

Readers' views

Letters continued from Page A6

Losing teachers

Sir:

Several articles and columns in the past week have touched on teachers' salaries and whether or not they are adequate, and whether or not striking, or work-to-rule, are to be considered appropriate tactics.

It is my opinion that neither striking nor work-to-rule is the worst tactic they can use. The worst one is voting with their feet, which they are practicing more and more.

In the company where I worked there are plenty of former teachers, who quit teaching and went

into computers because it paid more money. Many of them are deeply concerned with the education their children receive, and would like to see it upgraded. But they no longer want to be the ones to contribute to it.

Do you remember the outcry a few years back about gays trying to become school teachers? You don't hear much about it these days. They figured out that there are plenty of occupations with better earnings and less hassle, so they went there.

Increasingly teaching is becoming a haven for those who can't make it in any other occupation, and thus can't leave for better pastures. The brightest students don't go into teaching because if

they know enough math, they can figure that it will be very difficult for them to pay off their loans out of their earnings. Those who still graduate and become teachers will leave.

We are in danger of letting the education of the next generation become the occupation of the incompetent unless some action is taken to attract bright students to teaching, to reward the good teachers we have and to make their job easier so that they don't leave, and to give education the attention it deserves. If we don't do that, we will be heading for disaster in a few years.

ADRIANA I. PENA
Annapolis

Runner thanks those who aided her

Sir:

On Aug. 30 I participated in the Annapolis 10-mile footrace. I felt certain I was prepared physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for this race. Unfortunately, the Annapolis race did not conclude the way I had hoped.

I began the race with a bruise on the ball of my left foot, an injury suffered during a training run. By the time I crossed the Severn River Bridge, I noticed I was having to struggle. By mile five, I was pushing hard to keep running. At this point, I noticed I was no longer sweating.

After completing the worst part of the race, from about mile six to mile eight, with the help of my friend Schuyler Giles, who encouraged me during the entire race, an unregistered runner joined us. We had passed his house on Martin's Cove, and he noticed at that time that I was having trouble. He set out to catch up with us to assist if he could.

With the help of the runner and Sky, I was able to complete the entire distance. Once inside the stadium, however, I began to hyperventilate. At the finish, race officials took me to the aid station where it was determined that I had dehydrated.

After a few minutes, the attending doctors decided the safest place for me was the emergency room at Anne Arundel General.

The runner who had joined us for the last two miles remained by the aid station to make sure I was all right. After several attempts to locate my family by paging failed, this runner set out to find them in the crowd. Not only did he find my husband, but he insisted on riding with him to the hospital so my husband would not get lost.

My thanks begin with the race officials who attended to me at the aid station. Not only were they extremely professional and courteous, they were kind and compassionate.

Most especially, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the runner, Jerry Finkner, an Annapolis Strider. He called me later to ensure that I was well, an extremely considerate gesture considering all he had done.

Words cannot really describe the feeling and appreciation I have for all those who helped me. What an experience to be touched by so many in such a wonderful way!

CATHERINE CHAPMAN GREGORY
Ellicott City

Duckett and child abuse case

Sir:

(This was written to Maryland Attorney General J. Joseph Curran Jr.)

The Office of the State's Attorney for Anne Arundel County, and me personally, were recently substantially criticized by the local press for our handling of a child abuse case before the Grand Jury.

As a result of this criticism, they have suggested and requested an impartial investigation/examination of all of the facts of this case to determine whether any inappropriate activities occurred and whether the decision by the Grand Jury not to indict the individual accused was appropriate.

I join in with this request. I would hope that you would have sufficient time, inclination and interest to assign one of your people to fully and thoroughly examine what transpired in this case.

It would be tremendously appreciated if you or your designee could contact me at your earliest convenience in regard to this matter.

WARREN B. DUCKETT JR.
State's Attorney
Anne Arundel County

Sir:

Regarding the State's Attorney's Office and the alleged child abuse case reported in your paper: It was not the nature of the alleged offense nor the prominence of the alleged offender nor the allegations that the State's Attorney plays favorites that got my attention.

In my view, as an attorney and former prosecutor, a cause for alarm is the statement attributed to the chief law enforcement officials of the county that "The worst thing in the world is to charge a person who's not guilty. My God."

The problem with that philosophy is that the prosecutor thereby assumes the functions of the prosecutor, grand jury, judge, and petit jury. This is a usurpation of power that is cause for pause.

Another way of stating it is that the quotation begs the ultimate question of "guilt." That is not the question for the State's Attorney. The question for him is whether there is the minimal probable cause to believe that a crime was committed and probable cause to believe that the suspect committed it. Decisions beyond that are for the judge and jury.

BILL D. BURLISON
Crofton

Sir:

I read the recent *Capital* child-abuse articles with much concern and interest because I know the victim and her family. This family has suffered so much — the pain and heartache are immeasurable.

When the Grand Jury decided not to indict the accused perpetrator, the family accepted it. They knew they had done everything they could for their daughter. For two years they have been torn in every direction by everyone from social workers, attorneys, relatives, journalists, police officers, friends, the State's Attorney's Office and therapists to representatives from People Against Child Abuse. Everyone had an opinion. But it was over. Now was the time to rest, to begin healing.

But it wasn't over; that wasn't the end of it. The next day they had to read in *The Capital* that she was "hysterical" and they were "revengeful." Ridiculous! For anyone to say such a thing about these people is beyond my comprehension.

Through all of this, uppermost on their minds has been that the accused people need therapy.

Sure, they want them punished too — who wouldn't? (Statistics show that without the necessary treatment they will continue to sexually abuse children.) Very few people, if any, could have been less hysterical or less revengeful under these circumstances.

Why, after all they have been through, was this final slap in the face necessary?

LAURA RYAN-CHAPMAN
Annapolis

Sir:

I read with interest the Sept. 2 story in *The Capital* regarding the State's Attorney's involvement in an alleged child abuse case before the Grand Jury. I commend *The Capital* and Lorraine Ahearn for doing such a thorough job in reporting this case to the public.

It is apparent after reading this article that the handling of this case is, at best, questionable, which brings some concerns to mind. Why was the



Photo by J. Hanson

STATE'S ATTORNEY Warren B. Duckett Jr. has requested a state inquiry into his office's handling of a child abuse case.

accused invited to testify before the Grand Jury, and who invited him? Apparently, this is unusual, as a defense attorney asked why his client was not afforded the same "courtesy." Could it be that his client was not, as the article points out so clearly, a "wealthy state official" or a "public figure"?

While State's Attorney Duckett reports that this was a "revenge type thing" brought on by the parents of the child, and Assistant State's Attorney Bell states that "the evidence was basically a hysterical mother," it is interesting to note that two recognized experts in the field of child abuse, one of whom works in the State's Attorney's Office, disagree with these statements. Both of these experts indicate that there was clear evidence that the man abused the child.

In my opinion, the system of justice has failed, and the victims have become further victimized by the system. Entirely too much emphasis has been placed by the State's Attorney's Office on protecting the "public figure."

I would support a further investigation into this case with the results of this investigation reported in *The Capital*.

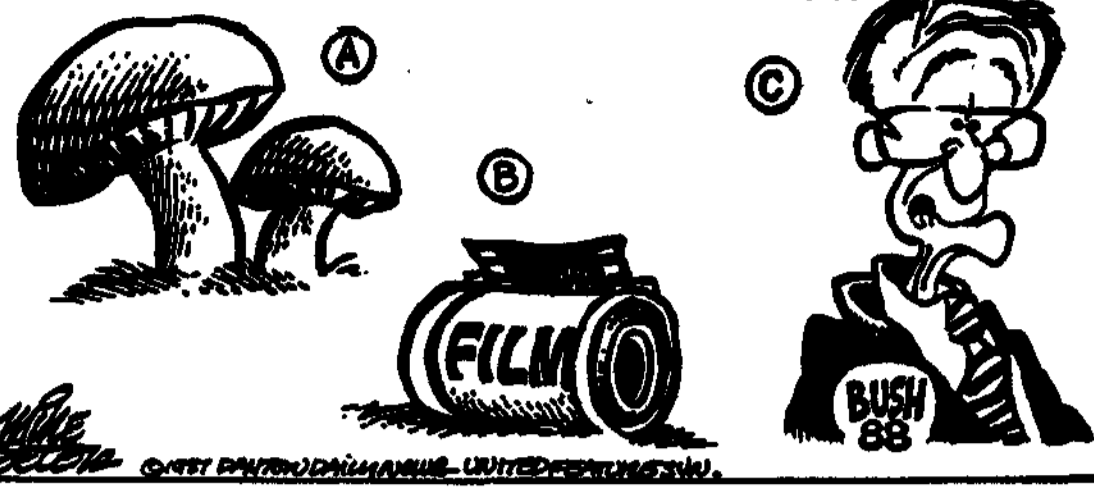
WILLIAM R. CAPPE
Pasadena

Sir:

In regard to Assistant State's Attorney Cynthia Ferris' letter published Sept. 10, I have two questions. Is it the grand jury's responsibility to decide the best interest of an alleged victim? Or is it the grand jury's responsibility to decide if there is sufficient evidence against the accused to go to trial?

ELIZABETH HARTMAN
Odenton

THINGS THAT ONLY SURVIVE WHEN KEPT IN THE DARK...



Company move-outs hurt cities

A rash of move-outs, mergers and acquisitions is robbing one American city after another of its homegrown corporations. Firms rooted in a single town for as long as 100 years are selling out, looking for greener pastures as they "reposition" themselves in the international marketplace.

RJR Nabisco has left Winston-Salem for Atlanta. Gannett departed Rochester, N.Y., for Rosslyn, Va. Kimberly-Clark, makers of Kleenex tissues, deserted Neenah, Wis., for a Dallas suburb.

This year Firestone Tire & Rubber triggered civic paroxysms when it said it would move its headquarters from Akron, Ohio, its home since 1900, to Chicago. The chief of the Akron Regional Development Board called Firestone's move "a slap in the face" to the people of Akron. "The Rubber Capital of the World is losing one of its wheels," reported the *Akron Beacon-Journal*.

Why would Firestone do such a heartless thing? The *National Journal's* W. John Moore asked in Akron and learned: so that Firestone could shake off its image as "the friendly tire and rubber company" and present itself as "a dynamic automotive services company," operating with the likes of Sears Roebuck out of the big national retail hub of Chicago.

Corporate location experts predict the wanderlust for big towns will hit increasing numbers of firms, that tough competitive pressures will force more to abandon the towns of their birth and growth.

Sometimes executive recruitment is behind the moves: Top talent prefers larger metropolitan areas. And with more working wives, two-income families demand a location with a critical mass of job opportunities.

Neel stands by water policy

By THOMAS H. NEEL

Since water restrictions began this summer in some parts of the county, many interested citizens raised a number of good questions about the Anne Arundel County Department of Utilities' decision to restrict outside use.

Unfortunately, a few people see water restrictions as a failure to plan wisely, when actually the reverse is true. Careful water management has allowed the department to provide record amounts of water to residents during a prolonged dry period.

Through careful planning and constant attention to water supplies by dedicated employees, water continued to be readily available for all county residents, even those living in areas of water restrictions.

The ability to provide water during drought conditions is an extension of the county's philosophy as expressed in the master water plan. Passed by the Anne Arundel County Council on April 16, 1984, after two public hearings, the document clearly states that the department will not provide unlimited amounts of water, but instead will conserve and manage this valuable resource.

The master plan reads: "It should be noted that water supply and distribution systems are designed to meet the maximum day demands that could normally be expected. The design of a system to meet the most extreme anticipated conditions would be economically prohibitive and unjustified. It should be realized that during extreme weather conditions and periods of prolonged, unusual high demand some problems may be experienced."

To alleviate problems of low water pressure and low water reserves for fire fighting, residents on the Broadneck Peninsula and outlying areas were asked to change watering patterns.

Change — not end
On weekdays, residents still had unlimited use of outside water for 20 hours and on weekends, 16 hours. Residents were very cooperative, and the department tracked a shift



Neal Peirce

The result: Second-tier cities that for generations proudly referred to themselves as the "headquarters" location of one or more nationally known corporations are finding themselves in the unglamorous category of "branch-plant" town.

The immediate loss of jobs grabs the headlines when a corporation moves out. But in Akron, and many other cities, the ebullient growth of today's service-based economy, together with multiple small-business start-ups, is beginning to make up for the job losses.

The more serious blow is to civic capacity. Firestone had been contributing \$150,000 a year to Akron's United Way; 61 of its executives gave \$1,000 annually. The company had given the town a park, sponsored major golf and bowling events. All may now be lost.

Towns whose corporations flee also lose the talent of executives who counted the cities their homes for life, who knew how to put together economic-development deals, organize new civic projects, attract investment dollars.

In their place come branch managers, imported from some other town and anxious to climb the corporate ladder in another. They often exhibit, my academician friend Norton Long is fond of saying, as much concern for the town's long-term welfare as managers of United Fruit

in watering times and the resulting rise in tank levels.

Despite the shift, however, the department was still providing record amounts of water to the area. Therefore, it was difficult for us to understand repeated use of certain words in articles written about the restrictions. We did not turn lawns into dust bowls, kill gardens or wilt flowers. During a time that the governor was investigating federal disaster status for Maryland farmers, Broadneck and other county residents were still able to water their yards and gardens.

The department is always willing to make improvements to the water system, and constantly reviews and

"We did not turn lawns into dust bowls, kill gardens or wilt flowers."

modifies the master plan. Over the last few years we have added the 1.6-million-gallon capacity Amberly Water Treatment Plant, a 2-million-gallon tank in Jacobsville, a 1-million-gallon tank in Pasadena and a booster pumping station at Marley Station. Currently, the plan calls for the addition of a 2-million-gallon storage tank in Shipley's Choice and 3-million-gallon tanks in Arnold and Severndale.

However, these improvements are planned and will be paid for by households that do not yet exist.

But even if those tanks planned for the future were built today, residents would not have more water than they do now. Tanks only hold water produced by plants, pipes and pumps. Without additional support equipment, more tanks would be empty tanks in the Broadneck Peninsula, for example, the department would need to double the existing system to provide the amount of water that was being demanded when restrictions were initiated. The capital connection charge, by which

exhibited for the banana republics where they were doing business.

Now comes another threat: branch banking. Up to the '80s, banks were immune to merger mania. Bankers were at the core of local leadership. It made a huge difference. In the words of Paul Leonard, lieutenant governor of Ohio and former mayor of Dayton: "The banking industry is the source of financial power and they are the ones that can make or break you as a community."

Dayton is now one of the cities where almost all the banks are under outside ownership, notes Leonard. "We used to be able to go across the street to our bank and ask them to invest \$1 million in the community. Now we have to go to Cleveland and in some cases to New York City. It's a whole new ball game."

A few national firms, to their credit, have made a conscious effort to overcome the branch-plant problem, to persuade their regional or branch managers to contribute and lead locally. The short honor roll includes Levi Strauss, ARCO, IBM, Cummins Engine, Dayton-Hudson and, among insurance companies, Aetna, Allstate, Prudential and Mutual Benefit.

But the corporations that "care enough" to make such an effort are few and far between. And only a handful of the nation's new high-technology firms and start-up businesses of the '80s, help much — either in their branch towns or hometowns.

Luckily, these gloomy trends don't prevail in all cities. But they're pervasive enough to pose a central civic challenge of these times: how to nurture, encourage, advance, a replacement generation of civic entrepreneurs. Any city not pursuing that task right now may soon find itself in deep trouble.

systems are paid for, would be at least \$5,000 per household.

The Capital suggested that people who want more water be given more water at a higher cost per gallon. Unfortunately, it isn't that easy. The cost of a water system is paid for by capital charges. The one-time fees are charged when a household connects into the system. The quarterly water bill is a fee based only on the monthly cost of bringing water into the home.

To suggest that the cost of building a new system be added onto water bills fails to understand the important difference between capital connection charges and water bills, and severely underestimates the cost of increasing capacity.

Over recent weeks, Broadneck Peninsula residents worked with this department to manage the available water. By watering in the morning or evening, they helped the department, their neighbors and the fire department. We regret that the communities in the areas of water restrictions have become the center of contention and the target for negative articles and cartoons in the press. We appreciate the community cooperation the department has received and thank residents for assisting us in managing a valuable resource.

Experts believe that while there is not a severe water supply problem in this country, the future presents the need for better management. We must look past our laws into the future. The cost of producing water is going up. There is more concern for the environment. City and county governments must begin to educate the public, rather than continue to provide unlimited water.

If the voters of this county amend the master plan to allow water at any cost, the department has no choice but to follow. But until that day, we will continue to seek ways to manage and preserve what cannot be easily replaced.

(Thomas H. Neel is director of the County Department of Utilities.)