

## LETTERS

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Clinton well placed as women's advocate

After waging a historic campaign for the presidency, Sen. Hillary Clinton will become the new secretary of state. It was difficult for some of us to accept the result of the Democratic primaries and caucuses, especially the troublesome one here in Michigan, but now it is over, and we expect she will do a great job in her new position.

She is well positioned to restore respect for our country abroad. As first lady, she traveled extensively and became familiar with many countries and their problems. One of these is very dear to her, the "rights and everyday lives of the world's women," as Ellen Goodman stated in her recent column printed in The Ann Arbor News. It is evident that where women and girls are allowed to flourish, their nations do so as well. The U.S. is lagging in this area; only 17 percent of elected officials are women, 69th in the world, behind Iraq and North Korea, among others. Moreover, women earn only 70 percent as much as men for the same work. When Hillary serves as spokeswoman for Obama's administration abroad, it seems likely that she will raise consciousness of women's issues here as well, and the whole world will benefit.

Janine E. Easter, Ann Arbor

How did Ayers get his professorship?

The op-ed piece by William Ayers justifying his bomb-throwing career (that you reprinted) is excellently refuted by the op-ed piece by Charles Lane (that you also reprinted). Borrowing from Alcoholics Anonymous, addicts to terrorism such as Ayers should be referred to as "recovering terrorists," inactive but not cured. An unanswered question is how Ayers and his "Palestinian scholar" counterpart and friend (who he mentions) came to be appointed professors at otherwise reputable universities despite their skimpy scholarly credentials?

Henry Brysk, Ann Arbor

Government must force affordable health care

Health care cannot be a business. That may seem radical, but it is understood simply with the most basic business principle applied to a health scenario - a bad car crash. There's only one hospital in the area, and you're hurt very seriously. The hospital has the only treatment that would save your life. In that situation, they can charge you any amount, and you will have no choice but to pay it, even it means slaving the rest of your life to pay off the debt. Health services must be forced by government to be near the cost of treatment.

James A. Hill, Ann Arbor

Ayers unconvincing in whitewashing past

Under the guise of a pro-Obama piece celebrating the failure to taint the president-elect by their past association ("Guilt by association failed," Ann Arbor News Dec. 14), Bill Ayers is doing a very unconvincing job of whitewashing his and his associates' violent past. He describes himself as a basically harmless civil rights activist (even brazenly comparing himself to the black freedom movement!), and justifies planting bombs that could have killed and maimed, because "peaceful protests failed to stop an illegal and unpopular war," but was "not engaged in a campaign to injure people indiscriminately," he states.

Well, the surviving Mumbai terrorist can certainly make a parallel statement: Yes, he shot at innocent people, but he missed more than he actually killed, but who would buy that? Ayers' bombs fortunately also missed, but the definitions of terrorist and anarchist do not necessarily depend upon success or failure to kill. His attempt at revisionism, and his apparent failure to understand the nature of his actions, clearly define him as a sociopath - one who unfortunately has access to young, impressionable minds through his position as a professor of education at the University of Illinois. Oh, yes, he is also selling a couple of books. I hope this is the last we see of him in The Ann Arbor News.

Paul R. Kileny, Ann Arbor

Use of cananabis is essentially benign

Addiction is a deadly serious thing. My sister died from her addiction to a drug called bourbon. She was the smartest and most ethical kid in our family. It was disgusting to see an addiction doctor slam cannabis ("Straight facts on medical marijuana," 11/27). Addiction doctors want to maintain their piece of the drug-war pie by securing cannabis as part of their turf.

Cannabis addiction is trivial, and when you lie to people about one thing they think you lie about everything. It is not trivial, however, to arrest 800,000 Americans every year and destroy their lives because of a plant. It's un-American.

Cannabis never killed anybody, and it protects brain cells, even causing neurogenesis. He must know that it has been decades since the voters of this area decided (three times) that cannabis was essentially benign. That is our community standard. Maybe he has no idea how many of the successful professionals and creative people in this town have been smoking pot for 40 years, and live here, in part, because the Ann Arbor pot law shows some common sense.

The American Medical Association fought as hard as it could in 1937 to stop the federal government from banning medical cannabis, which had been a basic American medicine since the 1840s. They lost, and finally buckled under the force of reefer madness.

Let's thank God that Michiganders have the simple compassion to allow suffering people to use an ancient, effective, cheap plant - if their doctor agrees.

Chuck D. Ream, Ann Arbor

Susan Marlette's 'Daily Dose' uplifting

Susan Marlette (article that appeared on Dec. 13) and her "Daily Dose" is a witty ditty of positivity. Times are tough, and it is so easy to get caught up in the daily grind of bad news. However, every morning, her words inspire, uplift and rejuvenate us so that we can take another look at ourselves and our lives and see the positive. The employees of the Charles Reinhart company are blessed to have such a gifted and talented writer among them. I know I am.

Jennifer L. Fry, Saline

When you're positive, positive things occur

Some good news to give hope. We at Bill Crispin Chevrolet had a record sales month in November, and are ahead of December forecasts. So while the automotive industry is down, we are up - and we are up because everyone here believes "Gratitude creates the right attitude" - and when one is in a state of gratitude they are in a humble, appreciative, and joyous state of mind, that promotes positive thinking, emotions and actions. Thus, when you are positive, positive things happen, and business is great.

Craig Baugher, Belleville

Boombox users should be ticketed, too

I became upset after reading a recent, front page (local section) article about people using boomboxes to play music while downtown.

It put what they did in a fun, playful tone. Yet, when I drive by with my music on loud, I can get ticketed in this town. The police need to send me a refund or ticket those people, too.

Ben J. Calhoun, Ann Arbor

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