

DC if the city made good-faith efforts to improve its EMS system. Three years later, DC EMS hardly seems any better. Time for the Rosenbaums to bring their lawsuit.

POSTED BY JAY REEDER

As a former EMT with Montgomery County, I find it amazing that DC cannot find, train, and employ literate candidates who care about their fellow human beings. Why aren't there volunteers staffing any of the shortages? I was told it was because of the union rules when I inquired about volunteering my services and skills. Well, the union isn't working if it's protecting the positions of people who aren't doing their jobs, whether they be unwilling or unable.

POSTED BY SQUIRRELBAITDC

Hopefully the mayor, the DC Council, and others with influence in the District will realize soon that our shameful city services are not only dangerous but a huge threat to the city's financial viability. Economic growth is the only thing that really gets their attention—not ambulances, lead in the water, failed schools, or flaccid policing. Far fewer affluent residents are willing to put themselves and their children at risk by living in DC. It's appalling, but that threat may be the only one that produces real action.

POSTED BY EASTERNBRANCH

DRUGS CAN LEAD TO DEATH

The conclusion of "Who Killed Danny Petrole?," your well-written investigative piece in March, allows Justin Wolfe to reflect on where to place blame, if deserved, on any one person or set of circumstances for his conviction. Although he was gracious enough not to blame his attorney or even the main witness against him, the best reason he could offer for his present predicament was his failure to "read a law book."

I would suggest that Wolfe's self-admitted involvement in marijuana dealing (\$100,000 a year) set him on the path that might well end in his execution. I am not surprised that he does not realize the effect of his lifestyle choice. It was this same choice made by Petrole that resulted in his own death. The underlying theme of this article is wasted talent, youth, potential and self-denial.

BILL KELMARTIN
Manassas, Virginia

Author's reply: I should have included in the story information that addresses Mr. Kelmartin's point. Justin Wolfe has reached out from prison to church groups, a local high-school athletic team, and oth-

ers to warn of the dangers of drugs and the trouble that can come from them. He understands that his involvement with drugs contributed to his situation. His mother, Terri Steinberg, visits schools and churches to talk to kids about the consequences of drug use as shown by Justin's case.

RAISING THE BAR

It would have been great to see a few more bars on your March list of "75 Best Bars." All of the places described are swell, I'm sure. The Old Ebbitt is a bar, as are the Hawk 'n' Dove and the Brickskeller and the Vienna Inn and the Pour House. Proof is great, and so is EatBar. The Quarry House looks like a bar from the photo. I may have missed a couple. But it all begins to break down after that.

Start with hotel bars. There are some great hotel bars on the planet. The Round Robin at the Willard is a maybe, at least since Daniel Patrick Moynihan died. But for the most part, hotel bars are places in hotels where you get drinks and glazed peas.

A brasserie is not a bar. It has a bar.

A place that looks and feels like your fantasy living room is nice, but it's probably not a bar.

Bars in swell establishments such as Firefly and the Tabard Inn and Citronelle (!) and Vidalia have their place. But as bars? The Irish Inn is swell, but it is an inn, not an Irish bar. Bars are about people and focus, about regulars and attitude, not amenities and design tricks.

And there's this: Nothing is sillier than bartenders making up their own drinks. These drinks have the shelf life of Commerce secretaries. This has always been so.

STEVE DALEY
Arlington, Virginia

HOW TO STOP ABUSIVE DRINKING

Your February "Where's the Party?" article performs a service in documenting the extent of abusive drinking on local college campuses. Alcohol is responsible for 4,600 deaths per year among persons under 21, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Seventeen hundred of those die on college campuses.

More than 340,000 TV commercials a year present the industry's message of "good times means drinking." Twenty percent of the ads are on programs that appeal to youth ages 12 to 20.

Retailers need to exercise greater care in checking IDs. Colleges and universities need to build town/gown coalitions to adopt strategies that increase the price, decrease the availability, and limit promotion of alcoholic beverages on campuses.

Far more can be done to prevent under-

age drinking and excessive alcohol use than your article implied.

DAVID H. JERNIGAN, PHD
Baltimore, Maryland

The writer is an associate professor in the Department of Health, Behavior and Society at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

BIDEN INSPIRES STUTTERERS

I enjoyed your excellent February article "Everyone Calls Me Joe," which highlighted the challenges Joe Biden has overcome in his life, including stuttering. Vice President Biden has been prominently featured on the list of "famous people who stutter" on the Web site of the Stuttering Foundation (stutteringhelp.org) for many years along with such people as Bruce Willis, Marilyn Monroe, James Earl Jones, Peggy Lipton, and Eric Roberts.

I hope Biden will make stuttering research and greater access to speech therapy top priorities in the Obama administration.

ED DEPHILLIPS
Bronx, New York

CORRECTIONS

In March's "75 Best Bars" we said that the Fairfax Lounge is located in the Westin Embassy Row. It's in the Fairfax at Embassy Row, formerly the Westin.

In February's Capital Comment, Lawrence Summers should have been identified as a former president of Harvard.

In February's "100 Very Best Restaurants," we should have listed Art and Soul as open for dinner on Sunday.

UPDATE

An April 2007 article touted the Washington Nationals' signing of Esmailyn "Smiley" Gonzalez, a 16-year-old "phenom" from the Dominican Republic. A Major League Baseball investigation has revealed that Gonzalez falsified his name and age. His real name is Carlos Alvarez Daniel Lugo, and he's four years older than he claimed when joining the Nats. It's too early to tell whether we erred by calling Gonzalez/Lugo a "phenom." Last season, he batted .343 and won the batting title in the Gulf Coast League.

