

OPINION

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LETTERS

Danbury police need city's help

As a Danbury police officer, I, along with my fellow officers, await the arrival of our new chief.

While we harbor hopes and expectations of improvements he will make to morale and working conditions, a more serious problem has arisen.

We have been without a contract for almost two years.

Our pension needs improvement. Danbury police officers do not pay into Social Security, so they will receive none of those benefits. We pay into a pension fund.

For most of us, this pension has no scheduled increase to protect us against cost-of-living inflation through the years of our retirement.

Danbury police officers already receive a rate of pay which is below that of similar cities and towns in this area with similar problems.

Their pensions are also below those of the officers in those same cities and towns, some of which directly border Danbury.

In the last 10 years, officers from other departments came to work for Danbury, as they perceived it as a better place to serve.

Recently, however, the tide has turned, and more officers are leaving Danbury to go to other departments; some of them are even moving thousands of miles to do so.

Morale has reached an all-time low.

The officers in this department are committed to the job and will do their job regardless of the issues mentioned above.

But as the city enters the 21st century, facing all of its new challenges, does it really want to ignore the financial needs of its police officers, who also have families and need to make ends meet?

Will an unhappy police department contribute to a thriving and safe Danbury?

These problems will *not* be solved with a new police headquarters building. They will be solved when the police feel the city cares about their well-being — and is making an effort to improve it.

Daniel Sellner
DANBURY

Students excelled at state science fair

It is with great pride and honor that I recognize and applaud students throughout the area who participated in the 2005 Connecticut State Science Fair last month.

These students chose to pursue independent, authentic science research and presented their results at Quinnipiac University with more than 500 other projects from the state.

Student participants represented the following local schools and fairs: Newtown High School, Danbury High School, Science Horizons Science Fair, St. Joseph's School, East Ridge Middle School and the Sherman School.

Their sophisticated and timely projects demonstrate our students' willingness to pursue science academic excellence.

I must also recognize all of those

who make this opportunity possible for our students: our parents, local scientists who mentor our students and the faculty and administrations at our schools and districts.

Their contributions make such an important impact on our developing scientists. We could not have the degree of success without their unwavering assistance.

The fair would not be possible without the generous support of many individuals and corporations. This mammoth undertaking is the result of thousands of dollars and volunteer hours.

I would particularly recognize the title sponsor of the fair, United Technologies, whose continuous and steadfast support of the fair makes an amazing opportunity possible for all of our students.

I look forward to future experiences and successes for my Newtown High School students as well as the many students and schools throughout the area.

Frank LaBanca
Science Teacher
Newtown High School
SANDY HOOK

Officer Brevard deserves promotion

In response to the March 31 article, "Danbury officer blasts city hiring":

Nineteen years with the Danbury Police Department? That is more than frustrating and unacceptable not to be acknowledged for a job.

According to the article, "African Americans now make up less than 3 percent of the police force." Take a look around people, Danbury's population is more diversified than ever.

It is only common sense that employment opportunities and promotions should follow suit for those who are deserving of advancement — those who are here legally. I might add,

As a black police officer, you're a hot commodity. Lance Brevard, aside from race, color or creed, is just that — a hot commodity.

Not for the reasons stated by The News-Times, but he is a caring, dedicated, intelligent individual; a father and provider for his wonderful family and a faithful friend, who, by the way, came through for me (unmasked and unselfishly) during a personal health crisis.

He is dedicated to his church and a

man of extreme faith. We need more people like him. Get to know him on a personal level. You will be blessed.

Knowing that Capt. Mitch Weston and Mayor Mark Boughton are indeed men of honor, I have absolute faith and trust that they will see this through to a fair and equitable conclusion.

Officer Brevard, in the meantime, remember Jeremiah 29:11, which, by the way, is the Lord's promise to us all.

Susan Spector
DANBURY

Fairfield Hills bill endangers Newtown

The people of Newtown should be aware state legislators are considering House Bill 6712 that will enable the Legislative Council in Newtown (and other charter towns), by a simple majority vote, to create commissions or authorities to control designated town-owned properties.

The purpose of the bill is to allow local elected officials to bypass the town charter.

The Board of Selectmen and the Fairfield Hills Management Committee, through our local legislators, have introduced and are lobbying hard for HB 6712, in order to create an authority for the disposition and use of the Fairfield Hill property.

Our charter requires the approval of a town meeting to dispose of town property by sale or lease.

Newtown citizens have worked long and hard for the taxpayer protection given in our charter.

HB 6712 would also permit the creation of other authorities — for example, affordable housing — to act with no accountability to the taxpayers.

An authority would appropriate the Fairfield Hills property from the taxpayers and allow individuals to profit by using taxpayers' money to underwrite the cost of abatement and demolition. The authority would compete with private property development, rather than preserving Fairfield Hills for town use.

I urge you to contact your state representatives and local officials. Tell them House Bill 6712 is unacceptable.

It bypasses our town's charter and places the future of Fairfield Hills under the control of a chosen few. That is not the American way!

Ruby K. Johnson
SANDY HOOK