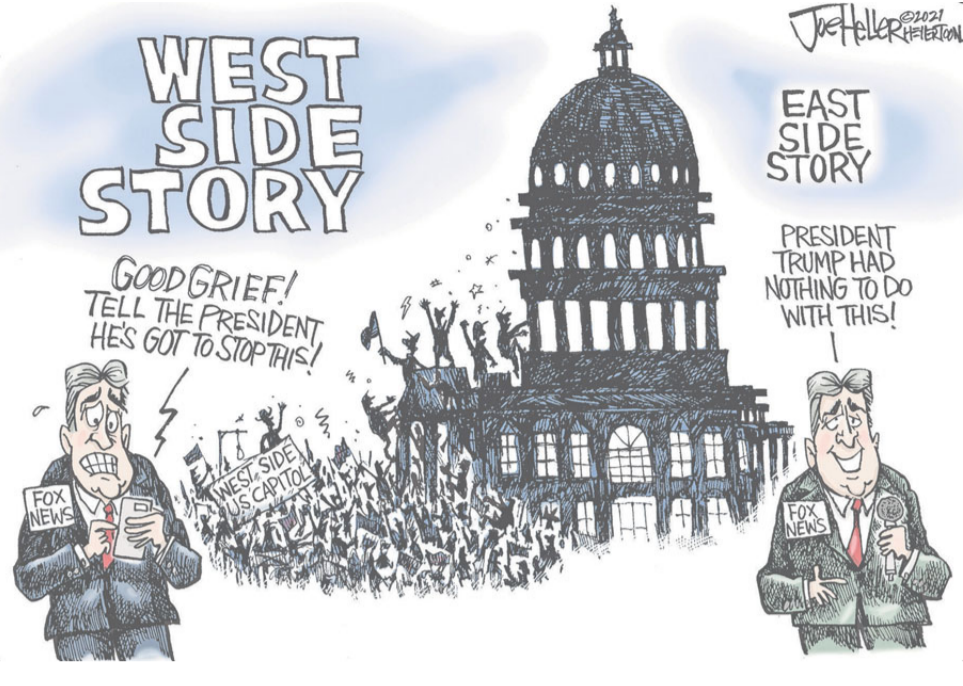


Opinion



Post Bulletin offers a new site to see

Wednesday was a pretty eventful day for us here at the Post Bulletin.

We covered car crashes in the morning fog, covered an unprecedented December thunderstorm in the dark of night, and in between we relaunched our website, postbulletin.com, powered by a new engine.

Or, at least, we tried to. Our 9 a.m. launch sputtered when the computer servers powering our site from the West Coast suffered a service outage. We didn't get fully online until about lunchtime. Those morning hours sure were uncomfortable, knowing that readers were trying to visit our site and running into a blank screen instead.

Hopefully now that our problems are behind us and it is launched, you'll find our new site to be an improvement over the old one. To my eye, it's more visually interesting and more cleanly arranged. I'd like to point out a few more things about it.

- It's easier to get to the sections you want. Just click the "Sections" button at the top left-hand corner of the page, and a list of the sections will appear down the left margin of your screen. We've reduced the number of sections to make it easier for you to find categories of interest. For example, we've folded crime and court stories into Local News, and our 507 Magazine into Entertainment.

- That cleaner appearance I described has a direct benefit for you in a few areas: Generally speaking, a simpler site loads more quickly, and ours is further engineered to prevent that annoying bump-down that used to happen when the ad comes onto the page. (If you're like me, you



JEFF PIETERS

would often find yourself clicking on the wrong link because of that bump.) The simpler layout looks better on smartphones, too. Fun fact: More than half of our online readers visit our site on a mobile device.

- The content management system – or what's called the CMS, the software that our journalists use to write their stories and upload their photos – has changed, too. What's nice about this CMS, called BrightSpot, is that it's simpler to use and gives us more ability to customize how our stories are presented to you. The software vendor offers better customer support than we have had previously, too. This is the same CMS used by the L.A. Times, Politico and several other national media outlets.

There's more I could tell you about this new site, but those are the biggest improvements. And there are definitely some loose ends we're still tying up. Feel free to send me a note with your reaction to this change.

WANT TO GIVE AN EDITOR SOME ADVICE?

The most important thing we've got at the Post Bulletin is not our website. It's not the printing press, a computer, a camera, a reporter's notebook or pen, or even the padded chair that keeps this editor's bottom off the floor.

Nope, the most important thing we have is our readers. Not only is your interest in our work the basis of everything we have and do, but your

insights can help us learn and discover better ways to serve your needs.

That's why, in 2022, we will reinstitute a program that we have had from time to time over the years: a Readers Advisory Panel.

I'd like a group of, say, six to 10 volunteers who are willing to meet with me and, occasionally, other members of my team one night a month for 12 months. We'll talk about us – our successes and failures, the challenges of being a journalist in the 21st century, and ideas we'd like to share with you for your feedback. And we'll talk about you – what you like or dislike about the paper, what you wish we'd add to it or remove, and what unmet information needs you have that we could potentially serve.

I'd like to attract as broad a cross-section of our readership as possible. Let's have a mix of men and women; young and, um, well seasoned; and be as racially diverse as we can. I hope for a variety of incomes, blue collar and white collar workers, and of course representation across the political spectrum.

The only essential qualifications for this group is that you are interested in the Post Bulletin and local news, and that you can talk to somebody whose viewpoint may differ from yours without losing your mind. Oh yes – and you have to live in southeastern Minnesota, or at least have some tie to this region, because we'll meet in person, to the extent that the public health situation allows it.

You can tell me about your own interest or you can nominate a friend.

Jeff Pieters is editor of the Post Bulletin. He can be reached by phone, 507-285-7748, or email, jpieters@postbulletin.com.

Can Beatles film 'Help' your family 'Come Together'?

BY GEOFFREY L. GREIF
Baltimore Sun

Viewing almost eight hours of the Beatles' "Get Back" documentary, about the making of the "Let it Be" album, can resemble a lengthy holiday with family. For some, you wish it would go on forever, like "Strawberry Fields." For others, the time felt overextended and maybe a little awkward when disagreements festered, making you want to shout "Help!"

The Beatles related almost as siblings — who I study in my work at the University of Maryland — would after the death of a parent; longtime manager and patriarchal figure Brian Epstein had died 16 months prior to the 1969 filming.

When parents die, siblings are usually in adulthood and have formed intimate relationships with others (John Lennon with Yoko Ono, and Paul McCartney with Linda Eastman). Without their parents, they must figure out how to work together to manage the family going forward.

University of Maryland School of Social Work professor Michael Woolley and I have found through our research that there is often great affection between siblings in adulthood. Siblings often described their brother or sister as their best friend, as someone they could trust, and someone they have grown closer to over time.

At the same time, mixed feelings toward each other were common. Brothers and sisters described the ups and downs of their relationship over the years as their siblings married, had children or moved away. A new spouse inevitably causes a shift in the timbre of a family, sometimes bringing siblings closer and other times pulling them away from each other. The different successes and monetary situations of siblings in adulthood can enhance or erode a relationship if the toll of taking care of aging parents is not evenly divided.

Finally, sibling relationships can be ambiguous. Brothers and sisters may not understand each other's behavior toward parents, their children and each other. Why did a sister choose her spouse? Why is a brother estranged from the family? How could a sibling be close to a parent who was toxic for many years?

While the Beatles were a group of four in total sync at their best, subgroups formed as they often do in families. Dyads (Paul McCartney and John Lennon co-creating) and triads (Paul, John and Ringo Starr after

George Harrison quits the group for a short period) emerged as various Beatles and significant others (e.g., Yoko Ono and Linda Eastman) paired off and squared off.

All of these components of relationships appear in "Get Back," just as they will for many during this holiday season.

The affection is palpable in the jamming and wondrous song creation we witness and in the way the members fit into each other like old shoes. Yet ambivalence can be seen when Paul wonders if he is being annoying and pushing the band too much and George says he will withdraw from playing on a song if that is what Paul wants. Yoko and Linda, the "in-laws," can be seen as intruders in the siblings' relationships. Separation and loss are also palpable as they wonder about their continued attachment to each other. George's withdrawal from the group, purportedly for having some of his songs displaced, is not immediately understood. Feelings are hurt between the brothers/the Beatles just as they often are in a family.

Ultimately, and not forever, the band comes back together to pull off a rooftop concert, perhaps a metaphor for how families come together when they must to take care of each other. The ambivalence between some of the members would turn into outright animosity until their later years. They might have reunited had that opportunity not been tragically cut short with John's death. We never will have a chance to see how the story might have ended.

In families there is often a future that can be wrapped, like a present, in affection as long as family members accept that few sibling groups have unfettered relationships. And if there has been a rift, a reconciliation is always possible — if not for the current generation, then for future ones, as all the Beatles' families joined together for the "Get Back" film.

Families can learn to "come together, right now" as they let certain things be.

Geoffrey L. Greif (ggreif@ssw.umaryland.edu) is a professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland and co-author of "Adult Sibling Relationships." He attended the Beatles Baltimore concert in 1964 and the Beatles D.C. stadium concert in 1966.

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Courtesy Apple Corps Ltd. / Disney / TNS

Ringo Starr, Paul McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison in "The Beatles: Get Back."

For the sake of safety, land the Landing elsewhere

The Landing, which has the noble task of serving the homeless, needs to find its own new home. Its current location at 702 West Silver Lake Drive NE apparently will no longer be an option after April 2022. The City of Rochester, after spending \$875,000 to renovate and support that location, is asking the Landing to find a new location. The former Whiskey Bones site is being considered as an option.

The adjoining neighbors to this proposed new location have every right to be concerned. In a Nov. 11 PB article, the Landing



DAN MUYRES

founder was quoted as saying "its operation doesn't spur increased crime." A police spokesman likewise stated "the city has not had an increase in crime around the Silver Lake site that can be attributed to clients of The Landing." Well, a quick police records check would suggest otherwise.

In the approximately 13 months the Landing has been located at its current location within Silver Lake Park, there have been 259 police calls for service there. In the prior six years there were a total of seven calls to this address. These recent calls include weapons violations, sex assault, exposure, warrant arrests, intoxicated person and many others. These are calls specific to the Landing address; it would be difficult to ascertain the total problems that may follow the Landing clients into the surrounding neighborhoods, although I would point out two troubling incidents.

On Sept. 22, 2021, an 11-year-old girl was walking in Silver Lake Park, a short distance from the Landing, when she was allegedly accosted by Danio Dorres. Mr. Dorres has been arrested and charged with criminal sexual conduct. Court documents list Dorres' home address as 702 West Silver Lake Drive NE.

On Nov. 15, 2021, police received a call of a man punching a bus on the street in front of the Landing. While arresting Mahamed Abikar, he allegedly spit on the officers and grabbed an officer's groin. He is being held on felony assault and criminal sexual conduct charges. Court

documents list Abikar as homeless.

While the Landing is a much-needed organization and many of its clients likely cause no problems, the City of Rochester seems wise in asking the Landing to move out of Silver Lake Park. It would seem allowing them to locate near another park, school or residential neighborhood would be foolish, if not reckless.

Dan Muyres retired from the Rochester Police Department in 2012 as a lieutenant after 32 years of service.

Opinion

What’s wrong with education funding is not hard to grasp

BY ROBIN ABCARIAN
Los Angeles Times

It wasn’t a joke. It wasn’t a parody, nor a satire, nor performance art. It was an honest-to-God scramble for cash, foisted on teachers in South Dakota, where salaries are among the lowest in the nation. They average less than \$50,000 a year. The money grab was the entertainment between periods for Saturday’s Sioux Falls Stampede hockey game. In a video that (inevitably) went viral on Twitter, public school teachers in jeans, T-shirts and helmets knelt on a shag rug tossed onto the ice and scooped up \$1 bills that had been dumped onto the rug. Five grand was on the line. The teachers stuffed the money down their shirts as fast as they could. Some critics compared the exercise to the 2021 Korean-language survival drama “Squid Game” — in which characters desperate for money enter a deadly competition — without the blood. It put me in mind of the 1969 satirical movie “The Magic Christian,” without the manure. In reality, it wasn’t either of those things. The goal in “Squid Game” was to stay alive. The goal in “The Magic Christian,” the film starring Peter Sellers and Ringo Starr, was to show how people will compromise or debase themselves for money. (Its famous final scene showed

The first-ever Dash for Cash event pitted 10 Sioux Falls area teachers against each other to grab as many single dollar bills as possible in less than five minutes.

The money, meant to go toward either their classroom or school, was donated by CU Mortgage Direct.

SIOUX FALLS, S.D., ARGUS-LEADER

proper gentlemen in bowler hats and suits diving after cash into an excrement-filled vat.) But the teachers in the ice-cold hockey arena were not in it for themselves; they were scrambling for entirely altruistic reasons. They want better for the kids in their classrooms. “The teachers in this area, and any teacher, they deserve whatever the heck they get,” said the marketing director for the mortgage company that dreamed up this unintentional exercise in humiliation. I know he meant well, but as the child of a Los Angeles Unified School District teacher who spent far too much of her own cash on classroom supplies, it was hard not to read his quote as an insult. Most teachers deserve SO MUCH more than what they get. When she died at 70 in 1998, my mother, who taught deaf and hard-of-hearing students, left a trove of teaching supplies. “This just feels demeaning,”

tweeted Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers. “No doubt people probably intended it to be fun, but from the outside it feels terrible.” The hockey team and the mortgage company later apologized. I certainly don’t blame the South Dakota teachers who participated. They were hoping to get enough money, they told the Argus-Leader, to purchase flexible seating, such as standing desks, or computer and sports equipment. Good luck with that. When the spectacle ended less than five minutes after it began, their cash hauls ranged from \$378 to \$616. The stunt was in terrible taste, for sure, but it also encapsulated in one sickening moment much of what is awry with how we fund (or don’t fund) public education, and the regard in which we hold teachers in this country, most of whom are women. (Women account for 80% of elementary

and middle school teachers.) Even the federal government has formalized the practice of teachers’ reaching into their own pockets to help students. The IRS allows qualified teachers to deduct up to \$250 in classroom supplies each year, but as many teachers have noted, that amount is a pittance compared with how much they actually spend. Last year, The Washington Post surveyed American teachers to get a sense of how much of their personal funds are spent on supplies. The paper heard back not just from public school teachers but teachers in private, parochial and charter schools. “The portrait that emerges is devastating — and reveals that the problem has existed, without remedy, for decades,” wrote education reporter Valerie Strauss. “It has gotten worse over time.” From a North Carolina teacher: “We are not allowed to ‘ask’ from the community. So, essentially, I buy my own supplies.” A Minnesota educator: “Not sure what you need this information for, but teachers are funding their classrooms, not school districts.” Teachers said they buy all manner of traditional classroom supplies and also — incredibly — even furniture. “There’s a joke that, in most professions,” wrote a Massachusetts teacher, “you steal office supplies from work to bring home, but teachers

steal office supplies from home to bring to work.” One teacher simply said, “I am a scavenger.” COVID-19 has only made things worse. Last year, HuffPost reported that Los Angeles science teacher Mishna Hernandez, who normally spends between \$500 and \$700 on supplies, estimated that she spent at least \$3,000 to prepare for online teaching from home, including purchasing an iPad, an iMac and a desk. Online, it’s become popular for teachers to post wish lists on Amazon that are filled by everyday good Samaritans. The nonprofit group AdoptAClassroom.org regularly asks teachers about their out-of-pocket classroom spending. Its most recent survey found that teachers spend an average of \$750 a year. Thirty percent of the 5,400 teachers surveyed reported spending \$1,000 or more on supplies. Well, you might say, no one is forcing teachers to do so. That’s just the point, isn’t it? Most teachers do what they can — and must — to make sure their kids have what they need to succeed. This practice has become education as usual. What a shame we’ve come to accept it.

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Senate membership shows how the parties have changed

BY STUART ROTHENBERG
CQ-Roll Call

Like the start of the 107th Congress, which began Jan. 3, 2001, and ended Jan. 3, 2003, today’s Senate (the 117th Congress) is split between the two parties. In 2001, Republican George W. Bush entered the White House with his party in “control” of the chamber, thanks to Vice President Dick Cheney’s tie-breaking vote. Now, Joe Biden is president, and his party “controls” the Senate, with Vice President Kamala Harris as the tie-breaker. But while the party affiliations in 2001-2003 and 2021-2023 are similar, the two parties look dramatically different from a mere two decades ago. Sixteen senators of that 107th Congress — six Republicans and 10 Democrats — are still in office. Except for one obvious exception (Maine’s Susan Collins), the Republicans in that group are and have been very conservative, while the Democrats are and have been very liberal. Besides Collins, the five other GOP senators still serving are Alabama’s Richard C. Shelby, Idaho’s Michael D. Crapo, Iowa’s Charles E. Grassley, Kentucky’s Mitch McConnell and Oklahoma’s James M. Inhofe. On the Democratic side, there’s California’s Dianne Feinstein, Delaware’s Thomas R. Carper, New York’s Charles E. Schumer, Michigan’s Debbie Stabenow, Oregon’s Ron Wyden, Rhode Island’s Jack Reed, Vermont’s Patrick J. Leahy, and both of Washington’s senators, Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell. Republicans often talk about how much more liberal the Democratic Party has become, and it certainly is true that in the 2001-2003 Senate, at least six Democratic senators could be classified as “conservative” or “moderate” — Arkansas’ Blanche Lincoln, Georgia’s Zell Miller, Nebraska’s Ben Nelson, Indiana’s Evan Bayh, Louisiana’s John B. Breaux and South Carolina’s Ernest F. Hollings. Today, only West Virginia’s Joe Manchin III falls into the moderate-to-conservative Democratic category, though a few others, such as Arizona’s Kyrsten Sinema, can cause heartburn for progressive



Andrew Harnik / Pool / Getty Images / TNS

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, speaks during a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and Senate Rules and Administration joint hearing on Feb. 23 in Washington, DC.

Democrats on individual issues. But even 20 years ago, liberals made up the heart and soul of the Democratic Party. In addition to the 10 Democratic senators mentioned above, the list of Senate liberals in the 107th Congress included California’s Barbara Boxer, New York’s Hillary Clinton, Iowa’s Tom Harkin, Maryland’s Paul S. Sarbanes and Barbara A. Mikulski, Massachusetts’ Ted Kennedy and John Kerry, Michigan’s Carl Levin, Florida’s Bill Nelson, Hawaii’s Daniel K. Akaka, North Carolina’s John Edwards, Minnesota’s Paul Wellstone (who died in a plane crash on Oct. 25, 2002), West Virginia’s Jay Rockefeller, New Jersey’s Jon Corzine and Robert G. Torricelli, Minnesota’s Mark Dayton and Wisconsin’s Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold. Other than Vermont’s Bernie Sanders, who was elected in 2006 as an independent but caucuses with Democrats, Democratic senators are not noticeably more liberal or progressive than they were in 2001-2003. On the other hand, the other

side of the aisle changed much more profoundly between 2001 and 2021. There certainly was a hard core of social and foreign policy conservatives in the 107th Congress, including Alabama’s Jeff Sessions, Kansas’ Sam Brownback, Kentucky’s Jim Bunning, New Hampshire’s Bob Smith, North Carolina’s Jesse Helms, Pennsylvania’s Rick Santorum, Oklahoma’s Don Nickles and, I suppose, South Carolina’s Strom Thurmond, whose health had already deteriorated significantly. If you wanted to add Arkansas’ Tim Hutchinson, Texas’ Phil Gramm and Colorado’s Wayne Allard, I might not put up much of a fight. But the biggest change, by far, has been the shrinkage of moderate-to-liberal Republicans (and the demise of “institutionalists”), who once played a major role in the party. The list of moderate or “establishment” Republicans is short today, probably no more than two sitting senators, Collins and Alaska’s Lisa Murkowski. (Utah’s Mitt

Romney may also qualify as an institutionalist.) But in 2001-2003, the Republican Senate roster included moderates such as Alaska’s Frank H. Murkowski, Arizona’s John McCain, Nebraska’s Chuck Hagel, New Hampshire’s Judd Gregg, New Mexico’s Pete V. Domenici, Indiana’s Richard G. Lugar, Maine’s Olympia J. Snowe and Collins, Ohio’s Mike DeWine, Rhode Island’s Lincoln Chafee, Pennsylvania’s Arlen Specter, Missouri’s Kit Bond, Tennessee’s Bill Frist and Fred Thompson, Texas’ Kay Bailey Hutchison, Vermont’s Jim Jeffords (until he left the GOP and became an independent caucusing with the Democrats in June 2001), Virginia’s John W. Warner and Colorado’s Ben Nighthorse Campbell. Even conservatives Jon Kyl of Arizona, Thad Cochran of Mississippi and Gordon H. Smith of Oregon probably belong on that list given their style, which emphasized cooperation, compromise and comity, not ideological combat. I’m sure some will argue over which members belong in which category. I have not placed every member of that

Senate into a category. That’s not my point. But when you look at the Senate of just 20 years ago, you see how much the GOP has changed. Can you imagine McCain, Specter, Domenici, Hagel or Alaska’s Ted Stevens being cowed by Donald Trump? If you can, you certainly have a vivid imagination. Yes, Senate Democrats have moved slightly to the left. But that’s primarily because Republican voters in states that once elected moderate Democrats will no longer do so. Bayh, once a popular Indiana governor and senator, tried to come out of retirement in 2016 but lost by 10 points to Republican Todd Young. Michelle Nunn, daughter of iconic Georgia Democratic Sen. Sam Nunn, lost a 2014 Senate bid from the Peach State even though she stressed her pragmatic political views. Twenty years ago, both North Dakota and South Dakota had two Democratic senators. So did West Virginia, Florida and Louisiana. Today, Republicans hold all but one of those seats, and it seems unlikely that a Democrat like Tom Daschle, Byron L. Dorgan, Bob Graham or Breaux could get elected today under anything short of an anti-Republican midterm tsunami. Changes in Senate membership between the 107th and the 117th Congresses offer a clear picture of what has happened to the two parties. In the Senate, at least, Republicans have become more ideologically extreme over the past two decades. GOP senators like Warner, Lugar, Frist, Chafee, Thompson, Hutchison, Specter, Cochran and Hagel have been replaced by members like Roger Marshall of Kansas, Rand Paul of Kentucky, Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty of Tennessee, Ted Cruz of Texas, Mike Lee of Utah, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, Josh Hawley of Missouri, Tommy Tuberville of Alabama, Mike Braun of Indiana and Tom Cotton of Arkansas. The GOP is an entirely different party now.

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