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A Sloane Fan's Notes

I can see that Tim Kreider has determined what the most frequently asked question is going to be at the Baltimore Science Fiction Society booth at the Baltimore Book Festival this weekend: "Do you have the two books this guy talked about?" ("[The Frightener](#)," Big Books Issue, Sept. 26).

Without even looking, I know the answer is, "No, not for sale." We get rid of duplicates from the club library there, but we don't have duplicates of those two. The club does have a copy of William Sloane's *To Walk the Night* and of *The Edge of Running Water* in our library, as do I on my own shelves, but that is it. They are remarkable books.

On the other hand, a fast look on AbeBooks.com says that the first has 80 copies on sale at the moment, and 64 copies of the second, as well as (perversely) one copy of the fairly recent omnibus edition, called *The Rim of Morning*.

Ah, but has Kreider ever read the book edition of Sloane's supernatural play *Runner in the Snow*? I've never seen a copy for sale, in 40-some years of looking.

Mark Owings

Baltimore

Bum Rush

Come on, Madam President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. Why bother wasting the taxpayers' and the council's time, debating "why" men wear their pants hanging down revealing their butts in Baltimore City ([Councilmania](#), News, Sept. 26)? Seriously, aren't there really more pressing issues concerning Baltimore? Like maybe poverty, guns, deaths, filth, abandoned homes, HIV/AIDS . . . HIGH TAXES!

I, for one, couldn't care less that these young men want to wear pants exposing their macho booties. It's all good to me, especially since gay black nightlife in Baltimore is all but nonexistent, and most Baltimoreans are not connected on the internet, leaving me little local fare to ogle. (To hell with *The Wire*, whatever happened to Baltimore's Wi-Fi initiative?) Since moving here from the D.C. area, one of my favorite pastimes is now sitting on my stoop watching all those thugged-out booties walking by. Ummmm ummmm! And you have to appreciate that if the booty is out, there is definitely no gun in the waistband of those flimsy briefs. So it tends to be a safe hobby, and way more appealing than watching "real birds"!

I think that most young men don't know that this fashion started from prison culture (regrettably, as do many fashions in African-American hip-hop culture). In prison, an exposed butt signals other inmates that the owner of said exposed butt cheeks was open for business--a prostitute. For a pack of cigs, a few dollars, some drugs, whatever, the exposed booty would do a trade. (Fair exchange ain't no crime, right?) It also signaled that the person exposing those luscious buttocks was taking it just there. I guess I can help Ms. Rawlings-Blake with her question about what those men are seeking--its formal name starts with the letter "P" (and its common nickname starts with "D")! Ponder that!



A NEW WEB DRAMA BY
BARRY MICHAEL COOPER

I think that if more of our youth actually knew where this fashion started, they would not only stop it, but they may stop being so hard on gay dudes. It is clearly evident, from the masses of exposed buttocks in the streets to the most high-fashion runways in Milan, that gay men have a powerful influence on fashion everywhere, even in thug gear.

Wallace Farmer
Baltimore

Bye Bye Bar Scars

I've loved reading **Bar Scars** over the years. As both a bartender and musician who's worked or played in almost every Baltimore dive around, I've really learned the joy and agony of people watching in bars; as I get older (34) I, too, have found that its been a long time since I've been to the Club Charles, even longer since I've been buzzed enough to straddle next door to the Depot, and 1722!--I've only been there twice in my heyday. If you remember when the now-Talking Head was called Chambers, even before the Ottobar, then you're in my league. Such is the cycle of life, I guess. Your column was a great way for us aging hipsters to still get a window into the not always cool but always Baltimore nightlife scene.

Farewell, Bar Scars.

Jeff McDonnell
Baltimore

Don't Judge a Book-Lender by Its Cover

In regard to your award of "**Best Library Branch**, County," to the Cockeysville Library (Best of Baltimore, Sept. 19), to rate county, or city, libraries in this manner is redundant, as county and the city libraries are part of library systems (namely the Enoch Pratt Free Library System and the Baltimore County Public Library System).

In such systems, materials alone--especially signs, graphic novels, and zines--cannot stand alone as qualifiers for a successful or unsuccessful branch. The reviewer seems to have mistaken individual library buildings (notably, their size) as individual entities entirely independent of their systems. Materials such as books, magazines, CDs, and DVDs float around these systems and, while it's true larger branches such as Cockeysville and Towson receive considerably more returns from borrowers, these materials are then redistributed throughout the system. Instead of comparing Cockeysville to White Marsh, it would be wise to remember that these two libraries are responding to the needs of their patrons and are not in competition with each other.

If City Paper feels a need to review and decide upon a "best" library branch in the future, I would suggest that instead of passing judgment on surroundings or fluctuating material, they instead observe the borrowers, the librarians, and the volunteers. A good library should be acknowledged for its assistance and participation with the community.

And, if that alone is not enough to confirm that Maryland is lucky to have some of the strongest library systems in the United States, go to the library headquarters. Ask for the circulation and door counts, and be done with it.

Sarah Morrow

On the Lamdin

I hope that Judge Bruce Lamdin and similar judges get the punishment they deserve.

In response to E.A. Walsh's letter about Lamdin's suspension ("Bench Warmers," [The Mail](#), Sept. 19), Walsh has an excellent point: Lawyers have a strong incentive not to annoy judges. You can't assume from attorneys' praise that a judge has no problems, because s/he has much power to affect their careers.

Walsh complained that the Court of Special Appeals is required to actively look for reasons to uphold a trial court's decision. But that is true everywhere.

Presumably, you had a fair trial, including 1) getting to tell your side of the story, 2) the opportunity to have a lawyer, 3) hearing and being able to respond to the other side, including confronting any opposing witnesses, 4) all this being out in public so that the government and the other side have more reason to play fair, and 5) an impartial judge and (if applicable) jury.

If your rights are violated at trial, you may appeal. But after a fair hearing the appeals courts are supposed to presume that the result was just, and the side that wants to overturn it has a heavy burden of proof to show otherwise. Rightly so.

What if someone had beaten you up--and then you had to do everything necessary to make sure s/he got a fair trial? Like preserve evidence, coordinate with witnesses and possibly police and a prosecutor, testify in court, and maybe have the other side rip into you on cross-examination?

Let's say you win. You expect compensation, maybe jail time for the miscreant. And then s/he goes to the Court of Special Appeals and just says, "I disagree with this," and they say, "Well, there are reasons for this judgment, but there might be some way to decide it differently. Let's have a new trial and see." How would you feel then?

With most trials, some reason could be found, somewhere, why the decision might have gone the other way. Cases would go on forever. Each judgment needs to stick unless the other person can prove that something went seriously wrong.

Of course, everywhere there are a few bad apples, and some people with various issues--including judges. But I've watched various judges in action, and from what I've seen, the majority will treat you respectfully if you do the same for them. Given that Walsh is complaining that "most" Maryland judges are abusive and that a fair judge is a "rare gem," the problem just might lie with Walsh

I don't know Walsh, but if Walsh has not made a habit of 1) being well-dressed and well-groomed, 2) addressing the judge as "Your Honor" or at least "Sir" or "Ma'am," 3) talking to the judge and others respectfully, and 4) listening carefully to what the judge and others have to say and responding appropriately, Walsh should do so. Judges tend to give the benefit of the doubt to those who show they respect society.

Judge Lamdin has a problem and I hope he gets disciplined, and that's also true of a few other judges. From what I've seen, though, generally you get a fair day in court, and your

treatment of the court is repaid in kind.

Jeffrey Deutsch
Severna Park

Stupid Trend

A trend I would like to see nipped in the bud: the use of the word "stupidly" as a supposedly hip substitute for "very":

"Rarer still is for that actress to be as stupidly gifted as Helen Mirren" ([Dec. 31, 2006](#));

"the stupidly successful rap-rock band Korn" ([July 4, 2007](#));

"a stupid-hot cast-iron skillet" ([July 11, 2007](#));

"a Sesame Street-diverse group of stupidly talented and beautiful men and women" ([Sept. 19, 2007](#)).

On the bright side, I am pleased to see your film reviewers seem to have finally tired of the phrase "scenery-chewing" to describe actors. Keep up the good work.

Patrick D. Hahn
Baltimore

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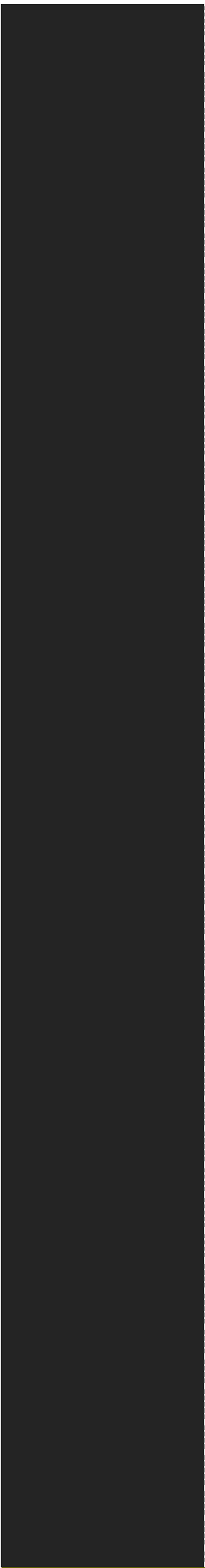
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