

Word of the day

Animadversion: \an-uh-mad-VUHR-zhuhn\ noun: 1. Harsh criticism or disapproval. 2. Remarks by way of criticism and usually of censure — often used with 'on'.

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Today's DEBATE Do you intend to watch the Summer Olympics? If so, what events are you interested in seeing most?



Steve Sutherland 45, professor Boston "Yes I do. Swimming, some track and field, diving and marathon."



Irvin Bailey 16, student Dorchester "Yes, track and field and swimming and definitely soccer."



Rachel Pelkey 20, student Allston "Yeah I'll just probably randomly turn it on and just watch. I do like the swimming."

Voices

Basketball and brotherly love



Marc Lamont Hill letters@metro.us

A few weeks ago, I decided to come out of self-imposed retirement and play a game of Sunday pickup basketball with some friends. Except for my decreased talent and increased laziness, the game was like thousands of others that I'd played in my lifetime: two solid hours of intense cheating, ball hogging and trash talking; countless victories and losses that meant everything at the moment but would soon be forgotten after a few days of deadlines, meetings and personal drama; and, most important, more brotherly love and affection than I had experienced in months. And while none of the other 13 brothers who were there would likely admit it, a major reason for their presence on the court that morning was for collecting all the hugs, high-fives, chest bumps and butt smacks that comprise any ghetto basketball game.

What all of us needed was a space for offering the type of caring touches, kind words and genuine regard for other brothers that most of us possess but aren't permitted to share except under very limited circumstances. Where else but a basketball court, football field or other such place could the "thug" with the Sunni Muslim beard place his hand on the small of my back and ask if I was okay as I desperately gasped for air? Where else would I not have thought twice about it? Although none of my comrades checked their homophobia or misogyny at the out-of-bounds line — the day was filled with disturbing anti-gay and anti-female language — they momentarily escaped the world of hypermasculine cool poses and ice grills, let their guards down, and be someone slightly different and better.

My point here isn't that black men sneak off to basketball courts to indulge their homoerotic impulses. There is little or nothing sexual about what I am describing. Rather, the basketball court provides a space where men instinctively separate the homosocial from the homosexual, the affectionate from the erotic. Such places allow us to rethink our own conception of masculinity by promoting care, compassion and vulnerability. While these attributes are generally considered antithetical to "real" manhood, they are crucial for making us better friends, lovers and fathers. Hopefully, we can take some of the lessons from the basketball court and translate them into the real world.

Marc Lamont Hill is an assistant professor at Temple University and a political contributor for Fox News Channel.

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Letters

Keown's outreach builds community

MILTON. I have a bumper sticker that reads: "The most radical thing you can do is introduce people to each other." In this era of cell phones, e-mail and instant messaging, columnist Thomas Keown, "Who is my neighbor?" (Metro, July 28), reminds us of the enduring powers of a simple, in-person smile, handshake and hello to build a community.

JEFF STONE

"Manny: Hurry up and leave so we can miss you!"

Szymczuk

Desperate pursuit of American dream

LYNN. Barbara Ehrenreich's claim in her column "The Suicide solution" (Metro, July 29) that Wall Street is to blame for the suicide of Carlene Balderrama requires more nuance than can be covered in a column (or this letter). But my simple question is: Why should a family with a small house and a plumber's income have faced any difficulty keeping up? Maybe the American Dream is over and nobody noticed because we were too busy pursuing it.

TOM BISHOP

From fans to Manny: Get out!

BOSTON. I loved Monday's cover with the Red Sox fan's poster entitled "Too Many Issues." I agree. Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet. There is no whining in baseball. Manny: Hurry up and leave so we can miss you! I think you should try soccer.

DANA SZYM CZUK

LEXINGTON. Regarding Bob Halloran's article, "Time to man up, Manny apologists" (Metro, July 29) How do I feel about Manny? Box of bats, a bag of balls, and let's call it a deal!

MARY KRIENER

Thanks to a Good Samaritan

ARLINGTON. My 6-year-old son fell on an escalator at the Museum of Science yesterday. He would have been severely injured but for a Good Samaritan who acted without hesitation. I hope he reads this and might know how grateful my wife and I are. Very reaffirming to know that people still step up.

JOHN BROMLEY

Arroyo's doctor is accountable, too

SWAMPSCOTT. I was happy to see Boston Fire Department employee Albert Arroyo on the front page of the Metro, exposed as a cheat to the system. However, I noticed the name of the doctor who originally certified that Mr. Arroyo was not physically able to work was missing. There's more than one man running a scam on my tax dollars and I think the good doctor deserves a little spotlight as well.

MICHAEL OUELLETTE

Blogarithms A look at the best of the blogs

Finding a healthy balance

Take the advice of health and wellness expert Brett Blumenthal. She dismisses diet myths, lets us know that even "good fats" should be had in moderation (ex: not a whole vat of guacamole), test out Wii Fit and reminds us that hogging equipment at the gym should be a federal offense.

The Permagrin: Being Forced to Smile

Not long ago, I wrote an entry on how powerful it is to smile. Today, I'm going to discuss how important it is to allow yourself to not smile. Smiling is great ... I'm all for it. It has a lot of great benefits and makes you feel all warm and fuzzy. But let's face it: There are times when you just don't want to smile. It doesn't matter what the reason is. It is human. It is natural. And there is no reason for you to feel bullied into smiling if at that very moment, you just don't feel like it.



sheerbalance.com

This morning I was perfectly content in my own world, deep in thought about all the things I had to get done today, and BAM, I hear someone say, "Brett ... SMILE." My co-worker obviously assumed that my not smiling implied that I was unhappy. As a result, he jolted me out of deep thought and tried to command me to smile. What is that? Where is it written that if you don't smile there must be something wrong with you? Aren't we past the "Beaver Cleaver" days of society? The 'I must smile and look perfect all the time' era?

The dream you're not living

You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll close the Web page in a fury of contempt, and graffiti "Die Yuppie Scum" onto the stucco buildings of Wall Street.

Leveraged Sell-out is a blog by an ex-banker, who tells the luxurious life like it is. And it isn't pretty.

Chartered Financial Banalyst For about two months before my boy Mark took the CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) Level 3 exam, he didn't go out at all. He'd go to work, come home, hit up the gym, and



leveragedsellout.com

then study. That was it. Done. "Going out is lame, anyway," he'd bark from the couch when I rolled up to his place on a Friday with two Lauren Conrad look-alikes. Sitting there in sweaty mesh shorts and a T-shirt, he'd wave a No. 2 HB pencil in the air dismissively. "Staying in is the new going out."

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E-mail your letters to letters@metro.us. Keep them as brief as possible, preferably under 100 words. Metro reserves the right to edit all letters. Please include your name and contact information.

The Metro cartoon TOBY, Robot Satan

by Corey Pandolph

