

Strong community advocate

There have been several articles in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel pertaining to Repairers of the Breach, the day respite for homeless and underserved adults on Vliet St. in downtown Milwaukee.

I've had the privilege of being the lead physician over the last two years at the medical clinic. The Breach offers many services to its members, and columnist Eugene Kane rightfully describes the organization as a reflection of its founder, MacCanon Brown ("[Standing up for the city's homeless](#)," Crossroads, Jan. 12).

There was a very strong board when I started at the clinic and as I began my second year. The board needed to adapt to the resignation of key individuals. Despite corporate changes, programs stabilized and the medical clinic actually doubled the number of patients seen in the fall quarter by doubling the clinic days, the volunteer staff and their hours worked.

Repairers of the Breach still has very effective corporate leadership and now has a new executive director, James West. It is important for everyone to realize that any organization is a reflection of more than a single individual. Change, though at times very difficult for everyone involved, is sometimes necessary for the good of a program.

Repairers of the Breach continues as a strong community advocate and is very thankful for everyone's support, and I believe is deserving of the newspaper's continued coverage.

John P. Thomas Jr.

Wauwatosa

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Germania building historic

The Germania Building, 135 W. Wells St., is one of the jewels of Milwaukee's historic architecture ("[Apartments proposed for vacant Avenues West office building](#)," Jan. 16).

The preservation community agrees that one of the best ways to revive and sustain historic properties is through use and activity. Local historic designation of the property would only stand to benefit the development even further.

Since the building is already on the National Register of Historic Places, the development team has access to not only the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority tax credits, for which they are already applying, but also Historic Tax Credits.

Just this year, the state made two increases to the amount of state historic tax credits available, making Wisconsin competitive with other states at 20%. The state and the city would benefit from encouraging the use of these tax credits as an economic development tool. The increase will be evaluated in 2017 for a recommendation on whether to continue with the credits.

Milwaukee is continuing to be nationally recognized for its wonderfully intact historic buildings and

neighborhoods. Locally designating the Germania Building would further ensure the integrity of the building, and the history of Milwaukee, with the encouragement of best redevelopment practices to support the longevity of the building.

The Milwaukee Preservation Alliance supports local historic designation of the Germania Building.

Ali Kopyt

Board member

Milwaukee Preservation Alliance

Milwaukee

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Where was inner city concern?

In regard to editorial columnist James E. Causey's comment on being "taken aback" by white suburbanites holding summits to address the heroin epidemic in their communities, I was taken aback by his question: Where were these efforts when heroin was destroying Milwaukee's inner city? ("[What about when heroin devastated Milwaukee's streets?](#)" Jan. 14, JSOnline).

Good question. The summits in the suburbs were organized by the residents of those communities and the people they had elected to represent them. What was stopping the residents of the inner city and their representatives from being proactive and organizing forums and summits of their own? Where was the concern, indeed?

Lauren Douglas

South Milwaukee

Sanitation is no joke

I looked for an image to illustrate the statement that even today "an estimated 1 billion people worldwide still practice open defecation" ("[Quest to reinvent the toilet](#)," Jan. 19).

How many is 1 billion? Try 1804. That's when world population reached 1 billion. Imagine if everyone living then "went to the bathroom out in the open."

This would mean everyone, everywhere, including our great grandparents to the fifth power. Everyone would include, as well, President Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clarke, Napoleon, Pope Pius VII, Sir Walter Scott, Beethoven, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Robert Fulton and all other humans living in 1804. There would be attempts at efficiency and privacy, of course, but since it was still some 75 years before John Michael Kohler would invent the flush toilet, exceptions would be the privileged few. Millions, especially the poor, would have little choice — on all continents including our own — like today.

And that's the point. One billion people today still have little choice. So it's no joking matter. Besides humanitarian reasons, the threat of a global pandemic from unhealthy sanitation should be enough to motivate us