

LETTERS

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Kennedy is right

The editorial on Sen. Ted Kennedy's pointed criticism of President Bush's policy in Iraq, or more appropriately, lack of it, is a lesson in obtuseness ("Ted K speaks out and he's still wrong," Feb. 5).

The Herald again gives the tortured logic that attacking Iraq has made America safer from al-Qaeda. Kennedy is not "dead wrong," as the Herald says. He is dead on target and we should all be thankful for his courage and candor.

Every reasonable person expresses joy over the Iraqi election but the Herald's equation of "freedom in Iraq" with destruction of al-Qaeda is spurious. Our involvement in Iraq drains from our resources and ability to strike at al-Qaeda, particularly at its heart, in Afghanistan.

— Robert Cannon, Quincy

Laity spurned again

Columnist Charles Chieppo decries the fact that the archdiocesan leadership has once again done as it pleases rather than what is best for the people ("Church must practice as it preaches," Feb. 7). Is it possible that our church leaders consider themselves something other than Americans? They defiantly denounce discussions and the American way of thinking. It appears their goal is to have parishioners as "well behaved" as our European counterparts and just do as we are told.

What more can be done to prove to them that their time has passed and we are now and actively involved laity?

— Rose Barrett, Braintree

Students still at risk

The real root cause of the accident on the VFW Parkway is not unplowed sidewalks ("There are no excuses," Feb. 5). While we're paying millions of dollars to bus students to Boston schools each year, every day dozens of West Roxbury High students take MBTA buses and then walk a half-mile to the school. They're crossing the VFW

What Keane forgets

Columnist Tom Keane may well be right that we have to get over the sales of large local corporations like Gillette and move beyond our nostalgic longings ("It's all about nostalgia," Feb. 4). Indeed, this is the way of modern businesses: to merge and move on.

But it is not nostalgia that causes me to linger over three words in Keane's column: "Job losses aside." Am I also supposed to move beyond the fact that while an executive and his chums romp lavishly in Jacksonville, 6,000 people, not to mention their families, face the horror of unemployment? How far away we are from a just society that would ask of such a merger: Will it maximize the benefits accruing to the least well off in the companies involved? Incidentally, this last notion is not nostalgia; it comes from John Rawls' theory of justice.

— Thomas J. Cottle, Boston

The writer is a Boston University professor of education.

Parkway at many points, and most often not using crosswalks. It's a recipe for more accidents.

These students also leave the

campus at all hours of the day to hang in the neighborhoods and take those buses home. The solution is simple: Have a bus at Forest Hills that goes directly to West Roxbury High, and require all students to use that bus and not the others.

Until the root cause is addressed, the state can shovel all it wants, but another accident is inevitable.

— Andrew J. Porter, West Roxbury

They advance freedom

After going to the Herald's Web site many times a day, I feel the need to thank Herald reporter Thomas Caywood and photographer John Wilcox for their brave coverage of the 42nd Military Police Co. ("A vote for freedom," Jan. 31). It gives me such comfort to be able to see my husband, SFC Frank Smith. Also, it allows me to get an understanding of what they are enduring. My thoughts and prayers are with them.

— Anita Smith, Carlstadt, N.J.

Crisis exaggerated

After nearly four years of vague proposals to rescue and overhaul our "failing" Social Security system, President Bush is proposing partial privatization accounts that are wrong, frightening and confounding ("President rolls out big plans," Feb. 3). Wrong because how many workers would know what to invest in. Frightening because of the possible shrinkage and dissipation of the funds at retirement time. Confounding because of unnecessary transition costs of \$2 trillion plus billions more in brokers fees annually.

The Congressional Budget Office predicts Social Security will pay full benefits through 2052 and 80 percent thereafter. If this is the case, then there is no immediate threat to future retirees. But to ensure that there will be no reduction of benefits and to increase the fund, there is a simple solution: Remove the cap on taxable wages.

— David Baskin, Holbrook