

## Bible club advisers merely monitors

A student and member of a Bible Club at Hunterdon Central High School wanted to sponsor Dr. Robert A. Morey from Faith Defenders to speak on Islam; however, the Bible Club did not have an adviser. Last year's adviser decided not to oversee the club until the teachers' contract was settled. The student alleged there were still clubs functioning with legal advisers. Finally, the student found a teacher who agreed to be the adviser.

The student handed in the application to reserve the auditorium on May 15. The student alleged that the adviser revoked the application and told him that if he just wanted a legal adviser, she did not want to be the adviser. (The law states that a legal adviser for a Bible Club can only be a custodial monitor and cannot exercise control over the club.) The student also alleged that this took place last year when the club wanted to sponsor an ex-homosexual to speak at the school. Last year's adviser made the decision not to allow the club to sponsor his speech. An outside group had to sponsor him, which took place at the Little Theater on March 22, 2001.

My purpose here is not to assign blame on anyone, but to explain the legal role of an adviser for Bible Clubs according to the "Equal Access Act."

The Equal Access Act imposes one difference in treatment between religious student groups and other clubs. The Equal Access Act prohibits faculty or staff from serving in any role with religious student groups other than as a custodial monitor. In other words, the teacher-sponsor of a religious group is present only to ensure that the group does not violate school policies or injure school property. Unlike the sponsor of a Chess Club, often himself a chess player, the sponsor of a Bible Club or prayer group is not permitted under the act to actively participate in the club's activities.

Prayer groups and Bible Clubs must be student-initiated. Students must create the clubs, organize their activities, and lead their meetings. This requirement does not mean, however, that religious student groups cannot invite outside speakers.

If the school has non-curriculum related clubs and the Bible Club has no adviser, the school has to appoint an adviser to the Bible Club. Also, students are allowed to hand out gospel tracts during non-instructional time. This is a First Amendment right. And it does not consti-

tute soliciting — they are not selling anything.

For further information on students' rights, contact the American Center for Law and Justice at (757) 226-2489 and ask for the center's booklet entitled "Students' Rights and the Public Schools." Or you can log on to [www.aclj.org](http://www.aclj.org).

**TOM SMITH II**  
Flemington

## Remember Korean War vets for service

I noticed just before and during Memorial Day and right afterwards, the Korean War was seldom mentioned. However, I just came back from visiting South Korea in May and the Korean people are very grateful for what we did, plus the other countries are also.

They have done a lot in 50 years, very modern, especially in Seoul. Tension seems to be a little less between North and South Korea. My brother, Jim Scott, who made it possible for me to get to South Korea, and I went on GI tours at previous battlefields with eight or nine Marines to their previous areas. We were not allowed to take pictures of those areas.

To all Korean vets — South Korea and its people will never forget. They are our best friends.

**PARRY B. SCOTT**  
7th Div. 32nd Reg't. Purple Heart  
March 1952-February 1953

## State custodian of school funding

Your editorial, "School aid decisions should stay with the court," displays a complete disregard for our constitutional system of government and an ignorance of the New Jersey Constitution's educational provision.

First and foremost, there are no provisions in the New Jersey Constitution for a, "thorough and efficient education." The word "education" simply does not appear anywhere in our Constitution. The constitution ordains: "The Legislature shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of schools." So it is to the legislature, not the courts, that our constitution delegates the authority and responsibility of providing a system of free public schools.

Our New Jersey Constitution, in Article III, declares: "The powers of government shall be divided among three distinct branches — No person or persons belonging to one branch shall exercise any of the powers

properly belonging to the others." So by interjecting itself into the school-funding issue, the court has violated Article III by intruding into an area exclusively delegated to the legislative branch by the Constitution.

The New Jersey Supreme Court has displayed hypocrisy in the continued use of funding as a supposed remedy for student disparity as this court has already ruled in the Abbott decision, "... We realize that our remedy here may fail to achieve the constitutional object (of a thorough and efficient education), that no amount of money may be able to erase the impact of socioeconomic factors that define and cause these pupils' disadvantages." So why, then, are we taxpayers being continually exposed to an admitted failed remedy with ever-increasing taxes?

What's even worse is that all the court's decisions have overlooked the constitutional mandate that the state provided school funding should be "annually appropriated for the support of the public schools and for the equal benefit of all the people of the State." All of the court's "remedies" fail to meet this equal benefit provision and are therefore further unconstitutional. The constitution mandates that every student shall receive the exact same state aid. Why isn't this happening?

Perhaps our Supreme Court should heed the advice of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who in 1937 observed: "I want, as all Americans served — an independent judiciary as proposed by the framers of the Constitution. That means a Supreme Court that will enforce the Constitution as written — that will refuse to amend the Constitution by arbitrary exercise of judicial power — amendment by judicial say-so." It's now time for our legislators to step in and forever remove the court from the school funding issue.

**DOUGLAS E. WICKS**  
Basking Ridge

## Flowers will help Manville's image

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mayor, the Council and Mr. Phil Petrone and his crew at

the Public Works Department of Borough of Manville. The Manville Business and Professional Association recently purchased 1,200 plants to be planted in the area around the trees on Main Street. The Public Works Department did a terrific job cleaning, planting and mulching these beds. By allowing the association to purchase the plants, it has helped to create a friendlier and more inviting atmosphere on Main Street. We hope this will be recognized and appreciated by the townspeople and visitors to Manville.

We hope in light of some of the problems that have occurred in town the past few years this gesture will help polish Manville's image and show the rest of the area that Manville is on the rebound and a great place to live and visit.

Again thank you to all involved.  
**JOHN GLUCCI**  
President  
Manville Business and Professional Association  
Weston Surber  
Manville

## New license plate for animal lovers

The new "Animal Friendly" license plate is now on sale at the Jersey Division of Motor Vehicle Services. The adorable plate was designed by syndicated "Mutts" cartoonist Patrick McDonnell, a Jersey native.

Forty dollars from the sale of each license plate goes to the state's dedicated Animal Population Control Fund, to spay neuter dogs and cats of people receiving some forms of public assistance, as well as animals adopted from humane societies, shelters and municipal pounds. The annual renewal fee of \$10 is also used for this purpose.

The Governor's Domestic Companion Animal Council urges every animal lover to purchase this attractive license plate. It tells others that you are "Animal Friendly," while helping countless animals that would otherwise be unable to find loving, permanent homes.

**NINA AUSTENBERG**  
Chairperson, Domestic Companion Animal Council  
Flar

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