

OPINION

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stability

With the first dollar a per-  
 today, there would be an ex-  
 some people that in effect  
 no tax to pay. In addition,  
 e the state's property tax  
 idget would raise Medicaid  
 ospitals, increase access to  
 for the poor, and put all mu-  
 health insurance pool negoti-  
 on budgets would get more  
 s would not be as generous  
 n.

h other. The spending cap  
 ut the governor's consent,  
 eto-proof majority in both  
 mpromise, the Democrats'  
 ax more progressive is long

more money should be  
 to address the educational  
 cticut's disgrace, the Dem-  
 istricts to accept state over-  
 the money. That's a plus,  
 ility is needed. The Demo-  
 he best approach in that re-  
 have to demonstrate their  
 upon measures.

nd it is, but the state rarely  
 the causes represented by  
 lly connected voices at leg-  
 greatest infusions of cash  
 or not, and whether their  
 or flops.

tax is inevitable this year,  
 t should do is to spend the  
 Democratic budget takes a  
 uring that.

Too Much Noise  
 In Westport

To the Editor:  
 Re "Relief From the Roar of Traf-  
 fic" (editorial, April 22):

I live in Westport, where the aver-  
 age home sells for about \$1.3 million.  
 Westport is the only town in Fairfield  
 County that does not have sound bar-  
 riers! Not one state or local poli-  
 tician will tell us why.

In 1999 many residents who were  
 affected by the sight and sounds of  
 I-95 started a group called Got  
 Noise?. We had a professional sound  
 test done. It showed that the level of  
 noise was high 24/7, and at such a  
 level that the state was required to  
 install some type of noise abatement  
 system. This test was presented to  
 state and local politicians and basi-  
 cally fell on deaf ears!

Now that money may be available  
 for the sound barriers program, I  
 was told that Westport is nowhere  
 near the top of the list. I-95 is heavily  
 congested in the Fairfield county  
 area; this should be reason enough to  
 install the barriers in Westport!

DEBRA KANDRAK  
 Westport

Materialism, Snobbery  
 And Young Shoppers

To the Editor:  
 Lesley Jane Seymour's unabashed  
 reveling in tween shopping habits  
 ("Tweens 'R' Shoppers," April 22)  
 proclaims this young group of girls,  
 ages 8 to 15, as a new economic pow-  
 er base in consumer spending. Real-  
 ly this is not new at all — young girls

from wealthy suburban towns have  
 been power shopping for decades,  
 displaying insatiable tastes for de-  
 signer labels, fueled by parents'  
 seemingly limitless budgets to sup-  
 port such spending.

What is missing from this light-  
 hearted discussion, though, is the im-  
 pact of spending habits, not to men-  
 tion the overriding themes of materi-  
 alism and overt snobbery perpetuat-  
 ed by a lifestyle of acquisitions nur-  
 tured at such a young age.

LYNN VILLENCY COHEN  
 Stamford

To the Editor:  
 My children at 12 did not even  
 know the name "Louis Vuitton."  
 Presently, their priorities lie in their  
 studies, working, sports, traveling  
 and spending time with friends. Oh,  
 and they have chosen to actually help  
 people in need by doing volunteer  
 work in local hospitals and places  
 such as Costa Rica and Jamaica.

Still today, when they need clothes,  
 we go shopping and find items that  
 look good, fit well and do not cost a  
 fortune. My children do not like see-  
 ing designer logos embellished on  
 their clothing, as they would rather  
 themselves be seen, not the name on  
 their shirts or jeans.

Many of us have forgotten how to  
 help others or merely claim that we  
 do not have the time to do so. We can-  
 not blame these children; a parent's  
 job is to guide the children and en-  
 courage them to grow up to be formi-  
 dable adults.

LINDA ROWAN  
 Redding

To the Editor:  
 Lesley Jane Seymour's profile of

three shopping tweens was a poignant  
 look at how a new generation of  
 shoppers succumbs to brand names  
 and price-based decisions (the high-  
 er the price, the trendier the fash-  
 ion). We have been lured into paying  
 money to advertise the brand-name  
 logos we willingly flaunt, and buying  
 very expensive pre-ripped jeans.

As the shopping bags held by the  
 girls in the lead photograph demon-  
 strate, we also allow Abercrombie &  
 Fitch's suggestive advertising and  
 skin-tight jeans inventory to mask  
 the possibility that subtlety and age-  
 appropriate dressing are a faster  
 route to sophisticated style.

What a gift it would be if the fash-  
 ion industry spent less time market-  
 ing the lowest common style denomi-  
 nator to our youngsters and, rather,  
 helped them learn the meaning of  
 style. Perhaps then our children  
 would notice that the true value of  
 Eve's bracelet mentioned in the arti-  
 cle was not its Juicy Couture price  
 tag, but rather that it was a gift of the  
 heart from her mother.

JANE BAILEY  
 Washington, Conn.

Note to Readers

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OP-ED

All the School's a Stage

By Kathe Koja

DETROIT

RECENTLY, high school stu-  
 dents in Wilton tried to stage  
 a play they had written ti-

avoiding the war, vaginas and  
 "Grease" is not the answer, then  
 what is?

It's a cheap shot — if irresistible —  
 to mock what is a serious issue of  
 control, of "protecting" teenagers  
 from ideas deemed too adult, too of-  
 fensive or explosive for them to han-

these ideas? Online? In a movie?

Surely a school is one of the safest,  
 sanest places available for this  
 struggle. Allowing free expression,  
 even of views that we may disagree  
 with — especially the ones we dis-  
 agree with — would enlarge that edu-  
 cational setting to include real life it-

he arts should be a vehicle  
 ng people away from their  
 rited protests helped per-  
 1 after a week. An attempt  
 by engaging in sweeping  
 ictory.

was a very wise move. The  
 ons from plays looked ri-  
 ould have sword fights.  
 s of revenge. And Brutus  
 : to using a banana to kill