

## WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

### 'Pretty Much It'

In the middle of washing dishes and waiting for something to finish baking, I skimmed my *World Tribune*, as I always do, when it first arrives. Of course, since it's now much easier to read, I immediately read through it the same way I do *Martha Stewart Living*. But this particular article ("Perspectives," Sept. 4) I think even Martha would appreciate.

I have a saying that I use frequently when, say, a picture says it all. (I've also heard Jay Leno use it occasionally.) When I see or hear something that says it all, or someone makes a statement that completely sums up a topic, "hitting the nail on the head," as it were, my first comment is usually, "That's pretty much it, isn't it?" (Usually it's a bad comment, but sometimes, it's a good comment.) Lisbeth Gant-Britton's article ("One Person, One Mile, One Smile At a Time") elicited that response from me. Good points, good topic, and it says it all.

When she described the aftermath of a KKK rally, witnessing one of their inebriated "youth division," the same comment came to mind: "THAT'S pretty much it, isn't it?" No, I don't know that I'd chat with them about Buddhism, either, and I'm just as white as they! Her district leader, however, did it completely correctly — no violent confrontations.

I always appreciate more modern ways of looking at and applying Buddhism in daily life, particularly when I don't feel like a stellar example for others. (That's been the case quite a lot lately for me.) The books, the articles, the "Mailbox," all of it — brings Buddhism right into your home. All these things clearly demonstrate that although the practice originated in Japan, it's universal. Anyone, anywhere, regardless of any difference, can practice this Buddhism, and it's literally "one size fits all." Ms. Gant-Britton's article was very clear, to the point and made complete sense. More articles like this, please!

And with that, I'll say it again: That's pretty much it, isn't it?

— AMY O'DONNELL, Metairie, La.

### More on the 'Mailbox'

In the Sept. 4 "Mailbox," Dale Anderson stated "Lately, some of the letters in the "Mailbox" section have been very unencouraging..." The feeling that Dale had (if I understand correctly) was that because members are sending in letters disagreeing with each other (and as we all know, sometimes very strongly) the *World Tribune* "Mailbox" should be discontinued.

To me, if we would do that we would be cutting off one of the best aspects of our great SGI organization. The opportunity to express ourselves in an open forum and then hear the opinions of others is truly wonderful. Just because there are other places for this kind of dialogue does not take away from the need for this space in our *World Tribune*. I personally have had my eyes opened many times about various issues from the responses of members from around the U.S.A. and the world...

As Dale says "we have discussion meetings to work out any differences of opinion..." but until Dale starts visiting Brooklyn monthly (from Portage, Mich.) for my meetings, and members from Los Angeles, Memphis, Atlanta, Miami, Chicago, New Orleans, etc. do the same I will not have the opportunity to discuss the many issues brought up in the "Mailbox" with all the members in SGI-USA.

Title: Mailbox: 09/25/98

Subject: World Tribune 09/25/98 n.3210 p.11 WT980925p11

Author:

Keywords: 09/25/98 December July Mailbox Opinion Tribune World

Lastly let us not forget that Nichiren Daishonin when inscribing the Gohonzon did not represent only the more comfortable parts of his enlightenment. He inscribed all of the potential life-conditions. As we all strive to do our human revolution, we must expect the road to get bumpy at times. And if I'm going to read something that may disturb me, then where is there a better place than the SGI publications where I can turn the page read some guidance, or an experience or some study material so that I can get encouraged to take my feelings to the Gohonzon....

— MICHAEL WALTERS, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Please don't discontinue "Mailbox." Every reputable newspaper publishes letters from readers, even when they differ from the editorial stance of the paper. I find the "Mailbox" letters submitted in the past year so often validate my own experiences within SGI over 23 years. I'm so happy people are speaking their minds. Also, I get a chuckle out of some of the more outspoken viewpoints. Thanks for the *World Tribune*. What would those of us in the "outlying" areas do without it?

— KATHY JERNIGAN, Knoxville, Tenn.

Fasten your seatbelt, Dale, I'm going to disagree with you. In all the opinions on various issues that have been penned to the "Mailbox," I have been impressed by not only the passion and commitment but also the restraint and calm deliberation of our contributors. Unless I missed some particularly virulent issue, I don't recall any comments which I would characterize as "barbs" or "insults." Because of our various karma and locations in time and place, we will all necessarily have differing view points. The dialogue that unfolds in the "Mailbox" is a fine medium for working this through.

While some readers turn first to the experiences, I go right to the "Mailbox." It is my "discussion meeting." I live on a tiny island and because of physical isolation I haven't been to a meeting in four years, but through the *World Tribune* lifeline I feel connected to our organization. If the *World Tribune* prints this letter I am part of the nationwide (worldwide?) dialogue, unfettered by the groupthink that a particular district may fall prey to....

I shared an issue of the *World Tribune* with a new friend of mine who practices Buddhism in another tradition. She loved the *World Tribune*. She called it a "practical foot." The "Mailbox" letters more succinctly than any other segment demonstrate the application of our philosophy and practice to our lives and the thought processes behind our actions (and reactions). This on-the-spot sharing of our hearts and minds is vital to my practice.

Someone out there will undoubtedly suggest I hook up with other members through the Internet. No, thank you.... Printed media are under assault from aggressive information technologies, and worthy publications struggle to stay afloat as they lose their advertising base and readership. Those of us who have not hit the information highway need not be excluded from public discourse as long as the tried-and-true periodical tradition of letters to the editor thrives. Please don't take my "Mailbox" away.

—BEVERLY BAGANS, Isla de Culebra, Puerto Rico

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