

# OPINION

The Newport Daily News

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"Our view" represents the opinion of the editorial board, above

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## READERS' LETTERS

### Sunshine Week propaganda compromises newspaper's objectivity

What do they teach in journalism school? I thought newspapers were supposed to be filled with, well, news. And yes, some opinion, clearly labeled as such on the editorial pages and in signed opinion columns.

But once a year the Newport Daily Nanny treats us all like little children who must be told over and over again, in editorials, columns, advertisements and so-called "news" articles, that all news from all government sources must be available all the time to all people.

It may not occur to you that there's anything wrong with this viewpoint. But in fact there are real issues involved, issues with two sides, on which reasonable people can disagree. For example, should identification information about battered wives be available online? How about birth records of adopted children whose moth-

ers were promised secrecy if they gave up their child for adoption? Or the home addresses of prosecutors and judges who pursue murderers and rapists?

When the local newspaper releases a relentless barrage of one-sided articles on subjects like these it forfeits its role as an impartial reporter of news. It becomes just another voice clamoring for its side to win in the court of public opinion.

Why does our local newspaper have this obsession with propagandizing its readers? I searched The New York Times Web site and half the references to "Sunshine Week" were about vacation packages to warm climates. The most recent one dealing with "Sunshine Week" as openness in government was dated 2007. Needless to say, it had nothing to do with The New York Times promoting or celebrating the week.

Similarly, I checked a number of other big city newspapers, including the Boston Globe, Washington Post and Los Angeles Times, and while I could find a few articles that mentioned the term "Sunshine Week" in connection with some other genuine news report (such as noting that certain information was released by a government during Sunshine Week), none of them openly promote the week. These newspapers respect the difference between reporting the news and crusading for a point of view.

Am I tilting at windmills? I don't have much hope that The Daily News will completely give up its crusading instincts on this topic. But next year, please, tone it down a little, will you? We're adults. We don't need to be told what to think.

**Roland F. Chase, Newport**