

WORLD TRIBUNE MAILBOX

Well Done, Byakuren!

The first several *World Tribune* issues of the new year were excellent and augur a new beginning for our entire organization. Thanks especially to Christine Allen and the *World Tribune* for the Jan. 24 article on the San Francisco Byakuren retreat. In the past, reports of local SGI activities were great validation for those who had attended but boring stuff for some members elsewhere. Predictably, these articles would begin with the weather, faithfully mention each song and presentation, and end in an unsubstantiated generalization about how every one left totally encouraged. Then began the innovation of relating each activity to SGI President Ikeda's latest guidance on dialogue and diversity; this began nicely but got old after a bit.

Ms. Allen, on the other hand, effectively used the personalized reflections of three Byakuren who attended the retreat to remind all of us about the debt of gratitude we owe to the Byakuren and the incalculable personal benefit to be gained from regular participation in divisional activity groups. The article could not have been more timely, because many such activity groups are crying out for more participation and the members do need more benefits!

Keep up the good work! I'll try to submit more material and meet the standard set in the January issues.

— MIKE LEVINE, Silver Spring, Md.

All Are Respectworthy

When I read the letter and the counterpoints about President Makiguchi, I could understand each view and the reasoning behind them (Jan. 17 "Mailbox"). What I didn't understand is how Jim Johannsen's comment that "obviously, Mr. Freedman has much to learn about the spirit of pioneers of this organization" applies to the issue being discussed. I am sure that Mr. Johannsen doesn't know Mr. Freedman, for if he did, he would know that Mr. Freedman is worthy of respect and that insults are not any way to convince him.

— MIKE FIROVED, Mission Viejo, Calif.

Puh-leeze

Though I applaud attempts to make the *World Tribune* less stilted and predictable, I must say I find "Joe YMD" (Jan. 1 *World Tribune*) patently offensive. It is so painfully reminiscent of our past perspective on how to practice Buddhism: basically, the rule of behavior and loyalty to the almighty SGI.

Isn't this fabulous life philosophy a bit deeper than showing up for Soka Group because "that girl you like is here and some Byakuren is handing out fresh *mochi* cakes."

Puh-leeze.

— JESSIE NEWBURN, Columbia, Md.