

1/18/94

Mr. Mike Powell
News-Post
Frederick, Md 21701,

Dear Mike,

I had deliberately understated in the enclosed letter not to be as inflammatory as is justified. And, in confidence, not to make problems for the people at the lab, who have just stopped calling dangers to the attention of Dr. Frizzell's office. He is responsible for the building.

Many lab patients go there with empty stomachs, so they get there early. Until a couple of months ago, even the stairs lacked illumination before daylight.

A large percentage of the people who go there are older and more inclined to fall, from darkness or from ice. And more inclined to break bones if they do. Those cheapskates have created a disaster waiting to happen and are insolent and insulting when the dangers they create are called to their attention. As though that should be necessary! In a medical building yet, with the few toilets stinking the place up from time to time.

A fairly large number of those who go to the lab for blood testing are kept alive, as I am, by the anticoagulant coumadin. In the course of time we develop the most friable skin. Mine tears back on the slightest contact. Today a coat-hanger hanger peeled the skin on the back of my hand back a half inch from slight contact. Larger, much larger areas of this are not uncommon. While I have no reason to believe that those not on this essential medication for the 19 years I have been are as vulnerable, it is inevitable. So, aside from broken bones those of us who are more unstable are also much more vulnerable.

Those uncaring owners of that building are so indifferent they are even skimpy on handicapped parking places. There is not a single one in that large parking area for lab patients. That cost them only the slight charge for time and paint. And caring a little for the source of their income, the patients.

There is more but this should be enough, I hope. I hope also that you can find space for this before someone really pays for that greed with the kind of weather we are having and seems to want to stay with us.

Thanks,

Harold
Harold Weisberg

Uncaring and Greedy

The bible tells us that the love of money is the root of all evil.

I encountered a conspicuous illustration of this ^{on} one of the coldest days of the year, the day before an all-time low was predicted, both days ^{with} with a high wind-chill and one predicted.

Because I am past 80, unsteady on my feet even with a cane, and am kept alive by an anti-coagulant, which makes even a bump potentially hazardous, I'd skipped the regular blood test the day before when the storm was heavy, ~~and~~ the winds strong, and the official advice was to stay at home if at all possible.

With the predicted next-day temperature ~~near~~ and the windchill 35 below, I dared not delay that necessary blood test.

When I arrived at the Toll House Road Medical and Outpatient ~~Surgery~~ ^U Building, I found the parking areas and the roadways ~~are~~ ^{and} glazed icy. The snow had been removed once but ~~now~~ after the ~~snow was~~ first snow was removed ~~and~~ it had snowed again. It simply was not safe for the elderly in particular to walk on that glazed surface, especially not with the strong gusts of wind and for the distance from the also-glazed parking areas to the ~~entrance~~ entrance.

On reporting this potential danger to the lab I was told to report it to the office that manages the building. There I was greeted with obvious unpleasantness by the woman who had to leave her computer to speak to me. She was unpleasant and she looked it. She knew I was not a patient and she may have guessed the purpose of my visit.

When I explained to her that the condition on all sides of the building was slippery and dangerous, she replied, "We've done all we can." I then said "you did not have salt or sand used." Her reply was, "You should have stayed home."

That is a way to speak to an obviously older person who was out on a day like that and for a medical reason?

That building, new and modern as it is, has been a disgrace and in other ways a health hazard, medical building as it is, all because the office that manages it is

~~uncaring~~
 and chisels. I think the Health ^Uepartment should get interested.

The janitorial service is excellent, Monday through ^Friday nights. The building is ^{used} the other two days but is not cleaned because the janitor is hired for five days only. What is not cleaned those days ^{includes} the toilets, too.

For weeks on end the one men's toilet was broken. It could not be flushed. Complaints from the lab, to which I reported it, were to no avail until I asked the lab to report that if that was not repaired I'd report it ~~it~~ to the Health ^Uepartment. Then the ~~one~~ ^{men's} toilet was finally repaired.

The soap dispensers did not work for months. When that finally was rectified, dirt-catching holes were left to catch ^{dirt} dirt, as they still do, after several years.

There are two toilets in the one woman's restroom. When my wife used it the day I was told I should have done other than my doctor has me do, ~~one~~ ~~was~~ had a broken handle, ~~and~~ it could not be flushed, and the stench was abominable.

In a medical building!

^{and other ill}
 Where I ~~am~~ and vulnerable people go.

The management was until recently so cheap with outdoor lighting that the parking-lot-lights cut off automatically when it was still dark. That danger, particularly to the women who work in that building, was ignored despite repeated complaints until a woman whose work gets her there early delivered an "unless" ultimatum. They and only then, from the time that building was built, did the night lights stay on until full daylight.

The cheapskate owners of that building certainly charge enough in rents to be able to afford minimum safe conditions for those who spending ⁱⁿ these medical money there, ^{to} give them and their practitioner tenants what should be a more than adequate income.

If the contracted snow remover was paid to use sand and salt he would use them to make use of that building less unsafe. ^{It} ~~It~~, as he'd know, he'd lose that contract.

This was not a one-time oversight. It is what is usual for the elderly, the mothers and grandmothers with children in their arms and for all others who are subjected to unnecessary danger on the outside and revolting other danger on the inside.

Only because of the greed of those who are anything but needy. Harold Weisberg

Harold Weisberg