THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE - JULY 22, 1990

MIKE BARNICLE

The handicaps of playing golf

THER THAN POLITICS, GOLF attracts the greatest number of cheats and liars in America. People regularly fail to tell the truth about their score, their handicap and their ability as if fibbing were as much a part of the game as swinging.

And they spend a ton of money doing it, too, because golf has never been as popular. Millions of fools spend hard-earned money on the latest clubs, the best balls and the finest shoes. Public courses are packed. Private clubs have waiting lists longer than the line of voters eager to give Dukakis a good slap.

It's hard to understand because golf is stupid. It isn't fun. It isn't even exercise because most golfers drive around in carts like drunk sailors on shore leave.

Also, next to eating greasy quarter-pounders and fudge bars, golf is the biggest cause of stress and heart attack among males aged 35 to 55 in the United States. Take a peek at any fairway and you will inevitably see someone throwing a club in frustration, screaming and generally being miserable.

I don't feel sorry for golfers, because they choose to delude themselves. Think about it: If someone suggested you could hit a Roger Clemens fastball merely by wearing a certain shoe or holding a bat with a lighter grip, would you believe it?

Of course not. But millions of simple-minded optimists take to the outdoors every day thinking they can break 100 because of a specific set of sticks or a stiff elbow.

Most of them should save their dough or enroll in a torture chamber because golf is not for everyone. Yet it's hard to convince any golfer that being anything less than horrible is hopeless, because lying is such a part of the game's mystique.

And the lying begins at the top.

For example, magazines aimed at attracting golfers lead you to believe that the purchase of this kryptonite club or that triple-dimpled ball will take 10 strokes off your score. Then, teaching pros gobble up good rates kidding nitwits who are barely coordinated enough to button their shirts into thinking that a lesson will make them play like Greg Norman.

When was the last time a club pro told some terminally inept sucker: "Look, I've seen your swing and I want you to save your money and go home to your loved ones. You will only hurt yourself or others on the golf course, and you are in serious danger of having your entire fat, out-of-shape frame covered with ticks and other creepy crawlers because you will be in the woods more than Indiana Jones. Take up napping."

Besides lying, golf is saddled with a lousy image: An elitist walk around manicured acres cut into the countryside solely for the pleasure of well-to-do white men in plaid pants and shirts with tiny gators on them who, upon admission to a private club, act like complete jerks.

It's a fact of golf life that, on many courses, the biggest handicap is the club's membership list. Leading the pack is Oyster Harbor, in Osterville on the Cape.

A few weeks ago, a lawyer told me about a fellow who loves to golf and wanted to join Oyster Harbor. The guy has a lot of dough and has done an awful lot of splendid things for other people with his money. In other words, he is a fine member of the human race, but he was informed that there was no way he could ever and I do mean ever - get into Oyster Harbor.

"How come?" I asked. "Because he's Jewish."

So it would be nice if the state took the whole course by eminent domain and built a nuclear reactor there. However, Oyster Harbor isn't alone in its thick-with-prejudice attitude.

This past winter, when I must have been under the influence of LSD, I foolishly applied to a country club I had no business applying to and once the laughter died down I was told there was no way my Irish arse would ever be admitted. The funny thing was, I just wanted to attempt the game on a good course. Shame on me, though, and I must admit I am embarrassed that I ever submitted the papers, so from now on I will deny it.

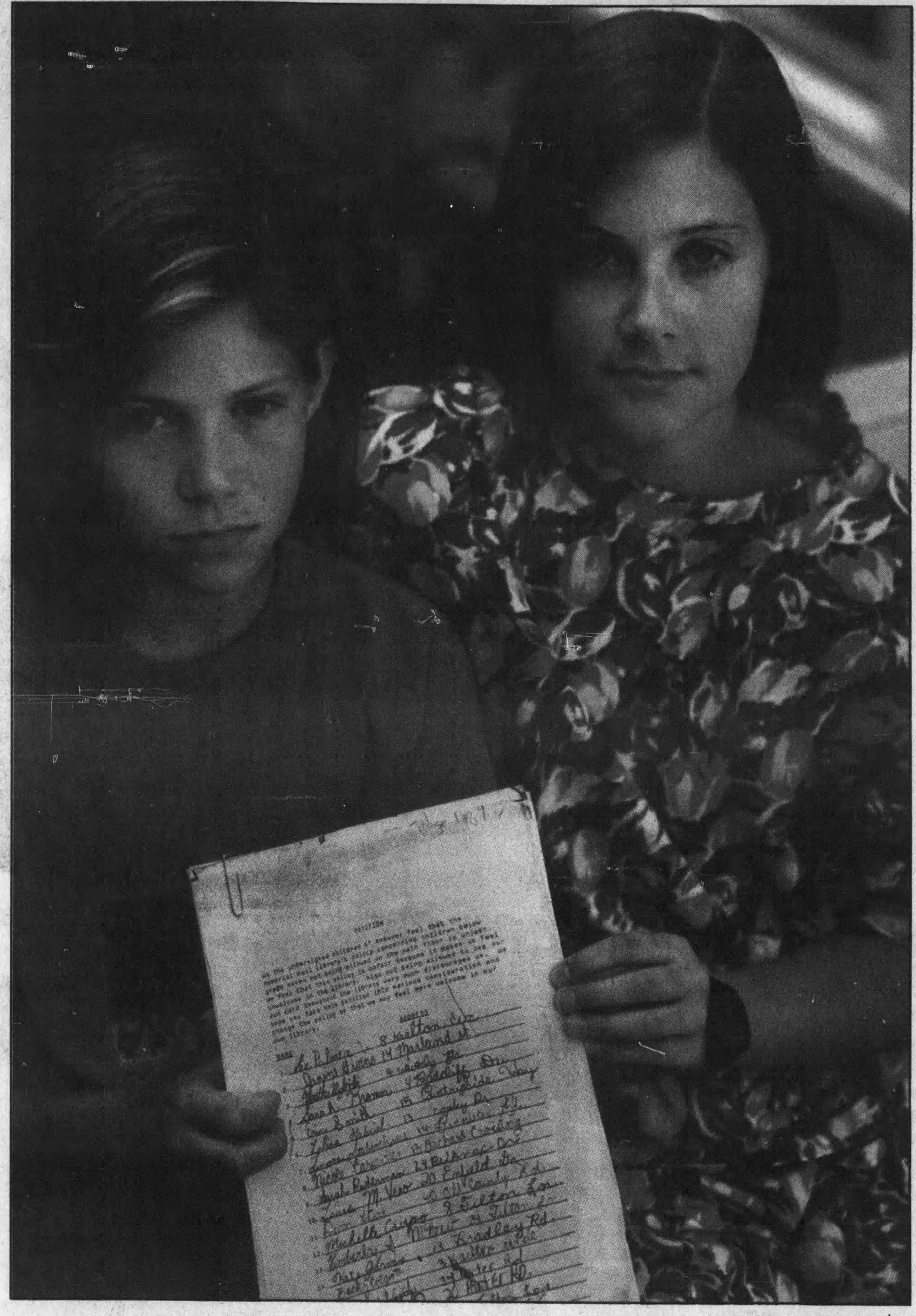
However, like a lot of clubs, the fools on the admission committee mistakenly figured that a lowlife like me wanted to get to know them, to be friends with them, to jump into the rack with their wives, to eat dinner three nights a week with their families. Off a golf course, you wouldn't even wave at these self-important clowns who regard themselves as golf police.

One fact of golf, though, is beyond lying and elitism: 78 percent of all who try it will be frustrated failures.

How do I know? Well, I am among the 22 percent who play exceptionally well. At least, I will be when my new clubs arrive and I take one + - two at the most - lessons from a pro who will bring out my incredible, natural athletic ability.

'It's a humiliating experience for the kids. I'm appalled as a librarian that children should be treated that way.'

JEAN PALMER, mother of student



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / JONATHAN WIGGS

Janine Givens (left) and Lee Palmer hold a petition to remove restrictions on children's use of Andover's library.

Library goes by the book

Restrictions on children faulted by Andover parents

By Paul G. Allvin CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

NDOVER - While the rest of the country grapples over whether the rap group 2 Live Crew is obscene, Robert Mapplethorpe's photo exhibit is pornographic and the American flag is okay to burn, this town north of Boston has its own First Amendment brouhaha, centered on whether to allow children on all floors of the public library.

Children under age 12 who venture beyond the Memorial Hall Library's children's section must be accompanied by an adult. Librarians are enforcing this policy by escorting children off the "adult" floors and into the children's section. The idea is to minimize noise and disruptions.

"You can't have a bunch of kids just taking over. Period," said Alfred L. Daniels, attorney for the town of Andover,

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Silber defends remarks on elderly

By Peter J. Howe GLOBE STAFF

WORCESTER - Democratic gubernatorial candidate John R. Silber campaigned at a senior citizens' housing complex here yesterday in a counteroffensive to repair the political damage caused by what he called "vile attributions and deliberate distortions" of his statements last week on medical spending for the elderly.

Silber said Tuesday that "some form of rationing of medical services in this state" is inevitable to prevent ruinous state budget deficits, and set off alarms with his comment that "when you've had a long life and you're ripe, then it's time to go."

While Silber's campaign has been marked by blunt, controversial statements from the outset, his comments on the elderly, a powerful voting bloc, were widely seen as his most explosive yet and potentially deadening his campaign's momentum. Political rivals and critics accused him of abandoning sick old people and pitting them against the young.

But in yesterday's appearance at the 199-unit Lake Park Towers senior complex, Silber lashed out at what he called gross misinterpretations of his remarks, such as newspaper cartoons depicting him pushing elderly women in wheelchairs off cliffs and gangplanks.

Silber said his criticisms were aimed at a government-supported medical system in which terminally ill elderly people can receive thousands of dollars "to have tubes

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Abortion issue trails Pierce's bid

By Bruce Mohl GLOBE STAFF

Republican gubernatorial candidate Steven D. Pierce, who has said flatly that he would veto any measure outlawing abortion, is nevertheless a supporter of a number of pending bills restricting a woman's access to abortion.

In response to a Globe request for his positions on a number of abortion-related measures pending in the Legislature, Pierce indicated he supports a bill barring abortions after a fetus has reached "viability"; a bill banning abortions based on the

William Weld says ads will link Steven Pierce to Moral Majority stances. Page 26.

sex of the fetus; and a bill requiring wives to notify their husbands 48 hours prior to an abortion.

The overall impression Pierce leaves is that he is solidly against abortion but to PIERCE, Page 26

The debate on workfare: A push or a punishment?

By Alexander Reid GLOBE STAFF

To its supporters, including many legislators on Beacon Hill, the idea of workfare represents a significant effort to reform the state's multimillion-dollar welfare system and cut thousands from the rolls.

To its opponents - single mothers and welfare rights advocates - workfare resembles a punitive slap at people who depend on government checks to raise their families.

"The single most important goal of workfare is to get people off of welfare and into private employment," said Rep. Gregory Sullivan (D-Norwood), one of two sponsors of a workfare proposal in the House Ways and Means Committee that is

expected to be debated this summer or fall. "It's not a motivator as much as it is an enabling tool to allow welfare recipients to leave welfare."

Peg Hoganson, 42, a divorced single mother who lives in Peabody with her five children, voiced a different sentiment. "This just throws stones at impoverished women and their children. I know a lot of single mothers who would like some education or training so that they could better themselves. Workfare doesn't prepare anybody for meaningful jobs."

Under terms of the proposal, welfare recipients would be required to earn their benefits by taking jobs at nonprofit human service agencies that are under contract with the state.

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Cambridge housing costs burden many, study shows

By Diane Lewis GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE - A recently released report commissioned by the city shows that many of the people who live here may be having trouble paying their rents and most residents cannot afford to buy a home, raising questions about the future of a community long known for its diversity.

The report, written and researched by consultant Rolf Goetze of Belmont to help officials assess the city's housing needs, shows that 42 percent of the tenants in Cambridge are paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent. About 75 percent of the residents of Cambridge are renters.

Goetze said that, ideally, renters should spend between 25 and 30 percent of their income on rent.

According to the report, 18 percent of the 30,000 tenants in the city are paying more than 50 percent of their household income on rent. Ten percent are paying 40 to 50 percent of their income on rental property, and 14 percent must spend 30 to 40 percent of their household earnings to hold onto their apartments.

By way of comparison, the median percentage of income spent on rent by Americans is 28 percent, meaning that half the renters spend more than 28 percent of their income on rent and half spend less,

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Study: Cambridge housing costs burden many

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according to a spokesman for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

A percentage figure for Bostonarea renters was not available, but Goetze said it is reasonable to assume that they are also spending percentages similar to what Cambridge renters pay.

"The median income in Cambridge is now more than \$46,000, but a lot of Cambridge renters are not at median income," Goetze said in an interview.

Using federal labor statistics and other data, Goetze found that a tenant would have to earn between \$38,000 and \$46,000 a year to afford the \$950 or more a month needed to rent the average two-bedroom apartment in Cambridge and that two incomes are required to buy a

Goetze also found that those who would benefit most from rent-controlled housing are unable to gain ac-

Rent-controlled units elusive

"There is no question that finding rent-controlled apartments is a problem and has been for a long time," said City Councilor Edward Cyr. "We need to deal with substantial landlord prejudice against poor people. We need to address that by finding people who are not renting their controlled units to the poor and make it known that we won't stand for it.

"There are a range of things we can do by assisting with housing searches and creating incentives that will encourage landlords to rent to the poor."

The City Council, which is ex-

pected to hold hearings on the study sometime in the fall, also will consider setting aside available property in so-called land banks or housing trusts and then encouraging developers to submit proposals for lowand moderate-income housing on those sites.

"To understand this market situation, imagine a skilled secretary earning \$26,000," Goetze wrote in the study. "Living alone, she can just afford the median priced one-bedroom market rate apartment, renting for \$650 montly. If married to anyone earning a similar amount, they could afford any sized medianpriced unit.

"But as a single mother with two children, she would need a larger unit on a single income. In this market, only half the noncontrolled onebedrooms and fewer of the larger units would be affordable to her."

According to Goetze, the woman would have to seek a rent-controlled unit. But although nearly half of the more than 14,000 rent-controlled units in the city have two or more bedrooms, many are occupied by single people with no children. Moreover, families are finding it increasingly difficult to locate suitable rentcontrolled units.

As for buying a house, Cyr said, "The only people who can really afford to buy here are two-income professional families, and that is disturbing for a city that has traditionally had a real diverse population."

Ten years ago, the median price of a single-family home was \$61,400, according to the study. Last year, by contrast, the median price ranged from \$173,500 for a condominium to \$231,000 for a one- to three-family home, which required an annual household income of \$68,000 to \$90,000 to meet mortgage payments.

Poor planning blamed

In an interview last week, Cyr attributed the city's serious housing crunch to factors ranging from poor planning by previous administrations to increased demand among 'young professionals and two-income families for housing in Cambridge.

"Could we have gotten more housing out of the economic boom?" he said. "We certainly should have and we could have. The fact that we did not was a serious failure."

According to Vice Mayor Kenneth Reeves, "The report says to the city that it ought to have a real policy with respect to families and children and that we are going to have to begin planning now for the increasing numbers of elders we will be seeing in Cambridge over the next few years."

But how much Cambridge can actually contribute to the development of new housing is a matter of concern at a time of decreased support from the federal government and a statewide fiscal crisis, officials

"My sense is that it is very difficult for a locality, a city alone, to

solve the problem of housing need," 'said Susan Schlesinger, housing director of the Cambridge Community Development department. "Federal funds have been cut by more than 80 percent, the state is cutting back on funds that were once available, which means Cambridge is going to have to look for more local solu-

Schlesinger, whose department has submitted Goetze's study to the City Council, said the data would serve as the basis for future housing

"The study really points to where resources should go and that's for family housing and for people who have a variety of special needs and need community resources," she

Among the solutions now under consideration by city officials is an to tenants.

Under such a program, tenants are allowed to pool their resources and buy shares of a rent-controlled building under the condition that the units are not sold at market rates. A city ordinance also stipulates that if the units are sold, they must be purchased by a low- or moderate-income person.

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Going by the book, library limits children

LIBRARY

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who is acting as the town and library spokesman on this sub-

Some Andover children feel alienated, some parents are incensed and town officials feel they are being vilified for simply trying to prevent the library from being "used for baby-sitting."

Now the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts has jumped into the fray, saying the policy violates state law. There is talk of a lawsuit to guarantee children free and complete access to the library.

While the library policy has been an unwritten rule for decades, only recently have parents begun to chal-

lenge it. "I think it was around the middle of March," 11-year-old Janine Givens said recently, recalling the day a librarian relegated her and her 11year-old friend Lee Palmer to the four-floor library's ground floor, where the children's section is locat-

"We were doing a report and we went upstairs to look at some of the books," Janine said. "This lady came and asked us our age. We told her we were in the fifth grade. She told us we had to leave."

So the girls, who were researching a school biography report, went one floor down to the biography section.

"The lady came after us and got real mad. She said we had to be in the children's section," Janine said. "I was scared. I didn't want to go up there anymore."

Janine's mother, Cyndi Givens, said, "I don't feel that I should have to be sitting with her or accompanying her any time she has to do a school report."

The library's director, Jean Jacobson, would not speak to the Globe, and a member of her staff said she had forbidden library employees from giving interviews on the grounds their comments could jeopardize the town's position if the case goes to court.

Daniels said the library welcomes children, most of whom are well behaved. It is the unruly excep- said.

tions that the policy targets. "All the library wants is some sort of control," he said. "In a lot of places the library is used for babysitting. The kids are dumped here after school and picked up two hours

later. "You get eight little girls, if they trol away from the room," Daniels said.

The giggles of a few, however, do

not provide legal grounds to evict a class of people, according to Sarah Wunsch, an attorney for the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.

Wunsch said state law requires public libraries to adopt procedures and standards established by the American Library Association, which in its Library Bill of Rights states libraries should not deny or limit access because of origin, age, background or view.

"The director indicated to us that the [library] trustees probably wouldn't discuss this problem until September," Wunsch said. "Each day that a kid doesn't get the free use of the library, it's a problem.

"They shouldn't be drawing lines on basis of age. In fact, they should encourage people of all ages to use the library."

The library was handed a similar indictment by the American Library Association.

"You don't kick kids out of a library to accommodate the adults you serve," Anne Levinson, assistant director of the association's office for intellectual freedom, said in a telephone interview from the group's Chicago headquarters.

"Children mature at various rates. They have widely varying interest levels and accomplishments. The library is there to serve all levels and to provide for all points of

Jean Palmer, Lee's mother, agrees. She learned of the policy from Lee who, with Janine, collected 150 petition signatures from third-, fourth- and fifth-grade classmates at South Elementary School. In the petition the youngsters called on the library trustees to rescind their restriction.

Palmer, a librarian who has worked at other local libraries, has confronted Jacobson and the trustees, but there has been no change. She met Wednesday with Town Manager Buzz Stapczynski.

The two agreed not to discuss the outcome of their meeting, Palmer

"It's a humiliating experience for the kids," she said before the meeting. "I'm appalled as a librarian that children should be treated that way." Daniels said library officials are

committing the policy to paper. "They're working out the rules start giggling, they could take con- and regulations. They're putting them in writing," he said, adding that he hopes the rift will heal by

September.

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