

Articles 'snowed' readers on science of snowflakes

As I was sitting watching the beautiful snow float down from the sky, serenaded by my daughter's tale of the Snow Goose Queen, I was happy to find an article about the wonder of snowflakes in the Jan. 19 Union-News' story, "Fascinating Flakes."

However, as I read through the article's snide discussion of this "four-letter word" for "misery" I became somewhat disgusted.

Beyond the annoying tone that characterized the lead article in your Health & Science section, the content of the secondary piece "Pictures reveal no matches" is badly erroneous. In fact, the lead article in this same section of your paper several years ago, the Dec. 8, 1995 Union-News, "Snowflakes," provided a wonderful "Science for Kids" discussion on snowflakes. Written by staff writer Stan Freeman, the article's tone was more appropriate and it reported on the discovery that "snowflakes can be identical." The article even included pictures of the well-known snowflake "twins" photographed by National Center for Atmospheric Research scientist Nancy Knight.

Additionally, since this time your paper has reported on mathematical models that students at Westfield's Abner Gibbs Elementary created which provide significant evidence that there must be snowflake twins ("Today's Forecast Calls for Learning," Nov. 10, 1999). Students at Westfield's Munger Hill Elementary and both Westfield Middle schools have explored, and indeed continued to explore, the science and mathematics of snowflakes. These students certainly could have set the record straight.

Your readers deserve more responsible journalism.

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