FREE *for* ALL

ı *Edwards deserved better*

ieve that you placed the Dec. 8 article eth A. Edwards's death (1) below the ront page, (2) next to an article about Vashington Redskins lineman Albert ı, and (3) with such a tiny photo of her n to four others on the page, including esworth. That guy doesn't deserve all e used on him, but I suppose he sells uxtaposition of the two articles seemed t to appeal to women and men.

n an avid Post reader for more than 40 netimes I find that you're out of touch ople really care about. To every woman ɔeth Edwards is a hero. If you mention rds of sympathy, empathy and admira- ɔilling out in conversations. I know ɪried at the news of her death on Dec. 7

ng that you would give her an outstand- ɔp the editorial page. For once, we have ɔraise as a role model for living with ırage despite awful challenges.

Lois F. Morris, *Silver Spring*

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only one who noticed the incredible of appending the Reliable Source's drivel on the glitterati at the Kennedy ɪrs ceremony with a five-line footnote forming readers that "Elizabeth Ed- ɛr has spread to her liver, and her advised that further treatment would tive' . . . ." She died, of course, the day ared.

d for Mrs. Edwards and also saddened f judgment by your editors. Respect

Lois A. Engel, *Washington*

ı *reading*

Impositions on utility poles

The Post's most recent article bashing Pepco for outages ["Why Pepco can't keep the lights on," front page, Dec. 5] repeated at least one mistake from an earlier piece ["Holding Pepco accountable," editorial, Aug. 24]. Both articles included misleading captions to photographs depicting Pepco workers removing debris from "power lines."

As the articles noted, many of the problems associated with maintaining electric distribution systems — especially during storms — are the result of debris on or near lines connected to the poles. Many of the lines, however, are not "power lines." They are cable, telephone and other communications lines that the Federal Communications Commission requires utilities to permit on their poles. Other attachments include municipal street lights, which also are often attached to utility poles.

SUSAN BIDDLE/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Tom Cross of Riverton, W.Va., clears branches for Pepco that overhang lines in Bethesda on Dec. 2.

These lines and attachments are not owned by electric utilities. They have nothing to do with the distribution of electric utility service. Their presence makes the distribution of electric utility service harder, not easier.

The FCC is in the midst of adopting rules to require utilities to allow even more communications lines on their already heavily burdened poles, pursuant to rigid timelines and other onerous conditions. Adding salt to the wound, the FCC wants to reduce the low, government-mandated attachment rate (it typically costs less than $8 — less than the price of six-pack — for a cable company to place an attachment on a utility pole for one year) in a misguided attempt to promote broadband deployment at the expense of electric utilities and their consumers, not to mention electric utility safety and reliability.

The Edison Electric Institute, the Utilities Telecom Council and a host of individual electric utilities (including nine represented in our Coalition of Concerned Utilities) repeatedly have protested many of the FCC's proposals. To date, the FCC has turned a deaf ear.

If the FCC has its way, we'll be seeing more scenes like the ones depicted but incorrectly captioned in your articles.

Jack Richards and Tom Magee, *Washington*

The writers are attorneys representing the Coalition of Concerned Utilities, whose members include nine utilities, most of them along the East Coast.