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Appointing Levy would be a poetic injustice

I AM seriously worried that Harold Levy, our front-runner to be the chancellor of the Board of Education, is playing ping-pong with a bowling ball.

In one fell swoop, he has slid off his scooter.

What was he thinking when he decided to give the seven-member board at 110 Livingston St. a crash course in the finer things of life, like poetry, cosmology and violin recitals?

I find it hard to tip my lid to The New York Times. But when that paper came out yesterday with the story that Levy is sending board members inspirational poems and planning violin lessons for them, I almost lost it.

The crime being perpe-

trated on New York City kids at 110 Livingston is the worst thing that's happened in Brooklyn since the Palm Sunday massacre, in which 11 humans were murdered on Liberty Avenue.

"What the hell are we doing with the immediate danger at the Board of Education?" an exasperated Jerry Cammarata told me yesterday.

Cammarata, who has served five years as the Staten Island representative on the central board, said: "This is not the time to engage in an academic exercise of intellectualism at the sacrifice of managing the immediate crisis."

Levy sent three Wallace Stevens poems to the board members and lec-



tured that "poetry can give voice to the inner souls of people who seemingly lead mundane lives."

Who the hell is Levy to say that folks like me — who don't read poetry — live a mundane life?

Hey, Harold, ever drink a case of Bud in one sitting?

No?

Then shut up, Harold.

"Look, we have to clean house and that's what Levy was put there for," said Cammarata. "I don't

know whether he knows how to do it. There is a place for culture, sure.

"But we have to get to basics. We have a crisis on hand and somehow you get the impression he is distracting everyone with this culture-vulture stuff."

Rudy Giuliani didn't want Levy there in the first place. It looks like Rudy knew a thing or two.

What is Levy doing about this horrific task of the summer school program?

Reading freakin' poetry?

OK, I am a cultural savage. But when you have kids who can't read, write, or do arithmetic we can afford to skip past Wallace Stevens right now.

Does Levy think the board members are a

bunch of Neanderthals? How does he know that they don't read poetry?

Hey, board member Ninfa Segarra might play the violin with her toes, for all Levy knows — though she admitted to the Times she prefers novels about serial killers to poetry.

If I had my way, I would give all school kids a deck of cards instead of a poem.

My younger kid learned to count to 10 when he was 3 years of age in two foreign languages from playing cards with his grandpa.

Consider the alternative — the poetry of Wallace Stevens:

"The palm stands on the edge of space . . . the wind moves slowly in the



HAROLD LEVY

Overboard on culture.

branches. The bird's fire-fangled feathers dangle down."

Say what?