

EDITORIAL

Push For "Common Time"

Do you know what a "common time" is? We have one at Capitol though you would never know it.

A "common time" is a period when no classes are scheduled so that students may participate in club meetings and cultural events.

Capitol's "common time" is all day Wednesday. That really doesn't make much sense to The Reader when some students do have class on Wednesday and most others do not. And those that do not are certainly not wandering around the Main Building looking for those club meetings and cultural events which, for the most part, he or she will not find being held on a Wednesday.

If anything, Wednesday is the most "uncommon day" at Capitol.

Capitol is the only commonwealth campus that has designated a "common time" as all day. All other campuses have set aside one period of the day whether it be two or five days a week. The Delaware Campus, by the way, is the only commonwealth campus that does not have a "common time."

Berks Campus named fourth period Monday through Friday as their "common time" after a majority of the student body voted for it last spring.

According to the editor of the Berks Voice, the student newspaper at Berks Campus, this "common time" is working well and well it should when their entire student body is commuter.

The Reader believes students at Capitol ought to have the chance to vote for a truly "common time" and calls for SGA to look into the matter and put the question to the student body to vote upon.

With a 70 per cent commuter student body, a "common time" might be just the thing for greater involvement in clubs and cultural events. The Reader thinks it's worth finding out.

Letter To The Editor

A recent concern has arisen in the Residence Halls, and consequently, an appeal is being made to the Capitol Campus student body for its support.

Fire extinguishers have been discharged for reasons other than for protection against fire. These unauthorized acts not only cause a financial loss by necessitating that the fire extinguishers be refilled and recharged, but they also show a lack of consideration for resident students and a disregard for their safety in the event that there would be a fire.

As Capitol students, we are requesting your help in discouraging students to use the fire extinguishers inappropriately.

The following rule has

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Profit vs. Preservation

By Theodora R. Graham

It is October, 1975, in Lancaster County, a Thursday afternoon. The first chill of Fall is in the air and the streams and rivers of Central Pennsylvania are receding outside a falling-down "stone-end" barn. For sale are two parcels of land separated by a creek, the old barn, and a magazine-cover cornshed with the date "1885" carved on one board.

In 1970 the first auction of this parcel and additional adjacent land was held by the owner-speculator who spared no expense on fanfare: newspaper ads, circulars with aerial views, exhortations and signs with elaborate surveyor's diagrams.

The Pennsylvania Dutch stone farmhouse built in 1812 and ten acres which had been part of his original package deal were not being sold, for somehow Bob Graham and I with no little effort had wrested them from the owner-speculator. We were thinking in 1969 of preserving something beautiful.

The parcel at auction that day was not sold. Oh, the speculators were out, hoping to become owner-speculator number two. But a ritual was being enacted in which the first owner-speculator ferreted out the interested parties in order to up the ante in a warm, comfortable lawyer's office. And so he did.

Time passed and the new possessor, by buying the parcel, had enabled the first owner-speculator to make a 100% profit in one year without having spent a cent of his own except for interest paid to a friendly banker. To him it didn't matter that the barn doors had begun to fall off, that water rushed from rotten spouting onto rotting wood, that the slate roofs of barn and shed were disappointing.

Then it was October 1975 and the second owner-speculator was trying to get his 100% profit. But the day was colder, the crowd smaller and unfriendly, looking for a steal. So the barn, shed and 17 acres beyond it did not sell to the highest bidder--Bob and I--that day either. The auction was terminated no sale today. There might be a call to that warm, comfortable office soon. On the other hand, perhaps I'd drive home and the bulldozer will be doing its job.

The stone house wasn't entirely dilapidated when we bought it, but as a neighboring farmer put it, "the place needed a friend." We didn't even try to get the barn and acreage beyond, which the first owner-speculator, a delightful advertising man from Lancaster who dresses up on a farmer's outfit for local affairs (like the opening of a shopping center), had wrested from a widow and our neighboring farmer. He needed to preserve that profit; therefore, his asking price for barn and adjacent land was six times his initial purchase price. While in the meantime, another parcel he owned across the road turns over twice more.



Dr. Robert Graham discusses fund raising efforts with some of the members of the Lancaster County Conservancy.

On that plot stand homes like all the other little and big boxes, built so fast that daylight and water stream in around window frames, plaster board shrinks from baseboards, and in the first wind storm after they were completed, half of some roofs blew off because they hadn't been stapled on correctly.

Skip two weeks ahead to October 12th. An Indian summer Sunday raises our hopes that some things can be delayed, frustrated, subverted.

"The Lancaster County Conservancy," a group of people hoping to preserve some land for open space, farms and parks is sponsoring a walk today to raise funds in order to buy a tract of land along the Susquehanna River between Columbia and Marietta. A beautiful summit, the hill is named Chickies Rock and was used a sighting point by the Indians. The walkers, trotting past the old barn and corn shed, are using our house as a registration point, stopping for apples, cookies and juice. Perhaps they will save Chickies Rock from some well-meaning speculator who just wants to bull-doze the sight to put up homes or townhouses for nice folks to live in. You can be sure they will have daylight streaming in around

their window frames, too.

Well, big deal, the cynics retort. Your husband walked five miles and raised \$10 for a cause. And big deal, that 1812 house of yours is an investment; just look how its value had appreciated in six years. Indeed, we're not innocents. We can count and we know how much it takes to buy a house or rock.

That we might sell this house and land to the highest bidder, if living here were to become aesthetically intolerable, could be evidence to destroy my argument. However, that we would rather preserve house, barn, shed and land for aesthetic and ethical reasons makes the thought of giving in to the economic vultures abhorrent.

But the failure if township

supervisors and all people with even a modicum of principle, not to enforce zoning laws (which may after all be unconstitutional), but to acknowledge that history and natural beauty have in certain circumstances priority over monied interest; the rampant cynicism of speculators and other unprincipled people who have thrown up for them (like the painting of duchess for duke) housing units, mini markets, even children's play areas which exhibit no human values, no regard for aesthetic sensibility or ecological systems--these may, yes may, drive Bob and me out.

And who is to say how shoddy and impermanent our ideal of preservation is when (through our conscious choice or, more likely, through someone's backdoor manipulation) the old house becomes another gift shop for plastic flower arrangements and maudlin "Penn. Dutch" trinkets made in piece-work factories and tucked into the Pennsylvania hills? How do you convince the best farmer in the area to hang on to that rich corn field and those towering silos for posterity, when the stakes are so high? More likely, how do you convince his children who may like nothing better than to divide the spoils, live in new bi-level homes, and buy as many plastic flower arrangements and "Penn. Dutch" trinkets as their farm-children hearts have been made to desire?

You don't. The argument for free enterprise serves many purposes. You keep walking and undermining the economic vultures as often as you can bear it.

It rained the day of the last Conservancy walk in Spring; but this October Sunday afternoon is a lot sunnier and a lot warmer than it was the afternoon of the auction

Editor's Note: We encourage faculty members to submit material for publication in this regular READER column. Articles should not exceed 750 words (3 typed pages) and may address any topic, however, campus-oriented-subjects are especially welcomed.