

EDITORIAL

Tremendous bargain

Most people pay for it...pay a lot, either in higher insurance premiums or higher taxes. But here in the Back Mountain it's a tremendous bargain—as a matter of fact it's free, except for a voluntary contribution or two which at least a significant percentage of the citizenry chooses to overlook.

"It" is "fire protection". If you don't have it, your household insurance rates skyrocket. If you're a city dweller, you likely find it included in the city tax rate and, even then, you are at the mercy of labor unions and the city political structure.

In the Back Mountain, volunteer groups in virtually every municipality provide fire fighting and often ambulance services without any tax support, without any remuneration to the volunteer firefighters and raise by private donation and fundraising projects equipment and operating funds needed each year.

They buy trucks now costing \$50,000

each and more. They donate long hours to regular training at their own expense. They serve the community in projects unrelated to firefighting and emergency services. And they come when called, even for false alarms, at any hour of the night or day, willing to risk their lives if necessary to provide a kind of security for area residents.

It's almost amazing, that in the cynical world of the Seventies, such men and women are working consistently and conscientiously to be of service to their neighbors.

The least the public can do is support their solicitation, such as the drive now underway for Dallas Fire and Ambulance Inc. There is no minimum, no penalty if you are unable to give...only courteous letter of request.

How can the citizenry, in good conscience, deny them?

—by Ray Carlsen

MY TYPEWRITER TALKS

by the Rev. Charles H. Gilbert

This time my meditations are in a different key. Or I should say "about different keys"! And not piano keys, either. I sat with my feet propped up on the front porch railing, with my eyes meditating on the big old adding machine I had just lugged up from the cellar.

I'm getting it in condition to be offered to the collections of oddities and endities that are being contributed to Saturday's "Yard Sale" at Mount Zion Church. Mount Zion people are fortunate in having lawns and yards and perhaps we need to clean house and bring things together for a more or less commercial sales project. This on the theory that many have stuff 'n' junk in their houses that they don't want any more, but that some other people might be glad to get at a bargain price.

So I said, "This is a good time to get rid of the old adding machine that I once paid \$36 for." It really does add figures to figures and gets right answer if you punch the right keys and pull the right lever. It is one of the few machines I have never been tempted to take apart to see how it works, if it does! If you use the dollars and cents and right signs you can see

how much money you could add to what you have and be a rich man. That is fun if you can take it for fun.

I was awfully poor as a child but my dear mother never told us so, for she was a proud New Englander for whom it was all right for everybody to be thrifty, but you didn't have to call it poor. But I did wish we didn't always have to go without things.

At our school we used slates about 9x12 to write on; it was cheaper than paper. I was also taught to be saving of paper, like used envelopes, like Abraham Lincoln wrote his famous speech on. On my slate I used to draw pictures of bags and bags of money, lots of it. I could write labels on the bags such as a hundred dollars, or a thousand, or better yet a million, a billion, a trillion, and why limit oneself in making bags of money of any amount like skillions of dollars, bags piled upon bag somewhere.

I felt they would be safe on my slate—and I never knew of losing a cent of all that. Nor did robbers ever think it worth while to steal when all one had to do was draw more pictures of more money.

I don't remember what I used all that mint of money for. Even though I was so poor that kind ladies sometimes took me to the store and

Columns of riches

bought me some new clothes, I never realized I was being treated to charity clothes. Funny, I never thought to spend some of those bags of trillions to buy more and better clothes for more people all around me.

I regret to say it never entered my head to waste any of those skillions of coin by putting big money on the collection plate on Sundays. Nobody had as yet taught me to tithe; I hadn't got as far as fractions in school yet. As I remember my "addition" in those days I had no intention of giving any of it away, not even to the Lord! Guess I was really a dyed-in-the-wool miser.

In later years I learned that there was such a thing as squeezing money so tight that it made you practically sick with what is called a "poverty consciousness"; the opposite of that is the "prosperity consciousness". I like the idea of thinking of one's riches not in terms of that money I used to draw on my slate, but in the real stuff.

We get joy and gladness from living on rich ideas, rich in thinking, inspirations that one just has to have which is not related to those old dustybags of money, made of chalk dust on a slate. It's the wealth of discovering meaning in a Greek word, like that word I gave you a few weeks ago which means "full measure of".

I guess the words one can think up and put down by hitting some typewriter keys are really more wealth for me than the rows of keys on that old adding machine. But I hope whoever lugs that adding machine home will find it useful in adding up columns of riches.

Wood proposes

sunset measure

Sen. T. Newell Wood, R-20th, recently cosponsored legislation establishing an orderly system for abolishing many agencies, boards and commissions that no longer can justify their operations, a measure popularly known as a "sunset" bill.

Wood explained that public hearings will be held with regard to this "Sunset" legislation, and the agencies in question will have the burden of proving public need for their services. Any agency reestablished will have a life span of six years before it again comes up for review.

"Taxpayers citizens are keenly aware that we can ill afford the expense of state government as it now exists—a constantly growing monster with an enormously expanding appetite for the state's dollars and a tendency to regulate activities which would function better unregulated," Wood said.

"The potential savings to taxpayers will be significant if we abolish or consolidate many overlapping and unnecessary agencies, boards and commissions. Too often, the cost of running these agencies far exceeds the cost of the problems they were created to solve."

Wood, who is minority whip, continued, "The bureaucratic tentacles of our octopus-like state government have grown tremendously without proper accountability to the public."

He cited the Weather Modification Board, which has met about 20 times since its creation in 1968, as an excellent example of a non-productive government agency. The seven members of the Board are paid \$30 a day—when they work—to advise the Agriculture Department on the science of weather modification through such activities as seeding clouds, reducing lightning and fog suppression.

"The State Lottery Commission is another bureaucratic farce which could be abolished without loss to the taxpayers," Wood said. "The State Lottery is operated by the Revenue Department. State Lottery Commission members have collected more than \$66,000 over the last four years for travel and expenses while their meetings have produced nothing of significance, as all actual work is done by the Revenue Department."

"This legislation would terminate, by July 1, 1978, activities of smaller boards or agencies, such as those in the Departments of Agriculture, Military Affairs and Revenue," Wood stated. "In this way, we would work into the more complex departments, such as Education and Health and Welfare by July 1, 1982."

"This does not necessarily mean that all agencies would be terminated," Wood emphasized, "but bureaucracy seeks to expand its powers, bloat payrolls and squander taxpayers' money rather than to evaluate its usefulness. This legislation would require that this evaluation be made," Wood concluded.

EDITORIAL

Postal update

Further information on the proposal to assign the Dallas post office as a branch of the Wilkes-Barre post office seems to indicate the controversial proposal is an addenda to another more basic plan.

The initial plan was to consider the merging of Shavertown, a Wilkes-Barre branch, into the Dallas office, which is less than a mile away compared with about 10 miles to the Wilkes-Barre office, the present

Shavertown parent.

Then Wilkes-Barre postal authorities apparently suggested the Dallas modification.

In any event, we are also advised that pending legislation on postal reorganization which is now before the U.S. Congress has resulted in a moratorium against any post office closing or status change while the legislation is pending.

—Ray Carlsen

GROSSMAN

The elderly: myth and reality

by Howard J. Grossman

Statistics are often misleading and do not represent the realities of life when it comes to consideration for the elderly. This is especially true in the situation which faces the senior citizens in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

More than 13.2 percent of the total population of 875,000 residents within the seven counties of our region are 65 years and older. The percentage relationship to the total population threatens to increase in the 1980 census, and there is little prospect that this percentage relationship will be lowered in coming decades.

Knowing that a large segment of the region's population falls within this age group has led many persons to conclude that the region has faced and will continue to face particular problems which other regions do not face. A basic problem is attitudinal rather than physical, insofar as the senior citizen is often considered to be a liability and not an asset or a resource.

While recognizing the particular problems of the senior citizen in the area of housing, income, jobs, health, and other factors, we must not lose sight of the tremendous resource this population group can offer Northeastern Pennsylvania. Volunteerism is a strong motivating force throughout the United States, and the senior citizen group can offer a potential for tapping into their experiences and judgements so that community problems will have a better chance of being solved.

If, in fact, the trend continues

toward a larger segment of the population in the age group 65 years and over, and if, in fact, more persons retire at an earlier age so that the age group normally associated with senior citizenship becomes a much larger group, then an all-out effort should be established to use these resources toward community development problem solving.

There is specific legislation designed to provide assistance to senior citizens. The Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended has created a new emphasis toward senior citizen issues. The prestige of a White House Conference has allowed a focusing of problem solving toward the aged. All counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania have area wide agencies for thng. While these and other developments have allowed a new focus on the senior citizen, much remains to be accomplished. Sometime ago the senior citizen was identified as the forgotten American. In many respects, we still have not changed our basic attitude toward looking upon the senior citizen as being someone who is useless to society and must be cared for and considered as a nuisance.

Instead, we should take every step possible toward using the senior citizen and considering that age group as a special part of American society and encourage all persons within the age group capable of contributing to community development to fully participate in planning and maintaining community resources and programs. In this way, we will have achieved a better quality of life for all Northeastern Pennsylvanians.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Noxen busing

To the Editor,

The Lake-Lehman School Board has been told by state inspectors that the Noxen Elementary Bldg. will be condemned.

Existing elementary schools in the district are not adequate to house all of the Noxen students. A new building must be built, but the location of that building must be determined by the needs of the district as a whole. The school board plans a district wide census and a needs assessment study to determine where the new building should be built.

The people of Noxen don't want to lose their neighborhood school. They say new elementary schools have been built in other areas of the district. They want a new one built in Noxen or modular buildings put on the site of the existing school. They don't want their pupils bused to other schools in the district. More than 90 percent of their pupils walk to school and home for lunch. The Noxen Building does not have a cafeteria. They do not want a teacher shift that would benefit the pupil-teacher ratio in the district as a whole.

Ross, Lehman-Jackson, and Lake Elementary schools have had a pupil teacher ratio varying from 39-1 in Kindergarten to 31-1 in sixth grade. Variations in other grades are generally 24 to 26 to 1.

The per pupil teacher ratio at Noxen is so low as to make it fiscally irresponsible to maintain the school or consider building a new one at the present site. There are slightly more than 80 full day students using the building at a cost of almost \$1,100.00 per pupil. The full day classroom ratio is from 14 to 18 pupils per teacher. There are so few Kindergarten students that only a half session of Kindergarten will be held.

Dividing the number of teachers in the district by the number of pupils, the average classroom size would be 24-1. The problem being where the pupils are the teachers aren't, and where the pupils aren't, the teachers are.

The parents of Noxen want a hot food service provided at their school,

so children from the other areas can be bused to Noxen. Considering the district as a whole, and the tax dollars necessary to initiate a trucked food service, it is difficult, if not impossible to consider it as an interim plan.

They say if some of their students must bring "bag" lunches to school, then bus the children to Noxen from Ross, Lake, Lehman-Jackson and let them bring "bag" lunches. Only six students at the Noxen Building carried their lunches last year; and they are proposing to have large numbers of elementary students from other areas "bag" their lunch to a building threatened with state condemnation. Do they think this is a reasonable position?

The school board has considered busing Noxen's 5th grade pupils to another building in the district and making a teacher shift and class assignment change that would benefit the students of the district as a whole. Most pupils in the Lake-Lehman District are bused to school in Kindergarten beginning at age five—except at the Noxen School.

The Noxen parents say they will not allow their eleven year old fifth grade students to be bused. If it is less expensive to the district as a whole than starting a hot food service and busing children INTO Noxen, then one small segment of a school district should not be allowed to dictate what should be done—and, what conditions it will accept. In rural school districts busing is a way of life. It is a practical necessity.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Richards ripped on Olympics comments

To Lee Richards, sports columnist, Sir:

I have difficulty believing you call yourself a sportswriter after reading your past two columns, concerning the Olympics.

The Olympics are not for the United States alone. Doubtless, you were in favor of pulling out from the games, but neglected to notice that the American team was not. The decision had been reached even before the team arrived in Montreal.

So too, your treatment of Olga Korbett was unfair and unnecessary. Any one following the career of the young gymnast realizes she loves the United States, and her people.

And she is a crowd pleaser. Despite a somewhat poor showing at the recent games, Olga had the support of the capacity crowd behind her, and it's only too bad that the U.S. has no one like her, or Nelly Kim.

Howard Cossell may beat his favorites into our heads, but be careful of pointing the finger. Week after week, we suffer the same predictions, the same astute guesses concerning football, baseball, or basketball that come rolling out of

your typewriter. ABC still spells "Olympics" to many of us, so until you don suit and tie as an anchorman yourself, please: enough is enough.

I for one give the network much credit. It is ABC that gives our winning athletes victory dinners, for family and friends as well. The Olympic committee, however, prefers winning and dining board members, and not the athletes who won.

At least I was glad you saw the "Olympic Spirit" in the victory lap of Edwin Moses and Mike Shine. I was afraid you would see it as a black-and-white put-on, to show the American way, and it was hardly that.

In addition—much to your disappointment, I imagine—rest assured that a lot of people would pay money to see all those "Communist dolls" perform. And why not? Certainly it's no worse than paying to see a bunch of doped-up, higher than a kite, grown men bang one another up on a football playing field—but then, I forgot: that's the American way.

Maybe the Communist system is too harsh, but I feel our own government could spend a little less time and money telling us what kind of movies

and books are fit to read, and more time and money helping our gifted athletes.

Let's face it. If something isn't done for our athletes, we're going to be just another country at the Olympics in 1980, and not the United States of America we all want to see.

Jane Lutz

Rotary plans supper

Dallas Rotarians this week announced plans for the sponsorship of their annual turkey day dinner on Nov. 6 at the Dallas High School cafeteria.

Rotarian Dale Parry is chairman of the event, which is scheduled following a home football game for the Dallas Mountaineers.

Tickets will be available by fall fair time, according to committee reports.



HORSE AND BUGGY—The Lehigh Valley Station in Noxen was a postcard topic before the advent of cars and energy crises. To give an idea of the age of the photo, found on the front of a picture post card, postage stamps were a penny each.