

## The economic viewpoint

### Gore's book offers environmental program

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

In a 408 page book which should be read by every citizen, Senator Al Gore of Tennessee has provided a new frontier for environmental protection in the United States. Gore takes each environmental issue, describes the problems facing the world as well as the nation in relation to the issue and proceeds to discuss ways in which these various issues can be resolved. One of his major themes is that environmental degradation and the extent to which the environment has been despoiled in a global sense means severe economic distress and requires massive and immediate global action. His solution is the creation and implementation of an environmental Marshall Plan similar to the Marshall Plan in Western Europe following the end of World War II.

One of the striking characteristics of the book is the extent to which he discusses and portrays environmental issues. To him, the environment is in the midst of a national and international crisis of proportions previously unknown to the world. He wants to catapult and rocket the nation into extreme consciousness of involvement and action to create a new climate of awareness and policy direction which would cause a Marshall Plan to be undertaken. In his opinion, if a Marshall Plan approach is not undertaken soon, only disaster will befall the many countries of the world facing already serious and substantive environmental problems. He points to those problems facing the Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union), Eastern European Nations and others whose legacy has been a terribly degraded landscape with air, water and land pollution of unbelievable proportions.

While he believes some important actions have been taken in the United States and some other nations, he points to the fact that despite committing hundreds of millions of dollars on hazardous waste cleanup, there are so many superfund sites remaining to be cleaned up and at such an expense that it will be near to impossible to find all the resources necessary unless the solutions are so long to become a 100 year war rather than a 10 year war. He believes that only a total commitment much like the Manhattan Atomic Bomb Project or a Marshall Plan approach can be effective.

Recently this writer had the rare opportunity to be invited to Alaska to advise on regional economic development and to participate in a major workshop involving the

13th Regional Economic Development Organizations in that state. Sponsored by Alaska Regional Development Organizations, the workshop discussed a series of programs and actions designed to enhance the relatively new role of regional economic development organizations in Alaska.

The most striking observation in relation to the future of economic development in the State of Alaska is the way environment plays the most significant influence on why economic development does not take place at the level and pace required. Alaska faces serious budgetary problems, in relative terms equal to those being faced by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but has so many natural resources in the way of oil, coal, gold, and other resources of similar nature that it is difficult to believe that the State would not be the most economically favored of all 50 states. Relying on a heavy dose of travel development and tourism, Alaska knows well why the environment must be protected.

On the other hand, those involved in economic development in the state believe that Alaska is looked upon as the national symbol of environmental action in relation to the beauty and majesty of the mountains, rivers, and lakes offer to the attraction of the tourist dollar. Thus, if any action is required in a state such as Alaska, it is a much more balanced approach by those outside the state who believe that the state represents symbolically the last bastion of environmental preservation in the nation. Those inside the state need to take another look as to ways toward a more appropriate mediation approach between development interests seeking economic growth and environmental interests seeking environmental protection and sensitivity. Perhaps some type of structured organization similar to the Pennsylvania Environmental Council which takes a balanced approach toward this issue would be appropriate for the State of Alaska.

Alaska, as a major hub of the environmental movement, reflects greatly what Gore says in his book. His Marshall Plan would call for clarification action which would include, among other elements, the following:

1. Stabilizing the world population with policies designed to create in every nation of the world the conditions necessary for the so called demographics transition—the historic and well documented change from a dynamic equilibrium of high birth rates and death rates to a stable equilibrium of low

birth rates and death rates.

2. Rapid creation and development of environmental appropriate technologies—especially in the field of energy, transportation, agriculture, building construction and manufacturing—capable of accommodating substantial economic progress without the concurrent degradation of the environment.

3. A comprehensive and ubiquitous change in the economic "rules of the road" by which we measure the impact of our decisions on the environment. We must establish by global agreement—a system of economic accounting that assigns appropriate values to the ecological consequences of both routine choices in the market place by individuals and companies and larger, macroeconomic choices by nations.

4. The negotiation and approval of a new generation of international agreements that will embody the regulatory frameworks, specific prohibitions, enforcement mechanisms, cooperative planning, sharing arrangements, incentives, penalties and mutual obligations necessary to make the overall plan a success.

5. The establishment of a cooperative plan for educating the world's citizens about our global environment.

He goes on to say that the plan should have as its more general, integrating goal "the establishment, especially in the developing world-of the social and political conditions most conducive to the emergence of substantiable societies—such as social justice, a commitment to human rights, adequate nutrition, health care and shelter, high literacy rates, and greater political freedom, participation and accountability.

The book should be read by public and private sector officials and citizens who need to concern themselves with the long range future and 21st century life in the nation. It is a book written by a political leader but not for political reasons. As a model for understanding the environmental conditions facing the nation and the world, it could serve as text in the colleges and schools of the nation where the teaching of understanding and the ability to assemble a thought process regarding our nation's future has great potential for helping to set new standards of excellence over the long term and with a strong and dynamic international context.

Howard Grossman is executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.



**PLANNING ADULT PROGRAM** — The Adult Council members responsible for planning the programs are shown, left to right, Front row, Carol Coolbaugh, Susan Razny, and Pastor Harriet Santos. Second row, Lynda Rogers, Frank Razny, Mary Ellen Pajor, Pastor James Wert. Absent from the group are John Turner and Ed Pall.

### Shavertown UMC plans new adult program

A new adult educational program, "Sunday Morning Live," will begin on September 13, 9:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. at the Shavertown United Methodist Church, according to Carol Coolbaugh and Mary Ellen Pajor, Adult Ministry Coordinators.

The program will continue each Sunday at the same hour and will be held in the Church lounge. Sessions will begin with refreshments.

The first emphasis will be, "Ministry with Baby Boomers," based on resources using the video and study book by Robert Paul. Leaders will be Mrs. Pajor and Pastor Harriet Santos.

This will be followed through the Fall quarter by "What Christians Should Know in the Year 2000," led by John Turner; "Straight Talk to Families," led by

Ed Pall; "Christian Hope and Human Emotions," led by Mrs. Coolbaugh; and "Potpourri-The Symbols of Our Faith," led by Lynda Rogers. Further sessions will be announced later.

Adult Bible Study sessions will also be held each Sunday morning 9:45 a.m. led by Elwood Swingle.

The Adult Program will include a special forum through the week

called "Tuesday Night Live," and guest speakers will be announced; "Exclusively Women" discussion group on interests of women led by Dr. Victoria Jaen, meeting on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month, beginning at 7:30 p.m. and Bible Study Groups led by Pastor James A. Wert, which will meet each Thursday, with identical groups at 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., beginning October 1.

### Back Mountain briefs

#### Twins and Triplets Club will meet Sept. 14

The Luzerne Mothers' of Twins and Triplets Club will hold its first meeting of the year on Monday, Sept. 14, at 8 p.m. Meetings are held at St. John's Lutheran Church, Academy and S. River Streets, Wilkes-Barre. All mothers of multiples are welcome to attend. For more information about the club, contact, Michelle Coombs at 639-2699.

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