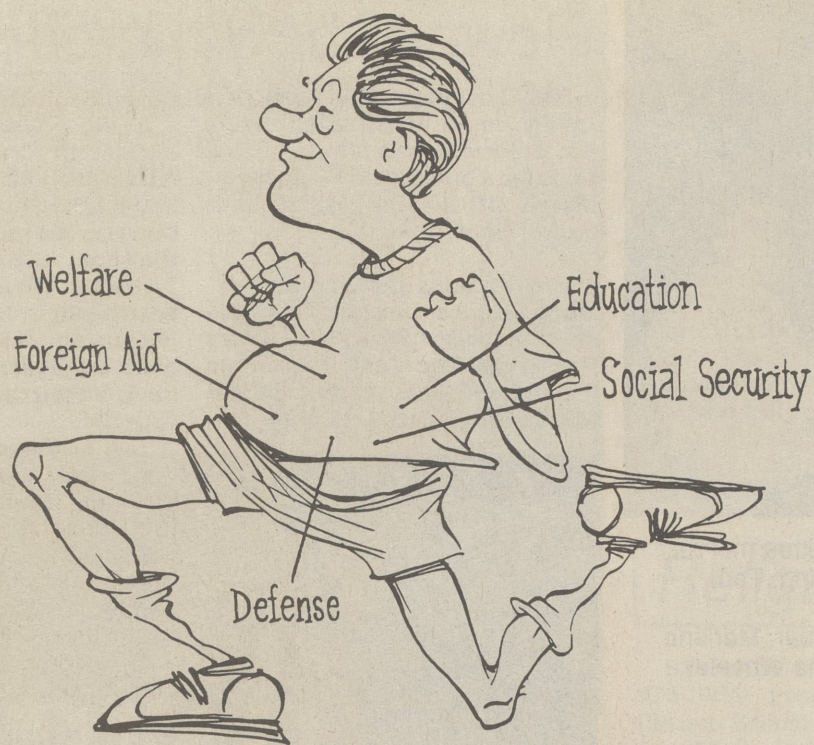


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Difficult Reductions

Library news

Library's eighth anniversary at new location

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will celebrate 8 years in our new location on Thursday, March 4. Our library continues to grow with new members joining every day. Our book collection is continually increasing with new books being added. Our volunteers support the library in different ways; many of them help in the library shelving books, checking book numbers against book cards, alphabetizing daily circulation cards, and slipping the returned books at the front desk. Our library auction is handled each year with board members and volunteers who put a lot of effort and time into the annual event. The library staff is willing and able to answer the questions of our patrons and help them search for the material they need. The Back Mountain school children use the library for research and study space every day. This library continues to be the best it

can be!

One of our faithful supporters and patrons is moving from the Back Mountain area and has donated his collection of classical records. We are selling these records in our basement sale room in advance of the auction. The single records will sell for \$1.00 each and the albums for \$3.00. These will be for sale on Wednesday and Saturday during the regular sale days. Wednesday sale hours 12 thru 5 and Saturday 10 until 5.

Some of the single titles include: 'Kiri sings Gershwin' John McClinn and the new Princess theater orchestra; Ives Symphonies 1 & 2 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra; Montserrat Caballe Puccini Arias by the London Symphony Orchestra; Emanuel Ax, The Cleveland Quartet Dvorak, A German Requiem by Brahms, the London Philharmonic Orchestra and choir. The albums include Simon Boccanegra Giuseppe Verdi with Claudio

Abbado; Verdi Othello Del Monaco Tebaldi with the Vienna Philharmonic and Madama Butterfly, Puccini, complete recording with Renata Tebaldi as Butterfly. These records are in good condition and are sure to be enjoyed.

New book at the Library: "Official and Confidential" is the Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover, written by Anthony Summers. The story tells of the presidents who yearned to fire him, but were daunted by his storehouse of damaging secrets. Public officials and private citizens lived in fear of his illegal surveillance and harassment tactics. Now, in this ground-breaking, at times shocking biography, J. Edgar Hoover, the man who ruled over the FBI for nearly fifty years, emerges definitively as one of the greatest menaces of our times. Some disclosures include he was a closet homosexual and transvestite. Mafia bosses had information about him and used it for decades to keep the FBI at bay.



Bike-A-Thon memories

How many of you remember the First Bike-A-Thon sponsored by the Dallas Junior Womans Club in the 1970's? Although it took months of planning it raised thousands of dollars in only about six hours of riding. The 25-mile course was one of the most community-involved projects ever undertaken in the Back Mountain; some of the route is still used today by the "thons". Every local fire company, all local police forces and every municipality had a part in the run. It began at the Dallas Junior High School and ended there. The proceeds went to ARC. The photo this week shows the first group out. Ready-Set-Go-Identify them for us!

J.W.J.

Padding insurance claims: honest or theft?

By J.W. JOHNSON

A recent local story occurred in the Borough of Moosic where traffic violators, and the ticket fixers who accommodated them, were discovered. The real story here, however, was not the lawbreakers; rather it was the attitude of citizens about the law breaking...citizens were actually upset that something was being done about the problem, saying there was nothing wrong with ticket fixing.

This brought to mind my own experience with an employee many years ago...a person from the "valley" who demonstrated quite clearly the "valley" moral code.

To summarize: She had been in a slight auto accident. She came to me and wanted me to tell her insurance company that she had, in fact, missed many more days of work than had actually occurred. She would then file a disability claim, and I would get a percentage of what she collected...she was lying and me swearing to it.

I declined...and you would have thought I had kidnapped her first-born child. She was actually furious that I wouldn't go along with this fraud. She couldn't believe there was anything wrong with what she proposed, saying it was business as usual where she came from...the Wyoming Valley...and, years later as I read the Moosic story, I guess nothing much has changed.

So as not to suggest the Wyoming Valley has a lock on morally repugnant behavior, how about a more insidious kind of fraud.

Some 40 million Americans are without health care coverage. Most vulnerable, of course, in the health care squeeze are the children of families without coverage, and senior citizens who face daily the twin ogres of escalating health

care costs, and constantly decreasing Medicare coverage.

As such, it's clear that some sort of national health care program is necessary. Beyond that, and for senior citizens, there is a daily fear of getting sick, of going broke, of going into a nursing home or both...and all compounded by the fear that they will eventually become a burden to loved ones.

Thus motivated by fear, many become susceptible to buying hope in the form of duplicate health insurance policies to supplement Medicare. Many of these so-called policies are virtually worthless. Some of these companies employ sales agents and pay them a cut of up to 60 percent of the premium of any policy they sell to the elderly. It is then only logical to realize that if a company pays its salespeople 50-60 percent and keeps out any sums at all for profit and administrative expense, then the amount which can be returned in claims to the elderly is very low.

At the same time, and when you look at the society as a whole, this corporate greed is not hard to understand...it is little more than reflection of debased individual values.

And isn't a large portion of inflation really the result of individual greed. Of individuals not satisfied with what they have, always seeking (and going into monumental debt, encouraged by credit card companies, to obtain items once called luxuries but now regarded as necessities?)

Is it really surprising, then, to find insurance companies spoon feeding hope, and then financially draining senior citizens, when at the individual level we hear, for example, a person boasting of how he or she "made money" on an auto accident claim by patronizing a shop willing to jack up the

bill with a resultant split of the so-called profit? Or employees and traffic violators as noted above.

It's clear that all of these persons are thieves; nothing more, nothing less. And none of this behavior, either corporately or individually is strange anymore. It's the run-of-the-mill; and more's the pity.

This kind of behavior cries out for a renewal of ethical and moral values once thought by many to be inherent in Americans. It's also clear that when a society forgets that its corporate actions reflect little more than its individual desires, any large scale efforts to then deal with that society's so-called undesirable elements, ends up begging the question.

It makes our so-called war on drugs a joke, our attempts to raise responsible, moral and ethical children a virtual impossibility.

I know there are those of you out there who will say that the answer is a God-fearing, theologically oriented country where moral values are imposed and enforced by temporal servants toward celestial ends.

If that's what you wish, move to Iran.

At the same time, we cannot continue to function as an ethically and morally debased society without accepting that, in doing so, we will eventually give up our freedom. And that's because the exercise of freedom, without a simultaneous exercise of moral and ethical responsibility, will always result in extreme governmental control.

In the most obvious cases, it brings martial law; in the most insidious ones, it brings mental law, robbing us all, and making a mockery of this land as the crucible for free and independent minds.

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