



## A. Case for conservation

# On the uses and abuses of land

By ALENE N. CASE

To paraphrase Robert Frost - There is something in all of us that does not love a rule. In fact, many conversations about environmental problems are quickly reduced to an airing of complaints about governmental regulations. Our idea of democracy tends toward that of a Bulgarian friend of mine who proudly refused to let me buckle my seatbelt as we careened through the busy streets of Sofia because, he said, "We are a democracy now - we have no rules!"

But, rules and regulations continue to proliferate. Did you ever stop to ask yourself why? Are our government officials getting some sort of perverse glee out of torturing their constituents? Why are these regulations necessary in the first place?

Consider the situation in a family as parents try to help an adolescent mature. Generally, as the child demonstrates that he/she can make responsible decisions, fewer rules will be imposed. But, if the child continues to disregard the consequences of his/her actions, the parent makes more and more stringent rules. I have come to see governmental regulation in much the same way.

Wetland regulation certainly came about as a result of irresponsible uses of swamps and marshes as repositories for junk automobiles or factory effluents. Or, perhaps it was the combined action of developers and farmers who drained wetland areas for their own uses and disregarded the needs of ducks and other wetland inhabitants.

The new storm-water runoff regulations, featured in the June

2nd Dallas Post, would have been totally unnecessary if we had thought about the effects of our actions on downstream areas as we cleared land and constructed parking areas. The old view of "It's my land and I'll do what I want with it" has led directly to the imposition of rules and added paperwork.

If we prefer to live in a world where there are fewer rules, I suggest that we begin behaving in a more mature manner. That involves thinking about the consequences of our actions. These consequences may be in relation to our neighbors, towns downstream, our grandchildren, future economic activity in the community, animals and plants, or even to ourselves at some future time. Let me describe a few examples as illustrations.

If we continue to drive our personal vehicles to work every day, we may discover the downtown area closed to automobiles during certain hours or exorbitant fees charged for driving through. These restrictions already are a way of life in many European cities where air quality has deteriorated to unbearable levels.

Our wanton tree-cutting activity may lead to taking orders from our children! In one Colorado town, the fifth graders drafted a tree ordinance which was adopted by the city council. Before any tree of a certain diameter can be cut, a committee of fifth graders must be convinced that such action is necessary or desirable. They also recommend where trees should be planted and which ones need pruning. (Sometimes our youth are more mature in these

matters than their elders.)

The most important question to ask ourselves is "Is this piece of land appropriate for this use?" If you are buying a house and you want a sunny deck, please don't purchase a house surrounded by trees planted by members of your great-grandparents' generation. If you plan to build a shopping center, please don't buy a prime piece of farm land that can never grow crops again once it is paved over. If you want to harvest timber or open land for a housing development, please don't choose steep slopes vulnerable to erosion.

Sometimes the most logical use for land is not the use that will bring the most economic gain in the short run. A wooded vacant lot is often viewed as a wasted space. How about putting in some treehouses and slides and making a neighborhood park to add to the quality of life for all residents? Abandoned farmland could be converted to an orchard, community garden area, or nursery. Do we really want a Back Mountain that looks like the Kidder Street "strip" in Wilkes-Barre? Will anyone want to live here if that is the result of uncontrolled development?

Let's use our heads in deciding what land to purchase for a specific use. Let's use common sense when planning what changes to make on our property. We must consider the results of our actions on the quality of life in our community, both now and in the future. Otherwise, our governments will enforce new rules to control our willful behavior.

## Library news

# Plans under way for annual library auction

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Book Club of the Back Mountain Memorial Library will meet on Monday, June 21 at 1:30 in the reference room at the library. This will be the last meeting until September. Members of the Book Club are invited to sign up for a shift at the Book Booth during the annual library auction.

Mrs. Florence Crump, who is now 98 years old, was the chairman of the book booth for many, many years and spent many hours pricing the books that were donated for the booth. Mrs. Crump spent hours on the second floor back room in the old library on Main Street and the small back room of the main floor, sorting, pricing and packing these books which were then stored in the Gazebo until the auction. Mrs. Crump is now spending her days and nights at the Meadows Nursing Home in Dallas and when I visited her last week, she con-

stantly asked about the library and the children who use the library. She was always one devoted library lady.

Bennie Matchett is chair of the book booth for 1993 with help from Ann Aston and Jeff, who is doing a lot of sorting. A telephone call to the library will enable you to offer your time for a convenient hour or two at the booth. The dates of the auction are July 8 through the 11th.

Ruth Tetchner is serving as chair of the 50-50 drawing for the 93 auction and tickets are available for sale at the information desk in the library. First prize will be 50/50, half of the sales; 2nd prize \$100 and 3rd prize \$50. Tickets \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The drawing will be held Sunday July 11, the last day of the '93 auction.

New books at the library: "Pleading Guilty" by Scott Turow takes place in Kindle County, where skies are generally gray and the truth is seldom simple. This is an edge-of-the-chair story rife with indelible characters and riveting

suspense—1993's most unforgettable reading experience. Mack Malloy, 50-ish ex-cop, has been charged with a highly sensitive task. A combative star litigator has been missing for weeks plus \$5.6 million from a special fund.

"Winter Prey" by John Sandford is a spellbinding story. It is winter in the remote, dark Wisconsin woods, but the chill in the local sheriff's bones has nothing to do with the weather. The extravagance of the crime is new to him; the murdered man, woman and child; the machete-like knife through the man's head; the ashes of the fire-consumed house spread over the ice and snow. His carefully hardened shell suffers many shocks.

"Exemption To Murder" by Anne Wingate is a Walker mystery and begins when councilwoman Margaret Ruskin is found dead and mauled in the alligator pit of Ark Park, a newly opened religious theme park in Texas. Police Chief Mark Shigata finds many lines of inquiry.

## Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - June 16, 1933  
**PROPERTIES TO BE SOLD FOR BACK TAXES**

Members of Dallas Borough Taxpayers Association will meet Monday in the high school building to discuss the report of the tax committee meeting held this week, when members of the committee composed of representatives for the school board, poor board and borough council checked a list of 75 properties on which taxes are three or more years in arrears. The list will be sent to the Commissioners for Treasurer's Sales and Sheriff's sales. In all cases of forced sales the association will not recommend action where property owners have been out of work or through adverse circumstances have been unable to meet their taxes.

Plans to improve the fire truck at cost of \$1,200 were approved at a meeting of Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Co. held Friday in the borough building.

You could get - Potatoes, full 15 lb. peck, 31¢; butter, 2 lbs., 49¢; lg. eggs, 17¢ doz.; P & G soap, 10 cakes 29¢.

50 Years Ago - June 11, 1943  
**GIRL SCOUT CAMP AT LAKE STARTS SEASON**

Annual day camp for girls will be opened by the Dallas District Girl Scout Council on June 29 at Wildwood, Harveys Lake. The camp will be held four days each week for two weeks. Cost of \$1.50 per week includes all meals, and registration fees.

Over 135 boys were honored Sunday at Lake Township when parents and neighbors dedicated an honor roll inscribed with their names on the lawn of the Township High School. The township school board sponsored the affair.

After being without birds for several days because of shortages in the local poultry market, North Star Farms dressing plant in Shavertown will kill and dress 6,000 chickens this week and 9,000 next week.

40 Years Ago - June 12, 1953  
**THEATER, DRUG STORE IN DALLAS ARE SOLD**

Announcement was made this week that A.C. Devens has purchased Himmler Theatre from Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Himmler in one of the largest real estate transac-

tions in this area in some time. Sale figure was not revealed.

Merritt Drug Co., located in the Acme Market Building on Church Street, has been purchased by Leo Czajkowski from Carl T. Merritt and henceforth will be operated under the name of Dallas Drug Co.

30 Years Ago - June 13, 1963  
**FIRST GRADUATION IN NEW L-L HIGH SCHOOL**

Lake-Lehman High School gym was filled to capacity with proud parents and friends as 100 graduates received their diplomas in the new building's first graduation ceremony June 11. Diplomas were presented by Willard Sutton, President of the School Board.

Two fathers took the spotlight at Dallas Senior High School Commencement exercises where 108 seniors received their diplomas. Mr. T. Sieber accepted Nancy's diploma for his Rotary Exchange student daughter still in the Netherlands and Ross Walker's father here from Australia to see his own Rotary Exchange student son graduate from an American High School.

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