

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Regional recreation plan is needed

The announcement that Wyoming Valley Health Care System, Inc. will construct a 35,000 square foot medical facility on the former Dallas Drive-In property is yet another signal that the Back Mountain is a large and growing community, in which such a property can be put to good use. Once completed, the building is to include rooms where non-profit and self-help groups may hold meetings, and where health education programs can be presented, as well as expanded medical facilities, according to Ron Stern, president of the organization formed by the merger of Wilkes-Barre General and Nesbitt hospitals.

The choice of the site along Route 309 in Dallas Township lays to rest for now fears that Back Mountain Baseball would be deprived of its playing fields on the Church Street property presently owned by the Dallas School District, which was one of the parcels considered for development. While rumors of the imminent loss of the fields were the health-care facility to be located there were wholly inaccurate, supporters of Little League and other activities are undoubtedly breathing a sigh of relief.

But they shouldn't relax for too long. The permanent availability of adequate recreation fields in the Back Mountain is an issue that will not go away until a site is earmarked specifically for that purpose. Just as the new health-care facility will serve the entire region, so must land be set aside by and for all the communities here, or we risk the real possibility that none will exist. That could leave about 1,000 children without a place to play baseball or soccer, and everyone else without a place to walk, birdwatch, relax or play a game of pickup basketball.

It's clear that enough interest in those and other activities exists; what is needed now is leadership that will bring the resources of the region together before progress and profit use up all suitable land, or drive the price beyond affordability. Is there anyone who will take on this challenge?

Reporting on fires has a purpose

Events such as the recent string of fires in this area force newspapers to confront fundamental questions about their position in the community. Some people involved in fire fighting and law enforcement have asked *The Post* to tone down reporting of the fires, believing that publicity may spur the arsonist to continue his spree, or will give others the idea to join in with copycat crimes. Also, it has been pointed out, the owner of a useless building might find this an opportune time to burn it for the insurance, although that doesn't appear to have occurred.

Those concerns must be balanced with a newspaper's commitment to print all the news it can, especially when doing so might alert readers to a lurking danger. In this instance, we feel a responsibility to report arsons and attempts consistently and prominently enough to gain the attention of readers whose property could be the next target. Doing so might also spur someone to offer a piece of information that could bring about the arrest of the arsonist, or arsonists.

We have tried to strike a balance between these competing interests by continuing to report suspicious fires but not going overboard to get photos. After all, most fires look about the same, anyway. We also have dispensed with charts and graphs until or unless there's a compelling reason to update them.

Experts on arson we have spoken with say that no statistical evidence exists linking publicity with serial arsons. But, they also point out that an individual perpetrator's motivation could include seeing his exploits in the news, or any number of other attractions.

In the end, we believe it's important not to ignore this activity, for two reasons. First, because we feel an obligation to warn readers of a dangerous situation, just as we would if we learned of an unsafe bridge or dangerous intersection.

And second, because experience teaches that an involved citizenry can help authorities stop and solve these crimes, and the sooner they end the better many people who live in the Back Mountain will sleep.

About the opinion pages

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms. Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of *The Post*, appear on the editorial page. Cartoons are the opinion of the cartoonist and columns are the opinion of the author. Neither necessarily reflects the viewpoint of *The Post*.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published subject to the following guidelines. Letters must not exceed 500 words. Except in unusual circumstances, no writer may have more than one letter published during a 30 day period. Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification. Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer. *The Post* retains the right to accept or reject any letter and to edit letters as necessary without distorting their meaning.

In addition to letters to the editor, we welcome longer pieces that may be run as columns. The author or the subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be our prime consideration when selecting material for publication.

To submit an item for publication, send it to: *The Dallas Post*, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612, or bring it to our office.



Ducks limited

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Letters

Business leaders' pay is out of line in the United States

Editor,
Your editorial (June 9) concerning executive pay was very timely. When CEOs' salaries are roughly 104 times what an average employee receives, the issue of executive pay is stirring outrage and cries for reform. On the proxy statements that stockholders receive, the salaries of the top five officers are supposedly shown. However, we're seeing more complicated packages and more finely-tuned efforts to obfuscate the actual amount of pay, especially through the use of stock options. CEOs commonly wait to exercise most of their options until after they retire, when their pay no longer is re-

ported in public documents. Let's consider one particular corporation, PNC Bank. I attended their stockholders' meeting in April in Pittsburgh and raised your question. I inquired: "Can you please have the board of directors justify the CEO's compensation of \$3,620,000?" The CEO explained that he only received \$800,000 in salary, a \$1 million bonus, and \$1,620,000 in stock options. I was informed that was only a median salary.

I then nominated myself for the board of directors with the following justification. I suggested that the current board was out of touch with the ordinary middle-class citi-

zen and needed someone to put things in proper perspective. Too many CEOs have a cozy relationship with their boardroom buddies. Attorneys and investment bankers commonly sit on the sensitive committees of corporations even though their firms commonly do business with the company. Board members have to exercise greater restraint.

At the biggest U.S. companies, the CEO collects an average yearly total of \$4 million, as you stated. In comparison, the Japanese counterpart pulled down \$525,000. Industrial Bank of Japan president Yoh Kurosawa made between \$460,000 and \$640,000 in salary

and bonus. The long-term incentives such as stock options are virtually unknown in Japan.

In other industrialized countries, the approximate annual compensation for the typical CEOs of the top 30 companies were: Britain, \$1,100,000; France, \$800,000; Germany, \$800,000.

How the heck do you spend \$4 million a year? Again, *The Dallas Post* touches on a critical issue. Hopefully, all shareholders will carefully peruse their proxy statements and ask questions and demand satisfactory answers.

Clarence J. Michael
Dallas

A. Case for conservation

A short refresher course in Ecology 101

By ALENE N. CASE

"Ecology" is a word that is used frequently these days. I have met people from many countries who assume that an ecologist is the same as an environmental scientist or even an environmental activist. It is important for all of us—no matter what we call ourselves—to understand the basic principles of ecology. These basics give us the foundations for intelligent action and discussion on a wide variety of environmental and conservation issues.

According to Webster, ecology is "the branch of biology that deals with the relations between living organisms and their environment." Thus, whereas an environmental scientist might study only meteorology or soil science with little or no concern about plants and animals, an ecologist begins with the biology and looks secondarily at the environment. This environment includes other plants and animals as well as physical factors such as sunlight, moisture, temperature, and so on. So, what are some of these

ecological principles with which we should be familiar? The first principle is that it is impossible for any living organism to exist without affecting its environment in some way. In order to survive, each creature must obtain nourishment and dispose of waste products. In other words, we all use energy and recycle materials. That brings us to the next two basic principles: (1) Energy always degrades to a lower form, eventually being given off as heat; and (2) Matter can never be "consumed," it can only be recycled.

Let us examine these principles more closely. We have all heard of food chains or food webs. In that scheme, the plants always come first because they can use energy from sunlight to manufacture food (sugars) from raw materials. Then the plant is eaten by an animal—let's say an insect—and the insect is eaten by a bird and the bird is eaten by a weasel and so on. But, how much of the original energy is available to the weasel? Not much. In general, 90 percent of the energy is lost at each step along the way. In other words, the insect

gets 10 percent of the energy available from the plant; the bird gets 1 percent; and the poor weasel only gets 0.1 percent. One wonders why weasels don't eat plants!

When food is taken in, it is either used to provide energy for the organism or to gain useful materials for growth or is eliminated by the body. As energy is used, it is degraded to heat and released. But, the materials may be converted into tissue or stored for future use. When the organism dies, these materials are made available to other plants and animals by the process of decay. Decay is facilitated by decomposers—the bacteria and fungi. These, in turn, may be eaten by small animals and the cycle begins once more.

There are many other principles involved in this cycle of eating and being eaten; living and dying. Groups of organisms tend to multiply until a lack of space or food or an overproduction of waste products limits the size of the population or until other organisms prevent their further expansion. Therefore, the presence of

predators (i.e. those who eat you) are as important as the presence of prey (i.e. those you eat). A healthy population is generally one in which the death rate is roughly equal to the birth rate.

The word, population, refers to a group of similar organisms, within a certain area. It is also used to refer to all individuals of a certain type in the entire world. A community is an assemblage of plants and animals within a certain area. There are special branches within ecology that deal with populations or communities or landscapes.

Please remember that ecology is a relatively new branch of a fairly new science. Biology has only been studied for a couple of centuries. Therefore, ecological information is evolving as scientists continue to study the relationships among organisms and their natural surroundings. Decisions regarding conservation should be based upon underlying physical and chemical principles and upon the most complete ecological information that exists at the time.

The economic viewpoint

Northeast PA has a special bond with Bahai, Brazil

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

A special and unique relationship exists between Eastern Pennsylvania and Bahia, Brazil. Bahia is a large coastal state as fascinating by its cultural diversity as its beauty and is the location where Brazil was founded. The special relationship between Eastern Pennsylvania and Bahia is a result of the region's participation as a Partner State under the Partners of the Americas Program.

Following the demise of the Alliance for Progress which was President John F. Kennedy's Program to assist Latin America, a voluntary non-profit corporation was established called the National Association of Partners of the Americas. Under this Program, a state in the US or a portion thereof has a partner state in South America, Central America or the Caribbean. There are 60 such partnerships under Partners of the Americas. In Pennsylvania, Eastern Pennsylvania is tied to

Bahia, Brazil and Western Pennsylvania is tied to Maranhao, another state in Brazil.

In November 1991, the International Convention of Partners of the Americas was held in Salvador, a city of 2,000,000 people and the capital of Bahia. The International Convention attracted several hundred representatives from Partners states in the Americas. One of the exciting events at the convention was the receipt of the prestigious American Express Four dation Award by the Eastern Pennsylvania Partners Committee and the Bahia, Brazil Partners Committee in the category of organizational development. As a result of this Award, each Committee receives \$750 as well as recognition as having an outstanding Partners Program.

For over 25 years, the Partners Program as represented by the Eastern Pennsylvania-Bahia, Brazil connection has meant a people-to-people and institution to institution relationship of sig-

nificant importance. The results have been exchanges of technical personnel between Pennsylvania and Bahia, sponsorship of conferences, seminars, and workshops on topics of importance to Bahia, projects which have relevance to the needs of Bahia such as those having to do with health, CPR training, exchange of children's arts projects, cultural exchanges, the establishment of an economic development council in the Valley of Jequirica, the cocoa region of Bahia, modeled on the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP) and much more.

As a result of the recent International Convention, plans for 1992 were prepared by the Bahia Partners Committee and this will be matched by an appropriate response to the needs expressed in the 1992 Bahia plan on the part of the Eastern Pennsylvania Partners Committee. Among the activities will be a series of workshops and seminars requested by

Bahia Partners, completion of a 25 year progress report on the results of the Partners Program, further development of the Valley of Jequirica project, expansion of ways to enhance franchising operations in Bahia, and much more.

Most recently, two successful seminars were sponsored in Bahia, one on franchising which featured Philadelphia attorney Joseph Schumacher and a special seminar on recycling. During 1992 the recycling program will continue in Bahia with a second follow-up conference expected in the latter part of the year and will cover the topic of urban waste disposal.

Howard Grossman is Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

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P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
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Ronald A. Bartizek
Editor and Publisher

Charlotte E. Bartizek
Associate Publisher

Peggy Young
Advertising Acct. Exec.

Grace R. Dove
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