

## As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

In a previous reincarnation, for one year I wrote a column for another paper, and during that time I suggested to their editor that some of my columns be restaurant reviews.

I had planned to slant them primarily at senior and pick places which were bargains, and offer comments on the food and service, prices, etc. pretty much like Elaine Tait does for the INQUIRER. I was certain it would be interesting reading besides being helpful to the dining out set.

Well the editor squelched my idea. She said (and now you know which paper) that owners of local restaurants got upset "when their establishments were criticized." She added, somewhat haughtily I thought, "This valley isn't ready for anything like that."

Well it wasn't long after that we parted company (no, silly, not over that...you could say it was by mutual agreement.) Then that same paper suddenly started printing weekly restaurant reviews, all on the exact same lines I had suggested but with this disclaimer, "The reviewer's identity is withheld to avoid the possibility of preferential treatment."

And so in the spirit of friendly

## Yummy for the tummy

competitiveness we'll do our own review, only in their inimitable and unique style. If you haven't read any of theirs, you'll get the idea pretty quickly. I wouldn't call my version satire exactly, for its synonyms are caustic, sarcastic and ironical, and heck no, I won't be like those. No, it's all in fun, but if they get upset about it, then frankly, my dear, I don't give a you-know-what!

So here goes:

### THE OLD LOG INN A Veddly Special Restaurant Review

**Where:** Midway between Kunkle and Lehman  
**Atmosphere:** NONE  
**Menu:** Back Mountain  
**Prices:** Market  
**Hours:** Daylight to midnight  
**Phone:** Disconnected  
**Credit Cards:** Cash on bar-reelhead  
**Smoking:** You bet

The first thing I noticed about the Old Log Inn was that the entrance was through the front door. I prefer that when we dine out; going through the kitchen to get to one's table is so tacky.

The foyer was small and not too well lighted. As we hung our coats on the moosehead rack I noticed the wallpaper had a tad too much pink. The flower design was a bit fusty also.

Chairs in the dining room all had the correct number of legs, which I prefer, and the table seemed to be just about the right height once we were seated, which did not take a tad too long.

On the one-page menu - hard

to see in the oil lamp's light - there were no appetizers at all. I found this rather disappointing because it meant that I would have to order two entrees. However as luck would have it, there were two on the menu although the waitress, when she finally returned, said some nights there were three entrees on the menu.

My first selection, *tarte aux legumes beurre de citron*, turned out to be a sort of inept quiche in an overcooked crust. *Crepe de ris de veau* was a flaccid wrapper filled with hard little nuggets that might once have been sweetbreads. A *galette de crabe a la bisque* my companion had was a soggy mess, while it should have seen a lovely puff filled with fat chunks of crab meat in a rich and delicious sauce...

Oh my! I am sorry! I must have mixed up my notes from a weekend in Philadelphia. Those dishes weren't from the Old Log Inn at all! Thinking back I am not sure what we had there. Mine was possum I believe, underdone, and with a tad too much tarragon, while my companion had wild boar, which he complained was done too well and had a tad too much tad.

Oh well, anyway they told us not to come back after we complained about there being no desserts. I had been looking forward to at least a brownie or two. I prefer two. With French Vanilla. Two scoops.

So, see you next week when we perhaps will have dined at a more civilized hostelry. Learn and live, I always say.

And, as the Romans always say, "Bon Appetitus!"

## A Case for Conservation



Alene N. Case

When I began writing this column, I knew that I had a bias that would make the choice of topics somewhat difficult. That bias had to do with trees and forestry. Over the years I have written several articles on these issues, but I have tried very hard not to overdo it. Apparently, I have succeeded too well! Judging from the requests from readers to address the loss of large trees in our neighborhoods, I am not the only one with a bias in favor of trees. Therefore, I pledge to continue to write on this subject as often as seems appropriate.

February is an excellent time to consider the health of our community forests. Pruning - especially of fruit trees - is best done during the very next "warm" spell (that is, when the daytime temperature reaches 40°F. or more). A quick review of pruning techniques is advisable each year before you sharpen those implements. And, don't forget to inspect other trees and shrubs for "winter kill" (tips of branches that have been hurt by freezing) or for damage by ice and snow.

Late winter is the best time to take care of such pruning. If you wait until spring, the loss of sap could be harmful for the tree and insects might attack the wound before it heals. Speaking of insects, this is also about the right time to spray with "dormant oil" so that the egg masses and larvae that have over-wintered on your trees will not have a chance to hatch or turn into adults when warmer weather arrives.

Suppose you do not have trees to prune or spray, but you would like to get involved in some way - you could attend a workshop or

## Our trees, our friends: take good care of them

conference on the care of community trees. There is a wide range of possibilities, both local and national. Workshops on topics as varied as funding, liability, and creative development are being held in northeastern PA during late February and March. Call Vinnie Cotrone at 825-1701 to get the latest information. He is our local urban forester associated with the Luzerne County Cooperative Extension and I know he would be thrilled if citizens in the Back Mountain would take a more active role in planning and protecting our suburban forest.

The National Arbor Day Foundation plans workshops and conferences all year round. Some of these are held in Nebraska, but many others occur closer to us. In March there are two conferences on Building with Trees - one in Richmond, VA and one in Burlington, VT. Or, if you are heading south in mid-March, you could sign up for a one-day workshop given by "tree guru" Dr. Alex Shigo in Atlanta or Orlando. Call (402) 474-5655 for more information on any Foundation activities.

One of my favorite activities on a cold day is to curl up with a stack of nursery catalogs and plan spring tree-planting and summer gardens. This year we will be adding to our tiny plot of future Christmas trees. As a "thank you" for our tiny order, the National Arbor Day Foundation will be sending us two free sugar maples. We have nowhere to plant them. Do you? I also have a few flowering trees of assorted types heeled in near our shed. These are also looking for good homes. Please contact me through this newspaper if you would like any of these free trees.

But, perhaps you would rather order your own trees. There are many important considerations. Since many of our neighbors have an irrational fear of large trees and have cut them down or "topped" them, it is important that the rest of us plant large trees to

replace them. If our community turns entirely to small ornamental trees and severely pruned shrubs, the natural benefits of the plants will be much less than if we nurture and plant larger species. The city of Frederick, MD recently discovered that their city trees reduce air conditioning costs by \$1,000,000! And, that did not include benefits such as slowing storm run-off, cleaning the air, reducing heating costs, or holding soil in place. Our communities need such an appreciation of the actual benefits of our trees.

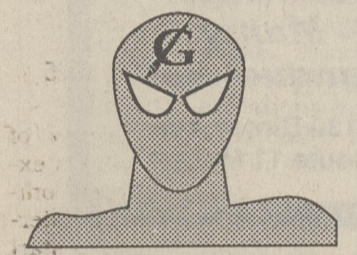
But, I have digressed - let's get back to the choices we make. I recommend that you plant the largest tree for which you have space (please do not think that you must buy a tree that is already large - a seedling will grow fast and costs much less). If you live close to a busy highway, pick a variety that is not sensitive to air pollution.

If you only have room for small trees, consider planting something useful such as a dwarf fruit tree (these grow to be smaller than full-sized trees but the fruits are regular size). Trees will make your surroundings more comfortable, more beautiful, and also more interesting. Birds like to have branches on which to rest when they fly back and forth from your feeder. Many trees bear seeds or fruits that attract birds and small mammals. Your yard will begin to look less like a putting green and more like a part of the wider creation.

Concern for the trees of our community is one of the best ways to "act locally," as the saying goes. Let us begin with our own yards and branch out into our boroughs and townships. I will be happy to supply ideas and facts and figures. Please let this paper know about tree-planting events and other activities that can be announced in order to encourage actions by others.

Together we can make a difference.

## Ghostwriter



by Paul Rismiller

I've recently been accused of being out of line with my criticism (mockery would be a better phrase) of the current occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Perhaps my dismay and disgust with the leader of the free world, and her husband, will be more understandable if I get something off my chest.

I was a Clintonista!

Yes, I confess - I not only voted for Bubba, but I actively worked as a campaign volunteer for "the man from Hope!"

Now I must work overtime to expiate my sin.

You see, I actually believed that Bill Clinton was a "New Democrat". That he was done with the liberal lie that the government could solve social ills by shoveling more and more of our tax dollars at them.

I was self-deluded.

I wanted to fire George Bush for betraying the legacy of the Reagan years by cutting a deal with the congressional Democrats to rip us off. Voting for the "little general", Ross Perot, was out of the question. Despite the comic relief he provided during the '92 campaign, I would have given serious consideration to emigration if he had, by some disastrous happenstance, become president.

And even though I had serious doubts as to Clinton's character, I blew them off. As a vet, I shrugged off his draft scam, when I should have known better. I ignored the "bimbo eruptions", glazed over shady financial dealings and Hillary's wacko left leanings.

In short, I settled for the lesser of three evils.

And what did I, and the rest of the nation get? Whiplash from the sharp left turn Bill made after drop-

## Confessions of a Clintonista; pulling the plug on PBS, O.J.

ping his right hand on inauguration day. (Which, by the way, wouldn't have been covered by Hillary's power-grab, er, Health Care Plan.)

And boy, did Clinton hit the ground running! Gays in the Military, Nannygate, Travelgate, the Health Care scam, Bosnia, North Korea, Whitewater, the Foster suicide, Jocelyn Elders, etc., etc., ad nauseam.

Even now, at the mid-point of his first (and hopefully only term) what have we got?

- Barbara Streisand seems to have become Hillary's stand-in. Whatever talent Ms. Streisand possesses has always eluded me, but she is a success in her field. Unfortunately, her field isn't politics. B.S. has been more and more visible as a Bubba-Booster, obviously confusing her freedom of expression with a right to be taken seriously.

- The troubled nomination of Dr. Henry Foster for Surgeon General. As an OB-GYN man, it would have surprised me if Dr. Foster had not performed any abortions, and whether you're pro or anti-abortion, the fact remains that the procedure is legal.

But the number of abortions isn't what's sinking the nomination of "Elders Lite" - it's the fact that the number is changing on a seemingly daily basis. It betrays the administration's institutional, pathological, avoidance of the truth. The Clinton philosophy seems to be: "How can we fool them today?" (Dittos to Rush.)

- Clinton's sticking his nose in the baseball strike, and as usual, proving to be a national embarrassment. Bad enough trying to inject the federal government in something it has no business in, worse still to be ignored by the parties involved. As to the ballplayers, I don't care if they ever come back.

Given all of the above, my criticism is hardly out of line.

As the government finally begins the debate on curtailing the albatross of welfare for the poor, it

seems only fitting that we include welfare for the affluent in the discussion as well.

One example has already been booted about - cutting taxpayer funding to PBS. Critics of public broadcasting point to a decidedly leftward ideological bent. Defenders enriching programming, available no where else.

Both sides have valid points. But the question is, should federal tax money be supporting it?

The answer is a resounding no! While tax funding was obviously necessary to get PBS up and running, it is now a going concern, receiving only 20% of its budget from the feds. PBS's defenders are trying to hide behind Barney and Big Bird, claiming the heartless Republicans want to croak these lovable characters, but these critics pull in billions of dollars - none of which are going into PBS's coffers.

They should certainly get a cut from money-makers, and they may actually have to tighten their belts. But PBS most assuredly can make up the shortfall when Uncle Sam, rightfully, pulls the plug.

I know I can't be the only one sick and tired of the O.J. spectacle, and here I find myself weighing in on the mess!

While I don't want to discount the sad and savage deaths of Nicole Simpson and Ron Goodman, there are, tragically, murder trails taking place in every state of the union every day. Just because the accused in this case is famous, the press has been cramming it down our throats.

At this point, I don't care if O.J. is found innocent or guilty, drops dead, or is stuffed in the trunk of the next space shuttle. If I thought it might be taken seriously, I'd consider confessing, if only to purge the airwaves of O.J.!

And that's the saddest part of being beaten over the head with this case every day. As a citizen I should care whether an innocent man is imprisoned...or a murderer walks free.

## L-L pre-school program

Charles James and Robert Kunkle, Elementary Principals for the Lake-Lehman School District, announce the third installment of Lake-Lehman's Early Childhood/Pre-school Program is scheduled for February 21, 22 and 23, and will feature nutrition and health, along with an explanation of kindergarten.

Faculty from each building will conduct the nutrition and health presentation. Separate activities including storytime, games, crafts and snacks are scheduled for the children at each elementary school.

The schedule for this pre-school presentation is as follows:

Feb. 21, Ross, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.; Feb. 22, Lake-Noxen, 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.; Feb. 23, Lehman-

Jackson, 9 a.m.-10:30 a.m.

Program topics: Nutrition and Health - On this date parents and children are invited to be our guests for lunch with the Kindergarten classes. Explanation of Screening Procedure.

To register for this third presentation, call the neighboring elementary school office and let them know how many adults and children will be attending:

Ross Elementary School, 477-5050 or 256-7897; Lake-Noxen Elementary School, 639-1129; Lehman-Jackson Elementary School, 675-2165.

The program is intended for four-year olds only. It is kindly requested that you not bring younger brothers and sisters unless there is no alternative.

## Penn State to host paralegal open house

Penn State Wilkes-Barre will hold a Paralegal Program Open House February 23 from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. in Hayfield House at the campus in Lehman. The Paralegal Career Night is free and open to the public, and recent high school graduates are encouraged to attend.

Reservations are requested by February 21.

For more information or to RSVP for the Open House, call Penn State's Continuing Education, 675-9251.

**Q:** Where do you find the most Back Mountain news each week?  
**A:** Only in The Dallas Post

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