

## A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

Once upon a time, there was a city named Curitiba. It had all the usual problems of large, growing cities in South America — unemployment, pollution, congestion, flooding and squatter settlements. But, over the past 30 years, Curitiba in southern Brazil has become a model to the world. What makes mayors from Paris to Toronto to Santiago want to learn from Curitiba? In a world — PLANNING.

Jaime Lerner was described as a "visionary mayor" in an article about this city in the March 1996 issue of *Scientific American*. He was an architect and planner who looked for creative and appropriate solutions to the problems of his city and, by all accounts found them. Since his was a relatively poor city, he knew that he could not invest in high-tech solutions. Instead, he succeeded by solving multiple problems at once. Curitiba now has over two million inhabitants with an income profile that is similar to other cities in the region, but it has significantly less pollution, slightly lower crime rates, higher literacy rates, and no flooding.

One of the most successful parts of Curitiba's make-over was the installation of a rather simple system of busways. There are five main spokes which reach out to dense population areas or to industrial hubs. The main hub, of course, is the center of the city. The buses are privately owned and operated. They maintain a

## Urban planning can help to solve many problems

fast schedule partly because customers pay when they enter the raised "boarding tube" much as they would do at a subway station entrance. The tube also has a lift that allows wheel chair access. That way each bus does not need to be outfitted with a lift or wait while a person in a wheel chair enters the bus. All bus entrances and exits are wide, making for quicker boarding and disembarking at all stops. This system is so efficient and inexpensive that one quarter of all automobile owners take public transportation to work each day.

By allowing people to reach their destinations quickly and easily, this mass transit system has prevented the congestion and smog which plague other large cities. There are also bikeways and pedestrian areas that are incorporated into the transportation system. These often lead through the parks along streams, ponds, and other drainage control areas that were created to alleviate flooding. Green space per capita is up to 50 square meters in comparison to less than one square meter in 1970. There is an area of downtown shops and cafes that remain open all night so that the center city is a vital part of people's lives.

Curitiba also has innovative approaches to its solid waste disposal problems. First, it sets an example by recycling everything from old buses (used as mobile classrooms or offices) to utility poles (used as construction materials for park buildings and walkways). Second, poor families who tend to live in settlements not regularly served by garbage pick-up services can exchange bags of trash for bus tokens, packages of food, or school notebooks. A mil-

lion bus tokens and 1,200 tons of surplus food have been distributed in this way. The city also hires temporary workers (usually retired or unemployed persons) to clean up areas of the city where trash has accumulated.

The planning and innovation shown by the city of Curitiba could help any region with any set of problems. There are rural areas in the United States which have worked with landscape architects to create greenways, minimize agricultural runoff, provide environmental education for disabled children, maintain the vitality of historic districts, conserve water, etc. "As design professionals, they are able to synthesize and translate their knowledge and the specialized input of others into comprehensive plans or design concepts that will meet the varied needs of clients and user groups while also respecting the landscape's role in the larger ecosystem." (From a booklet put together by the National Endowment for the Arts and the US Department of Agriculture, 1995).

In other words, if we are willing to ask for some help in solving our present and future problems and if we are willing to work together, there are skilled people there waiting to help.

Let us resolve to work together toward the kind of regional planning that will lead us to innovative solutions to our local problems as the people of Curitiba, Brazil have done. And, perhaps, 30 years from now, the mayors of Miami and Tokyo will come to the Wyoming Valley to see how we did it.

...And we will all live happily ever after.

## Mainstream



John W. Johnson

"What the hell we doin' there?" Silas McMarnar asks.

"Doing where?" wonders Roscoe Bismark.

The Breakfast Club has barely seated itself when Silas asks again.

"There...in Bosnia?"

"NATO," Roscoe shrugs.

"NATO don't know," McMarnar mocks.

The waitress at a nearby table picks up her tips and pretends not to listen. The diner crowd, as it always does, listens without pretense.

Roscoe waits for a few seconds, knowing Silas will calm with his arriving coffee.

Out come the newspapers for the obligatory five-minute lull before the debate. And when it comes, resident historian Roscoe points out:

The occupation of a foreign soil by U.S. troops in this century has become almost commonplace as it is now with our (and to say it is a UN occupation begs the questions) occupation in Bosnia.

Beginning with Beirut in 1982, U.S. troops have been on foreign soil eight times in the past 13 years alone, and in this century, the U.S. has interfered in Panamanian affairs 13 times. Setting aside the world wars, Korea and Vietnam, the U.S. has intervened with military force in other nations an additional 11 times. The interesting number is, with the

## Is it our duty to mind every other country's business?

exception of Lebanon in 1958, all of those military interventions prior to 1982 took place in Central America and the Caribbean.

President Roosevelt began the century in 1903 with warships being sent to prevent Columbia from intervening after its northern province seceded to become Panama. A literal outgrowth was repayment to the U.S. by allowing building of the Panama Canal. Woodrow Wilson sent troops into Mexico from 1914-17 to protect American business interests during the Mexican Revolution.

From 1916 through 1924 U.S. troops were sent to the Dominican Republic; the dictator Rafael Trujillo emerged after that occupation.

From 1926 through 1933, both Presidents Hoover and Roosevelt sent troops into Nicaragua and insured the eventual rise of the dictator Somoza and his family.

President Eisenhower sent troops to Guatemala in 1954, and in 1961 President Kennedy supported Cuban troops in the Bay of Pigs invasion.

This was followed, of course, by President Johnson's use of troops in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and President Reagan's 1983 invasion of Grenada.

Should we have gone to all those places? Should we now be in Bosnia? Right or wrong, the intervention again raises the question of the U.S. military's role.

"Can we do any good there?" Silas asks again. "Do we belong in a country which has, essentially, been fighting this same war for most of our century?"

It was a single shot by a Serbian assassin in 1914 which killed

Francis Ferdinand, and touched off World War I. Roscoe ponders the bottom of his coffee cup. "And in perhaps the ultimate political irony for the right-wing political hawks in this nation, it was Communism which kept Eastern Europe's warring factions at bay for the better part of this century," he says into the cup.

As usual, at the root of this centuries-old tragedy is minorities seeking power through seeking land, fermented by ethnicity, and fueled by religious fervor.

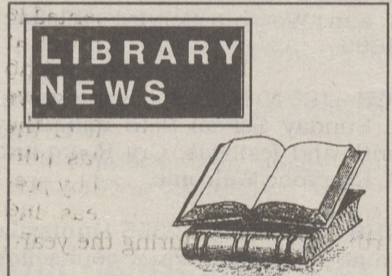
Religion, once again, stands out as the single largest institutional mechanism for human destruction.

Since 1982 some 783 Americans have died on foreign soil as a legacy to American intervention. Each and every time, we were told it was either to protect American security interests, or to preserve a fledgling democracy, or just to help the bullied survive the bully.

"What's it going to be this time?" Silas wonders, his deep blue eyes shouting the question. "What's it going to be as history repeats itself? As this civil war, like all civil wars, plays itself out across the pages of history?"

It was Shakespeare who said, "All the world's a stage, and all of us merely players." A stage whose props and lighting change virtually every minute, and yet whose players almost always choose ancient angers over new understandings.

Ancient angers, in the pathway of which idealistic young men, regardless of race, creed, or national origin, will always find themselves thrust upon the altar of history.



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library was the recipient of a large card board check, approximately 39 inches long and 23 inches high. This was presented to the library on Thursday, February 15 at the ribbon cutting for the new Dallas Wendy's Restaurant. The actual check was for \$256.00; the number of ways to order a Wendy's sandwich. The manager of the Dallas Wendy's stated they are committed to working with the library and the children for the future of our community. This money will be used for a special project.

A "Stress" busting techniques program will be held at the Back Mountain Memorial Library on Wednesday, May 22, from 7 to 8:30 in the evening. The program will be presented by 'Healthworks of Kingston'. Everyone is welcome. Come and learn simple techniques to help relieve the stress of everyday living! Wear comfortable, loose clothing. Come and enjoy!

New books at the library: "The Ugly Duckling" by Iris Johansen is a thrilling tale of contemporary romantic suspense that gives the age-old myth of transformation a stunningly unique twist—as an ugly duckling becomes a breathtaking beauty whose burning wish for revenge entangles her in a precarious world of sinister intrigue and dark desire. This is an explosive, enthralling, powerfully engrossing entertainment novel.

"Walking After Midnight" by Karen Robards is a lively, suspenseful, and sexy romantic thriller whose heroine discovers that the man of one's dreams sometimes wears a disguise. Summer McAfee is a survivor, and when her former life as a New York lingerie model went south along with her marriage, she founded

## Library will host program on stressbusting May 22

her own janitorial service as away to pay the rent. That explains why she's cleaning the town's funeral home at two in the morning.

"Love, Again" by Doris Lessing tells the story of a sixty-five-year-old woman who falls in love; or rather, falls into a state of love, which is another country alto-

gether, and struggles to maintain her sanity while there. Widowed for many years, she is a writer who works in the theatre in London. She falls in love with a seductive young actor, and then with the mature director. She finds herself in a state of longing and desire.

## No sale signs on utility poles in KT

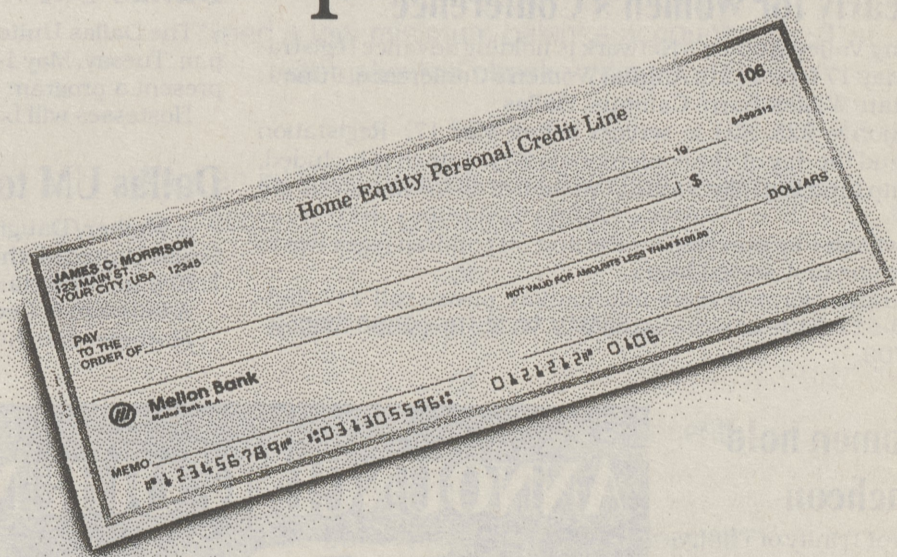
The Kington Township zoning officer reminds the residents of the Township that it is illegal to attach garage/yard sale signs to telephone poles or trees. Signs should be attached to individual stakes and be removed no later than two days after the sale.

Violators may be fined up to \$300. Additional information may be obtained from the zoning officer at 696-3809.

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Mon.-Sat. 10-8 • Sat. 9-6 • Sun. 12-6

## Legion Post 672 to meet May 10

Daddow-Isacs Post 672, The American Legion, will hold nomination of officers for the Legion and Home Association May 10, at the post home on Rte. 415. At 8 p.m. The Home Association will give its annual report and answer all questions on the business of the Association. Legion dues for 1996 are now due. Refreshments will be served.