

EDITORIALS

Here's a place for government to do good

Listening to some of the loud voices on the right side of the political spectrum, on some editorial pages and from behind fences in Montana, you get the impression the biggest problem with America is too much government. No doubt there are instances where that's true, but not always. Sometimes too little government endangers the rights and pleasures of individuals just as surely as too much regulation strangles them.

For an example, look at the seemingly intrusive regulation about grass height in Kingston Township. The rule says that all grass and other vegetation on improved property must be kept at a height of six inches or less at all times. And if the property owner doesn't take care of the grass himself, the township can cut it and send a bill.

We know there are many people who think the government — local, state or federal — has no right to tell them what to do with their land. After all, they own it, and they can do as they please with it. Those folks would find Dallas Borough's ordinance far more to their liking; it says the grass must be cut by August 15 of each year. That's as close to no regulation as you can get.

But think a little more deeply about the government's role in our society. An absence of rules is called anarchy, a non-system in which each person does as they please and differences are settled between individuals. That usually means the most powerful hold sway over as much territory as they can manage. We don't think many people would choose a society like that over one where an elected central authority makes and enforces rules that balance individual and group interests.

In this case, neighbors of a home in Dallas Borough are being held hostage by an irresponsible home owner who has abandoned a house on their street. They are all suffering, both in esthetic and financial terms. Can you imagine trying to sell a well-kept home that sits down the street from one with waist-high grass in the yard and trash on the deck? While his "rights" are being upheld, your ability to live a healthy and prosperous life is being trampled.

Reasonable regulations may cause inconvenience or cost a bit to comply with, but in the long run we gain from them. While we can't disagree that some rules are unreasonable, the vast majority have been developed with the greatest good in mind, and observance of them benefits most individuals and the society in general.

Cable television makes good offer to schools

The cable television industry is stepping into the breach left by government, volunteering to wire every school in the United States with sophisticated technology that will allow students access to the Internet and other cyberwonders. The industry has offered to provide a free connection and a cable modem, which allows substantially faster data transfer than phone modems, to schools, and in some cases will install other equipment and give ongoing service at no charge.

This appears to be a fine example of public service by private industry. School teachers and administrators, even if they are handy with computers, aren't able to research and install this technology, and school boards will be happy to avoid new expenses. Students will benefit because the faster transfer will make the Internet and other computer services far more useful and engaging.

Cable companies have enjoyed a local monopoly for many years, and it's gratifying to see them eager to offer this valuable service in return for the prosperity they've enjoyed.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I must confess to watching far less of the 1996 Olympics than any before. That could be because I'm simply busier with other things, or that NBC's coverage wasn't strong enough to draw me in. I'm really not sure which it was, but probably a little of both.

Complaints about the style of television coverage generally focus on whether too much or too little was shown of a particular sport, or if the heart-tugging (at least they were meant to be that) features were overdone or shown too often. I won't get into that, but there's a more fundamental question about how NBC handled the Games.

For my money, by failing to distinguish between live and taped coverage, the network threw away its integrity and gained nothing in return. Worse, NBC intentionally misrepresented some events by showing a live overhead shot of a venue, then switching to the action, which had taken place hours before. And, in the cases where the event was live, not saying so cooled whatever drama might have added some balance to the sickening-sweet profiles of athletes, who would be better remembered for their performance and not their trials and tribulations outside of sport.

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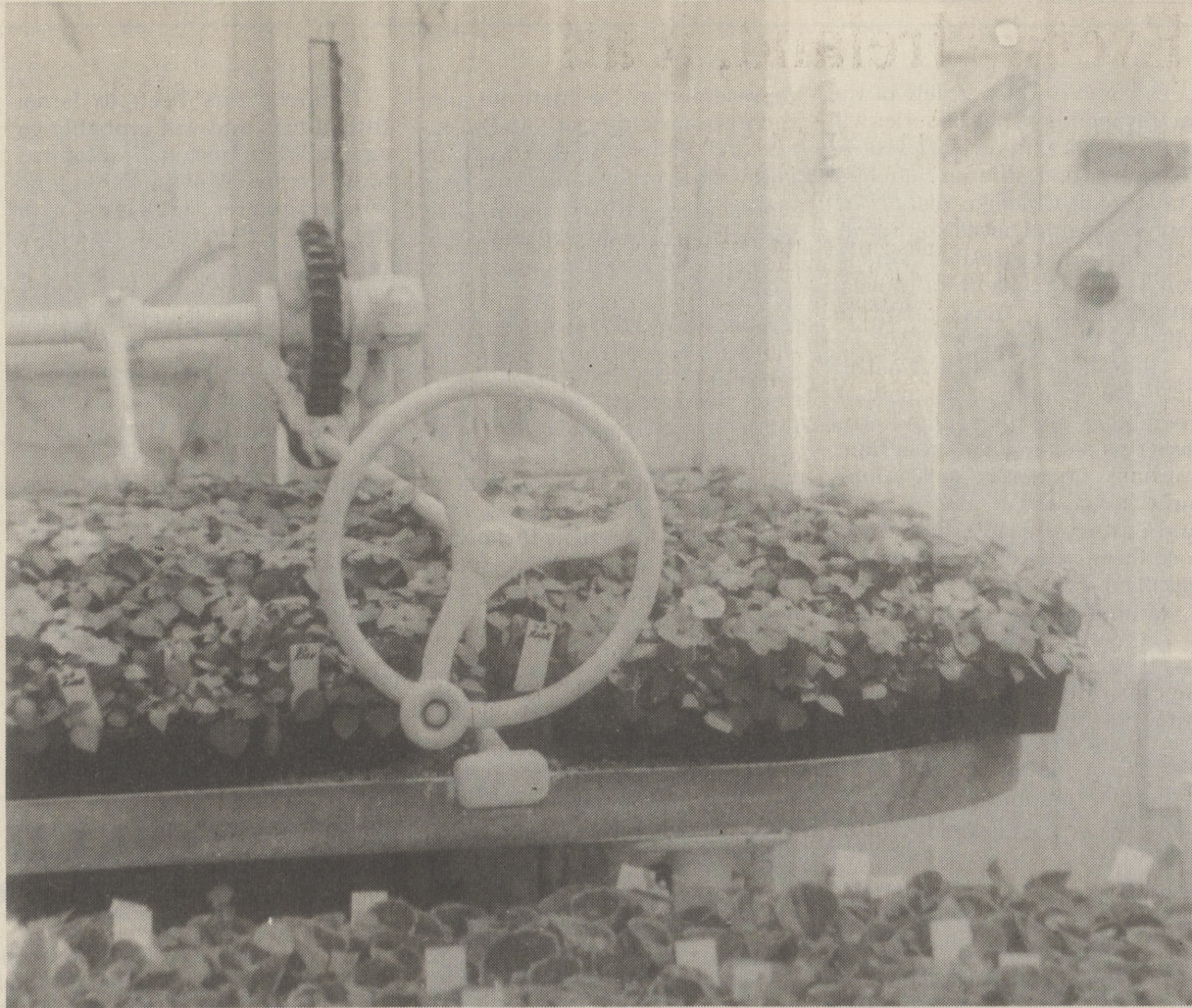
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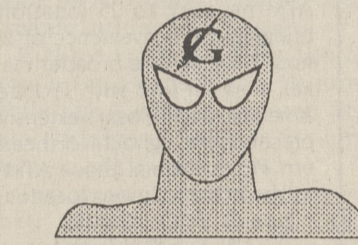
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Summer's blooms, when they were still young. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Ghostwriter



by Paul Rismiller

As it's been awhile since I've let my spectral presence be felt, we've got a lot of ground to cover, so forgive me if this column moves along at a Larry King-like clip. But on the bright side, unlike the "soft-ball King", I make sense!

"Eenie Meenie, Chili Beanie, The Spirits are about to Speak!"

- Jean Houston

Or was that Bullwinkle J. Moose? It's difficult to keep the first ladies' "spiritual advisor" and the famed cartoon moose separate in my mind, although frankly, I think Bullwinkle has more credibility. I mean, Frostbite Falls' favorite son never claimed degrees and/or positions from universities that never heard of him, as at least two institutions say of Jean.

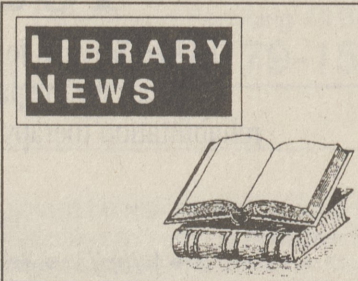
Of course, the most interesting thing about the revelation that Hillary sought advice from the late Eleanor Roosevelt was the reaction of the press, especially in light of the way they treated Nancy Reagan's consulting astrologers. Nancy was at least looking out for Ron. Hillary Rodham's questions to the late first lady all revolved around Hillary Rodham.

The least she could have done was to ask Eleanor who and what to watch out for at the Atlanta Olympics!

Filegate: An innocent "bureaucratic snafu", huh? Just imagine if Clinton were a Republican - he'd have been run out of D.C. on a rail by the press when it came out he was perusing the "confidential" FBI files of political opponents. But...

However, my crystal ball predicts indictments and incarceration for this caper.

Speaking of the feds, isn't it



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library summer reading program "Patchwork Pennsylvania Readers" will conclude with a final party on August 9 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Refreshments, games, prizes and certificates will be handed out. Plans will be made for the outside, weather permitting. Sign up should be made at the front desk in the library.

The Fall Story Hour registration will be held September 3 through the 7th at the library in the children's room. Sign up is necessary. Space is limited. The toddler story hour begins October 1 and the three to five year olds

Observations ala King, and more media muffs

interesting how former FBI Agent Gary Aldrich's book *Unlimited Access* raised such a firestorm of protest, arm twisting and sniveling from the White House, and then was subsequently blown off as "not credible" by the press because it's hard to believe that Bill Clinton could slip the leash of his Secret Service detail.

First of all, that was only one of the allegations in the book. If the mainstream press was blown off for one "error in fact" in their stories, we'd have to revive the office of town crier to get our news. (Remember "cuts" in Medicare?)

Secondly, do the initials J.F.K. ring any bells? Granted, times have changed since the days of Camelot, but where there's a will, there's a way, and considering the way Bubba used and abused Arkansas states, I for one don't believe the scenario is all that far-fetched.

And on the subject of literature, I just don't get all the snarling and gnashing of teeth in the press over the unveiling of Newsweek columnist Joe Klein as the "Anonymous" of *Primary Colors* fame. To hear the talking heads and liberal columnists tell it, Klein is a direct descendant of Judas Iscariot, and should be walking around in a hair shirt for damaging the credibility of the press.

Klein wrote a *novel*, for crying out loud, and the speculation surrounding the identity of the author undoubtedly cranked up sales. And as for credibility (Remember "cuts" in Medicare?) I don't recall anyone in the media falling all over themselves trying to find the facts behind the "fictionalized" sleazeoid behavior in Klein's book, even after various administration officials talked about how eerily accurate the book was.

Is it me, or is there a trend emerging throughout these items? Of course!

They all illustrate the credibility, or lack thereof, of the press. Unless and until the media, which is given to much self-analysis, get honest and admit their ideology is getting in the way of their profession, things will not change. There is already a built-in distrust of the press among the public, and it will only get worse until they start re-

porting both sides of the story and researching facts. In other words, acting like reporters, instead of press agents and spinmeisters for the Democratic party.

And speaking of flacks, and closer to home, I can't think of any liberal columnist who sucks up more news hole being absolutely wrong about everything than Wilkes-Barre's own Tom Bigler. If the Bigmeister writes it, you know it's wrong! While Carl Rowan and Michael Kinsley are quite as knee-jerk and disingenuous as Tom on a national level, Bigler beats them both on word count on a regular basis.

Way to go Tom! Between you and the rabble-rouser, what's his name, the Wyoming Valley, often accused of being behind the times, will never be accused of lacking doctrinaire liberal or radical chic.

Watching the opening ceremonies of the Atlanta games, I was struck dumb by the even dumber sight of a bunch of kids running around with fake doves on sticks. It seems that several of the birdbrains roosted in the torch at the Olympics in Seoul and got instafired when it was lit.

This, of course, set up a collective wail from the bunny-huggers, who somehow strong-armed the Olympic committee into foregoing the traditional release of live birds. My question is, how?

I mean, there's precious little difference between wearing fur and leather, but the Animal Rights nuts find it much easier (and safer) to harass rich old matrons than biker gangs. So where do these crybabies get the power to intimidate international organizations?

I don't know, but I must confess that I too believe in animal rights. I believe they have the right to lay there and be delicious. And to the condiment or gravy of choice. And my cat agrees completely.

Back in the Back Mountain, the recent eviction of a well known family did not exactly send shock waves through the neighborhood, but many, including myself, thought Wilkes-Barre Mayor Tom McGroarty and his NIT Team made a wrong turn on the Cross Valley.

Summer reading program will end with a party

begins October 2.

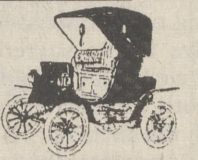
New Book Club books at the library: "The World At Night" by Alan Furst brings an extraordinary touch to a story of honor and lost love set against one of the 20th century's great battle-grounds of intrigue—the German-occupied Paris of 1940. Jean Carson is a typical Parisian male: dark-eyed, well dressed, well bred. He and his wife have an "arrangement".

"Equation For Evil" by Philip Caputo has it all: a riveting novel of suspense that takes dead aim at issues of violence, accountability, and racial unrest that threaten the very fabric of contemporary society. It is not to be missed. The story examines the anatomy of a horrific crime: a lone gunman has opened fire on a busload of Asian-American children in California.

"Accordion Crimes" by E Annie Proulx is a masterpiece of storytelling that spans a century and a continent. It opens in 1890 in Sicily as an accordion maker completes his finest instrument—19 polished bone buttons, sleek laquer and dreams of owning a music store in America. He and his son, carrying a green accordion, travel to the port of New Orleans.

"Neanderthal" by John Darnton begins in the mountains of northern Asia where a guerilla fighter vanishes, a schoolgirl is murdered, and an eminent Harvard paleontologist disappears. To a shadowy government agency in Maryland, these are all signs that something has gone terribly wrong with the most extraordinary expedition ever mounted. They are looking for the link.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Aug. 14, 1936

LONG LOST BOOK RETURNED FROM MINE

Norman Dinger, former supervising principal of Dallas Borough High School, received an offer this week of a position as supervising principal of Picture Rocks Vocational High School of Lycoming County. He had not decided he would take the position, but he intended to visit the school to investigate and was said to be considering the contract seriously.

A book left in a vein of Old Mt. Lookout mines in Exeter 45 years ago by Charles H. Wilner, Shavertown, was returned to him after workmen cleaning out that section of the mine discovered the worn volume. Wilner was a pump runner in 1891, read to pass time away during his 14 hour shift. He left the volume in the Pittston vein. The next day that vein was closed and partially filled with rock. Recently operations at the abandoned mine were resumed and one of the several employees engaged to clean out the Pittston vein found the old book, saturated with dampness of years. Wilner's name was clearly visible on one of the opening pages and the volume was turned over to Mr. Wilner by Frank Hoffiman, Exeter burgess.

50 Years Ago - Aug. 16, 1946

NATIVE SPURNS FUND, BEGINS CONSTRUCTION

Months of indecision and delay during which Native Lace Works Inc. of Hightstown, N.J. negotiated fruitlessly with Wyoming Valley Independent Development Fund for assistance in establishing a plant here, came to an end this week with the company severing all relations with the Fund. Immediately thereafter officials of Native Lace gave the "go ahead" signal to Sordoni Construction Co. and work started at once at Natona Mills, its new Dallas plant.

40 Years Ago - Aug. 10, 1956

CANVASS SMOKES OUT 400 TAX DODGERS

Demolition of the double-planked nine room house formerly occupied by the McGarry family on Gate of Heaven property started Monday and is going forward with a rush to make way for excavation for the new addition to the school. The addition soon to be constructed, will bring the school capacity to 800 elementary students, first grade through eighth.

A house to house canvass of Kingston Township by Thomas Jenkins commercial instructor at Westmoreland High School smoked out 400 adults who had never paid taxes, in the course of a routine school census required every three years. Many of the 400 had attained their majority four years ago, had registered for voting but had not reported to the tax collector Ted Poada as required by law. The three week census will result in \$4,000 added revenue from per capita taxes for use of the school district.

30 Years Ago - Aug. 11, 1966

HARVEYS LAKE PLEDGES ACTION ON LITTERING

Lake-Lehman directors worked through a long agenda Tuesday evening from endorsement of Civil Rights to letting of contracts for paving of a parking lot at the high school and laying of kindergarten floor at the Lake building.

Harveys Lake Supervisors will take action if persons hauling to the landfill do not keep their garbage covered. Chairman Walter Hoover reported highways were littered with papers and refuse from pickup trucks and trailers who fail to cover their loads. State law places a \$100 littering fine on such offenders and the supervisors plan to enforce it.

20 Years Ago - Aug. 12, 1976

ONE BID RECEIVED FOR OLD SCHOOL BUILDING

A lone bid of \$102,100 for the Shavertown Elementary School was received by the Dallas School District at the board meeting Tuesday evening. The bid was submitted to the secretary's office by William J. Powell, Hickory Hills, Dallas on personal stationery accompanied by a certified check in the amount of five percent of the total bid of \$5,105. Powell is the brother-in-law of Edmund Davis, an official of Burger King but the firm was not mentioned.