

EDITORIALS

# Tower is an issue of land use, and of trust in government

What is the price of progress, and who should decide how it's paid? Those are two key questions raised by the apparent intention of Dallas Township officials to embrace a 280-foot tower that ostensibly will be used to provide clear cellular phone service to the Back Mountain.

The township supervisors have already given their answer; they signed a contract with Cellular One committing the township to a 50-year lease of township property on which the tower will be constructed. That action is troubling for several reasons, among them handing over use of township property to a private company that has its own profits and not the good of the township as a top priority. The supervisors say the addition of \$800 a month to the township coffers and free use of the tower for use by fire, police and ambulance personnel is worth giving up use of the land.

Many people who live in Dallas Township disagree. They feel an unsightly tower in a highly-visible location will not only sully the character of the town, it likely will lower the value of their property as potential residents choose to live in a community that values esthetics more highly.

The tower itself, and its effect on the township, may not be the most important aspect of this issue. Of equal or greater consequence is the manner in which township officials approached the question of whether or not to lease township land to Cellular One. When the deal first came to light, the supervisors said the tower would require a variance for its height, which exceeded the township's three-story limit. But when opposition surfaced, officials changed the rules, declaring the company a public utility, which is exempt from zoning restrictions. Opponents were quick — and correct — to jump on this issue since cellular phone companies are not considered a public utility by the state Public Utilities Commission or anyone else.

Officials have one last chance to avoid making a decision that isn't in the best interests of the township. The tower plan will go before the planning commission Tuesday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m. Commission members may properly find that the scheme is an inappropriate use of the land, in conflict with the needs and goals of Dallas Township. Or they can continue the discouraging trend of ramming an ugly and unnecessary tower down the throats of residents in return for a pittance. It would be wise for everyone concerned to appear at the meeting so that officials understand the seriousness of their action, and the resolve of those who find what's happened thus far to fly in the face of responsible government.



In Lehman, a stone monument marks the site where two Clydesdales were buried 60 years ago. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

## It's still true: The Government that governs least governs best

Editor:  
So, now we are supposed to be surprised to find out that the Luzerne County Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office staff was keeping sloppy books; and, oh my, may have been using their appointed positions for personal gain (TL-4/20/97). When are the American people going to realize that government is not corrupt just because it was poorly designed or because of inadequate oversight? These things are important, but there is a much deeper problem at work.

Government is corrupt primarily because it is run by people, and people are prone to corruption. This is why the government that governs least is the government that governs best. The smaller the size and scope of government, the less damage it can do by its inherent corruption.

HUD is a socialist federal program because it takes money from those who have earned it and gives it to those who have not. This is not to say that the poor and, homeless do not need help, only to question the authority and ability of the federal government to provide the assistance.

Socialism is the natural inclination of man's feelings. It sounds "enlightened" to suggest that the

"less fortunate" need our help. Life is not "fair," and the "more fortunate" have an obligation to "share" with the "less fortunate." And of course, since selfish people cannot be counted on to give voluntarily, we will make them give for the "greater good of society." This philosophy was expounded to me by our Congressman, the Honorable Paul Kanjorski, when I spoke with him in Washington, D.C. on April 15. It was also the basic philosophy of Karl Marx - "From each according to his means, to each according to his need." Sounds enlightened. But in the real world, different forces are at work.

Capitalism is the natural inclination of man's actions. By this I mean that men will seek to improve their lot in life, and usually by the easiest means possible. If only hard work is rewarded with prosperity, then men will pursue gain by hard work. If other means of advancement are available, such as "working the system," men will seek enrichment through that means. This was the basic philosophy of another group of revolutionaries - "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that

among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

The American experiment is an acknowledgment of the value of "enlightened self-interest." There is no mention here of "winning life's lottery" or "giving something back to society." The fact of the matter is that "selfish" pursuits of men such as Edison, Ford, Jonas Salk and even Bill Gates, have the effect of benefiting all of us. If the lives of these men had been dedicated only to the pursuit of "volunteerism," our lives would be much poorer in many ways. Even the selfish pursuits of the neighborhood high school student working for minimum wage at the local McDonald's has the benefit of providing us with affordable fast food.

The beauty of capitalism is that it recognizes that, in order to make personal gain (within the confines of morality and the law), individuals must serve others. So it does not seek to punish success (through "progressive" taxes), but recognizes that "success" comes from serving others, and should therefore be encouraged. On the other hand, the only way that the government (and by extension, its employees) can function is by taking from those who serve others with their work and giving it to

those who have served their fellow man. The result of this "redistribution" is the destruction of the human spirit, as detailed in Marvin Orlasky's "The Tragedy of American Compassion."

It is time for Americans who live as conservatives (work hard serving others, i.e., your family) and give a tithe to the only institution designed for charity, i.e., your church, to start thinking and voting conservative. Don't let your historical party affiliation stop you from voting consistent with your lifestyle. J.F.K. Democrats need to remember that the only president in our lifetime to favor tax cuts as much as Reagan was J.F.K.

Don't be shamed into thinking that wanting to keep control of what you earn is "selfish." Teddy Roosevelt said that good citizenship starts with being willing and able to pull your own weight. One of the most significant ways you can improve the world around you is to make a good living by giving others what they want, taking care of your family, and supporting the work of your church, financially and physically.

Dr. David J. Madeira,  
President  
Back Mountain Republican  
Association.

## Commissioner Jones satisfied with Allardyce guilty plea

Editor:  
I am very happy and relieved that the letter culminating in Robert Allardyce's plea of guilty to the crime of harassment has come to a conclusion and I deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of the District Attorney's Office. Since as far back as 1989, this individual has senselessly harassed me through an avalanche of anonymous,

nonsensical and demeaning letters and even targeted a member of my family near a public voting place.

I hope he understands that this episode has not been about politics but character...his character. For years, I have devoted my life to public service and have always welcomed fervent public debate of the issues...eye to eye. But Mr.

Allardyce chose a cowardly, malicious behavior to communicate meaningless garble. He neither engaged in public debate nor served the public interest by his actions.

He pled guilty to a crime that is defined as engaging in a course of conduct, with the intent to harass and annoy, and which serves no

legitimate purpose. This is not about politics. If it were, I would say to the voters of the Lake-Lehman School District that they have an opportunity to judge this candidate for who he says he is...by his admission of guilt.

Joseph "Red" Jones  
Lehman Township

## A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

Many environmental organizations and governmental agencies have worked very hard over the past quarter century to protect fragile parts of our ecosystem. Laws have been passed that restrict the amounts and kinds of pollutants that can be released into the water and air. Clean-up days have been held, parks established, and trees planted. Endangered species have been protected by declaring certain activities off-limits in their habitats. Draining and filling of wetlands has been strictly regulated.

But, many areas of the earth continue to experience ecological degradation. Rare species continue to decline or disappear. Land use practices continue to lead to soil erosion or water pollution. It is becoming obvious to many that it is not enough to simply restrict

## Is protection of ecosystem enough?

or prohibit damaging activities. Protection often involves much more than creating or maintaining a park or reserve. Many damaged areas and threatened species require help from humans in the form of ecological restoration.

When most of us think of environmental or ecological restoration we tend to conjure up pictures of reclaimed strip mines or of wetlands used for sewage treatment. We do not tend to think of re-vegetated alpine ski slopes in Switzerland or pine plantations clear-cut to allow the original health to return to southern England. Nor do we think of people spraying herbicides or hand-pulling plants to rid an area of foreign invaders.

In fact, scientists and environmentalists are beginning to realize that they must change their approaches. Ecologists have generally chosen as pristine an area as possible in which to do their research. This may still be a valid approach in some instances; but, as less and less of the earth is untouched by human use and as we need more and more information on the most effective methods of restoration, ecologists must turn their attention to disturbed envi-

ronments. Studies should be conducted before, during, and for a lengthy time after any restoration attempt. As more and more of these studies are done, restorations will become more and more successful both in terms of money and effort expended and in terms of habitat for plants and animals.

Preservationists are also going to have to change their approach. It is no longer valid in most cases to simply keep people from hunting, fishing and logging in a certain area and hope that nature will return the site to its pristine condition. There are too many plants and animals that have been introduced from other areas - even from other continents - that tend to take over. They have no grazers or predators in the new location and they often out-compete the local biota.

Some regions of the American west are rapidly being taken over by plants such as spotted knapweed or yellow star thistle. These plants may look attractive but they do not tend to hold the soil as well as the native grasses and they do not provide good habitat for native animals. Left unchecked, these invaders are claiming 4600 acres of public land each day. This is no

time to squabble over the application of appropriate herbicides.

It seems to me that ecological restoration should involve an unprecedented cooperation among all interested parties. Environmental groups have the energy and time to devote to the often hard manual labor involved. Ecologists and landscape architects can analyze the situation and recommend appropriate treatments. Then they can follow the progress, with the help of students or volunteers, of the restoration and make any necessary adjustments.

Governmental agencies have a great deal of expertise and may also be able to provide funding or in-kind services such as the propagation of rare plants. Individual land owners can work with departments of public land management to coordinate treatment approaches.

No, protection is no longer enough. Humans must begin to correct the mistakes of the past. We must learn better ways of managing our environment so that we and the other residents of this planet can at least continue to coexist - perhaps even to thrive.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Being the father of a soon-to-be 11-year-old girl, I listen to popular song lyrics when we're in the car together. There's good stuff out there these days, with the "Canadian Invasion" bringing some of the most interesting in the form of Alanis Morissette. But it's disheartening to hear some of the lyrics, particularly coming from female vocalists. One goes "fool me, fool me," in which a girl asks to be misled by a man who doesn't really care for her. This isn't far from "I Want to Be Bobby's Girl," from the early 60's (maybe late 50's), in which "that's the most important thing to me," or "I Will Follow Him," wherever he may go. It seems the movement towards gender equality only went so far, and reached only some girls and women, with others content to take a back seat to some supposedly desirable male. Music isn't the only place this is evident; much of popular culture still deals in stereotypes of the helpless female who gets what she deserves from some dominant man, and likes it. I hope my kids, girl and boy alike, grow up to respect other people regardless of gender, and neither want to dominate or be submissive to their partners in life. As the lyric goes, "Got along without you before I met you, gonna get along without you now."

It remains to be seen whether the budget deal hatched by President Clinton and Republicans in Congress will amount to more than a few years' respite from big budget deficits. There are a few things to be encouraged by, and some disappointments in the broad outline that has so far been agreed to. On the positive side, there has apparently been some agreement to stem the growth of spending in Medicaid and Medicare, although it's not clear it will be enough to head off long-term problems in those programs. And there's going to be a point at which we can't cut payments any more and expect providers to continue participating. Even Social Security may take a small hit when the cost of living index is scaled back in a couple of years. But those gains are offset by foolish tax cuts that will be most helpful to those who least need them. If tax cuts are so important for economic growth, why has the economy performed so well of late, following tax increases?

This heavily-promoted agreement is only the starting point for serious negotiations on specific items, and history tells us budget deals fall apart at least as often as they hold together. Given the GOP hold on Congress, though, it's likely the end product will contain many of the provisions in the broad outline, both good and bad.

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