

EDITORIALS

Paramedic choice must be made wisely

Life-and-death decisions aren't made often, but local fire and ambulance companies are staring at one now. With the announcement by Wyoming Valley Health Care System (WVHCS) that it will not provide paramedic service after Dec. 31, the Back Mountain and other communities in the area must pick a new provider. There apparently are three contenders — American Patient Transport Systems (APTS), from Hazleton; Trans-Med, based in Forty Fort, and Northeast Paramedic Services, a new organization formed by the paramedics who now work for the WVHCS service but do not want to join APTS. The health care system chose APTS to take over its service, but that is not the end of the story. Each local municipality can pick the primary provider for its residents, and most officials will follow the recommendation of their ambulance company.

There are many factors to consider, including competence, equipment and knowledge of the community, which might give the new service an edge. There may be even more at stake; the survival of local volunteer ambulance companies. That's because one of the negotiating points between the local organizations and the paramedic service is how to split insurance payments. In the current setup, payment is made to the local ambulance company, and a portion is forwarded to WVHCS. But the health system is a non-profit venture, and has been losing money on its paramedic operation, hence the decision to jettison it. If a private service such as APTS or Trans Med takes over, it's likely to want more revenue in order to pay the bills and make a profit. Since most insurance providers pay a set figure for ambulance service, the sharing arrangement could be in jeopardy, especially if a for-profit provider wants to play hardball over service or payment.

It's important that patients — too often referred to as "health care consumers," as though they take time to weigh options when in need of emergency care — be kept in the forefront of whatever discussions take place. When the paramedics are called, it can be a literal life-and-death situation, which outweighs financial considerations, for both the provider and the beneficiary of their service.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek

Twice last week I read articles comparing the presidential candidates Al Gore and George W. Bush to automobiles. In both cases, which I suspect evolved from a shared source, Bush was referred to as a snazzy sports car while Gore was seen as a boring but safe family sedan. I must be missing something in this race, because the characterizations, at least the one for W, don't square with my reality.

"W" as a Maserati? Please tell me what the two have in common, other than an elite heritage. One article said Bush would be a red racer, making him even more daring and debonaire. Tom Cruise must be berserk with jealousy since being displaced on the male hunk charts. Meanwhile, Gore is alternately tabbed as a Volvo or a Ford Taurus - reliable and safe, but unexciting - but it better have plenty of computerized gadgets. However, when there's a moderator anywhere in sight, Al turns into a vicious attack dog, more along the lines of a Humvee spoiling for a desert war, while George reminds me more of a pickup truck in need of a tuneup.

While I think auto comparisons are goofy, we can have some fun playing along and try them on the minor candidates and the veeps. Here are my selections:

Ralph Nader - Talk about boxy and safe! The man who did in the Corvair could only be a Volvo, but not one of those new, swoopy ones. Nope; he's a green 1981 240 DL.

Pat Buchanan - Mr. Protectionist (who was caught driving his Mercedes the last time around) also likes to project an image of toughness, so if you "buy American," you'll like this Chevy Suburban, mom and apple pie kind of guy.

Dick Cheney - The Republican vice presidential candidate easily beats Gore for the bland vote. Do they make Checkers anymore? If not, we'll have to find a used one for him.

Joe Lieberman - This guy's a problem. He's a lawyer, but spent his life in government, so he's not rich. He's a Democrat, but he likes business, at least the insurance companies headquartered in his home state. He looks like a nerd, but his wife calls him Joey and acts like she married a movie star. I guess the only choice is a convertible, so he can change images at the touch of a button.

And me? I haven't the foggiest notion what vehicle anyone would compare me to, except that it probably wouldn't be a Rolls Royce.



Is this a classic fall scene, or what! Photo by Monica Marzani.

LETTERS

Veteran says First Union Arena mishandles U.S. flag

Editor,
On Sept. 30, my wife, several friends, and I went to the Brooks and Dunn Concert at the First Union Arena. While waiting for the door to open I noticed the American flag was ragged a tattered. We went inside, a friend and I then saw a gentleman with a shirt that said Guest Supervisor. We asked why the flag was in that condition. He was very rude to us and said, "Don't worry about it, we have one on order". We then

asked him to remove the flag. He became extremely ignorant about the whole situation. I asked, with all the stores in the area that sell flags, why do they have to order them? Should they not have several flags on hand at all times to change them when they become tattered because of the high winds in that area?
That is not the end of the story. I then called several officials, local, state and federal. Some told me they could do nothing. Repre-

sentative Kevin Blaum's office said they would take care of the situation. Well, I went back Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and the tattered flag was still there but Thursday the flag was wet and wrapped around the flagpole. Is this the way to open the Penguins new hockey season? I was always taught to take a flag down when it was raining.
I want to know, as an American and a Vietnam vet, where is our

pride in flying the flag? I would rather see the flag not flown than be desecrated like that. Where is the pride of the people running the new arena? Where is the pride of elected officials who fought so hard for Arena Yes?
I realize the flag does not belong only to the veterans alone but to all Americans. Please show that patriotism and fly the flag properly or do not fly it at all.
Robert Kurtinitis
Franklin Twp.

The Senior Side

Jack Hilsher

Once upon a time in Rochester, New York, there was a bank bookkeeper named George Eastman who made \$1,400 a year. He was an unlikely prospect to become an inventor, but he did, and photography was changed forever, for Eastman produced the first camera film. In his mother's kitchen sink, no less!

It was equally unlikely he would become a successful businessman who founded a gigantic corporation but he did, Eastman Kodak, and it cranked out enough rolls of film in those familiar yellow boxes, to reach from here to the moon and back.

Prior to Eastman's development of film (not a pun) pictures were recorded on either wet metal or dry glass plates, and both taking and processing were tedious. Records from 1896 in France show and exposure taking eight hours.

George's kitchen tinkering with film started photography's many

Rise and fall of the 'yellow box'

milestone's: the Brownie box camera that made picture taking by the public possible; the German Leica camera, using 35mm movie film; the Nikon starting the flood of Japanese cameras; Instamatics, Polaroids, disposables, zoom, panoramic, all owe their lives to Eastman's film.

Eastman's company became known all over the world, and so did the yellow box. For generations it had the film market almost to itself, so its is no wonder complacency set in. The name he chose could easily have become a memory, it was close.

Eastman took his brand name out of the air, "K" from the first letter in his mother's name Kilbourne, and because he thought it was catchy. "I used it twice for emphasis and filled in with other letters."

So "KODAK" came into being and into our language, picture takers were called, "Kodakers." Eastman became one of the largest advertisers ever and his wealth kept piling up. When he told his mother about making his first million she said, "That's nice George." Obviously money wasn't that important to them.

His huge mansion had a room for movies, nine fireplaces, thirteen bathrooms and an elevator

for mom. More than 30 people were employed just for the house, from a third-floor maid to dairymen for his cows.

A lifelong bachelor, Eastman invited women to dinner but showed no interest in marriage. A historian said, "I doubt George ever went to bed with a babe in his life." A guest recalls that when George showed up next to an opera star wearing a strapless gown he inquired as to what held it up. She replied, "Only your age, Mr. Eastman."

He retired in 1924, eventually developing arthritis of the spine after an uneventful retirement. He shot himself in 1932, leaving a note reading, "My work is done. Why wait?" his company continued to prosper, exceeding \$1 billion in sales. Rochester also prospered. It was said, "If you didn't work for Kodak you didn't have a job." And, all you needed to get a job there were a few clean shirts, well-kept nails and a Hickey-Freeman suit.

The company had indoor golf courses, bowling alleys, movie theatres and a pistol range. You could bank there. Or buy at the bakery. Managers played golf in the afternoons. Then, finally, disaster loomed.

In the 80's, in spite of over \$10 billion sales, long-overdue competition started a downfall. Notably Fuji film appeared from Japan and seemed to be everywhere, selling for less than the yellow boxes. As sales dropped so did employment. Layoffs began, one time as many as 10,000 were given notice at the same time. Rochester shook to its core as citizen-ex-employees tried to cope with something previously unknown, being out of a job.

In addition to the series of layoffs there appeared a series of new Chief Executive Officers, as one after another tried for a turnaround and failed. One memorable fell asleep during an important meeting with Bill Gates, who promptly lost interest.

Kodak's latest, and hopefully best, CEO promises to halt the decline and start the long climb back up. One of his major goals, he says, is to penetrate the new and undoubtedly vast market of digital photography. He thinks it is a natural for them.

If he succeeds the yellow box may rise again, but George's invention won't be in the house because, as any photographer knows, digital cameras do not use film! (The mother of all ironies?)

Your news is welcome
The Dallas Post welcomes submissions about Back Mountain people and events. To have the greatest likelihood of publication, items should be received at our office no later than the Friday prior to each issue. Items will be accepted Mondays, although much of the paper is already assembled by that time. Send or bring items to: The Dallas Post, 607 Main Road, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Our normal business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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<p>Ronald A. Bartizek PUBLISHER</p> <p>Ken Brocius ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC</p> <p>Ruth Proietto PRODUCTION MANAGER</p>	<p>Charlotte E. Bartizek ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER OFFICE MANAGER</p> <p>Elizabeth Skrapits REPORTER</p> <p>Joanna Cease OFFICE/TYPIST/CLASSIFIEDS</p>
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Teen scene

Donora Hillard

Recently I was berated for not offering consolation to a friend who was (supposedly) contemplating suicide. My reasoning for this was really quite logical: I have heard this type of hyperbole from "this person before, he being a fan of "crying wolf" when bored or lonely. Also, he usually mocks those who threaten to take their

Let's choose to enjoy the journey

own lives without a justifiable reason for doing so.

Seeing him alive the next day, I asked him what it was that had brought him back from the brink. "Well," he said, "I watched a documentary on the making of FOX TV, and then I felt better." It's always the little things, I thought. It's the little things that sustain us and the little things that can set us off. Later I learned that he had been angry with me, not because I didn't try to save him from eternal damnation but because, just as I had guessed, I had not given him enough attention.

Attention, I have decided, is overrated. It is much of what drives us, but many take it to extremes. Suicide, in the form of

thoughts or threats, is definitely not something that should be treated lightly. I know far too many bright individuals who constantly try to alleviate sadness by seeking attention from others. Trust me, this is not the way to go. The attention you receive will not be of the best variety, and soon you will not be taken seriously in times of genuine distress.

Considering this, I remember two quotes: "I can live for two months on a good compliment," said Mark Twain; and "The excursion is the same whether you go looking for your sorrow as when you go looking for your joy," said by Welty. It is helpful to keep the former in mind when dealing with someone who could really use

some bolstering. Everyone enjoys a sincere compliment, and even a simple acknowledgment can change a person's mood drastically.

The latter is always good advice, whether you are truly depressed or just have a flair for the dramatic. This journey of ours is short; doesn't it serve a better purpose to dwell on the ecstasies of life rather than the agonies? I know for many of us it is not that easy, this is just a point to ponder.

On a more serious note, if you or someone you know is honestly considering suicide, do not hesitate to call the Suicide Prevention Service at 348-6100. Here's to improving the journey.

Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news, week after week?
A: Only in The Dallas Post, the Back Mountain's newspaper since 1889.