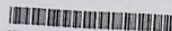






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Gas station frustration evokes memories of '73

Causes differ; effects similar

BY TIM GULLA
STAFF WRITER

Harold Schobert, Ph.D., remembers when some people felt the need to arm themselves to buy gasoline.

Living in Virginia during the first of two gas crises during the 1970s, Dr. Schobert recalls bumping into a woman at a McDonald's who relayed the violence she had just witnessed at a nearby gas station when someone jumped in the gas line. The woman wasn't going to fall victim to any such nonsense, the director of Penn State University's Energy Institute remembers.

"She had the longest, wickedest knife in her purse. That's how it was," he said.

Memories of gas lines, rationing and fared tempers are still vivid for many who lived through the turbulent 1970s and the U.S. government's response to a severe shock in the oil supply.

Those memories came to the forefront in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which battered Gulf Coast oil production, refineries and pipelines. Gas prices shot up, prompting talk of 1970s-style rationing and raising consumer angst.

While the effects are similar, the situation is different today. The latest crunch was caused by a natural disaster that exploited a weakness in the system, not by politics, as it was three decades ago.

Moreover, there's been no knee-jerk reaction by policymakers or widespread shortages so far, as efforts continue



Motorists wait in long lines to fill up at a gas station on Wheeler Avenue in February 1974.

to restore production.

Government-mandated price controls and allocations in 1973, however, well-intentioned, led to shortages, rationing and long lines at the pumps. The allocations of winter fuel during the first gas crunch were based on the most recent data at the time, which reflected summer use.

"A lot of the beaches and resort areas had plenty of gas and the rest of the nation had long lines," said Doug Macintyre, senior oil analyst at the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

"I think the good thing about the experience, (it showed price control) wasn't a good idea," said Edward Scallil, Ph.D., chairman of the economics and finance department at the University of Scranton.

"The way it was Robert Conner of Glen Lyon was 12 years old at the time of the first gas crisis, yet he remembers the frustration."

"I remember sitting in line with my father, waiting for two

hours for fuel, only to get two cars from the pump and the guy putting a sign out saying no more gas," said the automotive instructor at Luzerne County Community College.

Worse, gas rationing limited people to buying on even- or odd-numbered days, depending on the last digit of their license plate. "My father was fit to be tied," he said.

It wasn't just government-mandated rationing. Some stations did it on their own.

The problem in 1973 wasn't the U.S. oil industry's capacity to produce and refine gasoline. It was that the U.S. simply couldn't buy enough oil.

In 1973, Dr. Scallil was starting graduate school in New York when a conflict between Egypt and Israel initiated a then-meteoritic rise in gas prices — tripling from about 30 cents a gallon to roughly \$1.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries decided to exert political pressure by embargoing oil to the United States and others that supported Israel.

"That's the one time when

students paid attention to economics," Dr. Scallil said.

Today, though, OPEC can't retreat from the market like it did in 1973, given its own cash requirements, said David Cole, Ph.D., chairman of the Center for Automotive Research in Michigan.

Back to the future

While there are sharp differences, the coming price-fueled economic ripple, much like the 1970s, is likely to extend beyond the pumps.

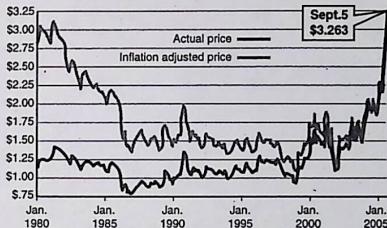
"This is something that will have a negative impact on economic growth," said Rob Seely, associate professor of economics at Wilkes University.

Though there were other factors, the gas crises of the 1970s contributed to three recessions between 1975 and 1982, economists say.

More recent experiences, such as gas shocks during the Gulf War of 1990-1991 and spikes in 2000, 2001, and 2003, show the market can sort itself out, economists say, even if that's little comfort to frustrated consumers. Much like

Paying at the pump

Gas prices reached historic levels in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's strike on the Gulf Coast. The peak of \$3.263 for a gallon of regular unleaded in the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre area, hit on Sept. 5, was higher than other inflation-adjusted prices since 1980.



SOURCE: AAA Daily Fuel Gauge Report, Energy Information Administration

KEVIN O'NEILL / STAFF ARTIST

today, there was a release of strategic oil reserves during the Gulf War to temporarily increase supply.

Yet, even when the U.S. Gulf Coast operations get back on track, probably by the end of the year, the problem with capacity will remain.

Not only are there no new refineries being built in the U.S., OPEC members haven't invested in the expansion of their facilities either.

The worry among oil producers and refiners is that when prices collapse, excess capacity will go unused, Mr. Macintyre said.

"There needs to be, I think, some sort of collaboration between the public sector and the private sector," Dr. Schobert said.

That could take many forms, he said, such as more atten-

tion to synthetic fuels and raising fuel economy of cars.

Both of those things happened after the gas crunch of 1973-1974. The gas crunch contributed greatly to the successful penetration of Japanese autos in the U.S. market and led to major changes in Detroit.

But neither the focus on fuel economy nor alternative fuels really lasted.

Before Katrina, U.S. automakers weren't panicking about the already rising costs of fuel, Dr. Cole said. They were counting on long-range economic forecasts that oil prices would, indeed, drop again.

"If you talk to the average person, they don't believe this is a permanent, long-term issue," he said.

Contact the writer: tgulla@citizensvoice.com

From one short visit grows a family bond

A girl from N.Y., now area undergrad, lauds her hosts

EDITOR'S NOTE: We know Mondays can be gloomy. So how about a good story to start the week? If you have suggestions for "New Week" stories, call Allison Walzer at 829-7162 or e-mail her at allison@leader.net.

By BONNIE ADAMS
badams@leader.net

JACKSON TWP. — The tiny 8-year-old girl from New York City could whack a baseball a good distance in 1994 when she first stayed with Fresh Air Fund hosts Rob and Janis Seeley.

She was curious about everyday things the Seeley children found commonplace: cows, stars, big dogs.

Her first two-week visit was just the beginning. Karena Richards soon went from being a stranger to an important part of their family.

The photos on their refrigerator



Rob Seeley, left, his wife, Janis, and children Jillian and Dylan have a special bond with the Fresh Air Fund child they welcomed into their home in 1994 and who is still part of their family.



A much younger Dylan Seeley, left, and his sister, Jillian, have grown up with Fresh Air Fund child Karena Richards.

door show the Seeley's own children, Jillian, 17, and Dylan, 15, growing up. Karena is there, too.

During her first visit, Karena wasn't shy about asking, "Will you let me come

back next year?"

Of course they wanted her back.

Karena returned year after year, well beyond the age at which most children opt out of the Fresh Air Fund program.

Her 14-day stays stretched to six or eight weeks every summer. There were more visits at Christmas, sometimes with her mother.

See FAMILY, Page 8A

FAMILY

Continues from Page 1A

"I just loved them from the first day," Karena said Friday from New York City where she is living and working this summer. She described the Seeleys as charitable, caring, funny and educated.

Karena said that when the family took her somewhere as a child, sometimes all eyes were on her because she isn't Caucasian. "I don't have that awareness of my color anymore."

She no longer notices other people's color and credits her experiences in this area for that quality, she said.

Karena urges families to get involved in the Fresh Air Fund. "There's so many things you can learn from each other."

Dylan, as a very young child, played with girls in the neighborhood because there were no boys his age. The Seeleys asked for a Fresh Air Fund girl. But there was a twist.

"Right before Karena came, Dylan decided he didn't like girls," Janis Seeley said. But Dylan now says the house seems empty without her.

"It's expanded our world to have her here with us," Rob Seeley said. When the Seeleys speak of Karena, it is as though they are talking about a third child.

They did for her what they will soon do for Jillian. They took Karena to visit several colleges. She chose College Miseriordia, a few miles from their home.

Janis Seeley praises Karena's

mother, a single mom, who worked long hours to raise Karena. Her mother didn't know if she could afford to send Karena away to college. A New York City school without the physical therapy major Karena wanted seemed the likely option.

The Seeleys, both college professors, wanted Karena to fulfill her dream. They suggested she spend her freshman year living with them in their Briarwood Drive home.

She lived in their finished basement so she could have her own space. Their two big golden retrievers, Buster and Dayzee, gravitated to her.

"Truly her greatest joy is the dogs," Janis Seeley said.

Karena will return to College Miseriordia this year. She will live on campus to better receive the full college experience.

The Seeleys don't host a Fresh Air Fund child anymore, but Janis Seeley is still involved in the program. She met the children as they arrived last week in Kirby Park in Wilkes-Barre.

When the children step off the bus for their stay with local families, Janis sees in them what she saw in Karena.

"There's all this potential."

Karena sends the family cards for birthdays and special occasions. Rob Seeley said her latest Father's Day greeting to him thanked him for treating her the same as he did Dylan and Jillian, including disciplining her when necessary.

"It always made me feel like I was one of your own," she wrote.

Bonnie Adams, a Times Leader staff writer, may be reached at 829-7241.

County Dems hide budget 'til election, Urban says

TL 10-27-03

To some, the delay is meant to reduce voter support for the home-rule charter.

By JENNIFER LEARN-ANDES
jlandes@leader.net

It is less than a week before a historic Luzerne County election, yet there haven't been any public hearings to let voters know the state of the county's budget.

Is the lack of the updates — typically held in October — by

designer
The delay has nothing to do with the Nov. 4 election, county Personnel/Budget Director Russ Arnone.

Republican Commissioner Stephen A. Urban and advocates of the home rule charter say otherwise.

Urban, who is anti-home rule, believes Democratic majority Commissioners Tom Makowski and Tom Pizano want the county's red ink to remain hush-hush until after

the election because voters might hold the fiscal mess against Democratic commissioner hopefuls Greg Skrepenak and Todd Vonderheid.

Wilkes University professors Rob Seeley and Tom Baldino, who helped draft the home rule charter proposal, have a different take. They accuse county officials of hiding the numbers because people would be more apt to vote for



"I don't hear any calls from Skrepy or Vonderheid for cutbacks of any kind over the last four years. They were silent."

Stephen A. Urban
Republican commissioner

See BUDGET, Page 8A

BUDGET

Continued from Page 1A

home rule if they knew what kind of shape the county is in.

"The word we're getting from inside the courthouse is that they're facing a big deficit for next year — many millions of dollars — and they don't want anyone to know about it," Baldino said.

Several well-placed courthouse insiders report that they've heard year-end deficit could balloon beyond \$10 million.

Arnone refuses to give credence to any such estimates, and he's adamant in his denial that the election is a factor. He said he's still working with majority commissioners to schedule budget hearings.

Last month, Arnone said he would prepare a detailed budget update at the end of September. His deadline came and went with no report. Now, he says he's waiting for end-of-October figures to come in before he prepares a budget update.

When pressed, Arnone reluctantly acknowledged the county will end the year millions of dollars in the hole because of revenue shortfalls at the county-owned Valley Crest Nursing Home. There's definitely going to be a several-million shortfall at Valley Crest. As far as other departments, I'll know more with the 10-month figures."

Arnone keeps tabs on day-to-day spending, and said he relies on smaller purchases wherever he can. Big-ticket budget cuts are up to commissioners, and Makowski and Pizano haven't proposed any publicly.

The county's 2003 deficit "may be of record-breaking magnitude," county Controller Steve Flood said Tuesday at his press conference. Flood tags the deficit at between \$5 million and \$6 million — a conservative estimate, he says. He said he doesn't know if commissioners can come up with the roughly \$8 million needed to cover the payroll deficit at the end of the year. "It's going to be a bloodbath," he said, "and it's going to be a bloodbath at a pace with

even the most critical expenditures." Flood said in a recent memo to Arnone and county Property and Supply Director Bill Burke.

Despite his frustration about the budget, Flood at his conference urged his supporters to vote against home rule and for Vonderheid and Skrepenak.

Urban said his repeated pleas for spending cutbacks have fallen on deaf ears, and he asks people to direct their anger at Democrats — not the form of government.

Home rule doesn't guarantee or propose any spending cuts, and the success of both forms of government rely on the sincerity and commitment of candidates, Urban said. "I'm here willing to implement all the reforms I've proposed for four years, and my running mate Bill James is willing to bring to the county what he's learned running a successful business of his own for 25 years."

He said Democrats raised county taxes by 80 percent since 1991.

"I don't hear any calls from Skrepy or Vonderheid for cutbacks of any kind over the last four years. They were silent. It's like they don't want to hurt the feelings of Tom Makowski because they're friends."

Vonderheid has been a Makowski supporter and donor in the past and doesn't want to hurt his feelings, but the excuse that they can't suggest specifics because they're on the outside doesn't fly.

Skrepenak and Vonderheid have pledged they will streamline the county and establish an open-budget process.

Baldino and Seeley say the proposed home rule charter dictates the budget process starts in September and mandates public budget hearings and budget postings in newspapers and web sites. "If home rule passes, they won't be able to trick you again. You'll know if there are budget problems before you vote," Baldino said.

"Under the present system, you basically have to drag this budget information from people out of the courthouse," Seeley said. "Under home rule you have to present the budget situation to the public in detail, and if you don't, a citizen could take them to court."



CASEY JONES

OPINION

Anti-Charter argument comes up short

It's hard to argue against the Home Rule Charter. Just ask West Hazleton Mayor Carl Puscauer and Luzerne County Republican Party Vice Chairman Paul DeFabo.

The Great Charter Debate at Wilkes University turned into a verbal beating Thursday, with Puscauer and DeFabo on the receiving end.

Wilkes professors Tom Baldino and Rob Seeley argued in favor of the Charter, and against decades of nepotism, despotism, cronyism and political patronage that the current closed-door form of government has fostered.

Puscauer and DeFabo were sacrificial lambs who made a lame attempt to support the status quo.

If it had been a football game, they would have instituted the mercy rule.

If it were a boxing match, it would have been stopped in the first round.

And if words were sticks and stones, Puscauer and DeFabo would be nursing broken bones.

DeFabo suffered from a lack of preparation. He made all kinds of claims, then admitted that he hadn't even read the Charter in its entirety.

Puscauer was awash in contradictions. He claimed the new form of government would shut the Hazleton area out, when it would in fact guarantee representation. And on one occasion, he actually argued in favor of a provision contained in the Charter, which he helped draft but now opposes.

By contrast, Baldino and Seeley, were well-prepared, well-spoken, and, well, victorious.

They aptly explained how the new government would provide checks and balances and accountability through a nine-member council and an elected administrator.

They explained how streamlined departments and professional management would allow county government to operate more efficiently and effectively at a reduced cost.

And they explained how contracts and jobs would be awarded in a manner consistent with the rest of the world.

They sounded as smart as college professors up there. But the truth is, anybody who is nobody could have won that argument.

Ten great reasons to vote 'yes'

There are hundreds of reasons that everybody who is nobody should vote for the Home Rule Charter. Here are 10 to consider.

10. Even a nobody could get a county job. All positions would be advertised.

9. Even a nobody could win a county contract. Competitive bidding would be required.

8. Even a nobody could attend a county commissioners meeting. A monthly evening meeting is mandated.

7. Even a nobody would be able to vote with confidence. You would no longer have to use party affiliation as the only basis for electing unknown, glorified office managers with titles like Prothonotary, Clerk of Courts, Register of Wills and Recorder of Deeds.

6. Even a nobody can have input in the county budgeting process.

5. Even a nobody can propose a new law.

4. Even a nobody can dispose of a bad law.

3. Even a nobody knows that nothing could be worse than the form of government we have now.

2. Nobody, even a nobody, likes to be laughed at. You demanded change, and it would be laughable to change your mind now.

1. Even a nobody can see that everybody who is somebody wants to see the Charter fail. Because if it passes, they'll be nobodies too.

Call Jones at 829-7215 or e-mail casey@leader.net

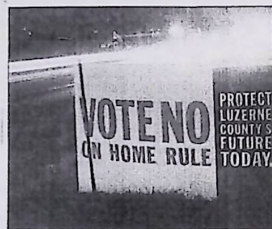
STANDARD-SPEAKER

HAZLETON, PA
SUNDAY 22, 2003
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By JIM SEWASTYNYOWICZ/Standard-Speaker

"Vote No" signs regarding Luzerne County's proposed charter have surfaced around Hazleton like this one on Route 309.

'Charter No' makeup a mystery

By L.A. TARONE

ltaronel@standard-speaker.com

"Charter Yes" has challenged "Charter No" to a debate and to publicly identify its members.

But, so far, no one has identified himself as a "Charter No" member, so there has been no answer.

"Charter Yes" is the group formed to urge voters to approve the proposed Luzerne County charter on the Nov. 4 ballot. "Charter No" is the group formed to urge voters to reject it.

"Charter Yes" has three co-chairs - Hazleton Councilman Jim Ferry Sr.; former director of the Economic

Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Howard Gressman, and Northwest Area School Board member and Luzerne Intermediate Unit representative Randy Tomassacci.

"Charter Yes" has a board of directors. It includes six members of the government study commission that wrote the charter: Chairman Carl Goodwin, Betsy Summers, Robb Henderson, George Race, Neil Allen and Ruth Teischner.

Also on the board are Green Party county chairman Carl Romanelli, former Hazleton City Council President David Sosar, Wilkes-Barre attorney Michael Bart, retired Army Lt.

Col. Edmund J. Sieminski, long-time Wilkes-Barre government watchdog Ambrose Meletsky, the Rev. William Kennard, Jay Mlakey, Dr. Wallace Stettler, Frank Loch, Phil Tuhy, Dorothy Endrizzi, Nicholas Episcopo, Harold Phoenix, Maria Episcopo, Spencer Martin, Bill Vachman, Eleanor Venit, William Breslin, William R. Reed and Helene Flower Reed.

The group has a Web site, www.charteryes.com, which has icons for a charter summary, the board of directors, a donations page and the like. It also has a mailing

See MYSTERY, A2

Mystery

(Continued from A1)
address (R.J. Box 2103, Kingston) and an office phone number (822-9154).

As for "Charter No" ... nothing.

There has been no released list of members, no incorporation and no public release of a chairman's name. There is no mailing address and no contact phone number.

But, "Charter No" has money, though its source isn't known. The group has placed "Vote No on Home Rule" signs on highways all around the county, including several along Route 309 near the Airport Beltway in Milnesville. The shadow group also made a big TV buy, reportedly plunking down about \$65,000 for advertising spots on WBRE, WNEP and WYUU.

One published report said the ads were ordered by Ed Mitchell, the long-time Democratic media consultant. But he has not commented.

However, the ad buys were mysteriously cancelled Friday.

No one has said why.

"Charter Yes," meanwhile, has been raising funds, but its cash availability for advertising is less than a quarter of what "Charter No" has raised.

Goodwin said "Charter Yes" has \$16,000 for advertising.

There is no shortage of charter opponents. Both the Republican and Democratic county party committees have expressed opposition. The two Democratic candidates for county commissioner, Todd Vonderheid and Greg Skrepnek, have voiced opposition to the charter. But they have stated they are not involved in "Charter No." Republican candidates Steve Urban and Bill James are also opposed. But they, too, have said they're not involved in Charter No.

So, who is?

Goodwin said the public should know.

"Everyone knows who we are," Goodwin said while in Hazleton Friday. "Our officers have been publicly identified. We're an incorporated group.

We're doing everything publicly."

"I challenge 'Charter No' to a public debate over the charter," Goodwin added. "But, I also challenge them to identify themselves. The public should know who's urging them to vote against the charter. Why are they hiding?"

There already has been a debate between "yes" and "no" forces. Thursday night at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, study commission members Tom Baldino and Rob Sealey argued for the charter, while West Hazleton Mayor Carl Puscahauer, vice chairman of the study commission, and county Republican Committee Vice Chairman Paul DeFabo argued no. But, both have said they're not involved in "Charter No."

In fact, Puscahauer said that after Thursday night's debate, someone handed him printed "Charter No" material.

"This kid came up to me after the debate - he looked

like about a 20-year-old college kid - and handed me a bumper sticker and a sign to hang from my door."

Puscahauer said, "I had no idea who he was, had never seen him before. But, I can tell you the texture was pretty thick - this was not cheap knock-off material. They cost somebody quite a bit of money."

Puscahauer added that someone named Eric George applied for and paid for sign permits to put "Charter No" signs up in West Hazleton. There is no Eric George in the Hazleton phone book.

There has been some speculation the ad buys were withdrawn as a way to get around an election code deadline, which requires a full detailed report - including donation sources, expenditures and listings of committee chairmen and members - be filed before election day. But, so far, that is only speculation.

No one from "Charter No" has answered the charges.

WP native returns to address women's club

IT'S GOOD TO GO BACK HOME. This past Tuesday, the West Pittston Women's Club welcomed West Pittston native, Dr. Robert D. Seeley as a guest speaker at their October meeting at The First United Methodist Church.

Dr. Seeley is an associate professor at Wilkes University where he teaches economics. He is also serving on the Luzerne County Government Study Commission that will possibly change the way we look at government in Luzerne County for the first time in over 170 years.

Dr. Seeley's mission? To educate all on the benefits of a home rule government in Luzerne County. His passion and enthusiasm for this push was very evident as he demonstrated many times that the advantages of change will outweigh the disadvantages of such a government restructuring.

It is amazing that many people in the county are still unaware that such a vote in the upcoming election will be happening. The group of approximately 40 women were very attentive and were extremely interested in how the changes will affect them.

Under the proposed home rule government, separate executive and legislative branches will create a system of checks and balances as set up like our federal government. The executive and county manager will be full-time county employees.

As Dr. Seeley explained, the county will be split into six regions with each region hav-



MY CORNER YOUR CORNER

TONY CALLAIO

ing a representative on the County Council made up of nine members. The other three members of council would be elected at-large.

Greater Pittston would be a part of District 6. The towns comprising this district are: Avoca, Dupont, Duryea, Exeter, Exeter Township, Forty Fort, Hughestown, Pittston, Pittston Township, West Pittston, West Wyoming, Wyoming, Yatesville, and also Swoyersville.

In addition to voting in a nine-member council, county residents would also vote on a County Executive, a Controller, and a District Attorney.

The current three-person Commissioner system would be abolished. The row offices that we currently vote on, such as the Register of Wills, Prothonotary, and Recorder of Deeds would no longer have an elected official running those departments. Those branches would then be combined under the Home Rule Charter and would have an individual appointed to oversee those departments.

"We elect a President of the United States, but we don't elect a Secretary of State," Seeley stated, comparing the Home Rule Charter government to way the Federal government is set up.

He also stated that the

County Coroner would be appointed under home rule and the name would be changed to Medical Examiner. Under the current county structure, the Coroner is elected and does not necessarily need to be a physician. The Medical Examiner would be a physician.

On a personal note, Dr. Seeley was thrilled to have the chance to speak to the group from his hometown. As he noted, he participated in Cub Scouts as a child in the very same hall he spoke. He also noted that many women in the audience have known him as long as his mother, Ruth Seeley who proudly was seated in the audience.

If you'd like to read up on the charter, point your computer to <http://www.pel-central.org/Luzerne>.

Dr. Seeley is married to Dr. Janis Wilson Seeley, who is a professor at Luzerne County Community College and a native of Wyoming. They have two children, Jillian and Dylan. He is also the son of Robert D. Seeley, West Pittston.

CRAFT FAIR - The J.L.W. Mountain Laurel Lions Club is hosting its Third Annual Craft Fair on Saturday, November 8 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the

Plains Ambulance Building.

Maffett Street, Plains. Craft items, home made foods, and home made baked desserts will be sold. A Chinese auction will be held.

For further information, call Michelle at 823-6861.

ZITI'S ON! - Camp Cadet is hosting their annual Ziti Dinner on Sunday, November 16 at St. Cecilia's Church, Wyoming Avenue, Exeter.

The dinner is open to the public from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. Tickets are \$6 per person and will be available at the door.

Camp Cadet is a law enforcement academy program open, free of charge, to boys and girls from Luzerne, Wyoming, Bradford, and Sullivan Counties and is designed to provide the cadet with stimulating, enlightening, and informative experience. Cadets learn team skills, enhance their self-esteem, self-discipline, self-respect, and develop a better understanding of the role of enforcement in the community.

The cadets will participate to include: and overview of programs of Pennsylvania State Police; an overview of Forensic Services; instruction on various law enforcement topics; K-9 demonstration; drug and alcohol prevention; firearm instruction (if desired); as well as first aid and safety.

It's a worthwhile cause and if you are hungry, stop by, say hi and pull up a chair. You'll be surprised at all the local faces you recognize that are involved

in this program.

BIRTHDAYS - Birthday wishes goes out to Cheryl Frushon (10/29), Maria Alu (10/30), and special wishes to Anna Fusco on November 1.

Happy Belated wishes goes out to Matt Frushon, who celebrated yesterday, October 25.

HAPPY-ANNIVERSARY - Brian and Bobbie Powers, West Pittston, will be celebrating their wedding anniversary tomorrow, October 27.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK - "Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved." - author unknown

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK - It's not the destination that matters - it is the journey!

BUMPER STICKER - The tongue is small, but few can hold it.

Tony Callaio is the owner and operator of the advertising agency, Callaio Communications, Inc. and also the Public Relations Coordinator for Wyoming Area School District. Submit items for "My Corner, Your Corner" by calling 654-5358.

e-mailing Tony at tony150@adelphia.net or writing to me at 230 North Street, West Pittston, PA 18643.

We have Hugo to thank for this mess

CV
10 30-03

Interesting, isn't it? All it takes to blow the lid off a prison is a simple little jail break.

Ever since Hugo Selenski and Scott Bolton decided they needed some fresh air and exercise, life at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility has been punctuated with drug busts involving guards and inmates, calls for the warden to resign or be fired, guards leaking details of mismanagement, drug trafficking, nepotism, cronyism, politics and general corruption.

The district attorney has called for an investigation, the prison board has called for an investigation and the warden has launched his own investigation.

Soon, the investigators will be investigating the investigators.

Just think, if Hugo and Scott had stayed put, we probably wouldn't be treated to all this intrigue.

Hopefully, when the smoke clears, and that may take a while, the county prison will be purged and ready for another 10 or 20 years of scandal-free operation.

With all the drug trafficking these days and law enforcement agreeing that 80 percent or more of prison inmates owe their incarceration to drugs or alcohol, it's no wonder that these substances find their way into the jail.

The last time the prison endured any substantial scandal was back in the late 70s or early 80s when then Warden Terry Paul was connected to a scheme to pilfer funds from the prison's commissary fund. He was succeeded as warden by Allan Sincavage, Walter

Sokolowski and then by Gene Fisch, the current warden.

Animals' trivia

Party Animals trivia question: Who preceded former Luzerne County Prison Warden Terry Paul?

Answer: Donald Dorris who was preceded by Lewis Winans who was preceded by William Healey. That takes prison management back to the 40s. Does anyone know who preceded Healey?

Home rule: yes or no?

With the Nov. 4 general election now just around the corner, the contest over the proposed county home rule charter is heating up.

At stake is whether the present form of county government will survive or whether voters will choose to turn the courthouse upside down to install a completely new form of government.

Groups and individuals both for and against the measure that will appear before voters in the form of a public question on top of the ballot are articulating their reasoning in hopes of convincing voters one way or the other.

But, despite the two sided lobbying underway, it still appears that few citizens are energized about the issue. At a recent gathering to launch "Charter Yes," the group lobbying for approval of the new form of government, there were less than a handful of citizens. Indeed, there were more media representatives present than were members of the general public.

A public debate on home rule took place last Thursday night at Wilkes University.

At first glance, it appeared the event attracted a healthy attendance. A rough head count indicated 100 or so citizens.

A closer look, though, showed the majority in attendance were college students — from Wilkes.

One of the proponents of the home rule charter is Tom Baldino, a member of the Government Study Commission that recommended the government change.

Baldino is also a professor at Wilkes University. Is it possible that many of the students in attendance are in Baldino's class? Is that why they clapped so loudly?

Anyway, let's discount the number of really interested "citizens" at that gathering.

And, then, there was the unprecedented effort to gather Democratic and Republican leaders under one roof at the Pittston Convention Center, also on Thursday night, to mount a political assault on the home rule issue.

Less than 100 showed up despite the fact that organizers had tables set for more than 300. It was another disappointing showing.

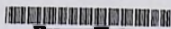
Meanwhile, the shadowy and mysterious "Charter No" group appeared to be fizzling out even before they got started — whoever they are.

Some TV station moles leaked information last week that \$65,000 would be spent in advertising to defeat the charter issue and that the ads were being placed by media spin doctor Ed Mitchell.

Calls placed to numerous ranking county Demos all produced the same answer: "We don't know anything about 'Charter No' and we don't know where the money's coming from."

Mitchell was obviously ducking inquiries as repeated calls over several days went unreturned.

Then, more word leaked from the TV stations that the advertising was canceled. The issue remains clouded in as much mystery now as when it first emerged several days ago.



Butterflies

4110 11
2223 02 11...

THE SUNDAY TIMES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2003

THE SUNDAY VOICE

Deficit: Big problem or small potatoes?

P225FF Wilkes

BY STEPHEN DAILY
TIMES SHAMROCK WRITER

Experts differ on impact of feds' mounting debt

A fully loaded home computer for every man, woman and child in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

That's what folks in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties could buy for \$1,712, the individual share of the burgeoning federal budget deficit.

Of course, folks around here won't be getting a bill on Sept. 30, the end of the government's fiscal year. The economic impact of the spending shortfall, though, has some economists and public officials concerned.

Others are much less worried.

Either way, the price tag for the war in Iraq and homeland security is climbing. Congressional estimates now peg this year's federal budget deficit at \$500 billion. The shortfall is about 25 percent larger than an earlier estimate by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. New estimates come in the wake of President George W. Bush's call a week ago for an extra \$87 billion for rebuilding Iraq.

Here's a look at the split viewpoints on what the red ink may mean for residents:

A BIG PROBLEM

Many Democrats say the deficits next year and in subsequent years could be substantially higher because the budget office does not take into account future policy changes, such as increased defense costs or new tax cuts.

Dr. Satyajit Ghosh, professor of economics at the University of Scranton, said the shortfall will have a serious impact on future government spending.

The deficit, he said, will be difficult to pay off. Just as we need

to pay interest on our loans, the federal government will need to pay interest through treasury securities as it tries to pay off its debt.

"As your debt grows, you have to worry about cutting back on other things, such as social services and funding for education," Dr. Ghosh said. "All future spending will be affected. They will need to keep cutting because there is no other way."

His best solution: roll back the tax cut, raise taxes on certain things, and find ways to cut

spending.

"The problem cannot be solved overnight. We need to find ways to cut spending over time," he said.

Dr. Ghosh compared the federal deficit to the debt an individual may incur.

"If we are in debt, we would consider getting a second job to try to make more money. If the fed is cutting taxes, instead of taking that second job, they are taking a pay cut," he said.

Please see DEFICIT, Page H3

DEFICIT: Many experts disagree about the debt's impact

FROM PAGE H1

NOT A BIG DEAL

The White House says the fiscal situation will improve as the economy, bolstered by the Bush tax cuts, becomes more robust.

Others add the economy is much larger today, so the budget shortfall has less of an impact. Eventually, they say, the deficit will shrink as the economy improves.

Dr. Robert Seeley, associate professor of economics at Wilkes University, said \$500 billion is not something to be ignored, but said the deficit is not going to cause a shock to the economy.

"To look at budget deficits, you can't just look at absolute dollar value. It's a question of the size of the deficit compared to the gross domestic product," he said.

If the deficit reaches \$500 billion next year, Dr. Seeley said it is still not a huge amount compared to the country's income of approximately \$10 trillion.

"The deficit resulting from financing World War II was a much larger percentage of the economy than today's deficit and we recovered very nicely," Dr. Seeley said.

The post-World War II record was set in 1983, when the deficit hit 6 percent of the GDP, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Dr. Seeley compares the long-term effect of the deficit to "running a race with a rope tied around your waist."

"It doesn't mean the standard of living 20 years from now will be lowered, but it won't move as fast as it would otherwise," Dr. Seeley said.

In the short-term, the deficit will actually have a positive effect on the economy, as tax cuts could stimulate spending, which in turn, could lead to more private investment and jobs, Dr. Seeley said.

However, over time, economic growth will be slowed as interest rates rise and less private busi-

nesses borrow money for investments.

Long term, though, it's hard to know just what will happen.

"In 2000, both the Democrats and Republicans were projecting huge surpluses. Any kind of projections of government finances eight years from now, I wouldn't take too seriously," Dr. Seeley said.

By PAUL KRUPSKI

Standard-Speaker

WILKES-BARRE — Proponents of a home rule government for Luzerne County announced Thursday the creation of the non-profit Charter Yes organization to solicit money to muster support for passage of the ballot question Nov. 4.

Organizers assembled at the Ramada Inn on Public Square checks made payable to Charter Yes should be sent to the organization's mailing address: Charter Yes, P.O. Box 2103, Kingston, Pa. 18704.

They said pro and con viewpoints are welcome and also should be sent to the mail address, and that Charter Yes will create its own Web site.

Organizers drew attention to two upcoming events and said they would begin within seven to nine days to distribute summaries of the proposed charter to county residents.

**Luzerne County Govern-
ment Study Commission**

Chairman Carl Goodwin said a debate of the charter proposal would be held Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. at Wilkes University.

He said commission members Tom Baldino and Rob Seeley, both professors at Wilkes, would argue the pro-charter side of the debate.

Goodwin said West Hazleton Mayor Carl Puschauer, a commission member who voted "no" to the final version of the proposed charter, would argue against adopting home rule.

Puschauer will be joined in opposition by Lynette Villano and Paul DeFabo, chairwoman and vice chairman, respectively, of the Luzerne County Republican Party, Goodwin said.

Commission member Ruth Tetschner said a breakfast is scheduled at the Ramada on Oct. 18 at 9 a.m. to recruit volunteers and assign them areas to circulate the charter summaries.

Hazleton Councilman James Ferry Sr., private consultant Howard Grossman and Northwest Area School Direc-

tor Randy Tomasacci are co-chairmen of Charter Yes.

Carl Romanelli, co-chairman of the Luzerne County Green Party, who led off the press conference, introduced Grossman as the "chief executive officer" of Charter Yes.

Grossman emphasized that "320,000 citizens living in the county will be affected and impacted by the contents of the charter."

He said "feedback and money" are needed to achieve an "end result of 51 percent of the vote on Nov. 4."

Grossman championed the charter as "the touchstone of governmental programs" and "way to modernize for future generations."

Ferry said Hazleton made the transition to home rule in 1989 and that voting "yes" to the charter would be "giving control of the county, as we did with the city, to the people."

He said home rule was "great. You're going to love it." Tomasacci said he believes in

the concept of home rule and wants to help "spread the word" in his home area and the county.

He stated, "It gives ownership of government back to the people. There are no political heavy hitters here, only common people."

Grossman said Bear Creek Village Mayor Walter Mitchell, will serve as treasurer of Charter Yes.

Mitchell said the failure of Luzerne County has been "its inability to keep up with the 21st Century."

He said the charter shows how the county can finally operate as a business with an executive and checks and balances."

Mitchell said, "Other more progressive counties in Pennsylvania" that adopted home rule "had their nay-sayers, too."

He said the charter was a turning point and "opportunity to restore confidence to the electorate" and "return respect and confidence in government."

Romanelli declared, "Whether the charter passes

or fails, the sun will rise over Luzerne County. We are asking that the discourse be intelligent and grounded in public service."

He expressed the view that home rule would create "a new level of citizenship by voters" and replace a "a kind of elitism" by leaders and atmosphere where "money interests take precedence over the concerns of the citizenry."

Romanelli said people from a diverse background have agreed to serve on the Charter Yes board. They include himself, Tom

Bigler, Dr. Wallace Settler, Dr. Phil Tuhy, Frank Loch, Nancy Kemp, Leonard Ziolkowski, Jay Niskey, Dr. Dave Sosar, the Rev. William Kennard, Tetschner, Neil Allen, Goodwin, George Race, Robb Henderson, Harold Phoenix, Betsy Summers and Mitchell.

Romanelli said the group, and others expected to join, will speak to service clubs and community groups, plan events to highlight the importance of a "yes" vote and respond to questions and opinions expressed by citizens.

Luzerne County government study commission members sworn into office

Panel will hold its first meeting Thursday night

By Tim Gulla
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

Luzerne County's newly former Home Rule Charter Study Commission isn't letting any grass grow under their feet.

Ten of the 11 persons elected to the 11-member board were sworn into office on Monday by Luzerne County judges Thomas Burke and Ann Lokuta.

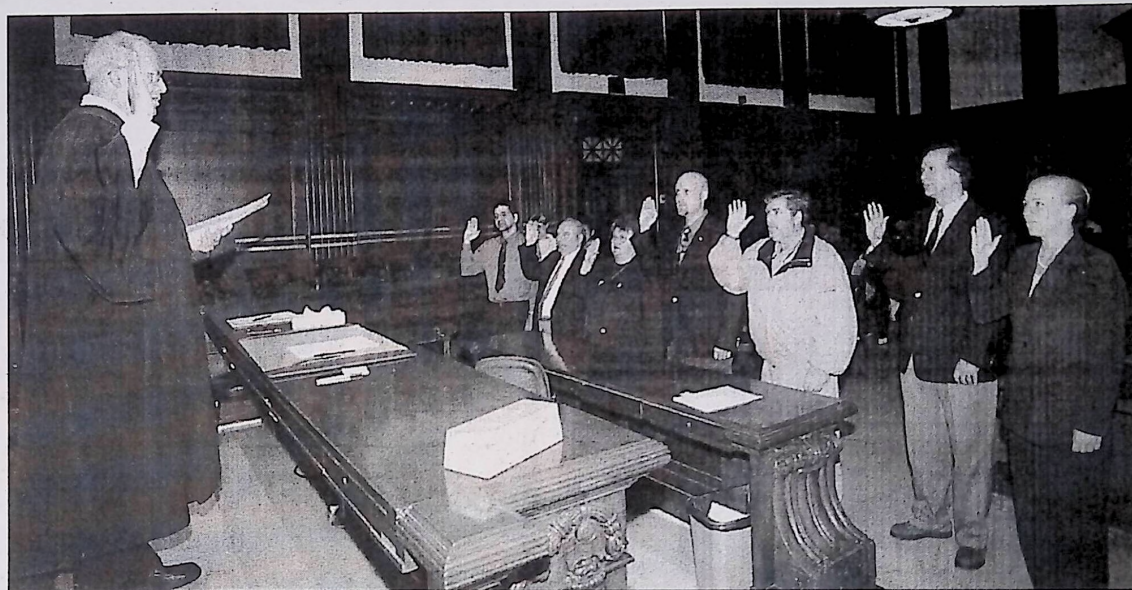
'MY HOPES ARE THAT WE CAN WORK TOGETHER WELL AND FIND A SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT THAT WILL WORK IN THE CITIZENS' BEST INTEREST.'

The group will meet at 7 p.m. at Wilkes University's Marts Center, room 213.

Kemp said the group hopes to meet at least once a week in upcoming weeks and further plans to

move the meeting locations so people from all areas of the county will have a chance to participate.

Robb Seeley, one of the commission members, commented, "My hopes are that we can



Judge Thomas Burke administers the oath of office to several members of the commission. From left are George Race, William Hyer, Ruth Tetschner, Edward Kilduff, Barry Finn, Rob Seeley and Elizabeth Summers. Other commission members, Nancy Kemp and Carl Puscauer, were sworn in separately by Judge Ann Lokuta.

work together well and find a system of government that will work in the citizens' best interest."

George Race, another study commission member, offered, "I think Luzerne County taxpayers have been getting their ass kicked for several years now. Our election, and the passage of the (home rule study) question, may be their way of getting to kick back for a change."

The home rule charter study commission was formed as a result of a referendum that was

placed on the November General Election ballot. The question was passed by the electorate by more than a 2-1 margin.

The 11 members of the commission were selected from a group of 35 persons who were seeking a nomination to the study commission.

Eight of the 11 members who were elected to the commission came from a group called "Team Home Rule," which was comprised of many of the initial backers of the home rule drive.

The panel is charged with the task of investigating Luzerne County government and recommending changes to the structure of government.

It will be up to Luzerne County voters at a future election, possibly the November 2002 election, to either accept or reject the study commission's proposals.

While the panel has many different options to explore, one possible option would be to switch from a three commission-form of county government

to a seven or nine member council.

Court stays execution

HARRISBURG (AP)—The scheduled execution of a man convicted in Philadelphia of killing another man over an argument involving a gold chain was put on hold Monday.

Sheldon Hannibal, 29, was set to die by lethal injection on Dec. 13. A Common Pleas Court judge stayed the execution on Monday to allow time for appeals.

County study panel anxious to begin work

By Fred Ney
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

CV
11-14-01

Members of Team Home Rule, the grass roots group that started the move to study county government with an eye toward change, is ready to start its work but is dead in the water until the county officially certifies the 2001 general election.

"We're kind of in a holding pattern at this point," said Ed Kilduff, one of the 11 members elected to serve on the government study panel and a member of Team Home Rule.

Kilduff said several local election recount challenges due to close voting numbers is delaying final certification of the election.

He said, by law, the county has 10 days from the date of certification to swear in members of the government study commission and then the commission members have five days after that to conduct their first meeting.

"I would expect that we'll at least accomplish organization at the first meeting, you know, selecting a chairperson, a secretary — hopefully we'll even get started with outlining a study plan," Kilduff projected.

'WE'RE

JUST WAITING

TO BE SWORN

IN AFTER THE

ELECTION IS

CERTIFIED.'

NANCY KEMP

PANEL MEMBER

Nancy Kemp, another elected member of the commission and the chief promoter of Team Home Rule, echoed Kilduff's thoughts.

"We're just waiting to be sworn in after the election is certified," she offered.

Luzerne County Chief Clerk Jim Torbik said Tuesday that he's preparing to assign someone to help the commission find suitable space to conduct business.

"And, of course, the county is responsible to pay their bills," Torbik added.

Attorney Joseph Cosgrove, chairman of the Luzerne County Election Board, was traveling on business Tuesday and could not be immediately reached for comment about when certification will take place.

The study commission was created by overwhelming public approval, 22,590 to 10,156, of a home rule study question on the general election ballot.

Thirty five persons were seeking election to the commission. According to unofficial numbers, the top 11 vote getters were Nancy Kemp, 10,418; Elizabeth Summers, 9,161; Ruth Tetschner, 8,948; Barry Finn, 8,101; William E. Hyer, 7,339; Robb Henderson, 6,921; Edward Kilduff, 6,635; Tom Baldino, 6,366; George Race, 6,347; Carl C. Puschauer, 6,227, and Rob Seeley, 5,992.

The only persons among the

unofficial top 11 candidates who didn't belong to Team Home Rule were Barry Finn of West Pittston, Rob Seeley of Jackson Township and Tom Baldino, Mountain Top.

Another group of commission candidates, calling themselves "Candidates for a True Study," had also aligned for the election.

They included Rose Andrews, Russel E. Arnone, Paul DeFabo, John Flynn, Charles Gelb, George Hakim, Todd Klein, Edmund Poplawski, Alan Pugh, Virginia Murtha-Cawley and Leonard Piazza.

However, none of these candidates placed in the top 11.

The commission has up to 18 months to come up with a viable plan for change. Whatever plan is adopted must go before voters for acceptance or rejection.

A decision must be made by November 2003, but Kemp hopes they can have a plan ready for voter review by May 2003.

'Team Home Rule' wins county charter study seats

By Tim Gulla
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

C.V.
11-7-01

In the race for Home Rule Charter Study Commission, it nearly was a clean sweep for a group of candidates who were aligned as "Team Home Rule."

According to unofficial election returns, nine of Team Home Rule's 11 candidates won election to the study commission. The study commission was created by overwhelming public approval, 22,590 to 10,156, of a Home Rule Study question on

Tuesday's ballot.

Thirty five persons were seeking election to the commission. According to unofficial numbers, the top 11 vote getters were: Nancy Kemp, 10,418; Elizabeth Summers, 9,161; Ruth Tetschner, 8,948; Barry Finn, 8,101; William E. Hyer, 7,339; Robb Henderson, 6,921; Edward Kilduff, 6,635; Tom Baldino, 6,366; George Race, 6,347; Carl C. Puschauer, 6,227, and Rob Seeley, 5,992.

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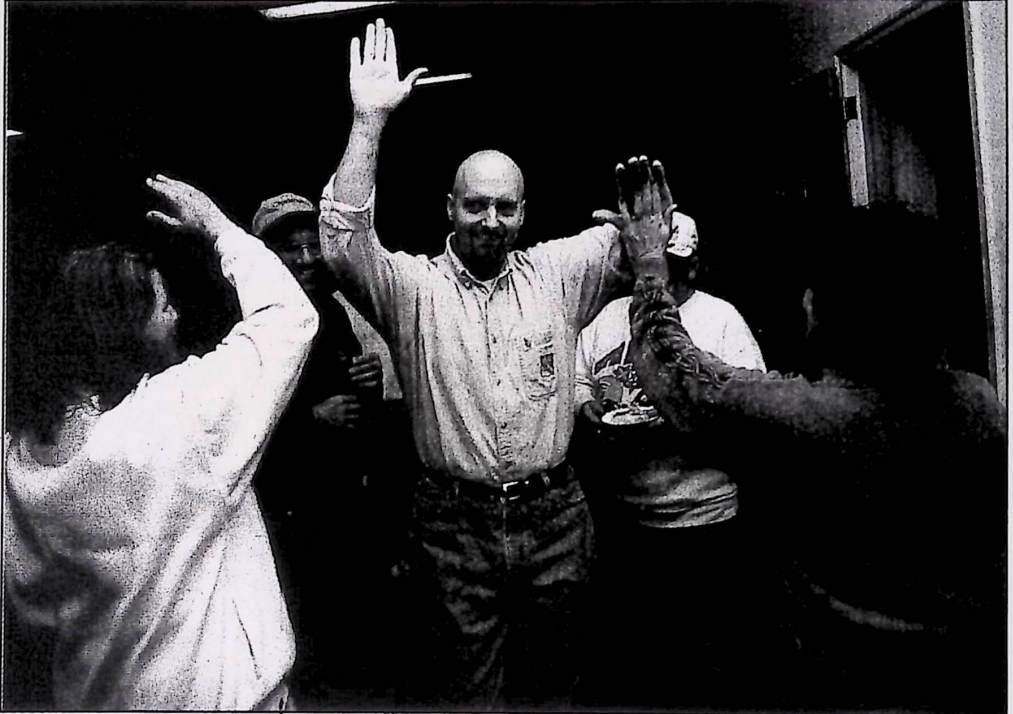
Another group of commission candidates, calling themselves "Candidates for a True Study," had also aligned for the election. However, none of these candidates placed in the top 11.

The commission members must be sworn in within 10 days after the election is certified. The panel must then hold its first meeting within the next 15 days.

LUZERNE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Voters bring it home

TL 11-7-01



TIMES LEADER STAFF PHOTO/CLARK VAN ORDEN

Ed Kilduff, one of eight members of Team Home Rule who were leading in the race for 11 seats on the Luzerne County government study commission, celebrates with his teammates Tuesday at First United Methodist Church in Wilkes-Barre. Voters approved the formation of the commission, according to unofficial results.

Proposal to set up home-rule panel gains huge majority

By DAVE JANOSKI
davej@leader.net

Luzerne County voters took a giant step toward the possible transformation of their county government by approving a government-study commission Tuesday.

Voters endorsed the study 22,590 to 10,156 in an unofficial count with all 316 precincts reporting. They also elected 11 members to the commission, which will have 18 months to examine county government and consider reforms that would be presented to voters in a second referendum.

"There's a crack in the courthouse dome tonight," said George Race, of Team Home Rule, an activist group whose candidates won eight of 11 seats

on the commission in an unofficial count. Members of Team Home Rule organized the petition drive that placed the study-commission question on Tuesday's ballot.

The group has proposed a host of reforms, including the abolition of the current three-commissioner system in favor of a larger, part-time, county council with a county executive to manage day-to-day affairs.

Team Home Rule members saw Tuesday's outcome as a resounding "no-confidence" vote in the Democratic majority commissioners.

"People are fed up," said Nancy Kemp, another Team Home Rule candidate who was the apparent top vote-getter for the study commission. Kemp said residents

were angered by this year's 23 percent tax increase, a predicted budget shortfall for 2001 and the majority's favoritism toward campaign contributors in awarding some county contracts. "Things are going to change."

Another candidate who failed to win a seat on the commission agreed.

"The three-commissioner system is gone," said Paul DeFabo, vice chairman of the county Republican Party who ran on the Candidates for a True Study slate, which included several other candidates with political and party ties. "People are unhappy with anyone who is even faintly connected to county government."

Through county Chief Clerk Jim

See RULE, Page 12A

RULE

Continued from Page 1A

Torbik, majority Democratic Commissioners Tom Makowski and Tom Pizano declined comment on the vote.

The majority commissioners, who did not support the study-commission referendum, spent Tuesday night closeted in their courthouse office as an unofficial count proceeded in a courthouse lobby and candidates and political supporters milled under the rotunda.

County Democratic Chairman James Bach said it was unclear how the party, which hadn't actively opposed the study commission, would react.

"Do we need change? Obviously the public thinks it does. Maybe we have to change with the times."

The turnout for the study commission was light, even by the standards of an off-year election, which usually attracts 30 to 35 percent of the voters. Thirty-one percent of the county's registered voters went to the polls Tuesday. But only half of those who voted cast a ballot on the study question, which was placed at the extreme upper right of the voting machine, where, many observers said, it was hard to find.

Tuesday's government-study referendum was the third in Luzerne County since 1974, when voters approved a study commission, but then rejected the charter it proposed. In 1990, 54 percent of voters rejected a study commission after a heated campaign in which leaders from both parties worked against a study and pro- and anti-study groups spent nearly \$70,000.

In contrast, neither party took a position on the 2001 study, which saw \$1,750 in spending as of late last week. Political observers said the Sept. 11 terror attacks and subsequent military action in Afghanistan shoved the home-rule effort, which began as a grassroots petition drive, into the background.

Team Home Rule takes 8 of 11 seats

Team Home Rule, a slate of candidates endorsed by the volunteers who spearheaded the formation of a commission to study Luzerne County government, took eight of the 11 seats on that commission, according to an unofficial county Tuesday.

With all precincts reporting, the following Team Home Rule members were the leading vote-getters:

- Nancy Kemp, president of the Luzerne County Public Forum, the citizens group whose petition drive placed the study-commission on Tuesday's ballot.

- Elizabeth Summers, a member of Libertarian Party and former candidate for Wilkes-Barre City Council.

- Carl Puschauer, the West Hazleton tax collector.

- Robb Henderson, an Episcopal pastor and bus driver with the Luzerne County Transportation Authority.

- George Race, president of the Wyoming Area Taxpayers Association.

- Ruth Tetschner, a retired Dallas School District teacher and principal.

- Edward Kilduff, Luzerne County deputy prothonotary.

- William Hyer, a retired Air Force veteran.

Rounding out the commission, if the unofficial numbers are confirmed, would be two Wilkes University professors, Tom Baldino and Rob Seeley, and Barry Finn, a former broadcast meteorologist who works as a photographer and auto salesman.

There were 35 candidates for the commission, including nine who billed themselves as Candidates for a True Study. That slate, which included several candidates with ties to county politics and parties failed to win any seats in an unofficial count.

The campaign for a study commission began in the spring when the Luzerne County Public Forum, a citizens group, began circulating petitions to place Tuesday's referendum on the ballot. Forum members said they were motivated by a Times Leader investigative series, "Party Favors" that detailed how the county Democratic majority commissioners have steered millions in no-bid contracts for legal, accounting, insurance and other services to their campaign supporters since 1994.

Although those dealings were legal, the series showed that other Pennsylvania counties, including several with home rule charters, paid less for those services by requiring competition.

Six of Pennsylvania's 67 counties have home-rule charters drawn up under a 1972 state law that allows counties and municipalities to draw up their own charters, or constitutions, to replace the traditional forms of government outlined in state codes.

Five of those counties — Allegheny, Delaware, Erie, Lehigh and Northampton — have county

councils of five to 15 members and county executives or managers who are elected or appointed by the councils.

Some of the counties allow voters to propose and pass county legislation through petitions and referendums. Others have merged county row offices and made some row officers appointed employees rather than public officials. Some home-rule charters limit the salaries of elected officials, require civil-service tests for prospective county employees and bar officials from hiring their relatives.

The commission elected Tuesday will have public hearings, hear testimony from county officials and government experts and study government in other counties before deciding whether a home-rule charter should be drafted. If a charter is adopted, it will be presented to voters for approval. State law gives a commission up to 18 months to draw up a charter. The commission's work is funded by county government. Previous county studies have cost an average of \$37,966, according to the state.

The Elected 11

A field of 35 home rule commission hopefuls has been narrowed down to those who will study Luzerne County government. The candidates highlighted in **gray** have been elected to the study commission.

CANDIDATE	VOTES
•Neil Allen	5,008
✓Rose Andrews	3,824
✓Russell E. Arnone	4,623
Thomas Baldino	5,965
Michael B. Carroll	3,431
George J. Cheponis	3,822
Virginia Murtha Cowley	4,960
Al Czajkowski	3,464
✓Paul M. DeFabo	3,760
•Bill Falls	4,020
Barry P. Finn	7,608
✓John Flynn	4,124
Joyce Dombroski Gebhardt	5,016
✓Charles Gelb	4,936
✓J. Carl Goodwin	4,879
✓George Hakim	3,761
•Robb Henderson	6,539
Andrew "Butch" HvozdoVIC	3,427
•William E. Hyer	6,947
•Nancy R. Kemp	9,842
•Edward P. Kilduff	6,256
✓Todd J. Klein	3,334
Suzanne M. Leseberg	3,675
Leonard C. Piazza III	3,241
Frank J. Pizzella Jr.	3,959
✓Edmund R. Poplawski	4,381
✓Alan Pugh	3,837
•Carl C. PuschaUver	5,895
•George R. Race	6,057
Mark Sciabacucchi	4,406
Rob Seeley	5,643
•Elizabeth Summers	8,670
•Ruth Tetschner	8,476
John M. Yench	4,751
Henry W. Zelinski	4,596

* "Team Home Rule" member

✓ "Candidates for a True Study" member

T.L.
11-4-01

Vote YES to government study and everyone wins

HERE IT IS, plain and simple.

The powers that control the government of Luzerne County have led you into a quagmire of debt, mismanagement, favoritism and corruption. It is damaging to your future, taxing on every household and embarrassing to the credibility of the area as a good place to live.

As long as there is a contract to be awarded without bid or a job to be created and doled out, these self-serving elected officials will take advantage of Luzerne County government, the power that comes with the office and the people they've been elected to serve.

You are being cheated day in and out.

FIRST — You owe it to yourself and the future of your community to vote YES for the government study commission question on the ballot Tuesday, Nov. 6.

The grassroots campaign that prompted the ballot question allows Luzerne County residents to consider taking a look at the way their county is governed. Voting YES doesn't change your government. Voting YES allows the study to consider ways the system of government can be improved to prevent the current pit of nepotism, bad planning and mismanagement, a government by the few and benefiting their family and friends.

Plain and simple. Something is rotten right here in Luzerne County. This is your chance to find a way to make it right.

THEN — After you vote YES, don't forget to vote for 11 commission members. Beware of candidates connected to county government who have a vested interest in the status quo.

Based on their experience, their responses to a Times Leader survey and a lack of connections to

the present county government, these are the 11 candidates we endorse for the commission. Voting for them is voting for an informed and intelligent examination of how Luzerne County government should function.

Thomas Joseph Baldino, a professor of political science at Wilkes University and chairman of the Division of Social Sciences and Communications.

Barry P. Finn, the familiar TV and radio announcer who now works as a photographer and salesperson.

Robb Henderson, the pastor of the Southern Episcopal Church in Forty Fort and a bus driver for the Luzerne County Transportation Authority.

William E. Hyer, a retired U.S. Air Force veteran and former federal government worker.

Nancy R. Kemp, a founder of the Luzerne County Public Forum and the Team Home Rule that started the government study commission.

Edward P. Kilduff, the lone county employee we've suggested. He is deputy prothonotary at the courthouse, however, we were impressed by his survey response and experience in the U.S. Air Force.

Carl C. Puschauer, a tax collector for the borough of West Hazleton, he would represent southern Luzerne County.

Mark Sciabacucchi, a freshman at King's College, he would bring the voice of young people to the commission.

Rob Seeley, an associate professor of Economics at Wilkes University.

Elizabeth "Betsy" Summers, has been active in local issues and with the Libertarian Party for the past 10 years.

Ruth Tetschner, a retired elementary school teacher and principal who has studied to the predoctoral level at the University of Pennsylvania.



CLEAN SLATE

Chance to help shape county's future motivates home rule candidates

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are 35 candidates running for the government-study commission. Eleven belong to "Team Home Rule." That slate has been endorsed by the Luzerne County Public Forum, the group that circulated petitions to place the home-rule question on the ballot. Nine people, most with close ties to county government or the county Republican and Democratic parties, are running as "Candidates for a True Study." The remaining 16 candidates have announced no affiliation.

* Indicates a member of Team Home Rule.

** Indicates a member of Candidates for a True Study.

The Times Leader recently mailed out questionnaires to the 35 people who will appear on the ballot to serve as home rule study commission members. Eleven will serve on the study commission. Their responses to our questions appear verbatim:



Baldino

1. Name: Thomas Joseph Baldino
2. DOB: June 27, 1949
3. Community residence: Fairview Township, Mountaintop
4. Occupation: Professor of political science at Wilkes University and chairperson of the Division of Social Sciences and Communications
5. Party: Registered Democrat
6. Elected position: None
7. County connections: None
8. Education: Bachelor's of arts, Maxima Cum Laude, LaSalle College, 1971; master's of arts, University of Illinois, 1974; Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1982
9. Experience: Instructor of political science, St. Francis College, Loretto, Pa., 1978-79; Assistant/Associate Professor of Political Science, Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pa., 1979-91; Professor of Political Science, Wilkes University, 1991; Department Chairperson, Juniata College, 1987-91; Department/Division chairperson, Wilkes University.

10. Why interested?

Dr. Seeley and I believe that county government, at its best, can make a significant contribution to the quality of life in Luzerne County. We enthusiastically support the creation of a commission to study alternative forms of county government. We are eager to bring Dr. Seeley's expertise as an economist and my expertise as a political scientist to the deliberations of the Study Commission. We are serious about studying alternative forms of county government without any preconceived ideas about what form is best. We have no ties to any political organizations or interest groups and, therefore, we will be completely objective participants in the process. Dr. Seeley and I are not interested in pursuing any elected or appointed positions with the county in the future. We seek election to the Commission because we want to assist the citizens of Luzerne County in finding the best form of government possible.



Seeley

1. Name: Rob Seeley
2. DOB: Aug. 4, 1955
3. Community residence: Jackson Township.
4. Occupation: Associate professor of Economics at Wilkes University
5. Party: Republican
6. Elected Position: None
7. County connections: None
8. Education: Wyoming Seminary, 1973; B.A., Franklin and Marshall College, 1977; Ph.D., University of Maryland, 1986.
9. Experience: Assistant Professor of Economics, King's College, 1982-83; Assistant Professor of Economics, Susquehanna University, 1984-89; Associate Professor of Economics, Wilkes University, 1989-present; Department Chairperson, Wilkes University, 1995-98
10. Why interested?

Dr. Baldino and I believe that county government, at its best, can make a significant contribution to the quality of life in Luzerne County. We enthusiastically support the creation of a commission to study alternative forms of county government. We are eager to bring Dr. Baldino's expertise as a political scientist and my expertise as an economist to the deliberations of the study commission. We are serious about studying alternative forms of county government without any preconceived ideas about what form is best. We have no ties to any political organization or interest group and, therefore, we will be completely objective participants in the process. Dr. Baldino and I are not interested in pursuing any elected or appointed positions with the county in the future. We seek election to the commission because we want to assist the citizens of Luzerne County in finding the best form of government possible.

T.L. 10-28-01

36 seeking seats on government study panel

By Fred Ney
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

CV
8-24-01

It's now official. Thirty six people have registered to run for 11 potential slots on the Luzerne County government study commission.

Three dozen candidates filed their nominating petitions by the time the deadline occurred Tuesday at 4:30 p.m.

About 30 seconds after the deadline was officially clocked in by county Voter Services director Kevin Jordan, a lone straggler showed up with his nominating papers in hand.

Carl Romanelli Jr., a Green Party member, was told by Jordan that he was too late and could not register to run.

Romanelli said he was delayed trying to find a notary public to sign his petitions. Jordan apologized but insisted the law prevented him from accepting the petitions.

"That's all right. My family will probably be happy. They didn't agree that I should run," he commented before leaving.

Those who registered successfully as candidates will run simultaneously on the November ballot with a referendum question asking voters whether a government study commission should be formed to determine if the system of county government needs change to make it more effective or efficient.

If the question is approved, the 11 candidates receiving the most votes will be impaneled to begin the task of evaluating county government. Their recommendations will be offered to voters on a subsequent ballot for approval or rejection.

If the question is defeated, the issue and the commission candidacies will simply be scrapped and the status quo will remain.

Candidates have until Sept. 12 to withdraw.

Those who filed include:

Al Czajkowski, Wilkes-Barre; Michael B. Carroll, Avoca; Russel E. Arnone, Wilkes-Barre; Joyce Dombroski-Gebhardt, Trucksville; John M. Yench, Wilkes-Barre; Andrew "Butch" Hvozdozic, Wilkes-

Barre; George Race, Exeter; Frank Pizzella Jr., Plains; Paul M. DeFabo, Wilkes-Barre; Leonard Piazza 3d, Wilkes-Barre; Neil Allen, Wyoming; Nancy Kemp, Laflin; Ruth Tetschner, Dallas.

Also, Edward P. Kilduff, Swoyersville; J. Carl Goodwin, Trucksville; Mark Sciabacucchi, Pittston Township; Elizabeth Summers, Wilkes-Barre; John A. Flynn, Wilkes-Barre; Rose Andrews, Wilkes-Barre; Carl Puschauber, West Hazleton; Robb Henderson, Exeter; Bill Falls, Wilkes-Barre; William Hyer, Edwardsville; Barry P. Finn, West Pittston; Alan M. Pugh, Dallas.

Also, Suzanne M. Leseberg, Wilkes-Barre; George J. Cheponis, Plymouth; George Hakim, Wilkes-Barre; Edmund R. Poplawski, Dupont; Charles Gelb, Pittston; Joseph J. Joyce, Hughestown; Todd J. Klein, Wilkes-Barre; Tom Balding, Mountain Top; Rob Seeley, Shavertown; Virginia Murtha-Cowley, West Pittston; Henry Zelinski, Wyoming.

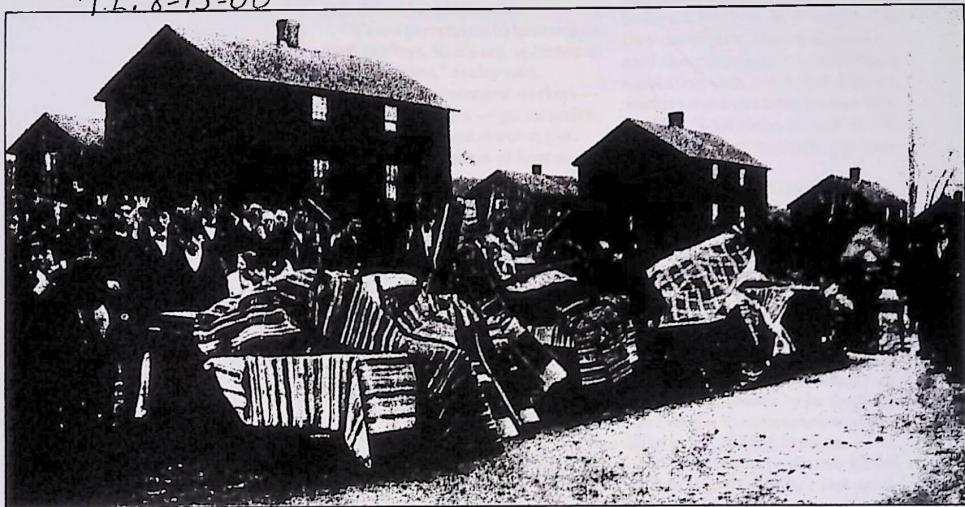
Change in nature of work force, economics among reasons experts give for absence of strife in Verizon strike locally



TIMES LEADER/RICHARD SABATURA

TODAY: Both companies and strikers must follow federal rules that govern picketing and the company's treatment of strikers. Two unions representing workers at Verizon — formerly Bell Atlantic — called a strike last week.

T.L. 8-13-00



SOURCE OF PHOTOS: ANTHRACITE HERITAGE MUSEUM, MCADAM PARK, SCRANTON/ COPIED BY TIMES LEADER PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD SABATURA

Peaceful picket line



100 YEARS AGO: Regional labor disputes were bitter and divisive. In the early 1900s, as strikes became more frequent, companies sometimes retaliated against the miners who walked off the job. Miners, above, were evicted from company-owned homes after the strike of 1902. Labor organizer John Mitchell led miners in strikes.

By CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON
chrisj@leader.net

WILKES-BARRE — Red streaks stained the sidewalk during a recent afternoon of picketing at Verizon Communications' South Main Street building.

They weren't the bloodshed or vandalism of a violent labor dispute. They were the remains of a cherry Popsicle one of the pickets apparently had dropped or eaten too slowly.

At the time, five women — four of whom wore matching red shirts — paced in front of the building. Those were the rules, and the pickets followed them. "You can't block an entrance or anything," said one woman. "You have to just keep moving."

The art of picketing clearly has taken on a softer side recently in the Wyoming Valley, where labor disputes have a disruptive and violent history dating to the coal miners' strikes of the early 1900s.

"They're more polite than they used to be," said Robert D. Seely, an associate professor of economics at Wilkes University.

In his book about the town of Freeland, historian Charles K. Stumpf wrote that coal miners' demonstrations and riots were so fierce in the early 1900s, "One

young breaker boy was said to die of fright."

Consider some of the area's most recent job actions:

- Rather than disrupting the school day, Greater Nanticoke Area teachers in April picketed after school at the homes and businesses of School Board members. The picket was so PG-rated, at least one teacher brought a child to help demonstrate.

- In October, teachers at Luzerne County Community College were on strike for less than a day before a judge ordered them back to work. They returned the next day, finished the school year and still don't have a new contract.

- In May 1999, St. Michael's School teachers agreed to halt their strike and finish the school year after the school's executive director gave the strikers an ultimatum that the school would "conclude this school year by alternative methods."

Why the apparent shift in union intensity? It's the economy, partly.

Coal miners were protesting against working conditions which, in 1907, killed four miners a day in Pennsylvania.

"How bad off are people today?" said Jack Ryan, associate professor of business and management at King's College. "Are you really going to go to jail if you don't get \$22 an hour instead of \$20 an hour."

LABOR

Continued from Page 1D

Ryan said that in 1970, 25.7 percent of the work force was unionized. In 1999, 13.9 percent of workers were union members, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The number is even smaller — 9.4 percent — when you look at just private-sector employees.

"It's not as common to have unionized workers, so it's not as common to have strikes," Seeley said.

And when government workers — especially teachers — go on strike, their jobs are almost never at risk.

"It's just a question of how much of a pay increase, and when am I going to get my money," Seeley said. "When the jobs themselves are on the line ... you're much more likely to see intensity."

Workers went on strike against the Leslie Fay Cos. in 1994 after the company announced plans to close all manufacturing plants in the United States and move production to low-cost overseas sites.

During the angry six-week strike, at least two pickets were arrested for being threatening to police officers.

Leslie Fay closed its production plant a year later.

"Technology and foreign competition: I really think those are the two biggest drivers for the loss of power for unions," Ryan said.

One of the area's ugliest labor disputes was the 1978 clash between the Times Leader and its trade unions shortly after media chain Capital Cities Communications took over the paper. Replacement workers were brought in, and strikers quickly labeled them "scabs."

Among reports from the time: Scuffles erupted between pickets and Wackenhut security guards stationed around the building; compa-

ny vehicles drove straight into crowds at the gates of the paper; and pickets smashed windows and tossed buckets of paint at the building.

The pro-union community also took up the cause. Carriers were harassed, and some retailers refused to sell the Times Leader.

Little outward anger is apparent in the Verizon strike.

During 15 minutes on the Verizon picket one afternoon last week, two cars honked their support as they drove past. One of the pickets said the community seems more supportive than when Bell Atlantic workers went on strike for two days in 1998. "Last time, people would shout, 'Go back to work, you lazy bums.'"

The strike at Verizon, which was created by this summer's merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE, has some of the elements of more fierce strikes. Union members say they fear that the company will move jobs from the old Bell Atlantic territory into cheaper areas in GTE's region.

Verizon claims that, especially in New York, it has suffered hundreds of acts of vandalism to its facilities and threats to managers who are filling in for striking workers.

But Wilkes-Barre Police Chief William Barrett said late last week that he had received no reports here.

Verizon union leaders have said that they don't want to cause problems for customers.

With the loss of manufacturing jobs, much of the area's unionized work force — such as Verizon workers — hold white-collar or service jobs, Seeley said. Unlike factory or mine workers, they are face-to-face with their customers every day.

"I think there's a feeling among these workers to maintain professional behavior," Seeley said. "So, violence is much less likely when they're picketing."

HMO Changes Leave Seniors

Searching for Covera

BY VINCE COVELESKIE
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Thousands of Medicare HMO beneficiaries across the country will be celebrating New Year's Eve by shopping for a new way to pay their medical bills. Dozens of insurance companies that offered a full plate of services at no or low cost to the consumer — other than Medicare — shielded at shrinking reimbursements and decided to cut their losses.

Fortunately, it appears that most northeastern Pennsylvanians will escape the ax, at least for now.

The Penn State Gelsinger Health Plan and First Priority Health, the Medicare risk HMO of Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania, will continue coverage into 1999.

The Blue Cross board of directors wrestled with getting out of the business altogether before deciding to maintain First Priority 65, with the addition of monthly premiums.

"We decided we wanted to stay," said Blue Cross President/CEO Thomas Ward. "We'll still have some losses in 1999, and there needs to be some recognition of rural and non-urban areas," he said, explaining that Medicare reimbursements differ from big cities to small towns.

As a result, residents of Lycoming, Susquehanna and Wyoming counties will have to pay more for First Priority 65 than their counterparts in Bradford, Clinton, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Sullivan and Wayne counties.

The Penn State Gelsinger Health Plan will conduct open enrollment for its Gold Plan to Medicare-eligible participants in January, said Pat Eagen, marketing representative.

Medicare covers not only individuals who are over 65, but those who are disabled, as well. Penn State Gelsinger has offered a Medicare HMO for the last six years, she said.

"We have not had any increases (in premiums)," she said, crediting a combination of utilization management and administrative for holding the line on costs. While zero premium plans are still available, there is a fee for prescription drug coverage.

REIMBURSEMENT A FACTOR

Rick Slaughter, director of Medicare programs, said reimbursement is just one of several factors considered when marketing the HMO. "We also take into consideration the product, the service and the provider," he said.

Mr. Ward said Blue Cross sees significant deterioration in terms of Medicare reimbursement that depends on geography.

"We feel very strongly that rural and non-urban areas other than big cities are not getting sufficient reimbursement," he said. "Combine that with utilization rates of people over 65, and you can't even break even. That's the problem."

The Healthcare Finance Administration is considering changes to the reimbursement system in 2000, according to Mr. Ward. It's a tug of war between the government and insurance companies created by the federal Budget Act of 1997.

"At this point, I can't tell you what they're going to do, but hopefully they'll come up with a solution that makes sense," he said.

Mr. Ward declined to speculate on what Blue Cross would do if changes aren't made at the federal level.

"One of the main features at Blue Cross has always been to figure out ways to help people get their claims paid. That hasn't changed. That is what we do," he said, stressing that all medical decisions are made by a panel of physicians. "We're local. We try to pay attention to customers and their needs."

In announcing the addition of monthly premiums for all categories of service, Blue Cross cited the following examples of how other insurers decided to handle the problem:

- Oxford Health Plan is withdrawing its Medicare risk HMO from Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties.

- Health America plans to pull out of Berks, Lancaster and Lebanon counties.

- US Healthcare eliminated its Medicare risk HMO in six states and withdrew partially from three states.

- Anthem Blue Cross withdrew from 22 counties in Ohio.

- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota is eliminating its Medicare risk HMO program at the end of the year.

- American Health Care Providers, the longest serving HMO in Arkansas, is leaving the Arkansas market with its HMO and point-of-service products.

All told, between 400,000 and 500,000 Medicare beneficiaries will be impacted by the cut backs.



SUNDAY TIMES

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LAW OF SUPPLY AT WORK

Dr. Robert Seeley, professor of economics at Wilkes University, ties the problem of shrinking reimbursements to the law of supply.

"If reimbursements are going to be lower, providers and insurers are going to be less interested in dealing with Medicare patients," he said. "This obviously is not good for Medicare patients, and the government needs to set reimbursement rates at reasonable levels."

Simply put, providers and insurers are looking for some return. If they cannot make a profit, there will be fewer to serve the Medicare population.

"When a service is performed, you have two willing participants — the buyer and seller. If one of those parties becomes an unwilling participant, it isn't going to happen. There has to be an incentive. People won't work for nothing," he said.

Enrollment in managed care plans has exploded in the last 10 years and Dr. Seeley sees it as an important option in the health care industry.

"Managed care has certain advantages and disadvantages (over fee for service). It's another option they can pursue depending on taste and preferences, but there are limitations on the services you can get and trouble you have to go through to get them. The key is the lower price. If you want fee for service where you choose what you want . . . you have to pay extra for those advantages," he said.

"People will always have fee-for-service options. If you're willing to pay, that option will be there. Physicians would rather have patients with that kind of insurance," he said.

As lawmakers debate a proposed patient Bill of Rights, Dr. Seeley warns that providing too much flexibility will make HMOs more like traditional fee-for-service plans and could eliminate the cost advantage for consumers.

"HMOs restrict physicians' choice... they review how different physicians use resources — some run all kinds of tests, while others are more careful about costs. In the HMO, you deal with those who are careful about costs," he said. "The HMO keeps premiums down by not dealing with physicians that use a lot of resources."

Weiss Ratings Inc., an insurance company rating service based in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., suggests those who lose coverage consider leaving HMOs altogether and rely on traditional Medicare, plus a supplemental policy.

Starting next year, consumers will have another choice in the Medicare + Choice, a new option created under the Budget Act.

Weiss says Medicare + Choice is still in its infancy, and advises consumers to wait until it is up and running smoothly before they consider replacing their current coverage.

*"People will always have
fee-for-service options. If
you're willing to pay, that
option will be there."*

DR. ROBERT SEELEY

TAKING UNIONS' PULSE

KRT PHOTO

To boost membership, organized labor caters to hospital workers

By PAMELA C. TURFA
Times Leader Staff Writer

This is the labor movement's new face: female, employed in health care and concerned about quality-of-life issues as well as salaries.

Partly to survive, because of changes in the work force, union organizers are moving from factories and mines to schools, hospitals and food service companies.

Some employees — frustrated with cost-cutting measures, staff reorganization and a growing salary gap between rank-and-file and top management — are responding.

Registered nurses at Wyoming Valley Health Care System voted in 1996 to join PSEA Health Care, a division of the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

A Feb. 2 strike was averted last week when the hospital system — which said it would bring in replacement workers — and the union reached a tentative agreement on the nurses' first contract.

About 250 nurses and technical employees at Penn State Gelsinger Medical Center Valley Medical Cen-

ter voted Aug. 1 to join District 1199P of the Service Employees International Union, the nation's third-largest and fastest-growing labor organization.

Six weeks later, Penn State Gelsinger's 250 maintenance and service employees went as far as holding an election, but then rejected unionization.

And the National Labor Relations Board has not ruled on a contested election at Penn State Gelsinger Medical Center in Danville. The initial vote gave the election to the union.

The movement to organize service workers will escalate as employees become more frustrated, says Andrew Stern, international president of Service Employees International Union, the labor organization that last year organized Gelsinger's nurses and technical staff.

He predicts the next wave of organizing will be among health care, food service, university, Head Start, child care and employment workers.

"The labor movement needs to respond to the new reality," he says. "We're beginning to

see large corporations or food service play a more significant role in the marketplace."

Nursing new growth

"Traditionally unions have been much more successful in organizing workers in goods-producing instead of the service-producing industries," says Robert Seeley,

Ph.D., an associate

See UNION,
Page 10D



TIMES LEADER PHOTO/BOB ESPOSITO

Wyoming Valley Health Care System registered nurses celebrated their first contract Wednesday night at the East Mountain Inn, Plains Township.

7.7. 1-25-98

Union

(Continued from Page 1D)

professor of economics at Wilkes University.

But the "traditional fertile ground for unions is disappearing" as the economy is changing.

Technology has eliminated factory jobs; overseas plants have taken them away.

Unions, which have seen a huge loss in membership over the last 50 years, are finding they can be successful in service industries when there is not a good substitute for the labor provided — highly-skilled workers, such as registered nurses, who are not easily replaced, he says.

Within the health-care industry, growth of managed care is playing a significant role in the movement to unionize workers.

With managed care, "there is a tremendous incentive to cut costs," he says. From the nurses' point of view, they are being asked to pay for fringe benefits (health care premiums for Wyoming Valley Health Care System's registered nurses, for example) and they are having to work harder, raising concerns about the quality of patient care.

Their jobs are coming under attack, says Greg Tarpinian, executive director and senior economist of the Labor Research Association, a labor-oriented think tank based in New York City.

"They're not getting the same wage increases, and they're being worked to the bone."

A general national rebellion against managed care — despite growing numbers of consumers enrolled in managed care plans — also is fueling public support for health-care workers who unionize.

"The public is generally more supportive of health-care professionals when they're involved in a union situation than they are of other workers," Tarpinian says.

"Consumers or patients are

very concerned about technical qualifications or staffing levels of the patients who take care of them," he says. "One area where you want the workers to be fighting for raising the cost of the product is in health care."

Wyoming Valley Health Care System's threat to bring in replacement nurses is typical in hospital strikes, Tarpinian says.

"In health care," he says, "it's clear that the level of conflict between employer and the employees is greater today than it ever has been."

Finding fit support

Wyoming Valley Health Care System's registered nurses organized in response to layoffs at Wilkes-Barre General and Nesbitt Memorial hospitals.

Penn State Geisinger nurses and technical workers organized in response to a hospital restructuring that is changing the jobs of most employees. Hospital officials said the restructuring — dubbed Geisinger 2000 — will make employees more efficient by grouping them into patient care teams.

These local issues are typical among health care workers nationally, says SEIU's Stern.

"Most people come to health care, because they're interested in providing quality health care. They're finding that in a world where cost and profit are taking over, it's hard to provide quality care."

"It all sort of stems from this same drive to have health care be more about profits than people. We find that too many hospitals talk about quality, but they're pushing to cut down on staffing, wages."

Health-care employees, he says, are finding that "if they're going to defend patient care and job standards ... they're going to have to do it in a union."

SEIU, the third largest union in the country, is also the fast-

est growing.

Although national union membership has dropped since World War II from about a third of the workers to about 12 percent today, SEIU had its best year ever in 1997, signing up 81,000 new members, including the 250 nurses and technical workers at Penn State Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center.

The goal this year is to add 100,000, Stern says.

The union, he says, is sensitive to the different needs of its members.

Doctors come to the bargaining table with a tremendous amount of influence. They seek recognition of the role they play.

But aides in a nursing home realize they are not viewed as highly by the employers, and that they must join with aides from other nursing homes to be successful.

"You find a lot more women in the service sector. You need to have a union where there are women in leadership, women organizers and where these workers don't feel that they're an appendage."

Women bring to a union a "strong focus on work and family issues — time off and day care and scheduling."

Unions also must be flexible, Stern says. "Representing doctors is different than representing custodians. You can't have a cookie-cutter approach."

Tactically, union leadership views consumers as allies of union members, Stern says.

"These are not just our issues; they're issues both for consumers and purchasers."

Typically, negotiations include campaigns to bring issues of quality care to the public's attention. "Health care is one of the few areas," he says, "where there are issues of life and death."

Sales compensation packaged to product, personality

By Ralph Nardono

Sales compensation packages vary according to the needs of the organization. Sales professionals are paid by straight commissions, straight salary, or a combination of both depending on the product, company marketing strategies, and the marketplace.

Management needs to fit the compensation packages to the job to provide proper incentives, recruit adequate talent, and ensure certain duties are prioritized.

Obtaining sales employment is a popular goal for business collegians, says Robert Seeley, chairperson of the Business Administration and Economics Department at Wilkes University. He notes that availability of jobs, work flexibility, and income potential are attractive job qualities. Unfortunately, many undergraduates perceive that sales jobs do not require expertise, which they discover is inaccurate. To help educate future sales professionals, Wilkes offers salesmanship courses emphasizing the skills necessary to sell successfully.

Successful salespeople realize that selling is a skilled profession, which involves identifying consumer needs and spearheading market niches for all products.

Income levels for sales professionals in Northeast Pennsylvania rank high in comparison to other professions. Salespeople earn more than 62 percent

of other experienced, salaried professionals in 51 industries researched according to the 1996 study of occupational wages in eastern Pennsylvania, conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

With an average wage more than \$34,000 per year in Northeast Pennsylvania counties, local sales representatives, however, are still behind their counterparts in the metropolitan Philadelphia area, where the average is around \$51,000 per year, which ranks higher than 82 percent of professional salaries surveyed.

Sales management personnel in eastern Pennsylvania, with income around \$37,000 per year, earn almost 11 percent less than salespeople they manage who earn average wages of \$42,000, according to the survey. This may provide evidence that commission rewards earned by successful salespeople boosts their income over the wages of their supervisors.

Joseph Langan, owner of Langan Associates Personnel Consultants in Wilkes-Barre, which specializes in employment placement of sales professionals, says companies that use commissions as primary compensation are attempting to drive performance. The low base salary requires salespeople to strive for financial reward by achieving sales. Essentially, these salespeople take a higher risk to reap the greater reward because the income

potential is open-ended, notes Langan.

Companies selling office automation, insurance, stocks, or radio/television advertising placements use commission-intensive compensation because they are searching for young and "hungry" risk takers.

Some industries, notes Langan, offer packages that are more secure, because they are looking for talented people. Sales recruiters are aware that the best talent will not assume all the risk, and some security is necessary to entice them. These organizations are usually in the "recession proof" industries, such as consumer products, automotive parts, and pharmaceuticals, says Langan.

Pharmaceutical companies offer the highest base salary, says Langan, in an effort to obtain experienced professionals they require. Also, companies that deal in commodity-type markets with national advertising campaigns, use salary-intensive compensation packages to attract territory management professionals. These salespeople specialize in ensuring

their products are properly stocked and displayed in the marketplace.

Although the commission-intensive sales positions have an increased turnover rate, the industry is trending toward these compensation packages to keep motivation and rewards at a premium.

Fortune 500 companies recruiting in Northeast Pennsylvania may meet prospective sales personnel in the middle by offering a sizable salary for the first one or two years to allow the representative security during the product learning curve, then change to a commission-intensive compensation after the training period.

Also offered are packages that give a salesperson a choice between a fixed salary or straight commission. In these cases, successful sales professionals are happy to go to commission compensation because they can earn more than the company-allocated salary. If a salesperson is a "true talent," the open-ended income potential is preferable. ■

Proposed tax reduction not helping Dole campaign

■ *Local economist says
proposal appears to be an
election-year ploy.*

By PAMELA C. TURFA

Times Leader Staff Writer

"Write a check to your family," promises the red-white-and-blue campaign advertisement designed to tug at voters' pocketbooks.

"\$1,261 a year ... \$105 a month ... \$24.25 a week," Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole extols on his Internet page.

Dole has made his tax cut pro-

posal a hallmark of his campaign.

But the promise of a 15 percent personal income tax cut apparently isn't helping Dole narrow the national lead held by President Bill Clinton, a Democrat, who is not proposing a significant tax cut.

Senior Doris Davis, a West Pittston homemaker, believes she knows why.

"We'd all like a tax cut, sure. I don't see where it's practical, I'd rather see him reduce the deficit."

"He's a good man, but I think

■ See TAXES, Page 10A

Taxes

(Continued from Page 1A)

the Republicans should have gotten someone else."

Dole's economic platform is built around a simple idea: Reduce personal income taxes enough, and citizens will have more money to spend, stimulating the federal economy enough to offset the loss of revenue.

That idea is called supply-side economics, and it helped Ronald Reagan win two presidential elections.

But it's not playing well this time around. And Dole might be a reason.

During the Reagan presidency of the 1980s, Dole scoffed at supply-side economics, hammering home the theme of reducing the deficit, says Wilkes University economist Robert Seeley.

"Here he is 14 or 15 years later saying, 'Now I'm a believer.' Coming from Dole, it seems like a real election-year ploy."

Clinton's tax cut proposal more modest

Clinton, in contrast, is proposing only modest tax cuts — none across the board.

Like Dole, he wants to give parents a \$500-per-child tax credit. And, Clinton has proposed some tax help for community college students and parents of college students.

"Clinton's tax cuts are smaller, aimed somewhat more at the middle class," says Wilkes University political scientist Tom Baldino.

"I'm not so sure the public believes they will get it."

Dole's promise of a tax cut without a spending cut doesn't play well to a cynical public, Baldino says. "I think the public has realized there's no such thing as a free lunch."

Dominick Caprari isn't cynical. He believes the Dole tax cuts will work — and Dole will have congressional support if that's necessary.

Reagan's supply-side economics plan didn't work because Congress didn't follow through with promised spending cuts, says Caprari, 70, a retired county road and bridge supervisor.

Spending cuts will come under Dole, says Caprari, a registered

Democrat, who will vote Republican in November.

"If you have a Republican Congress now and you've got Dole in there, I've got news for you — that guy's going to knock the education (department) off the budget."

But Keith Parrish, 31, of Foster Township, a state employee, is leaning toward Clinton — and Dole's promise of a tax cut isn't swaying his vote.

Parrish is an independent voter, the kind Dole hopes to recruit with his tax cut promise.

"It's a message (Dole is) hoping will appeal to a lot of people. Certainly everybody wants lower taxes. But frankly, I don't see (that) he's connecting."

Reform tax system, Wilkes economist says

Will a tax cut do what Dole (and supply-side economists) say it will?

"I think it would be difficult for you to find an economist who wouldn't say that lower tax rates are a good thing," says Seeley, who holds a doctorate in economics and serves as chairman of the university Department of Business Administration and Economics.

Expect lower tax rates to have a negligible effect on individual workers, a larger effect in terms of investment and some positive effects on economic growth.

"The question is: Is this extra stimulus big enough to generate enough extra growth so that we won't have to find spending cuts?"

"Experience tells us probably not."

What the country needs, it's not hearing from either candidate, Seeley says. "From an economist's perspective, what we really should be looking for is a reform of the whole tax system. The tax system that we have at the federal level is a fundamental mess."

He wishes a candidate would propose junking the whole tax system and starting over with something cleaner and with broad fairness.

Although some third-party candidates have proposed a major overhaul of the tax system, neither Dole nor Clinton has made such a change a major part of their platforms.

"Dole is probably a little more

Candidates' stands on taxes

Bill Clinton, Democrat:

- Target tax cuts of \$500 per child to help families pay for child-rearing, homeownership and college tuition expenses.

- Continue the Simplified Tax and Wage Reporting System that is working with federal and state agencies to simplify, unify and streamline tax reporting and reduce the paperwork burden for small businesses.

Bob Dole, Republican:

- Cut the individual income tax rate by 15 percent.

- Give families a \$500 per child tax credit.

- Reduce the capital gains tax from 28 percent to 14 percent.

- Repeal the Social Security benefits tax.

- Expand Individual Retirement Accounts to encourage savings.

Ross Perot, Reform:

- Replace the Internal Revenue Service and the tax code with a paperless system.

- Bring together public and private tax experts to study proposed tax systems, including the flat tax, the consumption tax, the national sales tax, the savings tax, the value-added tax, the financial transaction tax and others.

These experts will make a proposal, which will be presented to American citizens and will be re-analyzed by computer science departments in major universities.

The final plan will be put to citizens for a vote.

Harry Browne, Libertarian:

- Reduce the federal government to its constitutional functions.

- Combine a reduction in federal government with repeal of the income tax.

- End the federal income tax and abolish the Internal Revenue Service.

- Sell off federal assets and use the proceeds to pay off the federal debt.

likely to undertake a project like that," Seeley says.

"I don't think Clinton is at all likely to do that."

by
Jerry Lynott
Times Leader
Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Patricia Eakin has two words for the registered nurses of Wyoming Valley Health Care System about to form a union.

"Patience and persistence," said Eakin, a staff nurse in the oncology unit at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia.

There are plenty of compromises to be made and plenty of time spent drawing up and negotiating a contract for the nurses, Eakin said.

But the president of the hospital's 600-member nurses association offered encouragement. "You work and work and work and come out with something better than what you had."

On Sept. 27, nurses employed at the system's surgical unit and two hospitals — Wilkes-Barre General and Nesbitt Memorial in Kingston — ended round one of the equivalent of a labor prize fight with a 488 to 248 vote to be represented by the health care arm of the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

The system's administration thanked those who voted against union representation but offered little more. The administration did not respond to requests for com-

ment on the organizing process.

Union supporters said the nearly 2-1 vote showed tremendous support for their efforts. Eakin, who as a PSEA health care union member visited with local nurses before the vote, added that the result gives the nurses a voice. "It puts nurses at the table dealing with their own issues."

In March of this year the system's administration laid off 72 employees and offered early retirement to more than 120 others, including nurses with more than 20

TL 10/6

"It puts nurses at the table dealing with their own issues."

—Patricia Eakin, staff nurse at
Temple University Hospital

years experience. The changes created at Us vs. Them situation between nurses and management.

Three months later, nurses took the step toward inquiring about a union with the National Labor Relations Board.

"People look to unionize when they have some discontent and don't think things are going well," said Robert Seeley, an associate professor of business and economics at Wilkes University.

But, Seeley, who teaches collective bargaining and labor economics, said that dichotomy doesn't have a place in the negotiating process. "There is inevitable tension, you can't get away from that. You want to minimize it."

Cooperation and collaboration are the keys, Seeley stressed.

Long before any negotiations take place, the nurses have to form the bargaining unit and elect officers, said Karen Schrader, PSEA health care representative.

Once that's done, Schrader said she has to develop a survey of "who they are and what's important to them. Without that information it will be difficult to draw up a good contract."

■ See SUCCESS, Page 2E

Success

(Continued from Page 1E)

The union will have members from a variety of specialized areas including floor nurses, critical care, surgery and intensive care units.

It's the first time the PSEA has organized nurses in Northeastern Pennsylvania but has set up unions and negotiated contracts in hospitals across the state. That past experience organizing and negotiating has shown that each situation is different, according to PSEA officials.

The PSEA has standard contract language already, explained Alf Nelson Jr., director of organizing for PSEA in Philadelphia. The specifics from the survey will be folded into the contract to make a custom fit, he said.

A five-member bargaining unit will be assembled from a larger bargaining committee to participate in the actual negotiations,

Nelson said.

There is no hard and fast time line to complete the entire process, but the sooner the better, Nelson said.

In the meantime, the nurses have some protection.

"From this point on in terms of salaries, working conditions, the hospital has no right to unilaterally make changes," Nelson said. "It's the difference between being an at-will employee and an employee soon to be under a collective bargaining unit."

Movement reflects industry changes

With the vote, the nurses at Wyoming Valley Health Care System are joining a movement across the country.

"I do know there has been an increase in the number of nurses who want more participation in the decision-making process and allocation of health care resources," said Mary D. Bantell.

The assistant professor of nursing at College Misericordia said the increase is a reaction to changes in the health care industry.

More hospitals are using non-professional health care providers and nurses with associate degrees as opposed to bachelor and master of science degrees, according to Bantell, who has a master's degree and works at Tyler Memorial Hospital in Tunkhannock.

At the same time, more patients are in the acute care stage, requiring more specialized attention, she said.

"We are constantly utilizing innovative things and make curriculum changes based on perceived client needs," Bantell said.

Within the profession, nurses complete the training, education and certification courses for the purpose of providing quality care, Bantell said, adding, "Nurses are the people who have the most contact with the client."

Minimum wage hike: The good, the bad and the ugly

By **TIM GULLA**
Citizens' Voice Staff Writer

CV
10/2/96

On Tuesday, another step in the ongoing battle to raise the minimum wage was taken with a 50 cent wage increase per hour.

But, as some minimum wage workers rejoice in the increased reward for their efforts, others question who will be left behind.

Dr. Robert Seeley, associate professor of economics at Wilkes University and chair of the business administration and economics departments, explained on Tuesday that although many workers will benefit through the increase, there are several negative side-effects that most people don't consider.

In the big picture of a \$7 trillion U.S. economy, the minimum wage increase has little impact, he said. For an individual working at the minimum wage level or competing for a minimum wage job, however,

the effects are far more apparent.

"It's really kind of elementary economics. When the price of something goes up, less of it will be purchased. That works for labor just as much as it does for items in the grocery store," Seeley said.

"The big concern is the loss of employment — you raise the price (of labor) and employers just aren't going to hire as many hours of labor. Certainly, it doesn't mean massive layoffs. But, there will be some people that won't have jobs."

Seeley said his opinion is backed up by studies. "Empirical evidence indicates there is a distinct loss of employment when the minimum wage is raised. It's not huge — but it's there."

Another problem, Seeley said, is, "That the the number of jobs will shrink, but the number of applicants for those positions will in-

crease. The competition for those positions will be a little more intense than it used to be."

This, in turn, allows employers to be more selective in hiring, impacting on workers perceived as

lower in quality.

"The unfortunate part of this is that the people who will be hurt tend to be the ones who need the income from jobs the most," Seeley said.

Wage

from page 5

answer isn't to artificially raise their price," he said.

Leahigh believes that the better way to help people relegated to low-skill or no-skill jobs is to concentrate on training and education to increase skill level and, ultimately, their worth in the job market.

The 50 cent increase is the first part of an two step plan to raise the minimum wage to \$5.15 an hour by September 1997. The minimum wage is now \$4.75 per hour.

The last minimum wage increase was 45 cents per hour in 1991.

Dr. David Leahigh, assistant professor of finance at King's College, reflected that "If you raise the price of any good, people are going to buy less of it." Like Dr. Seeley, Leahigh said the labor market was no different.

"We're not talking about a lot of people," he said, "but some people will be thrown out of work."

In a science which looks though "macro" and "micro" lenses, Leahigh noted there are positive aspects of the minimum wage increase in looking at the entire picture.

"In an aggregate sense, the people who keep their jobs will earn more than the people who lost their jobs lost."

But, he said, "In an economic sense, this is not really the way to go."

"If the argument's going to be made that we have to help low income people get better wages, the

(See WAGE, page 31)

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Why national austerity is form of child abuse

Editor: Economics is uncommon sense. An individual can save by accumulating money. A nation cannot. A nation can only save by spending. Spending on productive capacity allows production of a surplus of output over current consumption.

It is misinformation to report that Social Security and Medicare are savings programs that can "go broke". They are income-transfer programs that can only be pay-as-you-go programs. The critical issue is: will future output be large enough to satisfy the claims of all generations?

Instead of full employment, the government deliberately maintains a "natural" rate of unemployment that sacrifices \$1.2 trillion of income and \$240 billion of tax revenues annually. We can afford Social Security and Medicare. We cannot afford a "natural" rate of unemployment, fiscal austerity, and a muddled view of savings.

Do you remember the delightful 1950s movie "The Long Trailer," featuring

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Big Labor seems to be on rebound

By KEVIN GALVIN

Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO — The labor movement was in disarray a year ago, consumed by an internal power struggle and openly lamenting loss of influence. Many questioned whether unions still had a role to play, either in politics or on the job.

Today, big labor looks to be on the rebound.

Under the new leadership of John Sweeney, the AFL-CIO is wrapping up a successful summer organizing campaign, poised for the big test of its reassertion of labor's political and social clout: the fall elections.

"The biggest difference between a year ago and now is that everybody says that labor is back," said Rich Trumka, the

■ See NATION, Page 10A

Local labor unions mirror U.S. trends

By JERRY LYNOTT

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Some call it a revival, others a resurgence.

But what's happening here is no different from what organized labor is going through throughout the country, labor officials said.

"We feel like we're going through some very good times, especially on the construction end of it," said Max Blaskiewicz. "From what I've been hearing ... most craft unions are pretty busy."

The business manager of Laborers' International Union Local

■ See LABOR, Page 10A

Labor

(Continued from Page 1A)

215 in Hanover Township estimated that 300 laborers were working, a figure he said was "high compared to years in the past."

On projects like the ones at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and the Stegmaler brewery, local members are averaging nearly \$14 an hour with benefits. Blaskiewicz looked forward to more work with the planned construction of the Luzerne County convention center/arena and a cogeneration plant in Newport Township.

On the 102nd anniversary of

the designation of Labor Day as a federal holiday, the AFL-CIO reported 13.1 million Americans working in 78 national unions. Under the leadership of John J. Sweeney, elected president in October 1995, the AFL-CIO has undergone a restructuring, stepped up organizing efforts and changed the face of its leadership to more resemble the country's work force by including women and minorities.

Wilkes University's Robert Seeley has watched the change in organized labor over a longer period.

"In the United States, what has happened in the last 40 years is the percentage of the unionized

labor force in the private sector has really dropped. But the percentage in the public sector has gone way up," said Seeley, an associate professor of economics and chair of the school's department of business administration and economics.

Teachers, government workers, police and firefighters are all now heavily unionized, something they were legally prohibited from doing as late as the 1950s, according to Seeley.

The shift from manufacturing to services is partly responsible for the change. And automation has also depleted organized labor's ranks.

"It's a simple matter of economics," Seeley said.

He offered this scenario: As workers' pay rises, it costs more to produce something. The increase is felt by consumers, who are charged more for the product. If the demand for the product drops because of the higher price, the company is forced to either cut back on production or jobs.

Unionized workers in the service industry also tread a tricky line because their wages account for the largest share of the cost of doing business, Seeley pointed out. As their wages rise, companies and governments have to choose between cutting services or workers.

"Unions have real tough battle to fight," Seeley said.

?? HOW TO: ??

Select a graduate program

In today's competitive job market, education is an important asset, whether you are changing fields or staying in your profession.

What level of achievement you hope to reach in your career will affect your decision on whether to pursue a graduate degree, says Kathie Flanagan-Herstek, department head of advising and counseling at the registrar's office at Penn State's Wilkes-Barre campus in Lehman, Luzerne County.

If you want to work in a particular field and are considering which degree will give you the most opportunities for advancement, Flanagan-Herstek recommends joining professional organizations and getting to know the human resource people in the fields in which you are interested. If you are looking into a business degree, such as a master's in business administration (MBA), the local chamber of commerce may be worth joining.

"Maybe from talking to the people that do the hiring you will find that an undergraduate degree is all they look for," she explains. "An advanced degree won't make a major difference in that case."

She adds that many people assume an advanced degree will automatically make things easier for them. "These are difficult economic times . . . There are no guarantees anymore," Flanagan-Herstek explains.

If your goal is to perform your job better and to stimulate personal as well as professional growth, you may not be as concerned with the "value" of the degree in terms of its direct impact on career advancement. Instead, you will want to make sure that the degree program you select will help you to meet your specific goals. Flanagan-Herstek says more adult students are returning to school in their late 20s and 30s because they want more job satisfaction.

"People want more quality of life, even if it means a slightly lower paycheck," she observes. An advanced degree can help them make the transition into a career with which they are more satisfied.

Assuming you have an undergraduate degree, Flanagan-Herstek recommends checking with the career counseling departments of the school from which you received your bachelor's degree. She notes that most are willing to help alumni. They may have information on what types of degrees are necessary for specific professions.

Abilities, interests and work values are the three key areas to consider says Flanagan-Herstek. After you have decided where you are going, it will be easier to determine what you will need to get there.

Robert Seeley, director of graduate programs at the school of business, society and public policy at Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre, says future goals have a significant impact on what type of graduate degree you should seek.

CHECKLIST

✓ Weigh the selection of a graduate degree program by your professional and personal aspirations.

✓ If a career change is your goal:
Consider the knowledge needed in that profession;
Network with other professionals in that field, such as human resource managers.

✓ Whether you change careers or advance professionally or personally in your current position:

✓ If you undertake a program on a part-time basis in the evenings and weekends, determine the quality of the instructors.

✓ Make sure the program is accredited.

✓ Seek out graduates of the program to determine what they got out of the program.

Seeley, also an associate professor of economics, says that unless you have a specific field to which you are committed, a more generalized degree like an MBA is a good choice. "A general degree keeps more career options open," he notes.

A specialized degree is best for people who are in a specific industry and intend to remain there, Seeley explains. One example is a master's degree in health care administration. This is a good opportunity for someone already in the field who wants to advance professionally in that industry.

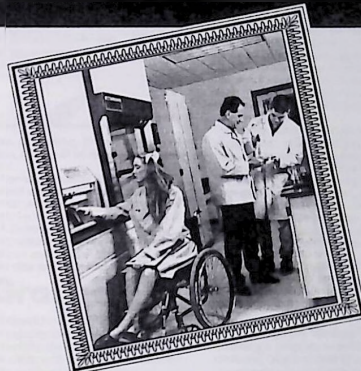
A variety of graduate programs are available to Northeast Pennsylvania businesspeople. This is particularly important to prospective students intending to continue their full-time employment while earning their degree. Less travel means more time for work, study or personal obligations.

Seven regional colleges and universities offer graduate programs. Five of those offer MBA degrees. They include Bloomsburg University in Bloomsburg, Columbia County, the University of Scranton, Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Union County, Marywood College in Scranton and Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre. Two offer specialized graduate degrees, and they are College Misericordia in Dallas, Luzerne County and King's College in Wilkes-Barre.

Costs are usually based on credits, though some universities have other. Continued on next page

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KING'S COLLEGE



WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA 18711

Letters of credit are becoming an important consideration for businesses buying and selling goods on the international market. Knowing the process of securing this financial transaction document may make the difference in getting or not getting paid.

According to Michael Horvath, director of international development at the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP) based in Pittston, Luzerne County, a letter of credit removes many but not all of the risks of doing business internationally, at least as far as getting paid is concerned.

A letter of credit is issued by a bank on behalf of a buyer of goods. The credit is then forwarded to the seller's bank by the issuer. The seller's bank advances the credit to the seller. After the seller agrees to the terms in the credit, the seller ships the goods and presents the required documentation to its bank. If, after examining the documents, the bank finds the terms conform to the requirements in the credit, the seller may be paid. The seller's bank then seeks reimbursement from the opening bank.

Horvath explains that it is important to review the letter of credit as soon as possible. Request that any changes required be made immediately. Areas that should be checked include the terms of sale, the documentation required to receive

payment, and any special conditions the buyer requires that are not covered by the terms of sale. Horvath notes that care should be taken to make sure that all the requirements in the letter of credit can be met. If there are any areas you cannot or may not be able to meet, request changes from the buyer.

Keep in mind that any discrepancies can cause delays or loss of payment. Names, addresses, terms and product descriptions must be correct. Horvath explains that the letter of credit should also contain information on departure and destination points, freight methods, insurance requirements and bank charges.

According to Horvath, the amount of the letter of credit should be sufficient to cover not only the merchandise, but any other costs that will be the buyer's responsibility. These charges may include freight, insurance and all foreign bank charges. The seller is usually responsible for the bank charges in this country.

If all the requirements are acceptable, you must communicate to your production department what product is required and by when. They have to be able to make the shipment by a certain date, Horvath says.

Once you do make the shipment, be sure to provide the bank with the necessary documentation as soon as you have it. The quicker it has the paperwork, the quicker you will get

CHECKLIST

Attention to detail is crucial to successful trading through the letter of credit. Just as important: sellers should know their buyers. A letter of credit should include:

- ✓ names of the invoice issuer and the recipient;
- ✓ addresses;
- ✓ terms of sale;
- ✓ product description;
- ✓ departure and destination points;
- ✓ freight methods;
- ✓ insurance requirements;
- ✓ bank charges.

paid. In addition, if any problems arise, there will be more time to solve them.

Horvath cautions that the seller should understand that the bank is under no obligation to make payment if all the requirements are not met.

A buyer should keep the instructions in a letter of credit clear, concise and simple. Horvath indicates that this prevents misunderstandings

about exactly what is required from occurring. The buyer should also keep in mind what the seller is capable of providing with terms of sale, documents and other conditions.

Although a letter of credit helps insure payment, Horvath explains that the buyer's credit worthiness should still be investigated, especially if this is the first time you have conducted business. Even with a letter of credit, if the buyer or the buyer's bank have financial trouble, there could be delays in getting payment. This may cause cash flow problems for the seller if the amount involved is large.

Also, political conditions in the buyer's country may present problems. There must be sufficient hard currency available to meet the demand, or problems may arise in actual delivery of the shipment. Horvath explains that sellers should know their buyers. This is as true for international sales as it is for sales to domestic buyers.

Horvath cautions sellers not to get trapped into unsuitable payment terms or requirements they cannot meet. Also, make sure that the items are not restricted, either by the buyer's country for import, or by the United States for export. Be sure that some products require export licenses. Don't let the lure of a sale cause you to break any laws, even unwittingly.

Continued on page 28



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Graduate program

Continued from previous page

arrangements as well. Bloomsburg University, for example, charges \$711 per credit or \$1,543 per semester for nine to 15 credits. University of Scranton's MBA program requires completion of 36 credits, 12 courses, at a cost of \$408 per credit. At Bucknell, where a MSBA, Master of Science in Business Administration, degree is offered, cost is calculated by the course, \$2,215 per course, and a single course carries four credit hours. Seven and a half courses must be completed to earn the degree.

Maywood charges \$175 a credit, and 36 credits are required for the degree. Wilkes University's cost is \$421 per credit for a 36-credit program.

College Misericordia offers a degree in organizational management for professionals involved in the business of managing non-profit organizations. Cost is \$325 per credit for a 36-credit program.

King's College offers graduate degrees in the fields of financing, taxation and accounting as well as a master's degree in health care administration. Cost is \$390 per credit for any of those programs. A student must complete 30 credits in the financing, taxation or accounting majors or 42 in the health care administration program.

It is important to consider whether to pursue your degree on a full- or part-time basis, Seely says. Although most schools have programs developed for both types of students, some cater more to one group than to

the other.

Seely says the "obvious" factors in choosing a program — tuition costs, distance, time required to complete the program — are far from the only issues to consider.

"Some people base their decisions only on these [obvious] factors," Seely explains. "People have chosen one program over another on the basis of \$15 a credit hour or five extra miles to drive. These decisions don't address the issue of quality."

Seely says the questions a prospective student should ask are, "What will you get out of this program," and "How will this improve my productivity?"

He explains that in getting to the bottom line, you have to realize that a program's graduates are the product. By talking to them, you will have a better idea of what the program can offer. Seely recommends asking what graduates are doing now and how the program enhanced their lives.

Investigating the quality of the faculty at an institution is important, according to Seely. By getting a bulletin, you can check what degrees the faculty has and where its members studied. A higher number of Ph.D. degrees from top schools can be a good indicator of quality. It is also important if you are a part-time student to make sure quality faculty teach evening and weekend courses.

Currently, student loans are available, but there is increasing political pressure to reduce or eliminate these programs.

CN 12/12/94

Schools & Colleges



Wilkes holds fundraiser to aid United Way

Wilkes University faculty, staff, alumni and students raised more than \$850 for the recent fund drive of the United Way of Wyoming Valley.

Dr. Mark Sowcik, director of campus counseling, was the UW coordinator for Wilkes University.

From the left are Leah Yurchin, Forty Fort; Mike Kaschak, Kingston, and Paul Kukucka, Plains, all

three student UW representatives; Dr. Mark Sowcik, Shavertown, and Dr. Robert Seeley, Shavertown, Wilkes UW coordinators; John Kwetkauskie, UW loaned executive; Walter Klepaski, UW representative; Chef Jerry Pasikoff from Celestino's Restaurant in Dupont, and Connie Vecerkauskas, Edwardsville, Wilkes UW coordinator.



UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS UNITED WAY — Wilkes University recently raised more than \$850 for the United Way of Wyoming Valley at "Taste of Wilkes II." Volunteers prepared some of their favorite dishes for the culinary extravaganza. Participating in the event were, from left: Leah Yurcho, Mike Kaschak and Paul Kukucka, student United Way representatives; Dr. Mark Sowcik and Dr. Robert Seeley, both United Way coordinators for Wilkes, Shavertown; John Kwetkauskie, United Way Loaned Executive; Walter Klepaski, United Way representative; chef Jerry Passikoff from Celestino's Restaurant in Dupont; and Connie Vecerkauskas, United Way coordinator for Wilkes, Edwarsville.

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BOYLE



SEELEY

Supply Co. in Wilkes-Barre; and **Louis J. Manzi**, vice-president and director of corporate management development for SmithKline Beecham in Philadelphia.

Finance

Sharon R. Linard, **Philip D. Olmes** and **Richard C. Reidler** were elected to Schuylkill County Regional board of directors for **COMMUNITY BANKS, N.A.**

Linard was the owner and president of Sharon's At Ten, a retail dress store in Pottsville, for five years. Olmes is vice president of Pflueger Insurance Agency Inc. in Schuylkill Haven. Reidler is president of Reidler Decal Corp., Saint Clair.

Nancy Mastrucct was appointed vice president, loan review officer at **FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF JERMYN**, Lackawanna County. **Richard R.**

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Robert D. Seeley was named director of graduate programs in **WILKES UNIVERSITY's** school of business, society and public policy in Wilkes-Barre.

Wilkes University appointed two new members to the university's board of trustees: **Lawrence E. Cohen**, president and owner of Benco Dental

EXPERIENCE

The Wilkes Master of Health Administration (MHA) program is in its tenth year of service to the health care industry in Northeastern and Central Pennsylvania. Over the past 10 years we have acquired and developed an outstanding faculty. Our up-to-date curriculum has evolved right along with the health care industry. We know what works for our students and what their individual needs are. All our courses are conveniently offered in the evenings with classes being provided both on the main campus in Wilkes-Barre and the off-site campus in Danville.

QUALITY

Our four full-time faculty members, all Ph.D.'s in their fields, are supplemented by adjunct faculty from the highest levels of local health care management. The Wilkes MHA program provides rigorous quality education in an established academic setting. No shortcuts. No "quickie" courses. We offer intellectual challenge and a genuine enhancement of your skills and knowledge.

SUCCESS

Wilkes MHA graduates and current students include Physicians, Nurses, Technologists, Middle and Executive level Health Care Managers and those seeking to use their degrees as a means of entry into the industry. We are extremely proud of the prominence of our alumni and students in the local health care industry and in what they have to say about the contribution a Wilkes MHA has made to their careers.

"The key to the success of the Wilkes MHA program is that it is delivered by a team of diverse faculty who have worked together in the program for several years, who know each other's expectations and interests, and who create a synergy. Second, MHA students learn from interaction with fellow students who are also health care professionals. Finally, the concepts I was exposed to at Wilkes really have contributed to my ability to operate a healthcare business more effectively."

A. Paul Holdren, M.H.A. '93
Vice President of Marketing, Business Affairs, and Operational Development
Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania



"I chose to pursue my MHA at Wilkes University because of the commitment to quality and the faculty's understanding of health care as it relates to the more global issues of public policy and economics. As a nursing administrator I have been exposed to a variety of situations in which my understanding of business management practice is crucial. My Wilkes education has expanded my understanding of business principles and how they relate to the health care industry. The program at Wilkes has been an excellent opportunity for me to network with others in the profession, to share ideas, and to debate issues. I would challenge other health care professionals to broaden their understanding through the MHA program at Wilkes."

Elaine Slawsky, R.N., M.S.N.
1995 MHA Candidate



"I am enthusiastically supportive of the Wilkes MHA program because it has allowed me to interface with other healthcare professionals with whom I would not normally have contact. Those contacts might prove to be useful in servicing our patients. The faculty at Wilkes are so impressive that I enlisted Dr. Ashim Bhat to conduct a series of seminars on the principles of practice management for our residents at the Family Practice Center. They have found the seminars to be an excellent complement to the clinical training that consumes most of their time."

Maureen Litchman, M.D.
1996 MHA Candidate
Center Director
Family Practice Residency Program
United Health and Hospital Services



"My education at Wilkes has prepared me for my selected career path in health care. Wilkes University's MHA program did an excellent job of integrating real life practice with business theory. By bringing in current healthcare professionals to teach the practical aspects of health care, the faculty at Wilkes were able to provide cutting edge information to the students in a form of instruction supplemented by theoretical approaches. The theory and experience provided by Wilkes is necessary in today's changing health care environment."

Allison Martin, M.H.A. '94
Senior Program Coordinator
Epidemiology Department
Merck Research Labs



For more information contact:

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Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18766
(717) 831-4725 or (717) 831-4717

CW 10/10/94

Robert Seeley named director of Wilkes graduate programs

Dr. Robert D. Seeley, Shavertown, has been named director of graduate programs in the Wilkes University's School of Business, Society and Public Policy.

In his new position, Seeley oversees the master's of business administration degree and the master's of health administration degree.

His administrative responsibilities include working with full-time and part-time faculty in the graduate programs, the review of curriculum, the marketing of the two programs and overseeing the admission of students.

He is also an associate professor

of economics, a position he has held at Wilkes since 1989.

Seeley received a bachelor's degree in economics from Franklin and Marshall College in 1977 and a doctorate in economics from the University of Maryland in 1986.

He has served as assistant professor of economics at Susquehanna University and King's College.

His professional memberships include the American Economic Association and the Eastern Economic Association. In addition, he is a member of the Wilkes-Barre Area Kiwanis Club and is a United Way coordinator for Wilkes University.

Seeley is co-owner of Garden Village Advertising in Shavertown. He and his wife, Janis, have two children, Jillian, 7, and Dylan, 6.



Seeley

Wilkes appoints Seeley director



Robert Seeley

Robert D. Seeley, a resident of Shavertown, has been named director of graduate programs in Wilkes University's school of Business, Society, and Public Policy.

He will be responsible for the review of curriculum and overseeing the admission of students. He is also an associate professor of economics, a position he has held since 1989.

He is a graduate of Franklin and Marshall College and the University of Maryland.

TL 10/2/94

RECEIVED

ROBERT D. SEELEY

AUG 10 1989

Address

622 Walnut Street
Mifflinburg, PA 17844

Telephone

717-966-9412 (h)
717-372-4187 (w)

PUBLIC RELATIONS
OFFICE
Personal
Married
Two children

Education

Ph.D., Economics, University of Maryland, 1986.

Fields of specialization: Labor Economics, Public Finance
Dissertation title: "The Impact of the Federal Government's
Antidiscrimination Efforts Upon the Earnings and Employment
of Women: An Inter-Industry, Inter-occupation Approach"

B.A., Economics, Franklin & Marshall College, 1977.

Experience

1984-present Assistant Professor of Economics, Susquehanna
University
1982-1983 Assistant Professor of Economics, Kings College

Teaching*

Courses taught include:

Labor Economics	Principles of Microeconomics
Public Finance	Principles of Macroeconomics
Urban Economics	Elements of Economics
Introduction to Econometrics	

Designed and supervised Independent Studies in:
Industrial Organization
The Economics of Energy and the Environment

*Consistently rated as the most effective teacher in the
Economics Department at Susquehanna.

Advising

Chosen as one of an elite group of faculty advisors to
conduct the advising of all Susquehanna freshmen. Advisor
to all economics and some business freshmen, in addition to
the normal load of upperclassmen. Advising load has ranged
from 35 to 45 students, often more than double the load of
other members of the Economics Department.

University Service

---Faculty Advisor to the Economics Club, 1984-present
---Faculty Research Committee, 1985-present
---Director of Summer Workshop in Business, a one-week
summer program for outstanding high school students,
1987-present

- Bogar-Steele Halls Improvement Committee, 1987-present
- Pre-Law Advisory Committee, Spring 1988-present
- Have worked with Susquehanna Office of Public Relations to promote the University. Have been featured in 3 different newspaper articles, one of which reached 30 different newspapers throughout Pennsylvania. Interviewed concerning issues in Labor Economics on "Faculty Forum" radio show.

Publications

- "The Private Costs of Crime", in Charles M. Gray (ed.), The Costs of Crime, Sage Publications, 1979 (with Charles T. Clotfeller).
- "The Impact of the Federal Government's Antidiscrimination Efforts Upon the Earnings and Employment of Women: An Inter-Industry, Inter-Occupation Approach", Proceedings of the 1987 Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Convention (forthcoming).
- "On the Relative Performance of Inflation Models", Proceedings of the 1988 Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Convention (forthcoming) (with Willy Sellekaerts).*
- *ready for submission to refereed journal, October, 1988.

Other Papers

- "Have EEOC and OFCCP Really Benefited Women?"*
- "Measuring the Quality of Life in Maryland and Other Selected States", a University of Maryland Bureau of Business and Economic Research Working Paper (with Charles T. Clotfeller).
- "Baseball's Free Agents: Have They Really Been Overpaid?" (research in progress).
- "The Pennsylvania Lottery: Enlightened Aid for the Elderly or Regressive Tax?" (research in progress).
- *ready for submission to refereed journal, October, 1988.

Professional Conferences

Attended and presented papers at the following conferences:

- Eastern Economic Association, Washington, D.C., March, 1987.
- Pennsylvania Economic Association, Bloomsburg, PA, May, 1987.
- Eastern Economic Association, Boston, MA, March, 1988.
- Pennsylvania Economic Association, State College, PA, May, 1988.

Membership in Professional Associations

American Economic Association
Eastern Economic Association
~~Pennsylvania Economic Association~~

Business Experience

1982-present Vice President and 50% shareholder, Garden Village Advertising, Inc., West Pittston, PA

Founded Garden Village Advertising, Inc., a firm engaged in the sale of advertising placemats, custom placemats, menus, advertising specialities, and other printed products. Provided leadership and direction, along with my partner, resulting in rapid growth in sales and profits. Experienced in all facets of operating the company. Have specialized in personnel matters such as hiring, training, promotions, and designing innovative compensation structure to fit the needs of each employee. Currently employ three full-time and four part-time workers. As a result of the success of the GVA, Inc., have been hired as a consultant by two printing firms.

References

Available upon request.

Business people

Named to Wilkes post

Christopher N. Breiseth, president of Wilkes University, and Theodore Engel, dean of the school of business, society and public policy, have announced the appointment of Robert D. Seeley of Mifflinburg as an associate professor of economics.



Seeley, vice president of Garden Village Advertising in West Pittston, is teaching courses in human resources management, collective bargaining, labor economics and principles of economics.

Seeley earned his PhD in economics from the University of Maryland in 1986 and his BA in economics from Franklin and Marshall College in 1977.

Prior to Wilkes, Seeley was an assistant professor of economics at both Susquehanna University and King's College.

An active participant in several professional associations, Seeley has presented papers to the Pennsylvania Economic Association, State College, May, 1988; Eastern Economic Association, Boston, Mass., March, 1988; Pennsylvania Economic Association, Bloomsburg, May, 1987; and the Eastern Economic Association, Washington, D.C., March, 1987.

CV

3/9/90

Name: Robert D. Seelley

Title: Associate Professor of Economics

At Wilkes since: September 1989

Please list your degrees and postgraduate work, including the degree itself, year and institution.

B.A.	Franklin and Marshall College	1977	(Economics)
Ph.D.	University of Maryland	1986	(Economics)

Additional credentials: _____

Experience outside academe:

Vice President Garden Village Advertising, Inc. West Pittston
1982 - present

At Wilkes, teach courses in:

Human Resource Management Collective Bargaining,
Labor Economics, Principles of Economics

Current research if applicable: Labor Market Discrimination

Community activity if applicable: Leadership Wilkes-Barre

Please include a short paragraph about why you enjoy teaching, why you enjoy teaching at Wilkes, the quality of the program or the students or some similar topic that would be appropriate as the conclusion to a short biography.

I especially enjoy teaching at Wilkes for a
number of reasons. First, in a small college community
such as Wilkes, professors and students are able to interact
very easily and form real friendships. Second, the graduate
students are very bright and highly dedicated and are therefore,
a joy to work with. Finally, Wilkes is more than simply an
institution that teaches students but also one with a sense
of obligation to serve the community.

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Wofford Vows Bill Aimed at Workers' Fight

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. (AP) — U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford probably can't make garment maker Leslie Fay change its decision to replace 1,200 jobs in northeastern Pennsylvania with cheaper labor overseas.

But the Democrat told striking workers that he will seek legislation that would push to raise the labor standards of workers overseas, making it less attractive for U.S. companies to relocate plants.

Wofford told members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union picketing at the company's Plains Township plant Saturday that improving labor standards abroad is essential to removing economic incentives that encourage companies like Leslie Fay to move American jobs overseas.

"Those incentives are substandard labor conditions and inadequate protection of workers' rights abroad," Wofford said.

In March, the company said it planned to close U.S. operations, eliminating roughly 2,000 jobs overall and 1,200 in Pennsylvania.

Union officials say the jobs will go to workers who make 35 cents an hour.

Wofford said the legislation would direct the Clinton administration to seek a standing committee on workers' rights and labor standards in the new World Trade Organization.

"It's not good for this country to allow these jobs to go overseas," said Howard Grossman, executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. "We need to do something nationally, to wise up...to try and save jobs."

The workers began striking last week after rejecting a final company offer that would have kept 150 jobs at the Plains Township plant but eliminated the rest.

Since the company announced closing facilities in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia and New York City in March, experts have debated the likely impact of losing 1,200 jobs in northeastern Pennsylvania.

"It's probably the single most critical event of substantial size to occur here since the coal mining days," Grossman said.

Wilkes University economics professor Robert Seeley believes the impact will be less severe.

"Any time there are layoffs, it affects spending patterns ... but realistically speaking, it's a mistake to overplay this," Seeley said. "We're talking about a metro area of at least 350,000 people. We're talking about 1,200 layoffs. It's not like we're all going to wake up one morning and say 'Oh my God, Leslie Fay ruined our lives.'"

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Wofford plans legislation to combat state job losses

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. — U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford probably can't make garment maker Leslie Fay change its decision to replace 1,200 jobs in northeastern Pennsylvania with cheaper labor overseas.

But the Democrat told striking workers that he will seek legislation that would push to raise the labor standards of workers overseas, making it less attractive for U.S. companies to relocate plants.

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ers Union picketing at the company's Plains Township plant Saturday that improving labor standards abroad is essential to removing economic incentives that encourage companies like Leslie Fay to move American jobs overseas.

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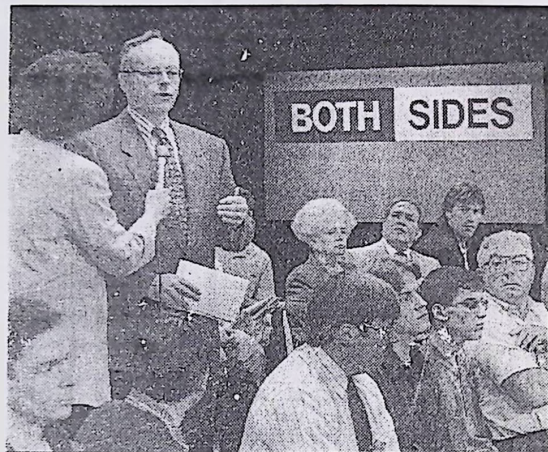
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TIMES LEADER/BOB ESPOSITO

John Carey, a member of the Patient Advocacy Coalition, asks a question during WVIA's public affairs special Wednesday night. The health-care forum was produced in cooperation with Times Leader.

Growth of managed health care stirs sharp debate at local forum

■ *What is a simple matter of cost containment to some participants is 'almost un-American' to others*

TC 5/24/94

By CECE TODD

Times Leader Staff Writer

PITTSBURGH TWP. — Managed health care took the stand in a television trial of sorts Wednesday night.

The jurors: doctors, health-care executives, businessmen, patients. The verdict: hung jury.

Health-care administrators and businessmen defended managed care as a way to control costs. Doctors and patients accused some managed-care systems of stripping away the patient's choice of physician.

Do consumers have a choice in health care?

That was the question examined during the WVIA-TV, Channel 44, public affairs show "Both Sides Now." The health-care special was produced in cooperation with The Times Leader.

NewsTalk responses
— Page 5A

For one hour, a studio audience of about 50 listened to arguments for and against managed care — a way of monitoring health-care providers, hospitals and claims to prevent abuses. Such a system leads to providers, hospitals and insurers banding together in regional networks to compete with each other for consumer dollars.

And locally, it has led to monopolies that exclude some providers and restrict the patient's choices, many people claim.

"It is a matter of concern about costs. It's a trend all over the country and not just this area," said Robert Seeley, professor of economics at Wilkes University. "...But, I wouldn't characterize them as monopolies."

■ See FORUM, Page 18A

Forum

(Continued from Page 1A)

The audience scoffed. "Yeah, right," one man added sarcastically.

"Almost un-American," Dr. Donald Shapiro called the recent posturing of area hospitals and insurers to create exclusive provider networks. Shapiro is a member of the Patient Advocacy Coalition, a group of about 25 doctors, pharmacists and other providers who have been lobbying for laws that would eliminate such exclusive contracts.

The coalition formed earlier this year when managed care burst onto the Wyoming Valley:

- Blue Cross of Northeastern Pennsylvania chose Wyoming Valley Health Care System Inc. as the sole provider of care for its health-maintenance organization members.

- Wyoming Valley Health Care System — which operates Nesbitt Memorial and Wilkes-Barre General hospitals — then formed an exclusive physicians group that barred doctors from competing hospitals.

Mercy Hospital physicians claimed they would lose about 1,300 Blue Cross HMO patients who would have to choose new doctors or change insurance plans.

- In the meantime, Mercy began developing and marketing its own health plans. The hospital is negotiating with Aetna Insurance to be the provider to a new Aetna HMO.

- Also this year, Geisinger

"We're simply responding to the changes in expectations by society, which is saying the present escalation of health-care costs is unacceptable."

Dr. Stuart Heydt

CEO of the Geisinger Foundation

Health Plan became the sole provider of care to Procter & Gamble Co. employees in an exclusive arrangement with the plant in Mehoopany. Blue Cross cried foul, insisting such an arrangement denies employees choice in health care.

Officials from Wyoming Valley Health Care, Mercy Hospital and Blue Cross were invited to Wednesday night's televised forum, but were unable to attend, WVIA officials said.

That left Geisinger as the lead defense attorney for managed care.

"We're simply responding to the changes in expectations by society, which is saying the present escalation of health-care costs is unacceptable," said Dr. Stuart Heydt, chief executive officer of the Geisinger Foundation. Heydt said managed care controls costs and can also improve quality.

"If I'm lying in a hospital bed waiting for a heart bypass operation ... I want the decision to be made by a physician who knows

me, my family and my history, not some administrator sitting behind a desk," said Mark Jones of Drums.

Heydt said physicians, not administrators, make the decisions about how a patient should be treated.

Richard Ross, retired chief executive officer of First Eastern Bank, reminded the audience that employers provide most of the public's health-care benefits.

"Every businessman each year looks at the budget ... He sees the tremendous inflation," Ross said, adding that managed care is helping businesses keep a leash on health-care costs.

Shapiro accused businesses of staggering the prices of the plans they offer so that employees are forced to choose cheaper plans that restrict their choice of doctor.

So, is there choice in health-care?

"It's like everything else in life," Seeley said. "There's a trade-off. As a consumer, you have to decide. If you want lower costs, there are limits."

Local professionals differ on effects of health plan

By MITCH MORRISON

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — Three men with three viewpoints illustrate why passing a national health-care bill will be gut-wrenching and far-reaching.

As they watched the television screen Thursday, the hospital administrator, sociologist and economics professor listened intently as Ira Magaziner — President Clinton's senior policy adviser — trumpeted the president's ambitious plan called Health Security Act.

While Clinton laid out the framework Wednesday night to reform the \$900 billion health-care program, Magaziner and other members of Clinton's health-care team shed more light on the proposed overhaul during a news conference broadcast via satellite.

"There are many rough spots in his plan," said William MacBain, senior vice president and administrative director at Geisinger Health Plan in Danville.

"But the underlying theory is better in my mind than the single-payer approach," he said.

Robert Seeley was more cynical. "My outlook is positive, but there are some problems," the Wilkes University associate economics professor said.

The two and Michael Garr, a Wilkes sociology/anthropology associate professor who favors Clinton's package, watched the broadcast at Wilkes



TIMES LEADER/RICHARD SABATURA

Richard MacBain takes notes at Wilkes University while watching Ira Magaziner flush out details of President Clinton's health care reform plan. Magaziner spoke Thursday during a news conference broadcasted via satellite.

University's Stark Learning Center.

Looking from their own distinct perspectives, the trio speculated what effect health-care reform would weigh on Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Seeley bemoaned that Clinton's plan calls for re-

duced private competition within health care and requires all employers to provide a detailed health-care plan for all workers.

"We're increasing the cost to hire a worker. The employer will attempt to lower the wage rates," Seeley feared. He later added, "The minimum-wage worker will be the most hurt by this."

On Wednesday, Clinton conceded the plan will cost more for those small employers who do not provide health care. Under the plan, they'll be required to pay 80 percent, while workers pay the remaining 20 percent.

To cushion the blow for employers with 50 workers or less, the government will subsidize health-care costs exceeding 3.5 percent of the company's overall expenses.

Not satisfied, Seeley said he preferred an income-tax increase set aside for health care. "There's no logical connection between health care and the work place."

"Then where do you put the burden?" asked Garr, who supports the plan, which promises to insure all Americans, including the 37 million now without health coverage.

Garr said the plan would particularly benefit lower-income workers who receive limited benefit packages. "I'm fairly optimistic about the plan," Garr said. "But I appreciate the pessimism."

MacBain said hospitals already are adjusting to the pending changes by forming alliances with

other hospitals or creating managed health-care plans such as health-maintenance organizations. He said the plan will force hospitals to operate more efficiently, and he praised Clinton's emphasis on preventive medicine.

MacBain, however, feared Clinton's proposed cuts in Medicaid and Medicare could cut into operating expenses at many medical centers.

During the satellite broadcast, the following points were made:

■ Magaziner said AIDS patients and most, if not all, abortions would be covered by the health plan. "Abortions would be covered as they are in today's market," he said.

■ Clinton senior economic adviser Gene Sperling defended the government's financial forecast despite criticism from liberal and conservative leaders who say the Clinton administration has underestimated the costs of his reform bill. Sperling said the government will easily raise the \$350 billion in new expenditures through cost-saving measures including Medicare and Medicaid caps and heavier taxes.

■ Doctors Arnold Epstein and Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, both of whom sit on the Clinton's health-care task force, said the plan favors general practitioners over specialists. Although 70 percent of doctors are specialists, the two predicted many would expand their primary-care practice.



MEMO

TO: News Media

FROM: Mark Davis/Stephanie Simmons ,Wilkes University

RE: Health Care Reform

DATE: September 20, 1993

When President Clinton announces his health care reform package on Wednesday night before Congress and then releases it to the nation on Thursday, Wilkes University has two experts in the health care field who will be able to provide reaction to the long awaited proposal.

They are:

Dr. Michael Garr- Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology. He will be able to discuss the proposal as a medical sociologist. Dr. Garr teaches in the Wilkes University Masters in Health Administration program in the School of Business, Society and Public Policy.

Dr. Robert Seeley- Associate Professor of Economics. He will be able to discuss the economics of the new health care package. Dr. Seeley is a health care economist and also teaches in the Masters in Health Administration program.

If you are interested in talking with either or both of these men, contact Wilkes University Relations at 822-8413, or if it is after hours you can call Mark Davis at 883-0240 or Stephanie Simmons at 822-0657. We will be able to find both men for comment.

Thank you.

Friedman's equipment going to auction block

■ *Started by a Russian immigrant in 1910, the Wilkes-Barre trucking firm was brought down in part by soaring insurance cost*

By **DAWN SHURMAITIS**

Times Leader Staff Writer

DORRANCE TWP. — Two signs now hang at the corporate headquarters of Friedman's Express Inc.

One, posted on an inside wall, says in big, bold letters "Total customer satisfaction. There is no other goal."

The other one, quickly scrawled and taped to the front door, offers directions to this week's auction of the bankrupt company's trucks, trailers and even typewriters.

Thursday and Friday, the guts of this country's oldest family-owned trucking business will go to the highest bidder.

Started by a Russian immigrant in Wilkes-Barre, the one-horse operation grew over 83 years to employ 500 people in 12 states and Puerto Rico. More than 130 of those employees worked in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Why Friedman's crashed and burned just four months after enjoying its most profitable January in 10 years reveals a lot about do-

If you want to go to the auction

The bankruptcy liquidation auction of Friedman's Express Inc. will be at 10 a.m. Thursday and Friday in Dorrance Township.

Trailers, trucks, cars, parts, typewriters, desks, filing cabinets and various office equipment will be auctioned off.

To get there: Take Interstate 81 to the Dorrance exit. Take the first two lefts. The company is on the right.

ing business in America today.

"We desperately tried to keep this place alive," says company president Daniel Friedman, discussing the final months before the April 6 Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing.

"We wanted to bring her down with dignity."

Friedman, who inherited the business started by his grandfather in 1910, blames his company's downfall on several factors, including the recession. But paramount were "exploding" workman's compensation costs and the repeated failure to find a bank willing to lend the struggling company enough money to stay

■ See AUCTION, Page 8A

Auction

(Continued from Page 1A)
afloat.

Four years ago, Friedman says, the company was paying \$700,000 annually to insure its employees against job-related injuries. This year, it paid more than \$2 million.

Worse, in December 1992, Friedman's insurer agreed to extend benefits only if the company made a \$364,000 lump sum payment, plus continued its regular premium payments.

The cost? Nearly \$20,000 a day.

"It's insane," says Friedman, 43.

When the recession struck, the company did make major changes — consolidations, layoffs, pay cuts.

"We cut our losses," says Friedman. "We were starting to make things work."

But the cash flow still dwindled to a trickle. Losses continued to pile up. More money was desperately needed.

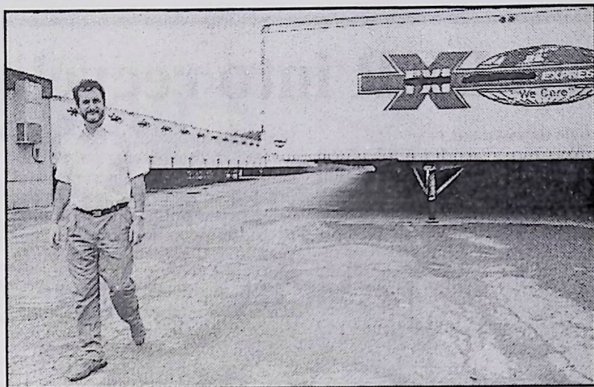
Friedman went to the company's two existing lenders — Mellon and First Eastern banks — asking for time and money.

It got neither.

Lending at First Eastern, suffering money troubles of its own, had all but dried up. And according to Friedman, "it (Mellon) said it no longer wanted to do business with trucking companies. They said it was a general business decision. They stuck it to us. If they loaned us the money we'd be in business today."

Mellon bank representatives refused comment. But according to a local economist, Mellon's reluctance to lend is not unusual in this chilly economic climate.

"Why lend money to a business that could go out? The bank might not get its money back," says Robert Seeley, associate professor of economics for Wilkes University. "Yeah, the economy is growing, but it's not growing fast enough to help these businesses."



TIMES LEADER/BOB ESPOSITO
Friedman's Express Inc. president and chief executive officer Daniel Friedman walks past the now-empty trailers that ferried goods throughout the East until the 83-year-old company declared bankruptcy in April.

Friedman's isn't alone in its troubles.

Since January, 1,385 businesses and individuals in 21 Northeastern counties have filed for bankruptcy, according to a clerk in the U.S. Bankruptcy office in Wilkes-Barre. That number represents a slight increase over last year.

Friedman's trucks once traveled throughout the East, hauling everything from rubber tires to hand-rolled cigars.

Following a massive expansion in 1982, the company payroll ballooned to \$12.5 million annually. In 1987, it was named Small Business of the Year by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce. Three years later, the company also known as FXI posted a profit of \$200,000.

In 1992, it lost \$1.3 million.

Today, the company lists debts of \$8 million and assets of \$7.791 million. Mellon and First Eastern are Friedman's largest creditors. The company also owes tire dealers, parts suppliers, utilities — and employees.

Workers are owed vacation money. The last expense checks bounced and health and welfare and pension payments are delinquent. Friedman estimates the company is behind more than \$200,000 in employer contributions to the Teamsters union pension fund.

Truckers were earning about \$35,000 a year, plus benefits. Non-union clerical workers earned anywhere from \$12,000 to \$25,000. Friedman says his salary last year was \$64,000.

"Some employees worked for three generations of Friedman's," says William Eroh, business agent for Teamsters Union Local 401 of Wilkes-Barre. "They took it pretty hard. It was the only job they ever had, the only company they ever worked for."

Eroh says the union is hoping to get the company to shell out an additional two months pay since it failed to give the federally required 60-day notice before closing.

"It's sad," says Eroh. "It's really very sad."

As the presidential campaign evolves, it is apparent that the economy is the predominant concern of voters, but that neither candidate is willing to seriously specify how he would eliminate our primary economic dilemma, the enormous federal budget deficit.

The \$340 billion annual deficit lies at the heart of both short-term and long-term economic woes. In the short run, the President and Congress, fearing larger future deficits, are understandably reluctant to cut taxes or increase spending in order to jolt the economy out of its current doldrums. In the long run, federal borrowing to finance the deficit diverts household and business saving from private sector capital investment essential to long-term growth in our standard of living.

Any serious solution to the deficit dilemma must include both tax increases and spending cuts focused upon where the real money lies. That real money lies in entitlements, which now account for about 50% of the entire budget. And the real entitlement money--roughly one-third of all spending--lies in Social Security and Medicare. However, each presidential candidate has solemnly pledged to exempt Social Security from any spending restrictions that might be imposed.

The sacred status of Social Security in the minds of many Americans--and hence, in the minds of presidential candidates--derives from two widely believed myths. Myth #1: The elderly are generally poor individuals, struggling on fixed incomes. Nothing could be further from the truth. The elderly have per capita discretionary income higher than that for any other age group and nearly double that of those under 35. Because they receive annual cost-of-living adjustments, their incomes are not fixed. Their poverty rate, after adjustment for noncash benefits, is less than one-seventh that of preschool children. In 1986, households headed by someone 65 or older had an average net worth of \$218,000 while households headed by someone under 35 had an average net worth of \$38,600.

Myth #2: The elderly are merely receiving in Social Security benefits what they paid into the system in payroll taxes. Again, nothing could be further from the truth. The average retiree receives in benefits all the payroll taxes he and his employer paid plus the tax-free interest those tax dollars could have earned four times over for Social Security and ten times over for Medicare.

This reality suggests two serious ways to reduce the deficit. First, Social Security benefits should be reduced gradually by suspending cost-of-living adjustments for all non-poor retirees. Second, Social Security benefits should receive tax treatment comparable to income derived from private pensions. The current system in which either 100%

or 50% of benefits are tax-exempt should be replaced by one in which the 15% of benefits (on average) that amounts to a refund of payroll taxes paid would be tax-exempt while the 85% of benefits that constitutes a windfall for retirees would be taxable.

When Americans begin to separate economic myth from reality, our candidates for elective office will begin to offer serious solutions to serious problems.

Research Associate: Karen Dock

Dr. Robert Seeley is an Associate Professor of Economics in the School of Business, Society, and Public Policy at Wilkes University.

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Wilkes University

News

Mark Davis
Office of Public Relations
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766
(717) 822-8413

ROBERT SEELEY JOINS WILKES FACULTY

WILKES-BARRE--Christopher N. Breiseth, President of Wilkes University and Theodore Engel, Dean of the School of Business, Society and Public Policy have announced the appointment of Robert D. Seeley of Mifflinburg as an Associate Professor of Economics.

Seeley, Vice President of Garden Village Advertising in West Pittston, is teaching courses in Human Resources Management, Collective Bargaining, Labor Economics and Principles of Economics.

"I especially enjoy teaching at Wilkes for a number of reasons," said Seeley. "First in a college community such as Wilkes, professors and students are able to interact very easily and form real friendships. Second, the

--MORE--

1ST ADD SEELEY JOINS WILKES FACULTY

graduate students are very bright and highly motivated and are, therefore, a joy to work with. Finally, Wilkes is more than simply an institution that teaches students but is also one with a sense of obligation to the community."

Seeley earned his Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Maryland in 1986 and his B.A. in Economics from Franklin and Marshall College in 1977.

Prior to Wilkes, Seeley was an Assistant Professor of Economics at both Susquehanna University and King's College.

An active participant in several professional associations, Seeley has presented papers to the Pennsylvania Economic Association, State College, May 1988; Eastern Economic Association, Boston, Massachusetts, March, 1988; Pennsylvania Economic Association, Bloomsburg, May, 1987 and the Eastern Economic Association, Washington D.C. , March, 1987.

The author of several publications, Seeley has written "On the Relative Performance of Inflation Models," Proceedings of the 1988 Pennsylvania Economic Association

2ND ADD SEELEY JOINS WILKES FACULTY

Annual Convention, "The Impact of the Federal Government's Antidiscrimination Efforts Upon the Earnings and Employment of Women: An Inter-Industry, Inter-Occupation Approach," Proceedings of the 1987 Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Convention and "The Private Costs of Crime," (with Charles T. Clotfeller) , Sage Publications.

Seeley maintains memberships in the American Economic Association, the Eastern Economic Association and the Pennsylvania Economic Association.

PHOTO: Dr. Robert D. Seeley, Wilkes University

SI 12/22



KIWANIS INDUCTION HELD — The Wilkes-Barre Kiwanis Club recently Inducted three new members. In a special ceremony the club welcomed Dr. Robert Seeley, associate professor of economics, Wilkes University who was sponsored by Dr. Merle Peper; Charles Cometa, Wyoming Valley Alcohol & Drug,

sponsored by Atty. Thomas Cometa, Lt. Governor of Kiwanis 11th district and Kevin Stuart, account executive/research director WBRE-TV28, sponsored by Club President Joseph O'Brien. From left to right are: Atty. Thomas Cometa, Charles Cometa, Dr. Merle Peper, Dr. Robert Seeley, Kevin Stuart, Joseph O'Brien.

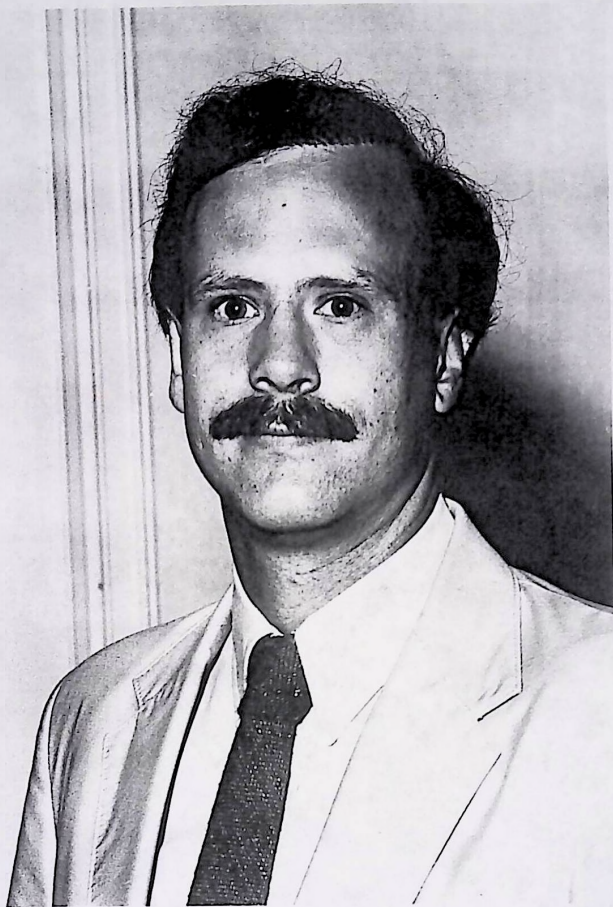


Kiwanis inducts 3 new members

Wilkes-Barre Kiwanis Club recently inducted three new members. Welcomed were Dr. Robert Seeley, associate professor of economics, Wilkes University; Charles Cometa, Wyoming Valley Alcohol and Drug and Kevin Stuart, accounting executive/research director WBRE-TV 28.

Seeley was sponsored by Dr. Merle Peper; Charles Cometa was sponsored by Thomas Cometa, lieutenant governor of Kiwanis 11th District; and Stuart was sponsored by Joseph O'Brien, club president.

From left are Thomas Cometa, Charles Cometa; Dr. Peper, Dr. Seeley; Kevin Stuart and Joseph O'Brien.



Wilkes University News

Christine Liberaski
Communications Assistant
University Relations
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania 18766
(717) 831-4773

Dr. Robert D. Seeley Named Director of Graduate Programs at Wilkes University

Wilkes-Barre -- Wilkes University President Christopher N. Breiseth recently announced Dr. Robert D. Seeley, of Shavertown, has been named director of graduate programs in the university's school of business, society and public policy.

In his new position, Seeley oversees the master's of business administration degree and the master's of health administration degree. His administrative responsibilities include working with full-time and part-time faculty in the graduate programs; the review of curriculum; the marketing of the two programs; and overseeing the admission of students. He is also an associate professor of economics, a position he has held at Wilkes since 1989.

"Robert's experience in both the MBA and MHA programs makes him uniquely qualified to lead our development of graduate programs in the school of business, society and public policy" says Dr. Gary A. Giamartino, dean of the school of business, society and public policy.

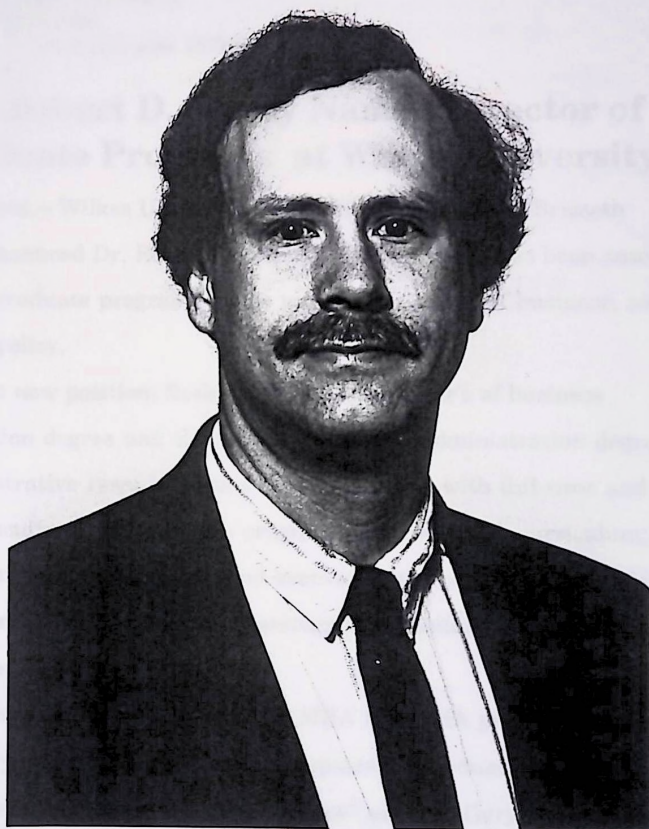
Seeley received a bachelor degree in economics from Franklin &

-MORE-

1ST ADD- SEELEY APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE PROGRAMS AT WILKES
Marshall College in 1977 and his doctorate in economics from the
University of Maryland in 1986. He has served as assistant professor of
economics at Susquehanna University and King's College.

His professional memberships include the American Economic
Association and the Eastern Economic Association. In addition, he is a
member of the Wilkes-Barre Area Kiwanis Club and is a United Way
coordinator for Wilkes University,

Seeley is also co-owner of Garden Village Advertising in Shavertown.
He and his wife Janis have two children, Jillian, 7, and Dylan, 6.



Wilkes University News

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Wilkes University Announces Appointments in School of Business, Society and Public Policy

Wilkes-Barre-- Dr. Gary A. Giamartino, dean, Wilkes University School of Business, Society and Public Policy, recently announced reappointments and new appointments among the School's faculty.

Dr. Robert D. Seeley, Shavertown, was appointed acting chair of the department of business administration and economics. Also, Dr. Thomas J. Baldino, Mountaintop, was reappointed chair of the department of political science and public administration, and Dr. Michael S. Garr, Wilkes-Barre, was reappointed chair of the department of sociology and anthropology.

In addition, the former position of director of graduate studies in the School of Business, Society and Public Policy was reorganized into two positions: director of the Master's of Business Administration (MBA) program and director of the Master's of Health Administration (MHA) program. Dr. Ashim Basu, Wilkes-Barre, was appointed chair of the department of health services administration and

-MORE-

1ST ADD - WILKES ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENTS

director of the MHA program. While, Dr. Barbara Samuel Loftus, Clarks Summit, was appointed director of the MBA program.

"The reorganization of graduate studies will allow us to devote more attention to the unique needs of each of these graduate degree programs," said Giamartino.

"Wilkes offers a variety of programs which do an excellent job of building competence and confidence in students," added Giamartino. "Many of these programs have developed regional reputations for their quality and standards."

DALLAS POST

DALLAS, PA
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Seeley to head business department

Dr. Robert D. Seeley, Shavertown, was recently appointed acting chairman of Wilkes University's department of business administration and economics.

STANDARD-SPEAKER

HAZLETON, PA
DAILY & SUNDAY 24,000

SUNDAY
JUL 20 1997

BURKE/LEE

War for wages



With unemployment rates in Luzerne and Schuylkill counties higher than the state average, many area residents are turning to help wanted ads in their search for jobs.

With jobless rates above state averages, area unemployed turning to job centers

"Please take a number."
The sign, taped on a red ticket machine, is the first thing you see upon entering the air-conditioned building.

You see walls, plastered with "Help Wanted" flyers, a busy mosaic of job descriptions.

Then you see the strangers hunched over desks, busily scribbling short biographies on various papers—hoping this time they will be needed, wanted, or just accepted somewhere.

Welcome to the job center—the first step in combating unemployment.

In recent years, Luzerne and Schuylkill counties' rates have placed them near the top of Pennsylvania's unemployment list.

Luzerne County's unemployment rate of 7.0 percent and Schuylkill County's 8.0 percent rise above the state average of 5.3 percent and the national average of 4.7 per-

cent.
Standard-Speaker reporter Ed Conrad and interns Valerie Oswald and Mark Katchur visited state job centers in Hazleton, Wilkes-Barre and Pottsville.

For those who do work in the counties, wages are less, which means

lower income levels than Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, or Lancaster. This leads to less consumer spending," said Robert Serley, an economist at Wilkes University.

"The age of the population also has an effect on the unemployment rate," he added.

Luzerne and Schuylkill counties have a high percentage of retirees, whose spending habits differ from

young workers.

U.S. Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-11th) said the people in government and business who select sites for new companies forget Northeastern Pennsylvania.

"It's not intentional. It's just that we're off their radar screen," Kanjorski said.

Southern Pennsylvania, he said, has received a greater share of money to develop transportation, edu-

cation and industrial sites than the

Unemployment as of May 1997	
Schuylkill	8.0
Montro	7.9
Lackawanna	7.7
Carbon	7.2
Luzerne	7.0
Northumberland	6.9
Northampton	5.3
Lehigh	4.8
Berks	4.6

Source: Pa. Department of Labor

workers have less money to pump into the economy to create jobs, a college professor said.

"Northeastern Pennsylvania has

See JOBS, A2

Jobs

(Continued from A1)

The investment helped areas like Lancaster and Harrisburg have the lowest unemployment rates in the state.

As counter measures, Kerski said government and economic development groups in Northeastern Pennsylvania can void to attract employers to the region. Pennsylvania has 2,400 local governments, making the state most fragmented in the United States. Sometimes that forces companies to deal with several governments to open a business.

Despite that, Northeastern Pennsylvania is progressing. The jobless rate dropped in half from when Kerski took

office a decade ago.

Now, he asks work that will bring back college graduates who left the region the past 40 years.

"So the emphasis is not just on getting jobs, but what the wage level is for those jobs so we can have upward mobility in our workforce... and attract people who have left the area," he said.

Last year's college graduates, at least, found work.

John King's director of career planning and placement at King's College in Wilkes-Barre, said 100 percent of the Class of 1996 was unemployed.

"It's the brightest job market in seven years for the new college graduates," Hiestand said.

While King's graduates might enjoy prosperity in their future, the unemployment plague is due to many other reasons, not just a lack of a college degree.

Some people quit their jobs.

Some were fired or "let go" when plants closed, or cut back, or changed managers.

Some workers held out for better opportunities or return to training classes.

And some don't know how they fell into unemployment in the first place.

HAZELTON

Frost of the high unemployment rate can be seen at the Hazleton Job Center, as out-of-work residents come and go throughout the day.

Thomas Olsif, 46, of McKdon, is one of a number of area residents unemployed. He visited the job center on Wednesday to ensure that she will be waiting somewhere - anywhere - as soon as possible.

Olsif was employed until December 1998 at Sara Lee Bakery in McKdon, which was a distribution center for Spender pants. The plant closed, leaving Olsif and others unemployed.

At the job center, Olsif learned she was eligible for training through the Trade Readjustment Act.

Following her visit, Olsif now knows that it is a matter of time before she receives confirmation on her schooling.

"Honestly, (the reindeer) will get me a better, permanent, full-time job," Olsif said.

Robert Kerski, manager of the Hazleton Job Center, hopes everyone who seeks help from the center finds the same satisfaction as Olsif.

He offers a number of reasons why the region has higher unemployment than the state or the nation.

"I think the big reason behind it is that the economic activity in other areas is better than this region, historically," he said.

Kerski also said the vast majority of jobs being created are in the service and retail sector. But the enormous population of the Hazleton area is not high enough to attract as many service and retail jobs as other areas in the state, such as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and, on a lesser scale, the York area, Kerski said.

Although the statistics for the Hazleton area seem bleak, Kerski pointed out the improvement in employment during the last few years.

"The thing that I find encouraging is that the unemployment rate used to be in the double digits, now it is under 10 percent," he said. "The unemployment rate has shown marked improvement."

Kerski hopes that the decrease of unemployment in Hazleton continues. Attracting jobs is one way to continue the trend.

"We work very closely with the CAN DO Inc. (has been very successful) in bringing in jobs over the past few years," Kerski said.

W. Kevin O'Donnell, president of CAN DO Inc., said creating jobs is basically what the organization exists.

He agreed with Kerski that one of the reasons for the high unemployment rate is the increase in service jobs nationwide.

"We don't have the population around here to support the service industry," he said.

O'Donnell also attributed the employment problem to their own cause, such as automation and the demise of the local coal industry.

"The manufacturers are going so automated in their operation that the same business that used to bring in 300 or 400 jobs now only brings in 100 (jobs)," he said. "And when the coal industry failed, so did the community."

Like Kerski, O'Donnell is confident that the Hazleton area has a bright future. He hopes that his organization "can do" its part to make that happen.

Pottsville

Almost as sure as death and taxes is Schuylkill County's perennial status of being well above the statewide average in unemployment.

"Our unemployment rate has remained high for quite some time," admitted Thomas J. Mullin, manager of the Pottsville Job Center, the only one in

the county. "Most of the surrounding counties are lower than we are."

Schuylkill County's present unemployment rate of 8.5 is decidedly higher than Carbon County's 7.2 percent and Lehigh County's 4.8 percent.

But it is much, much higher than Lehigh County's 4.8 percent and Berks County's 4.8 percent.

Mullin recently released statistics for the commonwealth and, after a long explanation, explained how bad the situation really is.

"Actually, we're presently ranked 81st among Pennsylvania's 67 counties," said Mullin, who is a native of Hazleton.

"One of the big factors in Schuylkill County's jobless rate is the decline of the county's garment industry," Mullin said.

He explained that a large concentration of the present work force is employed in the garment industry even though the total number of available jobs falls far short of those of the 1970s and 1980s, and also well below the totals of just a few years ago.

"We still have the garment industry but it's true that it has been in somewhat of a decline," said Mullin, pointing out that many of Schuylkill - and Pennsylvania's - jobs have been shipped abroad.

As more factories move, "we lose more and more jobs," he said.

Mullin said another sizable closure of a county garment manufacturer will take place in the next few weeks when the H.L. Miller facility in Port Jervis - a member of the Miller Manufacturing Group - follows its plant in Lehigh Valley.

He estimated that 90 people will be laid off when that happens sometime next month.

"Because of these kinds of problems, our unemployment rate goes up," he said.

Time we lose a garment facility, we lose about 350 employees," he said.

Those jobs are replaced as fast as they are lost.

"Some companies do put on 10, 15 people, yet it takes two months to offset the kind of thing that will be taking place when those 90 employees are dropped."

Andrew Minich lost his job when a plant in Schuylkill Haven out of work since January," he said.

Minich visited the job center to check in with its people and learn about prospective job openings.

Minich, 34, of Abland, is married; has a 10-year-old daughter and said this marks the fifth or sixth time that he has been without a job in his life.

"There's just not enough industry in Schuylkill County, which makes finding a new job very difficult," said the former U.S. Marine.

Five companies in the area pay workers' wages approaching the national average, he said.

"Throughout the county, only a couple of employers are doing it."

Minich was in relatively good spirits even though because his wife is not a wage-earner, the family has been subsisting entirely on unemployment compensation and "an odd job" here and there.

Ken Mullenbauer, who resides in Eagle Rock near Shepperton, found himself in a different boat than most people - when he said a visit to the Pottsville Job Center on Wednesday morning.

He sought a position as a production manager.

"I'm worried because I've been out of work since April," said Mullenbauer, 43.

He pointed out that positions as production managers are available "but there is nothing in my salary range."

Mullenbauer has found the salary that most companies pay production managers is a far cry from New Jersey, where he had worked and lived before moving to the Hazleton area 17 years ago.

"They're not paying anything (salary-wise) here," he said.

Mullenbauer, who is single, was last employed by Sunshine Quality Products in the Pottsville Industrial Park.

John Butler of Pottsville was a relative newcomer to the center because he has been out of work only a week or so.

Last Monday, he signed up for unemployment compensation.

"Today I went back to return some paperwork and see what

Call-in centers will process jobless claims

Some people will be able to file their first claim for unemployment insurance by telephone.

The state Bureau of Labor and Industry selected 135 Franklin Ave., Scranton as the site for its first unemployment services center, which should open by late May.

"Unemployed Pennsylvanians no longer will have to stand in line at the local Job Center to file for unemployment benefits from the comfort and convenience of their homes," Labor Secretary Johnny Butler said.

At first, the center will take claims called in by Scranton residents, but later will accept claims from Carbondale and Montrose.

Eventually, claims from several offices in Northeastern Pennsylvania will be centralized in Scranton.

A statewide system of at least four, call-in centers should open by 1999.

Helped by a grant from the U.S. Labor Department, Pennsylvania has been developing a system to process claims by telephone since October.

After the call-in centers open, the Job Centers will continue to help people find work by matching them with employers.

In other states, people say they prefer filing claims by telephone rather than in person, Butler said.

Jobs might be available," he said Wednesday.

Butler, 42, is a laborer whose specialty is working with concrete.

"I'm hoping I can get back to work soon, but I can't count on it because you can't find a job in this town," he said.

Butler, who has seven children, emphasized that he will continue to do his best to land new job - not only through the center but also by doing everything he can on his own.

"I'm not too worried right now," he remarked. "But I'm depending on nobody for nothing."

Putting in his pitch for a new job was Gary Augst, 35, of Port Grove, who worked as a diesel mechanic for a year until finding himself out of a job a month ago.

"I'm down here to see what's open because I want to get back to work," he said.

Augst said his departure from his previous job had come quite suddenly when he was let go.

"The new boss told me - just like that - he didn't like my attitude," said Augst, even though he insisted that his performance and attitude certainly must have been satisfactory to his previous boss.

He pointed out that he had been with the firm for a year and everything seemed to be going good until management changed.

Wilkes-Barre

Richard Garcia of Wilkes-Barre lost his job as a warehouse worker in West Pittston around the time his daughter was born.

He said he was laid off because he wasn't sure why he lost the job, but work took a lower priority than visiting his daughter, who is now 2 months old.

"I don't care how much work I have to do, I have a child," he said.

Garcia said the job center helps him fill out resumes, but he doesn't really trust the center to actually get him a job.

He said the Hazleton and McCoy telecommunications program (Wilkes-Barre) he is now will do more than the job center to help him find employment.

"I just have to do my end of the work," Garcia said.

Garcia said he is a CEE from high school and worked in two, but never got a degree.

Meanwhile, Garcia, a 20-year-old high school graduate who didn't want to give his last name, believes he was overqualified for jobs offered so far.

For seven months, he has been unemployed.

He attended college for one semester, but decided he wasn't cut out for it.

Right now, he is in a telecommunications training program.

"I don't trust the unemployment agency. (They) didn't do anything for me. They usually try to find unskilled workers (jobs). I'm skilled."

Jason said because of his qualifications he deserves a job making at least double digit per hour benefits.

"I'm looking for something that pays at least \$40 an hour," he said.

He had a job as a satellite dish installation technician in Washington, D.C., but said living there was too expensive for him.

Jason said Wilkes-Barre has jobs, but none that he is interested in.

"There's more work around here than anywhere else - unskilled jobs," he said.

"I've never been a 'worker' (type person)," he said. "Why he's not a 'worker' is because he's not a 'worker'."

One 21-year-old woman from Abland seeks help from the Wilkes-Barre job center even though she already has a job.

"There's a chance I may be laid off in the future," she said.

She has been in college for three years but is now on a leave of absence. She isn't sure if she'll continue college in the future for further job training.

She works now for a telephone company but said she has the experience, but no formal training, to be a flight attendant.

She said she trusts the job agency to help her find her ideal job.

"I think they could if you are interested in what they have to offer."

Joe Wasmus, manager of the Wyoming Valley Job Center in Wilkes-Barre, said employment centers can only help people who are determined to get jobs.

"If someone comes in the agency and they really want to work and they have reasonable expectations... then I think they would have a very good chance to be employed," Wasmus said. "A lot depends on motivation."

He said the job center allows people to browse other jobs in the area and get basic information about jobs that are available. The center also directs people to training programs.

The center gives a mix of college graduates, what Wasmus calls "our most precious commodity exported to other areas" and non-college graduates.

"There's no one in the agency job that becomes created in the state. Everyone strives to attract particular industries."

Wasmus said that sometimes people have to look in a mirror and do a self assessment before they start looking for jobs.

"Be very realistic about your job search," he advised.

1844: Wyoming Seminary was founded and was quickly followed by the first of the Catholic schools. Thirty-five years later, MMI was founded in Foster Township to serve the children of miners.

Private, parochial schools strong lure for parents

Concerns lead more to abandon public schools

By JENNIFER LEARN
Times Leader Staff Writer

After 14 years as a homemaker, Terry Bauder returned to work so she could send her two sons to a private Christian school in Hazleton.

Her husband, Robert, also has taken on a second job delivering newspapers to scrape together the total \$4,500-a-year tuition.

The couple is among a growing group of parents dishing out thousands of dollars in tuition on top of school property taxes to send their children to private or parochial schools.

"The academic standards are very high. The individualized attention is priceless to us, and so are the commitment and dedication of the teaching staff," Terry Bauder said of Immanuel Christian School.

Private and parochial schools throughout Luzerne County report thriving enrollments. Several in the Hazleton area have put new students on a waiting list for the 1998-99 school year.

"Private schools are pretty darn popular right now, and that indicates an increasing concern about the quality of education in public schools," says Robert D. Seeley, chairman of Wilkes University's business administration and economics department.

Seeley, a Wyoming Seminary graduate who sends his two children to the same school, says public schools often have too many students squeezed into classrooms, teachers who get tenure too quickly, lower academic standards and hirings based on politics or nepotism instead of qualifications.

"Public schools know they're going to have students, or customers, regardless because they're free," Seeley said. "Competition is what pushes people in institutions to do their best."

Many area private and parochial schools are housed in old buildings with a technology and teacher salaries a fraction of those in their public school counterparts, so what is the draw?

"Modern classrooms don't teach. Modern equipment doesn't teach. Teachers do, and at Immanuel all the teachers are dedicated and genuinely concerned about our children," Terry Bauder says.

Representatives of Wyoming Seminary in

Kingston and MMI Preparatory School in Foster Township say they have succeeded for more than a century, largely by staying the same.

Wyoming Seminary, the first private school in Luzerne County that is still in existence, opened its doors in Kingston in 1844 and was quickly followed by parochial schools. MMI Preparatory School was founded a few decades later, in 1879.

"There's been an awful lot of emphasis in years past about a return to basics. We like to say we've never really left the basics," MMI Principal Joseph Rudawski says.

"We've enhanced the basics with technology, but basically we've really stressed the strong academic background our students have always received," he says.

Rudawski says educators from other schools often ask how so many MMI students get accepted into some of the best colleges and universities in the country.

"I tell them, 'We do it the old fashioned way. We make them work for it.'"

Mary Frances Forcier, public relations and publications director at Wyoming Seminary, says the school seeks dedicated and enthusiastic teachers, including some who live on campus.

"As I look back on more than 150 years of Wyoming Seminary history, the teachers are the ones who really made it a meaningful experience for students in the 1840s and keep it going through the 1990s," Forcier says.

"The teachers here have always taken time to teach not only academic lessons, but lessons in life," Forcier says.

At least one other private school is opening in the area.

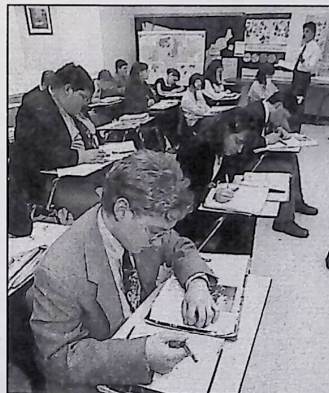
Ellen Hauck, a Hazle Township mother of three, plans to open the Mountain City Learning Center in downtown Hazleton this fall. Hauck said she has been frustrated with growing class sizes and nepotism in her local public school.

The school will follow the Montessori teaching method, an untraditional style used nationally that gives students more freedom to learn at their own pace.

A mother with similar frustrations opened the Wyoming Valley Montessori School in Kingston in 1970. The school has 220 students and a waiting list, school Director Jean Warrington says.



COURTESY OF MMI



TIMES LEADER/PETE G. WILCOX

Above, Students and faculty on the steps of MMI in 1908. At left, first Wyoming Seminary in Kingston and then MMI Preparatory School in Foster Township were founded in the mid-1800s to offer private education to Luzerne County students. Gregory Walters of Weatherly and other eighth-graders study social studies under the tutelage of Michael Scarlato.

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Gov't study commission submits proposed budget

By L.A. TARONE

tarone@standard-speaker.com

The Luzerne County Government Study Commission has submitted its proposed 2003 budget to the county for review. That budget will get a hearing this afternoon at 4:30.

But the submission itself caused some lively discussion during Tuesday night's regular weekly meeting at Luzerne County Community College.

Gerry Cross, of the commission's study consultant the Pennsylvania Economy League, argued the budget should have been prepared differently for submission.

The budget, prepared by commission Treasurer Betsy Summers, includes the panel's normal operating expenses, plus two large one-time-only line items. One for printing at least 130,000 copies of the final proposed charter, the other is for mailing them to all households in the county. Those two combined, while technically not part of the group's operating budget, total more than half the entire budget the commission has requested.

Overall, the request totals \$113,000. Printing and mailing of the charter total \$72,000. The operational portion of the budget is just

\$41,000, considerably below the \$60,000 the commission requested in its first budget last year and even lower than the \$60,000 it received.

"Except for printing and mailing, everything else is in line with last year," commission member Dr. Rob Seeley said.

But Cross argued that grouping everything together and submitting one budget would give critics reason to urge people to vote against the proposed charter when it's done.

"I think you're taking this far too lightly," Cross told the commission. "You're shooting yourselves in the foot."

"Those who are predisposed to oppose the work you're doing can point to this budget and say, 'See, it's just like everything else, it starts small and gets big,'" Cross said in an uncharacteristic raised voice. "They'll be saying, 'If this is charter government, I don't want any part of it.'"

Cross argued that the commission should have simply submitted its operating budget, \$41,000, and added an addendum with words to the effect of, "there will also be expenses related to the state-mandated general circulation of the charter when it's finished."

Cross said the county is ultimately responsible for circulation of the char-

ter, as per the state's home rule statute. He said the county already has a government bulk mail account, which would make the mailing line item far less than the projected \$32,000.

In fact, the printing and mailing costs are little more than educated guesses. And both might cost less, depending on how the commission chooses to get the finished charter into general circulation.

Printing the charter in booklet form and mailing it directly to all 130,000 households in the county would be the most expensive option, both for printing and mailing. The numbers in the proposed budget are based on that option. But, other cheaper alternatives are available.

One is to print a summary of the charter and mail it to county households, rather than the entire thing. The summary could note that the whole charter is available for inspection at the nearest public library or on the commission's Web site.

Another less expensive alternative is to ask the county's three big newspapers – the *Standard-Speaker*, the *Citizen's Voice* and the *Times Leader* – to print the charter in its entirety, either as a separate section or as an advertising flier. All have been discussed. No final decision has been made yet.

But Summers said she didn't expect a hard time on the budget request from Jim Torbik, the county budget director.

"They're all legitimate expenses," Summers said. "And they (county government) know they have to make the charter available to the general public – that's state law."

Summers added the commission has gotten a reputation as a taut spender.

"We've been very frugal," Summers said. "We have been very tight on our spending."

Indeed, the commission expects to return \$23,000 to county coffers – almost half of its \$50,000 budget. That's the first time in recent memory a county commission or agency has returned unspent money to the county.

But Cross said the \$113,000 total could be used by opponents as a public relations mallet to hit the commission, and the proposed charter, over the head. He reminded the group it was recently accused by a newspaper writer of creating districts so each member could run for a seat.

In fact, only one member expressed any interest in a run for county office. Ruth Tetschner said recently that she doesn't want to run for a seat, but said she would, as a

last resort, if candidates on the ballot expressed beliefs that "violated the spirit" of the charter.

Robb Henderson is running for office now – he's the GOP challenger to incumbent Democrat Phyllis Mundy in the 120th district.

Two commission members – Seeley and Dr. Tom Baldino – are full-time Wilkes University professors. Summers is a successful sales rep. Nancy Kemp is a founding member of the watchdog group Luzerne County Forum. None has expressed any interest in running for county-wide office. Neither has member George Race.

Former chairman Ed Kilduff had worked in the courthouse as a deputy prothonotary under Carolee Medico. He now works at the Red Rock Job Corp and has said he's not interested in a county-wide office.

Three other commission members already are elected officials. Chairman Carl Goodwin is the supervisors' chairman in Kingston Township and has already ruled out a run for county office. Neil Allen is also a Kingston Township supervisor. Vice Chairman Carl Puschauer is West Hazleton's mayor.

Under the proposed charter, council seats are part time, with salaries of \$5,500.

STANDARD-SPEAKER

HAZZLETON, PA
THURSDAY 22,002
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Proposed county charter will cap taxes

By L.J. TARONE

tarone@standardspeaker.com

The proposed Luzerne County charter will cap taxation based on a Consumer Price Index. But it will have no other tax or spending caps.

All that was decided by the county Government Study Commission during its Wednesday night meeting at Luzerne County Community College.

Last week, the commission voted to limit tax hikes to the growth in an index, though it didn't pick a specific one.

Wednesday night, commission member Neil Allen said he'd consulted with fellow commissioner Dr. Rob Seeley (an economics professor at Wilkes University) and they agreed the Consumer Price Index of urban dwellers would be the most reasonable.

Allen termed it "the most readily recognizable" and noted it averaged a four percent annual increase over the last 90 years.

"There have been periods of high inflation and low inflation, but it tends to balance out," Allen said.

He added that most recent increases have been well below four percent.

Charlie Waters, from the commission's consultant, The Pennsylvania Economy League, expanded a bit on the index, then asked Allen on what time period he wanted the limit based.

After some discussion, Allen moved to limit increases to the rate of increase in CPI-U from June to June. Those figures are released each July. That motion was adopted unanimously.

But George Race then moved to place an absolute limit on tax increases, even in the charter's "escape hatch."

Last week, the commission decided regular spending increases would be based on an index. But it also included an escape hatch, under which, in unusual situations, hikes could be higher.

The escape clause mandated above CPI-U pass a supermajority vote (five of seven) or a public referendum. Race moved to limit escape hatch hikes to double the CPI-U increase no matter the circumstance.

"Taxpayers should have that protection," Race said. "And this is not unreasonable - I'm talking about double the increase in CPI. So there's plenty of room."

Ed Kilduff supported Race's motion.

"I know whenever you mention 'cut the budget,' it makes the hair on some peo-

ple's necks stand up," Kilduff said. "But I have never seen a budget - federal, state or county - that didn't have fat that can be cut. Too many politicians think it's easier to raise taxes and keep spending. But, with a cap like this, it will force politicians to make tough decisions and take the heat for them."

Allen agreed. He pointed to Social Security recipients who live on cost of living adjustments based on CPI.

"Government can do the same thing - just tighten your belt," Allen said.

But Solicitor Jim Ferry said sometimes CPI hikes are just over one percent. He termed government operating on a like spending hike as "can't happen."

Watters noted there is also the rare instance of "deflation," when the CPI would be a negative number. That, he said, would force a spending cut. He added a tax cap might increase annual spending increases.

"Right now, you can go a long time without a tax hike, because officials would rather hit everyone with a big hike all at once and take the heat for it," Watters said. "But with a cap such as this, they might be inclined to increase taxes two percent every year, knowing they couldn't get eight percent in any one year."

Vice Chairman Carl Puschauer opposed Race's motion, saying counties can get hit by unfunded mandates from the state. He pointed to the recent massive increase in

tipping fees as an example.

Watters proposed a compromise, under which increases with a super majority vote would be limited to double the CPI-U increase. But, increase above that would require a public referendum.

Race's initial motion lost. But he supported Watters' compromise, terming it "reasonable."

But Dr. Tom Baldino said that cap could still prove problematic.

One problem, he said, was an incoming administration could be left a major budget hole to cover and have no choice, even after spending cuts, but to increase taxes above the CPI-U.

"My other concern is the tax base eroding," Baldino said. "You must cut? Fine, but where. Do we eliminate the (Luzerne County Transit Authority), force seniors to pay for bus rides? But even that may not be enough." He added he opposed "absolute" limits.

Race's motion for the compromise also lost - with him, Robb Henderson and Chairman Carl Goodwin voting 'yes,' Baldino, Puschauer, Allen and Kilduff voting no. Kilduff's no came with a "but."

"George I support what you're trying to do," Kilduff said. "But earlier in this process, we voted to keep taxation off referendum for the public. I will not support putting government over people."

Since both motions for an additional cap lost, there will be none.



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Local study commission members pleased with progress

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

Members of the Luzerne County Government Study Commission who hail from the Back Mountain are universally pleased with the group's work.

"We are making a lot of progress," said Neil Allen, Wyoming, in voicing the unanimous opinion of the four members of commission who have ties to the Back Mountain.

"I could never get over the shenanigans that go on and I think you'll find that most people on the commission feel the same way," said Allen, who is also a Kingston Township supervisor. "Hopefully, things can improve."

The 11 members of the Study Com-

mission are charged to investigate restructuring the form of government in Luzerne County. The commission spent the first nine months studying the current system and other forms of county government in Pennsylvania. The present system has the executive and legislative branches combined under three county commissioners. The goal of the Study Commission is to create distinct and separate executive and legislative branches with a strong system of checks and balances. They have studied, debated and decided



J. Carl Goodwin



Neil Allen

about 80 percent of the proposal to date.

"Of the literally hundreds of issues we've addressed, there are maybe five that I disagree with," said Rob Seeley, Jackson Township.

"When this gets put on the ballot I'm sure every voter will find something they don't like, but I think the bigger question will be would you rather this or the current system of government?"

Dr. Seeley, an associate professor of Economics at Wilkes University, decided to run for election to the commission after he saw the initial

list of candidates. "They had very clear political connections," said Seeley. "I think you can clearly say that the 11 members of the commission are not at all tied to the current county government in any major way."

The commission has already agreed on a system of government with a full-time County Executive and a seven-member County Council. Four of the council will be elected from designated areas and three would be elected at large. They also anticipate that a professional manager would be appointed. The commission is mandated to have a complete proposal by July 26 and the proposal may be placed on the November ballot.

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Study

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lot. "There is so much to do that we may have to lengthen our meetings," said J. Carl Goodwin, a Kingston Township supervisor who taught U.S. History and Government in Pennsylvania schools for 35 years. "We are working on an ethics part now that deals with what the behavior should be. Besides the checks and balances, we've added accountability and very open budget meetings."

The commission decided at a meeting on February 24 that the scope of accountability for county employees would be the stricter than either the state guidelines or a proposal submitted by the County Executive and approved by the County Council. In addition, council members would be paid \$5,000 a year with no bene-

fits to discourage anyone from making a career out of the position.



Rob Seeley

Goodwin, who is chairman of the commission, has life-long ties to the Back Mountain. "My great-great grandfather re-named Branchville for the man who sold him his property. It was originally spelled Truxville."

Weekly Study Commission meetings are held at Luzerne County Community College in Nanticoke at 7 p.m. on rotating weekdays, Monday through Thursday. The next meeting is Wednesday, March 12 and the

following will be Thursday, March 20. They are open and there are two periods for public comment at each meeting.

The commission held three community meetings in Hazelton, Duryea and Kingston Township at the beginning of their study process. As they near the end of the process, they plan to schedule several more community meetings to explain the proposed charter. The Study Commission will announce that schedule in the next few weeks.

"We take this job very seriously," said Ruth Tetschner, a commission member who was principal in the Dallas School District for 20 years. "I have three grandchildren and it is easy to lose enthusiasm for living in this area. I just want to do what is right."