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OPINION

Our mission is to provide news, information and services to enable our communities to prosper.

Friday, November 19, 2010

S.W. Calkins Sr., publisher 1954-73

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Thumbs up

■ To the local farmers and others who pitched in Wednesday to help the owners of the Torbert Farm and Cambria Stables in Lower Makefield clean up the aftermath of a violent overnight storm that ripped off the aluminum stable roofs and knocked down two hay storage barns. By 7 a.m., several area farmers were assisting owner-operator John Torbert Sr. and his family pick up the pieces. The helpers included Sam Stewart of Charlann Farms, Doug Wright of Breezyvale Farm and Tom and Jimmy McGowan of Sterling Farm. Jack Matthews of Scrappy's Auto Service in Pennel used his tow truck to pull farm machinery out from under the destroyed barns. Family friends Dave and Nora Doan helped out, too. Torbert estimated the damage at \$25,000 or more and said it won't be covered by insurance because the storm damage was an act of God. Thank goodness he has good friends.

■ To Marlene and William Madison, honored this week as the Family Service Association's Bucks County Family of the Year. The Madisons battled physical, emotional and financial troubles. Their kids were put into foster care. But after 15 months of intense therapy and plain old hard work, the parents got their lives together and their kids back. What a heart-warming story.

■ To Roy Halladay for becoming the first Phillies pitcher in 23 years to win the Cy Young Award. Halladay had one of the most dominant seasons on the mound in the history of the franchise, winning 21 games, throwing a perfect game

and becoming only the second Major League pitcher to throw a no-hitter in the postseason. Equally impressive, he did so with class and dignity, while setting an example for teammates with a tireless work ethic.

■ To the Lower Southampton Board of Supervisors for the cordial non-partisan sendoff they gave to resigning member Mark Hopkins. At his last meeting on Wednesday, Hopkins was hailed by members of the Republican-controlled board for his intelligence and dedication to the job. In turn, the Democrat referred to his former colleagues as "honorable, knowledgeable and fair people." It was a pleasant change from the bitter fighting we saw throughout the campaign.

■ To the Eagles for going beyond the green in their uniforms. The team announced Thursday that it will go off the electrical grid by installing 80 spiral-shaped wind turbines and some 2,500 solar panels. (Details are on A1 today.) Those turbines and panels — along with a soon-to-be built, on-site power plant that could run on natural gas or biodiesel fuel — should be enough to light up Lincoln Financial Field and power its sound system. Doing so isn't just helping the environment, but also saving the team millions of dollars in electricity costs. Go Green!

■ To the politicians who removed their campaign signs promptly after the election. We especially liked the "thank you" banners that some put on their signs for a few post-election days before removing them.

Thumbs down

■ To the politicians whose campaign signs have lingered, limp and fading, on our roadsides. Most are in public rights of way. C'mon,

folks. Whether you won or lost the election, show some real civic pride and remove this blight. We know who you are.

The vent

To Louise Boyd and the Neshaminy teachers union, the damage is done and retroactive pay won't be your reward for your past greedy and uncaring behavior.
Donna L. Boyle, Parkland

People who are unwilling to be patted down to secure the safety of all passengers should be denied passage, regardless of religious convictions.
Charlie Housman, Middletown

It's been two weeks since the Republicans "shellacked" the Democrats in the election. Since then, the price of gas has increased about 15 cents per gallon. Coincidence? You decide!
William Talley, Yardley

The only person who would say that



teachers work a 180-day work year is someone who has never taught.
Paul Connolly, Levittown

Everywhere I go in Lower Bucks, there are still Fitzpatrick campaign signs up. Someone should take them down.
Geraldine Ortlip, Croydon

Hate Obamacare? Why? Your taxes already cover kids to 18, adults over 65, military and families and politicians and government workers. Only the healthy remain!
Albert Davey, Churchville

Send your comments of 25 words or less via e-mail to Vent@phillyburbs.com. Comments may also be mailed to the address under "Writing us." Please include your name and hometown.



LETTERS

Paying for gold-plated public employees

The stimulus has dried up, spent on \$27 light bulbs and on stimulus construction signs. Rainy day funds have been raided to allow elected officials to ignore economic reality and continue to spend beyond our means, even for the best of times.

The dollars that have trickled down to support the expansion of local pensions and programs for years, despite Pennsylvania's shrinking population, are beginning to dry up. Soon, every school board, county executive, council or board, and mayor will be faced with fiscal reality and the opportunity to show real leadership.

But, unions are gearing up their local lobbying machines. Fresh off their Nov. 2 losses, groups that routinely spend mil-

lions lobbying federal and state legislators already have redirected their resources and manpower at the local level. If history is any warning, these special interests will make it seem too painful to stop spending more than is collected by current tax rates, lobbying instead for higher and higher taxes. Too often, the path of least resistance has been to tax those without an organized voice fighting for them: the Main Street business owner and average wage earner.

This is exactly what's occurring in Allentown right now. Exacerbated by a "retire at 40 with 153 percent pay" public pension, Allentown's Mayor Pawlowski is asking for an income tax increase on every dollar earned within

city limits. Even though this tax increase will reduce property values and encourage the movement of commerce and thus the tax base outside of the city, this tax increase will pass unless the little guy stands up and says, "We will remember."

We will remember if council members take away from my modest retirement to pay for gold-plated public employees. We will remember if you buy support from big business using sweetheart tax breaks. We will remember whose side you're on. We will remember.

Skip Salvesen
Pennsylvania Commercial Action Network

E-mail: americawins@pa-can.org.

Path to a better world

You have no rights. There is nothing our forefathers wrote even though they believed in the word of God that guarantees us anything.

Everything was created by God and was meant for good and useful purposes. If you believe that you are saved by the grace of God this is a free gift to you. No government can take it away or tax it.

But, this grace only comes by faith in the one who died and rose again to save us all.

Yes, a lot of you will read this who don't believe it. Everything belongs to God.

Government has no business taking anything that a person does not want to relinquish. What is the answer to a better society?

The answer is to do good unto your fellow man as you would have him do for you. Don't expect something for nothing and if you can't do good don't do anything. If you can't speak the truth in love keep your mouth closed.

The truth comes from two sources: wisdom and knowledge.

The wisdom preached by politicians and other power mongers will not lead you to the truth or set you free.

One will still be held captive by the society we have made.

This society now hampers prosperity because we do not follow the wisdom of God. We do not grasp the knowledge we need to come to actual truth and justice. This pure truth we can have will allow you to discern the truth of the world from the lies many profess as their truth.

You have a clear picture of good and evil. This will help eliminate selfishness, greed, pride, jealousy and a host of other sins that will just lead us all down the same road we have been traveling.

A new law written on our hearts will constitute a new society. This society will

be much better than the one we have now. It's not a dream; it can happen.

Bob Konyves
Croydon

Shame on you both

Selflessness: an admirable quality in parents who would without any hesitation walk through fire to save their child's life.

Selflessness: an admirable quality in a man or woman who would proudly and without reservation risk his or her life for their country.

Selfishness: cost cutting on the part of BP thereby risking the lives of thousands of people, ruining the sustainability of the natural habitat for hundreds of miles and killing and harming countless wildlife.

Selfishness: complete lack of conscience on the part of BP; knowingly proceeding with the use of a cement mixture formula that tested unstable prior to construction of the well, obliterating the livelihood of thousands of people in the tourism and fishing industry.

Shame on you, BP.

Shame on you, Halliburton.

Bobbie Burkhardt
Holland

WRITING US

We invite your thoughts, either in the form of a letter or Guest Opinion.

Letters need: a signature, address and daytime phone number for verification.

Limit: 200 words for letters; 700 words for Guest Opinions.

Frequency: Writers are eligible for publication once every four weeks. Submissions are edited for taste, libel, style, grammar and length.

Not accepted: thank-you letters, poetry, classroom assignments, replies to replies, open letters, letters to third parties, consumer

Democrats, fight back!

Right now the Rushpublicans hope to bully Democrats into handing the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans another windfall of \$700 billion.

Democratic leaders are making more noises about bipartisanship with the enemy. Enough!

It's time for Democrats to stand up to the fat cats. By now, Democrats should have wised up to the "No" policy of the Rushpublicans. Lame duck Congress or not, Democrats can fight back.

One Pennsylvania senator can't be punished because he's retiring, while the remaining one has yet to face another election.

Congressman Patrick Murphy is being replaced.

Those two are being replaced by ones who have demonstrated their hostility to the middle class.

The president has been too "nice" with his dream of bipartisanship. He has another two years to stand up to Rushpublican demands with a veto.

Then let's see if the opposition can override a veto. Now is the time to get off of the dime and fight back!

Robert D. Eckel
Southampton

complaints, hand-written guest opinions, testimonials and letters written as part of an organized campaign. Submissions from repeat writers on the same topic that do not cover new ground also may be rejected. Documentation may be required before publication.

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GUEST OPINION

'We watched him slowly slip away from us as each day passed'

By JAMES AND DIANE BRITTON

Every day we read the morning newspaper and see the listing of people caught drinking and driving. But what's truly disturbing is the list of underage drinkers, which seems to be getting worse every day.

Incredibly, some parents throw underage drinking parties and think it's OK and nothing will happen. Where are the brains the good Lord gave you?

We want to address those who think they can drink and still handle driving.

Our son Matthew was in his teens, enjoying many things in life: rollerblading, skateboarding, basketball. These were among the things he and his friends would do — including partying.

Every time he went out, he would call to let us know he was OK and what time he would arrive home; he was

mature and responsible throughout most of his teenage years.

Most of the time, if Matt got caught up in drinking a few beers, he would call us to drive him home or stay at the place where he was partying or have someone bring him home — until the time he decided he could drive while under the influence.

We had woken up in the early morning to find Matt hadn't come home. We checked the phone messages and found the hospital had tried to reach us in regard to Matt having an accident in which he was the only driver. We rushed to the hospital to find that Matt had broken his clavicle and spinal cord and was paralyzed from his chest down due to being thrown out of the vehicle; he was two miles from home.

This accident occurred Nov. 22, 2003. During his hospital stay, we

watched him slowly slip away from us as each day passed. Matt had turned 21 in July of that year.

The doctors and nurses involved in his medical care did an outstanding job in trying to keep him alive; but because he sustained a bad injury his lungs began to collapse. They had to put him on a special machine to keep him breathing, hoping he would pull through. And we had hope he would come out of the coma they had put him in so we could talk to him again.

We tossed around many thoughts about the final outcome. Never did we think we would have to make the decision to pull the plug and lose our son.

We spoke with many doctors about this decision, including a priest. On Dec. 12, 2003, we lost our son. It took only five minutes for his passing after he was taken off the machine.

We cannot explain the feeling we

had when the doctor came out to tell us it was over.

My family, to this day, keeps thinking of him every day and we wish we could have changed things, but Matt decided to take the risk and it turned out for the worst.

Parents and schools really need to talk to teenagers today and advise them not to drink and drive, or let them read the newspaper column (DUI log) where they list those who got caught and were lucky to be alive as well as reading about some people who weren't so lucky.

We thank the police officers who go to schools to speak on this subject and who break up parties where underage drinking is going on, and we hope and pray no other parent has to go through what my family has endured.

Why lose a life over a few drinks or kill someone else because you thought

you could handle driving while under the influence? Better still, think what it will do to your family and friends. So, be responsible. If you are under the age of 21, don't drink; it's not worth the cost of getting caught and fined or killed. And if you are over the age of 21, just don't drink and drive. Period.

We hope this letter saves someone out there from taking that next drink, especially our young teenagers and saving someone's life.

Rest in peace, Matt, we love and miss you.

James and Diane Britton, Levittown, are dedicated to the cause of educating others about the dangers of drinking and driving.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

We invite your thoughts, either in the form of a letter or Guest Opinion. Take the opportunity to provide readers with a different perspective. See the "Writing Us" guidelines above.