

Editorials

Much to be thankful for

Someday our ancestors may recall that it was President Ronald Reagan who in 1985 summed up best the significance of Thanksgiving when he said, "We manifest our gratitude to God for the many blessings he has showered upon our land and upon its people."

And history may note that at about the same time his proclamation was being transmitted on major news services a thunderous roar was heard and a tower of flame could be seen for hundreds of miles along the Southeast coast.

That spectacle was the successful launching of the space shuttle Atlantis at Cape Canaveral, Fla., just down the coast from where the earliest Thanksgiving feast was observed 421 years ago.

It was on June 30, 1584 — more than half a century before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock — that a band of 300 French Huguenots came ashore at Jacksonville seeking religious freedom.

But before the work of building a fort began, the leader of the expedition gathered his followers together and offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

Our traditional Thanksgiving evolved from other events that occurred later and further north. Shortly after a band of settlers arrived in Maine in 1607 they held a service of thanks for their safe journey. And 12 years later in Virginia a day of thanksgiving was set aside.

In 1621 Gov. William Bradford created the most famous of all such observances at Plymouth Colony when a bumper harvest inspired him to proclaim a special day "to render thanksgiving to the Almighty God for all His blessings."

President Reagan went on to say Tuesday that people should, "... thank God for our families, friends, and neighbors, and for the joy of this very festival we celebrate in His name. Let every house of worship in the land and every home and every heart be filled with the spirit of gratitude and praise and love on this Thanksgiving Day."

Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving Day laurels

LAUREL — To the 180-member Corning West High School Band and staff which will be proudly marching in the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in Manhattan today. It took seven years of planning to achieve the goal. Let's all look 'em over on NBC when the event is telecast this morning.

LAUREL — To the new Coalition to Save Cub Bears club that is campaigning against the shooting of the little critters in the Northern Tier. Their message is

clear: "Be a cub fan: Don't shoot cubs."

LAUREL — To Harry Seebach for his 13 years of volunteer service to the Chemung County Council for the Aging Inc. He has resigned from the executive committee where he has served since 1972 helping to coordinate programs for senior citizens.

LAUREL — To "Danny Lipson &

Friends" — Joe Crupi and Betty Hirsch — for staging their popular musical show the other day at the Clemens Center. The trio has entertained many people in recent years while raising funds for Arnot-Ogden and Corning Hospitals.

LAUREL — To Lori Shrik of Pine City for winning the Century III Leaders Award at Southside High School which qualifies her for state competition. The program involves student leaders who discuss issues facing America.



Reagan falls short of reaching tax reform simplicity

WASHINGTON — When President Reagan outlined his tax reform proposal last May, he made it sound like heaven. We would have a system, he said, "that is clear, simple and fair for all."

His goal, the President said with his usual optimism, "is an America bursting with opportunity, an America that celebrates freedom every day by giving every citizen an equal chance, an America that is once again the youngest nation on Earth — her spirit unleashed and breaking free."

Like so many of Ronald Reagan's ideas, it sounded dandy. There were visions of filling out these simple forms, paying one of only three tax rates and sending our checks off to the Internal Revenue Service fully confident that the "special interests" were not picking our pockets. Terrific.

But today, after months of wrangling, the first version of a tax reform bill has emerged from the House Ways and Means Com-

mittee. And although it may promise a vast improvement over the present system, no one would call it tax simplification. Moreover, Reagan himself is faced with an awkward decision on how to proceed, if at all.

Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of Ways and Means, summed up the real-world result this way: "We have not written a perfect law. Perhaps a faculty of scholars could do a better job. A group of ideologues could have provided greater consistency. But politics is an imperfect business."

Translated, what this means is that the House Democrats have produced a bill that accomplishes many of the particulars sought by the White House but falls far short of delivering the simplicity or fairness the President promised. So the question for Reagan today is whether he is willing to accept this imperfect product in the hope that the Senate will shape it more to his liking or simply throw in the

towel.

The gap between the high hopes of Reagan last spring and the reality of today is in large measure a product of two political misjudgments by the President when he made tax reform the centerpiece for his second term.

First, the idea of a truly simple system was always unrealistic. Over the years the tax code has become a tool of both economic and social policy — to the point that every change in the system causes dislocations in one sector of the economy or another. More-

over, not all of these "special interests" with a major stake in tax legislation are necessarily selfish. Any list would include, for instance, both charities and local school boards.

Secondly, although the administration made a point of stressing it wanted a reform that was "revenue neutral," it soon became obvious that Reagan viewed the reform as another way to reduce income taxes for many Americans. And to the degree that was true, Reagan was attempting a little social engineering of his own

— and, not incidentally, making an attempt to score another political success.

That priority was most obvious in his proposal to end the deductibility of state and local tax payments. Reagan described state-local tax deductions as "a special subsidy for high-income individuals, especially in a few high-tax states." What he didn't say was that these are the individuals who provide most of the income tax revenue — or that ending deductibility would run directly counter to his own announced purpose of turning more government responsibilities and revenue sources back to state and local government.

Those political equities were not lost, however, on the members of Congress who were faced with the necessity for dealing with the details of the legislation rather than simply promising simplicity and fairness. And once that revenue-saving was lost, there was no choice other than to begin fine-tun-

ing other provisions to maintain that revenue neutrality.

The final product, then, is something less than the pie in the sky Reagan promised on television last May. But the fact that the House Democrats have produced a bill at all is still a remarkable testimonial to the President's ability to control the national agenda.

From the outset, it was apparent in opinion polls that there was no strong grass-roots demand for tax reform. Even when Reagan himself made his celebrated "blitz" for support, he found voters far more interested in the federal deficit problem.

But the Democrats in the House understood they could not cavalierly reject something Reagan described in such glowing terms. The result — and ultimate irony — is that the President now must accept the plan or risk coming down on the "wrong" side of an issue he created all by himself.

Germond and Witcover write for the Baltimore Evening Sun.



Politics Today

Jack Germond
Jules Witcover

You can't trust the Soviets

To the Editor:

Diana Barlow in her letter, "Star Wars not effective" (Nov. 17), neglected to mention the fact that the Soviets are making an all-out effort for us to abandon the strategic defense initiative (SDI).

That in itself should tell us something. Currently, the Soviets have a first-strike capability in their giant SS-18 land-based missiles (ICBMs).

These missiles — there are 308 of them that we know about — could almost destroy our entire force of ICBMs.

And while we would have a few ICBMs and our submarine and bomber force, none of these forces would be able to destroy the large number of remaining Soviet ICBMs in their hardened silos.

SDI would eliminate the Soviets first-strike capability which is why they want us to abandon

Star Wars.

Opponents of SDI want us to trust the Soviets via arms agreements. This proposal is illogical as the Soviets have a very poor track record honoring arms agreements.

Also, we should remember that the Soviets are not our only concern. SDI would be effective against nations like Libya and Iran and also in the event of an accidental launching of an ICBM.

So let us not be taken in by the "nice guy" image the media is bubbling over with.

Just remember that, while the Soviet leader and his fashion conscious wife are smiling for the cameras, children in Afghanistan are being maimed by booby-trapped toys, compliments of the Soviet Union.

ROBERT BART
315 Elm St.
Ithaca

A terrible traffic pattern

To the Editor:

The Chamber of Commerce should be more concerned with the terrible traffic pattern that exists in Elmira than in renaming streets to add to the confusion.

Tourists and others entering Elmira from Rt. 17 and proceeding west of E. Water St. are met with sign at Madison that reads "Do Not Enter."

How much better if these signs read, "Welcome to the Elmira Business section, straight ahead." In my opinion nothing has hurt

downtown business more than one-way traffic on Water & Church Sts.

So why not let Mark Twain rest awhile and do something constructive, such as correcting past mistakes.

MAURICE B. COLLINS
1109 Maple Ave.

Negative view doesn't help

To the Editor:

In response to Walter Kent's letter on Thursday, Nov. 21 concerning the Mark Twain Blvd. change — it might be appropriate to ask Mr. Kent what is he doing for his community?

I can assure Mr. Kent that negative thinking such as his will make it impossible to provide an economic climate for the youth of this area in the years to come.

JOSEPH S. PIERCE
Pierce's 1894
Elmira Heights

Letters

Economy worries youngster

To the Editor:

I am concerned about unemployment in Chemung County. Many people do not have enough money to feed and clothe their families.

It's very hard on adults when they cannot find work. It's a very upsetting and lonely feeling and

sometimes children suffer from child abuse and are neglected.

I feel we have to have more companies in Chemung County so more people can go back to work.

ERICA MATEEN
Age 8
3719 Glendale Drive
Horseheads

Wants prison in Southport

To the Editor:

In regard to our new prison location, everyone seems to be pushing the Elmira College Domes to bail out the college from a \$600,000-a-year commitment. The college is a major employer in the county. It does need help but let's examine the amount of money it will cost the county if the Domes location is used.

Many of the new prison employees will buy Schuyler County property instead of Chemung County property.

A prison generates thousands of visitors in a year's time. By using the Domes location we will lose millions of dollars in motel, restaurant, service station and discount store revenues. Can we as

Chemung County taxpayers afford to lose this extra sales and property tax income?

The Elmira Southside needs this business. For years everything has gone to the Horseheads area. It will mean new stores, higher property values, a real economic boost. The Southside location will guarantee all of the money generated by the new prison will be spent in Chemung County, it will amount to many times the \$600,000 Elmira College commitment. Add this to the fact the Southside people want the prison and the Domes area residents do not. Our area politicians are supposed to be working for the good of our community and the will of the people. Let's see they do it.

ROBERT SULLIVAN
RD 1 Lowman

Misunderstanding clarified

To the Editor:

On Nov. 14th I spoke to Mr. Kevin Fox, vice president of Sugar Creek Stores, Inc., regarding the certified mail which he has stated was sent to property owners surrounding the area for a proposed Sugar Creek store at Bancroft Road and Davis St.

During our conversation, Mr. Fox admitted that our name was omitted from a list obtained from

the city. Consequently, we did not receive any type of notification of public meetings scheduled to be held and could not voice an opinion in the matter.

Mr. Fox suggested that we meet with a representative of Sugar Creek to discuss this issue, and we have agreed to do so.

LEO J. APPLIN
BARBARA I. APPLIN
1867 Davis St.

Letters policy

The Star-Gazette welcomes contributions to the Letters to the Editor column.

Please contribute and note the following guidelines:

Brief letters are preferred; 300 words is the limit. Be sure to sign your letter and include a complete home address.

A telephone number speeds verification.

Protest fewer Erwin police

To the Editor:

We wish to express our opposition to the reduction of the police budget for the Town of Erwin.

Together with 777 petitioners, we want the protection and security provided by the present three-person force. There is not full-time coverage now. To cut the police department to one officer invites the escalation of crime in our community.

One only has to look at the national, state and area statistics — or to refer to the media — to draw this obvious conclusion. Certainly

the state police and sheriff cannot provide adequate coverage with their short staffs.

We appeal to the citizens of the Town of Erwin to let the Town Board know their wishes immediately. We urge those members of the board who have placed our safety in jeopardy to rescind their votes. The price tag is a bargain for services received.

M. JACQUILINE MANSFIELD
GERALD R. MANSFIELD
489 Victory Highway
Painted Post

Welliver deserves a laurel

To the Editor:

Unless I missed it in a prior edition, why wasn't a laurel presented to Welliver's for putting the Christmas tree up? Today's paper presented a laurel to Bouille for donating the tree, but I

feel services rendered by Welliver's also rates a laurel.

A dart to the Star-Gazette for forgetting a long-time community helper!

ENIOLA G. NELSON
1028 Parkside Drive

Doonesbury BY GARRY TRUDEAU



STAR-GAZETTE

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