Opinion

The great government land sale

The land sale is about to begin. Without much fanfare, the federal government has posted for sale signs on more than 300 parcels of valuable government land across the country ranging from Waikiki Beach to midtown Manhattan. According to Reagan administration plans, this is just the start: Under the stewardship of Interior Secretary James Watt, the administration plans to sell 35 million acres of federal land — an area as big as Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts — in the next five years. It will be the biggest real estate sale since the Oklahoma land rush.

Watt and President Reagan are convinced that the United States owns far more land than it needs or can manage. And they are clearly right. The 35 million acres the administration plans to sell, for example, represents only five percent of government land holdings. Much of that land is unused or not used at all — small, scattered tracts that are costly to maintain and serve no public purpose — such land could be better used by private citizens.

The idea of selling government land is especially attractive to administration officials now because of its revenue-generating potential. As the director of the Parcel Review Board, which is preparing the list of the parcels for sale, told Time magazine: "It is the best way we can think of to relieve the debt, because it doesn't hurt anyone. It doesn't raise taxes. It just raises money."

But it's an irrevocable way to raise money. One critic of the land sale plans, Rep. James Santini, D-Nev., says, "Rather than chase a trillion dollar debt with our national heritage, let's look carefully at just what land is excess."

He's right too. Watt and the administration seem to have embraced the concept of "privatization" of land without carefully considering its consequences. What they are trying to do is consistent with the Reagan philosophy of cutting back on government controls and returning rights to the private sector.

But it is inconsistent with the century-old bipartisan consensus that the responsibility of government must be to act as a steward and a protector of the public lands, leasing them if necessary to raise revenue but rarely, if ever, selling them.

An adaptation of this policy to permit the selling of unneeded land is long overdue. But the change in policy should not be made in haste by a self-righteous secretary of the interior so unpopular that 30 members of Congress have called for his resignation. The land should be sold with care and only after due deliberation on each large parcel by bipartisan committees. And the land sales themselves should be carefully scheduled over a long period of time, so as not to glut the real estate market at a time when land prices are depressed.

A so-called study

A so-called scientific study of 10 years ago concluded a hard-core alcoholic poisoned by booze could become a successful social drinker, a responsible imbiber who can sip one or two cocktails and then stop.

Almost everybody fell for it. Newspapers ran the scientific conclusions with nary a skeptical thought about the facts. And alcoholics, who knew deep inside it was hogwash, went on binges, socially drinking themselves into stupors.

The "scientific study," financed by a government grant, was conducted with 20 alcoholic patients at Patton State Hospital, near San Bernardino, Calif., in 1970-71. Results were published in professional journals. They stated the patients, with histories of severe alcoholism, had been tested and most had become successful at controlled social drinking.

Successful patients were given a card explaining "a social drinker drinks mixed drinks, sips these drinks, paces these drinks and sets himself a moderate cutoff point."

Now the truth is coming out. Evidence, confirmed by police records and other sources, shows that out of the original 20, 17 were either jailed or hospitalized after the tests as the result of heavy drinking. Out of the 20, four have since died during heavy drinking bouts.

The Patton research had been regarded by some scientists as a landmark in the use of behavioral therapy for alcoholism. It has been used as research material in the controversy over whether an alcoholic can ever resume drinking with safety.

The original study wasn't real science. It had all the marks of a scientific study, but it was pseudo-science. The research report got a big play by the media, but it was false and it heaped a massive amount of misery on alcoholics who accepted it — and the families of those alcoholics.

Letters from our readers

Blood donors are thanked

To The Carlisle Mercury:

We had an excellent turnout for our recent Bloodmobile. A sincere "thank you!" is due to all who came in to donate. I still have a number of key chains for Gallon Donors which were not picked up. Any person who believes that they are eligible for a key chain should contact me at 289-2324.

The efficiency of the day's activities was largely due to the efforts of the following people and organizations, whom I would like to thank for their help:

The Carlisle United Methodist Church and Pastor Bob Gipson, for the use of their building and facilities;

The Carlisle Garden Club and their bloodmobile representative, Mrs. Kay Shumate, for enlisting our reception-ists. The receptionists were Bea Booth, Carolyn Crockett, Nell Gaffin, Bertha Marshall, Lucille Neal, Edythe Rich, Kay Shumate, Lorena Wagoner;

The Carlisle Presbyterian Church and Pastor Phil Hastings, for providing the supplies and staff for the Canteen. The Canteen workers were Geneva Allison, Phyllis Cox, Jane Hensley, Bobby Reynolds, Brenda Smart, Doris Whaley, Shirley Wilson and Dottie Young;

The Carlisle Woman's Club and their bloodmobile representative, Mrs. Sandi Letton, for enlisting the telephone callers. The callers were Geneva Allison, Carolyn Blair, Ruth Cassidy, Lucille Clark, Alma Clinkenbeard, Alma Cloyd, Shirley Collins, Kathryn Conley, Phyllis Cox, Betty Fay, Hurst Frey, Hida Fryman, May Galbraith, Judy Hardin, Ruth Heller, Beulah Hughes, Ann Jouy, nerma Marshall, Helen Roberts, Adeline Shepherd, Betty Smoot, Lynn Simons, Jeanette Wallace, Reba Wills, Sharon Wilson;

The Nicholas County Homemakers and their bloodmobile representative, Mrs. Hazel Swarts, for providing the evening meal for the bloodmobile crew. The clubs represented were the Headquarters, Parks and Sunnyside, and the ladies who prepared the meal were Mrs. Eula Carter, Mrs. Elsie Snelling and Mrs. Carl Ishmael;

The Nicholas County Hospital Auxiliary and their bloodmobile representative, Mrs. Patsy Smoot, for updating and compiling the necessary records. Those who helped in record keeping were Ginny Kingsolver, Patsy Smoot and Catherine Wells.

The Carlisle Christian Church and Pastor Ron Henwood for the use of their building and facilities in serving the evening meal to the workers;

The Nicholas County Hospital and Administrator Robert Hester for providing office supplies;

Mrs. Sally Watkins, Nicholas County Circuit Clerk, for the use of a Xerox machine;

The Carlisle City Council and bloodmobile representative Tommy Vaughn for financially underwriting the expenses of the drive.

The efforts and cooperation of these many people together with the able help of Buddy Burke and my secretary, Diana Wills, made my task as the County Bloodmobile Coordinator much easier. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Rev. David C. Biancil

Mother complains about kindergarten bus service

To The Carlisle Mercury:

It has become a sudden realization to me of the ordeal parents have entering their children into kindergarten in our county.

Since our school board has decided to stay with the present half day kindergarten without the adequate busing transportation, it will cost me as a parent approximately $460 a school year (this does not include lunch, insurance, etc.) to give my child an opportunity to attend.

I have been told funds have been cut, but in my opinion, a better system could be provided for everyone involved. If other counties can have a round trip busing program, why not ours? As all day kindergarten could be the answer since the school budget has decreased and cannot afford to bus the children in the early afternoon.

I would like the parents in this county to become aware of this and to urge them to "speak out" and contact the following school board members: Billy Hunter, Herbert Duncan, James Anderson, William Dampier and Chester Mattox.

Speaking out,
Nancy C. Jones

Agree or not

Can the state pay in advance??

by S.C. Van Curen

May a board of state government improvise to suit a particular situation or must it be bound by the Constitution?

That is a bone of contention between the Finance Department and a legislative subcommittee that has been dragging on for months.

It all started back in the administration of Gov. Julian Carroll when the Finance Department began advancing money to Exceptions of Lexington for operation of the mentally retarded facility at Dawson Springs.

Back in 1979 the Attorney General's office issued an opinion that said payment could not be made for services until they had been rendered.

Assistant Attorney General Charles Runyon said Section 3 of the Kentucky Constitution specifically prohibits the payment or advancement of state funds to any person or business: "no grant of exclusive, separate emoluments or privileges shall be made any man or set of men, except in consideration of public services."

However, the Attorney General's office was again asked for an opinion in 1982 (No. 82-281) on the same question, but saying the vendor needed advancement of funds to be able to render the services in the most efficient manner for the state.

Runyon said in this opinion, "Under certain circumstances such payments MAY be constitutional." Runyon said the opinion specified that Exceptions would have to provide a fiduciary bond to the state and agree to hold the money in an account and not make any payments until the services had been rendered.

Joe Hood, attorney for the Personal Service Contract Review Subcommittee of the Legislative Research Commission, said the committee firmly maintains this arrangement is a breach of the Constitution and it is an advance payment in disguise.

Furthermore, the state could be earning interest on the money. It also would be possible for the vendor to earn interest on the money if held until the services have been rendered.

Section 171 of the Constitution says payments must be "based on public service."

Kentucky Statutes also deal with the matter. KRS 45.340 says "public money can be spent only for public service."

KRS 44.010 also has bearing.

This fiscal year Exceptions was paid $444,200 July 1 and another $444,200 Aug. 1 to be set up sort as a revolving fund. Each month thereafter during the year Exceptions is to bill the state for services rendered or actual expense. Maximum for the year is set at $4,492,000.

Last year Exceptions's contract called for a total of $6,089,600.

Finance Commissioner Robert Warren, who recently took over the post from George Fischer who was transferred to the governor's office, said as far as he knew Finance is relying on the last attorney general's opinion for the authority to make the advance payments.

Runyon said the attorney general's office still holds steadfast to its 79 opinion that services must be delivered before payment is made. Excepting, of course, the special provision made in the 82 opinion.

Runyon said there is no court case or record testing advance payments.

Here's how the Exception situation has developed:

In July 1978 state government made an advance payment of $50,000 to Exceptions to take over the Outwood operation. Aug. 1 of that year a payment of $589,685.50 was made to cover August and September. In October another payment of $884,798.25 was made to cover operations for October, November and December.

Subsequent checks for the same amount were made Jan. 1 and April 1 to cover three-month periods to the end of the fiscal year June 30.

The legislative committee maintains the payment method amounts to financing Exceptions in advance to operate Outwood. In other words, it is furnishing the money to put them in business.

This is not the only instance of advance payments on personal service contracts.

Another instance during the Carroll administration was the payment of a California firm $50,000 in advance on a contract for the state library.

Advance payments are still underscrutiny by legislative committee.

The question apparently will not be settled until the matter goes to court. However, the attorney general is responsible for such action, but in recent years the office has seemed to be the attorney for the governor instead of for the people who elect him and to whom is supposed to be an advocate.

Down Memory Lane

Tire theft ring discovered

Thursday, Sept. 13, 1962

$5,000 in Series F Savings Bonds were found recently in the First National Bank in the name of the City of Carlisle. The bonds were purchased in 1943 by the late Arthur Mulligan, city clerk-treasurer. Except for finding them, there was no record of their purchase.

The Nicholas County schools had an overall gain in enrollment this year over last year although the school census had declined over the past year. The total enrollment this year was 851 as compared to 819 last year.

Fire caused by an exploding coal oil heater destroyed the residence of Dr. H.H. Buntin at East Union Sunday morning.

BORN — To Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Stewart, a son, Derrick Ashley, Sept. 6 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Billy Fryman, Ewing, a daughter, Jill Lorraine, Sept. 9 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Booth, a daughter, Dinah Kay, Sept. 7 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mrs. Richard Hatton, Sharpsburg, a daughter, Lenora Lynn, Sept. 7 at Nicholas County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dixon, Versailles, a son, Stephen Hargis, Aug. 25 at Woodford County Hospital. — To Mr. and Mrs. Joe Singleton, Orlando, Fla., a daughter, Sept. 6.

MARRIED — Miss Ann Vincent Hickman and John Tobitt Elder, Saturday at the Millersburg Presbyterian Church.

DIED — William M. Kendall, Tuesday at home on Sycamore Hill. — Hanson Scott, 60, Friday at home on Somerset Road. — Miss Ella Manley of Knoxville, daughter of Mrs. Fred Manley, formerly Alma Metcalf.

Thursday, Sept. 16, 1942

A tire theft ring bobbed its head up in Nicholas County Tuesday night, with the theft of four tires and two wheels from two cars belonging to men living in the county. Sheriff Floyd Clark said he had been investigating at the home of Hoy Berry and Joe Ritchie who lost two tires and two wheels from their cars.

A total of 1,413 head of livestock went through the regular weekly auction at the Farmers Stock Yards here Tuesday, with prices generally steady.

BORN — To Dr. and Mrs. D.B. Thurston of Carrollton, a daughter, Sept. 4 at Baptist Hospital in Louisville. — To Mr. and Mrs. Julian Atkinson of Vanceburg, a son, Stephen Kirk, Haywood Hospital, Maysville.

MARRIED — Miss Helen Louise Smith of Lexington and Lt. Lucian Yann Moreman of Perrin Field, Texas, Friday at Perrin Field.

DIED — Mrs. Mary Fields Cassity, 74, widow of David Cassity, Thursday at home in Millersburg. — Mrs. Eva Fe Stoner Edwards, 72, of Lexington, Tuesday at Good Samaritan Hospital.

Thursday, Sept. 17, 1922

MARRIED — Miss Mary Josephine Lake of Bourbon County and Julian Russell Feebach of this county, Monday morning at the home of the bride.

DIED — William R. Barton, 85, last Saturday at the home of his son John at Pleasant Valley. — Mrs. Elizabeth Biddle, 78, Thursday morning at the home of her daughter in Lexington. — Mrs. Frankie Walker Morgan, Thursday morning at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Lexington.

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Op-Ed page

Doggone different story . . . if pooches could pick best people

The only thing worse than a fisherman bragging about his catches is a dog owner telling you how smart his mutt is. If dogs were half as smart as their owners claim, they'd be running the computers and starting the wars and we'd be tied to trees with nothing to do but smell each other's rear ends.

Dogs are among the most-showed critters in the world. And some of the most common-looking dogs have been known to come up with blue ribbons for some reason or another. Since the world began, people have been constantly trying to decide which dogs are best and, even with the help of guns, whiskey and pedigrees, nothing has been settled.

That is why I think it is time for dogs to become the judges, a competition where the dogs will decide which human being is the best dog owner. Up to now it's been too one-sided.

We have an idea that dogs may judge their men with a great deal more tolerance and sympathy than men judge dogs. Dogs instinctively how good human beings, and also have good memories. I can get within a mile of a mean dog and he invariably wants to gnaw on my shinbones. And once you tincan a dog, the stigma hangs on you for every dog to pick up from them on.

Dogs know what kind of person a man is, but they don't hold grudges and renege on their responsibilities or try to trade them off for better masters. Once a dog has taken a master, he takes him for better or however worse he is.

At my dog show, the dog will have to bring his owner in personally and certify to their relationship and that he has no social diseases such as athlete's foot or dandruff. The dog will not have to furnish a pedigree on his master, because the pedigrees of most human beings are either forged or already exaggerated.

The entry will, however, have to conform to certain rules. He will have to behave well on the bench, neither starting rumors nor fights. He must be bathed, well-groomed and disarmed. He cannot smell of gooseliver, cigar smoke, ham gravy or panther juice or anything else that might influence the judges. He cannot show tendencies to chase cats or bark at the moon while under restraint.

Preferably, the owner should be able to sit alone, but he will not be required to speak for his food, chase sticks, or lie down and play dead, even if this is his natural posture.

The entry will be required to wear pegged britches which clear the ankles for the sniffs of the judges. In the ring, the entry will not growl at other dog owners. There will be no "Up, boy" or other degrading commands that might affect the judging.

It is my feeling that no vote of the judges will ever be needed. After a few sniffs around the ankles and some look into the faces of dog owners for a kindly glance, the dogs will quickly settle on one best owner.

After that, we are not responsible for what happens. There are more dogs in dog owners than in dogs.

— RM —

Are you a closet peeping Tom?

Do you spy on your neighbors?

It's a growing sport and more people are doing it than you think these days, according to New Yorker David Lloyd, who has written a book, "How to Spy on Your Neighbor Without Fear of Discovery."

Lloyd claims the interest in spying and voyeurism is unprecedented now. Most like to spy on arguments, intimate things and the like going on in the neighborhood.

He suggests using binoculars, telescopes or your two eyes, but warns against trespassing because that is an invasion of privacy.

And Lloyd claims Monday night is the best for viewing.

That may be great sport in New York City where that is the only way you can get to know your neighbors, but in small towns in our mid-America, we don't have to spy on our neighbors — we already know what they are doing.

— RM —

The right-on-red stop light decision that took the nation by storm in the mid-70s was supposed to save us gas and relieve traffic congestion. No doubt it has, but it has also created the driving habits of a banana republic.

It is legitimizing flouting of the traffic laws. It has opened the flood gates. It is O.K. for me to make up my mind on right on red, why can't I do it for a left turn signal? Or a stop sign? Or a stop light?

This do-your-own-thing approach to driving doesn't work. Clearly we can't be trusted. We, all out there acting as independent agents, picking and choosing which traffic laws we'll obey. And the law allows any town to make it against the law to turn right on red at any light it chooses, so you have to watch for these warning signs, even if they are hidden in a maze of other do-and-don't signs and signals.

Remember the old days when people used to stop for red lights? If you're from the old school and stop when you see the light turn yellow, you risk finding a gung-ho gas jockey of the car behind you in your trunk.

I think right-on-red has produced even more careless driving, and most of us wasn't all that safe as drivers before.

— RM —

In our great American pastime of stoking food down our gullets, it is generally assumed that women are more dainty eaters than man. They have tried, at least, throughout the ages to brainwash us into believing this.

But without too much research and study on the subject comes the foregone conclusion that women are just as sloppy eaters as menfolks — maybe more so. And with good reason.

Men, the hairy ones I know, are great on speed shoveling and quick disposal and concern themselves very little about style and etiquette. In the process, they lose little time in getting the chow from plate to mouth and consider any decorating of neckties and shirt bibs as accepted hazards of the business.

Women, on the other hand, go more for style than production and must feed their faces in a prescribed manner. This, naturally, poses some obstacles, like screwing up the mouth to slurp soup from the side of a spoon and chasing peas all over the plate without the use of a pushstick.

It must also be considered that due to the natural contours of a woman's body, she is more dribblepronne than the man. If she has any of the normal feminine attributes at all, there is practically no chance that spilled food will miss her.

Unless you are a confirmed divebomber, sooner or later you will spill vittles on your shirt front, which brings us to a point. For years we have campaigned strongly for the return of the finger bowl at the eating table.

I have offered to compromise by suggesting the napkin be tucked into the shirt collar and spread across the shirt front for complete protection. This, too, has gotten the cold shoulder from presses one who insist on defying the law of gravitation.

Nobody cares what color neckte you are wearing while eating, if the food is any good at all. Covering it up with a napkin or part of the tablecloth is no great sin. About 90% of the drippings hit you above the waist, so the napkin-on-knee rule gives you virtually no protection whatever in the upper extremities.

It is hard to strut around demanding orderliness in our world when our shirt fronts reflect sloppiness. No one is going to believe our manners are solid as long as our forks has holes in it.

Onward, upward.

An editor's random thoughts . . .

by Warren R. Fisher Sr.
September 9, 1937

So on after awhile to the creek, where giant sycamores arch gracefully, their mighty limbs like curving columns of flecked ivory and we see a humming bird dart among the leaves but cannot find his tiny nest. And as we look a Carolina wren begins his ringing sound so near that we may see the throbbing of his throat and across the creek his lady does make answer. And if there is not love and tenderness that would shame us humans in the songs of wrens, then do my ears deceive me.

Presently on under the willows and sycamores, with now and then an arching elm, which fringe the creek banks and the trees are vocal with small voices. And we sit and watch a still pool and I see the eternal tragedy of the feeding of the wild folk. For there a valiantly swimming bug dips suddenly to make a supper for a minnow that in its turn will make a banquet for a larger fish. Beautiful is Nature, yet in her laws of survival inexorable. And I wonder if this same law does not extend to us of the human brotherhood, hidden somewhat in its workings by the veneer of civilization, the unceasing search for food having its counterpart in the scrabble for money.

As we return we pass along a field of corn, where the kershaws white and striped among the rows foretell the rapidly approaching days of fields tented with the shocks, of piles of white and golden ears, of nights when the wild geese go over and the first fire of autumn crackles on the hearth. And we may scarce believe that where all is so verdant and colorful will be brown leaves and bare branches, for truly June is not more beautiful than these days of the maturity of Summer.

Soon we come down to an open pasture where the iron weed blossoms are as pretty as any flower of the fall, and were it rare and not a weed, many would think so. And I am minded that a flower book tells me that our iron weed is not an iron weed, but the Joe Pye weed, yet I am half persuaded, for even the botanists may err and one pair of eyes is as good as another in reading Nature's book.

Home through the shadows to supper with that peaceful feeling which the open fields always bring to me and at candlelight to hear the lessons of my young son. Very laboriously, it seems to me, he toils at his stint and seems mightily discouraged and I fain would show him sympathy, having known the tribulations of stuffy school rooms, after a glorious, sagrant summer out of doors, but dare not, for one must have tools wherewith to work, would he survive amongst his fellows. For without them one is like a hawk without talons.

Yet after he has fallen asleep I sit and muse of the unsullied page of a young life, of a mind plastic and ripe for impressions and I think that perhaps the sounding jargon of the schools is not so important after all and that mayhap in this day's strolling through the golden sunlight of the early autumn, there may have come a lesson in the reading of Nature's book. And if he but reads well and observingly, most surely will there come whisperings of "the still voice," healing, cltooling, pointing the way to man's greatest boon — contentment.

A sweet content
Passing all wisdom or its fairest flower
So presently to sleep.

In this corner... By Jim Butler Wanke

'Rocks are alive, did you know that??'

"This little piece of mud in my hand right here has little crystals in it right now," he said, rubbing the mud between a finger and thumb. "And if you leave them in this Canadian mud, mixed in with chemicals, copper, cobalt and others, they will grow. And eventually you'll have amethyst crystals the size of your thumb or larger."

An old prospector from the Canadian bush named Gunnard Noyes told me this story in 1976. He maintains that rocks grow just like everything else and that these formed out of the clay and the right mix of chemicals in the soil, which happens to be just perfect for making amethyst on the north shore of Lake Superior.

"Nobody much believes me, including the geologists," Noyes says, "but they've been wrong before."

Noyes said he started in the mines when he was a young boy near Sudbury, Ontario, where much of the world's nickel and copper is mined.

Sunday morning in the mine

"On Sunday mornings when nobody was working, I used to go down in the copper mine maybe 4-5,000 feet where there was no noise and if you were real quiet, you could hear those rocks and minerals interacting with each other. There was groaning and snapping down there under my feet, and mind you, I was already down there almost a mile. I say rocks are alive."

Noyes says the reason why we don't realize that rocks grow is because they take so long to do it, from our point of view.

"You take an amethyst crystal that might take 3 or 4,000 years to form in the clay and muck in the ground. Now, how is a human being going to measure that growth when he only lives 80 or 90 years? In that space of time you couldn't tell anything about an amethyst crystal...it wouldn't look like it had grown at all."

"In order to understand the growth of rocks you have to think like a rock...in terms of millions of years, not just 80 or 90 years," Noyes says.

That is what the geologists don't understand, Noyes claims.

"God thinks in terms of millions of years, so if you're going to understand God and the Bible, you'd better think that way too."

It's not a bad life, living on several million dollars worth of amethyst at the small town of Pearl, Ontario right next to the railroad tracks. The geologists said there weren't any deposits worth mining there, years ago. But when Noyes ambled through the woods one day, he used a favorite trick of prospectors...pulling a strip of bark from off the side of a tree and looking at the color of the inside of it.

"You can tell what mineral is in the ground in predominance by looking at the color of the inside of the bark on the tree. If it's green, there's a lot of copper in there."

Noyes found some bark strips that were deep blue on the inside many years ago and he bought the land because he thought there might be amethyst there.

There was.

Gunnard still lives the same, in spite of the money.

He did buy a new color TV set last year.

"There's nothing to do around here in the winter," he said, "and sometimes you get tired of watching rocks grow."

CRABEATERS

Crabeater seals don't eat crabs but dine on krill, small sea creatures that resemble shrimps. More than 30 million crabeater seals — more than any other species — live along the outer edge of the antarctic ice, National Geographic World magazine reports.

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