

Letters »

Continued from page 6

Huling Cove was one of the first places whose entranceways and walkways were cleared enough to deliver the mail following the storms, and that includes deliveries to many resident's doorways.

The reading public would also be better served if the news organization made more efforts to substantiate the facts when individuals allege inflammatory and possibly damaging contentions of fact in addition to their opinions. While the complaining resident is entitled to her own opinion, she is not entitled to her own facts and should be more responsible when making accusations in the news media which can and do cause harm to individuals, or in this case a state agency's reputation.

H.W. Dick Hannam
Huling Cove Annex
Lewes

Governing by revival meeting?

In his Cape Gazette letter of Feb. 12 Eric Bodenweiser unleashes an ad hominem attack and moral condemnation of Rep. Pete Schwartzkopf for his endorsement of the Del Pointe casino proposal. He goes on to indict liberals as having "government as their God and as a cure for everything." Opposing evil and having embraced conservatism, Mr. Bodenweiser goes on to say: "The left identifies us as haters in an attempt to isolate us."

Mr. Bodenweiser is entitled to his opinions about those on his political left. However, he cannot have his own set of facts, so I must protest and challenge him when he states: "Our Constitution and laws were made assuming we would always be Christians. But what have we become? How many of our state legislators would now be willing to take Delaware's original oath of office that included swearing allegiance to Jesus Christ, the one and only

true savior of this world?"

The historical record is clear that framers of the Constitution deliberately set about to have freedom of belief and opted not to have a state or government religion as was the practice in Europe at that time. They had the opportunity to establish a state religion but did not. In 1787 and 1788, all 13 states convened lengthy constitutional conventions to ratify and suggest further constitutional amendments. At the 1788 Massachusetts convention it was suggested that a religious qualification for office would be a protection against "popery." The Rev. Daniel Shute, a Congregationalist minister from Hingham, objected and recognizing the plurality of beliefs that then existed, supported the Article VI restriction of religious tests, saying: "In this great and extensive empire, there is, and will be, a great variety of sentiments in religion."

All of the states approved Article VI, which forbids religion as a qualification for any public office, federal, state or local, stating: "The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."

While Article VI barred a religious test for office, it did not guarantee citizens freedom of belief. Therefore, three states, New Hampshire, New York and Virginia, asked for a freedom of belief amendment (no state petitioned for a state religion). These petitions led to the 1791 Bill of Rights First Amendment, which reads: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of

DELAWARE CAPE REGION HISTORY IN PHOTOGRAPHS »

Ice in Lewes-Rehoboth Canal is nothing new



PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM BRITTINGHAM
THIS PHOTOGRAPH from about 1940 shows an iced-over Lewes-Rehoboth Canal from the Savannah Road bridge crossing. In the near right is a vessel tied up to the docks that would eventually become Fisherman's Wharf. In the distance on the right are vessels and buildings of the Anglers Marina which would eventually become Lewes Harbour Marina.

grievances.

There is nothing to support Mr. Bodenweiser's contention that our Constitution and laws assumed we would always be a Christian nation - on the contrary, the record show that our Constitution was designed to guarantee freedom of belief and religious practice in a pluralistic society. After lengthy consideration, the states clearly chose not to have a state-endorsed faith.

Mr. Bodenweiser's musings on having our office holders profess allegiance to Jesus are blatantly inconsistent with Article VI (no religious test for office), and are a highly divisive act in our pluralistic society. Is this what he means by "taking back the 14th District"? To me it sounds as if he wants our government run like a revival meeting by those of one particular religious persuasion.

Religious zeal can facilitate and

foster great progress in the political sphere - it was an essential and powerful force in seeking social justice in our civil rights movement. However, history also cautions us that where a church and a state are too close, we have conditions such as now exist in Iran or were found in Spain during the Inquisition.

William F. O'Connor
Lewes

Delaware Hospice deserves praise

This past Christmas Eve, a little-known 86-year-old lady departed this world. Her name was her only possession when her struggle ended. Her two-year path included home care, two hospital stays and three nursing homes. As her only living child, I found myself overwhelmed with appointments,

paperwork, travel, finances and grief.

Throughout the entire timeframe, Delaware Hospice was the one constant supporting and guiding light. I was never left without a return phone call, I was never left unnotified and my mom was never left without proper care, answered medical questions or medications.

Saying thank you to this organization, their staff and volunteers, seems an inadequate expression, but I sincerely offer it. Be assured that if the services of Delaware Hospice are ever needed, you will get much more than advice - you will get help.

To those who donated funds to Delaware Hospice, I express gratitude on behalf of myself and my mother, Mary Seilhamer.

Carol A. Everhart
daughter of Mary Seilhamer
Ocean View

Plenty of fat can be cut out of Delaware's upcoming budget

While our state legislators are working on the Delaware budget for the upcoming year, I thought it might be helpful to look at some of the highlights from the previous year's budget: budget.delaware.gov/fy2010/hb290.pdf.

The governor has publicly asked for ideas in ways that the state can save money, so I thought I'd give it a try. Besides, it's our money after all.

After just a brief look at the budget, I was absolutely startled to find so much waste lying right in plain sight. Don't believe me? Let me give you just a few of the many examples of Delaware's reoccurring expenses. You can then decide for yourself if your tax dollars should fund these items every single year.



- Office of Management and Budget: Delaware Surplus Services. We pay almost \$390,000 per year to auction off our surplus equipment. Does that mean that our state is so inefficient that we can't even sell our equipment without having to pay people to buy it?
- Department of Correction: Prisons: Other Items: Prison Arts. I am hopeful that the \$82,500 we spend every year on "Prison Arts" is at least therapy, and not simply macaroni-art

with a splash of glitter. At worst it could be a class on how to make prison weapons out of paintbrushes. Can anyone else think of a better way to spend \$82,500 per year of your taxes?

- Department of Health and Social Services: Public Health: AIDS Needle Exchange Pilot Program. We spend \$230,000 per year on exchanging dirty needles from drug addicts who are infected with AIDS? Do we know if the needle bandit used our taxes to fund his recent reign of terror on local businesses?
- Department of Agriculture: Other Items: Fingerprints: We pay \$76,000 per year for this one. More importantly, why exactly does the Department of Agriculture have a Fingerprints Division? Other Items: Fingerprinting: \$75,000 per year. You read that correctly, we have both

a Fingerprints Division and a Fingerprinting Division, both within the Department of Agriculture. On the state budget these are officially listed as two separate divisions of the Department of Agriculture. I'm still trying to figure out why the Department of Agriculture deals with fingerprints in the first place though. Are these guys fingerprinting Delaware farmers, or chickens?

- Department of State: Office of the Secretary: World Trade Center. \$120,000 per year. This is supposed to be a nonprofit that helps Delaware businesses do business overseas. Unfortunately, they also help allow member businesses from neighboring states.

Isn't it nice to know that Delaware tax money is going to subsidize businesses in Pennsylvania? Internal Program: Gov-

ernment Information Center. If you go to the website gic.delaware.gov/ you can see what they get paid to do. This mainly involves creating Twitter accounts and YouTube videos for state agencies, all for just under \$800,000 per year. Sounds productive, doesn't it?

Please note that this is only a very partial list. A thorough, line-by-line, evaluation should be performed by every department to eliminate wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars. Recommendation: There is plenty of room for budget cuts within the state of Delaware, without resorting to budget cuts for necessary services like police, fire, emergency medical technicians, maintaining roads, etc.

Christian Hudson of Lewes is a real estate entrepreneur, a member of the Governor's Advisory Council on Manufactured Housing.