



911 caller disappointed with response

I found rather frightening a call I made the other day to Lancaster County 911 to report a power outage in Manor Township, although I feel somewhat reassured it won't happen again after speaking with the county communications director.

When my electricity went off around noon, I walked outside and encountered a neighbor who also was without power.

There are many elderly folks in my neighborhood, most without cellphones, and I said I would call PPL and report it.

After trying, unsuccessfully, for quite some time to access the utility's automated reporting service, I dialed 911 and, not knowing the magnitude of the outage at that time, asked the operator if she could report a power outage for the residents of my street.

Her response was, "We don't report power outages. You have to do it yourself."

I was astounded.

The operator did not bother to ask me a single question to ascertain where the outage was, who I knew might be affected, whether any streets lights were out, etc.

As it turned out, a PPL substation had caught fire and the outage was widespread. Numerous traffic signals along busy Columbia Avenue were disabled and, without police presence,

causing serious traffic problems and safety issues.

I don't know whether 911 was aware of that when I called (in which case the operator should have informed me they knew about it), or whether I was the first to call county communications with the information and got shut out.

In either case, there was a serious breakdown in communications.

The operator should have asked important questions that would have gotten first responders in action where needed rather than treating me as if I was asking a county employee to do my work for me.

The Lancaster County communications director agreed with me when I called him to complain and, hopefully, this will not happen again.

Elaine Keno, Manor Township

Offering a full discount

I am glad John Wolff cleared things up for us by writing a letter to the editor about why he protested the 10 percent church bulletin discount. It just seems odd that such a good person would kick up such a fuss over a discount that he does not care one bit about.

I remember reading that he never even stepped foot into Prudhomme's restaurant to eat. The advertisement about the discount was spotted when he was on the computer. He apparently got so fired up that he sent letters and warnings to anybody who might listen to his complaints. Turns out that the most attention he received

over this silly matter was from Lancaster Newspapers. Maybe we all gave him exactly what he was looking for.

I sincerely hope that someday I am dining in the same restaurant as Mr. Wolff and it is brought to my attention who he is. I would like to buy him a meal so that he receives a 100 percent discount. Not that it would be an easy gesture. But it seems like it would be the right thing to do.

I was brought up to believe that people with negative attitudes towards life and others are the ones that need our love the most.

If somebody is going out of their way to start trouble over little stuff, then there is probably a bigger picture. But what the heck do I know? I am just crazy Lancaster County churchgoer.

Eric Rineer, Manor Township

Gov't isn't facing up to gun menace

The Second Amendment gives citizens the right to bear arms. The Founding Fathers recognized that one of their obligations was to provide security for its citizens. Now, the failure to make some adjustment to a 200-year-old document, in view of many societal changes, has the government forfeiting security as one of its primary responsibilities and it has left us out of touch with the rest of the world in regards to this issue of gun control.

There is a very positive correlation between the presence of guns and the murder rate. Guns intensify crime situations and increases the likelihood of the outcome being more violent or lethal.

Data estimate that 41 percent of homicides are gun-related and suicides are 94 percent gun-related. Many gun owners will claim it's for their own protection. However, gun ownership

does not have a negative impact on murder or crime.

In the only Supreme Court ruling on the Second Amendment, *U.S. v. Miller*, the justices concluded that, "the right to keep and bear handguns is not a guarantee by the Second Amendment."

Subsequently, one of the strongest lobbyist -- the NRA -- has demonstrated that money has become the single-most-important ingredient in any political issue regarding gun control.

The NRA is famous for exerting disingenuous statements because the issue of gun control arouses deep emotions that mobilizes its members. For example, if the president is re-elected, he will "start confiscating guns with no fear of retribution from voters," according to the organization.

Members of the NRA like to say, "Guns don't kill people, people do." This statement becomes meaningless when comparing the gun regulations from other countries. The countries with the lowest civilian firearm ownership have the lowest rates of firearm-related deaths.

If our rate of homicide would drop down to the level of other nations, 11,000 lives a year would be saved. That is almost twice as many American lives lost in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our murder rate is 10 times greater than Japan.

There are not many other issues that are more out of line with the rest of the world than gun ownership.

Larry R. Widdos, Manor Township