

Danville News Column  
Robert John Andrews  
Friday, April 15, 2011  
“It Is Good To Be King”  
Word count: 750

My tea and crumpets are warm. Given all the hubbub, marketing, and quivering anticipation in these United States over the April 29 Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton, I’m sensing our nation just might be ripe for dispensing with this nonsense of a republic and replace it with a monarchy. Now, if we do become a monarchy, we will require a king or queen. I have of late considered all the possible candidates most eligible to become our Royal Sovereign, and, frankly, it makes perfect sense that I should be king.

If I were king. Consider the possibilities.

If I were king, cinema centers immediately would be allowed to advertise the titles of all the movies they are showing, letting them place them back onto the marquee along the highway. What over-bearing, over-regulating nabob insisted that the public is stupid and must be protected from themselves, ergo, the theatre had to strip off the titles? How distracting to drivers were they really? How many accidents happened because of the marquee? The theatre is permitted, however, to advertise their phone number. Much safer now, phoning while driving.

If I were king, I would ban traveling sports teams until kids were in High School. What a poor way to learn sports. Let’s travel an hour each way (with gas prices sky-rocketing) to play a 40 minute game where your kid might play 15 minutes. Arggh. By royal decree, club and AYSO soccer teams (for example) instead would play twice a week at local soccer fields. Kids would show up (they could even bicycle there) and randomly select a color marble. That would determine their team for the afternoon. They would play 6 on a side for two hours. Structured pick-up. No uniforms required, just a white or dark T-shirt. Even better, no parents allowed. Parents could shuffle off and do parent stuff. I guarantee you, by the time these kids hit High School, they’d be the finest soccer players in the region because they’d actually have played hours of soccer rather than slouch in the back of the van.

If I were king, High School too would look a tad different. From 7:30 AM to noon students would study the straight, blisteringly hard-core, academic subjects: English, Science, History, Math. They wouldn’t need foreign languages because by High School they’d already be fluent in at least one foreign language. Noon would allow for a lunch break. But they’d have to pack their own lunches or leave to get lunch, because the school wouldn’t bother being in the food industry business. It would only be in the teaching business. Afternoons would be devoted to enrichment and extracurricular activities -- such as forensics, drama, chorus, band, sports, art, home economics, health, computers, mechanical engineering, cooking, wood shop, auto shop -- but only for the

students who choose to participate. The other kids could earn a paycheck or go to their internships.

If I were king, I would politely ask anyone who receives over \$500,000 a year to stop taking raises or bonuses. If I couldn't persuade them, I might have to haul out the guillotine and station it on their front lawn.

If I were king, I would have minded my grandfather who warned back in 1935 that the National Social Security Act would ruin us, make us dependent. My grandfather, if you believe it, tended toward the hyperbolic. But he did predict that life expectancy would increase and so would the expectation of benefits. When Roosevelt picked age 65 for when you could begin receiving benefits, most people died by 62. The remedy for our current problem with funding social security is pretty obvious: take today's average life expectancy, add three years, and that's when you can start receiving benefits.

If I were king, two years of national service would be mandatory for every young person upon age 18 or after High School. No exemptions. An essayist named Randolph Bourne got it right back in 1916 when he argued for mandatory national service managed through the Department of Education. He sought it as an alternative to the Department of War's draft. Military service would remain an option but not the only one. Imagine cadres of young people working in orphanages, community shelters, as nursing care-givers or teaching aides, or out in the countryside serving in conservation corps. A little sweat and lots of sacrifice does a body, and a nation, good.

It is good to be king. God save the king.