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9 Mile Run (Fall 2001)

Your Nine Mile Run piece is a wonderful tribute to a community that “gets it” about teamwork and environmental restoration. But two participants were not characterized fairly.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania gave the whole project its start with the Industrial Site Recycling Act, which Mayor Murphy used with such gusto at this and many other sites. This Act, and its rapid and expansive implementation in Pennsylvania, had led the nation. (President Bush signed his Superfund Reform Bill at Pennsylvania’s Site #1,000 in early 2002 in Conshohocken, Pa., and the campaign promise that gave rise to it was made at the US Gypsum plant—once a slag heap—in Aliquippa, Pa., in June of 2000.) Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection staff were intimately involved with many of Pittsburgh’s brownfield sites, and still are. The peripheral mention of Growing Greener money, and no mention of Department of Community Affairs money, is unfortunate in the way it misses the major change in the legal situation and subsequent regulatory climate in our state.

As for the US Environmental Protection Agency, Carol Browner was right—the site makes a good TV studio to tout a policy initiative, even a bad one. But on substance, EPA was actively hostile to real Superfund

reform for eight years, and impeded the kind of legislation in many states that would have had the results we are so proud of in our own. The EPA brownfield grant program was, and remains, little more than pork. It will clean up brownfields as effectively as the Great Society cleaned up poverty.

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Mr. Seif was Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection from January 1995 to March 2001

Without Sanctuary (Winter 2002)

This past October I took several of my Greater Latrobe Senior High School students to the *Without Sanctuary—Lynching Photography in America* exhibit at The Andy Warhol Museum. As a result of our visit, Matt Mayger, one of my sophomore English students, was featured in your last issue of *h* magazine. During our field trip, Matt discovered a photograph that depicted his great grandfather, a former grand wizard in the Ku Klux Klan. His exposure to the photograph and subsequently to a bit of family history has had a profound effect on him. His willingness to share his experience has, in turn, opened his classmates’ minds to the effects of racism. When I read Jim Davidson’s article to my students and showed them the vivid photographs, they

were all captivated, even those who seemed uninterested at first. My students were impressed because of the publicity, but they also became acutely aware of the power of the exhibit. And so it seems that through Davidson’s words Matt’s experience has perhaps inspired many more people to reevaluate the way they look at race relations in our country.

When Matt showed the article to his family, his father’s initial reaction was unfavorable. Although his father had given Matt permission to talk with a journalist about his ancestors, I’m sure that this public confrontation with his family history was met with a certain level of embarrassment. However, after reading the article, his perspective changed. Davidson’s words moved him so that he was able to tell Matt that he was proud of his son. The article was a true testament to Matt’s family’s ability to break the cycle of racism that plagues many American families. Similarly, Matt’s candor and courage is a true testament of hope for future generations.

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