

THE DALLAS POST

OPINION

Actions of board cause for concern

Dr. M. David Preston, superintendent of the Lake-Lehman School District, is the fourth official from that school district to be humiliated by the present Board of Directors. And, we believe the actions of the Lake-Lehman School Board are cause for major concern by the district's taxpayers.

Since the new board majority came into power a year ago, those members appear to be dragging the district down to the same low level it was 10 years ago.

In just one year, the current board has dismissed Attorney Peter Savage, who served tirelessly as solicitor of the district for years; has terminated Gerald Bernstein, CPA, as district auditor; has attempted to replace Rodger Bearde with a new athletic director; and has now voted not to renew Preston's contract as district superintendent.

All of these motions smack of political revenge and ambitions rather than of purposeful representation of the taxpayers. It is not the purpose of the voting public to elect school directors who spend all of their waking time plotting and conniving to "get back at" those who served before them which is exactly what the current board members appear to be doing.

None of those members of the board who voted for the resolution not to renew Preston's contract has given good reason why they voted like they did.

Newly-elected board president Ed Mark, who has made himself unavailable since the board's decision, has thrown daggers at Preston and his record, but offers no specifics as to why he claims what he claims.

One school director has reported he felt the board should have the option of considering other applicants as well as giving Preston the opportunity to look for other employment. And, yet another board member said the board just wants to see if anyone out there can do a better job than Preston is currently doing.

Termination of an employee - for whatever reason - is one thing. But humiliation of a professional person by others who are supposed to be "professional" is uncalled for.

If the Lake-Lehman School Board feels Dr. Preston has not carried out the responsibilities of his position as district superintendent, the board should vote on a motion whether or not to terminate him from that position. And, if the majority of the board members vote to hand Preston his walking papers, then so be it. That's the way the system is supposed to work.

But, to simply decide not to renew his contract and open the position to other applicants and, at the same time, allowing Preston the opportunity to re-apply for the position, is nothing short of pure humiliation.

How is Preston supposed to respond, knowing that those he answers to, mainly school board members, are, or are at least pretending to be, dissatisfied with his performance? Is he supposed to stoop to their level and re-apply for a position he already holds? Or is he supposed to let them get the best of him and bow out of the picture completely?

Nobody knows what is really going through David Preston's head over this matter - just as no one knew exactly what Rodger Bearde was thinking when the board forced him to re-apply for his position as athletic director. Bearde was renamed to the AD position after the one other applicant withdrew his name when he smelled a political rat. But, the humiliation of having to apply for the same position all over again lingers on, we're sure!

Taxpayers of a school district elect school board members to carry out the mandate of the State Department of Education to maintain and support a thorough and efficient system of quality public education as delegated by the Legislature.

Instead of fulfilling their responsibility as board members, the new majority members at Lake-Lehman are using their power as a political vendetta against the preceding majority, as well as to fulfill their own political gain.

A slogan coined by the late Jim Nicholas - "Good things are happening at Lake-Lehman" has suddenly turned sour. A more appropriate phrase at this time might be "What is happening at Lake-Lehman?"

Santa is alive!

When The Dallas Post learned that a priest in New Jersey had told his church congregation that Santa Claus was dead, we decided to do some investigating of our own.

After all, if Santa had indeed passed on, we would have to re-arrange our holiday photo schedule since he would no longer be available for pictures. And, we would certainly have to publish his obituary because he is so well-known throughout the Back Mountain area.

So, our team of reporters, photographers and editors did some real intense investigating. And, from our investigations, we are thrilled to report that the New Jersey priest had grossly erred in announcing Santa's death for we found the jolly old man to be very much alive.

To back up our conclusions that the loveable fat man is still with us, we offer the following:

We know Santa is alive in every child who pens a letter to the North Pole then drops it in a mailbox and anxiously awaits a reply; in every child who suffers shades of insomnia on Christmas Eve; in the glow of every parent's face when their child opens "just the right" gift.

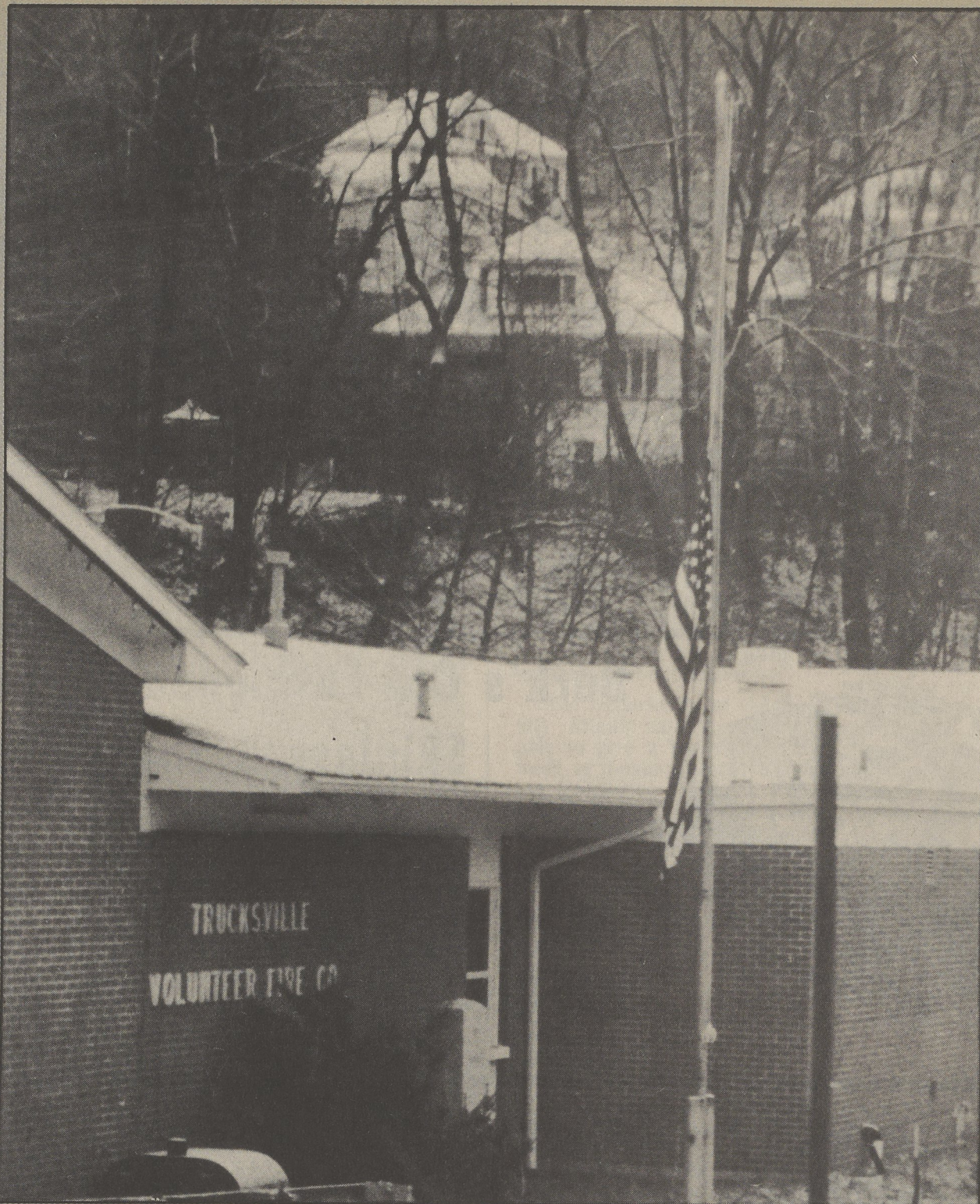
We know Santa is alive in every nursing home resident who painfully manages a smile for the carolers; in every person who takes time to visit a friend in the hospital during the holidays; in the look on every child's face while sitting on Santa's lap at the mall.

We know Santa is alive in every poinsettia plant bought for a shut-in who would otherwise have no Christmas decorations; in every Christmas tree that is cut and dragged down a mountain by a father to his anxious family waiting at the bottom; in every crooked tree-top affixed by the tiny hands of a child.

We know Santa is alive in a young man's last-minute efforts to please a special lady with a gift; in the special smell of Christmas dinner; in the time donated by volunteers to feed the homeless.

We know Santa is alive in the remembrances of Christmases past; in the everlasting memories of loved ones who can no longer be with us at Christmas time; and in the joy of spending the day in the company of those we enjoy.

You see, Santa Claus is not just a symbol of the traditional Christmas. He is a symbol of what Christmas is really all about - loving, sharing, caring and celebrating. And, as we have found, that spirit is very much alive!



Dallas Post/Jane Rem

Life in the Back Mountain

Piatt remembered

The flag at the Kingston Township Municipal Building flies at half mast, showing the township's respect for supervisor chairman Willard R. Piatt. Piatt, of 675 Carverton Road,

Kingston Township, died December 10 in the Wilson Memorial Hospital, Johnson City, N.Y., after suffering an apparent heart attack. A lifelong resident of Carverton, Mr. Piatt had been a member of the township board of supervisors since 1974.

Something to think about

It is no surprise that the cost of medical care is astronomical.

Several explanations can be given - the expensive machinery used in diagnosis - cat scans, ultra sound, equipment used in nuclear medicine and radiology, etc. This equipment and the technician employed to use it are very costly.

Another reason cited is the high cost to physicians for their malpractice insurance. Still yet another reason is the high cost of medical insurance. Anyone who pays for his own insurance knows about that.

Hospital costs have skyrocketed, so naturally the cost increases have been passed on to the patient.

Of course, everything today has gone up, but has this outrageous cost of medical care brought along with it superb medical treatment as well? Does the quality of medical care today justify the high cost?

Just because the insurance companies will pay, are all those tests really necessary? How many unnecessary operations are performed every day in every hospital in this country? Why shouldn't the doctors assume the cost of their

Toby COLEMAN



insurance as merely another expense of their practices?

Do the insurance companies have the right to set fees for medical procedures or make a medical judgement about the length of a patient's stay in the hospital? Do hospitals have a moral right to run at a profit like a business?

In 1964 a bonanza was dropped on the medical profession. It was called "Medicare." This is the answer to all our dreams, boys and girls. All the money we need for anything we need.

Big parking lots, gorgeous lobbies, cute uniforms for all the employees, every new gadget we can think of, tests and tests and tests, operations, operations, operations.

And the best part of all, the money is a

bottomless pit.

Comes the day of reckoning. The money tree is dying. Soon there will be no more, and doctors and hospitals and insurance companies and drug manufacturers will have to go back to the old way of treating the sick and dying, using all their skills and knowledge for the patient's benefit at reasonable, sane and moral rates.

Here's another surprise for you. There are those in the medical profession today who are genuinely embarrassed by their obscene success and are beginning to look at their "business" through the eyes of the healer.

"There is no profit in cure." The words profit and healing should never be linked together.

Physicians and insurance companies have a right to make a good living, but the profession of caring for the sick, the infirm and the dying should never be used as a means of amassing one's personal fortune.

It's something to think about...

(Toby Coleman, a Back Mountain resident, is a columnist for The Dallas Post. Her column appears regularly.)

Party hosts are responsible for guests' safety

Is the party host responsible for his or her guests getting home safely? In some areas, the legal answer is "Yes!" Regardless of the legalities, this question has prompted a holiday alcohol awareness safety campaign, "First a Friend, Then a Host", launched by the Valley Automobile Club.

"We believe that the host is responsible - certainly as a friend - to discourage excessive drinking by any guests," Patrick J. Higgins, Safety Director said. "This campaign is approaching the problem through the hosts who provide the drinks," he said. "As a friend of your guests, the host should find ways to make it easy for those who will be driving to stay sober. Attitudes have changed in society. It's not

longer unusual for guests to say "No, thanks! I'm driving." at a party. The total societal cost of drunk driving is estimated at around \$26 billion per year. And that doesn't include the human suffering that can never be measured."

The Valley Automobile Club offers these suggestions for party hosting.

- If you serve alcoholic drinks, make non-alcoholic beverages available and make certain that everyone knows both are to be had.

- As guests arrive for your party, encourage one person in each couple or group to be the "designated driver" and thereby assure a safe ride home for your guests. Provide a gift for the designated driver as an incentive.

- Prove your lavishness and creativity as a host with a tempting display of food. Offer new foods throughout the evening. Walk around the room with menu additions. Avoid preparing highly seasoned or salty foods or snacks, as these merely make your guests thirsty.

- Use "normal" (one-ounce) portions of liquor in mixed drinks - or less, and don't mix "strong" or "stiff" drinks.

- Don't be a "pour" host and push drinks on your guests. Serve drinks only upon request.

- Remember that a 12-ounce bottle of beer, a five-ounce glass of wine and a 1½-ounce shot of liquor (mixed or straight) all "pack the same punch" per drink, as they all contain the same amount of alcohol.

- Close the bar at least one hour before people are expected

to leave. Bring on the non-alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea and a dessert.

- If a guest has had too much to drink, offer to drive him or her home, or have the person sleep over. You may have to exercise diplomacy in arranging for a guest to go home as a passenger rather than a driver, but if you're a real friend, you'll find a way. Remember that only time sobers you up.

"We think that the 'First a Friend, Then a Host' campaign is a viable countermeasure to drinking and driving. Alcohol is a known factor in one out of every two traffic deaths in the United States, and if we can impact on this serious problem in a small way as a result of this campaign, we should be highly gratified," Higgins said.

We must concentrate on good news in the world

By CLYDE DUPIN
Special to The Dallas Post

When we look only at the bad news, we are tempted to lose hope. In many nations, there is a feeling of hopelessness. As we celebrate Christmas 1986, 43 nations are at war. There are four million troops around the world involved in these conflicts. There is fear of nuclear war, terrorism, the plague of AIDS, and governments on the

brink of toppling. In America, as we celebrate Christmas, we mourn the abortion of 20 million babies since 1973. Many homes feel the pain of drug addiction and alcoholism. Our permissiveness has brought dreaded sexual disease; and our homes are falling apart. We see a liberal media and partisan politics as they try to divide our country and destroy our leaders. The forces of evil have invaded our homes, schools, government, and tradi-

tional values. Today, many feel hopeless.

It was 2000 years ago that Christ came to give us hope. The meaning of Christmas is hope. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful; Counselor, The might God; The everlasting Father; The Prince of Peace."

These different names of our Lord should inspire and encour-

age us with hope at this Christmas season. We should let the meaning of these five words from Isaiah give us strength, hope, and faith to face any crises, endure any sorrow, and overcome any struggle for the coming year. Christmas means hope when we put our trust and faith in Christ.

(Clyde Dupin is author of a national column entitled "Religious Viewpoint." His column appears periodically in The Dallas Post.)

THE DALLAS POST

A Publication of Pennprint, Inc.

J. STEPHEN BUCKLEY
Publisher

DAVID F. CONNER
General Manager

DOTTY MARTIN
Editor