

THE DALLAS POST

OPINION

Police committee acted quickly, fairly

Members of Dallas Borough Council should be commended for the way they handled the recent incident involving Dallas Borough police officer Chris Purcell.

The police committee members - Timmy Carroll, Byron Grieves, Bill Berti and Mayor Paul LaBar - acted as fairly and as quickly as they possibly could in investigating the situation.

Purcell, a part-time police officer for Dallas Borough, had been accused of illegally entering a private residence, according to the owner of the home. A complaint filed by Dallas resident Arthur Miller stated that Purcell had illegally entered the home where a party was being conducted by approximately 20 Dallas High School students.

Following the filing of Miller's complaint, Purcell was suspended without pay for as long as the investigation continued. Suspension - and suspension without pay - was the only fair thing the Council could have done as long as the investigation was underway.

An attempt shortly after the November 1 incident to secure the assistance of either the Pennsylvania State Police or the Luzerne County District Attorney's office proved that the committee was attempting to carry out the most objective investigation possible.

Only because the State Police does not involve itself with anything other than criminal matters and the DA's office was much too busy did the borough opt to conduct the investigation itself.

Seeking to answer only the question of whether or not Purcell entered the home illegally, the committee interviewed Purcell, Miller and at least two students who attended the party.

Purcell, who needed to have a probable cause to enter the home in the first place, reported that he was responding to complaints of loud noise from residents of the neighborhood where the party was being held. After conducting second interviews with some of those involved in the incident, the committee learned that Purcell had gained entry into the home by following two students through a cellar door.

When the committee learned that Purcell had first attempted to enter the house through the front door and later through a side door, only to have both doors slammed shut in his face, the members started leaning toward Purcell's innocence.

The committee then concluded Purcell had done nothing illegal when entering the house and that he should be reinstated to the police force.

Making its decision to recommend that Purcell be reinstated on December 14 and presenting that recommendation to Council on December 16, the committee took only six weeks to clear up what could have turned into a long, drawn-out affair.

Since a man is innocent until proven guilty and there was no evidence produced during the investigation that proved Chris Purcell had done anything wrong, there seems to be no reason why he should not be back in a policeman's uniform. In this case, there is no evidence that he did anything he shouldn't have.

Do you have a friend?

How many people have at least one or two good friends? Someone you can complain to, and they will listen.

They will listen even though they know you will never stop complaining and do something about the problem, and you know it, too, but they will listen, and they will understand.

How many good friends have you made lately? Say, since high school graduation? Or marriage? Has your life been filled with activities with your spouse, your children, your job? Do you take the time anymore to even make an effort to enlarge your circle of friends and enrich your life?

Yes, time is scarce. This child's in the Scouts and one the baseball team and has to be chauffeured here and there and, of course, the house is always a mess.

Funny thing is, you may not even notice the absence of friends. Every once in a while, it may hit you. A childhood friend may call long distance. A class reunion or chance meeting may remind you of days when things were different-days before you slid into adulthood and shouldered the burdens.

Two recent stories in the newspapers told of foreigners who came to the United States and had difficulty making after-work connections. "They say, 'Call me sometimes,'" said one young foreign woman. "And when I do, they say, 'What do you want?'"

Our scattered families, our mobile society - under these circumstances, our need for connectedness, for a friend or two or three who will really listen, talk, and understand, is greater than ever.

And many of us have forgotten just how important good friends really are.

— Jane Renn

From us to you...

The staff and management of The Dallas Post, wishes all the good people of the Back Mountain a very safe and happy Christmas holiday.

May health, happiness and good fortune shine on you and yours during this festive season.

Merry Christmas!

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Life in the Back Mountain

Christmas bells

Gloria Miller, director of the Shavertown United Methodist Church Bell Choir, directs the choir members during a performance for residents of the Meadows Apartments, Dallas.

The choir is in its second year. Bellringers wear gloves because any moisture on the brass bells will change the tones and tarnish the bells.

Something to think about

Now that all the presents have been bought and most of the preparations made, it is time to reflect on the true spirit of this holy season.

Christians are asked to remember and celebrate the birth of the Blessed Child. This Miraculous Gift from God was given to the world to show His love for mankind.

People seem to forget in all the hustle and bustle what Christmas is all about. When one gives a gift, it symbolizes

Toby
COLEMAN

the giving of gifts to the Holy Infant by the Magi. Love should be wrapped in every present.

The closer it gets to Christmas, the warmer and cheerier becomes. There is an excitement in the air. You might say that it is because of the presents, the lighted tree, the family get-togethers, the parties and the decorations.

That's all part of it, but I rather suspect the real reason for all the excitement is the love, and the hope that this year, at last, will be "Peace on Earth - Good will to men."

The beautiful music of the

season expresses the prayers of everyone for the fulfillment of this dream. Remember and celebrate with joy in your hearts. Share your good fortune and your good feelings with those who have so little.

It will be your way of thanking God for His Wondrous Gift to you.

It's something to think about... (Toby Coleman, a Back Mountain resident, is a columnist for The Dallas Post. Her column appears regularly.)

Grossman on economics

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN
Special to The Dallas Post

Cities across the United States are faced with great economic and fiscal stress as a result of substantial federal cutbacks and the prospect of even more deep cuts in coming years. This has led to alternative ways to continue to provide necessary services to residents.

One of the ways in which government has chosen to change its traditional service delivery pattern is to contract out to the private sector to carry out services. Another technique has been the growing assembly of user fees charged for specific services provided by that government to its constituents.

For the most part, these types of innovations are focused in clusters of municipalities in the sunbelt states - places where city manager forms of government predominate. For example, in Phoenix, Arizona, private business processes the city's bills, maintains median strips on its streets, polices its municipal building and picks up half its trash.

In LaMirada, California, city government has been reduced to a bare minimum by wholesale contracting. The city has

approximately 60 employees, while 60 contractors provide everything from police and fire protection to human services and public works.

User fees are charged in such cities as St. Paul, Minnesota, which has so called "Revenue Centers" that collect user fees for special services. For example, city police charge marathon race organizers for crowd control and residents and business for responding to burglar alarms.

In many places throughout the west, county governments provide services to municipalities under a contracting system which has been in place for many years. Joint purchasing agreements are available in many municipal governments throughout that part of the nation.

While some of these techniques have been applied to the east coast, many are not commonplace and have rarely been organized as a systematic and comprehensive approach to meeting the fiscal challenges of local government.

In Northeastern Pennsylvania, most of these techniques are unknown and have not been examined nor considered as ways to control and effectively manage the delivery of services. While it is quite proper for many services to continue to be delivered

by traditional methods, that is by municipal and or county governments, some new and innovative techniques may be useful, such as those described in earlier paragraphs. Just as the city management process has taken hold in many parts of the United States as an effective way to help administer the delivery of local governmental services, so is the necessity to consider the private sector as one alternative to current delivery methods. Private sector involvement as well as user fees are significant techniques which should be carefully studied and examined as possible ways to broaden the way services are delivered in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

It is a topic which organizations such as the Pennsylvania Economy League, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs and others may wish to focus attention on in coming years as steps by which additional options are offered to local and county governments to help alleviate fiscal constraints throughout the Pocono Northeast.

(Howard Grossman, a Back Mountain resident, is the Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. His column appears periodically in The Dallas Post.)

Computers revolutionizing our lives

Computers have revolutionized the way we do business and for many home computer users, the way we balance the family budget. According to a poll of Pennsylvania CPAs, 93 percent of their largest clients, or the companies they work for, have a computer. This is up from 64 percent five years ago.

The current computer capabilities were reported as: personal computer (PCs) (46 percent); mainframe (20 percent); business micro (18 percent) and mini (16 percent).

According to John H. Kennedy, CPA, president, Pennsylvania Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), "Shifts in usage from five years ago to now underscore the popularity of personal computers (PCs) in the workplace for such personalized tasks as word processing, budget-spreadsheet, and forecasting-planning." Further, Kennedy states that, "The nature of these tasks also point to increased computer utilization in smaller businesses."

Some computer applications cited today and five years ago are:

Accounting-83 percent today, 78 percent five years ago; Inventory control-40 percent today, 37 percent five years ago; Word Processing-32 percent today, 11 percent five years ago; Forecasting-planning-20 percent today, 11 percent five years ago; Budgeting-spread-

sheet-14 percent today, 9 percent five years ago.

When identifying the characteristics which most influence computer purchasers, 44 percent identified the ability to expand the system and 44 percent identified software availability. Other factors identified include: price (32 percent); training and support (29 percent); consultant's recommendations (29 percent); IBM compatibility (26 percent); reputation of brand (26 percent); and memory capacity (22 percent).

The new tax law may spell trouble for churches and church related organizations that depend on charitable donations. Harvard economist Lawrence Lindsey estimates the new tax act will cause a drop of \$13 billion a year.

Because of the lower tax rates, charitable donations will be less attractive. The taxpayer who doesn't itemize will not be allowed to deduct church donations; and those who do, cannot deduct 100 percent. This new tax law will especially hurt

ministries that rely on small donations.

Although the use of computers is widespread, over 60 percent of the computer users feel that there is room for improvement in the effective use of this important business tool. CPAs polled said that they felt only eight percent of those who own computers are completely satisfied. Some of the reasons for dissatisfaction include: the computer did not perform as promised, lack of training and support, and inability to program and expand.

The CPA Poll sampled 2,000 of the more than 13,600 CPAs who

are members of the PICPA. From probability theory, it is known that if a sample is chosen randomly from the total population of PICPA members, the result will reflect the characteristics of that population at a 95 percent confidence level, plus or minus 4 percent. The PICPA is the second oldest and sixth largest CPA association in the country. Members are polled quarterly on a variety of business and economic issues which impact the business environment.

Tax changes will hurt charities

By CLYDE DUPIN
Special to The Dallas Post

The Americans have traditionally been generous in their charitable giving; and our tax laws have encouraged this generosity. The average American contributes \$650 each year to charity. The religious groups receive 72 percent of all money donated.

A study shows that 81 percent of Americans believe people have a responsibility to give what they can to charity. Most people admitted that they should give more to charity.

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Many large ministries like World Vision and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association have predicted a drop in

their donations. Our government has always been favorable to charitable organizations. The new law just seems to hit hard at charitable giving.

The local church will probably fare better than para church organizations under the new law. It is hoped that people will think of their blessings and still be generous in giving to help spread the Word and minister to the less fortunate of our world.

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