

# Editorial/opinion

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## Off the top

BY DEBBY HIGGINS  
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Parents in our country today, are being victimized by a widespread that is eating away at our status in the social order.

In some cases, the disease takes hold suddenly and without the slightest indication of its onslaught. In other cases, the plague comes on slowly, with subtle warnings.

This disease affects our moral, physical, and mental capacities. It does not select male over female. It strikes any age group. It pays no attention to social position or economic status. There is a cure but oftentimes itself is evasive, aloof, and non-effective despite all attempts to make it work.

The disease is not AIDS, cancer, or heart disease. The disease is the erosion of our freedom of choice.

It would be unfair to say parents have no voice regarding their children. We can still choose how many children to have; how we help develop their moral, ethical, and societal behavior to a certain extent, and how we prepare them to become productive, free-thinking members of adult society.

These advantages are dependent upon money, time, effort, and the fabric of our own childhood. No one said parenthood was easy, and no one has yet come up with blueprints for parenting.

Faced with the black and white decision-making processes of right and wrong issues, parents must also contend with the burgeoning bureaucracy of agencies, laws, and restrictions on our abilities to decide what is best for our children.

Case in point - the closing of the Mercy Center Kindergarten program. Some parents felt the program offered an ideal situation for their children. For whatever particular reasons, some parents chose to send their children to that school and they were willing to pay for the advantage they felt was available.

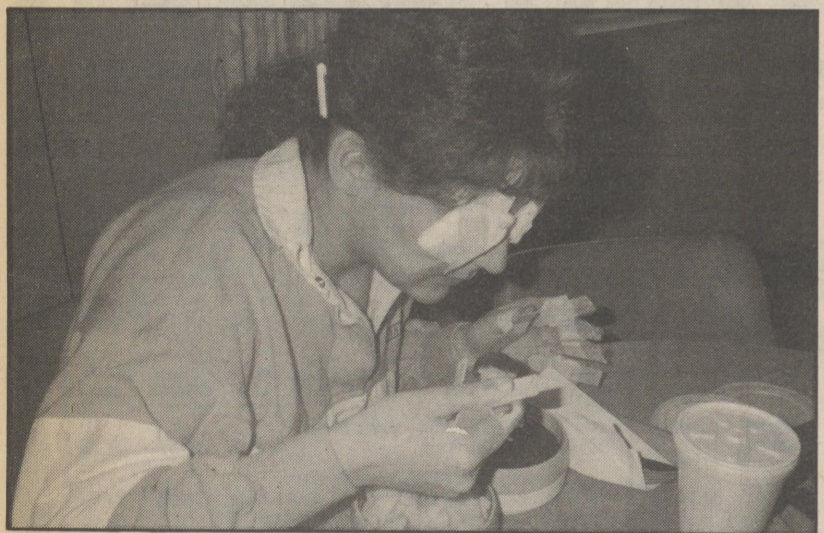
Despite efforts to ward off the closing, (at least temporarily) with an enrollment drive initiated by the parents, the school's administrators decided to end the program.

Case closed. The option of choosing was once again removed from the parents' grasp. Another chance for parents to make a decision that they felt would benefit their children was no longer theirs. The closing is another example of the erosion of a parent's right to choose. Other choices for the parents do remain but those choices are dependent on many variables.

Can each family financially afford to enroll their child in a similar, but costlier school? Are all five year-olds emotionally ready for day-long sessions in public school? Will the children be able to cope?

These questions and many more need be addressed again by the concerned parents. These are the same parents who thought their needs were met by the kindergarten program. Choices were made. Now the parents must choose again. This time, their choice may not be exactly what they wanted.

Parents who thought along similar lines, banded together for strength and unity in a common cause. They struggled and they lost. But, the parents say, their children are the real losers. And since our children are this country's future, we have really lost more than we realize.



### It's not easy!

Twenty employees of the Meadows Nursing Center, Dallas, recently participated in a workshop, "Sensory Awareness: Walk a Mile in My Shoes", designed to increase staff's awareness of how difficult everyday tasks can be for a resident when disabled by a stroke, arthritis, poor hearing or vision. Sabrina Major, Nursing Assistant, is shown during a simulated exercise, experiencing how difficult it is to feed yourself when disabled by blindness and arthritis of the hands. This program was presented at the Center through the Continuing Education Department of Penn State University.

## Over weight people are victims, too

BY ANDY ROONEY  
Special to The Post

I'm only talking to overweight people today. The rest of you can move on to something else in the paper.

Haven't you often felt it was unfair that, day after day, you see skinny people eating French fries and chocolate fudge sundaes and never gaining a pound? Haven't you noticed that a lot of people eat exactly the same things you eat and they stay the same weight while you blow up?

It is one of the unfair things I've come across in my lifetime but there's good news. Thin people of the world owe an apology to all of us average, normal, everyday overweight people.

If we'd all been falsely imprisoned, we wouldn't have been any more falsely maligned than we have been by thin people all these years. They always suggest it's our own fault and it is not.

Why? Because according to an article in The New England

Journal of Medicine, which seems to have a monopoly on medical announcements, it isn't fat people's fault that they're fat. After all these years of being looked down on by people who act superior because their collarbones stick out, the truth finally has emerged. It isn't us, it's our metabolism that's to blame.

It was only a matter of time before the scientists, in their maddeningly slow, methodical way, discovered it but they finally have found out why a lot of people get fat through no fault of their own and why a lot of people stay thin through no virtue of their own.

I've suspected all along that it wasn't my fault. All overweight people know in their hearts it isn't their fault. We can be around thin people who are eating the same things we eat for weeks and while we get fat, they stay the same.

Make no mistake about this announcement, it's good news for overweights. It could mean the end of Weight Watchers and the feeling of inferiority we all feel because we're fat.

It's really good to know my weight is not a result of weakness or any flaw in my character. It is apparent that I have a very lethargic metabolism. A big piece of chocolate cake goes farther in my body than it does in the body of a skinny person. (I prefer "skinny" to "thin," just as I prefer the word "overweight" to "fat.") It isn't that fat people eat too much, it's that their furnaces are always banked.

"Obese people," says Dr. Jules Hirsch, a doctor at Rockefeller University in New York, "are born with a handicap."

"Just like people born with other handicaps," Dr. Hirsch says, "they'll have to learn to live with theirs."

Next thing you know, they'll be giving us handicapped, overweight people stickers for the windshields of our cars so we can park right up near the entrance to the store in the handicapped parking places.

The doctors who made this report say that when an overweight person makes a big effort to diet and loses weight,

his or her metabolism declines even further. As the metabolism declines, the body uses less and less of the food taken in and turns the rest to fat. That's why it's so hard to keep off the weight you lose.

The researchers for this project kept track of their subjects for two years. They found that the people who were destined to gain weight burned 80 calories a day fewer than people of comparable weight. Dr. Eric Ravussin of the National Institute of Health estimated that a person who burns a mere 80 calories a day less than usual would gain nine pounds a year.

According to these figures in the story, I must have a world-champion low rate of metabolism. I've been gaining nine pounds a year for years. It's wonderful to know that it isn't my fault. And if my body runs at idle all day long, I should think it would last longer than if I were racing my engine.

I can hardly wait to get home and celebrate with a big dinner and a bowl of ice cream for dessert.

## Parents will now be notified by justice

BY REP. CARMEL SIRIANI  
Special to The Post

The House Judiciary Committee recently unanimously passed legislation requiring parental notification when a juvenile is arrested and charged with a summary offense.

The measure, House Bill 1593, passed the committee after it received technical amendments regulating the notification procedures.

Last session the measure was passed by the full House but was not considered by the full

Senate before the session ended.

The bill was developed after discovering that existing law does not mandate notification of parents or legal guardians when a juvenile is arraigned before a district justice on summary offense charges.

Summary offense charges in Pennsylvania include disorderly conduct, public drunkenness, vandalism, criminal misconduct and retail theft.

The bill would require each district justice to notify by mail the parents or legal guardians of a juvenile under arrest. A

waiting period would then be imposed between the time of the notification mailing and the acceptance of a plea in the case or a scheduling of a hearing.

If for any reason the district justice failed to notify the parents, the charges against the youth would not be dismissed but would be prosecuted in accordance with the law.

Amendments to the bill were agreed to in a meeting with the State Police, the Fraternal Order of Police, the Chiefs of Police Organization and district

justices. The legislation has received the support of all of these groups.

Parental involvement when a youth is arrested is a crucial factor in preventing repeat offenses. We've been pressing for the passage of this important legislation for some time and we're hopeful that it will pass this year.

HB 1593 has the bipartisan cosponsorship of 93 House members.

The law would not apply to Philadelphia which already has a notification in process in place.

## Fiegelman says...time to pick the winners

BY RICHARD FIEGELMAN  
Special to The Post

March is a month of much excitement. Spring fever causes the heartier among us to wear T-shirts in 50 degree weather. St. Patrick's Day parades the green soon to arrive from Mother Nature, and income tax returns highlight the return of green from Uncle Sam. For the sports fan, March is also a month long-awaited. It's NCAA tournament time. In this column we'll see if we can predict from the Final 16 right on up to this year's National Champion. Get your pies ready to throw, here we go...

This has been a season in which the usual conferences, including the ACC, Big East, and Big 10, continued their domination. Teams from these conferences, and a few others will certainly play a big role in this year's tourney. Most experts say that this is a light year for the NBA draft because of the lack of dominant players. Well folks, let me tell you, there's an awful lot of talent out there. Players like Gary Grant of Michigan and Hersey Hawkins of Bradley will make an immediate impact on whatever NBA team is lucky enough to draft them. Sixers fans take

note. Now, on the Final 16 with two comments. Indiana, last year's champ, has no chance. Temple, this year's Cinderella No. 1, has very little.

The Final 16 in team vs. team alignment:

Midwest Region  
Purdue vs. Kansas St. - Purdue in a walk.

North Carolina St. vs. Pittsburgh - Valvano's boys, always up at tourney time, will edge a lazy Pitt squad.

East Region  
LSU vs. GA. Tech - In a hard fought game between Southern rivals, LSU prevails.

Syracuse vs. Duke - In one of the wildest and hardest to pick games of the tournament, because of depth Syracuse by 1.

West Region  
Arizona vs. Iowa - Arizona directly to the Final Four, next.

Michigan vs. North Carolina - Another very physical barnburner. This one's tough to call but...North Carolina by 3.

Southeast Region  
Oklahoma vs. Brigham Young - A surprising Brigham Young gets this far. Oklahoma by 10.

Villanova vs. Kentucky - After Nova's showing in Big East, they might appear as a force. Only until they run into the Wildcats. Kentucky by 8.

Now down to eight teams, the

plot thickens and becomes much more interesting. A breakdown of these games...

Purdue vs. N.C. State - Possible upset if played at State's home court. Purdue has a little too much and will win by 4.

LSU vs. Syracuse - Though LSU can play a physical game, there will be thousands of screaming Syracuse fans at the Meadowlands court. Syracuse by 5.

Arizona vs. North Carolina - This one is undoubtedly the hype game. Perpetual power vs. upstart from the West. In this case, the upstart wins by 5.

Oklahoma vs. Kentucky - If you went with old favorites, you'd have to go with Kentucky. They're always there, aren't they? Not this year, Oklahoma by 6.

The Final Four brings the most casual or even non-fan to the TV screen, because it usually captures the drama of intense competition. This year's Final Four won't disappoint anyone.

Purdue vs. Syracuse - The climax of great seasons for both the Big 10 and the Big East, the two most dominant conferences this year. Purdue has great balance and several players who'll go quickly in the NBA draft. They won the Big

10 title and finished the season with a 27-3 record. Syracuse comes in with a 25-8 regular season record, but in the Big East that's no shame. They have big names such as Seikaly, and a proven coach, Jim Boeheim. This game will go to the wire, but when the dust clears in Kansas City, Purdue will be on top, 73-71.

Oklahoma vs. Arizona - In this contest, it's Oklahoma's high-powered offense against the closest thing to a pro team in America, Arizona. If Oklahoma can score at will with Stacey King, they will win. If Arizona, and superstar Sean Elliott can control the tempo, they will win. The hunch here is Arizona, 84-83.

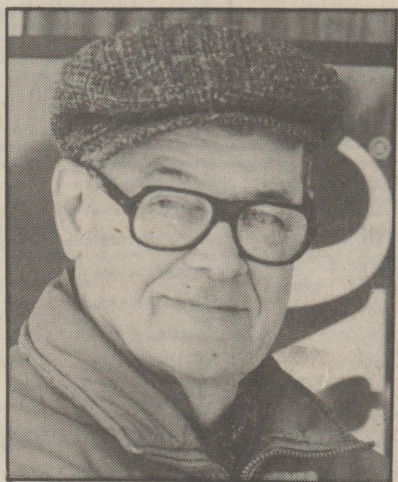
In the championship game, the arena in Kansas City will be rockin'. Purdue vs. Arizona. It has the potential to be a classic. Both teams are well-balanced, well-coached, and can light it up at a moment's notice. Purdue and Arizona will both have their share of fans there, since the trip isn't that far for either. This is another one that will go to the wire. On the strength of their conference schedule, they've been in many tough ones already, let's go with Purdue to win it all, 78-75. The climax of another great season. See you next week.

## The Post asks: 'Who do you think are better drivers, men or women?'



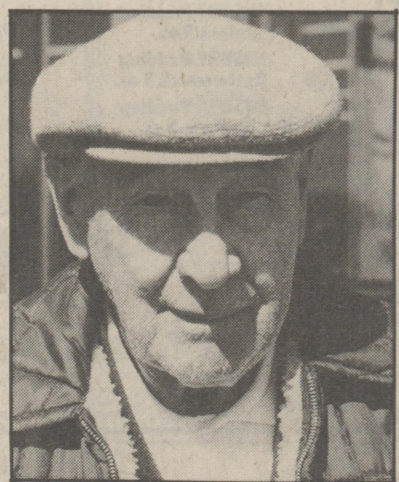
JANET METZGAR

Janet Metzgar  
Owner P.J.'s Gift Shop  
Kingston  
"Women are, they think about their families and the responsibility to them more often than men might do."



JOHN ROGERS

John Rogers, 69  
Retired Plant Engineer  
Shavertown  
"Men are faster, but women are usually safer, I think."



JOE TEMPRINE

Joe Temprine  
Retired  
Truckville  
"Men, the women scare me coming down the highway. They can't take their foot off the pedal. 40 years I drove a dairy truck for Dairyland and I know."



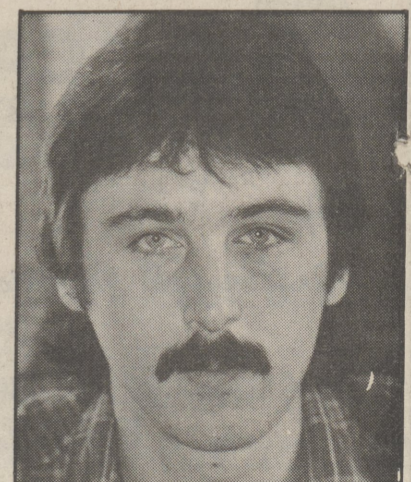
JO ANNE CALLAHAN

Jo Anne Callahan, 23  
Domestic Engineer  
Swoyersville  
"Women, because men are drunk half the time."



SARAH GRADY

Sarah Grady, 63  
Housewife  
Swoyersville  
"Women, because the men drink too much. I was driving for 15 years and never even got a ticket."



VINCE CALLAHAN

Vince Callahan, 26  
Bartender  
Pittston  
"Men, women are always too occupied, their minds on too many other things."