

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Use extra money to improve education

After months of trying to guess how much state aid they would receive, the Dallas School Board and administration have been told it will be more than they had anticipated when they put together a budget for the 1991-92 school year. Now the board must decide what to do with the approximately \$130,000 windfall.

The choices are limited, since the state Legislature restricted uses for the money. One option is simply to rebate it to the taxpayers, pro-rated on the size of their property tax bill. Another is to use it to purchase books or equipment, or to restore programs that had been cut in order to reduce expenses for the coming year.

Rebating the money might seem an attractive idea, especially in tough economic times. But it's not as simple as it seems—administrative expenses and postage would lop about 20 percent off the total, leaving an average rebate of perhaps \$10.

Using the new-found dollars to purchase equipment that will serve the long term interests of Dallas students seems a better idea. If done prudently, the money spent now will simply anticipate spending in future years, and students will benefit from access to education enhancing tools now rather than later.

Fair made possible by volunteers

The Back Mountain is host to many events throughout the year, but none offers so much fun for the dollar as the Luzerne County Fair, which runs through Sunday. Thousands of fairgoers will visit the grounds along Route 118 in Dallas to view the exhibits, look over the livestock, be thrilled on the rides, listen to the entertainment and sample the delicious food.

One thing many visitors may not know is that the enjoyment is made possible only by the hard work and devotion of hundreds of volunteers who serve on the Fall Fair Committee and with the 11 service clubs that support the event. What started as a small local gathering has grown into a major attraction that is attended by visitors from a wide area.

The fair runs for five days but planning for it began the day after last year's run ended and continued throughout the year. So go to the fair, bring the family and enjoy it—all of it. And remember that conscientious volunteers have given of their time and talent to bring this area a truly pleasurable and worthwhile event.

Openness would be boon in teacher talks

The president of the Dallas teachers' union complains that the administration and board are playing dirty by releasing information about the progress, or lack of it, in negotiations for a new contract. We disagree.

One of the weaknesses of relations between teachers, school boards and the people in Pennsylvania is the secrecy that ordinarily surrounds contract talks. That usually means the details of a contract are announced at the meeting at which it is ratified by the board. The public, which foots the bill, is thus removed from the most important item affecting a school's budget, while the teachers' union is insulated from criticism until it's too late to make a difference.

This year, as many Dallas teachers themselves say, even the rank and file members of the union don't know what direction the talks are taking, because their own leadership isn't telling them.

Pennsylvania is almost unique among the states in the amount of power it has granted to teachers' unions. Not only do teachers gain tenure after a few years, they are able to strike and to do so in a most disruptive way—the selective strike—which gives them the ability to deeply affect the lives of families with children in school. School boards' only counterbalance to that tactic is to shut down the school system entirely until an agreement is reached.

Let's hope it doesn't come to that this year in Dallas. One way to lower the risk is to make the talks as open—and realistic—as possible. Telling the taxpayers what they may face is only the first step in that process.

Do you agree? Disagree?

Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post. We welcome your opinion on contemporary issues in the form of letters to the editor. If you don't write, the community may never hear a contrasting point of view. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Please include your name, address and daytime phone number so that we may verify authenticity. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar.



Late summer lilies

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Sept. 11, 1931
VAULT CONSTRUCTION AT DALLAS BANK

Luzerne merchants plan a big \$1 day for September 17.

Mt. Greenwood Kiwanis Club met recently at the Colonial Tea Room to make plans for their winter activities.

Construction on the vault in the new First National Bank in Dallas has been started.

Dallas, Hunlock Creek and Noxen mail routes have been enlarged.

Rural League will open its elimination series between East Dallas and Dallas this Saturday.

Wed - Margaret Pemberton and Fred Case.

Son of India starring Ramon Navarra plays at Himmler Theatre.

50 Years Ago - Sept. 12, 1941
SEAPLANE OWNER CHARGED IN ACCIDENT

Court may order appointment of special police officers in Kingston Township for the additional safety of school children.

Harveys Lake Chief Stevenson

charges owner of seaplane with negligence for not posting running lights in the motorboat tragedy at the lake.

Parrish Heights lot of 3.5 acres is discussed as an auxiliary landing field in this area.

Wed - Elsie Garinger and Joseph Rauch; Gertrude Leah Smith and Sgt. John Smith.

Billy the Kid is playing at Himmler Theatre. The film is starring Robert Taylor.

Wyoming County and Allentown Fairs will be held next week, both opening September 16.

40 Years Ago - Sept. 14, 1951
FRANK BROWN'S FIELD NAMED BEST IN STATE

Wyoming County's Frank Brown's 23 acres of grass declared best green pasture in the state.

First National Bank of Dallas announces it will be open Friday nights from 5 to 8 p.m.

Otis L. Moore of North Carolina will succeed John D. Griffith as a superintendent of Fernbrook Plant of Bloomsburg Mills, who will resume his duties as superintendent of the main plant in Bloomsburg.

Forty four Back Mountain students enrolled at Seminary Day School this year.

Engaged - Kathryn Malta and Frederick Shouldice 2nd; Irene T. Stofila and Thomas Francis Krivak.

Wed - Charlotte Hoyt and John Engler Jr.

East Dallas clinches fourth place in Bi-County League by downing Vernon.

30 Years Ago - Sept. 14, 1961
KUNKLE FIREFIGHTERS WILL ADD BUILDING

The Back Mountain will build a new building on the site where the Back Mountain Lumber and Coal Company was totally destroyed early last Thursday morning in Shavertown.

Kunkle firemen will build another building on its lot at Kunkle to more adequately house its equipment.

American Legion Post 672 made two citizenship awards, one to Miss Miriam Lathrop, librarian, and to William O'Brien for notable progress of the American Legion under his command.

Wed - Ann Lou Whitesell and Robert Paul Smith; Mary Alice Prynne and Stanley Jack Grauer; Carol R. Markowitz and Morton Z. Baumgarten.

Engaged - Marcella Emily Shively and Jack D. Shepherd. Dallas Senior High gridders begin with Tunkhannock Saturday.

20 Years Ago - Sept. 9, 1971
TEACHERS UNSURE OF SALARY RAISE

Local teachers unsure of salary raise status because of President Richard Nixon's wage-price freeze August 15.

American Asphalt Plant reduces its pollution level at its plant in Chase.

Football outlook good as Dallas gridders get in shape under head coach Jack Jones now in his fourth year with the Mountaineers.

Home Run Derby scheduled for Saturday at Little League Field.

Wed - Rita Catherine Nieszgoda and Milford Langdon; Susan Sipple and Matthew P. Gillis III.

Sailboat parade at Harveys Lake marks the end of the summer season.

Anderson afield

Man leaves little on the range unchanged

By JOHN M. ANDERSON

Cowboys of yesterday fought each other, fought Indians, fought the man with a plow, and fought the land on which their cattle grazed. Conquering the wilderness, including bears, wolves, eagles, and, in fact, any creature that eats what we eat, was considered a patriotic duty, akin to serving in the army against a foreign enemy.

The farmer who broke the prairie and exposed the black soil to wind and water erosion was also considered a national hero. Virgin prairies now exist only in bits and pieces, usually where the land is too rocky, too hilly, or too wet to plow. In a few cases, owners, such as Ada Hayden in Iowa and Aldo Leopold in Wisconsin, decided to save parcels of prairie simply because they viewed the prairie as a living organism which they loved. And if we ever wanted to restore it, we would need a pattern to go by.

A few national wildlife refuges such as Arrowwood in North Dakota, Valentine in Nebraska, Flint

Hills in Kansas have preserved sizeable samples of unspoiled prairie. Several others exist on sanctuaries owned by the National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy.

But removing cattle from lands bought with money from a tax on duck hunters and on sporting arms and ammunition was and is looked upon as sacrilegious by western sheep and cattle men. The political clout brandished by western stockmen is something to be reckoned with. For example, when I worked on Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Montana, in 1938, we referred to the grasslands portion as BATH pasture; BATH meaning "beat all to hell". It was so overgrazed that the owners were glad to sell it to the feds, who promptly devoted the wetlands to trumpeter swans, ducks, and geese, and the uplands to moose,

deer, and antelope. When I revisited Red Rocks in 1969, there were cattle all over the place. The stockmen had returned and reoccupied the restored range.

The manger of Audubon's Ed Brigham Sanctuary in North Dakota recently told me, "Any non-agricultural use of water or grass in North Dakota is looked upon with grave suspicion bordering on hatred".

That the Audubon Society documentary, "The New Range Wars" has aroused a storm of protest from cattlemen comes as no surprise. Competent ecologists and range managers were consulted, and the movie clearly shows devastated areas caused by overgrazing on public lands.

About 20 years ago, a wealthy couple purchased about 2,000 acres in southeastern Arizona. Much of Arizona is in deplorable condition from overgrazing, and this ranch was no exception. After removing the cattle, the owners donated it to Audubon, with the request that the changes in plant and animal life be monitored.

Today the dried-up streams are flowing again, the restored grasslands support herds of deer and antelope, plus the endangered masked bobwhite. After they had

seen "The New Range Wars", a contingent of ranchers and U.S. Forest Service employees spent a full day on the ranch claiming the ranch was suffering from lack of grazing!

The old concept of Man vs. Nature is still very much alive and kept alive by appointees such as John Sununu and Manuel Lujan. On the other hand, public awareness is slowly but surely increasing. Land use that is ecologically unsound is automatically unsound from the standpoint of the taxpayer's pocketbook.

Proper use of land includes sound forestry practice, animal husbandry and grain production. It does not include any practice that results in soil erosion and loss of fertility.

That's probably why Ted Turner is willing to underwrite the Audubon documentaries on how we humans misuse our own environment.

John M. "Frosty" Anderson was Director of the Wildlife department of the National Audubon Society from 1966 until his retirement in 1987.

Breaker Society will have County Fair stand

In response to requests by the community for information on the progress of their preservation efforts, the Ashley Breaker Preservation Society has announced that it will be sponsoring an information/membership stand at the Luzerne County Fair.

Mary Pokorny of Kingston and Ray Clarke of Ashley are serving as co-chairpersons for the Breaker Society's stand. Along with membership information, the stand will feature photos and drawings of the historic breaker along with commemorative shirts, hats, mugs, sweatshirts and souvenirs of the Ashley site.

In conjunction with the Ashley Breaker Preservation Society, the stand will be operated by members of the Luzerne County Historical Preservation Society and the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society as part of the three organizations continuing cooperative ventures. Membership in the Ashley Breaker Preservation Society is available by writing to the ABPS at P.O. Box 123, Ashley, 18706.

DAV seeking volunteer drivers

The Disabled American Veterans, Department of Pennsylvania announces Andrew A. Gorto, will serve in the capacity of hospital service coordinator at the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center.

Mr. Gorto is in urgent need of volunteer van drivers. You need not be a veteran to volunteer. Any amount of time you can offer, whether daily, weekly or monthly would be of tremendous help and most appreciated. Contact Gorto

at (717) 824-3521 extension 7925 for further information on how you can be a Disabled American Veterans Volunteer Driver.

The office-site of Hospital Service Coordinator has been relocated to the third floor (west) Room C-367.

Gorto's primary responsibility is that of coordinating the transportation of veterans to and from the VA Medical Center via the DAV van.

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