

# THE DALLAS POST

## EDITORIALS

### Limit congressional perks, terms will take care of themselves

Recent revelations that United States representatives have been bouncing checks with abandon and failing to pay for meals has brought a chorus of calls for the imposition of limits on how long lawmakers may serve in office. The basis of most arguments for limits goes something like this: After too many years in Washington, representatives and senators lose touch with the constituents who put them there, especially after they've become accustomed to the perquisites of office. And there are plenty of those. Here's a short list:

**TRANSPORTATION**—Limousines, drivers and free gasoline for the speaker of the House, the House majority and minority leaders and whips, the Senate president pro tem, the Senate majority and minority leaders and whips. All members are reimbursed for 32 all expenses paid round-trips home each year. Cars used for "official business" may be leased on office budgets.

**HEALTH CARE**—Members of Congress have access to the 30-doctor Capitol physician's office and all its services including pharmacy, medical lab and ambulance at no charge. Taxpayers are charged about \$2 million annually to provide these services. There are also three fully-equipped gymnasiums with swimming pools at the lawmakers' disposal.

**PARKING**—Special license tags allow members to park at any available curb space in Washington except in front of fire hydrants, fire stations and loading docks. Members also can park free at Washington National Airport, in an exclusive, convenient lot adjacent to the terminal.

**MAIL**—The "frank" allows members to use their signature as postage, and they did for \$89.5 million in mail in 1990 alone. Special "orange bag" handling from the Postal Service ensures one-day mail delivery.

**RETIREMENT**—Members can start collecting benefits after age 50 if they've served 20 years, after 60 if they've served 10 years. And, with increases in salaries, many retired members are now paid more than when they were active.

**STAFF**—House members can hire up to 22 personal assistants. Senators' staff budgets vary with the population of their state, from \$814,000 for Wyoming to \$1.7 million for California.

And did you know that the Congress is exempt from many of the laws it passes, since the principle of separation of powers protects members from influence by the executive branch?

All this and more can put a great distance between the life experience of members of Congress and the people they represent. Wonder why nothing is being done about overcrowded airports? Maybe it's because our representatives haven't had to wait in line for a ticket.

How about health insurance? Surely if our political leaders had to foot the bill for their own medical care they would more clearly understand the plight of the average American.

It was the expectation of the writers of the Constitution that representatives and senators would largely be regular folks who would serve for a term or two and then return to their own affairs. This was a logical assumption, given the modest compensation legislators were to receive and the difficulty of traveling from their home to Washington. But all that has changed, and not necessarily for the better.

Another premise of the framers, mentioned by James Madison in 1788, was that the work of government would become simpler as time went on, since the most difficult part would be initially establishing a federal system. How wrong he was!

Term limits might be one way of bringing reality back inside the Beltway. The problem with them is that good legislators would be tossed out with the bad. While there may be no perfect solution, a better one might take two tracks; lowering the cost of getting elected and eliminating perks that allow lawmakers to avoid the concerns of the general population.

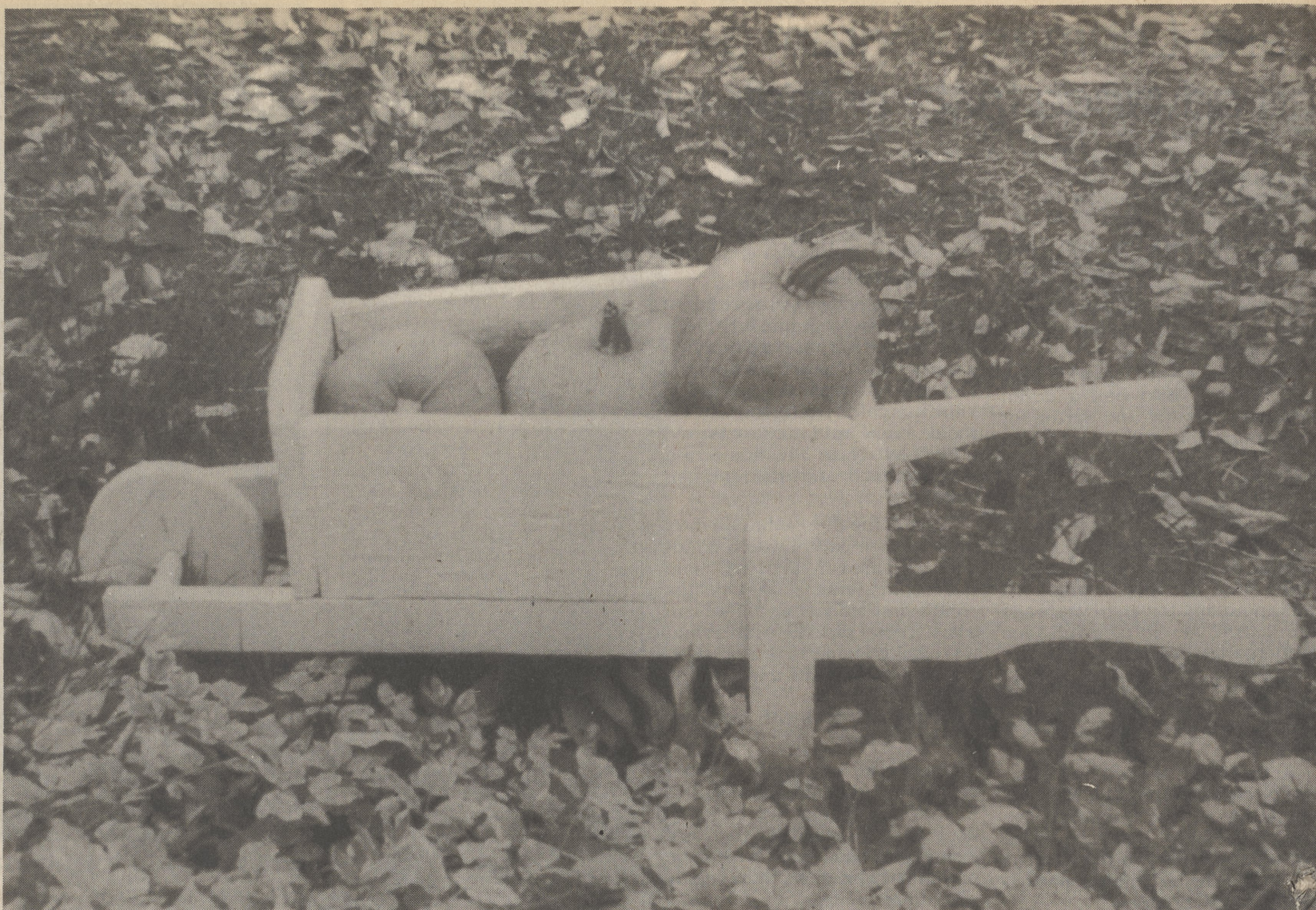
We have reached the unfortunate point where winning election to federal office is an all-consuming and wildly expensive proposition. Only the wealthy can afford to run, especially attorneys and other professionals who can maintain an income from their share of a private practice. Let's replace this system, which is rife with opportunity for corrupt influence, with something like this:

- Strict limits on campaign contributions and spending.
- Adequate free media time and space for each candidate.
- Elimination of all privileges that distance an official from the public—that means most of the ones listed above.

The original concept of citizen legislators is still valid. If the job was truly available to anyone who wanted to run and who had the right message to get elected, our government representatives would better reflect our people. And our government might be more effective if lawmakers were working under self-imposed term limits brought about because it was too much of a sacrifice to plan a lifetime in office.

### 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.



Jack-O'-Lantern wagon

Photo by Maria Sawka

### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - Oct. 16, 1931 IREM TEMPLE BEING REMODELED

Apply for 1932 motor vehicle license plates now. Benjamin G. Eynon, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles urged auto owners. "Buy now" avoid last minute rush of season.

State Game warden and local police are receiving numerous complaints that ring neck pheasants are being shot out of season by game poachers.

Institute sessions for Luzerne County will be held week of January 4, 1932 instead of October, due to remodeling of Irem Temple.

Wed - Jessie M. Hislop to Thomas Moore.

#### 50 Years Ago - Oct. 17, 1941 DALLAS PLANS ITS FIRST HALLOWEEN PARADE

Shavertown United Methodist Church will celebrate the 38th anniversary of the building of the church during Anniversary Week Oct. 19-26.

For the first time in its history Dallas Borough will have a Halloween Parade for Dallas Borough and Township youngsters on Oct. 31.

Sixteen years of medical practice in Dallas Borough and surrounding communities will come to an end when Dr. George K. Swartz is sworn into the U.S. Public Health Service on October 27.

Wed - Nancy Hagney to Charles Daniel Mattingly; Florence Miller to John Gaughan Jr.; Charlotte Cease to Dr. H. Young.

Engaged - Alice Hadsall to William Donache.

Dallas Township High School football team will play its first home game, Saturday, Oct. 18, 2:30 p.m. against the strong Clarks Summit eleven.

#### 40 Years Ago - Oct. 19, 1951 TALKS ON DALLAS SCHOOL JOINTURE BEGIN

Mrs. Calvin Hall, Shavertown has been appointed chairman of training on Dallas District Girl Scout Council.

Directors of Dallas-Franklin and Monroe Township schools met

Tuesday at Dallas Township High School for preliminary discussions of jointure between Dallas-Franklin and Monroe Township schools.

St. Paul's Lutheran Church will be rededicated on Sunday by its first pastor Rev. G. Elson Ruff.

Three Back Mountain teams were defeated last weekend: Forty Fort over Westmoreland 13-7; Wilkes-Barre Township over Dallas Township, 19-7; Tunkhannock over Lehman 20-7.

"The Frogmen" featuring Richard Widmark and Dana Andrews, playing Friday and Saturday at Shaver Theatre.

#### 30 Years Ago - Oct. 19, 1961 FRANKLIN AND NORTHMORELAND LOOK AT BUYING AN AMBULANCE

Citizens of Franklin and Northmoreland Township met at former Centermoreland school house to discuss the formation of an Ambulance Association and purchase of an ambulance to service their area.

ties by an average of 20 percent.

Mrs. F.M. Gordon a member of the first class that graduated Dallas Borough High School in 1889, observed her 90th birthday surrounded by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, at Irem Temple Country Club.

Annabelle Ambrose, Rotary Exchange student in Holland, had the thrill of a lifetime when she saw the Queen and the Royal Princess on their way to the opening of Parliament.

Bob Moore, Park Street, Dallas, rolled a 704 series at Crown Imperial Lanes recently to tie a record set by Danny Richards four years ago.

#### 20 Year Ago - Oct. 14, 1971 ELBY'S TO OPEN FOURTH AREA RESTAURANT

UGI filed increased electric rates with Pennsylvania Utility Commission in Harrisburg which would raise the bills over 50,000 customers in Luzerne and Wyoming Coun-

ties by an average of 20 percent. Walter Weir Sr., was named at the October meeting of Dallas Township Board of Supervisors to serve as a representative to Dallas Area Municipal Authority to replace David Coyle a former resident who resigned.

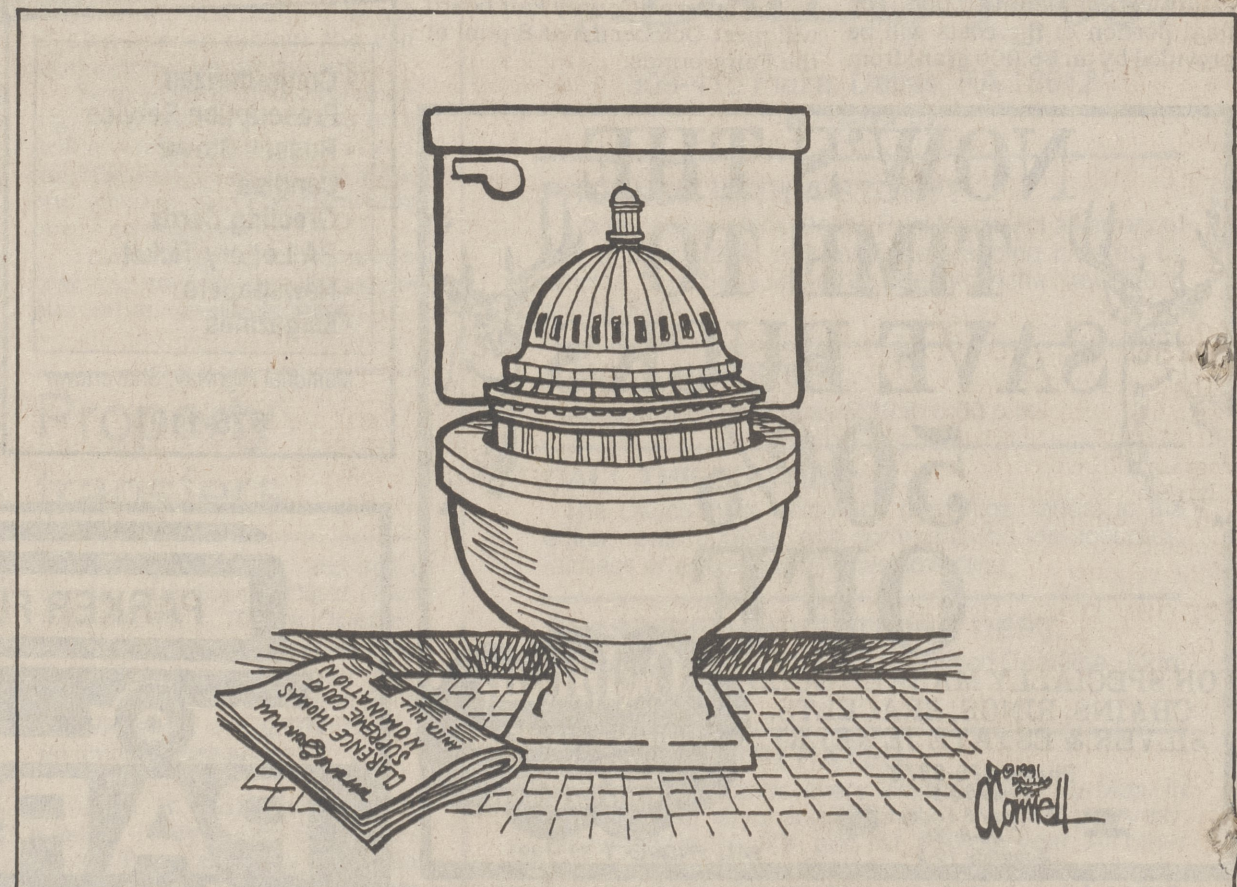
Bruce Hopkins, former Dallas resident has been cast in an off-Broadway production of Anouilh's Antigone in New York.

King's College appointed Edmund A. Napieralski, Shavertown to the faculty as assistant professor of English.

Elby's will open their fourth restaurant in the local area when they complete remodeling of the former Suburban Restaurant, located at the intersection of Routes 309 and 415.

Black Knights of Lake-Lehman turned in a decisive 29-6 victory over Plains.

Mountaineers pulled out a 17-7 victory over Hanover at the Mountaineers field last Saturday.



### A. Case for conservation

## So you want to plant a tree. Now is the time

By ALENE N. CASE

If your neighborhood is losing the stately old trees planted by earlier settlers or if you have moved into a new subdivision, you may be seriously considering planting trees. In fact, tree planting is one of the most popular and useful environmental actions that one individual can take.

But, you say, I thought spring was the best time for planting. Not necessarily. It has been my experience that late fall is the best time for putting in bare-rooted seedlings or small trees in this area of Pennsylvania. The roots can begin growing in their new location before the leafbuds open in the spring. Also, water requirements of the new tree are more likely to be met. A tree planted in the spring is often stressed by drought in late spring or summer before the roots become well established.

There are other advantages of

planting seedlings. One of the most important is cost. Except for fruit trees, most stock can be purchased for under \$10 each. This allows more trees to be planted and losses are more easily replaced. Transplanting becomes more risky as the size of the tree increases. Thus seedlings may have a higher survival rate than large "balled" trees, if the planting is done correctly. That brings us to the final advantage - you can do the work yourself!

So, go dig out those nursery catalogs and start picturing what you want your property to look like when the mortgage is paid off. (If you have no other catalogs, contact the National Arbor Day Foundation at 402-474-5655 and ask for member services.) Perhaps you would choose a weeping willow to soak up the water in an area that is soggy much of the time, or a couple of Norway spruce to keep

the north wind from blasting the house, or a maple to yield gorgeous fall colors, or an oak to provide hours of climbing fun for the grandchildren. Or perhaps you'd like to outsmart the gypsy moth caterpillars and plant their least favorite food - the yellow poplar or tulip tree.

Whatever the choice, check out the location before the tree arrives. Are you sure you know where the utility pipes are? If not, call the company in question. Dig a test hole to determine if there are obstructions such as old foundations or rocks that would be too heavy to move.

Plant as soon as possible after the stock arrives. If your nursery does not provide detailed planting and care instructions, I recommend the following steps. First, soak the roots in a bucket of water for one to two hours. Second, there is an old adage that a \$1 tree requires a \$10 hole - 18 inches

deep and 2 feet in diameter. Cut any sod. Third, turn the sod upside-down in the bottom of the hole to provide nutrients for the new tree (NEVER fertilize at planting time). Pile dirt on top of the sod to make a tightly packed cone. The height of the cone is correct when the seedling is covered to the same depth it was at the nursery. Fourth, depending on the soil moisture, add 1-2 gallons of water. Position the tree on the cone, spreading the roots evenly. Now, fill the hole with dirt and tamp to prevent air pockets that might cause the roots to die. Last, mulch generously with leaves.

The onset of winter brings the cold that the young tree needs to grow and prosper in the years to come.

Alene Case has worked on environmental projects since 1968. She holds a bachelors degree in zoology from Duke University. She lives in Trucksville.

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Ronald A. Bartzek Editor and Publisher	Charlotte E. Bartzek Associate Publisher
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