

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Grants are not the answer to education improvement

Articles in The Dallas Post this week and next take a look at proposals before the Pennsylvania Legislature to offer grants to parents who send their children to non-public schools. Bills before both the House and Senate contain language that would provide up to \$900 or 90 percent of the actual tuition, whichever is less. That would put the state in the position of directly paying in part the cost of sending children to schools that are not burdened with all the requirements placed on public schools.

Depending on your level of cynicism, the proposals are either a good-faith effort to improve the quality of education or a blatant attempt to win votes from parents who either send their children to private schools, or who would like to.

One premise on which these plans is based — whether spoken or not — is that public schools are not functioning as well as they should and a little more competition might spur educators to greater achievement. That may be the only positive aspect of the proposals, which, if passed are likely to cost the state millions of dollars while doing little to lower the expense of operating local school districts.

So-called privatizing of schools is much widely discussed these days, and it may be a good idea. There is reason to believe that competition among schools would raise the sights of teachers and administrators by more directly linking their compensation to the results they produce. But that can be done without making the general population pay for private school tuition for a few.

A start would be changing the tax base from which school funds are derived from property to income. Giving administrators the authority to set and enforce standards for teacher and student performance would also be a positive change.

In the end, though, the effects of schools and teachers are secondary to the value accorded to education in our homes. If parents instill a love of learning in their children — by word and deed — those young minds will be ready and eager to accept the instruction they receive. Unfortunately, too many children are given the opposite message; that school is a drag and acting too smart is an affront to your family or friends.

The bills now before the Legislature are one starting point toward improving the quality of education to which our children are exposed. But it will quickly become apparent that the state can't afford to be all things to all people, subsidizing free choice for parents while mandating expensive programs in public schools that are dependent on local taxes for their financial support. It would be far better to provide incentives for public schools to offer an educational experience of higher quality than is presently available to many children.

Why we accepted an ad for cigarettes

This week's Post contains an advertisement for cigarettes, and we anticipate that its publication may offend or anger some of our readers. But there are sound reasons why we accepted the ad as we do others for controversial products or services, though it often is not comfortable to do so.

This newspaper operates with the benefit of protections spelled out in the First Amendment to the Constitution, which clearly states that there are to be no restrictions placed on what we may publish beyond those imposed by civil or criminal law. But the First Amendment wasn't conceived simply to protect newspapers from censorship; it grants to all citizens and organizations the right to express their opinion or to convey to others news of interest. Our rights are no different than yours.

As one example of the amendment's effect, every time an individual states their feelings about a political figure without fear of retribution, they are exercising their First Amendment rights. The same holds true for so-called commercial speech, which includes advertisements.

By accepting this advertisement, does The Post condone cigarette smoking? No, we don't, though it is our right as a newspaper and as individuals to decide whether or not smoking is correct. Until cigarette smoking or advertising for cigarettes is banned, it is not our position to censor this form of speech, even if we believe it promotes unhealthy behavior.

Does the revenue we receive from this and other advertisements influence our decision? Not really. In this case, the advertising schedule arrived unsolicited, and its value was never considered in our plans for the newspaper. And, just as it showed up unannounced, it is equally likely that we'll never hear from this customer again, so we won't assume its revenue when we budget for the next year.

We appreciate that there are equally strong arguments against publishing this advertisement and invite readers to present them. But for now, we'll trust in individuals to weigh the merits and disadvantages of smoking and decide for themselves whether or not to light up.



Fall reflections

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Letter

Action now can avert water shortages

Editor:
What are we going to do when the water runs out?

The completion of the Cross Valley Expressway is now expected to give a substantial boost to development in the Back Mountain area. As a consequence, sooner or later, as more and more farms turn into sub-divisions it is likely that our occasional recurring water shortages will tend to become chronic.

When that fateful day arrives; when a turn of the faucet no longer yields results, what's the next step? Is there anything that can be done? Of course!

First, there's rationing. Due to an impending water shortage, Wilkes-Barre's Pennsylvania Gas and Water Company has already announced that, in December, it will begin water rationing. And several nearby communities have implemented very severe restrictions — some areas have reportedly limited daily water consumption to 20 gallons per household. This is less than one fifth the amount that community planners presently calculate as normal household consumption. (However it is more than the average Back Mt. rural household consumed at the turn of the century.)

There are at least two ways that water rationing can be enforced. The police power can be used — "big brother" watching in every household — or economic power can be used — metering and the pricing

water use with increasingly high rates for amounts consumed in excess of the community standard. (PG&W has announced such a policy, beginning in December.) Experience seems to show that this latter solution is more effective and induces less rancor.

Second, this could be the day of the "water witch" or "dowser". Their talents may be called upon to locate new wells or existing wells may be deepened. In other parts of the country suffering chronic water shortages, this "solution" has postponed, for a time, the necessity for a more permanent cure. However, in the Back Mt. area, some of the relatively few very deep wells that have been drilled ran into a layer of salt. (Some have run into pockets of gas.)

This may indicate that there is a limit, locally, that would preclude much hope from this endeavor.

Third, various existing bodies of water may be tapped. (Harveys Lake has long been considered by long-range planners as a potential water source for the Back Mountain.) However, water from such sources is generally polluted and would have to be filtered and purified before it would be suitable for human consumption. This would be costly and take some time to implement!

Fourth, the Susquehanna has always been touted as the "ultimate solution" for the Back Mt. region. However, in dry periods

there isn't much flow and whatever water that is now in the river has mostly been allocated for use by riverbank communities. Getting an allocation could be a major hurdle.

Finally, some really serious methods of conversation may have to be considered. In dry areas of the Nation, wastewater recycling is presently being utilized to boost groundwater supplies. Sophisticated equipment is employed to clean and purify wastewater and to inject it into the ground via special injection wells. Special toilets which require very little or no water are mandated. Use of today's ordinary household automatic dishwashers and clothes washer has to be forbidden. Water utilities supply tank trucks and "water buffaloes" to supplement inadequate supplies. Commonly drinking water supplies are separated from ordinary tap water (which is not potable). Rain barrels and cisterns are often used to catch and store rainwater.

So, although future water supplies in the Back Mt. may become much more costly and today's level of water use may no longer prevail, by exercising a little prudence and ingenuity, except for those living in the higher elevations, we are unlikely to completely "run out" in the foreseeable future. There are many alternative solutions that may be pursued.

Hugh P. King
Dallas

Library news

Ellen Casey reads to children during visit

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

Tuesday, Nov. 12 was a very exciting and busy day at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. Mrs. Ellen Casey, wife of Pennsylvania Governor, Robert P. Casey arrived at the library at 10 a.m. in response to our invitation to her to help promote the sale of the new library cookbook, *Chefs and Artists*. Her executive secretary and intern arrived a few minutes before she did to help set up the plans for her hour visit.

First on the agenda was her request to read to a group of children in the children's room and we invited the Little People from the day care on the second floor of the library to participate in the reading. They were thrilled and listened to the story telling with great interest and many questions. At 10:20, Mrs. Casey was introduced to the audience waiting for her in the reading room to celebrate "Books and Brunch with Ellen Casey". Her introduction included

many interesting facts about her; she is a great supporter of reading and libraries and has visited dozens of libraries throughout the state.

She served as chair of the Governor's Conference of Libraries and Information Services in 1990, and as the honorary chairperson of the Pennsylvania delegation to the President's White House Conference on Libraries this past summer. She is the mother of eight children, grandmother of 11, soon to be 14, and has done a lot of reading to young children. She sent the recipe for Governor Casey's Chocolate Cake for our cookbook and autographed many cookbooks while she was here. The refreshment table included many delicious cakes and cookies, all made with recipes from the cookbook, and two plates of the Governor's chocolate cake.

Ellen Casey is a very lovely and gracious lady and we were honored to have her at our library to

make the day pleasant and festive. Maryann Daily, chairman of our cookbook project, presented Ellen Casey with the library cookbook.

The cookbook which we will put on our library shelves as a permanent addition was autographed by Greg Welch, of Bangor, New South Wales, Australia who was the winner in the 10th anniversary of the 'Greater Wilks-Barre Triathlon'. He was also the world champion in 1990. Ellen Casey autographed the page with the Governor's chocolate cake with Best Wishes, always, dated November 12, 1991.

Our library had another busy Tuesday the week before on November 5 when the library became a polling place for voters of this Dallas Borough district. The library building is a welcome place for the voters, centrally located and easily accessible without any steps required to enter. Very busy, very noisy, but good to be a part of our voting privilege.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Nov. 20, 1931
DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS PLAN DANCE AND CARD PARTY

A large audience attended the Dallas Township P.T.A. meeting November 16 at the high school building. After the meeting the students presented "Tom Thumb Wedding" and "Thanksgiving Play."

Secretary of Revenue, Clyde L. King reminded school districts as well as boroughs and townships that they must file loan tax reports with the State Department of Revenue.

The senior class of Dallas High School will hold a dance and card party at Dallas High School tonight. Billy Rowland's orchestra will furnish the music.

Dallas Borough School football team will play the last game of the season this afternoon on the home field with Clarks Summit High School as their opponent.

50 Years Ago - Nov. 21, 1941
LEHMAN, KINGSTON TOWNSHIP FACE OFF FOR CHAMPIONSHIP

Bears evaded hunters on the first two days of the four-day game season with reports of only one bear being killed in Monroe Township by Gene Hackling of Noxen.

Lyman T. Place and his daughter Ellen, a teacher in the New York Public Schools were injured by a neighbor's "Billy" goat last week as they were driving the animal home.

Championship of the Back Mountain region hinges on the outcome of the Kingston Township-Lehman football classic at Lehman Thanksgiving morning with Lehman favored to win.

Wed - Arline Kiefer to Edgar Watson.

40 Years Ago - Nov. 23, 1951
GATE OF HEAVEN DEDICATED

The intense but friendly rivalry between Dallas Township and Westmoreland will come to face tomorrow 10 a.m. on the Trucksville gridiron.

Gate of Heaven was dedicated on Sunday by Bishop William J. Hafez before a capacity crowd of spectators.

Three Sweet Valley hunters bagged a 235 pound bear late Monday afternoon near Maple Swamp on North Mountain.

Russell Ruble resigned from Lehman-Jackson High School as instructor in Vocational Agriculture to be educational director and secretary of Pa. Cooperative Pot Growers in Allentown.

Wed - Mary Teresa Whalen to Paul H. Lauer.

Korean veteran Pfc. Theodore Busch will be home for Thanksgiving according to word received from Indiantown Gap.

30 Years Ago - Nov. 21, 1961
CONGRESSMAN DANIEL FLOOD HONORED IN BACK MOUNTAIN

Congressman Daniel Flood was honored by a group of Back Mountain residents joining the Wilkes-Barre Chapter 34 of the Reserve Officers Association of Irem Temple Club.

Students in Miss Esther Saxe's classes at Dallas Junior High School prepared more than 200 Thanksgiving tray favors for Junior Red Cross distribution to the Wilkes-Barre Veterans Hospital and Convalescent Homes.

A 5% penalty for late payment goes on all local taxes Dec. 1.

Final plans were made by the Dallas Junior Woman's Club for its annual fall dance, November 25 at Irem Temple Country Club with music for dancing by Bob Baird.

Plans are complete for Altar and Rosary Society's 10th Annual Christmas Tea, set for Friday, Dec. 8 at Gate of Heaven.

20 Years Ago - Nov. 18, 1971
DALLAS ELEMENTARY BUILDINGS ARE BARELY ADEQUATE

The task for preparing for its major winter task of clearing ice and snow from highways is well underway for PennDOT having been given advance notice by the snow which fell November 9.

Dr. Linford A. Werkheiser, released information to the District Board of Directors at a recent meeting on a survey of five elementary school buildings in the Dallas School District showing that for the present classroom facilities are just barely adequate for the number of pupils enrolled in the district.

As one of nine scouts in Boy Scout Troop 281 who are working on Eagle Scout projects, Jeff McDonald chose painting the basement of Dallas United Methodist Church as his community project.

Dallas dropped its final home game of the 1971 season with the Crusaders of Coughlin collecting the win 20-7.

Engaged - Linda Finn to Arthur E. Baird; Diane L. Martin to William Howard Miller.

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