

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Forget school choice, move on to changes that will really help

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives did the right thing last week when members voted to reject a so-called school choice bill. Representatives Phyllis Mundy and George Hasay joined with 112 others to defeat the measure. The state Senate had approved a similar proposal, but Senator Charles Lemmond voted against it.

In defeating the measure, Pennsylvania legislators stood up to lobbying from proponents both inside and out of the state, including some from Vice President Quayle and Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander. It's interesting that the Bush administration, which is supposedly a champion of state's rights, found it necessary to attempt to meddle in Pennsylvania's business.

It's good that the quality of education has become a high priority in American homes, offices and in the corridors of political power. As a nation, we need to more clearly understand the problems our lagging system has created, and to explore improvements. But school choice, at least as envisaged in these measures, is not a promising approach.

None of the nations with which American educational achievement compares so poorly have adopted school choice policies like the one proposed here. In virtually every case, they value education more highly, relate it to the real world, spend more time at it, and expect more from students and teachers. In Germany, for example, potential teachers must complete a double major in two subjects *before* they begin training for the classroom.

The tragedy of inadequate education is cause for individual, as well as national, concern. There seems little doubt that, for most people, greater knowledge has contributed to a more successful and satisfying life. And it is becoming painfully clear that the United States will suffer losses in quality of life about equal to our lagging educational achievement.

If the battle over school choice has brought these concerns to the forefront, that's good. But wasting time and money on this issue is counterproductive; instead of lobbying the politicians we could be devising new curricula and establishing higher standards. Instead of arguing about \$900 subsidies for a few, we could be assuring that every child comes to school prepared to learn. Until we can do those things, choice will simply mean a change of venue for mediocrity.

Don't just raise taxes, make them fair

It looks like property owners are in for a big increase in county taxes next year. The majority county commissioners unveiled their 1992 budget last week and it projects a 26.5 percent tax hike. Despite the massive increase, county salaries will be frozen, 50 jobs will be eliminated and some services cut back.

While they're at it, the commissioners might take the opportunity to not only raise taxes, but to make them fair. They could do that by re-assessing all property in the county, and by mandating regular re-assessments in the future.

But don't hold your breath. The commissioners are good enough politicians to know that doing what's right and best for the county won't always get them re-elected. Besides being fair, re-assessment could promote development, but it is opposed by powerful interests, including office holders who also are owners of older properties.

So, if you own a new home, or if you've made major improvements, expect to continue paying a disproportionately high share of property taxes. On the other hand, if you've been thinking about building, you might want to check with your tax office to see how much more you'll be paying. The difference between that and similar properties that haven't been re-assessed in years might astound you.

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 a daytime phone number so that we may verify authenticity. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar.

THE DALLAS POST

Published Weekly by Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
Telephone: 717-675-5211

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Diabetes group will hold Christmas Party

Wilkes-Barre General Hospital's Diabetes Education/Support Group will hold its annual Christmas Party on Thursday, Dec. 19, 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at the Thomas P. Saxton Medical Pavilion, 468 Northampton Street, Edwardsville. Participants are reminded to bring a grab bag gift for exchange. Refreshments will be served.

Support group meetings are free of charge and open to individuals with diabetes, family members and friends.

Contact Wilkes-Barre General Hospital's Education Department at 829-8111, ext. 2300, for more information or to register for the meeting.



Snow pony

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Letters

More money won't buy better teachers

Editor:
Dallas Taxpayers' Forum responds to Bill Wagner, president of the Dallas Education Assoc., comments.

Wagner disputes the suggestion that teachers should consider the economy when negotiating a new contract. Wagner said "I don't think the education you provide kids can fluctuate with the economy."

The Dallas Taxpayers' Forum would like to know what that means. Mr. Wagner, are you saying that if we give you a 5%, 8% or 10% raise you will be that much better of a teacher? If so we immediately ask your resignation. Our children need teachers that can be trusted and be the best they can be. We need teachers with a big heart not a fat wallet.

In response to Superintendent

Gerald Wycallis' remarks "The community is saying they are not against an increase but it should be within a certain realm." Mr. Wycallis hear the people. We are demanding a two year salary and benefit freeze. This request is based on the fact that the Dallas Area teachers are the highest paid teachers in Luzerne County. The average teacher salary is also more than double the average Luzerne County income of \$18,100. (Source: Chamber of Commerce).

Did you know?
Of the Dallas School Districts 145 teachers 86 receive a salary over \$40,000.

30 receive a salary between \$35,000 and \$39,999.
10 receive a salary between \$30,000 and \$34,999.

15 receive a salary between \$25,000 and \$27,999.

4 receive a salary between \$22,265 and \$24,999.

Add a \$7,200 benefit package to the above salaries and that figure will show that 121 teachers receive salary and benefits totaling over \$40,000.

And of the 121, sixty seven receive salary and benefits totaling over \$50,000.

Another fact, 40 of the district's 145 teachers have 20 or more years of experience.

If money plus experience equal quality education Dallas Area students should stand head and shoulders above the rest.

Charlotte Arbogast
Dallas Township
Dallas Taxpayers' Forum

Jackson police chief deserves better pay

Editor:
The proposed salary of \$19,000 for Don Jones as full-time police chief of Jackson Township is inadequate. He has done an exemplary job for 25 years. His efforts are a major reason why crime is low in our area.

Teachers, who only work part of

the year, are paid \$35,000 and principals are paid more. Teachers salaries are constantly raised to disproportionate levels on the assumption that the quality of public education will improve. Police officers upon whose efforts our safety depends, are paid a pittance because they have done

such a good job in keeping our community safe.

Patrolmen should be paid at least as much as teachers, and the chief should get at least as much as a school principal.

Ronald E. Bost, M.D.
Jackson Township

Library news

Books are on sale for Christmas

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library cookbook is available for sale at the circulation desk at the library and at various other areas throughout the Back Mountain area. They are available at Back Mountain Servistar, Back Mountain Books, Sue Hand Imagery, Penn State Campus, College Misericordia. The cost of the book is \$12.95 and they make a very nice Christmas gift. The book is unique in that it is much more than just a cookbook.

One of our patrons was using the cookbook for Christmas giving and decided to crochet a cotton dishcloth to put with the book; another lady decided to send hot pads with hers.

Our on-going book sale of current titles being sold in the office area of the library has been very popular and during the Christmas season, many people are buying them for gifts. One of our patrons

told us she sent two of the books to relatives in New Orleans as gifts and she received very favorable comments from them. Our slogan for this sale is, "They're cheaper than a paperback", and this is true with today's prices.

The library will be closed Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 and Christmas Day, Dec. 25 in celebration of the Christmas holiday. The staff of the library, Susan, Nancy, Marilyn, Charlotte, Jane, Lou Ellen, Millie, Marie, Jane and Will wish all our friends and patrons a very Merry Christmas filled with love, peace and friendship.

New books at the library: "The Leading Lady: Dinah's Story" by Betty White and Tom Sullivan has as its real star, a dog named Dinah. This is a heartwarming story about a dog named Dinah. For nine years the beautiful golden retriever was Tom's best friend, his right arm—and his eyes. A world-

class guide dog trained by the Leader Dog Foundation for the Blind, Dinah gave Tom, a man who has been blind since birth, his first real taste of independence. And she gave the entire Sullivan family unflinching loyalty and love.

"Dangerous Waters" by Bill Eidson is a story about Riley Burke who has it all: a successful advertising agency, a beautiful house, a trim sailboat, and a gorgeous wife. But no longer sure of his wife's love, he begins an affair. Riley and his would-be lover are waiting for a boat to launch when a young man is attacked by a brutal thug. When Riley intervenes, he finds himself inextricably drawn into a chain of events that will change his life forever; finds himself, suddenly, in dangerous waters. If he can just stay one step ahead of the police and the killer; it may not cost him his life. This tale of action and suspense will set your heart racing from the first page to the last.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Dec. 18, 1931 POST OFFICE INSTALLS CANCELING MACHINE

A new automatic cancellation machine was installed at the Post Office recently to lighten the work in the local office. This machine supersedes the old fashioned method of hand cancellation of letters and speeds up the preparation of outgoing mail.

Dr. Henry M. Laing Firemen will distribute clothing, food, toys and funds for needy families of Dallas and vicinity early next week.

Dallas Borough High School started its basketball season Tuesday before a small crowd in the high school gym. In the first game the girls team defeated Kingston High School alumnae by a score of 36-16.

In the second week of the Rural League games played at Meridian Hall, Shavertown defeated Lehman 32-26. Dallas lost to Trucksville 41-30.

50 Years Ago - Dec. 19, 1941 STOOKEY NAMED AIR RAID WARDEN

Relief Association of Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Co. will receive \$368 and the Relief Association of Shavertown and Trucksville will split \$232.12, from the Fire Insurance Tax Fund approved by Auditor General F. Clair Ross.

Charles Stookey was named Zone Warden by Luzerne County Defense Council Air Raid Zone 9 comprising Kingston, Lake-Lehman, Ross, Dallas and Jackson Townships and Dallas Borough.

Wed - Joan Winter to Alfred Rogowski.

John P. Kirkendall, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Kirkendall, Lake Street, has been promoted from Major to Lt. Col. in U.S. Air Corps.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1951 DALLAS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL GETS UP-TO-DATE DESKS

Traffic was brought to a virtual standstill during Tuesday's storm. Coupled with zero weather of Saturday and Sunday nights it was an indication of what January and February have in store.

Bob Grose, Dallas, professional baseball player in Class D. Mountain States League has been drafted by the West Palm Beach Club of the Class B Florida International League.

Installation of up-to-date chairs and desks for four classrooms in the Dallas Township School was completed last weekend.

Mrs. Alma Vavrek, Demunds, was give a wonderful Christmas present when she learned that her son, Corp. John F. Vavrek, missing in Korean Action since Nov. 20, 1950 is a prisoner of the Reds instead of dead.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1961 HOME MOVED FOR WIDER HIGHWAY

Christmas carolers at College Misericordia sang up and down Lake Street pausing in front of four residence halls.

Leroy Roberts 2 1/2 story home in Fernbrook is being moved from its present location next door to Noon's Garage up Main Street one block to a recently purchased lot on the corner of Orchard Street due to property needed for a widened and straightened highway program.

Engaged - Della Marie Steinruck to Warren Long.

In Church League action last Saturday at Lake-Lehman gym, East Dallas toppled Prince of Peace 54-46; Harveys Lake dumped Therese's 56-46; Huntsville edged Shavertown 47-43.

Dallas Senior High hoopsters scored its fourth straight victory downing Hanover at home 71-63.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1971 DAMA GETS THIRD SET OF ASSESSMENTS

The third set of assessment rolls for DAMA will be completed for delivery by end of January. To date 1,100 assessments have been delivered according to information furnished by the authority at their meeting December 16.

PUC handed down a decision December 16, indicating it would approve increased rates for UGI providing the utility filed a revised application within five days or by December 24.

Dallas Township Police Department received their new police cruiser, a 1972 Dodge Polara when it was turned over to them last Friday by James Richardson of L.L. Richardson, Dallas auto dealer.

Fifteen Christmas baskets chock full of groceries were delivered to families throughout the Back Mountain community Sunday by Dallas Junior Women's Club.

Dallas wrestlers posted a 2-0 record this past week as they won exhibition meets against Tunkhannock Area and the Wyalusing Rams.