

## THE DALLAS POST

## EDITORIALS

## Fact-finder's recommendations missed the mark

There are two major faults in fact-finder John Hamrick's recommendations for settling a contract between the Dallas School District and its teachers. First, the salary annual increases of 8.5 to 9 percent are too large. Second, a four-year contract with those increases is simply untenable given the state of the economy.

Hamrick erred in his methodology when he recommended the four-year contract containing salary increases of 8.5 to 9 percent. In comparing the teachers' situation only with nearby school districts, and not with other employers, Hamrick simply missed the point being made by residents opposed to such large increases — that most workers in the private sector have received raises of less than half that, if anything at all, and expect to do no better in the coming year. And Hamrick all but ignored the fact that teachers in the Dallas district already are among the highest paid in Luzerne County and enjoy a salary scale and benefit package that most employees of private companies can only dream of.

The problem is simply this; the earnings of taxpayers who pay educators' salaries has risen much more slowly than have those of teachers and administrators. That fact, combined with shrinking state and federal contributions to local school districts, has put an unfair burden on taxpayers.

Instead of asking teachers to moderate their demands in the face of present economic uncertainties, Hamrick's recommendations would commit the residents of the Dallas district to a contract that could be disastrous. No wonder school directors voted against the report. To have done otherwise would have been irresponsible.

## Bad timing in added Dallas administrator

It may be an essential position, but the Dallas School Board's decision to appoint an assistant superintendent came at an inopportune time. Creating a new administrative position at the same time that angry taxpayers are urging the board to play hardball in contract negotiations with the teachers' union is incongruous at best.

One argument raised against public schools is that too large a portion of budgets is spent on administration. Less than two years ago, the Dallas board eliminated a similar position after the person who held the job retired; now it is deemed important again.

A large group of taxpayers wants the Dallas School Board to pinch pennies by freezing teacher salaries at the same time that a spotlight has been put on educational achievement in America. The directors task is not easy, but they have made it more difficult by adding an administrator at this time.

## The Christmas story offers inspiration

Two thousand years after it began, the Christmas story continues to inspire and comfort millions of people around the world. Its message of hope and salvation has survived war and persecution; greed and envy; false prophets and imperfect leaders. Yet, Christians keep the faith, and cling to the promise offered by their Messiah.

Not everyone believes the story of the birth of the Saviour literally, but the message of joy that is at its heart has universal appeal. Everyone, no matter how powerful or accomplished, must at times place their trust in others, whether spiritual or human. For Christians, the birth of Jesus marks a new beginning for mankind, and Christmas is a time for worship whether alone or with family and fellow believers.

In the rush and distraction of the holiday season, all who celebrate this special time will find a moment for reflection on the true meaning of the season. But whether or not one believes the Christmas story as historical fact, it can inspire us all to a better, more generous life.

## 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.

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Snowy afternoon

Photo by Charlotte Bartzek

## A. Case for conservation

## O Christmas Tree, what to do with thee?

By ALENE N. CASE

Your living room is almost magical after the Christmas tree lights are turned on for yet another year. The evergreen reminds us all of everlasting goodness and the lights brighten the darkest time of winter. But, at the risk of resembling Scrooge, I am asking you to imagine that same tree in a week or two when the needles are beginning to fall. Is there an environmentally benign way to dispose of this lovely holiday symbol?

First of all, please do not put your tree into one of those huge plastic bags. Sheets can be used to keep needles off the carpet while taking the tree out of the house. The bag is a nuisance to the crews that carry the trees away to be burned (yes, BURNED!). The bag must be removed and carted away to the landfill. Also, plastic is made from petroleum and it is important to reduce the amount of energy used for disposal since most trees have already required considerable energy for transportation and lighting.

Now let me return to the issue of tree burning. What a waste! I must admit to being surprised and dismayed when I discovered that the Back Mountain boro/township pick-up service does not chip the trees for landscaping the local parks. If you live in an apartment and have no other choice, put your tree by the street, but call or write your council to suggest chipping as an alternative to burning. For those of you with yards or gardens there are alternative ways to get the most out of your tree.

One of the simplest uses is to place the tree on its side about 8-10 feet from your backyard bird feeding station. This provides cover for the birds as they come and go. Some writers suggest redecorating the tree for the birds. However, our common avian visitors seem to systematically ignore popcorn and cranberries. A couple of suet balls would provide a treat for nut-hatches and downy woodpeckers.

Evergreen branches also provide excellent cover for bulbs. If you have tulip or hyacinth beds, covering prevents damage by al-

ternating freezing and thawing. These boughs are easily removed in the spring when the flowers begin to come up. The trunk of the tree could be cut into short lengths and stacked for use as fuel for a few outdoor barbecues next summer. (Burning evergreen wood inside is dangerous because of creosote build-up in the chimney.)

The tree and/or branches can then be added to the pile of burnable yard wastes which you have undoubtedly accumulated over the past year. It can be burned in the spring (remember to get a permit). Mix the ashes with compost and spread as fertilizer on your garden.

Finally, if someone in your neighborhood has a chipper-shredder, plan a chipping party to celebrate the new year. Each family could carry the chips from their own tree home in a paper bag and use them around the shrubbery by the front door. The fragrance will remind you of the holidays each time you pick up the morning newspaper.

O Christmas Tree, yes, we can use thee.

## Library news

## Hume Cronyn writes a Hollywood bio

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library Book Club held its Christmas Tea on December 16 and shared the festivities with Friends members and community neighbors. The program was presented by Mary Ann Ostrowski with singing accompanied by an autoharp. There was also group carol singing. The tea table and cookie table were well laden with interesting drink and goodies and everyone enjoyed the Christmas attitude. The Book Club does not meet in January or February and will resume meetings on Monday, March 18 at the library.

The Victorian dollhouse on display in the library was decorated with Christmas wreaths and a Christmas tree and most of the 57 lights were lit for the Book Club party. This is quite an impressive sight and certainly made it seem like Christmas.

The library will be closed on New Year's Eve, Dec. 31 and New Year's Day, Jan. 1 and will reopen

for the new year 1992 on Jan. 2 at 9:30. The library staff: Susan, Nancy, Marilyn, Charlotte, Jane, Lou Ellen, Millie, Marie and Jane wish all our friends and patrons a very Happy New Year and a prosperous 1992 with health, peace and happiness.

New books at the library: A new Book club purchase is "Blindsight" by Robin Cook. Just when you thought it was safe to go back to your doctor or your hospital, this author produces a new thriller that will make you think twice. His state-of-the-art tales of medical horror have earned him a vast following worldwide. And now comes his newest! This is Robin Cook at his disturbing, electrifying best. Set in Manhattan, the story is of a city forensic pathologist and his battle to foil a plot of unimaginable evil. A chilling, haunting tale of terror.

A new honor book donated to the library is "An Old-Fashioned Christmas" from the Ideals Publishing Company. This book is

donated in honor of Elizabeth Cox Kozemchak, by her grandmother, Nancy S. Kozemchak. The title page includes the message, "Never a Christmas morning, never the old year ends, but someone thinks of someone, old days, old times, old friends. The book is divided into seven categories of Christmas: the scents, sights, sounds, feel, tastes, secrets and spirit of Christmas. The illustrations are marvelous and they are accompanied by poems or short stories relating to the pictures. A nostalgic memory!

"A Terrible Liar" by Hume Cronyn is a memoir in which the author shows himself to be a writer of grace and wit, capable of telling a good story on himself, as well as about countless legends of the stage and screen. His stories are both humorous and insightful, ranging from what happened when Tallullah Bankhead refused to wear certain clothing in the film "Lifeboat" to Spencer Tracy's reaction when Hume lit Katherine Hepburn's cigarette.

## Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Dec. 25, 1931  
D. HENRY LAING FIRE CO. DONATES FOOD

Members of the Harveys Lake Fire Co. No. 1, discussed plans for erection of a combined community house, police station and fire company building at Harveys Lake, at a meeting held recently at the home of Sen. A.J. Sordani.

Six trucks loaded with \$700 worth of foodstuffs, clothing and toys will distribute Christmas cheer to needy families of the community today as Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Co. completes its work of Christmas basket distribution.

Both boys' and girls' basketball teams of Kingston Township High School started practice during the past week at Meridian Hall, Dallas, for the season which opens after the Christmas vacation.

50 Years Ago - Dec. 30, 1941  
AIR RAID POST WARDENS NAMED

Wyoming Valley Garden Club's Christmas doorway contest in Dallas Borough will be judged by Mrs. Wilbur Manning and Mrs. Jerome Marshall. Mr. and Mrs. J. Williams have contributed the prize, a beautiful flower container.

Air raid post wardens and their assistants were named. District 9 is now completely manned.

James Franklin, Harry Ohlman and Nick Cave were mentioned to fill the unexpired term of Councilman James Ayre who has taken a defense job with the York Safe and Lock Co.

Wed - Catherine Scott to Donald Wilson; Lillian Ward to Sgt. Richard Huddy.

Shavertown Methodist Church ladies, Eastern Star and Dallas Women's Club sent cookies and candies to local soldier boys serving Uncle Sam away from home during the holidays.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 28, 1951  
OVER 100 CHILDREN VISIT SANTA CLAUS AT THE AMERICAN LEGION

Natona Mills entertained its employees Saturday evening at American Legion Home, Wilkes-Barre with 350 guests present.

Lehman-Jackson High School homerooms showed such excellence in their Christmas decorations that judging was difficult. Three rooms in both the senior and junior high were rated so closely that fairness dictated award of three prizes instead of one in each group.

Engaged - Lois Cragle to Anthony Yockavitch Jr.; Ann Ehrig to Ralph Arnold Yeust.

Over 100 children accepted the invitation of Daddow-Isaacs Post American Legion to an open house Saturday, Santa Claus in the person of Jack Donohue distributed the gifts.

Westmoreland turned in a 63-45 victory over Huntington Mills under new coach, Bernard Rockovich. The Westmoreland Jayvee and girls' teams lost by good-sized scores.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 28, 1961  
YMCA CAMPAIGN EXCEEDS GOAL

Following their long established custom members of Dallas Rotary entertained youngsters of the community at a Christmas party at Prince of Peace Parish Hall.

Engaged - Elizabeth Prescott Ruggles to Douglas Boe Hamilton. Youth Division of the Back Mountain YMCA went over its goal in YMCA World Service Campaign.

Proceeds from this campaign are forwarded to National YMCA World Service Headquarters for use in remote areas of the country for establishment, staffing and programming of YMCA's.

Ann Marie Spencer, five month old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Spencer was selected by James Kozemchak for his annual Christmas picture because she was such a beautiful baby and so completely in the spirit of the Christmas season.

After four weeks of Church League play, East Dallas over Harveys Lake, 55-53; Huntsville over St. Therese, 61-41 and Shavertown winning its first game over Prince of Peace 33-31.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 28, 1971  
UGI WILL INCREASE ELECTRICITY RATES

Dallas Township and Kingston Township have issued notices that no more warnings will be given residents who park cars or vehicles illegally from 2 a.m.-6 a.m. on all roads, including the berm in both townships. Henceforth police will immediately ticket all illegally parked cars.

Engaged - Anne Marie Pieczynski to Joseph A. Hometchko.

Dallas cagers defeated Coughlin 88-74. The J.V. Mountaineers dropped their second straight after leading through the entire first half.