

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Union exaggerates teachers' importance

Doing their job raised to mythic level

It has been hard to miss the many articles about the state of negotiations between the Dallas School Board and the teachers' union in this and other newspapers in the past few months. The tone of the reports has varied from balanced coverage of the situation to outright hostility against teachers. One consistency on both sides has been to exaggerate the role teachers play in society. Opponents of higher salaries say that many teachers are overpaid in relation to their skills, while the teachers' champions claim that educators hold the future success of the nation in their hands. Both sides are wrong to assign so much influence to teachers.

There are a couple of fallacies at work in accepting this position. First, no correlation has been found between the amount of money spent per pupil (which is mostly in teacher salaries) and the corresponding educational achievement. In an opinion page piece recently in *The New York Times*, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York used the fact that North Dakota students scored highest on math SAT's to advance a theory that proximity to the Canadian border was a more important determining factor in math achievement than was spending. His research showed a far stronger relationship between geography and score than between spending and score.

The second big mistake being made is an overemphasis on the influence of teacher performance on students. The plain fact is that students who come to school ready and willing to learn will do so regardless of the skill level of the teacher. All of us have had good teachers and bad, and thus it always shall be. The best teachers are those who know and love their subject, not those who have taken the most courses on teaching theory or creative blackboard arrangement. That's one important difference between the American education system and that of many other nations; we teach a lot about teaching, they teach about subjects.

Perhaps all the huff-and-puff about teacher salaries is a symptom of larger issues in American life. Maybe the misplaced emphasis on what teachers do and how much they make replaces the energy we should be spending on our children's development — and our own. Could it be that we expect someone else to solve our problems, teach our children and save the world? It has never worked that way, and is unlikely to do so now.

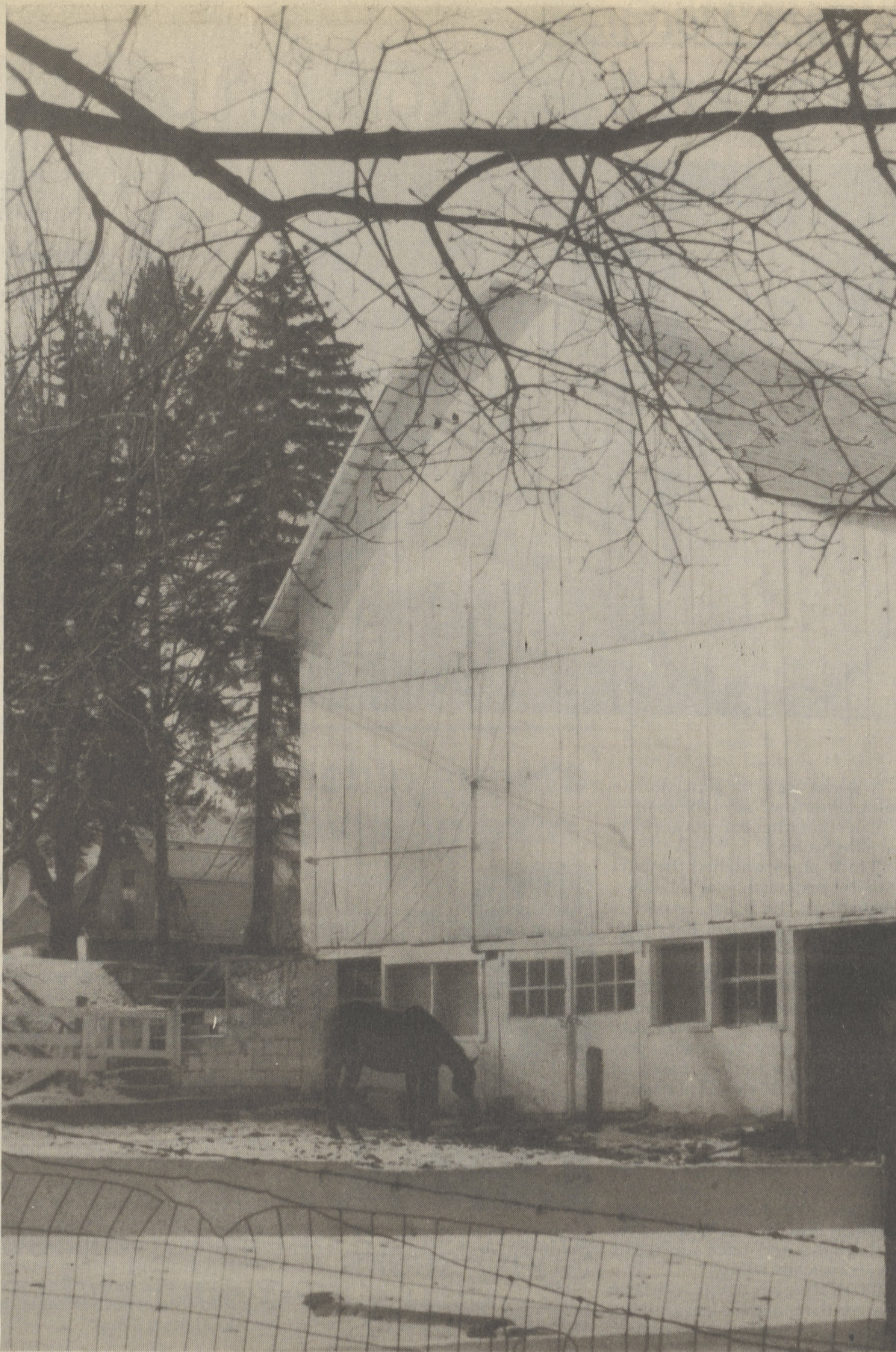
The status that the teachers' union attempts to gain for its members is similar to the standing that computer operators once held; sort of a modern-day medicine man without whose aid we would be lost in an unfamiliar world. This "You're nothing without us" concept is nonsense, and parents of successful students know it. Do good teachers help their students to learn more? Of course they do, and it would be good if their compensation reflected that fact, as well as the reverse. It would be even better if bad teachers could be removed from the classroom. Until that can be done, we should all free ourselves from the misguided notion that we owe teachers a debt of gratitude for doing their jobs. They're members of society too, and any benefit they provide affects them as much as anyone else.

For the moment, the question isn't whether or not teachers in the Dallas district deserve a nine or 10 percent annual raise; that is simply too much to justify in the present economy no matter how skilled or valuable they are. Many of the people who pay taxes to support the schools have seen their incomes grow slightly, if at all in the past two years, and they are right to expect teachers to share the burden of a stagnant economy.

To their credit, Dallas teachers haven't walked off the job or given any indication that they intend to, as their representatives negotiate with the administration. That display of responsibility has been welcome, and it is to be hoped that it will continue until an acceptable settlement is reached.

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.



Chow time in winter

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Letters

Says teacher raise foes are minority

Editor:
As a member of this community since 1979, I would like to voice my support for excellence in public education. It is the obligation of all taxpayers and community members to support public education for all children. This obligation exists whether or not we have or have ever had children in the public school system.

Teachers in the Dallas School District are experienced professionals. Therefore, we should expect to pay these people well. They are mentors to students and new teachers.

I feel that it is crucial that we recognize that the current taxpayer protests may not represent the majority opinion in the controversy over the teachers' salaries and program budget for the Dallas

School District. At a recent meeting of the School Board a group of about 70 people assembled to voice their opinions about the wage freeze. Superficially, it would appear that the supporters of a wage freeze represent the majority opinion.

Recently, I noticed that someone put up a sign on Route 309 near DAMA which reads, "Sound Horn If You Support a Freeze on Dallas Teacher Wages." Here was an opportunity to obtain real numbers in order to estimate more accurately the level of support for this position. A count was taken on Thursday, Feb. 6, 1992 during the afternoon rush hour near the sign. Total honks and total cars plus pick-up trucks were counted. Of 946 cars or pick-up trucks, only 14 vehicles honked their horns

in a half-hour period—1.5% of the total. Trucks and buses were excluded from the survey. From these data I conclude that the vocal group of community members showing up at the School Board meetings is simply a well-organized but insignificant minority.

Continuity in educational experience is essential to the present and future well-being of this community and our state and nation. Our security depends on making generous financial commitments to the schools through our taxes and personal support of school programs. Let us not allow an insignificant but vocal group of people ruin the future of quality education in our community.

James M. Case
Trucksville

J.W.J.

This is what we lost in Vietnam

By J.W. JOHNSON

In a few months will be the 22nd anniversary marking the death of anti-war protesters at Kent State University. Earlier will be the 17th anniversary of Saigon's fall. This year will also mark another anniversary for me as it will be yet another year when I can't quite bring myself to visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington. Nevertheless, I find myself drawn to books and movies about the subject.

For the longest time I couldn't talk about Vietnam. Not that I had shot anyone, or had even been fired upon.

No, I was safe and secure. As a vehicle mechanic in a United States Air Force combat support group, my part in the Vietnam nightmare was making sure that pilots and support personnel made it to those B-52's so that bombs could be dropped on hundreds of people at a time. I didn't have to look anyone in the eye when I killed them. And our guys did their jobs well. My unit even received a Presidential Unit Citation.

I'm not proud of that citation, nor of my indirect responsibility for the deaths of many people. But I did my duty, the job my country asked me to do. And I entered the

Vietnam War as a wrapped-in-the-flag patriot; I left, honorably discharged, but under threat of disciplinary action for a refusal to remove an MIA bracelet from my wrist.

All of the preceding is both catharsis for me, and prologue for you. Prologue to telling you about a book I recently read by Col. Harry Summers called *On Strategy*.

The book has been described as the "definitive analysis" of war, and is now used as a student text at the Army, Navy and Air War Colleges. I recommend it to you. However, and while I will never be proud of my part in the war, many persons, including Summers, make the mistake of saying the United States lost the war in Vietnam. That theme is central, for example, in the Clint Eastwood film, *Heartbreak Ridge*.

But Summers, and many others who've made this claim are just plain wrong.

Summers' book repeatedly states that we lost the war. That is also the public's perception. The truth is that U.S. military forces won all the major battles and had the country under control when President Richard Nixon—bowing to extreme and (appropriate) public pressure—began pulling U.S. military forces out of Vietnam.

In the sense that our corrupt and self-serving ally South Vietnam was finally overrun, the war there was lost. But it wasn't lost by the U.S. Army, Air Force or Navy. It was lost by south Vietnamese forces. U.S. military forces won its war. Had those forces stayed, South Vietnam wouldn't be Communist today.

Civilian objectors (and by 1970 I was an in-service objector) forced the troop recall. And it will remain incorrect to say U.S. forces lost the war, a view which unfortunately has become almost a cliché in today's discussion of that tragic misstep by Washington.

U.S. political leadership blundered, strategy was confused and yet the U.S. military accomplished assigned goals. As Summers points out in his book, these were inadequate goals, but as long as U.S. military forces were there, Vietnam remained non-communist.

Nixon and President Ford withdrew U.S. forces, having no other choice, rightly so; only after that was South Vietnam conquered. U.S. forces left victorious. And while, in my mind, the credit for that will always remain a heavy burden for me personally, the fact remains, we didn't lose the war in Vietnam.

What we lost, collectively and individually, was our innocence.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Feb. 12, 1932 SHOE REPAIR SHOP OPENS IN DALLAS

Women representing every neighborhood and vicinity met at the home of Mrs. George Beehler to form a committee to make plans for a card party and dance to be held at College Misericordia for the benefit of needy families of the region. In order to have the committee function more efficiently in raising and distribution of funds a Dallas Community Club was formed.

Joseph Anthony has opened his new up-to-date shoe repair shop in the Garinger Building on Main St., Dallas. New machinery of the latest type and design has been installed so Mr. Anthony can render first class service in the quickest time.

Junior class of Kingston Twp., High School is preparing for its annual class play "Go Slow, Mary" a comedy which will be given Feb. 22 and 23 at the Shavertown M. Church.

50 Years Ago - Feb. 13, 1942 ARMOUR LEATHER OF NOXEN SENDS PRODUCTS TO RUSSIA

Dallas High School Band appeared for the first time in its new uniforms at the Fourth Class District Teachers Association in the high school auditorium Monday night. The Band Parents Association acknowledged a gift of \$100 from Joseph MacVeigh and expressed its gratitude to James Oliver and Harold Titman for generous gifts.

Pay increases retroactive to November 1, 1941, and totaling more than \$7,000 were distributed to employees of Armour Leather Co. at Noxen on Wednesday. The big plant is busy on war orders for heavy leather and much of its present output is being sent to Russia.

Donald J. Warmouth former Shavertown resident is serving as chaplain at Fort Knox, Ky.

Emma Ruth Shaver to wed Wm. J. Broad, tomorrow.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 15, 1952 JOHN WAYNE STARS IN 'FLYING LEATHERNECK'

Sfc. Emory Kitchen's body was recovered from Coosa River, Ala. by a fisherman. Stationed at Ft. McClellan, but off duty, Kitchen was operating a speed boat, when the boat capsized throwing him and his companion in to the swiftly moving stream. The second body has not been recovered.

"Flying Leatherneck" in technicolor starring John Wayne and Robert Ryan now playing at the Himmler Theatre.

Engaged - Joan Coolbaugh to Donald Britt; Joan Edith Cragle to Seaman Richard L. Culver.

30 Years Ago - Feb. 15, 1962 SHAVERTOWN POST OFFICE HELD UP BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Acceptance of the new Shavertown Post Office by the U.S. Government is being held up pending an appeal from the contract rental price by Wyoming National Bank of Wilkes-Barre, owner of the building according to Superintendent of Mails, G.P. Finn, Wilkes-Barre.

Pa. Fish Commission trout stocking program gets underway tomorrow afternoon when four trucks containing 4,000 Brook Trout and 4,000 Rainbow Trout will arrive at the Alderson section of Harveys Lake.

Huntsville defeated East Dallas 49-40 thus wrapping up Church League championship. Therese's beat Shavertown 54-52 and Harveys Lake was victorious over Prince of Peace 61-53.

Two arch rivals Dallas and Lake-Lehman basketball teams will go at it Friday at 8 p.m. in the Lake-Lehman gym.

Engaged - Carol A. Rother to Frederick Hons.

Wed - Ruth Gordon Weed to George Shupp.

Anniversary - Mr. and Mrs. Morris Lloyd, 65 years.

20 Years Ago - Feb. 17, 1972 MISERICORDIA BUILDS NEW GIRLS DORM

Exterior construction on College Misericordia's new \$2 million girls' dormitory has nearly reached completion as workmen continue to lay brick facing. It will be open for occupancy with the opening of the fall semester this year.

A petition from Dug Road Area Taxpayers Association was presented to Kingston Township Board of Supervisors at its February 9 meeting, voicing their request to be included on the Dallas Area Municipal Authority sewer system.

A third full time police officer for Dallas Borough was sworn in at the borough council meeting Tuesday night. Patrolman Ronald Duddik will assume his duties immediately.

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Guidelines offered to those on fixed incomes for tax forgiveness

Rep. Phyllis Mundy, Kingston, wants to remind residents, especially senior citizens and those on a fixed income, filing for the special income tax forgiveness to closely follow the instructions on pages 27 through 29 of PA 40 tax form.

"In order to claim the tax forgiveness on line 14a, you must first read instructions on page 27 to determine if you're eligible for this tax forgiveness using the Eligibility Income Table on page 29 and then record the amount on your tax form," Mundy explained.

The Department of Revenue

provides a free income tax preparation service for individuals who are elderly, on a fixed or limited income, handicapped or housebound. Uncomplicated federal, state and local income tax returns are prepared by the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly programs.

Mundy encourages residents who think they may qualify to contact the Pennsylvania Revenue Department district offices for information or call the Internal Revenue Service's toll free number at 1-800-829-1040.