

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Judge's ruling should end DAMA dispute

Luzerne President Judge Patrick J. Toole has laid to rest the long-simmering feud between two trash hauling companies, a few residents and the Dallas Area Municipal Authority (DAMA). The disagreement began after two Back Mountain communities — Dallas Township, and Kingston Township — decided that DAMA was the proper vehicle through which they could institute recycling as mandated by state law. That was a logical decision since DAMA has a database of households and businesses developed over years of managing the area's public sewer system.

Dallas Borough seized the opportunity to link up with the other two, even though the borough's smaller population is below the minimum requirement. But officials realized that the DAMA program would save money for most residents while contributing to a cleaner environment.

The losers in the deal were independent haulers who had contracted with hundreds of local customers, but would be denied the right to pick up trash and recyclables after DAMA entered into an exclusive agreement with Danella Environmental Technologies for service in the region. That is truly unfortunate for these businesses and their employees, but it must be noted that they were offered a chance to get involved with the new program well before it began, and did not respond.

The crux of the matter was whether or not a municipality has the right to enter into an exclusive contract in order to best serve the health, safety and welfare of residents. Judge Toole's ruling states that regulating the disposal of waste materials clearly fits that definition. He also cites previous cases in which exclusive contracts were granted and found lawful. That's the legal part of the issue.

Of equal importance is the sensibility and effectiveness of DAMA's program. On that score, the vast majority of residents in the three towns come out ahead, paying substantially less for reliable garbage service. At the same time, we can be proud of the fact that this system is the first step in rationalizing our use of resources to see that unnecessary waste is limited and recyclable materials are saved for reuse.

The Dallas Area Municipal Authority's program for pickup and disposal of waste offers great benefits to the vast majority of people, at the expense of a few. But if government — and society in general — couldn't make this kind of choice, most of us would be the losers. Further challenge to the program will do nothing more than add unnecessary expense; we hope the issue has been laid to rest with Judge Toole's decision.

Health care reform crucial to our future

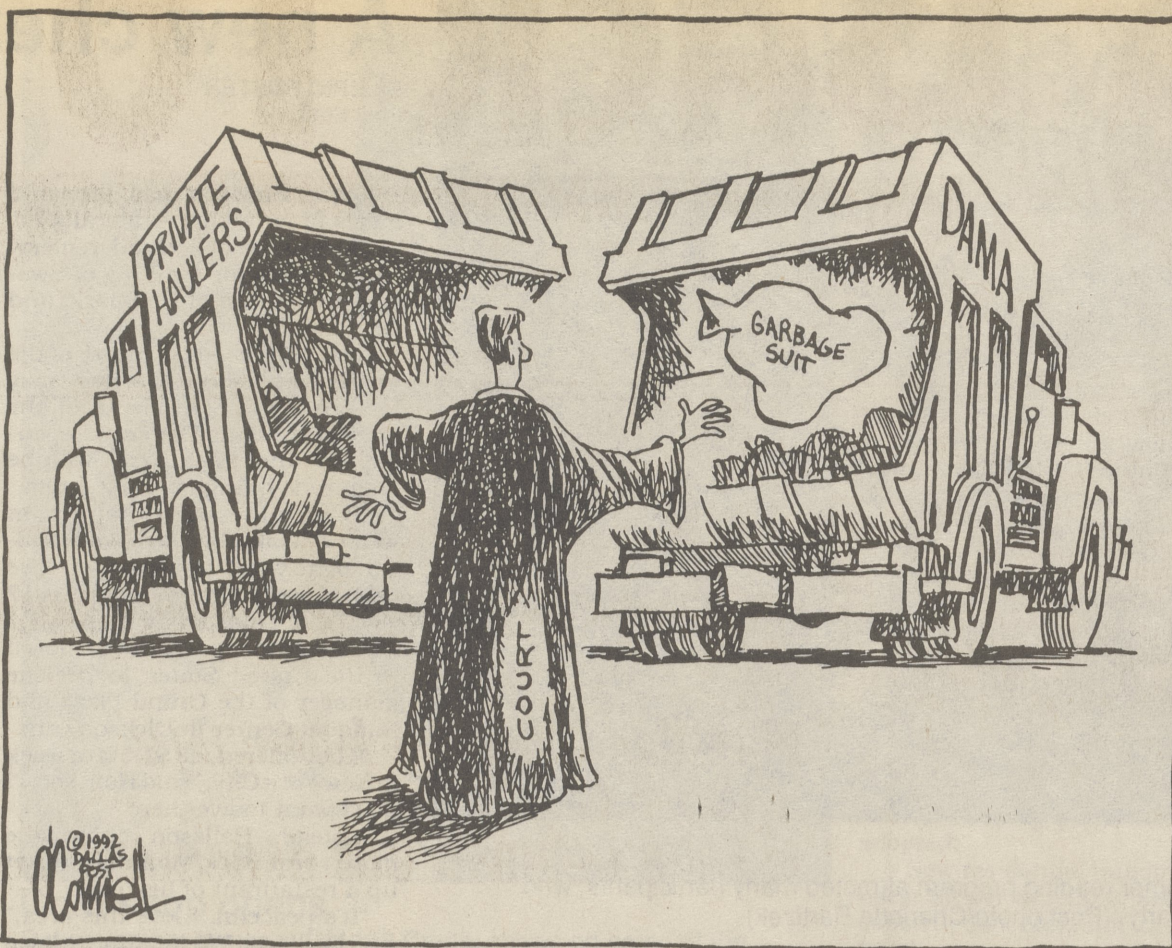
Remember health care, the issue widely-credited with propelling Harris Wofford to victory over Dick Thornburgh last year? Remember how much discussion there was about health care coverage during the Democratic primaries? Or, maybe you've had a more personal experience with the issue, by losing your insurance along with a job, or by having payment denied for care that you believed was covered.

Perhaps the reason we're hearing so little about expanded health insurance is that it will cost money, at least initially. Neither President Bush or Bill Clinton have explained in detail how their plan would work except in the most broad terms. Clinton's program is more expansive; basically a "play or pay" deal in which employers would be compelled to either provide health insurance to their employees or pay into a government fund that would cover the uninsured. But the candidate fails to tell us how much his idea will cost. The President responds with a package of vouchers and tax credits designed to make health insurance more affordable, but not necessarily available to all. Meanwhile, he attacks wider measures by derisively comparing them to the former KGB, a disingenuous tactic at best.

Reform of our health care system is of crucial importance to reviving Americans' confidence in our society and our nation's competitiveness in the world. As long as we deny basic care to many of our citizens while impoverishing those who become sick, we demean the character of our nation. Reform may cost more money initially, but in the long run, having a healthier, less anxious public will save far more than it costs. What we lack right now is a leader who is brave enough to drive that point home with the voters.

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 do not publish anonymous letters, but will consider withholding the name in exceptional circumstances. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar.



A. Case for conservation

Trying to get things done in Eastern Europe

By ALENE N. CASE

On June 24, Mike (my husband) and I flew to Sofia, Bulgaria to begin a seven week trip. As of this writing, we have also visited Budapest and Pecs, Hungary; Banska Stiavnica, Slovakia; Bucharest, Romania; and Vilnius, Lithuania (via Moscow).

This trip is not merely a long-awaited chance to see Europe. It is also our summer work. We are here to assist various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the form of a water quality monitoring network. We are also training many people in the use of portable monitoring equipment which will make it easier for them to obtain data on water pollution problems. The same grant which is paying for our travel is providing portable laboratories for use by these NGOs. All of this was made possible through the leaders and members of ECOLOGIA, an American NGO based in Harford, PA.

We have discovered that the people of these European countries have a great interest in the environment and the scientific knowledge necessary to make informed decisions. The leaders of these NGOs are chemists, biologists, geologists, computer scientists, and engineers. Many of them have the Ph.D. or equivalent degree. All are creative and resourceful. Access to equipment is a problem but one which can be ad-

ressed by granting agencies and NGOs from the West.

There are, however, two major problems which stand in the way of progress here: communications and transportation.

How do you do monitoring work if you have no money for gasoline to get to the sampling sites? Or perhaps none of the members of your organization has a car. What then? Our friend Dr. Kapusta in Slovakia has a 14 year old "Skoda" and the police recently took away his registration until he gets four new tires and a brake job. His assistant is a brilliant young chemist, but he has no vehicle. Another friend in Sofia, Bulgaria told us that she and a colleague had had a paper accepted for presentation at a large conference in Boston. It was read by someone else because they could not afford to fly to the USA. We have also shared in these transportation difficulties such as the subhuman conditions of the so called "first class" sleeping car on the train from Budapest, Hungary to Bucharest, Romania. Theft is a major problem and requires constant vigilance. In fact, on a train trip from Kiev to Vilnius, a young friend of ours had his tennis shoes stolen-including the socks.

If these examples of transportation difficulties are appalling, the communications systems are even worse. Letters from the USA take 10-14 days to arrive. FAX messages between countries are still

unreliable. (We tried for days to send this article from Vilnius to Wilkes University before giving up to a personally deliver it to the Dallas Post at the last moment!) In Hungary, many homes are equipped with VCRs but not with telephones. In fact, only half of the households have phones! In Romania it is 10%. Obviously, the former governments had no interest in promoting interpersonal communication and it will take years to upgrade the system. Businesses and institutes of science are difficult to reach because their lines are tied up by FAX machines dialing continuously in an attempt to reach other constantly busy phones. Sometimes we have found that calling from country to country is easier than phoning next door.

We were under the naive impression that our "English only" vocabulary would be the major impediment to effective communication on the trip. Not so. Many people here speak passable English; some are fluent in it. The main problems arise from outmoded technology. When one must stand in line for two hours to buy a ticket for the train or to verify an airplane reservation, one cannot accomplish much else that day. Our work and that of our friends is constantly hampered by this situation. Better personal communication must precede progress on environmental problems.

Guest Opinion

Pennsylvania voters need referendums

By WALTER SCHWENGER

Tax hikes, lawmakers' lavish benefits, uncontrolled campaign spending, deteriorating education systems, environmental degradation, corrupt courts, undue special-interest group influence—these issues impassion today's voters but receive only cursory attention from our representatives in Harrisburg and Washington. Is it any wonder that voters rushed to support an independent candidate for President?

What may be most surprising is that the surge of discontent that propelled Ross Perot into the news has not made major waves on the state level. Pennsylvanians haven't turned their wrath on state legislators, too many of whom are complacent and unwilling to institute needed reforms. They stalled measures to limit campaign spending, passed a reapportionment plan rigged to protect incumbents, and are attempting to nearly quadruple their pensions.

Our state legislators are under constant pressure from lobbyists, special-interest organizations, and caucus bosses to vote in ways that are not in the best interest of Pennsylvanians. This is not the kind of lawmaking body that can be responsive to Pennsylvania's real needs.

There is a way that Pennsylvania's citizens can begin to take back our government—by fighting for our rights of Initiative and

Referendum. For nearly a century, citizens in 23 other states have utilized Initiative and Referendum in order, as Teddy Roosevelt put it, "not to destroy representative government, but to correct it whenever it becomes misrepresentative." In November, Mississippi may become the 24th state to approve Initiative and Referendum if citizens validate a constitutional amendment recently passed by their legislature. There now is serious talk in New Jersey of enacting Initiative and Referendum legislation as well.

With the power of Initiative, citizens can propose new laws and place them on the ballot for approval or rejection by the voters. Referendum allows voters to repeal or approve controversial measures passed by the General Assembly.

Through Initiative and Referendum citizens can have more control over the democratic process and inject new ideas into the political forum. For example, citizens in other states have passed Initiatives ranging from auto insurance reform to new environmental regulations.

The Pennsylvania Constitution says, "All power is inherent in the people... (who) have at all times an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or abolish their government in such manner as they think proper." Theoretically, we don't need to amend our state Constitution to create the rights of

Initiative and Referendum—we already possess them. However, no specific rules have ever been written for actually using these rights.

A growing number of citizens' groups including Common Cause/PA, Citizens Against Higher Taxes, the Commonwealth Foundation, and the Northwest Coalition of Voters for Initiative and Referendum are now engaged in a statewide petition drive to demonstrate citizen support of the Initiative and Referendum process in Pennsylvania. The goal is to collect 200,000 signatures; these will be presented to the Secretary of the Commonwealth with the request that she put into place mechanisms making Initiative and Referendum a reality for Pennsylvanians.

Initiative and Referendum are not cure-alls for our political problems. Like any tool, they can be used either for the good or the detriment of our society. But, as Thomas Jefferson noted, because ultimate wisdom lies with the people, ultimate authority must also belong to the people.

If you would like further information about the Initiative and Referendum petition drive, please contact Common Cause/PA at (717) 232-9951.

Editor's Note: Schwenger is a team leader for Pennsylvania Common Cause's Initiative and Referendum Project.

Nesbitt Hospital to hold cancer survivors' picnic

"To Life!" is the theme of the annual covered-dish summer picnic for cancer survivors and their families sponsored by Nesbitt Memorial Hospital's Combined Cancer Support Services. The event will be held Sunday, Aug. 30, at 11 a.m. at Moon Lake Park, Pavilion #1, Hunlock Creek. Traditional picnic fare will be

enjoyed and summer fun activities, as well as time for making or re-establishing friendships, will round out the day.

Combined Cancer Support Groups at Nesbitt Memorial Hospital include Breast Cancer Support Group, Exceptional Cancer Patients (ECaP) and the Cancer

Support Group. Judith M. Nowak, R.N., technical advisor for Community Support Groups at Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, coordinates the group meetings.

Reservations are requested. For more information or to make reservations, call the hospital's Health Awareness Line at 288-8862.

Only Yesterday

60 Years Ago - Aug. 19, 1932

BAND LEADER RUDY VALLEY SLUGS HECKLING DANCER

Mt. Greenwood Kiwanis Club will hold a clam bake and corn roast at the Farmer's Inn on Thursday to raise money for the club's Tonsil Fund. About 35 children from Kingston and Dallas Twp. and Dallas Borough were cared for at Nesbitt Memorial Hospital and an additional 18 underwent operations at Kirby Health Center, Wilkes-Barre. The expense of the operations was assumed by the Mt. Greenwood Kiwanians.

Rudy Valley won the admiration of a sizeable group of masculine admirers at Fernbrook Park when he demonstrated his fist is as potent as his crooning. Valley was conducting his orchestra when a young man on the dance floor made a remark about the leader. In a flash, Valley stepped down from the rostrum, walked to the man and directed a well-aimed sock dropping him to the floor, and calmly walked back to his baton wielding.

You could get - Butter, 2 lbs., 45¢; 8 O'Clock coffee 1 lb., 17¢; Nut bread, 15¢ loaf; peaches, 2 lg. cans, 23¢.

50 Years Ago - Aug. 21, 1942

MISSING MAN'S BODY FOUND FLOATING AT H.L.

The body of a Pittston merchant Nathan B. Iscavitz, floating about 150 feet off Sandy Beach was recovered by two men, who notified the police who had been searching for the body ever since Iscavitz disappeared while boating on the lake during a severe storm.

Two hundred seventy five residents of Trucksville faced their first serious water shortage in 20 years since a pump plunger became disengaged last Thursday and dropped 505 feet to the bottom of Deep Well #1 of the Trucksville Water Co. Sordoni Construction Company employees with power equipment retrieved the missing plunger so that service was restored yesterday.

War will not curtail the Bloomsburg Fair. It will definitely be held day and night, Sept. 28 through Oct. 3 inclusive.

"Mrs. Minever" starring Gary Carson and Walter Pidgeon now playing at the Kingston Theater.

40 Years Ago - Aug. 22, 1952

IREM TEMPLE WILL PRESENT WATER FOLLIES SHOW

Paid up pledges for Dr. Henry M. Laing fire truck now total \$5,730. The amount still needed is approximately, \$15,000.

Dallas Borough-Kingston Township joint schools will open September 4 with regular bus service at the usual time.

"The Water Follies of 1952" featuring 13 water scenes, with famous professional divers and swimmers as well as 10 stage acts in a fast moving 2 1/2 hour show will be presented at the Irem Temple Country Club Showgrounds, sponsored by Irem Temple AAOONS.

30 Years Ago - Aug. 23, 1962

21 ROTARY EXCHANGE STUDENTS LEAVE FOR OVERSEAS SCHOOLS

Twenty one Rotary Exchange students have left for a year's experience in living and attending schools in other countries. Of this group Sandra Ambrose, Dallas; Nancy Sieber and Jack Parry, Shavertown are going to the Netherlands. Dale Mosier, Dallas, will visit Western Germany.

The tomato harvest is in full swing at Centermoreland. Big semi-trailer trucks lined up beside Orchard Farm Restaurant on Rte. 309 bearing Florida licenses are waiting to carry Back Mountain tomatoes to buyers' house and supermarket packing plants all over the east.

Wed - Ann Marie Geskey to Ross Steinhauer; Glenda Lyons to A/3C Kirk Lannan.

20 Years Ago - Aug. 24, 1972

MISERICORDIA'S FLOOD SERVICE HONORED BY HOSPITAL ASS'N

The First American Hospital Association Citation for Meritorious Service was awarded to a non-health care institution has been presented to College Misericordia for "its outstanding efforts during the disaster wrought by Hurricane Agne's this summer." The citation stated in part "The Association believes that special notice should be paid to the work of the college during the catastrophe because it is not a hospital and put aside its primary role as a school to become what the community needed most - a place to care for the sick."

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