

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

A few headlines we hope to write in 1993

In the last issue of The Dallas Post in 1991, we projected some of the headlines we hoped to write in 1992. They were:

- Dallas board, teachers reach reasonable contract
- Old pub torn down
- PennDOT, towns work to add traffic lights on Route 309
- Developer plans commercial park in Back Mountain
- Municipalities join to produce unified planning

Three out of five's not bad. So, we'll try it again this year. The last two can stay in, since they still make lots of sense and we hope they come true. Here are a few more:

Back Mountain communities to build joint recreation park

With something approaching 1,000 youngsters involved in Back Mountain Baseball and Back Mountain Youth Soccer, and an expanding basketball program, this area could put a large facility to good use. But a rec park could be more than playing fields; it could include hiking trails, a nature path, exercise stations, perhaps even a swimming pool. That all costs money to build and maintain, but some sort of partnership between the municipalities, schools and sports organizations could be worked out to make it feasible. Land won't get any cheaper than it is right now, so there's no time to waste.

Schools, parents making every dollar and minute count

We all know the bad news about American students' performance compared to those in other nations. But there are innovative, inspirational teachers and administrators in both Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts, and they are trying to bring out the best in our young people. They can't do it alone, though, and a renewed interest in achievement among parents is the surest way to boost learning.

Clinton signs health care reform bill into law

There is no single issue more important to American society than providing adequate health care to all our citizens while reining in runaway costs. President-elect Bill Clinton campaigned hard on the issue and citizens won't be satisfied until something is done. Even if reform doesn't reach its logical end this time around, some constructive movement in the right direction must be made.

Stores, shops report recession is over here

It's been said that economic events hit northeastern Pennsylvania late and leave late. Fortunately, it's also true that our region rides a tamer roller coaster than much of the nation, so the last couple of years — while not stellar performers — haven't precipitated the failures that have occurred elsewhere. Even so, it's time for a new wave of growth in stores here, as the population has increased faster than services. Back Mountain residents have too much buying power to ignore, and many are tired of driving to Wilkes-Barre or beyond to find what they're looking for.

About the opinion pages

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms. Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page. Cartoons are the opinion of the cartoonist and columns are the opinion of the author. Neither necessarily reflects the viewpoint of The Post.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published subject to the following guidelines. Letters must not exceed 500 words. Except in unusual circumstances, no writer may have more than one letter published during a 30 day period. Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification. Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer. The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter and to edit letters as necessary without distorting their meaning.

In addition to letters to the editor, we welcome longer pieces that may be run as columns. The author or the subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be our prime consideration when selecting material for publication.

To submit an item for publication, send it to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612, or bring it to our office.



Water over the dam

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Letters

Kiwanis thanks bell-ringing volunteers

Editor:

The Back Mountain Kiwanis would like to give a very special thank-you to The Viet Nam Veterans from Daddow-Isaacs Post 672, Dallas and to three young people of this area who volunteered their time on Saturday, Dec. 19, to ring the bells for the Salvation Army.

Thank you Ray Schultze of Harveys Lake; and Abbey and B.J. Lewis of Lehman.

We hope next year more organizations and individuals will join in and help with the ringing of the bells to make the holidays better for people who are less fortunate than the rest of us.

Again the Back Mountain Kiwanis thanks all who participated and those who gave so generously to the kettles and we hope everyone has a happy and prosperous New Year.

Clem Norman, President
Susan Stephens,
Public Relations Coordinator

J.W.J.

More on the unending gun-control debate

By J. W. JOHNSON

Well, it's that time of year again. The time when intrepid men, women and children trek fearlessly in the deep, dark woods seeking that denizen of venison, the ferocious white-tail deer.

Each year, the report of thousands of rifles signals that the woods are safe once again for white haired grandmas to travel therein, assured that the vicious white-tail, that vile eater of apples and other fruits, has once again been beaten back.

And, of course, all of the preceding is this writer's satirical comment on this annual rite of passage for many in this used-to-be frontier.

"If you're just after a head on the wall, what's the point?" "The herd must be culled, or the deer will die anyway."

The preceding two arguments often are used in summary of the polarization in this question. And to be sure there will never be a clear winner in the culling-the-herd versus guns-being-used-by-mental-nerds argument.

But hidden in the entire hunting question is the real issue here: the desire by some Americans to have unfettered access to weapons of death, be they handguns, rifles, shotguns, even automatic weapons.

—Item: During the years 1979-1987, handguns were involved in an average of 9,200 murders, 12,100 rapes, 210,000 robberies and 407,600 assaults each year.

—Item: On an average day, 10 children, 18 and under, are killed with handguns.

—Item: In 1988, 62 of the 78 law enforcement officers slain in the line of duty were killed with handguns.

—Item: An estimated 200 million firearms are in the possession of private citizens in the United States. Some 60 to 70 million of these weapons are handguns.

One need only look at our morbid wallowing in the reflected glory of the so-called Gulf War effort to see this nation's love affair with the notion that might, backed by weaponry, is right. That notion is equally evident in our slang. This nation is so wrapped up in the mental cavalry of force backed by weaponry that our very language is littered with verbal shell casings.

Just listen to our militaristic national anthem. Or how about our entire sports mentality, when

we're either "throwing the long bomb" or "rifling" singles to center field. We can't even have a casual, non-threatening conversation in this country without it being "shooting the bull." And, uh, lest there be accusations of "going off half cocked" or "shooting from the hip", read on...

Perhaps because of, and certainly despite of our so-called entertainment industries of TV and movies being filled with incredible violence, the real killing continues, particularly among the young. Yet attempting to curb such violence receives only lip service until a famous person is involved, i.e., former Reagan press secretary, James Brady, or when a famous personality such as Beatle John Lennon is gunned down.

In discussing death by weapon, a distinction needs to be made between the types of crimes involved: crimes of passion and crimes against persons and property. Legislation could help in the former case. Words would not help in the latter. Murder is already against the law.

However, anti-gun control advocates argue that control legislation attempts to manage inanimate objects (guns) instead of animate acts (persons using guns). That's a valid argument. Passage of stiff, mandatory sentences for gun use in the commission of any crime is long overdue.

In the final analysis, use of the weapon is the primary issue. Anti-control advocates are correct that some criminals will always obtain and use guns. That's because a criminal's intent is to commit a crime using deadly force.

However, the corresponding argument that handgun control would then disarm the law abiding, and allow criminals to run loose upon a helpless citizenry, is invalid because the vast majority (more than 90 percent) of deaths which occur as the result of handgun use result from crimes of passion or accidents, not defense against a criminal. In fact, and because of easily available and concealable handguns, our society has far more of its law abiding loved ones murdering other law abiding loved ones that it does criminals murdering law abiding citizens. And it's not because the criminal fears death at the hands of a gun wielding citizen that few citizen/criminal confrontations actually occur. It's because crimes of passion and crimes with criminal intent generally involve vastly

different sets of circumstances.

Anti-control advocates are correct that legislation will do nothing to stop premeditated murder or criminal intent. But it can help to stem the tide of murder committed upon loved ones, bystanders and tragic heroes.

It also seems that anti-control advocates have little faith in our constitution as a whole to keep this nation strong and free; instead relying on a deliberate misinterpretation of its Second Amendment as a foundation for anti-control views.

The constitution does not, in fact, categorically and automatically give every citizen the right to be a vigilante committee of one. The Second Amendment, when read in its entirety, and when placed in the context of the constitutional debates at the time, has absolutely nothing, repeat nothing to do with private ownership of guns. The amendment reads:

"A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Clearly, the writers of this amendment were preserving a collective right, not an individual right. A review of the debate at the time reveals no doubt that the premise behind the Second Amendment was fear that individual states would be at the mercy of a federal army; hence the assertion of states' rights to mount its own army. That concept evolved into National Guards and, at the local levels, constables, sheriffs and police departments...all for the security of a free state.

Anti-control advocates consistently torture the meaning of this amendment by only reading and asserting its second phrase. As well, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled on several occasions that the Second Amendment does not guarantee individuals rights to gun ownership.

Now if anti-control advocates want to assert the right of individual gun ownership as a matter of state, local or federal law, that's an entirely different question...a question which can be addressed in the political process, the proper forum for such debate.

But, please, do not seek refuge in the Second Amendment for an individual right of gun ownership. That right simply isn't there. It never was.

Only Yesterday

60 Years Ago - Jan. 1, 1933 MONASTERY HEAVILY DAMAGED BY FIRE

Sacred Heart of Jesus Monastery at Harveys Lake damaged by fire Saturday morning entailing a loss of several thousand dollars will be rebuilt immediately according to an announcement made by Rev. L.S. Brigmans, superior in charge.

Wages for borough employees during the coming year will be maintained at the same schedule as during the past year. Rates now in effect are 40¢ per hour for laborers; 60¢ per hour for road superintendent and the chief of police will receive \$75 monthly.

Kingston Township High School basketball team will battle the alumni in the high school gymnasium tonight at 8.

You could get - Victor Coffee, 21¢ lb.; peaches, 3 lg. cans 3¢; Asco saurkraut, 2 cans 11¢; Scott toilet tissue, 3 rolls 22¢.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 1, 1943 BOROUGH BUYS FOUR NEW AIR RAID SIRENS

Only a small percentage of Back Mountain motorists have taken their cars into official inspection stations to have their tires checked and recorded. Deadline for first inspection is January 31.

Dallas Council of Defense passed resolutions requesting the purchase of four air raid sirens, one by the high school and three by the supervisors at a meeting held Sunday at the office of Supervisor John Q. Yapple.

Deciding to stand pat until it had taken the matter up with Luzerne County Council of Defense, Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Co. at its meeting Monday night refused to abide by a recent decision of Dallas Borough Council to abandon the nightly 9 p.m. curfew in the interests of National Defense.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 2, 1953 MOTORIST SAVES AREA SHOP FROM FIRE

Dr. C. G. Perkins of Truckville will head the staff at Nesbitt Memorial Hospital for 1953. Dr. Malcom Borthwick was promoted from dispensary service to assistant associate on the surgical staff.

A Christmas fire which might have done extensive damage to Crompton's Tots and Teens Shop in Shavertown was rendered harmless when Dr. Miller of Pittston was driving by and smashed the plate glass window which had already cracked by the heat and pulled a blazing doll from the window display.

The Christmas dance of the Harveys Lake Boat Club held Saturday night at Irem Temple Country Club attracted more than 100 persons. A Yachting cap was presented to the past commodore by Commodore Ray Wall Jr.

Now playing, "The Quiet Man," with John Wayne at the Himmler Theatre.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 3, 1963 FROZEN PIPES CLOSE BOROUGH SCHOOLS

A Memorial Fund is being started for Howard Risley for the benefit of the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The library was Howard's consuming interest. Everything that affected the library affected him.

Back in Lockport, New York Air Force Base as good as new except for one cracked rib, Rowland R. Ritts Jr. says the report of his death on the late news Christmas Eve was greatly exaggerated. When the news flash came, the 19-year-old radar and electronics man was enjoying television at home, while his parents were at midnight Mass at Our Lady of Victory Chapel.

Dallas Schools remained closed yesterday because of minor damage suffered by plumbing over the sub-zero weekend will open again this morning.

You could get - Pork roast, loin portion, 37¢ lb.; veal roast 55¢ lb.; lettuce 2 lg. heads 29¢; Dole pineapple juice 4-46 oz. cans \$1.00.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 4, 1973 NO \$5 PER CAPITA TAX FOR HARVEYS LAKE

Harveys Lake Borough Council painted a rosy fiscal picture for its taxpayers last night when it adopted a budget that not only holds the present tax mill rate but also eliminates the municipality \$5 per capita tax.

Two newborn infants made news early New Year's Day when they became the first and third babies to arrive in Wyoming Valley in 1973. Amy Beth Kern, daughter of John and Mary Kern, West Overbrook Road, Dallas, was the Valley's official New Year's Baby arriving at 4:55 a.m. Sterling Lamoreaux III, son of Mr. and Mrs. S. Lamoreaux II, Westminster Dr., Dallas arrived at 6:35 a.m.

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