

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### Billing of vacant households a bad idea

The Dallas Area Municipal Authority (DAMA) just doesn't get it. First, the authority flubbed its relations with the public during the introduction of a comprehensive trash and recyclables pickup program. Then, faced with a backlash from people who felt threatened by the new plan, the authority and its member municipalities — Dallas Borough, and Dallas and Kingston townships — spent too much time asserting their power and too little explaining the program's benefits. Now, apparently having learned nothing from the earlier experiences, DAMA has taken yet another hard line stand, this time with folks who are away from their homes for extended periods of time.

DAMA's policy is to bill \$33.75 quarterly, even to customers who, for whatever reason, put out little material for pickup. Fair enough; a community-wide program like this must operate on a consistent basis, and most people pay less now than they did when contracting with individual haulers. And, the authority has made special exceptions available for people whose incomes qualify them for a lower rate.

But now DAMA says it will bill the full amount to a home that is unoccupied for less than an entire quarter — and even if it's empty the whole three months, unless notified a full 30 days in advance of the vacancy. That is an unnecessarily harsh policy, and one that again wasn't communicated clearly or consistently to the public.

Don't get us wrong; the program is a good one. It's efficient, comparatively inexpensive and it takes more recyclable material than is required by law. Implementation has been the weak point from the start, and it apparently hasn't gotten any better.

Given today's computer technology, there's no good reason why DAMA can't easily handle interruptions of service shorter than three months. Yes, it's a bit more trouble to change the records now and then, but not that much. Besides, the authority is a public utility, not a private business, so it's mission is to serve the public, right? And it's not as if pickups are scheduled individually. In most cases the truck starts at one end of a street and finishes at the other, picking up whatever has been left by the curb.

Maybe DAMA's real problem is that too many people who should be paying for service, aren't. If that's true, the authority may be trying to make up the difference with silly rules like this one. Instead, they should take firmer steps to collect what's legitimately owed; that's where a hard line makes sense.

### Water quality doesn't justify high rates

Nothing is more essential to life than a supply of clean water. But in much of the Back Mountain, the public water supply isn't particularly clean, and now it will be much more expensive. The combination doesn't add up.

General Waterworks, Inc. was recently granted a monstrous rate increase for many of the customers of its four local water companies. On a percentage basis, the 50 or so customers of the Harveys Lake Water Company face the biggest jump; their rates will double from an average of \$131 to \$262 a year. Dallas customers will take the biggest hit, as their charges go from \$276 to \$446. But just a few miles away, Back Mountain customers of Pennsylvania Gas and Water Company pay an average of less than \$150 yearly.

The high price being paid in most of the region would be more palatable if the water was especially clean. It's not, and the water company's main job is that of distributor rather than purifier. That's good news for people who sell water filters, but not for consumers who pay dearly for substandard water and then hundreds of dollars more for filtration devices.

It's hard to imagine why the state Public Utilities Commission allowed this massive rate increase through. While it's true that the company faces substantial expenses in replacing aging water lines and making other improvements, a \$336,713 increase (38%) is overly large. And the company can come back in another year for even more.

In most local communities, it's not required that home or business owners hook up to the public water supply. That will be good news for well drillers and for property owners who may soon find that having their own well is preferable to using the public supply. But in the long run, encouraging people to drill individual wells is detrimental to public welfare. There must be a better way, and a more reasonable rate allowance would have been a good first step toward finding it.

### Would you like to write a column?

The Dallas Post attempts to publish a wide range of opinion and information. We welcome material from local authors with expertise in or an opinion about a particular issue. If you would like to submit an item for publication, send it to The Dallas Post at P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612, or drop it off at our office at 45 Main Road, Dallas Township (across from Offset Paperback). Be sure to include an address and phone number where you can be reached. If you want the material back, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

## The Dallas Post

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

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Victorian splendor in Lehman

Photo by Charlotte Bartzek

### A. Case for Conservation

#### Litter is not only unsightly — it can be lethal

By ALENE N. CASE

During the weeks before Christmas, the UPS truck brought several parcels to our house. Each one was exciting. The boxes contained special gifts — either ones we had ordered to give to relatives and friends, or others given to us by people who live in other states. But, I soon began to dread the arrival of the UPS truck. You see, if the driver doesn't find anyone at home he leaves the parcel in our shed. He has a note written to that effect ready to stick on our door. So, if I was home to receive the package, there was no need for the note and he simply wadded it up and threw it on the ground. I got tired of finding little yellow wads of paper in our yard.

Perhaps this seems like a small complaint. But it also seems to be part of a larger pattern of disregard for our world. Litter is a problem that has not gone away. Parents and *Sesame Street* try to teach small children to put their garbage in a trash can or recycling bin. Then, these same children watch as cigarette butts are flicked out of car windows. I used to wonder why there were so many cigarette butts in grocery store parking lots. One day I discovered that the blame does not rest solely on the shoulders of the teens who congregate to smoke near the store. The person in the car parked next

to mine emptied the ash tray onto the pavement between our cars while I was shopping in the store! Why would someone do that? I'm quite sure this same person would never do such a thing in his own driveway.

As I hike throughout this region, it becomes obvious to me that some people have not been taught to care about their environment. One day I trained my binoculars on an object in the top of a distant tree. What had appeared to be a large bird was really a stray plastic bag! Old railroad tracks, abandoned mine works, and wooded roadsides are used as disposal areas for everything from tires to appliances to furniture to construction debris. It seems that if an area is remote or already degraded it becomes a logical dump. We could greatly improve the image of this region by cleaning up the mess.

Litter is not simply an esthetic problem. A yoke for a six-pack of drinks can find its way to the river and thus to the ocean. There it can entangle a bird, a turtle, or a seal. Some trash is mistaken for food and eaten by marine animals. Their intestines can become blocked by pieces of plastic. Sea turtles are especially susceptible to all of these problems and all varieties of sea turtles are threatened or endangered. Propellers on ships and boats can also become entangled in plastic line or sheeting.

We've all heard about the problems of litter washing up onto beaches. But where does this trash come from? Some people think it all comes from New York City or from ships at sea. Some of it does. But some of it comes from carelessness on the part of those who use the beach. Other material is blown or washed in from inland areas. One clean-up in Texas yielded 2 tons of trash per mile of beach! The list of items found included fluorescent light bulbs, baby diapers, metal drums, and soda bottles, among many other things. If you walk along a riverbank, you will notice similar types of trash. Floods can carry such things out to sea and thence to beaches.

Volunteer groups are spending more and more time cleaning up beaches. Partly, they "adopt-a-beach" to help the wildlife. But largely it is to improve the economy of the local area through improved tourism. These efforts are noble. However, it seems to me that all this energy and civic pride could be better used on other environmental concerns if we would simply stop littering.

So, next time you are tempted to toss something out of your car window or leave your tangled fishing line behind — **don't**. Think about the animals and people who may come in contact with your litter and dispose of it properly.

### Library news

#### Friends of the Library raise over \$8,000

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library Friends' campaign for 1992 has reached a total of \$8,805. This campaign is the financial effort sponsored by the Friends of the Library committee in response to the letter which is mailed in March of each year. The 'Friends' donations have become a very important part of the library budget and we are ever grateful to all the members of the committee for the effort they put forth on this campaign this year. The Friends organization has become the backbone of many of the library sponsored activities; including the spring luncheon, the mailing of the newsletter, and, for the first time this year, the citrus fruit sale. Our Friends are very dear to us.

Book Club membership dues for 1993 will be accepted at the library, either at the desk or by mail. The dues is \$10 for a single and \$15 for a double membership

and entitles the member to take two book club books out whenever they borrow from the library. The Book Club books are on their special shelf in the office section of the library. The membership dues is what pays for these books and they are restricted to members only for the first six months; after which, they revert to the regular library shelves.

New books at the library: "Touchpoints; the Essential Reference" by T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. deals with your child's emotional and behavioral development. The book includes all the wise guidance of America's most distinguished pediatrician packed into one easy-to-use volume. From pregnancy to first grade, all the concerns and questions that parents have about their child's behavior, feelings, and development are anticipated and answered in both chronological and reference form. Underlying this guidance is the touchpoints

concept that has shaped Dr. Brazelton's office practice and research for over three decades. "Touchpoints" are the universal spurts of development and the trying periods of regression that accompany them throughout childhood. This book puts a beloved pediatrician into every home.

"An Aristocracy of Everyone" by Benjamin R. Barber explains the politics of education and the future of America. Until now, the current crisis in education has been defined by controversy over what should be taught, who should be taught, and, increasingly, who should pay for it. What is less discussed is what these questions mean for the future of our country, our society, and our very value system, the basis of which is democracy. In this book, the author fundamentally alters the terms of the current debate over the value of opportunity in American education, politics, and culture. An intellectual history.

### Only Yesterday

60 Years Ago - Jan. 13, 1933  
**C.A. FRANTZ TO HEAD DALLAS BANK**

At the annual meeting of the stockholders of First National Bank, Dallas, C.A. Frantz was elected president to fill the vacancy caused by the death of George R. Wright, who had served in that capacity for more than 26 years.

"Miss Somebody Else" a real comedy will be presented by the Junior Class of Kingston Township High School next Wednesday in the new high school auditorium.

Donald S. Wormley, director of physical education and instructor of mathematics in the borough schools resigned that post and on January 30, he will assume his new duties as coach of baseball, basketball and instructor of mathematics in the high school at Mattituck, Long Island, NY.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 8, 1943  
**STATE REP. FLACK STARTS FIRST TERM**

Among the many new members sworn into office this week when the General Assembly convened in Harrisburg was Harold E. Flack of Saginaw Ave., Dallas, who is representative in the Legislature from the Sixth District.

Uncertain whether they will be able to finish any of their schedules because of the effects of gasoline rationing on their own transportation and that of their followers, teams of the Back Mountain Basketball League will open their season tonight with games at Lehman, Dallas Borough and Harter High Schools.

Chief Observer Paul Shaver, Daddow-Isaacs Post of the Aircraft Warning Service has extended thanks to observers who remained at their stations on Dec. 24 and Christmas Day.

You could get - Potatoes, 15-lb. full peck 43¢; carrots 2 lg. bunches 15¢; Gold Seal spaghetti, 3-lb. pkg. 23¢; Lux soap 2 cakes, 15¢.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 9, 1953  
**STORES TO STAY OPEN WED. AFTERNOONS**

W.B. Jeter, president of First National Bank was named treasurer of Dallas Borough at the meeting of Dallas Borough Council succeeding Severn Newberry who served after the death of Ralph Brickel but who cannot continue because he is a member of council.

Stores in the Back Mountain will remain open Wednesday afternoons throughout the year according to a decision taken Monday night by Back Mountain Business Association at its meeting in the Library Annex. Consensus of opinion was that stores should observe uniform hours for the convenience of customers and since there is a considerable amount of business from resort areas all stores should remain open Wednesdays during summer as well as winter. This measure was adopted.

If plans for a television installation at Westmoreland go through in time, students will be able to view the Presidential inauguration January 20 watching General Dwight Eisenhower take the oath of office from a comfortable stance in the high school auditorium.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 10, 1963  
**BORO FIGHTS DALLAS TWP. FOR TAX MONEY**

Borough Council President Harold Brobst and secretary/treasurer Robert Brown asked for authority Tuesday night to take any means necessary to regain a 1% real estate tax of \$4,500 now held by Dallas Township from the sale of Natona Mills last year. This could mean a court action to settle the claim if the township makes no move to restore funds.

New Year began officially Monday night for Dallas Township Board of Supervisors, who before they adjourned 1962 and opened 1963 discussed improvement of Ridge St., Fernbrook and the problem of the growth of small junk yards in various parts of the township.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 11, 1973  
**709 FIREFIGHTERS BATTLE HANSON'S FIRE**

A call advising there's smoke at Hanson's came into Harveys Lake police headquarters a scant minute after midnight last Wednesday and touched off a massive fire fighting effort by six Back Mountain fire companies. At least 709 men worked throughout the clear, cold night battling flames which were contained for the most part inside the rambling structure at Hanson's Amusement Park by a roof heavily laced with iron crossbeams.

You could get - Chuck roast 99¢ lb.; 49-oz. box Tide detergent 79¢; Grade A eggs, medium size, 59¢ doz.; 5-lb. bag grapefruit, 75¢.