

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### Pay close attention to candidates' positions Single-issues not adequate

Of the elective offices up for grabs in the May 18 primary election, school board directors hold the potential to cause the greatest impact on the most people in the Back Mountain. That's true in financial, educational and social terms. It's also why voters must choose candidates based on more than a single issue, such as tax rates, and should take campaign pledges with a grain of salt.

Candidates for office, once elected, nearly always moderate their views. That isn't necessarily because they concealed their true positions during the campaign season; more likely it's that once in office they see things in a new, and broader, light. Or, they discover they simply don't have the power to change the things they disagree with.

Our schools are the key to this region's—and the nation's—future. They are also the largest government expense, so the tension between their cost and value has lately led to hyperbole from defenders and detractors of the present state of affairs. The discussion has been dominated by talk of budgets and salaries, which are especially important in tough economic times, but can gloss over the essential task of the schools to educate and prepare young people for a life as productive, fulfilled citizens.

Like other offices, school directors' power to change the system is limited, but that doesn't mean they can't have a strong influence on the quality of a district's education. And the quality of education is a greater determinant of a region's prosperity than any other factor. So, invest some time looking into the options in the races for school director and other offices before casting your vote. Ask hard questions about specific issues, and demand substantive answers.

The turnout for off-year primaries is often abysmal, and can lead to small, well-organized voter blocs taking control of school boards and other offices. That shouldn't happen in America, but it has and it will as long as apathetic citizens shirk their responsibility to take part in setting the agenda for their own destiny.



### Responsibility for Waco tragedy clear

Make no mistake about it; the 51-day standoff and tragic deaths in Waco, Texas had nothing to do with religious freedom. It had everything to do with the twisted criminal mind of David Koresh and his compliant disciples.

Koresh had a long history of illegal activity, to the point that the government of Australia once filed a formal complaint with the United States about his kidnapping of young females from that nation. The Australians at least had the sense and backbone to make life there so uncomfortable that Koresh and his cult left. Sadly, the U.S. allowed him to gain power and bravado to the point that more than 80 others followed his apocryphal path.

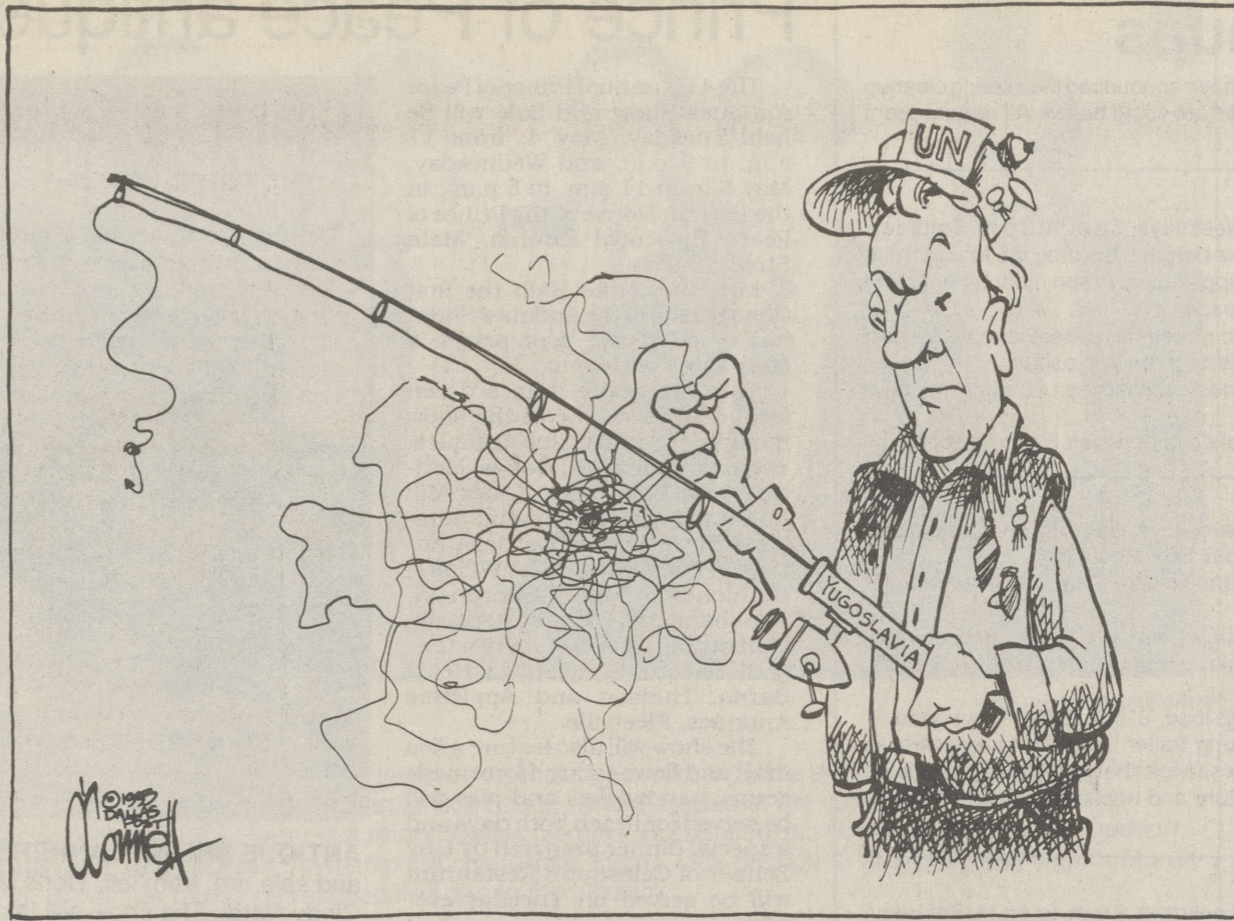
In the spirit of tolerance that sometimes leads to tragedy, United States authorities chose not to move earlier despite clear indications that a sick mind was at work.

Try as they might, the hand-wringers who would pin blame on the FBI, ATF, Attorney General Janet Reno or President Clinton can't be allowed to succeed in their quest to lift responsibility from the real perpetrator of this crime, or even from its victims. Remember this: At any point during the siege, up to and including the outbreak of flames, Koresh and his proteges could have peacefully left their compound. They would not have been greeted by gunfire, and would have had every opportunity to prove their innocence in a court of law. Instead, they chose first to defy the legitimate authority of our government, and then to die when death was clearly avoidable.

The whole affair could have gone better, and a review with the aim of discovering better methods to deal with cults is appropriate. But the ultimate responsibility for the unfortunate conclusion rests with Koresh and his followers, and it would be unhealthy to bolster any impression otherwise.

### 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

#### A tribute to Rachel Carson and her work

By ALENE N. CASE

Earth Day has been celebrated once again. Some years I have wondered rather cynically if anything of substance has been accomplished by such festivities. This year is different - I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the changes that have transpired during the past 30 years and for the people who have made these changes happen.

The streams of Appalachia are no longer choked with silt from mines and quarries. Children are no longer tempted to cool off by running behind the "fog" truck spraying DDT in our neighborhoods. Ospreys and eagles once again soar above many areas in which they had previously been extinct.

Of course, many people have been responsible for these positive changes in our environment. But, one lady who challenged the notion that we could - or should - change our environment for our own convenience deserves our eternal gratitude. That lady was Rachel Carson.

From her earliest days as a child in Springdale, Pennsylvania, Rachel Carson had two loves. She loved exploring the fields and woods along the Allegheny River. And she loved books. By the age of 11, she was a published writer in a children's magazine. Carson intended to major in English in college and pursue a career as an author. But a required biology course turned out to be so interesting that she decided to forgo that dream and become a marine biologist. Her biographers insist that she did not realize that she would be able to combine her two interests.

Rachel Carson may have been the youngest of three children and protected in many ways by her mother, but she managed to de-

velop a strong determination when it came to accomplishing a goal or ambition. That determination proved very useful as she stepped into the "man's world" of science in the first half of this century. Her second indispensable attribute was a keen sense of curiosity and an attention to detail. Indeed, one commentator remarked after reading her best-selling book *The Sea Around Us*: "I assume from the author's knowledge that he must be a man."

The ocean had been unknown to her except for the sound in a conch shell or the lines of a favorite poem until after Rachel graduated from college. The summer between college (Pennsylvania College for Women - now Chatham College) and graduate school at Johns Hopkins University she traveled to Woods Hole, MA to work at the Marine Biological Laboratory. Here, she not only saw the ocean for the first time but also began a life-time of research on the organisms that live there.

My first introduction to Rachel Carson's work was her classic book *The Sea Around Us*, which I read in high school - long before I had my first chance to visit the ocean. Her vivid descriptions and logical explanations made marine biology come alive for me and probably influenced my decision to major in zoology at Duke. She also wrote two other books about the sea: *The Edge of the Sea* and *Under the Sea Wind*. Much of her early writing was done as an employee of the US Fish and Wildlife Service and is now found only in out-of-print government publications. I, for one, am grateful that she did not stop there but published books for a more general audience.

Of course, most people know Rachel Carson as the author of *Silent Spring*. There are whole

books written about the process of producing that book and other books about its impact upon the environmental movement in the United States. She is credited with beginning the push which finally created the Environmental Protection Agency. However, Carson did not write the book with the idea of starting anything. She merely wanted to alert America to the dangers of uncontrolled use of pesticides.

The research for *Silent Spring* was begun in 1958 and required almost four years of full-time work. She was determined to present the facts as they were available at that time so that ordinary citizens could make informed choices about the chemicals that were being used on farm fields and home gardens, in wetland areas, and above forests all over America. When the book was published in 1962, she found herself in the center of a huge controversy. Many critics resorted to personal attacks because she had done her research so well that one could hardly argue with the facts.

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas summed up the book with these words: "The alarming story is calmly told, with not theatrics and in a sober, factual way. This book is the most important chronicle of this century for the human race, 'I thought she was a spinster. What's she so worried about genetics for?'"

Rachel Carson died of cancer before she would see the many positive results of her great effort. I hope only that we, as a people, have come closer to her dream for us: "Now, I truly believe that we in this generation must come to terms with nature, and I think we're challenged as mankind has never been challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature but of ourselves."

### J.W.J.

#### In defense of personal choice in smoking

By J.W. JOHNSON

Pay attention all you fur haters, vegetarians, whale lovers, and other purveyors of mental myopia...I've had it. Enough is enough! Your single-issue stridency, regardless of the cost to the concept of individual freedom, not to mention the economy, is becoming nauseating...such as, some of you used to say, was my cigarette smoke. Well, it's been nearly 18 months since my last cigarette, so subtract that from your list. More about that later...

In the first place, part of the reason that the short list of single-issues advocates noted above launch assaults against virtually anything is because the very thing many are railing against has given us a standard of living which permits the time, i.e., the radical Sierra Club virtually trying to stop economic progress with extremist ecological views which do not even try to find ecologically sound solutions. No, that group would rather destroy the very economy which gave them the time to be bored and have nothing better to do than sit around and dream up extreme, self-destructive views.

(Parenthetically, it's the same boredom born of success which now finds the professional community the largest consumer of cocaine and marijuana in this country...the struggle to survive

having been supplanted by the boredom of having arrived).

But it's not the Sierra Club, et al, who've finally gotten to me. It's the sanctimonious do-gooders who promote anti-smoking hysteria, and who now want to ban cigarette advertising.

I used to smoke. I smoked for many years. I enjoyed smoking. And had I continued to smoke, it would no doubt shortened my life span...but that was my choice.

I tried very hard not to offend (heaven forbid) another person with my smoking. I did not, for example, smoke in someone else's home or car, unless I was given permission. I was always careful, even in my own home, about where smoke was being directed.

And I don't buy the alleged research on second-hand smoke. From everything I've studied (pro and con), this research is akin to the many research efforts spawned by pseudo-scientists struggling to publish a paper and/or obtain more grant monies. In short, the conclusions reached are the pre-conceptions held.

Now the anti-smokers want to ban tobacco advertising. What about beer and liquor advertising? I'm also a sports fan, and virtually every sports event has

some sort of liquor and beer advertising. I doubt that continued tobacco advertising will be more hazardous than, literally, running into someone who DWI. If you don't believe me, ask the thousands of grieving relatives left behind by those who drink, drive and kill our fellow citizens each year.

And yet I don't hear any hue and cry about banning alcohol advertising. Is it because the effects of alcohol have reduced the number of brain cells of many who shout anti-smoking?

The issue here is obviously not whether to smoke or not to smoke, whether to drink or not to drink; the issue is one of personal choice.

I chose to smoke. I choose, then and now, not to drink. Many of you have made the opposite choices. I support your right to do so.

And we should continue massive (I would suggest industry supported) education programs about the effects of both tobacco, alcohol and other forms of drug use.

It's time to get off the back of continuing smokers...unless you're also willing to give up the rest of the drugs in your sanctimonious life.

### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - May 5, 1933 MONASTERY'S THIRD FIRE LEVELS STABLE

No change was made in the tax rate by Dallas Borough school board when it approved its budget for 1933-34 at a regular meeting Monday night. The rate was fixed at 30 mills, same as last year with a \$5.00 per capita tax.

Fire broke out for the third time on the property of the Monastery of the Congregation of Jesus at Harveys Lake Monday night and completely destroyed a stable and store room at an estimated loss of \$500. The stable has been more recently used as an ice house.

The most complete cooking school ever held in Dallas will be here starting Monday when a nationally known cooking expert under the direction of Luzerne County Gas & Electric Corp. will give cooking lessons each day in the electric company's display rooms on Church Street.

You could get - New potatoes, 10 lbs., 27¢; lard, 2 lbs., 11¢; prunes, 2 lbs., 13¢; Eight O'Clock coffee, 19¢ lb.

#### 50 Years Ago - April 30, 1943 DALLAS WOMAN JOINS NEW MARINES' UNIT

Mrs. Grant Shaner has received word that her grandson Grant Thomas who has been missing in the Pacific area since December 1941 has been reported as a prisoner of the Japanese in the Philippines.

Thelma Gregory of Mill Street, Dallas, was sworn into the Woman's Reserve of the U.S. Marine Corps at Philadelphia on Friday and will leave for six weeks training at Hunter College, N.Y.C. between May 17 and June 1. The Marine Corps has only recently opened its ranks to women, the first class of candidates having completed their training and reported to Cherry Point, N.C. about two weeks ago.

#### 40 Years Ago - May 1, 1953 TRAP SET NEW SPEED TRAP ON PIONEER AVE.

Dallas Township speed trap was in operation for the first time this season Sunday on Pioneer Avenue. The motorist's grape vine had functioned and cars proceeded for the most part at a reasonable rate of speed.

Several loads of old goods for the Library Auction have already been received at the Barn. One exceptional load from the estate of the late Mrs. Albert Stull contained a number of steamer trunks in excellent condition and also a quantity of luggage in first class condition.

You could get - Frying chickens, 49¢ lb.; pineapple pie, 39¢ ea.; bananas, 2 lbs., 25¢; new potatoes, 10 lbs., 49¢.

#### 30 Years Ago - May 2, 1963 WORK BEGINS ON NEW HIGHWAY PROJECT

Demolition and clearing of buildings, railroad relocation, bridge relocation and grading is the order of work in the first stages of construction of the new Dallas-Luzerne Highway according to H.J. Williams & Co. officials. The York construction company was awarded the contract last Thursday by the Pennsylvania Department of Highways.

Kiwanis Club members will flip pancakes all day at its annual pancake festival at Dallas Senior High School cafeteria to benefit worthwhile community services. Service expects to have attractive and interesting position openings for competent and well trained high school graduates who attain eligibility by successfully passing the exam. Entrance salary range from \$3820 - \$4110 depending on experience and examination rating.

#### 20 Years Ago - May 3, 1973 S.C.I.D. INMATES OFFER THEIR KIDNEYS TO BOY

Thirteen year old Edward Laibinis has no kidneys but at least six residents of SCID (State Correctional Institution at Dallas) were prepared to give him one of theirs. A portion of a letter to Edward's mother of Hanover Township read that they were willing to undergo tests needed to determine if the potential kidney is acceptable. They would like anyone concerned to know this offer is made with no other idea than to help this young man. They do not expect nor request any reward or compensation.

More than 40 police officers from 16 surrounding communities witnessed a "staged mock drug raid" last week at the Kingston Township Municipal Building. The raid was part of an eight week course on drugs and narcotics being offered by the Kingston Township Police Department under direction of Chief Paul Sabol.

The Post loves to receive letters!

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