

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

1993 grads face tough world; so what else is new?

As the last strains of "Pomp and Circumstance" fade and thrown caps hit the ground, hundreds of graduates move from the relative shelter of high school and into the world of higher education or work. At the same time, the world seems filled with trouble and turmoil instead of the opportunity that all parents hope will await their children at this critical time of life.

But instead of discouraging our young people any more than they already may be, let's take a look at how things were in the previous decades, for earlier crops of hopeful graduates.

1983: The United States is emerging from the worst recession in the postwar era. The unemployment rate nationwide reaches over 10 percent; in northeast Pennsylvania it is above 15 percent. Interest rates on a home mortgage are 17 percent, having been as high as 21 percent. The U.S. and Soviet Union are at loggerheads; President Reagan calls the U.S.S.R. the "evil empire," and proposes the "star wars" missile defense system. After a prolonged drought, 150 million Africans face famine conditions.

1973: The youngest army in American history is slogging through the jungles of Vietnam, trying vainly to turn the war over to the Vietnamese. War protests are finally influencing the government to seek a negotiated settlement, at almost any cost. Later in the year, the first Arab oil embargo will drive energy prices to incredible levels. Gasoline will be rationed and lines several blocks long will form at service stations. A violent, U.S. backed coup will overthrow Salvador Allende's progressive government in Chile, energizing repressive regimes throughout Central and South America. A botched break-in at the Watergate hotel in Washington will lead to the resignation of President Richard Nixon the next year.

1963: U.S. "advisors" are being sent into Vietnam, following the withdrawal of a defeated French force. It's been only two years since the Berlin Wall was erected, and a year after the Cuban missile crisis, which brought the superpowers to the brink of nuclear war. Later in the year, Americans will be stunned when President John F. Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

1953: "McCarthyism" is rampant, led by its namesake, Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. Thousands of Americans are censured or blackballed after unsubstantiated charges are made that they are Communists. The Korean War is winding down, after two years of fierce fighting that leaves more than 50,000 Americans dead. Chinese Communists forcibly collectivize agriculture and industry in that nation. The Soviet Union explodes its first hydrogen bomb, and major nations spend enormous sums of money to build up their nuclear arsenals.

1943: The Second World War is being fought furiously in Europe and the Pacific, with the Allies beginning to gain the upper hand. Nazi murder camps are intensifying extermination of Jews and others deemed undesirable. Some 45 million people will die worldwide as a result of the wars. Many goods are rationed as American industry is recruited into the war effort.

1933: It is perhaps the worst year of the worldwide recession that began in 1929 and will not end until World War II. Unemployment in the U.S. reaches 25 percent, with similar figures in Europe. Trade restrictions adopted to protect national economies bring even greater poverty. Adolf Hitler is named chancellor of Germany and given dictatorial power. A militant Japanese government sets up a puppet government in Manchuria after invading the mainland nation.

So, you see, things could be—and have been—worse. The trick is to view the world with perspective beyond the present, and to recognize the opportunities available even in the worst of times to persons with talent and drive. If this year's graduates can do that, they'll have a head start on the future, at least some of which will be better than the present.

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.



Pretty pansies

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

J.W.J.

Debunking the bilingual government myth

By J.W. JOHNSON

Thirteen years ago, Dade County, Florida, approved an "English only" law in the conduct of local and county government. That is, English would be the official and only language used in the conduct of government business.

Recently, voters there approved a measure which will require both English and Spanish in government documents, and at government meetings.

As the former Soviet Union has discovered, totalitarianism cannot keep an unwilling people together forever. Likewise, countries divided by language also find hot water being poured on the social glue.

Case in point, as some of you may know, many in the Canadian province of Quebec want to make Quebec a sovereign nation.

During a 1970's separatist movement in Quebec, I had some personal experience with this while living on the U.S./Canadian border. A majority of Quebec's citizens are French speaking while the English, a minority, control most of the economy and much of the government. A vocal French minority want to throw the English out and form a separate country. Many more of the French want to find a compromise and accommodation with reduced economic and governmental influences for the English, while achieving separate economic power, both from Canada and the United States.

And of course the argument will go on in Quebec for French becoming the official and only language, as well as for economic and political reforms. The argument should, in fact, continue. The question of sovereign nation status is a separate issue; but to accurately and fairly reflect its majority and history, Quebec should, in fact, be officially French.

It has always seemed empirically self-evident that a common language is essential for social contracts to be trusted and understood. But what about Switzer-

land, you say, where that trilingual nation is one of the most stable in the world? It has managed to overcome its language barriers, hasn't it?

However, and in contradiction to most other democracies, Switzerland is helped by geography conveniently defining and effectively segregating the different language regions, and also by being a very passive nation. Put another way, democracies generally encourage both diversity and aggressive individual action within a common framework and through common points of reference, i.e., our own Bill of Rights. Without a common language to allow both diversity and aggressive individual actions to be understood and shared, it's likely that our nation would have gone through many civil wars in its history, and would not now occupy its premier position as leader of the world's democracies.

The notion of a common language in this nation is now threatened from several sources, among which are:

- continued governmental emphasis on citizen participation in government by persons who don't speak English, (and many of whom can't read or write).
- and a governmentally encouraged proliferation of both radio and cable TV stations which cater to regional and ethnic audiences.

Largely through Washington ivory tower thinking, and its primarily Democratically controlled Congress over the past 20 years, has come the misguided notion that cultural differences, particularly in language, ought not to be assimilated, but rather cultivated.

This notion is dead wrong. And to the contrary, the English language has long been the unifying force in America, and should be its only official language. Bilingual education should be a transitional process only in our schools.

We should be seeking to preserve, not destroy, the degree of unity which this melting pot nation has achieved. The kind of

crisis developing—with increased polarization among various ethnic groups and minorities—was what skeptics of our republican democracy predicted in the late 1700's. But for over 200 years, the U.S. has maintained sufficient unity to make for orderly, stable government.

"My parents came to this country and learned the language and became Americans. And my mother only thought she was an American when she began dreaming in English."

Thus contributed a Breakfast Club guest last year as club members debated, among a myriad of other things, the impact of minorities upon our electoral process.

Immigrants coming to this land took it upon themselves to learn the language—and wanted to learn it. They also wanted their children to learn it, and to be Americans, not hyphenated Americans. That English is our dominant language is not something for which we should apologize. That was an accident of history.

But the continued polarization among various ethnic groups will not accidentally cause anything; it will almost certainly result in separate nations among one nation, bringing with it all the problems and conflicts inherent in that fractionalization.

Only an official language, that is, an accepted language, enables everyone to completely understand the nation's laws, history, freedom and traditions, all of which are necessary toward the preservation of individual freedoms and our republican democracy.

Families should encourage cultural awareness and language differences at home. But we should have official English now...in the County of Dade, in the State of Florida, and in these United States.

The operative word in the previous paragraph is "united"...and disunity will surely prevail if this officially bilingual nonsense continues.

Property tax/rent rebate forms due by July 1

Rep. George C. Hasay announces that 1992 property tax/rent rebate applications must be returned to the state Department of Revenue by July 1.

Eligibility for the program is limited to individuals age 65 or older, widows and widowers age 50 and older or permanently dis-

abled persons with total household incomes not exceeding \$15,000.

Total income received and property taxes or rent paid in 1992 are used to determine eligibility.

The maximum rebate is \$500. Detailed eligibility information is included in the application

booklet available at his office in Sweet Valley next to the post office. The telephone number is 477-3752.

Hasay stressed that there is no guarantee that the application deadline will be extended as has been the case in previous years.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - June 23, 1933 KT SCHOOLS DISMISS TEACHERS, CUT PAY

Carrying out the program it began with the appointment last week of J.A. Martin to succeed Tom Carle Jr. as supervising principal of Kingston Township schools, the township school board on Tuesday night dismissed five teachers and announced a 10% cut for all teachers retained or hired for 1933-34.

Noxen Post Office was one of 75 post offices whose classification was reduced this week because of reduction in postal receipts, dispatches from Washington, D.C. announced. Formerly 3rd class, Noxen will now be recognized as 4th class.

Plans of Dallas Borough Taxpayers Association to bring pressure on property owners who have repeatedly evaded payment of borough taxes moved forward as officials prepared for drastic legal action against a selected list of 50 local property owners whose taxes are three or more years in arrears.

50 Years Ago - June 18, 1943 N.Y. GARMENT PLANT MAY RELOCATE HERE

A New York manufacturer of women's dresses is making a survey of the Back Mountain area to determine whether there are 100-200 women here who would be available to work in such a plant, if he should decide to establish his business in Dallas. Like many similar firms, much of its trained help has been drained off into defense industries making it increasingly difficult for them to operate.

Anna M. Richards, Pioneer Avenue, has resigned after 48 years spent as a teacher in Plymouth and Dorranton schools, 30 of them as principal of junior high schools in those communities.

Tech Sgt. John E. Fritz of Idetown who has been missing in action since May 4 in the Southwest Pacific area is one of four Pennsylvanians who were this week awarded the Air Medal for meritorious achievements during bombing attacks.

You could get - Lettuce, 10¢ head; gr. beef, 32¢ lb.; eggs 43¢ doz.; 2 lg. lvs. bread 17¢.

40 Years Ago - June 19, 1953 HILLSIDE FARMS HERD IS TOPS IN COUNTY

Next Wednesday evening, Back Mountain Little League will conduct a benefit night in memory of Joe Petrick, first manager of the Jackson team. He was instrumental in the organization of Back Mountain Little League.

Hillside Farms' purebred Holstein herd has the proud distinction of being adjudged highest in Luzerne County Dairy Improvement Association. There are 100 head of cattle in the herd which is one of the oldest established herds in Pennsylvania.

"Small Town Girl" with Jane Powell and Farley Granger now playing at the Himmler Theatre.

30 Years Ago - June 20, 1963 RAILROAD BED MOVED FOR NEW HIGHWAY

With ideal weather prevailing initial operations for the new Dallas/Luzerne Highway were slated by H.J. Williams engineers for the middle of this week. First among operations, were excavations for widening the "big bend" to a six degree curve and digging for relocation of the railroad.

Lake-Lehman High School Principal Anthony Marchakitus was kind enough at The Post's request to draw up the following evaluations of the new school plant after its first year. The school has just celebrated its birthday with the first commencement from the new building. Despite ups and downs, late starting classes and a few partially completed facilities for part of the year, the staff, students and PTA all pulled together and kept the Alma Mater rolling. The year was valiant and vacationless, but worth it.

20 Years Ago - June 21, 1973
BIKERS ON 100-MILE TREK VISIT BACK MTN.

Harveys Lake Borough now has a mandatory hookup ordinance for the proposed sewer system. Passage of the ordinance came about during the regular June 4 meeting of council.

A Back Mountain couple for 59 years, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Prokopchak celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary May 28.

On Sunday bike riders from all over the nation will tour through the Back Mountain area as part of the Gibbons Great One Hundred. Those successfully completing the 100-mile tour will receive awards in the form of special shoulder patches to sew on their jackets.

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