

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

If this was the government, would you be screaming?

Suppose a friend told you about a government agency that employed 1 1/2 people for each person it served. Further assume that it spent twice as much money on administration as comparable agencies in other democracies. Even worse, its spending had increased by two and three times the rate of inflation in recent years, and it had purchased billions of dollars in unneeded equipment. Would you be outraged? Let's hope so.

The entity in question, though, isn't a tax-supported government agency; it's American hospitals, most of them privately operated. According to figures published last week in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the nation's hospitals in 1990 employed 1,221,600 administrative personnel and cared for an average of 853,000 patients daily, a ratio of 1.43 employees per patient. In 1968, 435,100 people served a daily average of 1,378,000 patients, a ratio of .32 employees per patient. No wonder costs have risen so dramatically.

That doesn't even count the explosion of people working for insurance companies whose job it is to assure the efficiency of our health care "system." Clearly, they have failed in that quest, but they certainly have succeeded in driving physicians nearly mad. Just ask your doctor about the voices on the phone who are paid to look over his or her shoulder and question each procedure that doesn't fit neatly into their company's standard list of practices. You'll get an earful.

More bad news is that membership in health maintenance organizations has no effect on administrative costs. That finding must be discouraging to President Clinton and his soulmates who are about to prescribe "managed competition," with its reliance on large buying groups, as the cure for the nation's health care spending ills.

It's hard to imagine a government bureaucracy more bloated and wasteful than our present health care patchwork, and we hope the President's proposals begin to improve it. But it's also difficult to accept that the tinkering now being contemplated will get to the heart of this issue, which threatens our economic welfare even as it provides top-flight medical care—for the people who can afford it.

Speak up, or forever hold your (peace?)

As recent concerts at the Harveys Lake amphitheater have demonstrated, the facility is not the boon to the community that promoters held out when first announced. Unless you call noise, fighting and drug use benefits.

Facilities like the amphitheater exist to enrich the people who own and operate them, so the gain for the larger community was always questionable. With food and beverages available on-site, the amphitheater complex caters to a captive audience. The problem, of course, is that the noise and disruptions don't observe property boundaries, so people all around the lake are bothered by them. The arrival and exit of 6,000 people by car, motorcycle and bus on narrow Lakeside Drive is in itself a major disruption for the folks who live on or near the lake. If an emergency such as a fire or large accident were to occur during peak traffic, the response of personnel would surely be seriously hampered.

Some Harveys Lake residents now rue their opposition to Shirley Hanson's plan in 1991 to build condominiums on the site of the former amusement park. They, and anyone else who wants to restore whatever tranquility formerly existed in summer at the lake may want to lend their voice to those who plan to air their concerns at the next Harveys Lake Borough council meeting. That is scheduled for Tuesday, August 17 at the borough building, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

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.



Rewards of summer

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

Letters

SCID inmate claims citizens' group misleads area legislators about lifers

Editor:

I write in reference to the article "Lifers may be let outside walls", by Grace R. Dove, Post Staff, of Wednesday, July 28, 1993. I'm certain you make a strong effort to provide your readers with accurate information. This article, however, lacks some factual foundation.

Ms. Rusiloski has been boasting, previously of her group being responsible for lifers being denied outside clearance. In reality, it's the local legislators who have unwittingly been misinformed and misled by Ms. Rusiloski with respect to the facts surrounding lifers at S.C.I. Dallas.

Since the early 1970's (the earliest time in which I can verify accurate information), two (2) lifers had left their outside work details and charged with escape. (One other did escape over 10 years ago, but from within the enclosure, NOT from the outside).

Quoted, Ms. Rusiloski claims that outside clearance (for lifers) as having been "discontinued in 1982 because of the prison's high rate of escapes." (my emphasis). An average of one lifer every ten years is "high" only to those uninformed and utilizing emotional, distorted expressions, rather than factual ones.

And, what about all the lifers who work outside, with no incident? What is the success rate of lifers working outside in all other major state prisons? The facts demonstrate abundantly of lifers at Dallas have attended frequent charitable functions in the community; played on outside sports teams in the community; worked in the entire outside area surrounding the prison in trades, and built enviable records while doing so without a murmur of trouble. No program is 100% successful all the time—in prison

or on the street. Lifers have shown that their behavior, while working outside, is near perfect nevertheless. Most lifers, by far, are no risk to the prison nor to the community-at-large, despite the hysterical and ignorant protestations of a watchdog group.

As for Chief Don Jones' remarks, who incidentally also serves as the misconduct hearing examiner at S.C.I. Dallas, they are so very vague and oblique as to make them unintelligible. Regrettably, they imply that lifer problems, as a result of being outside, kept him so busy. Two escapes, in virtually 20 years...with many successes....

I trust that Ms. Rusiloski's claims, concerning lifers at S.C.I. Dallas in the future, will be supported with facts.

Frank Metzger

Firefighter praises cooperation in brush fire

A Brush Fire:

On July 15, Back Mountain Communications Center called Lake Silkworth Volunteer Fire Company to a brush fire in the vicinity of Eleanor Street at the lake. The fire was not a threat to homes or people but had to be controlled before it spread.

Fire Chief Sev Newberry with a handfull of firemen from the fire company started to fight the fire, which was inaccessible by truck and required carrying water (Indian Tanks) and rakes to the crest of the hill.

It's difficult to say when I first realized it but all of a sudden there were two teenagers there helping with quad vehicles. What made the chronology of events difficult was that in addition to the fire we now had an Ambulance call. The quad vehicles were driven by Damon Radginski and Ray Sedorchuk and assisting them

were Dave SanFanandre, Jim Pudimott, Bill Jenkins, Mark Ronczka and Jason Deitz. They all helped moving water and supplies to the fire scene.

The fire was brought under control on the 15th of July but numerous smoldering spots existed and they flared up overnight. This required calling the fire company out again on July 16 and from 8 a.m. until evening these same people fought the fire. The Communications Center then requested relief fire fighters to replace those personnel that had been on the scene all day.

Responding to the call were six fire fighters from Idetown, Jonathan R. Davis Volunteer Fire Company and one from Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Company.

We would like to express our thanks to all the fire fighters and

the young folks that helped and also to fire chief Joe Blaine from Idetown, Jonathan R. Davis Volunteer Fire Co. and also fire chief Ron Witkowski from Franklin Twp. Volunteer Fire Co. for the assistance their people rendered.

This is just one example of volunteers in the community providing services to the residents. It also demonstrates the fine cooperation between the Back Mountain fire companies.

The monies to operate these fire companies are by and large raised by the members of the organizations and deserve to be supported by the residents. The next time you see breakfast, dinner, bazaar, bingo or a raffle sponsored by a local fire company please support them.

Fritz Chamberlain
Secretary, L.S.V.F.Co.

Guest column

Police need our help to win war on drugs

By COLONEL GLENN A. WALP
Commissioner of the Pennsylvania State Police

Despite the investment of billions of tax dollars resulting in significant battles being won by an aggressive law enforcement effort, the drug war rages on. Drug abuse and its myriad of associated problems continues to plague our society.

Even though arrests are increasing, mid and upper level drug dealers are being successfully prosecuted and our prisons are being jammed with drug offenders, there remains an unending line of consumers demanding the product. Decades of enforcement have made one thing clear, as long as there are people who want illegal drugs, there will be people willing to sell them.

Drug enforcement officers deserve our praise for constantly placing their lives on the line to investigate and arrest these peddlers of death and devastation. I submit, we must never end our

pursuit to bring to justice these criminals who are so willing to enrich themselves at the expense and misfortune of others. However, as we continue our aggressive enforcement, we must realize that if we are to win the war, greater emphasis must be placed on prevention.

Unless we are willing to make a greater societal commitment to lessening the demand side of the drug trade, we are destined to wallow in a worsening crisis.

Indeed, prevention is the key. Successfully steering people away from drugs eliminates the costly and heartbreaking need of trying to salvage a victim from the grip of drug dependency.

An informed person who chooses not to use drugs becomes one less person who wrecks his or her health and life, one less person who commits a crime to support his or her habit, one less person the police arrests, one less person in jail, and one less person in need of rehabilitation.

Unless the police and community work together to attack society's insatiable desire for drugs, we cannot hope to eliminate the scourge of drug abuse. The police are acutely aware that they cannot win the drug war alone. The war will only be won when community groups, schools, religious organizations and citizens join together to combat this mutual enemy.

Unless we begin to move quickly in this direction, society may eventually consider more radical and defeatist remedies like decriminalization and legalization. In my view, ideas that legitimize drug abuse are not the answer.

We can win this war, and I emphasize we, but none of us can do it alone.

Our most effective weapon in the drug war is education. If you take away the customer, the store closes. If you eliminate the demand for drugs, the pushers will go away.

Only then will the drug war have been won.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Aug. 18, 1933 BORO SCHOOLS SEE RECORD ENROLLMENT

With an enrollment that is expected to exceed 400, Dallas Borough Schools will reopen, Sept. 5, the day following Labor Day. This year's enrollment exceeds that of all former years and will be augmented by at least 25 new tuition pupils coming from Franklin, Jackson and Northmoreland Townships.

Despite the handicap of bad weather the first night of the Carnival held by Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Co., representatives of the company state that gross receipts of more than \$1,000 were received during the 3-day program. Deductions for expenses will reduce the net profit. As soon as a complete income and expense report is available, it will be presented to the fire company and published in detail in The Post.

You could get - Sugar, 10 lbs., 49¢; Bread, 20-oz loaf, 9¢; Gold Medal Flour, 24 1/2 lb. bag, \$1.17; lg. watermelons, 33¢ ea.

50 Years Ago - Aug. 13, 1943 SHAVERTOWN MAN PATENTS CAR PART

William J. Corcoran, rural mail carrier at the Dallas Post Office is celebrating his 25th anniversary in government service on August 25. Corcoran has served under six postmasters. His application for enlistment in the U.S. Navy as Lt. Commander is now pending.

U.S. Patent Office last week granted a patent to Fred B. Howell of Shavertown on an automotive transmission gas shift-indicator. The device is designed for use on semi-automatic transmissions and its purpose is to improve the handling and safety of the car.

"Commanders Strike at Dawn" with Paul Muni and Anna Lee now playing at the Shaver Theatre.

40 Years Ago - Aug. 14, 1953 POST OFFICE STOPS GENERAL DELIVERY

City delivery of mail will start delivery in Dallas on Monday, but there will be plenty of persons who will still have to pick up their mail at the Post Office because they have been too indifferent to number their homes or install mailboxes. There will no longer be general delivery window service for permanent residents. They must either have boxes or carrier delivery, but not both.

Dallas Woman's Club assumed sponsorship of Tuberculosis X-ray project at their board meeting in the Back Mountain Memorial Library Annex. The program will take in territory from Luzerne to Harveys Lake. X-rays will be made early in the fall.

All Stars of the Bi-County Teen-Age League will meet All Stars of the Forty Fort League Saturday at Artillery Park, Kingston in the National Teen-Age League Tournament. Fourteen teams representing 14 leagues including one from Texas will take part. Fans are urged to attend and give the local All Starts their support.

30 Years Ago - Aug. 15, 1963 SCHOOL OPENS FOR MIGRANT STUDENTS

School for children of migrant workers employed in the harvest of crops in the Orange-Centermoreland-Falls area is being conducted at the Orange Methodist Church and will continue for 5-6 weeks. Children's ages are 2-14 but only a few over 10 actually attend, since the older ones help their parents in the field.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank L. Ruggles of Meeker will celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary August 16. They are the parents of two children: Mrs. Wayne King, with whom they reside and son, Leroy, deceased. They have 10 grandchildren; 40 great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren.

20 Years Ago - Aug. 16, 1973 AREA GIRL SCOUTS VISIT SWITZERLAND

Dallas Township Board of Supervisors at their August 7 meeting approved an increase in building permit fees. A fee of 1% of construction cost will be charged for each permit issued by township zoning officer Leonard Kozick. This action was determined after the board agreed that small construction fees were not in line with large development fees. The new system will be based on cost of each project instead of a flat rate as before.

Twelve Senior Girl Scouts Troop 660 accompanied by several of their advisors left Kennedy Airport, New York, August 11 for Geneva, Switzerland arriving in Geneva, August 12. The scouts traveled by train and bus to Adelboden where they will stay at the Girl Scout Chalet for 10 days. During their stay they will take four bus trips to various places of interest.

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