

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Health officials boot it again on meningitis

Bacterial meningitis has taken two young lives in the Back Mountain recently, and parents are understandably worried. The latest occurrences of the disease come less than a year after it nearly claimed a teenager in January.

And once again, Luzerne County health department officials have chosen to minimize the dangers of this deadly disease rather than use its appearance as a launching pad for public education. That is a shameful position for them to take.

Parents have been calling doctors when their children show any symptoms of the malady, which are similar to the flu. Fortunately, in almost every case nothing more serious is at hand, but that clearly wasn't the case when the two tots died. In neither case did the child see a doctor in time to stop the rapid development of fatal symptoms.

Health officials have downplayed the possibility that the disease will spread and haven't even informed the public about how to protect themselves. They did, however, give preventive treatment to everyone who had close contact with the children who died. Why aren't they also providing the media with useful information about symptoms and precautions, so it can be relayed to parents? Since they chose not to do that, we gathered as much material as possible to publish this week.

There is no defensible excuse for holding back important health information from the public, especially when a potential killer lurks in our midst.

An easy choice for trash/recycling plan

The Dallas Area Municipal Authority and its member municipalities—Dallas and Kingston townships and Dallas Borough—have an easy choice to make when awarding the new contract for trash and recycling pickup. The two low bidders, Danella Environmental Technologies and Wayne-Pike Sanitation, both submitted bids that were lower than the rate that has been charged since the inception of the program nearly two and one-half years ago. Two other firms, J.P. Mascaro and Waste Management, placed bids that were considerably higher.

Wayne-Pike garnered DAMA's recommendation, so it's a safe bet they'll get the contract when borough and township officials make the final decision. The result will be a 17 percent reduction in cost for the next two years.

The only question remaining at that point will be how much to charge for extra bags beyond the two that are allowed in the bid. A price of 75¢ to \$1.50 has been bandied about, and that is what is commonly charged in other towns. But the four companies bid only 6¢ to 25¢ more per week for a two-bag plan over a one-bag limit. By doing so, they have shown how little the extra bag charge should be.

The price could be even lower if everyone who is able to pay their bill. That isn't the case now, as about 10 percent of DAMA customers are delinquent, double the number that was budgeted in the original plan.

The new contract also must include provisions for those who truly can't afford to pay full price for service, and for pickup from an occasional garage or porch for disabled people.

The DAMA program has been widely successful, lowering the cost of trash service for most families while collecting nearly 25 percent of total volume in recyclables. Both DAMA and the towns recognize that those aspects of the program must be maintained regardless of who is the contractor.

Simpler health plan needed

As the debate over health care reaches full volume in Washington, the word most commonly heard is "complex" and its variations. Both sides describe America's health care needs and the plans that address them as being of "enormous complexity." They are correct.

If simplicity still is considered a virtue, it may someday dawn on the combatants that a simpler system will work better and cost less than a complex one. And the simplest system is the one known as single-payer, in which one entity—be it part of the government or outside of it but closely regulated—takes responsibility for assuring both adequate health care and responsible finance.

U.S. government doesn't have a sterling record as an efficient operator, except in the area of health care. Medicare is widely regarded as accomplishing its goals with modest administrative cost. If the principal strengths of that plan could be combined with the broader goals of universal coverage, we might have the best plan of all. Not perfect, just the best we can manage at this time.

Do you agree? Disagree?

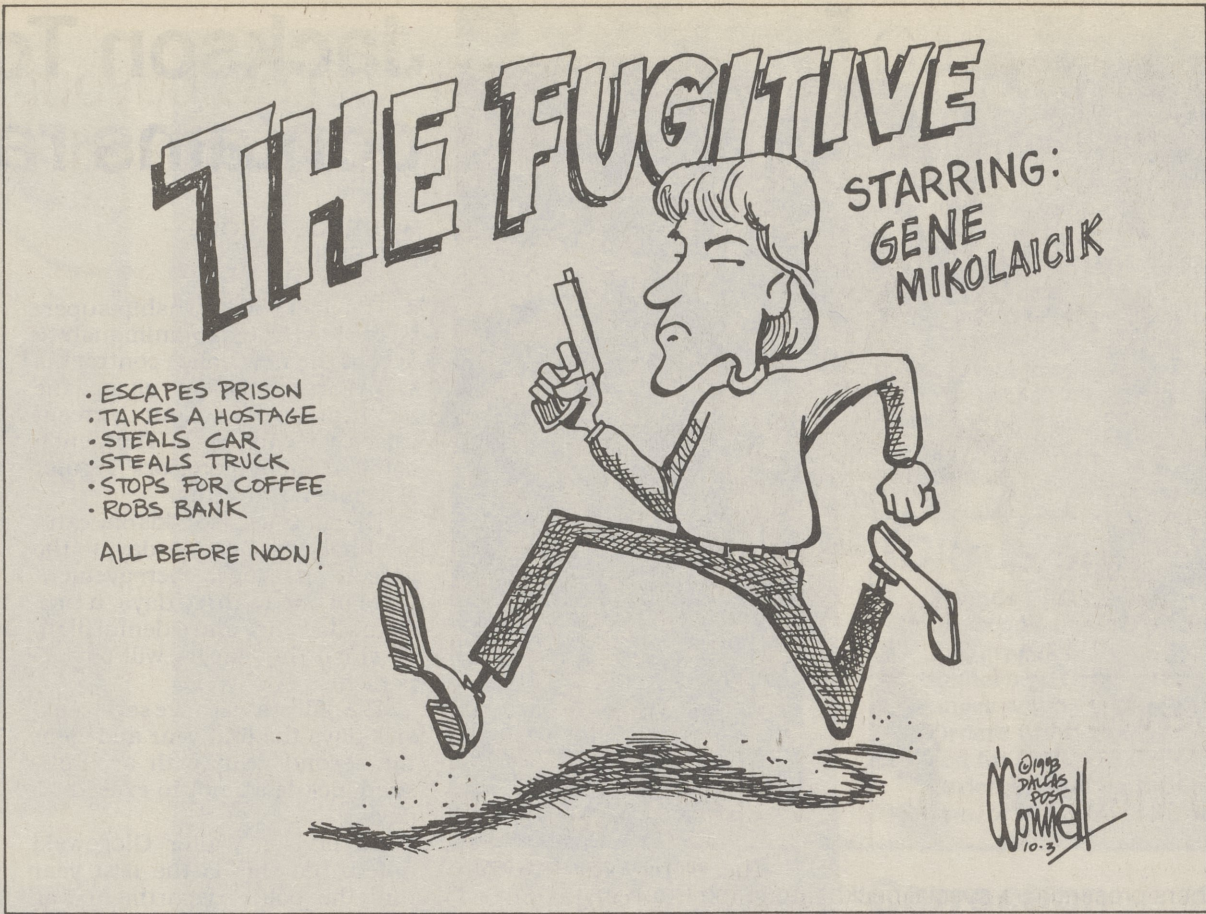
Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post. We welcome your opinion on contemporary issues in the form of letters to the editor. If you don't write, the community may never hear a contrasting point of view. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Please 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.

The Dallas Post

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

<p>Ronald A. Bartizek Editor and Publisher</p> <p>Peggy Young Advertising Acct. Exec.</p> <p>Paul Rismiller Production Manager</p>	<p>Charlotte E. Bartizek Associate Publisher</p> <p>Grace R. Dove Reporter</p> <p>Olga Kostrobala Classified/typesetting</p> <p>Jill Urbanas Office Manager</p>
---	---

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
AND THE PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHER'S ASSOCIATION



J.W.J.

Proclaiming peace while marketing war

By J.W. JOHNSON

Why are our soldiers dying in Somalia? Why are we, in fact, in that politically and morally destitute land?

Simply put, to secure access to the Red Sea, the U.S. has been trying to lease ports in Somalia since the early 1980's.

No deal. You figure it out...and all this to maintain access, and then to theoretically keep the price of oil stable.

Rubbish. Oil prices should rise dramatically so that the U.S., indeed the world, will be economically forced to find alternative energy sources other than in the finite and politically unstable world oil fields. And not one drop of any soldier's blood, from any nation, is worth the self-interest of keeping the price of oil low.

Our very future as a world political and economic power is dependent on Americans doing precisely that—setting aside self-interest and short-term expediency while embracing a notion the Japanese own as a cultural imperative: those who fail to look long-term, indeed, those who fail to plan, also plan to fail.

We must, in fact, specifically demand of President Clinton that he, in concert with Congress, stop mortgaging our economic future in championing a need for cheap oil. We should, in fact, be paying \$3 per gallon for gasoline...or higher. Before you run out to buy me a one-way bus ticket out of town, here's why.

Setting aside the blatant stupidity of war, more to the economic point is that if we continue to establish policy based on cheap gasoline, while depleting our own finite oil supplies, then we will almost certainly become, and sometime in the next century, a third-rate economic and political power. Some history:

From the beginning of this century, the world's oil supply and its price was controlled by what is known in the oil industry as the Seven Sisters, a loosely knit group of oil companies who received only lip service from those

in charge of monitoring monopolies. At the same time, it was perhaps necessary for both supply and price to be controlled by the suppliers, or the world's economies, desperately dependent on the black gold, would fluctuate wildly.

Along came the 1970's and OPEC, an acronym for a consortium—largely Arab nations—called the Oil Producing Export Countries. Two steep price hikes in the 1970's proved the temporary wisdom of supply and price control as the world, most notably the United States, went into price shock and economic recessions both times oil prices were raised.

We survived, largely through reducing dependence on foreign oil by reducing consumption, by dramatically improving our overall energy usage intelligence through massive education programs, and through experimentation and real world use of alternative energy sources, complete with tax incentives.

I was personally involved in one such use, retrofitting a former home for solar heat and hot water. The system worked well, and in four years, heat and hot water were essentially free at my house.

What's happened since the 1970's is that, in the 1980's, oil prices have dropped dramatically. This was caused, in part, by reduced consumption from the 1970's, along with a sluggish world economy reducing demand.

Now along comes Saddam Hussein in 1990 and the U.S. decides to become modern day Hessians, hiring out our military forces for the dubious benefit of having our young people die in the Saudi sand when the real solution is implementation of simple market forces.

Remember the \$3 a gallon mentioned earlier. We need to increase the price of gasoline to a point where consumption will be reduced and the rewards of the free enterprise system will rise up to discover, manufacture, distribute and promote alternatives, i.e., a viable electric automobile.

At the same time, we need to

realistically and with environmental consciousness, examine our own oil resources as yet untapped along our coast lines.

Aside from putting huge profits into the coffers of those who are paid for international communications, about the only thing Saddam Hussein's invasion did was prolong the illusion that this country can and should continue its primary economic activity as a military industrial complex. The naked truth is that many, many Americans are being paid under the thinly veiled guise of defending America here and freedom abroad when, in fact, it is disguised socialism providing jobs.

The horrible irony is that while we have applauded the Soviet Union, and Eastern Europe for its abandonment of communism in favor of free enterprise, we find our economic system glued to the Defense Department for the survival of an inordinate number of American citizens.

Don't kid yourself: our going to Iraq, and our current presence in Somalia, has as much to do with keeping profits flowing, and defense industry jobs intact, as it has to do with trying to maintain stable oil prices, and maintain alternative access to oil fields.

We proclaim peace and market war.

We market war while our public infrastructure is falling down around our ears.

We shout about the Japanese economic invasion while buying their cars, selling them our real estate, and not following their example of \$3 per gallon for gasoline.

And now we find ourselves in Africa.

No, no a thousand times no. No more Koreans. No more Vietnams. And no more lying to the American people. Any deaths in the Middle East, or in Africa, should be because we have declared a war against a legitimate threat to our principles and way of life, and come about in a war fully supported by the people in both principle and pocketbook.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Nov. 10, 1933 VOTERS KEEP AREA A G.O.P. STRONGHOLD

Decisive victories for Republican nominees at the General Election preserved for the Back Mountain its reputation as a rock-ribbed Republican stronghold. The people of this section joined with other parts of Pennsylvania in recording a vigorous demand for repeal of the 18th Amendment, but stood against the popular trend in the State by disapproving of any attempt to establish Sunday sports.

Counter-claims of football supremacy will be settled for the season tomorrow when Kingston Township High School football team comes to Dallas Borough for its annual clash with the local squad. The game has been preceded by intense interest this year because of the good records made by both teams and because it will mark the elimination of one of the contestants from the race for football supremacy in the Back Mountain Region.

You could get - Smoked hams, 15¢ lb.; sugar, 10 lbs., 49¢; Pastry flour, 12-lb. bag, 43¢; cranberries, 2 lbs., 23¢.

50 Years Ago - Nov. 5, 1943 COPS SEEK LAKE TWP. CHICKEN THIEVES

In the only contest of importance in Dallas Borough, Harry Ohlman, Republican nominee for school director defeated his Democratic opponent William Baker.

Dallas High School Band is again without a leader. Mrs. Jean Vercoe Mulligan who was appointed director of music on September 13, has resigned to accept a position as director of public school music at Berea College, Kentucky, at a salary of \$1,900 a year.

Harveys Lake police are still without clues to apprehend the chicken thieves that have been operating in the vicinity of Lake Township for the past several weeks.

"Air Force" starring John Garfield, Gig Young and Faye Emerson now playing at Shaver Theatre.

40 Years Ago - Nov. 6, 1953 LIQUOR STORE MOVES INTO BORO BUILDING

A \$100,000 building project that will give Dallas Borough its finest residential development is now underway in the woodlands just off upper Machell Avenue. Seven new apartment dwellings will be built there this fall and winter by Raymon Hedden.

Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board has signed a 5-year lease with Dallas Borough to use part of the new Borough Building for a State Liquor Store. The liquor store will occupy part of the building which was formerly used by Oliver Inc. as an automobile salesroom.

30 Years Ago - Nov. 7, 1963 VANDALS HIT HOME AT HADDONFIELD TWICE

Vandals smashed a plate glass window in front of the Haddonfield home of Mr. and Mrs. George Budd, by throwing a pumpkin at the front of the house. The Budds were only a few feet from the glass when it shattered. The night before several cabbages were thrown at the house. Both the pumpkin and cabbages had been stolen.

Commander George Cave, American Legion Post 672 announced the appointment of George McCutcheon as chairman of the Oratorical and Essay program for the year. McCutcheon will conduct a program of competition among students at Dallas High School working towards winning a \$25 U.S. Bond, one each for Oratorical and Essay.

20 Years Ago - Nov. 8, 1973 DEMS WIN SUPPORT IN AREA ELECTIONS

Back Mountain voters revealed Tuesday that they remain strongly Republican but perhaps not as strong as in the past. Local Democrat candidates made strong showings in Lake and Lehman Township and in Harveys Lake Borough. Back Mountain voting on Luzerne County candidates strongly backed the Republicans but the Democrats were the easy winners.

Walter A. Zell, Lehman Township has a handicap; he needs more players and more chairs for the wheelchair basketball team he's trying to make competitive. Zell is slowly building what he calls the Wyoming Valley Handicapped Athletes Association. Right now his group is interested in basketball but as he puts it "We will eventually get into bowling, ping pong, swimming, racing, shotput, discus, javelin, weightlifting and other sports."

Library news

Special cookbooks ready to be picked up

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library has received the cookbooks, "Best of the Best from Pennsylvania", selected recipes from Pennsylvania's favorite cookbooks; and they may be picked up at the library by those people who placed orders for them. The cookbooks were ordered from Quail Ridge Press in Branden, Mississippi. This project was sponsored by the 'Friends of the Library' and they appreciate the response from the community. There were orders placed for 70 cookbooks and they are here and ready for pick up.

The Book Club of the library will meet on Monday, Nov. 15 at 1:30 in the reference room. Book Club members are invited to attend and bring friends and guests to the meeting. Plans will be discussed for the Christmas Tea to be held in December.

New books at the library: "The Crocodile Bird" by Ruth Rendell is a mesmerizing story of the obsessive love between a mother and a daughter and its connection to a series of deaths near a remote English manor, magnificent in its hilltop isolation. Liza lived in the gatekeeper's cottage at Shrove House until the police took her mother away forever. She had grown up completely sheltered from the outside world and finds refuge with a young drifter. Each night she tells him a little more about her life; her mother's obsession with the house and her mysterious claim to it; and the men who came and never left alive.

"Mr. Murder" by Dean Koontz is a stylish, spellbinding tale of a man who has a happy marriage, two adorable small daughters, and a successful career as a mystery writer and he counts himself a lucky man. All this is shattered when a stranger breaks into his house and announces, "You stole my wife, and my children. I want them back." The madman wages a relentless and terrifying campaign to eliminate Marty and recapture the family and life he

believes to be his. Eventually, the family goes on the run, but no matter where they hide, their enemy finds them. The story is blisteringly paced and utterly fresh.

"Tell Me No Secrets" by Joy Fielding is the story of Jess Kostner who is a smart, young, non-nonsense district attorney who can hold her own against Chicago's toughest attorneys. She has survived not only a wrenching divorce but her mother's bizarre, inexplicable disappearance with only an occasional panic attack. Suddenly, she has felt the malevolent eyes of a stalker upon her. It must be pretrial nerves. Jess always gets jittery before a big trial. And she is prosecuting the thuggish rapist Rick Ferguson. She's convinced he brutally attacked a nice middle-aged mom. She knows the evidence is shaky at best and knows the mom is terrified and then one day, the nice mom disappears. A psychological thriller, intense, unforgettable story.

The Dallas Post makes a great holiday gift.

Call 675-5211 to find out how to order a gift subscription