

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Harveys Lake must justify amusement tax

Harveys Lake mayor-elect Richard Boice has opened the door to an amusement tax a crack, and who knows how wide it will swing. Boice suggested that the borough council consider placing a 4 percent levy on amusements, including the amphitheater operated by music promoter Thom Greco. The Lake-Lehman School District proposed a 10 percent tax in 1992, just before the amphitheater opened, but that idea didn't go far since state law forbids a school district from applying a tax that doesn't exist in its member municipalities.

If more revenue is necessary, an amusement tax is a tempting source. Applied only to live performances—especially at the amphitheater—it would fall most heavily on people who don't live in the borough, or in the school district, for that matter. A broader application—to jukeboxes, boat rentals and video games for example—would extract a higher percentage of revenue from residents.

What isn't yet clear is Boice's reason for the suggestion. Does he think Harveys Lake government needs more money for important projects, or is this just a ploy to curry favor with amphitheater opponents who have felt neglected by their public officials? If the former is his motive, he owes the people a full explanation of how much tax money is needed and how it will be spent. If it's the latter, adding a tax won't provide much comfort to people who object to the noise that comes from the amphitheater, Tijuana Bar and associated businesses.

One thing is certain; if Harveys Lake adopts an amusement tax, the school district will be sorely tempted to again consider the idea, especially in these days of declining state and federal funding and soaring teacher salary costs.

It's past time to raise the minimum wage

Speaking of salaries, the minimum wage is again a subject of discussion in some state legislatures, if not in Washington. The reason is simple: Accounting for inflation, workers at minimum wage are falling further behind the rest of the economy. According to a study in New York state, in 1979 a full-time minimum wage earner had annual income about \$700 above the poverty level for a family of three. By last year, the minimum wage earned him or her a salary nearly \$3,000 below the poverty level for a three-person family.

Meanwhile, the percentage of the nation's wealth and income going to the highest wage earners continues to climb. While rate increases of 3 percent or less (if any at all) are the norm for lower and middle level employees, top management averages about twice that, continuing a trend that has been in place for nearly two decades.

There may be ideological support among arch conservatives for this disparity, but if continued it will cost us dearly. The engine of the American economy is consumption, but those who don't earn a living wage aren't going to consume much. At the other end of the scale, consumption as a share of income declines with rising salaries, as excess income is directed into safe investments rather than yet another unnecessary car or home.

Henry Ford understood this principle, and despite the nearly unanimous outrage of his peers raised the salary of his assembly line employees to \$5 per day in the 1920s. The result was a pickup in auto sales, particularly to people who previously couldn't afford one.

A new minimum wage is especially important in this part of the nation, where pay levels at or close to the minimum are common, and unemployment is high. Critics will claim that raising the minimum will cost jobs, but that has never been proven true. The reverse is more likely, as people who formerly lacked disposable income begin to support more local businesses.

Since the minimum wage is at this point further below a true living wage than at almost any time in its existence, it is past time to raise it. But we must go one step further, and index the minimum to some recognizable standard, such as the inflation rate, or the increase in the average of all wages in our society. Then, it will take care of itself and we won't again have to go through the ludicrous process of convincing a majority in Congress that people who work a full week should be able to support their families in something above abject poverty.

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.



Letters

Fishing licenses worth their cost, and more

Editor:
No doubt there are fisher(women) between the ages of 12 and 16 who will have some difficulty digging up the proposed \$4.50 for an annual (that's 12 full months) Pennsylvania state fishing license. And provisions should be made to allow for their participation in this great outdoor activity. But I find it somewhat laughable that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is being criticized for suggesting this small license fee when registration costs for youth sports like baseball, football, and soccer average \$25

to \$40 per child, and that's only for part of the year.

It's even funnier when you compare the price of movies (about \$5), video games (average expenditure per short afternoon about \$5), sneakers (about \$105), audio and video tapes, cd's, haircuts, clothes, and on and on and on. And lest we forget, someone is purchasing the fishing rods, reels, hip boots/waders, bait, lures, flies, and transportation for those young fisherkids today.

Call me a scrooge, but several years ago when the PF&BC proposed the \$5 Trout/Salmon

stamp, I proposed that it be paid by any and all, resident trout/salmon fishers of Pennsylvania regardless of age. You can just imagine the criticism, complaining and crying I heard from that. Well folks, I'm still of the opinion that if you want to play you should have to pay. Maybe in this way you'll be more inclined to buy into the need for conservation of the resource. What most of us get for \$17 with today's license is worth at least 10 times that amount to me.

John P. Bergevin
Dallas

Pastor says thanks for food bank 'miracle'

Editor:
Each of the New Testament Gospels contains a wonderful story about caring for people who are hungry. Some of the details vary, but in general Jesus is confronted with 5,000 people who have come to hear Him teach. It is supertime and the disciples suggest that they be sent home to eat.

But Jesus says, "No, you feed them." They are confounded with such a request. They look around and see a young boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. "This is all we have," they say. Jesus tells them to distribute it and miraculously all are fed with baskets of food left over.

I have sometimes wondered how such a miracle could happen, but I saw visible evidence of

it last Friday when students from a Dallas Senior High sociology class arrived at our church with hundreds of boxes of food. They had challenged their fellow students to give food to the needy and had set out to collect 4,000 items for the Back Mountain Food Bank administered by our church. They could never have guessed the outcome of their childlike offering.

At last count, 15,626 food items, 23 turkeys, 3 oven stuffer roast-ers, 2 Cornish hens, 5 hams and \$940 were carried into our church, sorted and then transferred to the Food Bank storage area.

What a marvelous outpouring of generosity and care by these students and their families, the teachers and staff. As I worked along side them I could see the

great pride they had in their accomplishment and I could see wonder and awe in their eyes. What a wonderful experience for them to have at this precious stage of their life.

On behalf of our church and the Back Mountain Food Bank staff of Walter Meade, George Gaylord and Kathy Barlow, I extend heartfelt thanks to these students and the Back Mountain community for supporting them. Thanksgiving boxes of food have already been distributed and the remaining food will keep the food bank well supplied for many months to come. I'm glad I was here to see this "miracle" unfold.

W. Charles Naugle, Pastor
Trucksville United Methodist Church

J.W.J.

Tread lightly with health care reform

By J.W. JOHNSON

Interest rates are down.
Are interest rates going up?
Bond market is up.
Are stocks going down?
It all boils down to dollars and cents, to purchase goods, services, luxuries and the time to enjoy them, versus who has more of the former, so as to be able to acquire more of the latter. This endless financial game which is the life-blood of capitalism, can be seen in headlines, and heard in sound-bites daily.

And at the heart (no pun intended) of the health care reform movement is the cost of that service, vis a vis lack of access to it. That's why the rich are nervous. They own the companies which provide health care. And no matter how you slice it, the rich are going to be subsidizing the poor, and all of us will then have a mediocre health care, as opposed to the quality health care for most, and no health care for some, that we have now.

Health care reform has been on the citizen collective mind for some time now. It was responsible for Sen. Harris Wofford's defeat of Richard Thornburgh. Seeing that, and hearing all the pollsters say that health care was at the top of the citizen concern list, the Clinton Administration decided laws were needed to change the method, payment for, and accessibility to, health care.

Of course, what the pollsters didn't discriminate between were those persons who responded by saying a primary concern was losing health care if they became unemployed.

The issue then is not health care; rather, the basic economy. But the Clinton Administration seized upon the (I believe) deliberately misinterpreted polls, as an excuse to promote the real left-

wing agenda. Like the social reformers of the 1960's and the Great Society's attempt to redistribute income, the health care reformers of today want to redistribute government spending...and so Congress, is now considering monumental legislation to do just that with health care.

"We in America suffer from a great delusion," the late (and made by Watergate famous) U.S. Senator Sam Ervin once said. "We think we can pass a law and everything will be cured."...again, no pun intended.

The attitude noted by Ervin includes just about everyone: laborer, government employees, electronics technicians, florists...the list includes virtually all of us, and could go on forever. And of immeasurable length seems to be the list of special benefits wanted by virtually everyone from the 'government.'

So a law is passed, a bureaucracy formed, and regulation promulgated until the bureaucracy now numbers more than 3,000,000 in Washington alone, with a corresponding Federal tax bite. And it's estimated that it will take 100,000 to a quarter million more bureaucrats to run to so-called better health care system being envisioned.

Can anyone in the universe point to a government managed and staffed anything, and demonstrate that it is run more effectively and at less cost than a comparable anything in the private sector?

We are floundering in regulations we don't understand, taxes we cannot afford, but more importantly, moving forward with a 'help-me-government' attitude, an attitude which is causing the death of self respect, a character trait which, more than any other, made

this country great.

Every time we ask the government for help instead of doing it ourselves we lose self respect and gain more governmental control over lives.

Recall the Pilgrims. What guarantees did they have? They provided food, shelter, transportation and other necessities...or they did not survive. And it's because of their survival, and their example, that this country was preserved for future generations.

It would be ludicrous to advocate a return to pure survival; it is also no doubt true that self respect is more difficult to comprehend and/or to see the need for maintaining, when humans are once, twice and three times removed from an immediate survival threat.

But that does not mean the knight should hang up his armor for lack of dragons to slay?

Instead of self respect, the predominant character traits in America today are, to name a few:—demanding more money for less work.

—putting immediate security above self respect.

—and generations of welfare recipients now with no grasp of the notion of taking care of one's self, that idea having been supplanted by the myth of 'entitlements.'

It is true that in an age (New York City excepted) where survival is not paramount, self respect becomes more an idealistic symbol than a realistic response. But what better symbol to pass along and insure future generations?

To be sure, access to health care by Americans, at something less than a \$10 per aspirin cost, is long overdue.

But turning the entire mess over to yet another bureaucracy would be, indeed, throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Dec. 8, 1933 LIQUOR PROHIBITION OFFICIALLY ENDS

The Civil Works Board of Harrisburg this week approved the construction of an 18-foot roadway on Cemetery Street, Dallas, 450 feet from Rice Street to Foster Avenue including a stone bridge as the first thing of the borough's share in the Civil Works appropriation for the county. It is expected about 20 men will be employed on the project.

John Barleycorn came back last Tuesday after a 14-year vacation but he was a ghost of his former self. Compared with the rousing welcome this section gave the return of legal beer, the calmness which marked the death of Prohibition was as a popcorn in a wind-storm.

You could get - Chickens, 17¢ lb.; chuck roast, 12¢ lb.; eggs, 23¢ doz.; Eight O'Clock coffee 15¢ lb.; bread, 20-oz. loaf 9¢.

50 Years Ago - Dec. 3, 1943 DALLAS NATIVE NAMED WARD'S VICE-PRES

R. S. Stevens, born and raised in Dallas, today is vice president and general merchandise manager of Montgomery Ward & Co., the giant mail order and retail organization which employs 80,000. His father managed Raub's Hotel in Dallas for many years and later a hardware store in that community.

Lehman Township schools have been awarded the grand prize of \$20 for the highest per capita collection of waste paper during the drive sponsored by the Dallas Woman's Club. Lehman's pupils averaged 79 1/2 lbs. of paper per student while their nearest competitor Dallas Borough schools averaged 61 lbs. per student.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 4, 1953 BORO COUNCIL MEETS IN NEW BUILDING

Dallas Borough Council held its first meeting in the new Borough Building Tuesday night. There was considerable discussion of plans for remodeling the building, contingent upon whether the State Liquor Control Board signs a lease for a part of the building for a State Liquor Store. No changes will be made until the Board makes its decision.

Rate increases totaling \$11,335 a year for some 1,507 users of Dallas Water Co. and Shavertown Water Co. were approved Wednesday by the Public Utility Commission. Rate boosts which went into effect Monday means increased revenue of at least \$6,440 for Dallas Water Co. and \$4,895 for the Shavertown Co.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 5, 1963 NEW RTE. 309 WORK ON SCHEDULE

With the last laying of concrete this year for the new Memorial Highway to be completed in the week near Duke Isaacs in Trucksville, all major work with the exception of digging at the Birch Grove stretch is complete. Bridge work will also continue during the winter according to Fred Dietz field office manager for H.J. Williams Co. contractor for the job.

Dallas Rotary Club at their meeting at Irem Country Club voted in favor of joining other clubs and civic organizations in discouraging the erection of billboards along the newly modified Luzerne-Dallas Highway.

Rev. Andrew Pillarella, pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Dallas announced plans for a campaign to build a church and is asking parishioners to support the building campaign in conjunction with the regular Every Member Canvass on Dec. 15. No monetary goal has been established but it is hoped that pledges made over a three year period will enable the construction of one or more units as planned on the seven acres owned by the church adjacent to Dallas Township Junior High School.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 6, 1973 AREA GAS STATIONS SHUT DOWN

Nearly all gasoline station owners in the area followed President Nixon's request and locked up their pumps Sunday. Sgt. Gilbert Hanna of the State Police at Dunmore said the volume of Sunday traffic was down about 25% in his area and was even lighter on major highways. After a while people will get used to the shortage and adjust their habits accordingly.

You could get - Turkeys, 22-26 lbs. avg., 59¢ lb.; Lobster Tails, 2-4 oz. avg. weight \$3.99 lb.; apple pie, 22-oz. 59¢; Keebler Vanilla Wafers, 12-oz. pkg. 39¢

The Dallas Post

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

Ronald A. Bartzek
Editor and Publisher

Charlotte E. Bartzek
Associate Publisher

Peggy Young
Advertising Acct. Exec.

Grace R. Dove
Reporter

Paul Rismiller
Production Manager

Jill Urbanas
Office Manager

Olga Kostrobala
Classified/typesetting

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