

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### Rough start for new DAMA hauler, let's hope future is better

The new contractor for the Dallas Area Municipal Authority's trash and recycling pickup program appears to be off to a rocky—and snowy—start. Wayne-Pike Sanitation gained the contract for the next three years with a bid 17 percent below the old price. Now, the company may wonder if they won a prize or a problem.

Many home owners reported delayed pickups in the first two weeks of the new contract. That is understandable; it took the previous contractor several weeks to hit its stride, after which service was consistently reliable and efficient. Then the coldest, snowiest weather in years hit the Back Mountain, and the startup jitters were replaced by a complete lapse of service.

It's impossible to know whether anyone could have done better under the extreme conditions of the past two weeks. After the snow made roads impassable, bitter cold curtailed the operation of many vehicles, especially diesel trucks which are difficult to start and run at low temperatures. We hope Wayne-Pike is up to the task of serving the nearly 6,000 households in the DAMA program. Certainly they deserve a few weeks of normal weather in which to prove their abilities.

### Publisher's notebook

When Bobby Ray Inman, President Clinton's choice for defense secretary, withdrew his name in a rambling one-hour press conference last week, most news reports presented him as a thin-skinned egomaniac too concerned about his image to absorb the "inevitable" personal attacks on the holder of such a visible and important national position. National Public Radio went further and interviewed other recent withdrawers, about their experiences dealing with the Washington press and the confirmation process. All offered similar judgements; that their years of public and private accomplishment were virtually ignored in favor of one-dimensional negative caricatures that were reported and broadcast incessantly.

These instances point out an increasingly dangerous weakness in our political system, one that is not limited to national figures. When the statements of partisan political opponents and self-righteous pundits (who frequently are equally as partisan) are given the weight of real evidence, no one is safe from distortion and outright slander.

Politics, of course, is the realm for such goings on. As for the press, it just may be that there are too many people covering too little real news, with the result that ambitious reporters and editors leap at each opportunity to appear more aggressive than their colleagues. They also may believe that making headlines is more important than reporting accurately. Unfortunately, in many newsrooms, they're right.

Bobby Inman showed he isn't fit for a top job in today's political climate, but many other cases aren't so clear. One thing is certain; if the price of high public service is constant battering from ideologically-driven newsmen and women, many capable people simply won't get involved.

The very real plight of battered wives was lost in media hysteria and self-righteous babble during the Lorena Bobbitt trial. The gloating of some women's groups contradicted the proposition that violence is the wrong course for either partner in an unhappy relationship. Meanwhile, the response of the head of the National Organization for Men was equally loony. He claimed to fear an outbreak of attacks on men by radical feminists, implying that men—who are overwhelmingly the aggressors—are really victims.

But isn't that what the whole trial and verdict were about, being a victim? And it worked; portraying Ms. Bobbitt as a helpless waif allowed the jury to find her not guilty. After all, we can't expect people to control their impulses when they feel taken advantage of, can we?

In any event, if she had cut off a finger or an ear, do you think this case would have drawn the same attention?

Did you read the front-page articles about prisoners suing the state in Sunday's Times Leader? It seems they feel they're subjected to too harsh treatment in their time behind bars, and want the federal government to step in and uphold their rights. The leader of the inmates' lobby at Chase prison is Franklin Castle, who killed four people in cold blood, but feels that not having enough educational opportunities for convicted felons is "cruel and unusual punishment."

There's no doubt that prison life is hard. It should be; at least people like Castle still have a life to complain about. That can't be said for his victims.

Ron Bartizek

### 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.



### As I was saying...

## Computer disks will never replace books

By JACK HILSHER

Tom Bigler, whose output is truly prodigious, recently wrote about the financial crisis facing the Osterhout Library. Of course they are not alone, all county libraries sharing a measly quarter-of-a-million grant are facing similar money problems...our own Back Mountain Memorial Library and nine others. Bigler mentioned the more than one million coming from Lackawanna County to the Scranton public library system as evidence of the casual attitude the "Unholy Three" exhibit at our Luzerne courthouse. All too true.

But this is not a plea for funds. They will come, somehow. What I'd like to discuss instead is how cloudy the crystal ball becomes when forecasts of the future of the libraries are made, and they are made at regular intervals.

I have been a library lounge/lover ever since I learned to read, starting at the James V. Brown Library in Williamsport. That deep background sort of gives me the right to comment on some of those forecasts. For example:

In 1939 Frederick Keppel in "The Library of Tomorrow" predicted that librarianship in twenty years would be "largely a setting of dials. There would be no pages, but instead dial-controlled containers would be running the errands of the library."...Karen Smith wrote in "Robot at the Reference Desk" that students will dial in for reference queries which are "answered automatically using a terminal capable of voice recognition. Thus they will never see an advisor"....The Wilson Bulletin said, "We will be able to sit in our own homes and dial into libraries to request information."...In 1956 Library Trends said the potential of library mechanization lay entirely within punched cards.

And then the great and prolific Isaac Asimov, with more than 450 books and essays under his belt, wrote not so long ago that "Assuming our civilization continues to exist and advance its technology, the computerization of libraries is inevitable." There will be a tendency to centralize library information so that a request for particular items can tap the resources of all libraries in a region.

The process is bound to be gradual but surely within fifty years it will be well-advanced. The day will come when every human being will have a specific TV channel that can be tuned to a computer outlet that will be his or her connection to the gathered knowledge of the world.

To Isaac my friend, and all you other guys, I say this: poppycock! Notwithstanding the lack of cash to accomplish all this junk it'll never happen because it shouldn't.

Nothing will ever replace a book. Nothing will replace the look, the feel, yes, the smell, or the pure joy of a book. And, going one step further, nothing will replace the reading of that book by human eyes and not an electronic scanning device.

I don't care if a "CD-ROM" can hold 100 feet of shelf space on a 4" disk. I want the shelves, and I want them filled with books. And I don't want - ever - to be on that "Information Highway" all the current talk is touting. If I am on a back road, so be it. That's where I'll stay, with my books, and I'll be a damn sight happier. And smarter besides.

### J.W.J.

## Wanted: parents who really want the job

By J.W. JOHNSON

Parents: turn off the television. Parents: turn off the video games.

Parents: be parents. The evidence mounts by the day. According to the Pennsylvania State School Boards Association, "no matter how much homework the student did, how intelligent they were, or how much money their parents made, the relationship between TV and test scores was practically identical."

Test scores of more than 500,000 students in the sixth and 12th grades in California schools declined steadily for each hour of television they watched.

There's little doubt that television can and does educate. But indiscriminate use of television, particularly as a substitute parent, makes the mind a receiver, not a seeker. Then the medium can and does limit the total educational process by numbing intellectual desire, by robbing the mind of time to expand, even to contemplate the effort.

Television watching is more complex than its electronic insides. Its complexity raises larger issues than the medium's questionable use as a substitute parent.

There is the question of the development of future leaders. There are now more than 170 million television sets in use. Leaders are going to be more dif-

ficult to find in a populace increasingly more accustomed to being led than to leading.

Participatory government, essential to the maintenance of freedoms, has a good chance of succumbing to benign neglect, crushed under the cushions of all those watchers.

As well, studies have shown that by the time the average child graduates from elementary school, he or she will have seen more than 100,000 acts of violence on TV. And the average teenager will see nearly 14,000 sexual encounters on TV each year.

Parentally, and since 1960, illegitimate births are up 419 percent, teenage suicides are up by 200 percent, and violent crime by 560 percent.

To suggest there is no relationship between television watching and the above statistics is absurd.

Just listen to casual conversation on the street and you soon realize that very few young people today see a moral dimension to what they or their peers do. Gone are the days when 'character' or basic moral values are taught in school, even at home. More's the pity, because teaching basic right from wrong bears at least as much weight in the progress and survival of a society as does teaching basic education.

To be sure, violence-jaded young people are hard to reach with pithy sayings about right and wrong.

Think about it. Children today

have an enormous amount of time on their hands, largely because of modern convenience, on one hand for some of them, and for the rest at least in this part of the world, the guarantee of dairy farm milk subsidy removing economic incentive, and the consumption of time which the requirements of a job used to take.

In 1960, Wayne had more than 1,200 farms; farms now number a little more than 400. And until 1980 Wayne had more acres under agricultural than were residential. Throughout most of this century, many of its children and their families worked on the farm. Through the capitalistic blessing of modern convenience, fewer and fewer bodies were needed, and through government subsidy, the farms survived.

In part, this is now why we have so many kids with so much time on their hands. This time, coupled with a belief that an automobile is now a 'right' not a privilege, along with expectations of excitement fueled by television, movies and advertising, mixed with the traditional rites of passage, and you now find young people with so much time on their hands that they spend it primarily in front of the television where they are drenched in violence, or at the malls, where sexual imagery is used to sell virtually everything.

Parents: be parents. At least regulate, if not turn off, the television. Buy your child a book. Take your child to the library.

Parents: be parents.

### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - Feb. 2, 1934 MUCH DEBATE OVER K.T. JUNIOR HIGH

Proponents of plans for construction of a new Junior High School for Kingston Township expressed confidence this week that the project will be carried through successfully with the cooperation of the Public Works Administration. Opponents of the plan continued their attempt to block the project.

Appointment of Irvin C. Davis as acting postmaster at Shavertown was announced Wednesday by Postmaster General James A. Farley. Davis succeeds Herman Van Campen.

Dallas Township and Laketon basketball teams which are tied for first place in the local scholastic league will play at Laketon tonight to decide which is to be the league leader. Both teams have records clean of defeats.

#### 50 Years Ago - Jan. 28, 1944 FATHER, SON SERVING IN ARMED FORCES

With the sales of 69 War Bonds amounting to \$8,850 and War Savings Stamps amounting to \$59.25, making a grand total of \$8,909.25 has exceeded its goal by \$1,409.25 during the first week of the Fourth Loan Drive.

Dallas father and son who are serving in the armed forces with distinction are Captain William F. Cairl Jr. of the Army signal corps and his son, Clayton an aviation cadet, stationed at Maxwell Field, Alabama. A veteran of WWI, the captain fought in France. A 1943 graduate of Dallas Borough High School, the cadet entered the service on June 26.

You could get - Center cut pork chops, 37¢ lb.; lean smoked bacon, 31¢ lb.; oranges, 27¢ doz.; cabbage, 5¢ lb.

#### 40 Years Ago - Jan. 29, 1954 AREA WOMAN WINS BIG IN SOAP CONTEST

Borough Engineer John T. Jeter has been instructed to determine what can be done to open King Street between Norton and Machell Avenues and to prepare plans for a community parking lot for 50 or more automobiles back of the borough building and the Dallas Branch of Miners Bank.

Back Mountain Region contributed generously to the Mothers March on Polio, ranking 3rd among Wyoming Valley communities with a total of more than \$2,600 out of \$23,000 contributed by all communities served by Wyoming Valley Chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

Mrs. Josiah Jenkins of Shavertown was informed by Mgr. Robert Perry on Tuesday that she won \$1,000 plus an automatic Laundromat in a contest conducted in October for a new name for a household detergent distributed by the American Stores Co. Prize-winning name "Kee" was selected from thousands of entries.

#### 30 Years Ago - Jan. 30, 1964 COON FAMILY GIVES TO FIRE COMPANIES

The A. Harden Coon Sr. family donate \$100 to every fire company in the Back Mountain, accompanying each with a letter of commendation. Donations were made whether or not the company took part in the battle against the hopeless blaze New Year's Day which took the lives of all five members of the A.Harden Coon Jr. family in Huntsville.

Dallas Rotary presented the Back Mountain Memorial Library Association with \$300 for a memorial fund to the late Howard Risley, editor of The Dallas Post. The idea of a fund was originated months ago as a tribute to a man whose loss is still felt deeply in the community.

You could get - Rib roasts, 65¢ lb.; veal roast, 53¢ lb.; Jane Parker, 1 lb. -8 oz. pie, 39¢; spaghetti, 5-1 lb. pkgs. 99¢; Wisk, qt. bot. 67¢; Maxwell House 1 lb. can coffee 73¢.

#### 20 Years Ago - Jan. 31, 1974 GROUND BROKEN FOR NEW SEWERS AT LAKE

Ground was broken for the Harveys Lake Borough sewer project Jan. 24, following years of effort and years of feuding between members of the borough council and the Harveys Lake Municipal Authority.

Kiwanis Club of Dallas will offer \$1,000 in prizes for this year's Festival of Music, to be held March 23 at the Dallas Junior High School according to the 1974 festival chairman. Participants will win \$100 for 1st place in their division; \$50 for 2nd and \$25 for 3rd place. Divisions will be classical, popular, Western, folk music for vocalists; keyboard, instrumental or large group categories.

## The Dallas Post

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If you're looking for reports from Afghanistan, fluffy features about peanut butter or tales of the weird and absurd...well, you've got the wrong newspaper. We only do news of the Back Mountain, its people and places. Because we focus on your community, you'll find more local news—reported more completely and accurately—in The Dallas Post than anywhere else. That won't help you decide whether charrtreuse or flaming orange is the best color this year, but it will help you keep in touch with the place where your family lives, and that just may be more useful in the long run.

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