

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### Worst weather has brought out the best

The weather outside has been truly frightful this winter, and resources and tempers have been stretched to their limits. Yet, we've persevered in this coldest and snowiest period on record, with yeoman efforts from road crews and snow plow contractors, plumbers and electricians, and a lot of help from friends and neighbors.

The white stuff has piled high above anything seen in recent memory, and temperatures have plunged to consistent record lows. Water pipes that were never before a problem have frozen, dams of ice on eaves have forced runoff into windows and walls, heating systems have strained to keep up and countless car batteries have expired. But there have been no serious injuries or deaths, travel has been slowed but not stopped, and we're aware of no one who has gone without heat for any length of time.

Our hats are off to all the people who have worked so hard to keep others safe and sound through this trying time. Some get paid, but they have performed far above and beyond the call of duty. Many others ask for nothing in return for their kindness, whether it is manifested in doing errands for a shut-in neighbor, lending some firewood, digging out a driveway or jump starting a car.

An old saw says that adversity brings out the best in people, and that surely has been the case this winter. We've had plenty of adversity, and have seen even more of the best people have to offer. Of course, enough is enough, and we'll be pleased to see both come to an end anytime soon.

### A state of the region speech we yearn for

President Clinton delivered his state of the union speech to Congress last week, and Governor Casey laid out his goals for Pennsylvania. Both took credit for every good that has occurred recently, and little of the blame for the bad. That's to be expected.

While the condition of both the Commonwealth and the nation is important, it would be nice to get a clear assessment of the state of our region; the Back Mountain and Luzerne County. With a little imagination, this might be the state of the region speech given by an amalgam of our elected county, state and federal representatives.

My fellow Luzerne Countians, it has been a mediocre year in our region. Unemployment, though it is improved from a year ago, remains high. There are few good jobs to be had, and none on the horizon. Business activity was anemic, but at least stable, and most employers have adapted to slower times.

I haven't done much to improve things. I know it's tough for many of you, but it isn't for me. I get a good salary and great fringes, and since most people in this area distrust too much government activity anyway (except the part that benefits them), not a lot has been expected of me. I have, however, made every effort to have my picture taken handing out checks and signing proclamations. Besides, it's a lot less stressful to hang around with my pals at the courthouse or in Washington and Harrisburg than it would be to roll up my sleeves and work at the nitty gritty of attracting good new employers to the region.

But that was the past, and this is now. I've decided I'm no longer comfortable with the status quo, and will put all my energy and talent to work for the good of my constituents. Here's what I want to accomplish in the next year or two:

1. I'll pull out all the stops to save public bus service in Luzerne County. But I won't stop there; I'll insist that management shape up or ship out, eliminate waste and work to satisfy the needs and desires of riders. We'll work toward goals of improved service and greater efficiency, and require that these goals be met or managers fired. As for the drivers, they'll have to help, too, and I'm sure they will if they believe everyone's going to pull their weight.

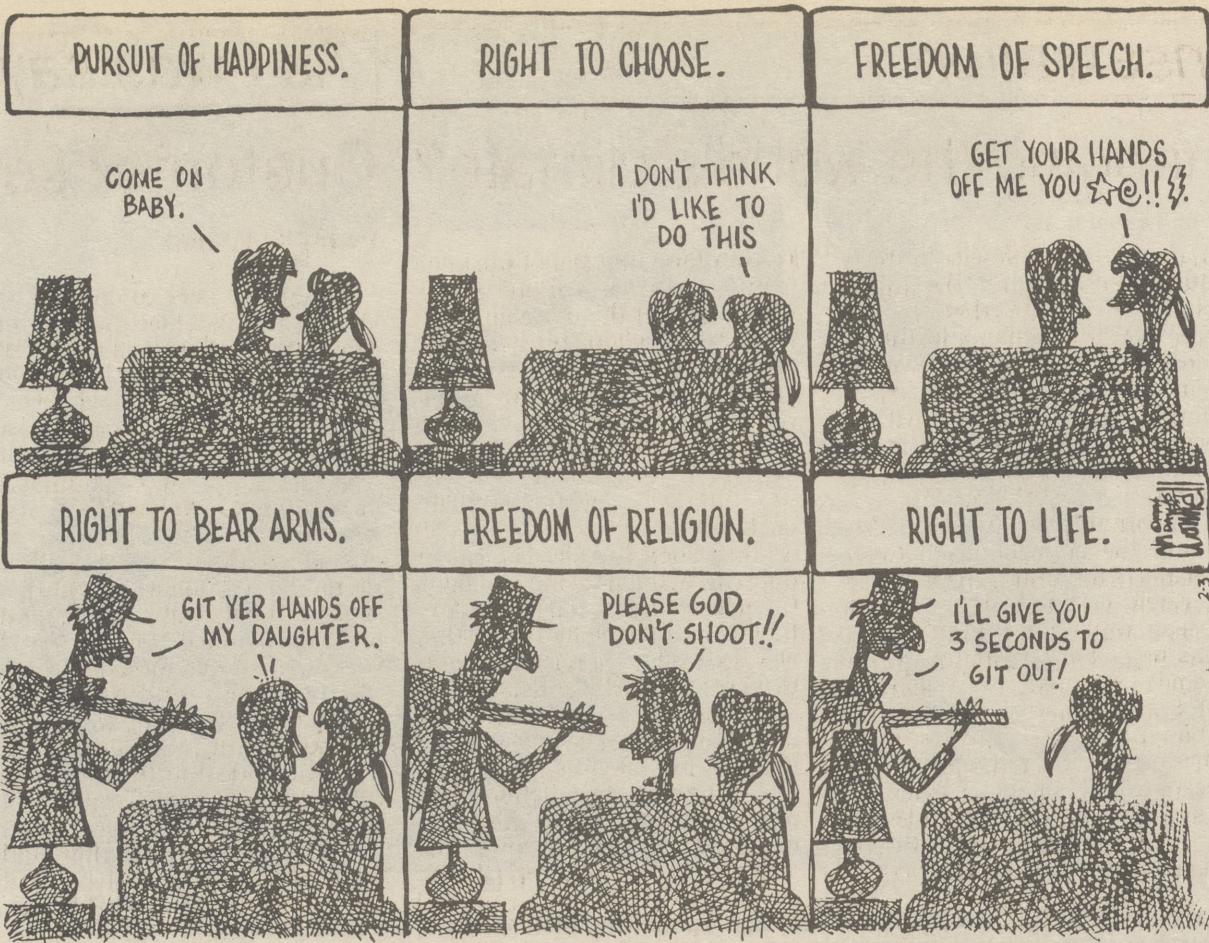
2. We need vigorous, good-paying employers, and I'll help bring them in any way I can. For starters, I'll gather business and government leaders of all the Back Mountain communities and decide how and where we can develop a park for light industry and offices. I know many employers appreciate a location like ours, and if we make an organized effort I'm sure we can draw them here.

3. Improvements to make travel on Route 309 safer must be completed as quickly as possible. To that end, I'll petition PennDOT to move up their work schedule so that all proposed work will be completed this year. While I'm at it, I'll press them to improve snow clearing on the highway.

4. Our property tax system is unfair, and it must be changed. I'll support tax reform that relies more on income taxes and less on property taxes to fund the schools. But I'll also propose and support mandatory revaluation of all properties every 10 years, so that those who buy newer homes aren't unfairly subsidizing those who are lucky enough to own an older one.

There's plenty more to do, and I'd love to hear your ideas. But remember, I would rather tackle a few important jobs and get them done than serve on endless committees studying problems to death. I'm asking you to help me accomplish these goals before we attempt new ones. That experience will give all of us more confidence in our ability to shape a future that is more secure and satisfying for ourselves, our families, and our neighbors.

Thank you, and may God bless you.



### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - Feb. 9, 1934 STATE SAYS NO TO NEW K.T. SCHOOL

A plan to construct an addition to the rear of Dallas Township High School was discussed by school board members and taxpayers at a meeting of the board. The addition as planned tentatively would consist of eight rooms and an auditorium, constructed of fireproof material and cost approximately \$25,000.

Ruling by the Pennsylvania State Department of Justice brought an abrupt end to Kingston Township School Board plans to construct a new \$100,000 building. Commenting on the ruling which declared that the district could not enter into an agreement with the Public Works Administration because of the amount of indebtedness already, a member of the school board said the present crowded conditions will force the directors to finance by some method some building projects.

#### 50 Years Ago - Feb. 4, 1944 STATE PLANS LAST LEG OF NEW RTE. 118

Officials of Wyoming Valley Motor Club this week gave their hearty approval to plans for the State Highway Department to construct a new highway between Lehman and Idetown as the final link in the route between Williamsport and Wilkes-Barre.

An ad sponsored by patriotic Back Mountain citizens and business firms who believe that its message is highly important to the furtherance of the all-out war effort in their home community appeared in *The Dallas Post*. It featured a page with three squares, each with 25 blocks, with photos of Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito in each: "Step up! Paste these fellows right in the 'pan' with War Savings Stamps. Hang one on Hitler, another on Hirohito...muss up Mussolini. When all squares are filled, your bank or Post Office will exchange a \$25 War Bond for this page. Let's all back the attack! Stamp out the Axis with War Stamps."

#### 40 Years Ago - Feb. 5, 1954 SHAVER THEATRE CLOSES ITS DOORS

The American Legion Distinguished Service Citation for outstanding service to life of the community, will be presented to Miss Frances Dorrance, Dallas, retired chief librarian of the Hoyt Library, Kingston at the American Legion Home, Kingston. Miss Dorrance will become the fifth person in 35 years to receive the Citation.

Dallas Borough Council at its meeting in the borough building adopted its annual budget of \$34,051.58 during fiscal year 1954. Tax millage will remain at 22 mills.

After 16 years of exhibiting motion pictures, Shaver Theatre, Shavertown, closed Monday night for an indefinite period following the final showing of "The Moon is Blue" with William Holden. "We cannot continue to operate said Daniel Shaver, owner "during the present unsettled condition of the motion picture industry." He said he was unable to obtain a regular flow of pictures. This plus competition of TV creates an impossible situation.

#### 30 Years Ago - Feb. 6, 1964 MARTZ KILLED IN CHOPPER ACCIDENT

Frank Martz Jr., of Wilkes-Barre and East Dallas, and owner of Martz Trailways Bus Co. met a tragic death Monday when the helicopter which he was piloting struck high tension wires at Tipton, Pa. Martz was on a business trip at the time of the crash completely destroying the aircraft.

When schools are closed due to inclement weather, the days lost will have to be made up during the week of March 22, time scheduled for the Easter recess. As of this date school will be in session March 23 and 24.

You could get Sirloln steak 69¢ lb.; rib roast 59¢ lb.; bananas 11¢ lb.; Virginia Lee pies 2-\$1.00; Kellogg's Rice Krispies 13 oz. pkg. 37¢.

#### 20 Years Ago - Feb. 7, 1974 GAS LINES, SHORTAGE WILL GET WORSE

Long lines at gas stations or no gas at all have begun to bother regional motorists in Northeast Pennsylvania. But general consensus of most station managers is that things are going to get a lot worse before they get better. In addition to the shortage, motorists also began noticing the price increases which generally went into effect Friday. Prices ranged from a high 55.9¢ gal. for hi test to a low of 40.9¢.

### One from the road

## S.O.B. (No, it's not what you think)

By PAUL RISMILLER

Another week, and more tales of woe about the impending crash of the Luzerne County Transportation Authority.

This week, union and management representatives finally come face to face . . . and refuse to look each other in the eye, let alone come to an agreement.

It was also the first week that I can recall seeing letters to the editor in local newspapers critical of the drivers and their union. As a regular rider, and an eyewitness to this slow motion disaster, I can tell you that as a rule, the riders support the drivers.

The LCTA management's constant attempts to shift the responsibility for the rapidly deteriorating situation onto the drivers have been so intense as to be laughable. . . and also incriminating. Anyone who tries so hard to shift blame has to be feeling guilty.

Most riders, myself included, have watched the LCTA shoot itself in the foot (or should I say tire?) so long, that the subject of "who's at fault" in this mess rarely merits discussion.

The fact is, many drivers will tell you, privately, that they would be willing to consider taking cuts in pay or benefits. After all, a \$12 or \$13 an hour paycheck beats no paycheck at all by a country mile.

They are not, however, willing to give a thin dime to the same crowd of chowderheaded mis-managers who brought the company to such a pass in the first place. Who can blame them?

And to agree to allow LCTA management to reopen the contract and make more cuts at any time, as the LCTA insists, would be suicidally stupid. Who, after observing the management and board in action, would trust them as far as they can throw a bus?

Indeed, how can you negotiate with people who've shown no inclination to do so in good faith?

Don't forget, that is the reason the federal government won't release the \$940,000 the LCTA desperately needs . . . the management is willing to go to Washington, hat in hand, and beg for it, they're just unwilling to do what would automatically release the funds . . . negotiate in good faith.

The emotion most often expressed by riders about the whole

mess is amazement. Not anger at the LCTA board and management, or disgust with the county commissioners, who are trying desperately to avoid their ultimate responsibility for this disaster, nor fear that they'll end up on the unemployment line when they can't get to work. Not that these emotions aren't present, and increasing. They are.

But most riders are simply amazed that this problem has been festering for so long with no resolution. Amazed that no politician or government agency has even suggested taking some common-sense steps that they see as self-evident.

First of all, why isn't someone, anyone, calling for the resignation of LCTA Director Harold Edwards? Regardless of whoever's second cousin this guy may be, it is evident that he doesn't have a clue as to how to run a bus company. In fact, when I read that his background is in accounting, I almost fell out of my chair laughing, because he can't be very good at that either.

Why is it that the LCTA only looks for cuts to balance the books? Cuts in service, cuts in personnel (only drivers and maintenance of course, not a single administrative or management type has seen a pink slip).

I have a novel idea . . . instead of trying to save money, why don't you try to make money?

No one in management or the board are willing to reveal a dirty little secret . . . every time they cut service, they also automatically cut their federal subsidy. Ever since the ill-conceived cutting of night service (ill-conceived is the polite way of saying "Bone-headed") the LCTA has been constantly diddling around with schedules in an apparent attempt to lose as many riders as possible . . . it's the only thing they've been successful at.

A driver once told me that he used to have a full load inbound on weekday mornings. People who worked downtown but didn't want to contend with the hassle of driving in Wilkes-Barre, or the expense of parking in the city. Seeing that accommodating commuters would make money, the LCTA quickly screwed up the schedule so that these folks wouldn't make it to work on time. As the driver said,

once you lose them, you'll never get them back.

Even more amazing to me, having been involved in different aspects of the newspaper business my entire adult life, is the lack of reporting on these issues:

(A note to editors who may read this: please feel free to claim credit for thinking of the following leads. Please.)

Nobody saw fit to demand an immediate, independent audit of the LCTA after it was revealed that the members of the board attended a Christmas party hosted by . . . their auditors.

No one saw fit to report the absolute lack of anything resembling promotional efforts on the part of the LCTA.

No one published the tax write-offs major companies can get for buying blocks of monthly bus passes for their employees, or questioned why the LCTA hasn't been pushing the program.

No one questions why the LCTA doesn't contact broadcast outlets to tell riders that the buses will be using snow routes. For that matter, why doesn't the LCTA put their snow routes in the newspapers, or at least on their schedules?

No one has asked questions about the \$80,000 study the LCTA paid for several years ago and promptly filed in the trash because the report criticized management.

No one ever followed up on reports that Harold Edwards gave back money to the feds because he didn't think it was necessary. (Of course, it's money the feds will never give us again.)

No one was interested, apparently, that when the LCTA board was thwarted in its initial efforts to kill Saturday service, it put a four hour gap in the Saturday schedules, obviously so they could come back at a later date to claim that such a drastic drop in ridership would require giving them what they wanted in the first place.

No one held Jim "Call me Brain Damaged" Phillips' feet to the fire when he made the sincerely stupid comment, "these people don't need buses."

Maybe not Jimbo, provided you're willing to give us a ride to work.

Better yet, you and the other two stooges can make an effort to Save Our Buses!

### Library news

## Friends collecting pennies for periodicals

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will be having a special project during the month of February. The Friends of the Library is sponsoring the project. The project will be called "Pennies For Periodicals".

One of the important men born in February was Abraham Lincoln. Since his face is on the penny, we are asking people to bring their pennies to the library and place them in the special container at the Information Desk. All loose pennies will be accepted, whether they are wrapped does not matter.

If you want to help the library pay for their periodicals, just give us your pennies which were being saved at home. Keep your loose pennies as you receive them at home, and bring them in whenever you come to the library.

When you think of February, think of the Lincoln penny and just collect them and donate them

to the library.

We currently receive 120 magazines and they cost us \$3,012.55 for the subscriptions for the 1994 year. These magazines are widely used by the patrons and the school children in our area.

If you have been saving pennies and would like to donate them to this worthy cause, just drop them at the library.

Shirley Forney is chairman of the library Friends and Beverly Marchetti is project chairman.

New books at the library: "They Whisper" by Robert Olen Butler is one of the sexiest books you will ever read. It is, also, among the funniest and the most harrowing and the most moving and the most lyrically beautiful of books. It is also a book of uncompromising artistic integrity. The book is an astonishingly rare thing in this sex-conscious age and a serious work of literary art that addresses the subject of modern heterosexuality. A timely examination

of human sexuality.

"Bad Love" by Jonathan Kellerman is an extraordinary new novel of electrifying emotional intensity. It came in a plain brown wrapper, no return address—an audiocassette recording of a horrifying, soul-lacerating scream, followed by the sound of a childlike voice delivering the enigmatic and haunting message: "Bad love. Bad love. Don't give me the bad love." The chant, repeated over and over again like a twisted nursery rhyme is the first intimation that a living nightmare is about to happen.

"McNally's Caper" by Lawrence Sanders is a story that plunges to the perilous depths of high society. If it were a soap opera, it might be called "The Young and the Feckless". However, the caper is real-life, real-death family 'meshuggass' The clan in question bears the name of Forsythe, but the devious saga is far too raw for Masterpiece Theatre.

# The Dallas Post

Published Weekly by Bartsen Media, Inc.  
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