

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

State tax reform plan ignores the greatest enequity of all

Tax reform is again the talk of Harrisburg, and may become reality. Unlike the last attempt at rejiggering the tax load, proposed by Governor Casey in 1989, the latest plan is simpler to understand and install, and leaves open the option for counties and municipalities to retain their present system. Even those that switch would be barred from disguising tax reform as a tax increase, so the legislation says.

The intent is to shift the tax burden from property to income, something that school administrators in particular have favored. They have faced an increasingly hostile public reaction to property taxes, which are the major source of funding for public education in Pennsylvania. The proposal doesn't rely solely on income taxes; it also would allow counties to impose up to a 1 percent sales tax that would be shared with towns and school districts.

Supporters of tax reform, with whom we agree on many points, tout the fairness of greater reliance on income taxes, pointing out that high-income renters don't pay their share to support town and school institutions. That part of the argument is true, and adding a local sales tax to the mix also would require more of those who can afford more.

It's an election year, and legislators will undoubtedly credit themselves with bravery for raising the issue. But if they really want to earn a medal for courage, they should take the next logical step—mandatory reassessment of property values each 10 years. Requiring that would eliminate the greatest inequality among taxpayers, the enormous difference between the property tax bill of owners of new and older homes of the same value. But the odds of reassessment being part of this bill are lower than Tonya Harding's chances at being elected sportsperson of the year.

U.S. budget faces a few fiscal realities

The Clinton administration has handed Congress the most realistic federal budget to appear in several years. But the \$1.5 trillion plus plan is hardly "austere," as some administration would have you believe.

It's popular these days to complain mightily about the huge amounts of money being devoted to welfare, and other social programs. But the actual figures reveal less spending on these items than may be commonly believed. Here are a few spending categories and the amount and percentage of the total budget devoted to them:

- Medicaid:** \$96 billion. 6.0%
- Medicare:** \$177 billion. 11.1%
- Social Security:** \$335 billion. 21.0%
- Welfare** (includes food stamps, and other programs): \$171 billion. 10.7%
- Interest payments:** \$212 billion. 13.3%

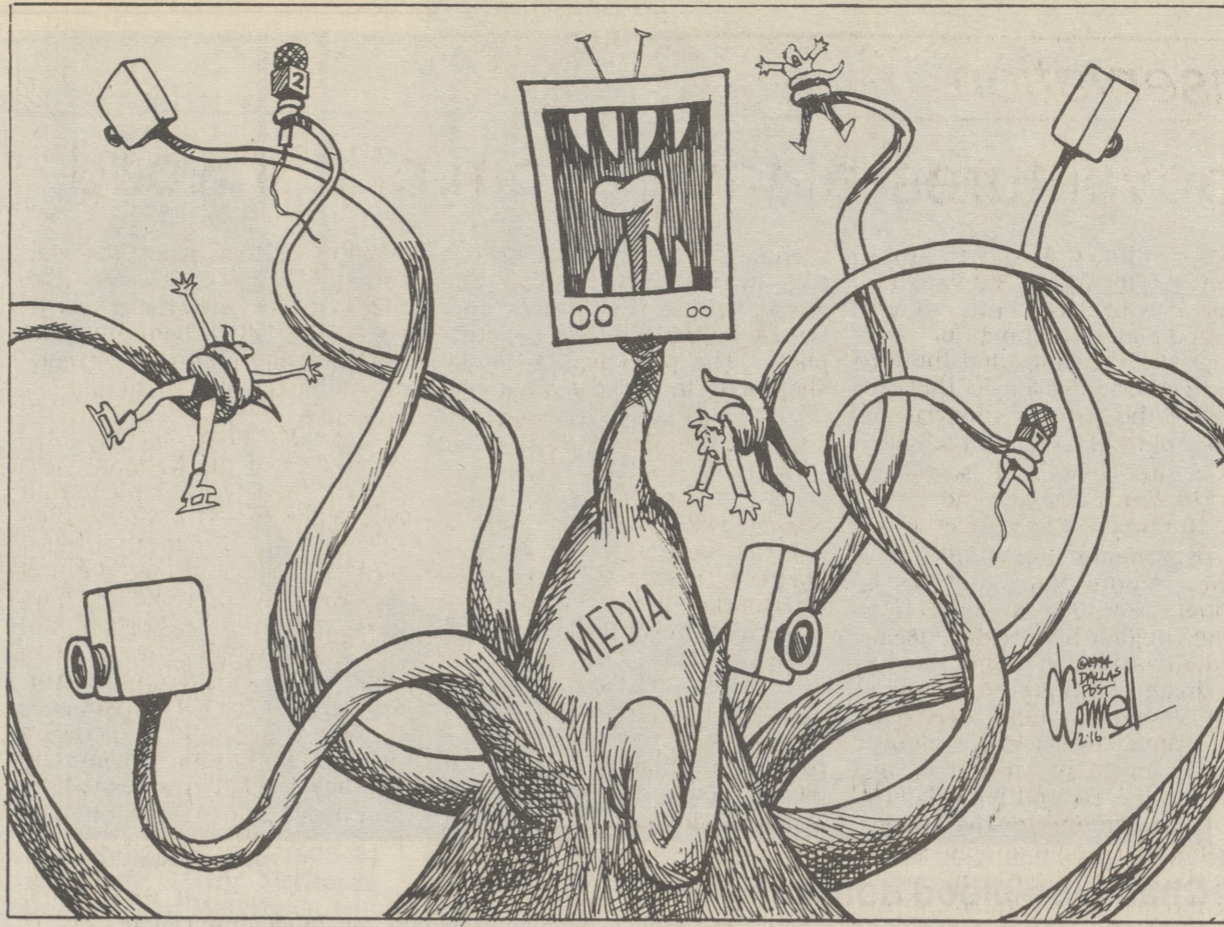
It's interesting to note that means-tested programs—Medicaid and welfare—will cost \$267 billion, while non means-tested ones—Medicare and Social Security—will cost \$512 billion, nearly twice as much. There are two reasons for this: First, there are more people getting Medicare and Social Security than welfare and Medicaid. And, second, the per person payments to the latter are considerably lower.

Of course the real problem with the budget isn't any of these programs, it's the accumulated debt of previous years. Next year's \$212 billion interest payments are more than the projected deficit of \$171 billion. If interest rates rise, the deficit will be higher.

George Bush took a lot of heat for trading his "no new taxes" pledge for the budget deal of 1990. But it is that compromise that is holding the present spending plan to any standard of discipline, because the President and Congress must actually reduce spending, not just its growth, by about \$20 billion each year. In a couple of more years, when Social Security and other entitlements must be trimmed, we'll see whether the American people have the gumption to continue slimming down the federal waistline.

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. The Post does not publish anonymous letters but will consider withholding the name when appropriate. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar, but will call if we think editing might change the meaning.



Letters

Memorial fund in baby Eric Murray's name

Editor:

It is an extremely unfortunate fact of life that when a baby dies, few people outside the family and close circle of friends mourn the infant's death. Maybe it is because the child never had the opportunity to make his mark on the world.

On February 2, 1994, Eric M. Murray died in Geisinger Medical Center, Danville, of injuries sustained in an automobile accident on February 1, 1994 in Tunkhannock. Eric was only 10 weeks old. He never had the chance to meet friends in school or at the playground. His parents, older sister and grandparents never had the opportunity to hear Eric's first words or watch him take his first step. Yet, to say that Eric never touched the hearts of those around him would be a severe injustice to his short life.

Not only are Eric's parents,

Patrick and Linda Growley Murray, Tunkhannock, my close friends, but I was the obstetrician who followed Linda through her pregnancy and delivered Eric on November 12, 1993. I know what the couple went through to have this child. I know of the extreme happiness this baby's birth brought to his family. I was also so proud of their decision to donate Eric's organs at a time when their grief was immeasurable. In doing so, they made Eric's life that much more worthwhile, potentially allowing several other very ill infants to live a long, productive life that otherwise may not have been. Imagine the happiness experienced by those children's families as a result of this beautiful couple's selflessness.

Since the life of a 10-week-old infant may be forgotten all too soon by everyone except family and friends, Pat and Linda want

to do all they can to keep Eric's memory alive. I want to help this family honor Eric's short but meaningful life.

A memorial fund is being established to preserve Eric's memory. Eventually, the funds will be used in a way the family feels will best keep their son's memory alive. Most likely this will be in the form of a charitable donation or the establishment of a scholarship fund. Understandably, the family is unable to focus enough to make this decision currently, but will do so in the near future. Announcements and acknowledgments will be made at that time.

Contributions may be sent to: Eric's Fund
c/o Mark S. Polin, M.D.
Towne Plaza
Tyler Family Practice
Tunkhannock, PA 18657

Mark S. Polin, M.D.

As I was saying...

The King of Swing finally makes it big

By JACK HILSHER

This second profile of King of Swing Benny Goodman is necessary because there is so much to be said about the man, his music, and those great days when life was so much less complicated and a helluva lot more fun.

Bill Crow's book JAZZ ANECDOTES touches on Goodman's well-known grasp of a buck - how he "borrowed" reeds for his clarinet from band members in order to avoid buying them. Vido Musso once told Benny he couldn't play a five-clarinet passage in "Bach Goes To Town" because Benny had taken Musso's last reed. Goodman, exasperated, snapped at Vido, "Well then, fake it!"

But so what if he was frugal? So what if he was absentminded? The Goodman legacy of sound rose above all that. It was once portrayed as "sheer vitality and splendor, stunning, estatic roaring, exceeding all previous-known delights by so immeasurably great a margin that...but then, who can describe it?" (Well, someone just did!)

BG's big-band swing sound

came to its full flower in 1936 at the Palomar on the West Coast. Bunny Berrigan sat in the trumpet section. So did Harry James and Ziggy Elman. Gene Krupa played drums and Jess Stacy piano. Besides that stellar roster, the band's Palomar engagement was a success because it had been featured on the popular coast-to-coast radio show "Let's Dance." The word was beginning to get around.

Then came a trial at Chicago's Congress Hotel, in the stuffy Joseph Urban room, which probably still has yet to recover from Godman band "killer-dillers!" After only a few weeks there, Benny thinking all the time he would never "make it," the Congress signed him for seven more months. Then, in the spring of '37, lightning struck. They opened at New York's Paramount and a newspaper reported, "At the opening bars the crown went loudly nuts."

Seniors, don't throw stones at your grandchildren when they behave like a Rolling Stone audience. You screamed at the Goodman playing "Don't Be That Way" and you "shagged" in the

aisles and the ushers couldn't stop you. (You also stood in line all night for tickets!)

Benny Goodman's swing band smashed all previous records for musical events. And when their '38 Carnegie Hall concert took place, history had solidly embraced swing music, art form or not. What's more, those amazing Henderson arrangements don't sound a bit historic; they sound fresh today and chances are pretty good they will still sound fresh for many tomorrows to come.

Before he died, Goodman lunched with his former pianist Mel Powell, laughing and discussing the old days. Mel said to Benny, "Remember when I played in your band at 17 and you were 20? What a difference that seemed then, and now look at the two of us, both old codgers discussing ailments and old times."

Benny laughed and replied, "Listen kiddo, take it from me, you'll soon find out there is a big difference between 72 and 72 1/2."

Know something, column readers? The King was right, take it from me, kiddo!

Library news

Ninja Turtles uphold the law at the library

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

It's 'Ninja Turtle Month' at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The display case is filled with a Ninja Turtle Collection borrowed from Robert and Ryan Murphy of Dallas. Robert is 8 years old and in 3rd grade at Dallas Elementary and Ryan is 7 years old, also at Dallas Elementary in 2nd grade.

Robert first became interested in these three years ago and received his first one at Christmas that year. His first one was 'Michaelangelo', the one with the orange mask. Ryan became interested a year later and started to collect his favorites. The bad guys' car is in the display, a purple and black convertible. The bad guys are Shredder and Bebop; there is a large bee called Buzz Off. Another large bee in the display is called Rock Steady. Leatherhead is the Rat King, a bad guy; Panda Conda a panda bear, is a good guy. Three Horns is also a bad guy.

The other three Ninja Turtles in the display are: Leonardo, Rafeale and Donatello. The large green van is the Turtles' hideout. Baxter Stockman is a bad guy; there is a large fly; two robots and a pizza flinger, which does fling pizza. Splinter, the rat is also in the display. He is the Turtles' leader. This collection is a welcome addition to the library for the month of February and it will surely help to ease the snow and cold outside. They will be here until March 9.

Book Club dues for 1994 is now payable at the library. \$10.00 for a single membership and \$15.00 for a double. The membership dues is used to purchase books for the special Book Club shelf in the library. 1993 membership collected \$2,006 to purchase books.

The 'Pennies for Periodicals' campaign is continuing at the library until the end of February. We are at the half-way point in the month and the response has been

good. A gentleman came in last week with a tide detergent box, 3/4 full of pennies for the large green jar. This added greatly to the collection. A woman from the Meadows Apartments sent her two rolls of pennies back to the library, the day we delivered books to the shut-ins at the apartments. Small children are thrilled to drop their two or three pennies in the jar. We will take other coins for the jar, as well as pennies. Bring your pennies in!

"Understand This" by Jervey Tervalon is a new book at the library. It is 'powerful', 'affecting', 'intimate', and 'provocative'. It is a tapestry whose main thread is the love between Francois and Margot. Seniors at Bolt High, on the surface they have bright futures. Francois is a talented young artist, while Margot's brains and looks promise to take her far from South Central L.A. Something is holding Francois back and he gets derailed.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Feb. 23, 1934 DAVENPORT ST. WORK ON DESPITE COLD

With about 35% of the work done, 40 men are still being employed 24 hours a week in the C.W.A. project of improving Davenport Street. Charles Harris, supervising the work received instructions that henceforth no work is to be done during extremely cold weather and that temperatures must be at least 25 degrees above zero on all days worked.

As part of their effort to bring good music to this community and to create good fellowship and better understanding among various sects and people, Shavertown M.E. Church will present the Russian Orthodox Male Chorus of Wilkes-Barre for a program of Lenten music. The chorus includes 36 men appearing in native Russian costumes.

You could get - Chuck pot roast, 10¢ lb.; stewing chickens, 19¢ lb.; sugar, 10 lbs. 47¢; red salmon tall can 17¢; cabbage, 3 lbs. 10¢.

50 Years Ago - Feb. 18, 1944 LT. BRACE MISSING IN TRAINING FLIGHT

Lt. Evan J. Brace, pilot of a P-47 Thunderbolt Fighter, was reported missing this week during local combat training flight at Dale Marby Field, Fla. The Braces received a call from the Florida Field informing them that the search for their son was continuing on a wide scale but nothing had been found of pilot or plane.

Nine tons of feed and 1600 six-week old chickens were lost early Sunday morning when fire destroyed the barn owned by William E. Pulsifer between Alderson and Beaumont. Hampered by lack of water, Pulsifer devoted his efforts to releasing a team of horses and five cows that were in the barn.

Dallas Borough turned back a fast Lehman team with a score of 59-33. On Friday the borough boys defeated Laketon 45-38 on the borough floor.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 19, 1954 K.T. AMBULANCE HAS SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Ted Poad has been appointed by president Martin Porter to head the first annual fund drive of Kingston Township Ambulance Association, which will start Feb. 22 through March 7. The Ambulance Association was one year old on the first Sunday of February and during that period answered 140 calls for service.

Five men from Kingston Township signed up as drivers for the Ambulance Association as a result of last week's item in the Dallas Post, asking for drivers for daytime duty. There is still room for many more to registrations to distribute the load.

Back Mountain Memorial Library may switch its evening opening from Thursday to Friday if demand is great enough, says Miriam Lathrop, librarian. Since Dallas bank fell in line with the stores in maintaining evening hours on Friday, more and more people make a point of visiting Dallas on Friday. She says children can be accommodated in the reading room while parents shop.

30 Years Ago - Feb. 20, 1964 AREA GETS 15 INCHES OF FLUFFY SNOW

Dallas Rotary Club will observe the 50th anniversary of Rotary's founding today. Myron Baker, president of the local club said that other member clubs are functioning in 11,600 communities in 125 countries and will likewise pay tribute to Rotary's founder Paul P. Harris, a Chicago lawyer. There are 544,000 Rotarians throughout the world.

Old Man Winter reminded Back Mountain dwellers of his remaining strength and fury when he heaped 15 inches of snow on the area Tuesday night. Many businesses and schools were closed.

20 Years Ago - Feb. 21, 1974 STATION OWNERS TRY TO SHRINK GAS LINES

Back Mountain service station owners met Monday night at Thomas Noon Service Station "to try to eliminate or reduce the confusion that's being created at the pumps. The major subject of discussion was the length of lines and how to reduce them. One dealer gave the opinion that decisive action will have to come quickly out of Harrisburg to remedy the problems.

Two new restaurants are scheduled to open within the next two months in the Back Mountain area and four local business establishments are already in the process of expanding their facilities. Construction of a Mark II Restaurant is nearing completion and Perkins Pancake-Steak House is under construction on Route 309 across from Dallas Village Shopping Center.

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