

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Let the sun shine on government dealings

The three-member Harveys Lake zoning board held an obviously-illegal meeting February 1. This happens from time to time, occasionally for perfectly innocent reasons. We hope that was what happened in this instance.

It's important that government officials and the public at large be aware that there are only a tiny number of reasons for any meeting to be held in secret. Mostly these deal with discussions about specific personnel, active or pending litigation and real estate purchases or sales. Even in those cases, no official action can be taken in private; all votes must be called in public.

This newspaper, and any others worth their salt, will report secret dealings not because we delight in chiding public officials but because we believe strongly in the principles of open government upon which this nation was founded. We apply the same standard to opinions; we won't publish a letter to the editor without the writer's name attached. Any newspaper that allows anonymous opinions in its pages is only a step away from the kind of scandal sheets that are found at supermarket checkout stands.

The freedom to express your opinion and to keep an eye on your government is a precious one, which can only be preserved by the very openness that is clearly envisioned in our Constitution. Whether Washington D.C. or Harveys Lake, our government works best and most equitably in the light of day, both for the governors and the governed.

Publisher's notebook

Olympic style beats out substance

Did you catch freestyle skiing during the Winter Olympic broadcasts last week? In case you missed it, freestyle involves skiing over and around "moguls," which are man-made bumps in the snow, and a couple of jumps. The entire run takes less than half a minute. Unlike downhill or cross country, the score is determined more by style than speed, with a 50% weighting for the bumps and 25% for the aerial display.

Mogul skiing is lots of fun both to perform and to watch, but is it really an olympic-caliber sport? One way to answer that question is to extend the same principles to other events. Here then, is its logical conclusion.

"Well, Brent, here we are at the 2012 Summer Olympics in Ho Chi Minh City, and things have really changed."

"You're so right, Bryan. In the 20 or so years since style became more important than substance, we've seen one event after another transformed from athletics to performance. But the audience seems to love it - you know, 10 billion people will watch these olympics on their home television sets, which are mostly made by our major sponsor, RCA/Sony/Samsung."

"Brent, one of the premier events of the summer games is the Disney/Paramount/Columbia 100-yard dash. And it will be quite a meeting this year, with contenders from six nations still in the running for a gold medal. For the play-by-play, we'll go to Donna and Dave down at the track, seated in their ringside box provided by Delta/British/Japan Airways."

"Hi, guys! It's a brutally hot day here at trackside, but the athletes look pumped up and ready to roll. They're in the blocks, and waiting for the starter's gun, which is provided by Winchester/Uzi."

"There's the shot, and they're off. Osaki from Japan had the best start, but Hank Jepson from the U.S. is right on this tail. Wow! Great Britain's Jamal Smithson just executed the finest pirouette I've seen in competition this season. But Germany's Gunter Brecker won't let that hold up; he's doing a back somersault that is something to see!"

"Over in lane 6, Jepson stumbled a bit on his aerial spin, but he recovered. As long as his knee didn't touch the track, he won't lose more than a tenth or two. They're nearing the finish and I wonder if Osaki will try a double backflip through the tape. He's the only sprinter in the world to attempt such a risky move in competition. But he may not feel up to it, since there's been so much publicity about his alleged reprimand for shoplifting when he was 9 years old."

"Here they come, Bryan and Brent, and it looks like Osaki is going to try it. Oh, no! He took a tumble into lane 4, taking down Russia's Boris Kosnekov. But Jepson is doing a front walkover through the tape, and he looks like a winner. Now, we'll have to wait for the style points, which, as you know are worth 90% of the total score."

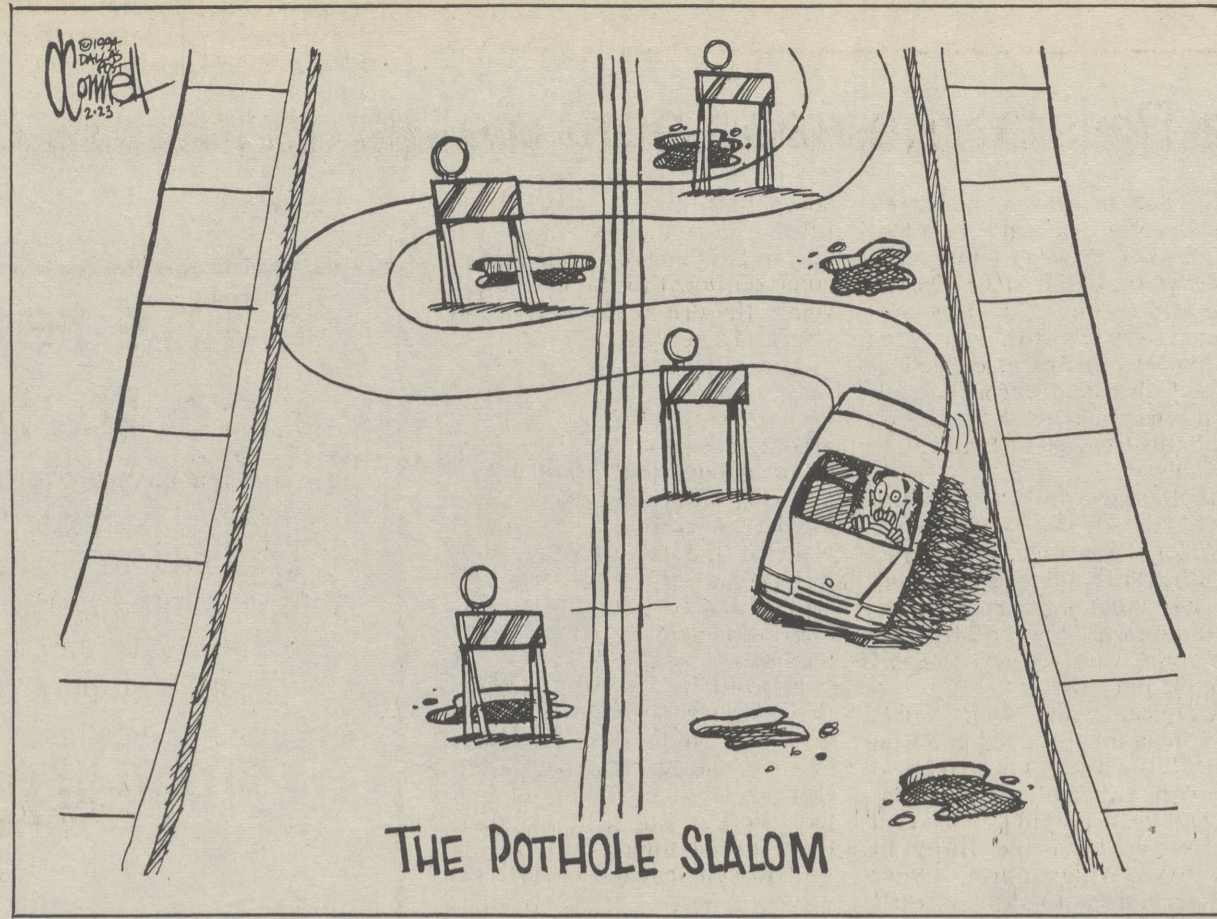
"Donna, this is Brent. Can you tell us what the winning time was?"

"The time? Oh, sure, let me see now...it was 16.79 seconds, only 7 seconds over the world record set in the 1996 games."

"Here it is, guys. Including the style points, which really went up with that last move, Jepson takes the gold medal, donated by General Electric/Motors Mining, which sponsors all the medals."

And there you have it, folks, the Olympic gold medal performance of the future, or at least my worst nightmare of how it might be.

Ron Bartizek



Guest column

TV cop shows don't depict the real police

By COL. GLENN A. WALP
Commissioner of the
Pennsylvania State Police

So-called police realism television shows are distorting and damaging the public perception of law enforcement officers.

Unlike the television depictions, there is more to being a police officer than knocking down doors, roughing up suspects and shooting it out with bad guys on minute by minute basis.

In viewing these television shows, I've seen police officers doing things that are a disgrace to this profession. For example, one episode showed a law enforcement officer apprehending a non-resistant suspect, then placing his service weapon directly in the suspect's face and shouting, "Give me a reason!"

This is not police professionalism; this is not the way a professional law enforcement officer is trained to perform his or her duty.

Many of these viewers, however, form their opinion of police officers based on what they have seen on television's supposedly "real life" portrayal. They form a generic opinion of police officers within the often bizarre context of the sensational incidents the programs present. Missing in the

formation of their perception is the hours and hours of exhaustive investigative work, day in and day out routine patrol duties, detailed paperwork, and the multiple community policing efforts.

Beyond the detrimental effect these shows have on police officers, I fear for what impact these shows have on their viewers.

First, the cop shows pander to the lowest form of voyeurism, an individual fascinated by real-life violence, brutality and mayhem.

To make matters worse, these viewers come away with distorted ideas of crime in our society. After weeks and weeks of nightly crisped-up, life-and-death crime drama, they emerge from their living rooms with this misguided notion that crime is everywhere, rampant and out of control.

One begins to sense that serial killers, rapists, child molesters, doped up gang members and crazed gunmen lurk around every corner.

Please, do not make the mistake of equating your law enforcement officers with what you see some cop doing on television. If you really want to know what it's like to be a police officer, call your local police department. Talk to

the officers who patrol your neighborhood. We must start getting to know each other again, police officer and citizen - on a face to face, neighbor to neighbor basis.

To that end, in addition to the many other community policing programs, the State Police will again hold informal town meetings throughout the state this year. In fact, at this juncture, at least 22 meetings are being planned. It is imperative that police officers know and understand the concerns of the citizens they serve. The meetings help us use our resources in the best way. In addition, they give local citizens a chance to meet personally with their area's State Police commanders.

To further rekindle that sense of mutual respect, cooperation and admiration between police officers and citizens, a system of 34 full-time State Police community service officers has been established. These men and women are attempting to form friendly and constructive relationships in our local schools and communities throughout Pennsylvania.

So if you are curious about police realism, please turn off the television set and get to know our local police officers.

J.W.J.

Are labor unions really necessary?

By J.W. JOHNSON

Unionism is a top heavy religion, preaching against the evils of the 19th century. It doesn't even have the decency to have a God of something other than money. All it has is a devil in the form of management. Additionally, unionism encourages the lowest common denominator among us to become the standard for all of us.

To be sure, everyone deserves a chance...but it is societal lunacy to, for example, level the playing field for the blind, by destroying the vision of everyone else.

It's not my job, man?????
What has happened to manufacturing jobs in the U.S.?

In states where 'compulsory unionism' is law, one out of every five manufacturing jobs that existed in 1969 was lost by 1979. Conversely, in the 20 states where 'right-to-work' laws exist, there was a net increase of 1,807,600 manufacturing jobs between 1969 and 1979.

In 30 states (Pennsylvania is one), which permit compulsory unionism suffered a net loss of 271,000 manufacturing jobs by 1979. In New York alone, a 371,900 jobs deficit amounted to a loss of one out of every five manufacturing jobs which existed in 1969.

And that's not all.....we also have the Davis-Bacon Act, which could more properly be titled fat back for unions. Made law during The Great Depression, the Davis-Bacon Act requires payment on federal construction projects of the "prevailing wage" in a given locality.

Sadly, the prevailing wage has all too often come to mean the inflated union wage. And if the Davis-Bacon Act isn't repealed, it will play a large part in the continued decline in construction jobs.....the Act, in fact, costs consumers about \$1 billion per

year in inflated construction costs.

But who do these higher wages benefit? Certainly not the small contractor or their workers because many of those workers believe they have a right to work for whom they choose, rather than be forced to join a union and pay union dues. The high wages benefit a select few, but most obviously they benefit politicians favorable to unions who, by no small coincidence, heavily fund political campaigns.

Inflated Davis-Bacon wage rates do little but line the pockets of big labor officials, contribute to inflation and, ultimately, produce unemployment for non-union workers.

With Davis-Bacon, free enterprise and competition are locked out of the process, big labor effectively dictating how many of your tax dollars are spent.

It's time to take the fat out of the pan and give it back to the increasingly leaner taxpayer.

But there is hope. According to the Census Bureau, union membership in manufacturing has declined from 27.2 of all employees in 1984 to 24.9 per cent of all employees in 1988. workers must be permitted, but not compelled to join a labor union.

In the bigger picture, consider the following: Some 225 years ago, British historian, Prof. Alexander Tyler commented:

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship."

Beyond the fraud on unionism, a major reason we are losing the battle for increased productivity and market share to Japan, and likely soon to the new European Economic Community, is because

we have forgotten one simple rule: Acquire new customers and then treat each of them as if they were the only customer we had.

Another major reason why the private sector now has difficulty in creating and providing employment rests in the very foundation of liberal persuasion...the liberal obsession with protecting us from ourselves through regulation...and that's what the Clinton Administration wants to do with Health Care Reform, give us more bureaucrats.

What's ironic is that the liberals, in establishing support for more government spending and more regulation, will point to the strangling economy and use the result of the very concoction they created as grass to mow and sow in campaign rhetoric.

What's wrong with spending no more than you earn, the law of supply and demand, and an honest dollar for an honest day's work...all ideas now tortured by the notion of "entitlements" for citizens. Those who subscribe to the entitlements notion must be reading a different constitution. Mine reads that we have a promise of the pursuit of happiness; nowhere does it suggest the guarantee of happiness.

Somehow, also, and because it is politically convenient, the liberals lump those who would advocate sound fiscal policy with those who advocate 'social repression.' This propaganda has been nurtured by the erroneous belief that money, especially money coming from someone else's pocket, will cure anything. This intellectual lumping serves a single purpose: To elicit an emotional reaction from the so-called socially repressed, thus insuring liberal reelection.

....."loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship," observed prof. Tyler.

If one thing is certain—and by design of its constituents—the propensity for history repeating itself is as safe a bet as water remaining wet.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - March 2, 1934 RECORD FEBRUARY SNOW, COLD HIT AREA

Winter's deepest snowfall, sub-zero weather this week sent the mercury far below the low marks already recorded this winter. Temps as low as 30° below zero were recorded as February the coldest month in the 18 years records have been kept locally made its exit.

Grown-ups who have memories of the little red schoolhouse and its exciting spelling bees have an opportunity to turn back the clock this month for the Old-Fashioned Spelling Bee to be held at Lehman High School March 16 as a preliminary to the state-wide contest for adults.

Beaumont upset Dallas Township 7-6 in scholastic basketball. Laketon is still undefeated as the season nears end.

50 Years Ago - Feb. 25, 1944 EVAN BRACE KILLED ON TRAINING FLIGHT

Students of Lehman Township School are doing a good job of salvaging tin cans. From Sept. 13, 1943 to Jan. 31, 1944, they have turned in 28,876 prepared tin cans, an average of more than one ton of cans per month.

Lt. Evan J. Brace, 23, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Brace, Huntsville Road, was instantly killed Tuesday, when his plane crashed into a tree in the Florida swamps.

You could get - Broccoli, lg. bunch, 15¢; oranges doz. 27¢; fancy shrimp, 37¢ lb.; Camay soap, 3 cakes 20¢; potatoes, 15 lb. peck bag, 49¢.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 26, 1954 GEORGE M. DALLAS LODGE HAS NEW HOME

Back Mountain Memorial Library is making a special effort to supply books for homebound readers who cannot attend the library to pick out their own volumes.

Several loads of furniture, household equipment, books and other items arrived at the Barn on Lehman Avenue this week for the 1954 Library Auction.

Members and wives of George M. Dallas Lodge F.&A.M. have received invitations to an Open House to which the public is also invited to inspect the Assembly Hall and Lodge Room at the new home of the George M. Dallas Lodge, on Main Street, Dallas. The Lodge is observing its 79th anniversary March 1 with the opening of its new \$44,000 home.

30 Years Ago - Feb. 27, 1964 TOWNHOUSE TO BE SOLD DUE TO ILLNESS

Heavy snow halted progress for a while, but crews are resuming work on a dam site by Carverton mill in preparation for construction of Frances Slocum State Park.

Persistent reports that The Town House, located in the large Acme building in central Dallas, is to be sold were confirmed by Mrs. J. Townsend yesterday. Formerly Dixon's Restaurant, the enterprise was taken over by the Townsends in 1961. The restaurant was being sold due to the continued ill health of Mr. Townsend.

"The Comets" one of the swiftest sounds heard recently in the Back Mountain and comprised by a group of Dallas Senior High School students played to a packed house at the bi-monthly Junior High Dance at the Back Mountain YMCA. William Lawson, advisor and sponsor is developing the musical group into a well integrated and polished band of musicians.

20 Years Ago - Feb. 28, 1974 BETTER BUS SERVICE TO AREA ANTICIPATED

Back Mountain Telecable Co. requested that the Dallas Borough Council award them a non-exclusive franchise in their municipality. The manager of the telecable company submitted a standardized FCC franchise form for approval by the Dallas Council.

LCTA became the owner of the Wilkes-Barre Transit Corp. February 21 with the official acquisition of the private business company. This acquisition is another major step in the progressive plans to assure Wyoming Valley a modern, efficient mass transportation system. A fleet of 43 new buses was unveiled Friday at a welcoming ceremony on Public Square.

Back Mountain Baseball and Little League Auxiliary will meet at Dallas American Legion March 4. People interested in having Little League Softball for Girls are urged to attend the meeting. League officials announced if there is enough interest shown, Back Mountain Baseball for Boys Inc. will sponsor a program for girls this summer.

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Ronald A. Bartizek
Editor and Publisher

Charlotte E. Bartizek
Associate Publisher

Peggy Young
Advertising Acct. Exec.

Grace R. Dove
Reporter

Paul Rismiller
Production Manager

Olga Kostrobala
Classified/typesetting

Jill Urbanas
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