

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Sports field plan isn't perfect, but it's useful

The plan to develop unused land behind Dallas High School into one soccer and two Little League baseball fields would go a long way toward alleviating the pressure on existing fields. With around 1,000 youngsters each, Back Mountain Baseball and Back Mountain Youth Soccer have found it difficult to schedule games and practices on the limited number of fields that now exist.

The school district is in a position to develop the land because of savings realized when a bond issue for an earlier improvement project was refinanced at lower rates. State law requires the proceeds be used for capital improvements and not operating expenses. The school board discussed how to spend the money at a school board meeting last September. At that time, a laundry list of projects was presented, with development of the fields mentioned but not detailed.

The limited playing fields in the Back Mountain have long been a concern to parents and players. As the region has grown and more families have moved here, the shortage of space has become acute. We and others have suggested that a regional recreation park be created with planning and expenses shared by all communities, but that idea has fallen on deaf ears.

This plan would expand on the system that already exists, with the primary Little League and soccer fields on Dallas School District property. There may be flaws in that concept, most obviously that the school district bears the expense of building fields that will be used by people who don't live in the district or pay district taxes. That may be galling, but it's not reason to scuttle the plan, which at least begins to address the field shortage.

Three attorneys have said that they will oppose the plan on various grounds, none of which are insurmountable if the development is made with the needs of neighboring property owners in mind. As for ongoing expenses, organizations that use the fields should be expected to pay them, as is now the case.

All in all, a lot worse things could be done to add playing fields for Back Mountain youngsters, including doing nothing at all. This plan may not be perfect, but so far it looks reasonable.

Publisher's notebook

Since when is it news that the losers in a sport complain about the referees? As long as there have been contests in which judges hold sway, there have been complaints about the poor quality of their decisions. Just attend any sporting event from tee ball to the pros, and you'll find dozens of contested calls each game. Yet, the news media made it seem like the whining at the Olympics was something unusual. If the folks who think Nancy Kerrigan should have won a gold medal because her skating program was more difficult really want figure skating judged solely on athletics, they should ask that each contestant perform an identical sequence of moves, with costumes and music banned. Otherwise, there will always be subjective factors in the judging, as there have been for decades.

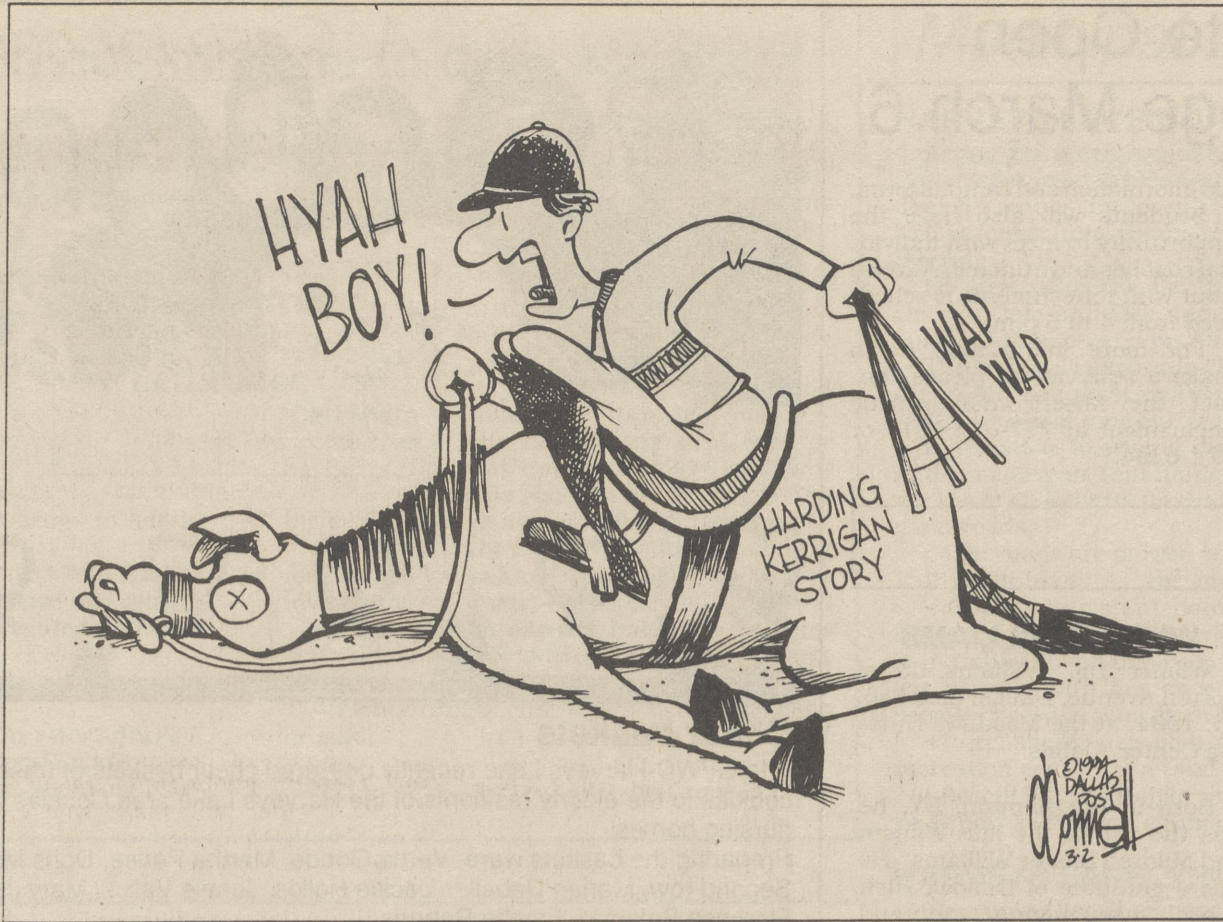
Lost in the tragic news from the Middle East last week was the fact that the number of Palestinians killed by a deranged Israeli fanatic is matched every day in America. The vast majority of gun killings aren't by career criminals, either, but occur when ordinary people gripped by passion or despair grab a gun and use it against someone they know, and perhaps once loved. Guns may not kill people, but having one handy in our violent culture raises the risks enormously.

The tobacco industry is reeling from a series of attacks that strike at the heart of its business. Most important, the Food and Drug Administration is pressing for hearings to determine if cigarettes—which contain nicotine—should be regulated as a drug. It seems that in the manufacturing process, nicotine is first removed from the tobacco and then sprayed back onto the leaves, stems and other parts after they have been made into a pulp. Thus, the makers are able to regulate the amount of nicotine in the cigarette, in essence producing an addictive drug. That's not news to anyone who has smoked, as I did for 20 years, and then tried to quit. The best advice to young people still is to never begin this destructive (and expensive) habit.

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. 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

No Sunshine Law violations at Dallas

Editor:

Some serious allegations were reported in a front page article in last week's *Dallas Post*, and as a member of the Dallas School Board I feel compelled to respond and inform your readers about the facts. Three local attorneys, who object to the possible development of six acres of district-owned (i.e. publicly owned) land behind the Dallas High School, have reportedly accused the School Board of possible violations of the Sunshine Law.

During the six years I've been on the Board of Education, there have been dozens of controversial issues in the Dallas School District - lots of "pros and cons" on many issues. I fully accept the fact that there are people who don't agree with all of my or the Board's decisions - that's healthy, as everyone is entitled to his or her opinion. I don't write letters to the editor every time some person or group questions my judgment. However, these recent accusa-

tions step over the line of just different opinions or protest. These allegations cut deeply to the very core of my being by questioning not only my judgment, but my honesty and integrity.

Let me set the record straight for your readers.

The Dallas School Board did not violate the Sunshine Law. The Board has been openly considering the possible development of this land off and on for at least six years. The Board has in fact at various times discussed with several Back Mountain groups the development of athletic fields on the six acres. It was included in the District's Long Range Plan which was approved at a public meeting in 1992. The discussion and decision to go ahead and do some preliminary research to see exactly how many athletic fields would fit on the acreage was made at a public meeting in December 1993. It has been publicly discussed at two meetings since December.

Contrary to the reported comments of one of the attorneys, the project was not a "best kept secret". It was discussed openly over a period of several years at public meetings, not at private Board executive sessions.

These individuals have a right to object, to protest, to make a case against such a plan. (Actually I happen to object to parts of it also and I made that known to a family member of one of the parties.) However, protest is one thing, attacking the Board's integrity and credibility is another.

Ironically, the same issue of the *Post* had an editorial titled "Let the sun shine on government dealings." I wholeheartedly agree with that statement. As a six year member and the current President of the Dallas School Board, I can unconditionally say that the "sun does shine on the dealings of the Dallas School Board." And I am proud of it.

Ellen J. Nagy, President
Dallas School Board

As I was saying...

When science fiction became science fact

By JACK HILSHER

Sometime between *The Hardy Boys* and Ernest Hemingway, I discovered pulp magazines, in particular John W. Campbell's *AMAZING STORIES* monthly magazine. Costing only a quarter and printed on the cheapest kind of paper (pulpwood fibers were scattered throughout the pages) here was the cradle of science fiction. (Jules Verne doesn't count.)

AMAZING had no scantily-clad maidens and few BEM's (bug-eyed monsters)...there was a novella (short novel) some short stories and a scientific article or two, and of course, John Campbell's editorial, lengthy and deep and deadly serious.

Two ads stand out in my mind - they were in every issue - *Scranton's International Correspondence School* and that cartoon strip showing a bully at the beach kicking sand in the face of a 98-pound weakling. Yes, there was a girl onlooker, but that's as close as *AMAZING* ever came to Topic A.

But they had a warp drive for inter-galactic space travel long before *Star Trek*. There was also an atomic device in every back

yard, furnishing all electrical needs for pennies. I learned about lunar orbit long before man actually did. I always knew that somehow one day everything depicted in *AMAZING* as fiction would actually come to pass, and I waited impatiently for the next issue.

In 1610 A.D. Johannes Kepler said, "When ships to sail the void between the stars have been invented, there will also be men who come forward to sail those ships."

And come forward they did: Alan Shepard, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, Walter Shirra, Deke Slayton, and Gordon Cooper...all at annual salaries of \$12,770 to risk things like a mid-air explosion, unknown radiation or not coming back at all from orbit. Then, reality intruded into my sci-fi dream world.

First, those "squeaky-clean" astronaut images were tarnished if you were willing to look. Four-letter words formed a good part of their vocabularies and teen "groupies" showed up on the cape, some keeping score and attempting to log the entire astronaut corps. Commercialization of APOLLO missions grossed more than a million; autographed stamp

carried on flights brought nest eggs to fifteen spacemen, at first confiscated and later returned. (None of these things ever happened in *AMAZING*.)

After rock samples were brought back from the moon, Dr. S. Luria, MIT prof and member National Academy of Sciences, said "those samples cannot even answer the few questions geologists are interested in solving. It is time the public were told that frankly the space program is technically impressive, scientifically trivial, culturally misguided and socially preposterous." (None of this ever happened in *AMAZING*.)

Later the one-billion Mars "Observer" disappeared after an 11-month journey, three days before it was to orbit Mars. And at \$1.5 billion, the Hubble space telescope needed expensive space surgery to correct its goofed-up optics. (Neither of these bloopers ever etc.)

So. Am I disillusioned? Well, some perhaps, but I'll tell you this...when Barry Tennebaum at his travel agency announces weekend space tours through the asteroid belt, guess who will be first in line for a ticket?

Thanks!

A copy of this letter was sent to Dallas Postmaster Ray Ceconi. The author asked that we print it in *The Dallas Post*.

Dar Mr. Ceconi, Coming from a retired postal employee my remarks may not carry much weight, but I had to let you know what a great job I think you and your employees are doing.

Specifically, our regular carrier, Mr. Jim Brown, and the sub on the route, Mr. Steve Good, have not missed a delivery, despite the extremely bad weather and the fact that my driveway and sidewalk have not always been cleared of snow and ice. I also appreciate the fact that my mail is

being placed on the porch, under cover, ever since my mail box succumbed to old age and the wear and tear of these winter storms. If there were Oscars to be awarded for mail carriers these two would get my vote.

I would be negligent if I didn't mention the professional service and attention I get from the two window clerks, Mr. Mike Williams and Mr. C.J. Wayda. Although Mike and I have known each other for a number of years (I've often heard the remark: "Everyone knows Mike") I believe he treats all customers with the same professional courtesy he has always extended to me. Mr. Wayda and I know each other only from across

the counter but he has always handled my requests in a courteous, friendly and professional manner.

I've been in Post Offices across the nation, from Portland, Me., to San Diego, from Seattle to Miami, both as a customer and an employee on postal business and I can say without exception that your office and its employees match up with the best of them. You certainly have every right to be proud of the outstanding job you and they are doing. It makes me proud to be an ex-postal employee being served by the Dallas Post Office.

John P. Bergevin
Dallas

About the opinion pages

Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post. Columns and letters are the opinion of the author. If you wish to contribute a column, call the editor at 675-5211 to discuss your subject matter, or send a copy to the newspaper.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - March 9, 1934 CENTER HILL ROAD DECLARED NUISANCE

The Dallas Borough school district which applied some time ago for a share of the \$5,000,000 fund which the State has appropriated to assist school districts will receive its grant in about a month, it was indicated at the directors' meeting Tuesday night. It is expected that the school district will receive about \$2,500.

Center Hill Road, long a point of contention between Dallas Borough and Township is again in the limelight. Atty. Turner reported that the road had been returned earlier in the week by Constable Leonard O'Kane as a road nuisance and that a true bill was brought in by the Grand Jury. The case will be tried during the April term of court. It is understood that both the borough and township are under indictment.

You could get - Eggs, 19¢ doz.; Salmon, 2 tall cans, 23¢; Palmolive soap, 3 cakes, 14¢; Ketchup, lg. bot. 19¢; cucumber pickles, qt. jar, 21¢.

50 Years Ago - March 3, 1944 AREA GETS WOMEN'S ARMY RECRUITER

The annual Red Cross Drive, more important this year than ever before, was launched Wednesday in the Back Mountain region under the direction of Mrs. Charles Wheaton Lee, Dallas. Quota for the district has been set at \$4,085 to be collected in the month of March.

Women of Dallas and surrounding communities will have the opportunity to learn more of the work and functions of the Women's Army Corps next week, when Lt. Phyllis Whittingham of Wilkes-Barre, recruiting office, opens a part time information and recruiting booth probably at the Dallas Post Office.

Lehman Township girls wound up an undefeated season Friday night when they trounced Laketon 44-23. The girls, all seniors, except one, are the first championship team since 1937.

40 Years Ago - March 5, 1954 FIRST WOMAN SCHOOL DIRECTOR IN K.T.

William Wright, chairman of the Dallas Community Ambulance Fund Drive reports the collections are lagging. He amends this statement by saying that there are enough collections, but that the collections do not average high enough.

With the appointment of Mrs. Charles Eberle to Kingston Township School Board, an unwritten law has been set aside. Mary Lou Eberle is the first woman to serve as school director in Kingston Township.

Today marks the opening of Grace Cave's new store in the Durkin Building, Main Street, Dallas, in space originally occupied by Flannigan's Furniture Store. Floor space three times larger than her former quarters affords her the opportunity to expand into new and different lines.

30 Years Ago - March 5, 1964 CAR THIEVES HIT AREA

Easter Seals' 1964 campaign of the Wyoming Valley Crippled Children's Association will end Easter Sunday. James Alexander is chairman of the drive, which this year is seeking \$25,000 to continue treatment and rehabilitation of an ever-increasing number of children handicapped by cerebral palsy.

A rash of car thefts in Dallas continued, last week, a 1956 Pontiac was stolen from a residence on Lehman Avenue, bringing the total to four cars. The car was found abandoned at the far end of Elizabeth Street, Saturday morning.

It was a big day at Crown Imperial Lanes Sunday when Alan "Chip" Landis blasted away at the pins to the tune of a perfect "300" game. Chip, 18, is the first person in his teens to bowl a perfect score in the Wyoming Valley in approximately 20 years.

20 Years Ago - March 7, 1974 GAS LINES DOWN BUT CRISIS ISN'T OVER

Long lines of automobiles at service stations have subsided in the area in the last 10 days, but the crisis is far from over.

For the first time in the 50-year history of College Misericordia, Misericordia Players director Walter C.J. Anderson has easy access to men for theatrical productions. With 30 male, full time students on campus, Anderson has been able to plan plays with male characters.

You could get - Lettuce 3 lg. hds. \$1; 10-lb. bag potatoes, \$1.59; center cut pork roast \$1.49 lb.; grapefruit 6/\$1; corn, 5 16-oz. cans \$1.

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