

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### An intelligent vote to complete school year Now, how about 200 days?

The state Legislature has done the right thing in passing a bill that allows school districts to lengthen the school day and hold Saturday classes to make up for time lost to this winter's severe weather. In a heartening display of common sense, both the House and Senate passed the measure unanimously before sending it to Governor Casey.

Now it's up to local districts to decide what combination of measures to take in order to meet the required instruction time.

Even more vital than the practical matter of completing this school year, the Legislature's action reinforces the importance of education in the minds of students and parents. As this vote shows, education is not something to be taken lightly, or put off because it becomes inconvenient. It is a commitment to our young people and to our society in an age when standards seem to be falling all around us. The last thing we needed in this climate was a signal from our leaders that summer vacations are more important than school.

Since the Legislature has shown such a startling ability to rise to the occasion, perhaps they can go even further. How about lengthening the school year to 200 days, as it is in some other states, so that our graduates can better compete for college admissions and careers? The short answer to that suggestion is no, given the intransigence of the teachers' unions on so many other issues. But teachers are a minority of the voting population, and our legislators surely could muster the necessary courage if they thought the general population favored a change.

### Form cards aren't treated like letters

We have recently received several form postcards with a generic message opposed to President Clinton's proposed health care reforms. They have come from members of the Seniors Coalition, which claims to have a membership of two million and, judging by its phone number, is headquartered in suburban Washington D.C.

This isn't the first time we've been deluged with material from this outfit and/or its members, but we hope it's the last. The well-intentioned individuals who sent these cards need to know that form letters don't get the attention of newspapers, even when they arrive in quantity. We strive to fill the Post's editorial and opinion pages with a variety of material, but each must be the original work of the author.

We welcome submissions from anyone with an opinion about issues of contemporary interest. If one of the folks who signed and sent a postcard wishes to write a column or letter opposing the President's health reform plan, please do so. But be specific about your likes and dislikes, and keep it relevant to our readers' lives.

Most of all, save yourself the 19¢ (some incorrectly put 29¢ stamps on), and the trouble of mailing form cards to us. Instead, send your personal opinion.

### Hats off to 'Pennies' crew

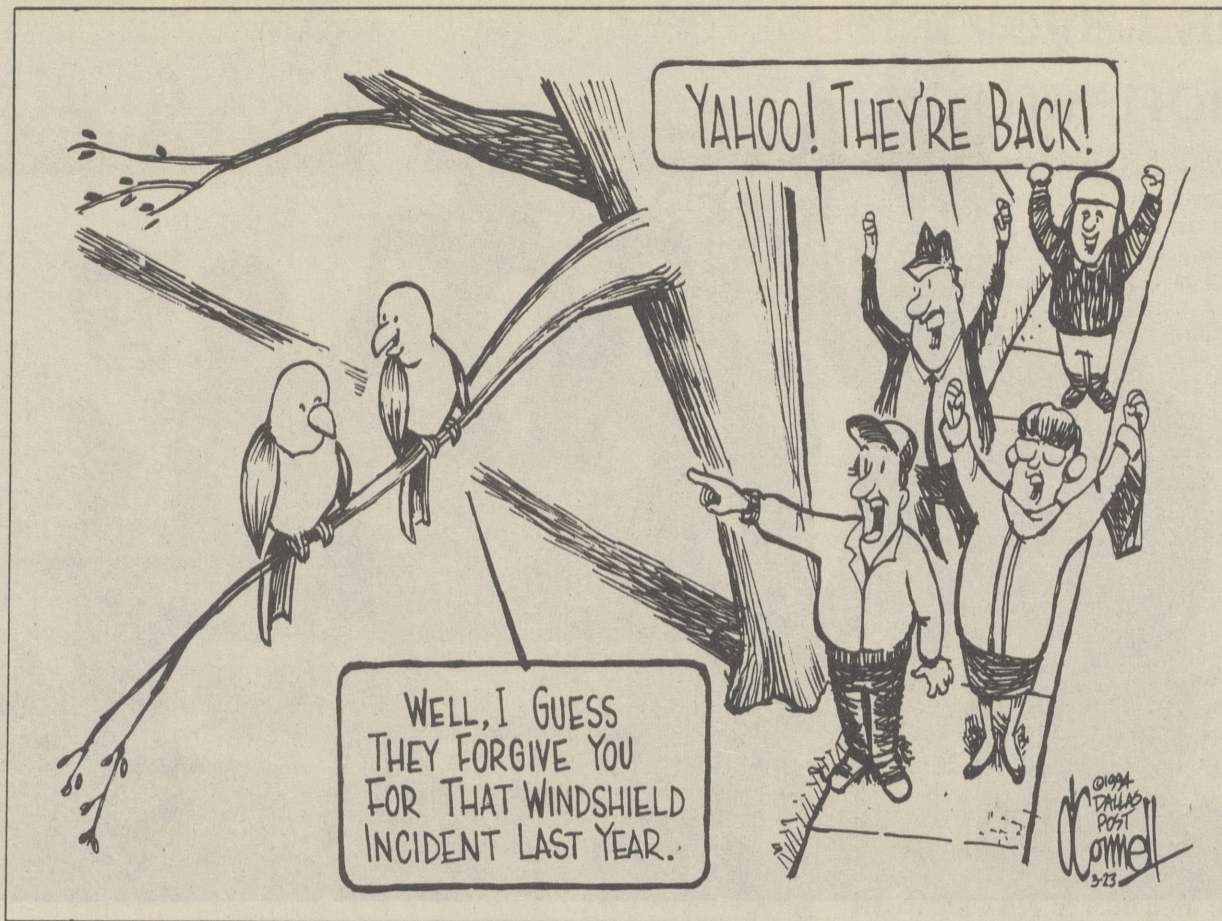
Last week's issue featured a story about the "Pennies for Periodicals" drive at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The new project was devised to fund the cost of the library's magazine subscriptions. The library keeps about 150 magazines on the shelf, at an annual cost of \$3,000. That's not small change, but neither is the money that was collected during February.

Most of us tend to associate libraries with books, forgetting the newspapers, magazines and tapes that also are in the collection. We also forget that not everyone can afford to subscribe to periodicals or buy books, but the library offers an equal opportunity for intellectual stimulation to everyone in the community.

All of the material comes together through the efforts of the library's staff and volunteers. Our hats are off to them.

### 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.



### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - Mar. 30, 1934 MOTORISTS MUST HAVE CARS INSPECTED

Sounding a general call for inspection of motor vehicles, the Bureau of Highway Patrol and Safety today reminded owners of more than 1 million motor vehicles that they have only two days in which to have their cars put in sound running condition.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt of the Greater Dallas Rotary Club will be held March 31 at the Kingston Township High School grounds, instead of Fernbrook Park as originally planned.

Formal opening of the Suburban Inn will be held March 31. During the opening day friends and customers will have the opportunity to inspect the facilities. A special chicken dinner will be served all day for 65 cents.

#### 50 Years Ago - Mar. 24, 1944 K.T. PREPARING BOYS FOR THE SERVICE

The four page pamphlet "Red Cross At His Side," which is being distributed nationally during the Red Cross drive, contains an excellent front page picture of Harry Lee Smith, former advertising manager of *The Dallas Post* and now a Red Cross Field Director in foreign service.

Kingston Township High School is making sure its boys will be ready when they enter the service. Boys who cannot swim are sent every Tuesday to the Wilkes-Barre Y.M.C.A. to take swimming lessons, sponsored by the Red Cross.

You could get - Fresh ground beef, 25¢ lb.; Pork loins, 25¢ lb.; grapefruit juice, 46-oz. can, 29¢; Virginia Lee Layer Cakes, 31¢ ea. Supreme bread, 2 lg. lvs. 17¢.

#### 40 Years Ago - Mar. 26, 1954 DALLAS 5&10 IS SOLD

John E. Williams of Forty Fort, has purchased Dallas 5¢, 10¢ and \$1 Store from James Sick and will take possession on Monday. Williams, his wife, Frances and their 9-year old son Richard expect to move here shortly and occupy the apartments over the store.

With four major candidates seeking the Republican nomination in the Congressional and Legislative contests at the spring Primary Election, the Back Mountain Region is due for a political awakening. Candidates are Newell Wood, Harveys Lake; Harold Flack and Edward Morgan, Goss Manor, for State Senator and Martin Walsh, Fernbrook for Congress.

#### 30 Years Ago - Mar. 26, 1964 FIRE DAMAGES AREA LAUNDROMAT

Dallas Rotary Club will participate in the 1964 Rotary program at New York's World Fair when they hold their weekly meeting in the shadow of the Unisphere on June 20.

Work began on several sections of Memorial Highway this week, after a lapse of two months. Excavation continues above the road in the 2/3-mile section between the big bend and Harter's Dairy. Howard Daubenspeck, job superintendent, estimates the whole project, which entails 4.1 miles of construction and refinishing, would be finished by late August or early September of this year.

Following a fire around midnight Friday night at Shavertown Laundry Center, Chief William Frederick ordered an inspection of all boiler rooms in the shopping center. The Laundromat fire, if not reported could have set off a destructive blaze in the Shavertown Shopping Center.

#### 20 Years Ago - Mar. 28, 1974 BURGLARS HIT AREA

A rash of burglaries continued to harass Back Mountain police over the weekend with restaurants and a school the main targets. No arrests have been made.

Morgus Convalescent Home at Harveys Lake will close in two months, victim of strict new state laws designed to better protect the elderly from the rages of nursing home fires. The Morgus home would require extensive alterations that owner Andy Morgus has decided to close the home rather than make the necessary changes.

With severe predictions that large areas of Luzerne County will be ravaged this season by the gypsy moth, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources has begun extensive programs to destroy the tree killing insect.

You could get - Cube steak, \$1.48 lb.; fresh eggs, 68¢ doz.; seedless grapefruit, 5 lb. bag 79¢; Fab laundry detergent 84 oz. pkg., \$1.19; chuck roast, \$1.18 lb.

### Letter

#### Belated best wishes to Mrs. Louise Brown

Editor,  
I was delighted to read about Mrs. Louise Brown. I have often wondered how she was and where she was.  
She forgot to tell you of her

association with the Fine Arts Fiesta. I was program chairman for several years and it was my pleasure to call her each year to schedule her demonstration of rug hooking. She was always eager to

help and a joy to work with.

Cheers to you Mrs. Brown for a life well spent. You look terrific!

Sylvia A. Hughes  
Dallas

### As I was saying...

#### Five 'secret' language rules for success

By JACK HILSHER

The funniest writer on this planet - alive or dead - has to be Dave Barry. I met him once at a bookstore author's day and told him I enjoyed reading his column. His reply, "So do I!" Mr. Barry sometimes writes about "Mr. Language Person," a title I wish were mine because that is what I want to be today, especially for all my younger readers.

Boys and girls, I am going to give you five very important secret "language rules" which will guarantee that you will (a) be hired at your job interview or (b) will be promoted if already hired. I call these rules "secret" because obviously your teachers are keeping them from you. So are your parents, although they are as guilty as you probably in breaking them. Let's get started:

##### ...LANGUAGE RULE NO. 1. STOP USING DOUBLE NEGATIVES

Example: "I don't have nothing to wear. Not having "nothing" means you must have "something," and therefore your meaning has cancelled itself out. In

other words, you are no longer saying what you mean if you use double negatives and you will always sound like an illiterate boob. (Sorry, but it's true.) Besides, no one hires a double negative-user unless they only need someone to run errands.

##### ...LANGUAGE RULE NO. 2. STOP USING THE WORD "LIKE"

Example: "Like, I got up this morning, and, like, I had this headache, and, like, I took these pills, and they hey, like work." Even if you like something, stop using the word entirely so you'll get out of the habit and stop sounding like a Valley Girl.

##### ...LANGUAGE RULE NO. 3. STOP USING "RIGHT" AS A QUESTION

Example: "I had this headache, right? So I took these pills, right?" No, it's not right. Your listener has no knowledge of your headache or whether you took the pills or not, so why are you asking? Take my word for it and stop saying "Right?" all the time. Remember, running errands is very boring.

##### ...LANGUAGE RULE NO. 4. STOP ALL THOSE "YOU-KNOWS"

James Thurber once said that he "deplored the spreading blight of "you-knows" afflicting the spoken word in the U.S. It moved like a rainstorm through the language and he "trembled at its increasing garbling of meaning, ruining of rhythm and drumming on hapless ears. America's galloping illiteracy is bloating the language." Thurber counted 34 "you-knows" in one five-minute phone conversation.

##### ...LANGUAGE RULE NO. 5. USE "SAID" INSTEAD OF "GO". Please!

The worst is last: listen to yourself say this and you'll stop all by yourself. "I go, what did you have for lunch?" And she goes, "A hot dog." So I go, "Gee you must be hungry." She goes, "Yes." Are you following this? "Go" means to "go" somewhere and had nothing whatsoever to do with what someone "said." So please use "go" as it should be used or you'll run errands for sure.

Well, you know, I don't, like, have nothing more to say.. right?

### Reporter's notebook

#### 'Pappy Gordon,' Back Mountain's guardian

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

The Back Mountain has lost a good friend, a man who came very close to being its guardian angel - James "Pappy" Gordon.

I first met Pappy four years ago when I was a novice reporter working for another newspaper. I had to interview him for a story about the Back Mountain Fire Police and his many years' work with the Junior Firefighters, which he had helped found.

Understandably nervous (this was maybe my second or third feature) I found Pappy very personable and easy to talk to.

Reminiscing about the many young firefighters he had trained, he was proud of the special situations he had set up for fire schools and the innovative firefighting techniques which he had devised.

He truly loved his community and took pride in more than 50 years in its service.

I called him by the affectionate nickname, "Pappy," given him by area residents, because he reminded me of my father, a person who always had time to help someone else just for the enjoyment of brightening their day.

After that first interview I made it a point to look for the familiar white-capped figure in the fire police hardhat directing traffic whenever I had to cover a fire or accident.

Pappy always recognized my car and helped me out.

"Pull off the road in here, Gracie, and you'll be okay," he would say, telling me how close I was allowed to go and anything else

that he knew about the situation, while continuing to direct traffic and patiently help frustrated motorists unsure of where they were going.

Thanks to Pappy Gordon, I quickly learned how not to get in the way of emergency service personnel and what not to do at a fire or accident scene.

One of the worst days of Pappy's life came when he had to remove himself from the Back Mountain Fire Police active duty list when illness got the better of him.

Like the old fire horse whom he compared himself to, he didn't want to stop responding to the fire whistle.

But Pappy Gordon's example of unselfish service to his community went beyond the fire service. Everyone I asked for remembrances about him mentioned some special kindness done for them.

The last time I spoke with him about a month ago, he told me of his countless hours plowing snow for his township and his neighbors.

Because some Kingston Township streets were too narrow for the municipal trucks to maneuver through, he used his own truck to clear them of snow, usually making a pass by the Trucksville fire hall to make sure that the fire engines also had a clear path from their garage.

If he saw someone having trouble shoveling out their driveway, he'd stop, motion them out of the way and clear it in one pass, then drive away like the Lone Ranger, without letting them know

who he was.

If necessary, he got up as early as 4:40 a.m. Sunday mornings to plow the parking lot of the Trucksville United Methodist Church for Sunday services.

"For a long time the pastor never knew I was the plow driver," he had told me.

To me, that was typical Pappy Gordon - helping anyone he found in need without calling attention to himself.

At the end of that last interview, we shook hands and he once again told me to call him if I needed any more help. Looking death in the face, his first thoughts were for others, not himself.

That's the other lesson which he taught me: the survival of our communities depends on dedicated volunteers, not only fire and ambulance personnel, but also the "regular good Joes" who help their neighbors without any thought of reward.

This spirit of cooperation and unselfish sharing has always typified the Back Mountain. Pappy Gordon epitomized that spirit.

I'm sure that Heaven has a special place for the Pappy Gordons of the world, the guardian angels who never can do enough for their communities and neighbors. His genuine love for his fellow man and his community certainly brought a small piece of Heaven to the Back Mountain.

Pappy Gordon's shoes will be extremely difficult to fill. Possibly, if we all emulate him and commit many random acts of kindness, we might make a start.

We owe it to him.

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