

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Here's hoping Lehman contract talks continue amicably

The headline on last week's article about negotiations toward a new Lake-Lehman teachers' contract may have been startling for its tameness. "L-L contract talks 'professional, pleasant,'" it read. That's quite a departure from the usual screaming pronouncements of conflict we've become accustomed to, and a credit to both sides in the talks.

In the new scheme mandated by Act 88, the state rule that was designed to rectify some of the failings in prior regulations, negotiations between the teachers' union and a school district must follow a particular sequence of events. The result in this case is that the two sides' positions are now in the hands of a "fact finder," whose job is to render an opinion on whether either side or both is proposing a reasonable basis for settlement. In the past, fact finding was a last resort, requested when all other attempts to reach agreement had failed. One thing that hasn't changed is what happens after the fact finder's report is completed; each side has 10 days in which to accept or reject it. If it is accepted by both sides, the report becomes the basis for a final agreement. If it is rejected by either party, it becomes public record so that the taxpayers can see just what each side had been asking for.

That last step is at least a nod to the people who will ultimately foot the bill for the contract, the taxpayers of the Lake-Lehman School District. Of course, paying the bills isn't the only interest citizens have in their school system. The success or failure of schools has a great and long-lasting effect on the character of a community, as a magnet that attracts or repels new residents and as a shaper of people who will lead local government, business and institutions. Teachers are the front line in this endeavor, and maintaining a competent, motivated staff is of prime importance to everyone, not just parents of school-age children.

Lake-Lehman's teachers have enjoyed two consecutive contracts that brought healthy wage increases over several years. Given the current state of the national and local economy, it is unrealistic to expect a repeat, or even anything close to the last round of hikes. We hope their leaders understand that, and don't engage in the kind of brinkmanship that has been evident in Abington Heights and other districts. The positive relationship that has existed between residents of the district and its teachers took years to develop, but can be destroyed in a much shorter time. Both sides should keep that in mind.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Listening to much of the debate about young Michael Fay's upcoming whipping in Singapore, you might think Americans long for an authoritarian regime that sweeps criminals off the street and makes the trains (or airplanes) run on time. While I agree that our government has done all it should by expressing our concern at the barbaric punishment, and shouldn't interfere beyond that, I don't for a minute wish to see the repressive Singaporean system raised as a model for our nation. People expressing their unfettered support (it sounds like glee in some cases) for Singapore's seemingly pure culture would be far less enthusiastic if they were aware of the repressive nature of the national government there.

As PennDOT embarks on its latest project to upgrade Route 309, I can't help wondering why the powers that be think it's necessary to install a "jug handle" turn at Hillside Road, and demolish the former Harter Dairy building in the process. Wouldn't a traffic signal and a longer northbound left-turn lane accomplish the same purpose? If that were done, the historic building could be spared and its driveway could be located opposite Hillside.

Can anyone recall a year in which ice remained on ponds and lakes so late in the season? Some people have asked if we knew how much snow had fallen in the Back Mountain this winter, since we're all aware it was considerably more than the official record 90 inches recorded at the airport. When we lived in northwestern Connecticut, an unofficial lake watcher would record the "ice-in" and "ice-out" dates for publication in the paper. There were also many weather watchers, including the publisher, who were a steady source of truly local weather information. Would anyone like to volunteer for the job? Call or write and we'll talk about it.

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.

The Dallas Post

Published Weekly by Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
Telephone: 717-675-5211

Ronald A. Bartizek
Editor and Publisher

Charlotte E. Bartizek
Associate Publisher

Peggy Young
Advertising Acct. Exec.

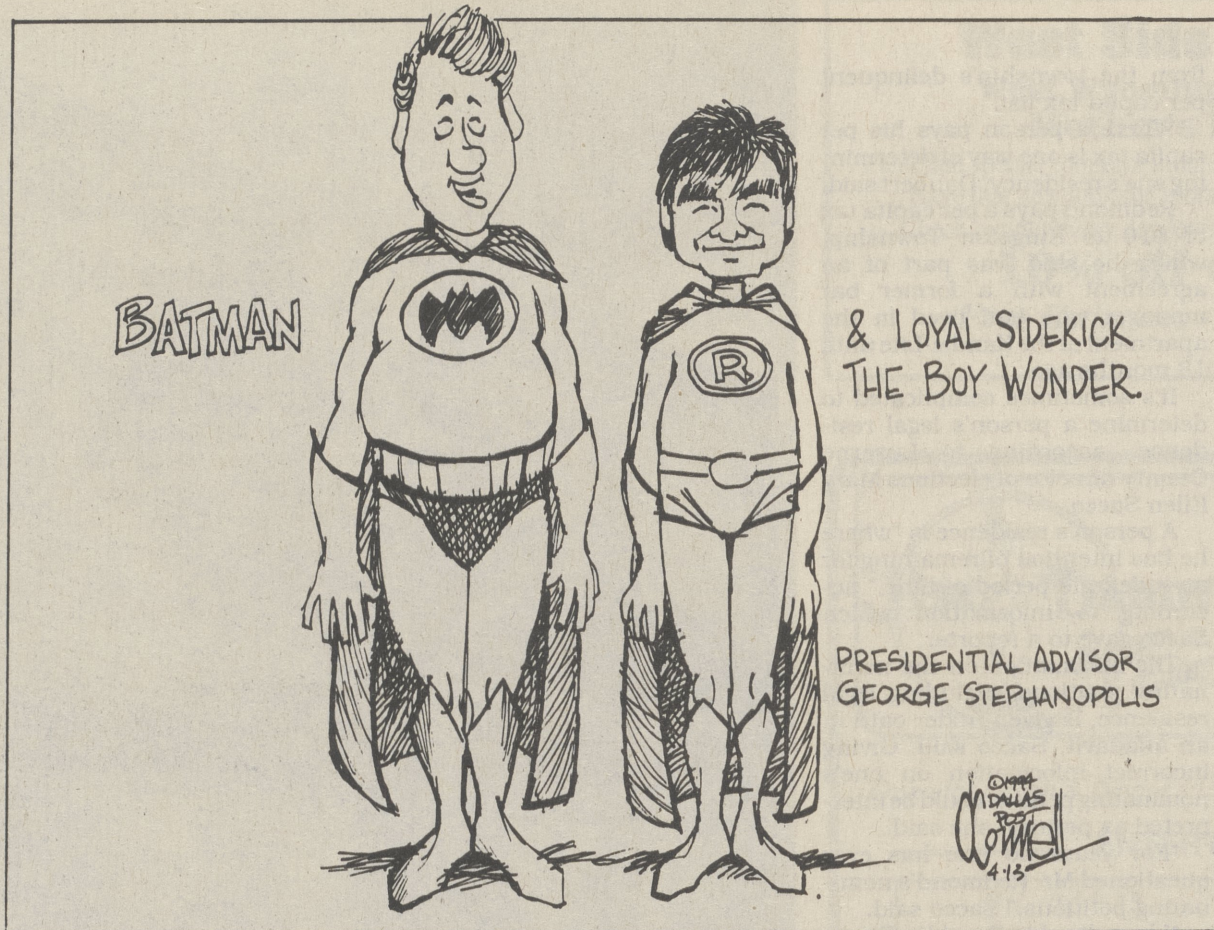
Grace R. Dove
Reporter

Paul Rismiller
Production Manager

Olga Kostrobala
Classified/typesetting

Jill Urbanas
Office Manager

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION
AND THE PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION



Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - April 20, 1934 MAIN ST. SPEED TRAP NABS BORO SPEEDERS

Pennsylvania's sightless population will soon have available the latest innovation which has been developed in aid of the blind - the new "talking book" machines which will enable the blind persons who have not mastered Braille reading to enjoy the latest and best books.

A determined effort to end speeding through Dallas Borough was launched this week by Chief of Police Leonard O'Kane and a number of arrests were reported as a result of the speed trap established by local officers on Main Street.

Dallas Borough Council at its meeting Tuesday took a step toward instituting legal action against delinquent taxpayers in the borough when it authorized its finance committee to obtain from the County Treasurer, a list of taxes due on the 1932 duplicate, preparatory to pressing collection.

50 Years Ago - April 14, 1944 DRAFT BOARD CALLS UP 57 AREA MEN

Fifty seven men from the Back Mountain area are among the 157 called by Wyoming Local Draft Board No. 1 for pre-induction physical examinations on April 17. Eight of these are from outside cities and states where they apparently were employed in defense work.

Burgess H.A. Smith has designated the week of April 24 as annual Clean-Up Week in Dallas Borough. Smith said that the Borough Street Department will be available, April 27, 28 and 29 to make a complete tour of every street with the borough truck and remove all refuse that is placed along the curb lines.

You could get - Center cut pork chops, 37¢ lb.; ground hamburger, 25¢ lb.; Pillsbury Flour, 25 lb. bag, \$1.29; carrots, lg. bch., 6¢; American Tissue, 2 rolls, 11¢.

40 Years Ago - April 16, 1954 GATE OF HEAVEN SCHOOL TO EXPAND

Gate of Heaven parish plans a new building on the present school grounds, designed to provide recreational space and to house the four school buses used in transporting grade school children. In two years, Gate of Heaven school has added two grades to its original six and will now graduate students directly into Catholic high schools in Wyoming Valley.

Lehman-Jackson-Ross school board plans to add a qualified librarian to its faculty next year. Lester Squire, supervising principal, in making his report at the business meeting, stated a high school principal is also needed, but that adherence to the budget dictated one step at a time. He considered that a librarian who could guide students in their reading and research work of more importance than assistance for himself.

You could get - Especially for Easter, ladies spring coats, \$16.98 and up; Easter suits, \$14.98 and up; dresses, \$6.98 and up at the Globe Store in Luzerne.

A. Case for conservation

The Bill of Rights for Future Generations: securing the future for our grandchildren

By ALENE N. CASE

There are some who think the environmental concerns are frivolities for which ordinary people have no time. There are others who insist that conservationists are trying to "turn back the clock" or return to the past. But, I believe that ordinary people want a planet on which their children can live healthy and productive lives and that conservationists are working to secure that future for many generations to come.

In May 1991, Jacques-Yves Cousteau began circulating a petition calling for the United Nations to adopt a Bill of Rights for Future Generations. He plans to present this proposal to the next session of the General Assembly in September of this year. As of January, 1994, five million people all over the world had signed the petition! Let's help add to that number.

The proposed Bill of Rights reads as follows:

• **Article 1** - Future generations have a right to an uncontaminated and undamaged Earth and its enjoyment as the ground of human history, of culture, and of social bonds that make each generation and individual a member of one human family.

• **Article 2** - Each generation, sharing in the estate and heritage of the Earth, has a duty as trustee for future generations to prevent irreversible and irreparable harm to life on Earth and to human freedom and dignity.

• **Article 3** - It is, therefore, the paramount responsibility of each generation to maintain a con-

stantly vigilant and prudential assessment of technological disturbances and modifications adversely affecting life on Earth, the balance of nature, and the evolution of humanity in order to protect the rights of future generations.

• **Article 4** - All appropriate measures, including education, research and legislation, shall be taken to guarantee these rights and to ensure that they not be sacrificed for present expediences and conveniences.

• **Article 5** - Governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals are urged, therefore, imaginatively to implement these principles, as if in the very presence of those future generations whose rights we seek to establish and perpetuate.

This petition campaign can involve everyone. No money or membership or voting status is required. All persons old enough to understand the proposal are urged to sign. Petitions are available in many different languages. If you would like to help me circulate the English version, please contact me through this newspaper. For more information, call The Cousteau Society at (804) 523-9335. Together we can begin to live as if the future really matters - in other words, with hope.

I would like to share with you the words of several people and groups who have been giving these issues a great deal of thought:

Vaclav Havel - "Man is not an omnipotent master of the universe, allowed to do with impunity whatever suits him at the moment. The world we live in is

made of an immensely complex and mysterious tissue about which we know very little and which we must treat with utmost humility."

Canada's Green Plan - "The great challenge of the 21st century will be to accommodate the economic hopes of the majority of the world's growing population within the limits imposed by the planet...our success depends on our ability to adapt to our environment. The environment will not adapt to us."

The Union of Concerned Scientists - "A new ethic is required - a new attitude towards discharging our responsibility for caring for ourselves and for the earth. We must recognize the earth's limited capacity to provide for us. We must recognize its fragility. We must no longer allow it to be ravaged. This ethic must motivate a great movement, convincing reluctant leaders and reluctant governments and reluctant peoples themselves to effect the needed changes."

Jacques-Yves Cousteau - (from the gut) "Surviving like rats is not what we should bequeath to our children and grandchildren."

(from the head) "The most effective tool we have as citizens, as parents, is the sheer force of our numbers. When confronted with superior size and strengths, dolphins band together. They attack power with wisdom. We, too, can rise as a human family to stop environmental destruction, to safeguard the legacy of life we must pass on to future generations. We can take our inspiration from the dolphins..."

J.W.J.

You can't always trust those opinion polls

By J.W. JOHNSON

As you no doubt would surmise, most politicians do not blow their noses without consulting that carrier-of-the-political-win-in-the-bottle; his or her pollster.

Every political campaign begins and ends (they never really end) with some pollster telling us how we will think, and then telling us how we, in fact, did think.

Most of the time, the pollsters are close to the facts. Sometimes they are so wrong as to be laughable.

The most obvious example of the latter was when pollsters predicted a landslide victory for Thomas E. Dewey over Harry Truman for president. We know that Dewey won...who can forget that famous photograph.

With much less fanfare, the same thing happened in the State of Maine in 1974 when then attorney general George Mitchell (that's right, THE George Mitchell) was running for governor against neophyte politician and insurance salesman James Longley. Mitchell supposedly had Longley down for the count by as much as 15 percentage points only 10 days from the election.

When the smoke cleared, Longley had won, and thus became the only governor this century elected running as an independent.

Public opinion polls are believed

to accurately measure public opinion. Originally, they were rather massive for it was thought (and probably rightly) that only through a wide sampling could a somewhat accurate measurement be accomplished.

That was before the computer age. Now and with all of today's population breakdowns and so-called representative samples, many poll takers think they take a miniature, minute, small (pick an adjective) sample of public opinion and obtain a representative reading. Sometimes they can't; sometimes they miss, as noted above.

Do you recall, for example, that the Washington Post poll in the final days of the 1980 presidential election found (surprisingly) that Carter had at the last minute emerged with a lead over Ronald Reagan. The Post had endorsed Carter. Were the poll takers carried away with their own hopes...ahem.

The point is that polls are often better entertainment than accurate measurements of public opinion...that is, as polls are currently constructed...that is, until the information highway becomes a reality and we have a truly interactive democracy.

In the future, for example, we will be able to instantly measure public response because, and through the electronic information highway, a more accurate,

detailed and complete measure of public opinion can be taken.

It will always be true that polls are only as valid, complete and balanced as the persons developing, and then asking, the questions.

And it will also always be true there will be polls intended to influence public opinion. No one doubts, for example, that when a television network polling exiting voters predicts a certain candidate will win overwhelmingly, that affects the race. Many want to be on the winning side.

Finally, polls confidently announce a margin of possible error. It's usually, two to five percent. That's also often optimistic. The poll may be (and has been) off considerably more. So the rule to remember about public opinion polls is that they are sometimes far off the mark, and sometimes not what they are supposed to be.

But we will continue to hear about them, until the information highway makes it possible for us to finally tell our politicians what we think...that day...that minute...about whatever is on our minds, or about the issue of the day.

Admittedly, such a system would be fraught with the opportunity for abuse; then again, a republican democracy itself is fraught with those same opportunities.

Viva republican democracy.

30 Years Ago - April 16, 1964 NO MORE BUILDING ON SUNSET SHORELINE

Lehman Township Supervisors outlawed construction of any more buildings along their 3,000 foot stretch of shore at Harveys Lake at their April meeting. In effect the ordinance forces owners of vacant lots on the Sunset waterfront to keep them vacant.

Dallas School District is losing two qualified instructors as Chester Molley, Senior High English teacher joins Wilkes College faculty in September and John K. Thomas.

In Grassroots Editor, a four times a year publication issued by the International Conference of Weekly Newspaper Editors with offices in the Journalism Dept. of Southern Illinois University, an editorial from The Dallas Post took top billing. Occupying the entire first page of a 15 page Editors' Scrapbook on the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy gleaned from weekly newspapers all over the country and from foreign lands, "The Living Flame" was reprinted in its entirety.

20 Years Ago - April 18, 1974 BIKE-A-THON TO RUN THROUGH AREA

Wheels will begin turning at 10 a.m. Sunday when the first group of riders will take off on the 25 mile Bike-A-Thon route in the Back Mountain. Riders of all ages are scheduled to start the ride which originates at Dallas Senior High School, thence to Demunds, Kunkle, Harveys Lake, Lehman and Dallas.

Mary, why haven't you written? Let the Back Mountain know what you think by writing a letter to the editor. Always include your name, address and a daytime phone number; we don't publish anonymous letters. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612