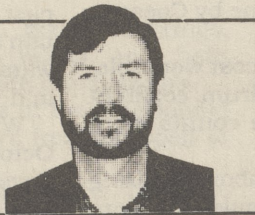


# The Dallas Post

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



## Crime bill: Politics at its worst and best

Last week's passage of an anti-crime bill by the U.S. Senate was a graphic illustration of the best and worst features of American-style democracy. After it appeared this quite popular program would fall victim to an arcane procedural rule, a half-dozen Republican senators joined their Democrat colleagues to send the measure to the President's desk.

Along the way, we were treated to the kind of partisan bickering that has so characterized Congress in recent years, producing the much-reviled gridlock that we hear concerns the electorate, although not enough to actually vote incumbents out of office.

I found this elaborate stage play remarkable in two ways; the utter disregard for the recommendations of two groups closest to the crime issue — police officials and big-city mayors; and the "get tough" mantra recited by some opponents of crime who claim their constituents aren't interested in attempts to prevent crime, only in swift and harsh punishment. I think they are misreading the public mood by listening too much to a vociferous segment of society that is well funded by the National Rifle Association and other groups opposed to gun control. Had the senators cared to listen to law enforcement officials, they would have heard that punishment just isn't enough, prevention programs are a necessary and effective component of any crime fighting strategy.

But then, a remarkable thing happened. Six Republican senators put principle before party and voted against both the procedural roadblock and for the bill, and it was passed. In that instant, reason overcame rhetoric, and the attempt by a minority to thwart the will of the majority was beaten back. Of course, the Republican effort to waylay this bill was simply a reflection of years of Democrat tactics in both houses, where the majority party can pretty much control the fate of legislation by sending it forward or burying it in committee.

It's interesting that Republican Senator Arlen Specter, a former prosecutor, was among the six mavericks to vote for the bill, while Democrat Paul Kanjorski voted against it in the House, so as not to offend opponents of gun control.

Each year, it seems elected representatives in Washington become more disconnected from the real world of most citizens, and their reasons for not doing what they know is right become more tenuous. Last week, I watched a senator who is opposed to the current health care reform initiatives decry the lack of personal accountability in the bills. They make it economically painless to get health care, he claimed, suggesting that when people aren't responsible for paying the bill they won't keep an eye out for inflated charges. But I never once heard him volunteer to pay a portion of his health insurance premium. Nor did he express any concern that many of his constituents lack anything approaching his benefit package, not to mention his salary and other perquisites.

"Politics!", is the scream most often heard in response to legislative failure. But that may not be the proper word. "Money" could be more accurate, as people from both parties who sit in Washington seem far more interested in working the will of big contributors than doing what's beneficial to voters. Is it any wonder that even the most ambitious health care reform proposal holding any chance of passage is derisively referred to as the "insurance company preservation act?" Money — starting with the obscene amount needed to conduct a modern campaign — also is the largest obstacle to challengers who might take a different approach in the nation's capital.

I have resisted the "throw the bums out" mentality that leads ultimately to term limits for elected officials, but I'm beginning to think there may be no alternative if our desire is to be represented by people less beholden to special interest, big-money contributors. But term limits alone won't do the job, and may in fact make things worse. The first order of business must be election reform that will shorten campaigns and make it possible for good challengers to enter the ring with ideas and principles.

I'm annoyed every time I pass one of those Adopt-A-Highway signs, listing the name of a company, organization or individuals who have volunteered to clean up the roadside. I'm not mad at them; they're performing an important public service by removing unsightly trash from view, making a drive through the Back Mountain more enjoyable than the slobs who toss garbage from their vehicles would have it. In truth, litterers probably have no evil intent when they spew paper, bottles and cans across the countryside. They probably aren't intelligent enough to have intent at all.

What bothers me is that I pay taxes in part to keep the roadways clean and in repair, so why do citizen volunteers have to do the dirty work? And what happens when their enthusiasm wanes, or the company moves, or a new boss decides his employees' time is better spent in the office or plant? I would rather leave the task to the state, county or town crew members whose full-time job it is to care for the roads.

Along the same lines, New York City is poised to send citizen volunteers out to patrol parks with portable phones programmed to dial 911. The unarmed patrollers are supposed to summon the police by phone when they see criminal activity. I hope it doesn't happen, but can't you see the headlines the first time a phone patroller is mugged or worse?

If this is the trade-off we must make to keep taxes down, is it worth it? I don't even think it works, in addition to which, spending leisure time picking up roadside trash or patrolling parks certainly doesn't add to quality of life for those who do it. In the first instance, it's pretty well proven that can and bottle redemption eliminates a large portion of roadside garbage. In the second, well, there is a crime bill in Washington that is supposed to help pay for an additional 100,000 police officers.

## Do you agree? Disagree?

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Ronald A. Bartizek  
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Charlotte E. Bartizek  
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Peggy Young  
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC

Grace R. Dove  
REPORTER

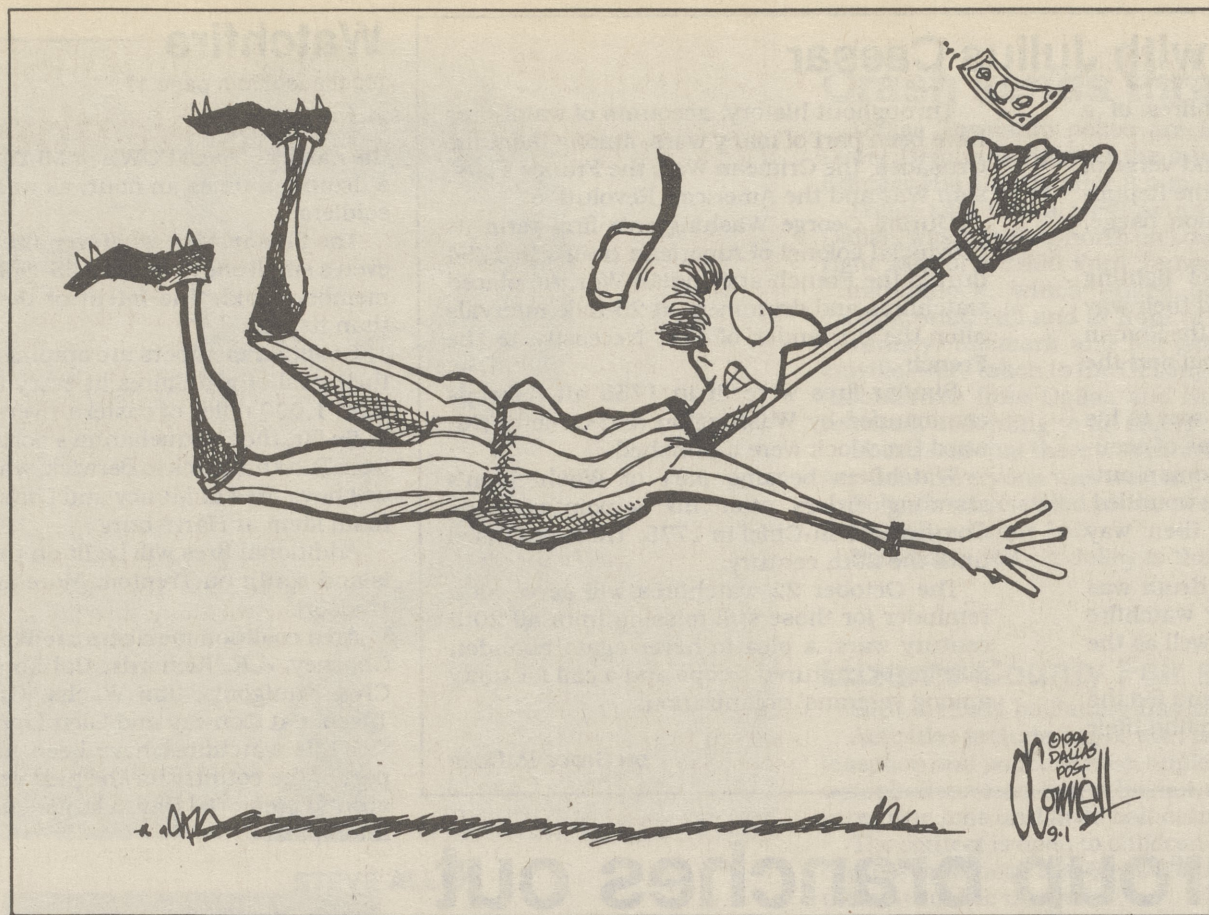
Paul Rismiller  
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Olga Kostrobala  
CLASSIFIED/TYPESSETTING

Jill Urbanas  
OFFICE MANAGER



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## Only yesterday

### 60 Years Ago - Sept. 7, 1934 DALLAS TWP. SEES RECORD ENROLLMENT

Construction of the new Harveys Lake fire house and community building, made possible through the generosity of Daniel C. Roberts, will be started immediately it was announced this week.

Five hundred children registered for the first day of school at Dallas Township, establishing a new record for the number of students in that district. Because of the unusual number of 4th grade students, directors at a meeting, elected Mis Mary Leona Smith of Kunkle as a teacher.

The First National Bank of Dallas this week received from Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. of Washington the official signs which will hang at all receiving windows as visible evidence that the depositors of this institution are insured.

### 50 Years Ago - Sept. 1, 1944 LT. SKOPIC LOCATED IN GERMAN PRISON CAMP

Rev. John J. O'Leary, distinguished chaplain of WW I and now pastor of St. Therese's Church, Shavertown, has already purchased the Bauer estate on Machell Avenue, Dallas, as the site of the proposed new church, "Gate of Heaven". Actual construction will await the termination of the war.

A prisoner of war in Germany, where he has been confined since shortly after his disabled bomber landed in Austria on July 29, Lt. Peter Skopic, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Skopic of Lehman, was able to send his first letter home last week.

Now playing at the Shaver Theatre, "Passage to Marseilles" with Humphrey Bogart, Michele Morgan and Claude Rains.

### 40 Years Ago - Sept. 3, 1954 BORO BUILDING GETS NEW LIQUOR STORE

Pennsylvania State Liquor Control Board has signed a three-year lease with Dallas Borough for the establishment of a Liquor Store in the Borough Building at a rental of \$1,200 per year. It is expected the store will open there shortly after the middle of the month after minor repairs are completed.

Nine one-room schoolhouses were sold over the block in Ross Twp. during July, some of them including building and lot, some only the building. Prices ranged from a few dollars to \$600. Some buildings could have been sold for higher prices if they could have been moved across the highway, but it was impossible to get State permission to tie up Rt. 115 long enough to maneuver a building across it.

You could get - Star Kist tuna, 3-6 1/2 oz. cans, \$1.00; Nabisco Ritz Crackers, 1 lb. pkg. 35¢; Parson's Ammonia, qt. bot., 23¢; Dial soap, 2 reg. bars, 25¢.

### 30 Years Ago - Sept. 3, 1964 UPDYKES RETURN TO GHANA MISSION

Andrew Morgus, Point Breeze, Harveys Lake, convalescent home owner, has purchased the Gregory Building on Main Street, Dallas, which houses the Colonial Restaurant, Toni the Barber, an apartment and the B.B. Lewis law office, the Dallas Post has learned.

Rev. and Mrs. Kenneth D. Updyke have completed a year's furlough and have returned to Ghana, West Africa, for their third term. They expect to be gone for four years.

Mr. and Mrs. Oscar J. Culp, Rice Street, Dallas, celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary, Aug. 15. They are the parents of eight children and have 20 grandchildren.

### 20 Years Ago - Sept. 5, 1974 MOCK DISASTER'S MERITS QUESTIONED

Explosive sounds of thunder and flashes of lightning accompanying the storm that hit the Back Mountain Area last Tuesday can still be heard echoing in some parts of Kingston Township. Trucksville Vol. Fire Co.'s "Mock Mutual Disaster Exercise" just happened to be scheduled at the same time as the storm hit the area. There seems to be differences of opinions as to the merits or effectiveness of the mock disaster.

The symphonic concert sound of Lake-Lehman High School Band under direction of John Milauskas will be presented over Radio Station WNAK, Nanticoke, Sept. 15.

The 12th Annual Fall Fair will be held this weekend at the Lehman Horse Show grounds. There will be amusements and a fantastic variety of entertainment.

## A Case for Conservation



Alene N. Case

The summer can be characterized by one word — wet. We have had plenty of time to contemplate rain. So, it seemed to me only natural to check on the status of acid precipitation. This subject has been ignored by the media since the passage of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments. But, the problem certainly has not evaporated.

Let's begin with a definition and some useful background. First of all, acid rain is only part of the larger problem of acid deposition. Acid deposition includes acid that falls either dry (on particles or aerosols) or wet — in snow, fog, dew, rain, hail, or sleet. Second, acid deposition has been around for a long time. Earlier in the industrial revolution, it was attached to soot which dirtied laundry and took paint off of houses that were situated literally "on the wrong side of the tracks." I imagine that the health of people who lived in these areas was affected, but no one really noticed because these poor people had little political clout.

But, in the 1950's and '60's, there was a general complaint about the dirt and grime in more affluent neighborhoods. The easiest and cheapest way to solve that problem was to build taller smokestacks for coal-fired power plants and other industrial furnaces. Much of the soot would then precipitate by gravity before it reached the top of the stack and the remaining particles and gases would be dispersed and diluted in the atmosphere. All of this proved to be true. The only problem was that then the gases (especially sulfur and nitrogen oxides) had plenty of time to react with water

## Acid rain, a problem that hasn't gone away

vapor to form strong acids. These acids then fell as acid deposition sometimes hundreds of miles from the original source. Those of us living in Eastern Canada and the northeastern United States now find ourselves "on the wrong side of the tracks."

Pennsylvania is downwind from many sources of acid deposition and we are also a large contributor to it. We still have many coal-burning power plants and some of these burn high-sulfur coal. We have a large fleet of automobiles — not all of which are fuel efficient or have functional catalytic converters — which puts out large quantities of nitrogen oxides. Although exhaust pipes are generally low to the ground, cars continue to contribute substantially to acid deposition. The only real way to reduce this is to burn less fuel because the nitrogen is a direct product of combustion, coming originally from the air used as a combustion gas.

You may remember that acid deposition was a subject that stirred up a great deal of controversy. The government of Canada would not believe the low pH values we were measuring in Nova Scotia in the mid-'70s. They accused my boss of reporting false data or having bad equipment. We finally proved to them that rain really was acid even where it was generally buffered by sea spray. Then, the power companies would not believe that it could travel that far from their plants. Then, people figured that the lakes that were acidifying had always been that way. And on, and on...

There are at least two aspects of the acid deposition problem that make it so difficult. One is that proving cause and effect is not a simple matter. In fact, some bodies of water show no effects for decades because they are naturally buffered systems and that natural buffering must be used before the water pH drops. In other bodies of water, pH can actually rise temporarily as microbes process the additional

sulfur and nitrogen compounds. Acidity can lead to the release of toxic heavy metals from soils and sediments and some people point to these substances as the real source of a fish kill or other result. Additional nitrogen can act as fertilizer for terrestrial plants, but extra growth is not desirable if it leads to increased injury by frost.

The second difficult aspect is that acid deposition easily moves across state and national boundaries. The Swedes and Norwegians are dealing with lakes that no longer support salmon populations. The acid from industrialized Europe is responsible, but how should these nations receive compensation? Canada has the tallest smokestack in North America at its copper smelter in Sudbury, Ontario. But, three-quarters of its acid deposition comes from the United States. This has caused unusual conflict between two generally friendly neighbors.

The soils in northeastern Pennsylvania are generally thin and not well-buffered. Therefore, I believe that we should be paying very close attention to whether or not our government is serious about enforcing the provisions of the amendments to the Clean Air Act. We should also cut down considerably on our use of electricity and automobiles. Even though these measures may not have an immediate effect on acid deposition, we will not be contributing as much to the degradation of our regional ecosystem.

If you want to become directly involved with monitoring the effects of acid deposition on nearby water courses, contact ALLARM at 717-245-1565. They have a program by which you can help with research on this issue in Pennsylvania. The only requisites are "enthusiasm and concern for the effects of acid rain" and \$20 to purchase a test kit to use in the work.

A variety of approaches is essential to the solution of complex problems and acid deposition is no exception.

## Library news

## Last-chance auction September 24

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

"SEPTEMBER SPECTACULAR" The Back Mountain Memorial Library will be conducting a one day auction special on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 11 a.m. until everything is sold. The spectacular will take place in the antiques room on the auction grounds and will be chaired by Ernest Ashbridge.

There are many antiques left from the 48th annual auction as well as new items purchased for this sale. The sale will include new goods and household items also. Books will be sold in the lower level of the library, from the regular auction storeroom, the \$1.00 a book room and the \$1.00 a bag room.

There will be food and soft drinks available on the grounds either from the refreshment stand or from private vendors. This will be the final wrap-up for the auction season 1994.

The Fall story hour sessions will begin in October, dates to be announced later. The sign up

date will begin on Tuesday, Sept. 6 in the children's room.

New books at the library: "The Proud and the Free" by Janet Dailey is the story of vivacious, black-haired Temple Gordon who was raised on a grand southern plantation. The sassy, outspoken belle has known only luxury and laughter. But in truth, no matter how elegant the Gordon Glen estate is, no matter how beautiful Temple is, they are both Cherokee. Temple's father has attended the finest eastern schools. By 1830, their life of parties begins to shatter and they become caught in a crossfire of tribal arguments and government betrayal.

"Phoenix Sub Zero" by Michael DiMercurio is a submarine adventure, the most seaworthy in every sense of the word, submarine epic. In a not-so-distant future the United Islamic Front is fighting what seems a losing war against a United Nations whose land-based task force is headed by a Navy Seal team and Green Berets. These forces are closing

in on the leader who, however, manages to slip through the UN net and escape into the deep waters of the Mediterranean. The action is tense and authentic with state-of-the-art technology and courage.

"The Secret Life of Count Dracula" by Roderick Anscombe is a mesmerizing fictional debut that takes readers into the fevered mind of Count Dracula the man-aristocrat, doctor and helpless killer of young women. There are no vampires in this stunningly erotic reinvention of the classic myth, only tormented human beings. The story of an all-too-human man.

"Makes Me Wanna Holler" by Nathan McCall is a shattering and unflinchingly honest auto-biography in which the author looks back on his journey from troubled youth to professional journalist and shows that the easy answers — poverty, terrible home life, lack of education, don't always apply. Funny, disturbing and powerful, this is a revelatory book.

## Are you opinionated?

The Dallas Post is looking for a few good columnists. If you have what it takes, we guarantee you a regular forum to write whatever you choose. (Unless it's libelous or tasteless, of course.) If you are the one person in 1,000 who can express ideas clearly and forcefully, send The Post a letter telling why you want to be a columnist. Mail it to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612, or drop it off at our office at 45 Main Road. Dallas (across from Offset Paperback).