

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Taxpayers give a civics lesson

Last week's article about the Back Mountain Taxpayers' Association (which we incorrectly labeled the Dallas Taxpayers' Association, a different group), reported the evolution of the organization's focus from opposition to the Dallas Area Municipal Authority's trash and recycling program to countywide concerns. Among their current targets are the proposed arena, a regional rail line, and Congressman Paul Kanjorski's plans for an inflatable dam on the Susquehanna River.

In a nutshell, president Russ Ockenhouse says the group wants tax money spent on basic necessities — roads and bridges — before projects like an arena are funded. In addition, they would like major expenditures to face a citizen referendum before funds are committed.

It's hard to argue with this group's basic premise, although one could easily draw the conclusion they aren't as much interested in controlling progress as in stopping it, unless someone besides their members is footing the bill. If you agree or not, though, this and other organized groups are providing a lesson about civics in action. By organizing, attending meetings, promoting their cause and voting for candidates they support, taxpayer groups are becoming a significant force in local government.

While it's far from certain that a majority of citizens line up behind their cause, taxpayer associations have and will continue to wield power beyond their numbers as long as those who feel differently don't turn out at the polling booth. The same would be true of any organized group no matter their ideology; if the "silent majority" sits home while a motivated few take charge, it won't be long before they see things changing against them. That has already happened in the Abington Heights School District, where every member of the school board was a taxpayer association-supported candidate.

The essence of American democracy is found when competing ideas meet in the public arena for debate and discussion, being reduced and merged until a general consensus is reached. But it takes two to tango, as the saying goes. If a single group — whether it be a taxpayer association or a collection of profligate liberals — can dominate elections, our government will serve their interests before those of the community at large.

Many people apparently feel uncomfortable taking a public stand. Some wrongly fear retaliation from powers that may be offended. Others "just don't have time." Still others claim they don't really care, they'll go along with whatever happens. Nearly all overestimate the reaction their opinion may draw, and the difficulty of expressing it. You can guess the conclusion of the lesson — if you care about how your town or school district is run, get involved. If you feel strongly about the direction it should take, get organized. At the very least, get registered and vote, or you could be surprised at what happens.

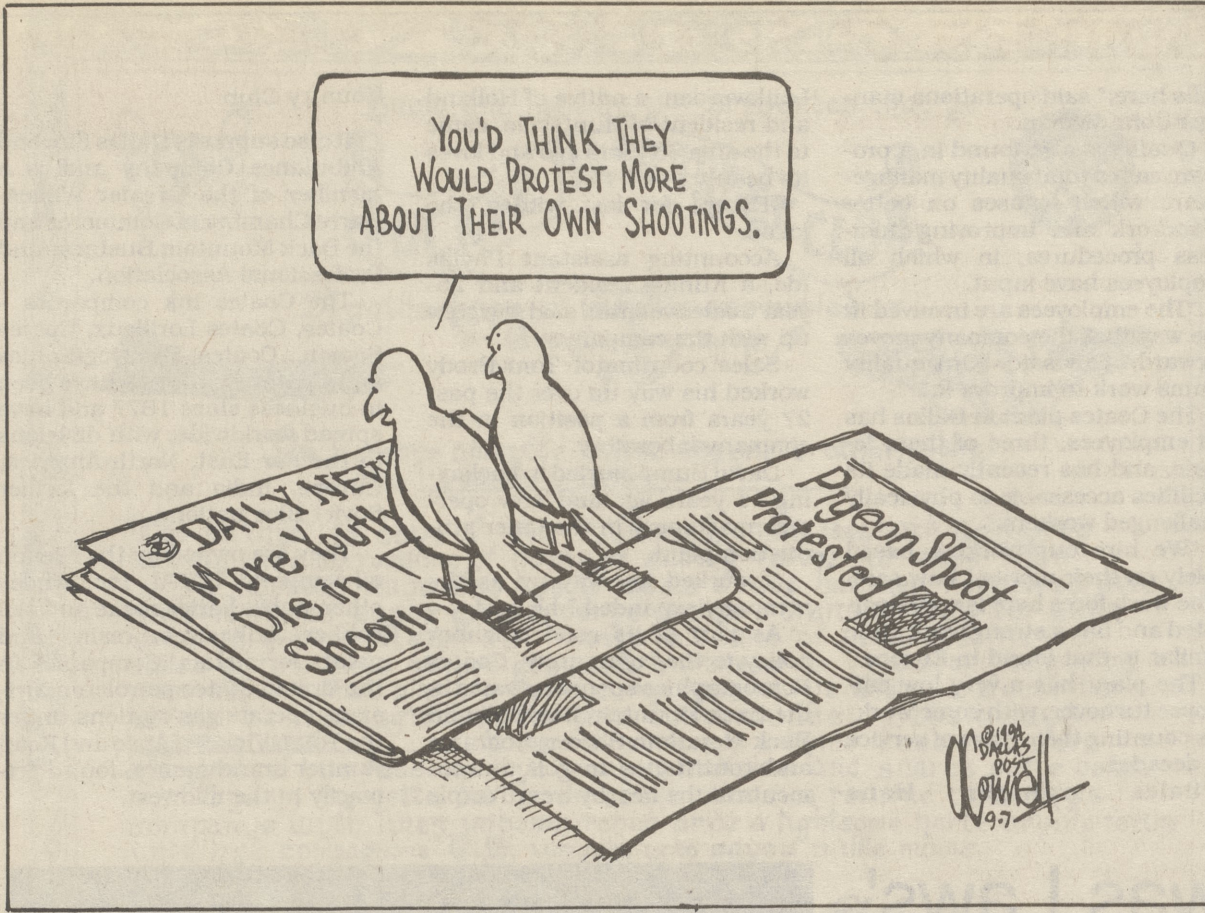
Two area residents will be honored during National Rehabilitation Week September 18-24. Though left a quadriplegic by an automobile accident, Heidi Jo Allen of Sweet Valley has battled back to earn a job as a computer operator at SallieMae in Hanover. Understandably, she is now an advocate for people with disabilities. Her story is both inspiring and instructive. No one would have blamed her had she chosen to live a life of dependency after this tragic event. Instead, Heidi stood up to adversity of a scale few of us will ever confront, and grasped her dignity and self-respect from the jaws of fate. Hers is a fine example for everyone who feels life has dealt them a bad hand, and that's most of us at one time or another.

Of course, none of us, disabled or not, succeeds completely on our own. Thus, Nancy Dukes of Harveys Lake will be recognized for her work in pet therapy and volunteer efforts to raise funds for Allied Services' recreational programs for the disabled. Both will receive regional awards sponsored by Allied.

The fall sports season is upon us, and you'll notice that Dave Konopki is no longer writing for *The Post*. That's because he landed a full-time job with *The Times Leader* as their high school football writer. We wish him the best of fortunes in his new position, and know he'll do as good a good job there as he did for us.

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.



As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

The following is from "Who's Who of Jazz" by John Chilton, Page 111 under "F", for Fitzgerald, first name Ella:

"Raised in Yonkers, won prize at Apollo Theater amateur night. In 1935 made professional debut with Tiny Bradshaw's band at Harlem Opera House, then joined Chick Webb as featured singer, working at the Savoy Ballroom in New York. When Webb died Ella led the band for two years. Worked solo thereafter, promoted by impresario Norman Granz who became her manager. Gained international reputation for many tours during 60s and 70s.

Would you believe this 76-year old jazz singer won her 13th Grammy only a few years ago? Her poor health prevents any more tours but otherwise she'd be plying her trade, and to quote Joe Williams, "she still can outswing any-

A close encounter with jazz great Ella Fitzgerald

body." The phrases used to proclaim her artistry are many: "purest tone," "pearlescent sense of rhythm," "musical inventiveness," "exceptional range," and on and on. Someone once said, "All the great singers, if they have continued over the decades, become different singers than they were; they get deeper and better, with a touching quality."

Those words surely apply to Ella Fitzgerald. Critic Leonard Feather said, "she's the definitive jazz singer. Although Granz got her to do commercially saleable albums of Cole Porter and Irving Berlin, with strings yet, she never sacrificed her validity as a jazz artist."

Ella occupies a special place in my memories. Anyone who knows me will know of my long standing love affair with jazz. I had three symphonic albums in my collection - they were supposed to broaden (improve?) my musical tastes, and I did play them and I did enjoy them; always I returned to my first love...that stuff with a beat!

Before WWII it was possible to bus to NYC over a weekend, sight-see, see a ball game, see a Broad-

way show, dine well, stay at the Sloane House YMCA for \$1.75 per, and return pooped Sunday night with change left from a \$20 bill! (Today, how many minutes does \$20 last??)

But my Big Apple nights were spent on 52nd Street, where you could hear Basie, Shearing, Art Tatum et al. Beer was 75¢ a bottle and they never asked you to drink up or move on. I'll never forget one night - maybe at Kelly's Stables or the Famous Door, not sure which - our subject, Miss Ella Fitzgerald walked in and sat down right next to me at the bar.

She was bubbling over, having just watched Sgt. Joe Friday in a Dragnet episode. She thought it was terrific and couldn't wait until the next one. Well, I wish I could tell you that I introduced myself as an out-of-town fan. Bought her a drink. Told her about Wilkes-Barre. Told her how much I enjoyed her music.

So help, I did none of those things. I couldn't. My tongue was stuck to the roof of my mouth. Before long she departed.

Ella, wherever you are, I'm sorry. But I didn't stop buying your albums.

The economic viewpoint

Stakeholders' Alliance tries to save jobs

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

The burning issue in Northeastern Pennsylvania from an economic development perspective is not how many jobs will be attracted to Northeastern Pennsylvania but how many jobs will be retained.

Job retention is a conscious strategy designed to enhance the ability of existing businesses and industries to maintain and expand economic opportunities wherever and whenever possible. The most crisis laden issue currently facing Northeastern Pennsylvania in recent time was the need to retain over 1,200 jobs threatened by the policy of Leslie Fay to eliminate these jobs and move them to Guatemala.

To combat this policy, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Stakeholders Alliance was organized. Consisting of over 70 individuals representing the community of Northeastern Pennsylvania including, but not limited to, government, business, clergy, labor, social service and related economic sector categories, the Stakeholders Alliance has been meeting weekly at St. Mary's Rectory in Wilkes-Barre to plan, organize, develop and implement ways to carry out its primary mission of complete job retention of all Leslie Fay employment in the region. It is a regional issue since Leslie Fay has manufacturing facilities in three Northeastern Pennsylvania counties including Luzerne, Lackawanna and Schuylkill. In still other countries, contract work between Leslie Fay and another firm is carried out, and these jobs may be and, in some cases, were at risk.

A special study to demonstrate the social and economic impact of the potential job losses in Northeastern Pennsylvania was completed by the Midwest Center for Labor Research, a Chicago-based organization. The organization issued a 22 page document, the summary of which suggested the following impact would occur if

over 1,200 direct jobs were lost.

—Loss of 3,024 workers including direct and ripple effects

—Total cost to government would be \$26.6 million

—Two years after the layoffs, dislocated workers will earn 74.3 percent of their former incomes

—Total tax loss of \$14.7 million

—Increased cost of social safety net programs would equal \$11.9 million

—440 people would still be unemployed after two years

—A variety of risk factors such as physical and emotional diseases, stress, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks, depression, etc. would occur as well as social pathologies such as crime, suicide, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse.

A Congressional hearing was held in the region on June 7th by the US House Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor. Five members of Congress were present, led by Congressman Paul E. Kanjorski, of the 11th Congressional District and Congressman Ron Klink of Pennsylvania who chairs the Subcommittee. Taking testimony from 12 individuals representing government, labor, the not-for-profit community, economic development and the clergy, the testimony ran for three and a half hours.

The result of the testimony clearly showed the shocking impact which the loss of these jobs would have on the Northeastern Pennsylvania regional community as well as the extremely difficult conditions which exist in other countries such as Guatemala and Honduras where workers carry out the production of women's clothing for Leslie Fay.

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Stakeholders Alliance presented testimony, submitting for the record the entire Midwest Center for Labor Research report along with information on the specific impact these job losses

would have on the general economy of the region as well as a series of recommendations which are designed to help alleviate this type of problem in the future. Among the general economic impacts which relate to the job losses are the following:

—Set back the regional economic development program significantly, probably years.

—Cause severe disruption to the human service delivery system in light of the vast number of individuals who would require assistance.

—Add many unemployed people to an already high employment rate of 7.8% (as of April, 1994), with the unlikelihood of finding jobs for high age individuals (the average age of a Leslie Fay employee was 47).

—Cause the region to add a number of empty buildings to its stock of buildings which is already high.

—Further depress the economy of a region during a period of time which is uncertain and unstable.

In summary, the Stakeholders Alliance believed that every conceivable step should be taken to enable these jobs to remain in Northeastern Pennsylvania. If not, the human toll would be severe as the average age of Leslie Fay employees is 47 and many have devoted their entire careers to Leslie Fay. Many will be unable to secure new employment in light of the current economic conditions facing Northeastern Pennsylvania. The support of the regional community and its leaders and citizens has been sought by the Northeastern Pennsylvania Stakeholders Alliance.

The final result was the conclusion of an agreement between company management and the union for a new three-year contract, saving well over half the jobs originally threatened. The Stakeholders Alliance hopes that full community support was a significant factor in concluding the agreement.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Sept. 14, 1934 EMPLOYMENT IN BORO IS IN GOOD SHAPE

Dallas Borough has less unemployment than any other borough or city in Luzerne County with one exception. That is the conclusion drawn from the 12 page report which the Department of Research and Statistics of the Pennsylvania Emergency Relief Board released this week.

Announcement was made this week that Dr. Charles Perkins of Kingston Township will become associated with Dr. G.L. Howell of Trucksville in the practice of medicine and X-ray work.

You could get - Chuckpot roast, 19¢ lb.; smoked shoulders, picnic style, 17¢ lb.; small mackerel, 3 lbs. 25¢; soup beans, 4 lbs. 15¢; onions, 4 lbs., 10¢.

50 Years Ago - Sept. 8, 1944 COLLEGE SEES A RECORD ENROLLMENT

College Misericordia will start the fall term September 10 with the largest enrollment in its 21 year history. In order to accommodate an increasing number of boarding students, College authorities have made arrangements to house 20 students and two nuns in the former Bauer home on Machell Ave. and Spring Street in Dallas. Until such time as the new Gate of Heaven Parish starts construction, the property will be known as Misericordia Villa.

Miss June Owens has been employed to teach senior high school mathematics at Lehman High School and will start her duties in about five or six weeks after she completed her master's work at Bucknell University.

"In Old Chicago" with Alice Faye, Tyrone Power and Don Ameche now playing at Shaver Theatre.

40 Years Ago - Sept. 10, 1954 TEACHER REQUESTS OVERTIME PAY

The question of what constitutes a teacher's working day arose at Dallas-Franklin Joint School Board. A letter from one of the teachers requesting additional pay for work outside the regular school day was presented to the directors for consideration. Whether coaching football, directing the band, selling tickets was a normal teacher activity or should be considered as extra work for which a teacher receives extra income would be discussed.

Enrollment of Dallas Borough-Kingston Township joint schools announced by James Martin at the school board meeting is 1,102 on opening day as contrasted with last year's 1,069.

30 Years Ago - Sept. 10, 1964 DALLAS CONSIDERS COLLEGE COURSES

Dallas School Board meeting approved the offering of college subjects to high school students at Saturday sessions. College instructors will be approached to teach classes or permission obtained for high school faculty members certified in essential subjects to help out in the new program. Those eligible to participate will be determined by the guidance instructor and senior high school principal.

Lake-Lehman's banner enrollment this fall, necessitates, hiring another first grade teacher, reported supervising principal Lester B. Squire, Tuesday evening to members of the joint board.

A brand new \$25,000 building will be constructed on Foster Street, behind the new post office site by Dallas Chapter 396, Order of the Eastern Star as a meeting hall. Ground will be broken shortly.

20 Years Ago - Sept. 12, 1974 AREA DRUG BUSTS NET 12 DEALERS

District Magistrate Leonard Harveys' Dallas office was a busy place the latter part of last week. The Magistrate conducted preliminary hearings for 12 individuals most of whom were swept up in the latest State Police drug raids. Biggest catch was Wallace "The Governor" Hughes an alleged Wilkes-Barre heroin dealer charged with selling 16 bags of heroin to undercover State Police narcotics agents.

From all reports this year's Fall Fair was bigger and better than ever. It is still too early to determine exactly how much money was earned for the new medical facility, but total gross on the grounds (including refreshment stands, gate admissions and sale of space to commercial exhibits) will run slightly higher than last year.

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No one covers local news like The Post