

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### School directors deserve our support

The Dallas and Lake-Lehman school boards have just elected new officers for 1995, making this a good time to thank all school board members for their faithful service over the past year.

Given today's harsh judgement of people in public service — especially elected officials — it is a wonder anyone wants to serve in these positions. They surely don't do it for the money, which ranges from non-existent to minimal. Only the most desperate for attention could be drawn by the prospect of gaining notoriety, which takes the form of infamy far more often than acclaim. So, in this age of national cynicism, just what drives an individual to sacrifice free evenings and much more to sit in a school board director's seat?

It's safe to say that in most cases a prime motivator is true concern for the quality of education in our schools. While that high calling may sometimes be mixed with baser aims, it's seldom is obscured, but if that happens, it's easy to spot.

Both boards have felt growing pressure from taxpayer groups in recent years, and a few board members owe their seats to support from those groups. The stated aims of some taxpayer association members don't go much beyond holding down or even reducing taxes, but that is no reason to assume candidates who sprung from that camp don't support good education. It's a safe bet that once elected, they learned the lesson all new officials apprehend; that issues are more complex than they seemed from the outside, and each action causes a reaction. They also discover that our school boards, administration and teaching staffs are largely populated by responsible individuals who are trying hard to do the best for our children.

We offer our hearty congratulations and good wishes to all who serve on school boards, and hope they are able to maintain their commitment to improving already good schools. Their service combined with the work of concerned parents, teachers and administrators is our best assurance of a brighter future, molded largely by the young people who are the focus of their efforts.

### 'Special purpose' taxes create mistrust

Special purpose taxes are the dirty little secret of municipalities which have used up other sources of funding. They may be necessary to provide for public services, but their nature creates suspicion that erodes confidence in government.

The assessments, which are allowed as long as the revenue is dedicated to a specific purpose, let townships tax above the statutory limit of 14 mills. Lehman and Jackson are two local townships that have adopted special purpose taxes in order to meet their financial needs. Both are largely rural communities which lack any substantial commercial base as a significant source of funding. They also host substantial tax-exempt properties — the prison in Jackson Township and Penn State Wilkes-Barre in Lehman. Those circumstances make it understandable they would need higher tax rates than the allowable limit.

Still, these so-called special purpose taxes give the impression that any township using them has failed to properly balance revenue and expense, an impression that probably isn't fair. And the laundry list of items that can be financed by special assessments, from recreation to street lights to new municipal buildings, means they aren't really special at all.

Walter Glogowski, chairman of the Jackson Township supervisors, blames the need for special taxes there on predecessors who didn't properly maintain the roads. But three-fourths of the assessment will go to pay loans on the new township building which has proven to be a burden of the first order. Fortunately, those taxes can last only as long as the loans.

Other than an unwise investment in that building, there's no reason to suspect residents of either township are paying for anything they don't need or deserve. It hasn't helped that county politicians, quaking in fear of retribution at the polls, have refused for 30 years the prudent measure of re-assessing all property.

Government at all levels ought to dispense with artificial devices that add to citizens' mistrust. A regular re-assessment of property combined with prudent financial management is greatly preferable to loopholes large enough to drive a truck through.

### 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.



A trio of toy soldiers took the stage during the Christmas play at Gate of Heaven School last Sunday. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

### Reporter's notebook



Grace R. Dove

The science fiction short story anthologies *Dangerous Visions*, *More Dangerous Visions* and *Again, Dangerous Visions*, edited by Harlan Ellison, painted a very disturbing picture of the future.

After reading the following dangerous visions of the present, it was difficult for me to be anything but cynical of the "Peace on earth, etc." season, no matter how hard I tried.

All I want for Christmas is a Klingon disruptor, a couple of warheads and a Romulan cloaking device.

• For sale (cheap): one atomic bomb factory.

A Pocatello, Idaho, used car/scrap metals dealer recently purchased a collection of devices, which, when assembled, will convert uranium to weapons-grade plutonium.

He was even able to get the blueprints and instructions — all for less than \$200,000, or about a penny on the dollar.

Mind you, this was no high school chemistry set. This setup is said to be more sophisticated than anything that North Korea has.

The fumets hit the fan only after a British firm whom he had approached as a potential purchaser blew the whistle to the U.S. government, who now wants the contraption back.

What other little goodies has our government quietly sold to private dealers, who can then

### All I want for Christmas is a Klingon disruptor

funnel the right stuff to any maniacal despot with visions of conquering the world?

• Anyone see a couple of missiles?

According to a recent national news program, the Department of Defense has announced that it can't find "some" missiles originally sent to the Persian Gulf in 1991.

The Pentagon's conception of "some" seems to be possibly several hundred, but it isn't really sure of the count. It keeps track of its missiles by serial number and by a physical inventory — neither of which are accurate, it says.

The Pentagon is presently downplaying its "worldwide alert" for the missing missiles until "all have been accounted for," probably right after they explode.

I wonder how many stray missiles have fallen into the wrong hands — if anyone possessing missiles can be said to have the "right" hands.

• Fully restored WW II Jeep w/ many extras

My husband found this gem in a recent auto sales magazine. One of the jeep's "many extras" is a working .50 caliber machine gun — exactly what I need for those late night cruises through the beautiful Back Mountain.

• Mail-order mayhem

In the course of a work week, a lot of mail crosses my desk. Most is routine — press releases, exchange newspapers and catalogues hawking a variety of strange or useful items.

Recently I received a copy of the *Urban Combat Catalogue* from Delta Press, Ltd., offering a fascinating array of manuals and instruction books to fit any interest:

"The Anarchist's Cookbook" is a "how to" book for making weapons, explosives, surveillance elec-

tronics and drugs.

Other nifty manuals explain the fine art of making claymore mines, illegal gun silencers, hand grenades, land mines, boobytraps, assassination devices, improvised weapons and flamethrowers ("legal and easy to build, operate and maintain.")

Not alarmed yet? Consider these topics:

"How to get anything on anyone" (several of my relatives would love this one!)

"U.S. Army counterterrorism manual." You have to know how to be a terrorist before you can counter one.

"How to hide anything." No elephant jokes, please.

"Sniper training manual." The perfect gift for my dad, in his epic battles with the armadillos who are wantonly destroying his lawn.

"Hard-core poaching." If you're still using a .22 with a scope and sub-velocity ammo, you're a real wuss.

"How to convert legal firearms to full-automatic weapons." Useful, I suppose, for snipers, hardcore poachers and ex-wuss wannabes.

And my favorite, "Ragnar's Guide to the Home and Recreational Use of High Explosives." Just what I need for Christmas, to go with my standard home arsenal, Klingon disruptor and WW II jeep equipped with a working machine gun.

When lost missiles, atomic bomb factories and detailed instructions for making just about any weapon one's little heart desires are so easily available, the recent passage of federal gun control legislation seems ludicrous.

Why bother controlling weapons at all when people can make their own?

### As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Here's a clip and saver — a gift suggestion for your favorite pupil. It's a tool to avoid misspellings and it's called a dictionary. James Kilpatrick said spelling is a losing art, not yet lost, but that too many errors constantly crop up in too many newspapers. He explains, "We must cultivate a sense of uncertainty, a feeling that a given word in our copy just doesn't look right. With that instinct and a good dictionary, writers are on the way to glory." And, I add, students to better grades!

I've had dictionaries at my elbow all my life, because I do not trust my memory. All sizes, all kinds. I even have a little beauty measuring only 4x6", the Webster "Handy" (illustrated!) printed in 1877. It is fascinating. A flyleaf

### Give a lasting holiday gift

advertises "Spencerian Steel Pens" in "12 numbers suited to every style of writing. They are THE BEST in the essential qualities of Durability, Evenness of Point and Workmanship. Samples of all the numbers for trial, by mail, on receipt of TEN CENTS." Iverson, Blakeman & Co., 755 Broadway, New York.

A preface in this little gem reads, "The words of the vocabulary have been selected with great care, so as to present as useful a list as possible. They are printed in a prominent black type which will readily catch the eye. Great pains have been taken to express the meanings in the simplest language. Though necessarily brief, they are clear and precise." Good copy?

But I am sure you'll want something a little more modern for your gift giving. The Wilson Bulletin, a library publication, says a dictionary is something a student needs badly, will always use, and probably shy away from buying themselves. Some cautions: "Webster" in a title does not automatically mean what you think. It is not a trademark, nor is it copyrighted. Thus it can, and often is, used by any publisher.

Some of our best — and worst — dictionaries bear the name Webster. But you won't go wrong either with any of these names — Doubleday, Houghton-Mifflin, Merriam-Webster, Oxford, Random House or Simon & Schuster. Don't buy by mail...look at it first. Then, look up some words and see if the definitions are complete and clear. Does it have modern words like "glasnost" or "contra"?

Don't overbuy. Normally one with 100,000 to 150,000 entries will suffice. The best retail between \$15 and \$20, discounted. If you must pay more, pay it.

If your recipient has a CD-ROM attached to his or her computer, there is a Random House Unabridged on a compact disk for \$100. Someday it is predicted all college-size dictionaries will come with a CD-ROM insert.

At any rate, your student can now avoid things like the ad which called for a reporter to take a "test of grammar." And the greenhouse which advertised that a "thoughtful child could sent Mom an 'Impatient Basket' or some 'Creeping Flocks.' Or the farming newsletter which warned, "When using a kerosene heater, be sure to open a window."

### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1934 BORO GRIDDERS LOSE FRIENDLY GAME

Literary Digest paid tribute to Dr. L.L. Sprague, president of Wyoming Seminary to be the oldest secondary school administrator. He had taught continuously for 73 years; is completing his 52nd year as Wyoming Seminary president; and 68th year as a member of its faculty.

Dallas Borough High School's football team was defeated 6-0, by a team made up of former school stars and other local athletes. The game was a benefit by friends of Clarence LaBarr.

You could get - Turkeys 32¢ lb.; tub butter, 3 lbs. 95¢; sugar, 10 lbs., 50¢; Lucky Strike gift wrapped carton cigarettes, \$1.20.

#### 50 Years Ago - Dec. 15, 1944 SHAVERTOWN CHURCH BURNS MORTGAGE

The Post is indebted to the Standard Oil Co. of Pennsylvania for an advance copy of its newest map-Esso War Map III, which is just now coming off the press. Printed in six colors, the map covers in detail the Pacific Theatre of War, everything from Calcutta to the Solomons, and from Darwin to Vladivostok. There is a special map of Japan and adjoining Korea and Manchuria, showing hundreds of probable bombing objectives.

The Shavertown Methodist Church will burn its mortgage at a ceremony at the 11 a.m. service Sunday. Bishop Ernest G. Richardson who spoke at the dedication of the church will preach the sermon. Adult and girls' choirs will sing. The special services conclude a concentrated effort on the part of pastor and congregation of 460 members to clear off the mortgage of \$14,563 contracted in 1928.

#### 40 Years Ago - Dec. 17, 1954 CARPENTER DIES IN ACCIDENT IN KOREA

Dallas-Franklin High School graduates of 1951 will present a bronze memorial plaque to the high school in memory of William Edgar Carpenter III. William was injured in a traffic accident in Korea in July, dying of a fractured skull, when he had only three months left to serve of a tour of duty overseas with the Marine Corps. He was expecting to be home for Christmas.

Tower chimes have been presented to Alderson Methodist Church by Mrs. Iris Kitchen Smith and Walter Kitchen in memory of their parents and grandparents. They will be heard weekdays at noon and 6 p.m. and Sunday at 10:15, 11:15 a.m. and at 6 p.m.

Now playing "Betrayed" with Clark Gable and Lana Turner at the Himmler Theatre.

#### 30 Years Ago - Dec. 17, 1965 FLOOD DEDICATES NEW POST OFFICE

"A beautiful new facility in this splendid location" was the way Congressman Daniel J. Flood put it at the Dallas post office groundbreaking ceremony. There was some danger, Flood said, of the Dallas post office losing its identity and becoming part of the Wilkes-Barre Post Office. Every effort was made to keep Dallas's name intact. "Thank goodness we were able to do it," he observed.

Top news at the Back Mountain Library board meeting was acceptance of the old Dallas Depot building, a gift from Raymon Hedden. A prospective buyer is already negotiating but no firm sale has yet been announced. The sturdy frame structure will be moved from the site of the projected Dallas Post Office.

Santa will arrive in Dallas Saturday and will tour the area on the Dallas fire truck. The retinue will arrive at the American Legion Home in time for the Post Christmas party. Santa Claus will distribute stockings and prizes.

#### 20 Years Ago - Dec. 19, 1974 UTILITY PRICES TO INCREASE NEXT YEAR

Back Mountain residents can look forward to the bleak prospect of healthy increases in the cost of utilities early in the new year. PG&W, U.G.I. and DAMA have all announced plans for substantial rate increases which will hit Back Mountain residents in the first quarter of next year.

Mr. and Mrs. Loren D. Cragle will observe their golden anniversary December 24. They are the parents of three children, two of whom are living; three grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

You could get - Turkeys, 59¢ lb.; London Broil, \$1.69 lb.; Maxwell House 2 lb. can, \$1.79; fruit cocktail 30 oz. can, 59¢; Carnival ice cream, 1/2 gal. 85¢.

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