

# The Dallas Post

## EDITORIALS

### Public broadcasting helps build high cultural standards

Opponents of public broadcasting say it's an unnecessary luxury, the plaything of the "elite," and shouldn't receive any government funds. Supporters say public television and radio are beacons of light in an otherwise dreary electronic landscape, and without them millions of children and adults would never be exposed to anything more uplifting than Roseanne. Who's right? The answer requires that we look at both dollars and sense.

New Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich opened the debate by saying he wanted to "zero out" public broadcasting. Many observers took this to mean his goal was to eliminate the service, although he now says his comments were misunderstood. That may be true, but it's clear there are some people in Washington and elsewhere who would be delighted by the demise of this medium, which they find intolerably liberal.

It is ironic that Gingrich, a professor of history, finds public broadcasting so distasteful. He seems to suffer from the delusion that open-mindedness is tantamount to licentiousness and therefore dangerous to the republic. That is in itself a far more threatening outlook than anything broadcast on the public airwaves. If we become unwilling even to allow the airing of comment with which we disagree, we will lose the essence of our freedom, as stated clearly in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

Gingrich and others say public broadcasting is a toy for the "elite," who don't need taxpayer money to amuse themselves. But he knows full well the importance to a society of people who work to create and preserve institutions that are judged by standards other than a popularity contest. In an interview last month, he pointed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York as an example of an establishment worthy of support, as though it somehow was built and maintained by hourly laborers. Contrary to the currently popular refrain, the most-respected civilizations through history have owed a good part of their success to governments that encouraged cultural pursuits, in the belief that exposing their populace to better things would set an example of excellence.

That leaves the money argument. The entire federal contribution to public broadcasting amounts to a bit over \$1 per year per citizen, so eliminating those funds would have no noticeable effect on either individuals or the budget deficit. But, you say, every dollar counts, and exempting public broadcasting while cutting back other programs wouldn't be fair. That's a reasonable argument, if there's a reasonable effort to address our nation's budget problems. Since tax cutting is currently the vogue, though, it's quite clear there is no reason for supporters of public radio and television to lay their necks on the chopping block.

If Congress ever makes a real effort to get spending under control, public broadcasting shouldn't be passed over. By the same token, as long as the government supports tobacco growing and other pursuits that benefit a minority of citizens — or harm more than they help — public broadcasting should demand at least equal treatment.

Public television and radio aren't perfect, but they are worthy of support. Most comes from individual donors, who pay taxes and contribute as "members." And most aren't in the "elite," but rather are in that great middle-class politicians say they care about. They give because they truly appreciate the range and quality of programs that — contrary to what opponents say — will never appear on commercial stations. And don't forget that commercial stations aren't really free; you are paying the cost of advertising in the products you buy every week.

Public broadcasting viewers and listeners surely should demand high standards and efficiency, just as they expect from business and government. There appears to be some potential for savings that have been overlooked, and that should be investigated. It also would be helpful if all the people who listen and watch would contribute, not just the loyal minority who now provide the majority of funding.

In the end, though, support for public broadcasting is a question of principle, not of economics. If our culture becomes one in which only the most popular survives, we're doomed to continuous decline, as mindlessness replaces creativity, boorishness steps in where civility may no longer tread. Support for public broadcasting, and the arts which make up so much of its programming, is one indicator that we're not yet ready to surrender to mediocrity.



### Back Mountain Daffodil Days co-ordinators

Daffodil Days, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, will be held March 20-24 to help raise \$101,000 to fund local programs for cancer research, education and patient services. A bunch of 10 daffodils cost \$5.00. Pre-orders will be taken until March 10. Daffodil Days T-shirts, sweatshirts and sweatpants are also available at the American Cancer Society's office. T-shirts for \$10, and sweatshirts and sweatpants for \$15. For more information or to place an order, call the American Cancer Society at 825-7763. Coordinating Daffodil Days in the Back Mountain are Sue Wallace and Diana Kovacs, Back Mountain Committee, Barbara Giordano, Medical Auxiliary Committee and Karolina Cimochowski, Back Mountain Committee.

### One from the books



Ken Books

*(Editor's note: Ken Books is indisposed so the eminent adviser George has agreed to take his place. Books's comments will return as soon as he gets out of jail.)*

#### Dear George:

What's with all these talk shows on the radio? The other day, I heard a guy so fat you'd need a crane to get him out of his seat tell people they need to learn to show restraint. Then I heard a convicted felon spouting off about the need for law and order. That night, I heard some guy brag he's not a right-wing whacko, then interview a bozo who believes all our problems can be solved if men will only start wearing skirts.

What's going on? Have the clowns taken over the circus?

#### Radio inactive

#### Dear In:

That's a good question, one which I address at length each day on my syndicated radio program, "Sit Down and Shut Up." Tune in today to your clearest Mexican outlaw station and give it a listen.

#### Dear George:

I started a business last spring which has made a small profit, but I am still paying off my equipment. How does one go about depreciating goods for a tax deduction?

#### Infernal Revenuer

#### Dear Rev:

If you were in front of me, I'd paste you one in the chops. It's people like you that cost taxpayers money every year with your schemes to defraud the government. Remember, the money you earn belongs to our government

### Gotta problem? George has answers

to do with as it pleases.

You're scum. If you'd included your address with your smarmy little cheat note, I'd sic the cops - or my ex-wife - on you.

#### Dear George:

In July, my partner and I robbed the local bank and shot two tellers. We got away with \$11,000, but during the getaway the car we had stolen got a flat tire. Luckily, we got away when we blew up a bridge and kept the cops on the other side.

Should we report our \$11,000 to the IRS and can we deduct the cost of the tire and the TNT?

#### Rocco and Icepick

#### Dear R and I:

You only have to pay taxes on money earned legitimately. Instead of taking the deduction on the tire and TNT, why not simply steal a new car? Of course, you're still out the cost of the explosive, but that's the price of doing business these days.

If I were you, I wouldn't even file a return.

#### Dear George:

My wife and I ate at a fancy restaurant the other night, and the pate de foie gras was grainy, the lobster thermidor was tepid and the wine was from 1993 rather than 1992.

The total bill was \$260, and I left a \$40 tip. My wife said I shouldn't have tipped at all because the food wasn't good, but I told her I couldn't penalize a waiter for the incompetence of a chef.

#### What do you think?

#### Croesus

#### Dear Cro:

The way I figure it, that \$300 you spent would have bought me lunches for two months. The \$40 tip you left would have bought my dinners for two weeks.

Don't you think you're going overboard here? I recommend my favorite restaurant, where I've always been satisfied and never had to overpay. You'll recognize it by the golden arches.

And if you want wine with your

meal, I'll sell you a jar from my private collection - 1992 vintage - for a buck.

#### Dear George:

Last year, my wife left me, running off with my best friend and business partner, who had embezzled all the cash from our business. That forced me into bankruptcy and, eventually, debtors' prison.

When I got out of jail, I learned I had tuberculosis. I went into a sanitarium for three months, came out and was run over by a truck. While I was recovering in the hospital, I learned I had cancer.

My daughter, who ran away from home just before my wife left, wrote me from Colorado, where she has joined a cult that worships O.J. Simpson. She told me she can't see me again because I'm Satan.

After I recovered from being run over, I bought a house near the hospital so I could be nearby for my chemotherapy. As I started my car to go to the insurance company to pay for fire insurance, my car burst into flame, setting the garage and then the house on fire. I was badly burned in the accident.

I'm at the end of my rope. I don't know how much more of this crap I can take.

#### I'm a Loser

#### Dear Loser:

Look, pal, I don't care how bad things seem to you - although I must say you strike me as a real whiner. Nothing can excuse use of such vulgar language. What would you say if I told your mother how you talk when you write the newspaper?

Someone should wash your mouth out with soap.

*Desperate? Really desperate? Really, really, really, REALLY desperate? George can help with your problems, or at least make you a laughing stock for writing in the first place. Just get in touch with him in care of this newspaper. Enclose \$20. Cash, please.*

### Only yesterday

#### 60 Years Ago - Feb. 15, 1935 PUBLIC WORKS OKAYS PAVING OF RIDGE ST.

The Wilkes-Barre unit of the State's Public Works Administration branch has approved Dallas Borough's request for funds to pave Ridge Street. Formal approval at Harrisburg and favorable weather are needed to start the job.

Highways throughout this section were dangerous to travel yesterday as a result of the cold rain which, freezing almost as soon as it fell, coated roads. A number of minor accidents were reported.

You could get - Hamburg, 2 lbs., 27¢; pork loins up to 4 lbs., 19¢ lb.; onions, 6 lbs., 19¢; lettuce, 2 hds, 17¢; 2 tall cans Del Monte Fruit Salad, 37¢.

#### 50 Years Ago - Feb. 9, 1945 FLAMES DESTROY CRANE'S BARN

A large hay and storage barn on the farm of Burdett Crane, formerly the Fred Anderson place on Harris Hill Road, was completely destroyed by fire about 8 a.m. Wednesday, when flames from a back-firing motor car are believed to have ignited hay and straw on the barn floor.

Winner of the Silver Star for gallantry in action T/Sgt. Theodore Scouten, 24, a machine gunner with the 79th Infantry Division, died in France Jan. 12, one day after being seriously wounded in action. A brother, Welford Scouten of Noxen has been missing in action in Luxembourg since Dec. 20.

#### 40 Years Ago - Feb. 11, 1955 CUNDIFF GETS ODD AIR FORCE NUMBER

The Board of Directors of the Sordoni Construction Co., at their annual meeting elected Andrew J. Sordoni, Jr., president of the corporation succeeding his father to that position. At the same meeting Sordoni Sr., was elected Chairman of the board.

What happened to Kyle Cundiff is as improbable as drawing an Irish Sweepstakes winner. He enlisted in the Air Force and guess what his serial number turns out to be? AF 12345678, in perfect sequence. It couldn't happen in a million years.

"White Christmas" with Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney, now playing at Himmler Theatre.

#### 30 Years Ago - Feb. 11, 1965 ZIP CODES TO SPEED MAIL DELIVERY

Dan Shaver's former theater building on Main Street, Shavertown, will soon be the new site of a new Back Mountain business enterprise. The 33x120 foot building erected in 1938 was a favorite entertainment spot with the children and their parents until about 10 years ago when the theater was closed.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Foss, Sweet Valley, celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary February 5. They are the parents of two daughters and have six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Postmaster Ed Buckley has received word from Postmaster General John A. Gronouski in Washington D.C. that a big "break-through" has now been made on electronic machines to "read" ZIP-CODED addresses of mail. Postmaster General said he expects to begin installing these sophisticated new machines in major post offices starting in about a year.

#### 20 Years Ago - Feb. 13, 1975 FLU HITS AREA HARD

High absenteeism is spreading throughout area businesses and schools with the spell of flu continuing to harrass the area. As of Tuesday, flu cases remained high, it appeared an end to the near-epidemic may be in sight.

James O. Brokenshire, assistant to the superintendent, of Dallas Area School District will soon become the superintendent of the Western Wayne School District which covers the area north of Lake Wallenpaupack to Lake Ariel. He will be replacing John Lozo in a vacancy left since January by Lozo's retirement.

Feasibility of funding and constructing a new municipal building for Lake Township was discussed. Township Coordinator Mrs. Eisenhower called on the supervisors to set guidelines for the building. In response the supervisors decided on a 35x50 building which will be used for meetings, voting and equipment storage. The township already owns 13.7 acres of land, a portion which could be used for the building.

### Library news

## Under construction - Legos visit library

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library is featuring a collection of 'Technique Lego' items in the display case. These are borrowed from T.J. Amico of Trucksville. T.J. is 13 years old and in 8th grade at Dallas Middle School. He started with legos when he was three and enjoyed playing with them. Eventually, he became interested in advanced 'Techniques' legos. He now has a 10 year collection and the 'Techniques' legos have working gears and moveable parts.

Included in the display are a large car in center state, which is one of the largest T.J. has completed; a motorcycle; a hovercraft tractor trailer, pulling Santa Claus and his two helpers; a medieval castle; airplanes, a pony; a snowmobile; a paddy wagon; boats, space ships and a camper. These Technic lego kits come with instructions and all the parts. T.J.

said it takes him about 40 minutes to assemble one of these kits. These made a very interesting and exciting display and the boys and girls are enjoying them immensely. They will be at the library until March 1.

The library Valentine project is in full swing. We have sold 94 to date, which nets the library \$94.00. The object is to buy a heart and put a message on the heart and then we hang it in the lobby of the library. The donation of \$1.00 for each heart sold will benefit the library and make possible some special purchases which the library is in need of.

New books at the library: Large Print Books: "Pearl Moon" by Katherine Stone is the story of Maylene who is the architect of Hong Kong's most luxurious hotel, the Jade Palace. Her desire for rugged Texan Sam Coulter, the hotel's builder, is potent and addictive. But a secret stands

between the two. Two beautiful women collide in unexpected ways.

"Valentine" by Jane Feather begins when a quirk of fate has made Sylvester Gilbraith the heir of his sworn enemy, the earl of Stoneridge. But there's a catch: to claim his inheritance he has to marry one of the earl's four granddaughters. He has no choice but to comply with the terms of the will, but he finds the one who intrigues him is not interested in him.

"Olivia" or, The weight of the Past, by Judith Rossner is a wonderful novel of family, love—and food. Life looks good for Caroline Ferrante. She is a charismatic cooking teacher who has just been taped for her own television cooking show. The relationship with her upstairs neighbor - a doctor - is thriving except her past seems to undermine her future.

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