

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Excerpts from a campaign speech delivered in Wilkes-Barre by Gov. Tom Ridge, August 12, 1998.

My fellow Pennsylvanians, it is truly a great pleasure to speak to the residents of Luzerne County. As I ask for your support of my re-election campaign, I find this county to be one of the shining lights in the Commonwealth, a place where people ask little of their government other than to be left alone, a place that demonstrates the kind of fiscal restraint I have encouraged, a place where young and old alike are content with their standing in life, not whining for self-improvement.

As I have traveled the state these past four years, I have been struck by the insecurity that seems to dwell in so much of our Commonwealth. Everywhere there are political leaders and ordinary citizens clamoring for change and growth. It's as if they are afraid the next century, which is at our doorstep, will pass them by. How anxious they appear to be, fearful that their children won't keep up with progress or will be unprepared to compete for admission to the best schools or employment with the best companies. I see little of that here, in what may be the part of Pennsylvania least concerned about the future.

The greatest example of this county's coal-solid values, of course, was the momentous election in 1995, when the voters turned down a \$20 million gift from the Commonwealth that could have been used to build an arena and convention center. True to your parsimonious nature, you chose to reject this attempt by government to drown your county in debt. With leadership from a pestilential radio host and other masochists, you saw through the false cloak of prosperity cast before you, and saved each county taxpayer a potential expense of five or ten dollars per year. Some people would say that's chump change, but you didn't let such derogatory comments deter you.

Other counties wouldn't have shown such remarkable self control. Given the chance to risk the cost of a couple of McDonald's meals a year in order to save the time and expense of driving to distant cities for the Ice Capades, the circus or a top-flight concert, most people would vote yes. Others would have chosen to throw away the cost of a six-pack on the very good chance that several thousand jobs would be created and their county would become a regional center of culture, sports and entertainment. But not you; more than half of Luzerne County's voters said no to bringing first-rate events to town, precisely because those few dollar bills in their pockets meant more than potential — but not guaranteed — benefit for their children and grandchildren. You are a testament to the old adage, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush," and your county's present economic condition shows exactly what benefits accrue when risks are avoided.

I hope you are satisfied with the results of your cautious approach to things. As a conservative, I applaud you, because you have set an example for the rest of the state, an example of fiscal responsibility that is unequaled, and that has made it easier for me to say no to the hordes of local politicians who come to Harrisburg with their hands out. I say to them, "Look at Luzerne County. Look what they've accomplished without our help. You should be happy with what you have now, as they are, not hungry for improvement." Thank you for providing such a clear baseline with which to compare other counties.

With your permission, I'll close on a personal note. As some arena proponents correctly pointed out, your vote against the arena left \$20 million of your tax money available for other uses. Michele and I and our children want you to know that we have taken great pleasure in attending events at the new Erie County Arena, and will be forever grateful to you for helping to make it a reality. Thank you, and may God bless you.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Our 9-year-old daughter is beginning to take an interest in music, in different ways. She began playing the clarinet last year, and has stuck with it to the point of asking to take lessons through the summer. She also has begun to notice popular music, so I'm getting some sense of what kids listen to, at least what very young ones. Fortunately, in her case that doesn't include "head banger" heavy metal, at least yet. Actually, there are some pretty good solo and group artists out there right now. One of the best is Boyz II Men, which sounds a lot like the street-corner harmony groups of two or three decades ago. It's interesting how much of the music that's popular today is either recycled from the 60's and early 70's, or an imitation of that era. But it grates on my ears to hear The Beatles or Eric Clapton reduced to piped-in muzak while sitting in a restaurant.

The *New York Times Magazine* had an article last week about a new crop of federal courthouses that are striking for their architecture. I may disagree about whether we need all these buildings, but I support spending a few extra dollars to make public buildings attractive symbols of design. I think a nation that can't take pride in its public institutions would be lacking an essential element in a well-balanced outlook on life. One need only look to the former Soviet Union for the ultimate reflection of a society's esthetic bankruptcy. For the most part, the buildings that were featured Sunday were interesting and a great improvement over the boring boxes that we also built for too many years.



Honoring those who served

Firing squad members SPC Anthony Karpovich, SPC Ronald Bronsberg and SPC Edward Dudick prepared to fire a salvo during Jackson Township's Memorial Day service May 27.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Reporter's notebook



Grace R. Dove

Last weekend saw a major accomplishment in my life, taking a second place in the women's class in my first muzzleloader shoot.

(Okay, smarty — there were three women shooting. Two out of three isn't bad.)

My family and friends know of my great interest in firearms and shooting. I often brag that I inherited it from my grandmother, Alice VanKirk Richie, a feisty, petite redhead whose prowess with guns is a family legend which I know I'll never live up to.

Dad's and my favorite story about Grandma is about the time she blew the corner off the outhouse.

When Dad was growing up the family lived for a while in Fairchance, in the southwestern part of the state. Across the dirt road from their house was a creek bed which dried up in the summer.

Grandma loved to sit on the front porch with her .32 revolver and pop off the rattlesnakes as they came out to sun themselves on the rocks in the afternoon.

One day she noticed a stranger trying to steal the wheels from the family's Hudson, which was parked in the front yard. She started taking pot shots at him.

He took off towards the back yard, barely centimeters ahead of Grandma's bullets, finally taking cover behind the outhouse. Grandma used her last shot to clip off its corner. The guy got away, but the legend didn't.

I inherited that gun, a sweet little Iver Johnson hammerless which sits in my hand like it was made for it and still shoots accurately.

When Grandma, Granddad and the three boys moved to central New Jersey during the Depression, they lived for a while on the rural west end of North Plainfield near a dairy farm. Grandma often kept the kitchen window open a crack so she could stick her .22 single-shot rifle out and bag a rabbit or a pheasant for dinner.

(I have that rifle too. It made local history by being the first Parcel Post delivery ever made to Fairchance. Dad used it to earn his Boy Scout sharpshooter's badge.)

Dad and Granddad (his stepfather) often hunted the farmer's fields together.

"One day when we were out hunting, I was supposed to be kicking the brush to scare out game," Dad recalled. "I guess my stepfather didn't like the way I was doing it, because he started kicking it himself. He scared out a rabbit and it took off between us. When it got behind him, he turned, fired over his shoulder and nailed it with one shot. But he wasn't as good a shot as my Mom."

As a child I remember visiting

Sharpshooting, with not an outhouse in sight



WATCH OUT, GUYS! My left-handed style of shooting a right-handed muzzleloader is a bit unorthodox, but it works.

the boardwalk at Seaside Heights with Dad and Grandma, who always managed to find a duck shoot. I loved to watch them intently blasting away at their targets, neither willing to give up and let the other win.

So my family's honor — three generations of sharpshooters — was at stake last weekend at a small mountain man rendezvous and muzzleloader shoot in Silvara, way out in the boondocks near Laceyville.

Mountain men (and wimmin) are a strange breed. No one uses their proper name, choosing a "mountain man name" instead. Some they make up themselves, others they earn as the result of some grand escapade or colossal blunder.

For example, Short Fuse has one. Pale Face gets one when he has a hangover. Broken Toe did it. Smoke in his Face accidentally blew up a friend's gun which had a defective breech plug. Pack Ratt is one — he's the sutler (the guy who owns the trading post.)

I'm Amazing Grace. Guess why. While on rendezvous, many mountain people wear regalia of the late 1700's or mid 1800's and live in campsites using authentic pre-1860's equipment. Some stay in tipi's, but I won't go into that.

Instead of the .50 caliber CVA flintlock I normally use for hunting, I had my new (used) .32 CAV percussion squirrel rifle. Because all my guns are right-handed and I shoot lefty, I tied a bandanna around my wrist to protect it from getting cut by flying percussion cap pieces.

Before shooting I had to make several adjustments on my gun, which I was barely accustomed to shooting. Although it was properly sighted in, I had to try out two different sizes of ball and patch to see which was most accurate.

It's surprising how something small like your shot and patch and even the wind can affect how well you shoot. But muzzleloader people are nice — they don't laugh at you if a breeze blows up and makes your bullet miss the target. It's happened too often to them.

They also follow strict safety rules, which nobody dares break, on the shooting range. The range marshal has the final say over everything and can even disqualify anyone whose equipment isn't pre-1860's traditional (no modern scopes allowed).

We shot two targets at 25 and 50 yards and one at 100 yards,

five shots per target. From where I stood, the large buffalo on the 100-yard range appeared to be about the size of a field mouse.

"The range is HOT!" the range marshal shouted, and for awhile it felt like a rerun of the American Revolution, with blue smoke rising in the air and the crack of gunfire echoing between the hills. My best target was a trapper with a cup on his head. I hit the top of the cup twice at 25 yards.

Between closing the range to post new targets and adjusting or loading guns, it took us most of the afternoon to shoot five targets.

Don't forget — these guns don't use regular ammo. Each carefully measured powder charge, patch and slug is loaded individually by hand. Percussion shooters also have to set a copper cap by the touch hole near the trigger before firing, while flintlock shooters must first check their guns' flints, then pour gunpowder in the pan.

You have to take frequent breaks to clean the barrel so shot doesn't get stuck halfway down. I've seen three guys sweat, swat and swear for 15 minutes trying to pull a slug from a clogged barrel.

Smoke in his Face once got a ramrod stuck halfway down the barrel while loading his flintlock. Thinking the ramrod would come out like an arrow if he shot the gun, he charged the pan and fired. The ramrod came out all right — in many tiny pieces.

During the shoot there's a steady stream of lighthearted banter, advice and swapping back and forth of tools and equipment. Shooters often take breaks for snacks or to rest their eyes. Old friends catch up on the latest news, while new friends get acquainted.

When I left Saturday night, I was in second place behind a lady named Kathy. She may have outshot me, but I did all six of my targets and she had only shot two at 25 yards.

Pack Ratt told me Tuesday that someone else shot in the women's class Sunday, but had come in last. Kathy came in first and I won a candle lantern for second place. Not bad for a first try.

If Grandma could see me now, she'd probably laugh herself silly and say, "Clean your glasses, snickelfritz, and keep on practicing."

Then she'd take my gun and blow away every single target on the range.

Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - June 1, 1935 FIRE DAMAGES KELLY COTTAGE AT LAKE

Thousands of dollars worth of state checks were distributed to local 4th class school districts this week to pay for transportation, additional teachers and other regular school functions: Dallas Township, \$3,358.90; Kingston Township, \$2,322; and Lake Twp. \$2,983.50.

A cottage owned by William Kelly at Worden Place, Harveys Lake was damaged last Saturday when a discarded cigarette thrown into a quantity of leaves on the lawn started a blaze.

You could get - Long Island ducklings, 21¢ lb.; rump roast, 33¢ lb.; strawberries, 2 qts. 25¢; evaporated milk, 6 tall cans, 39¢; Lifebuoy Soap, 3 cakes, 18¢.

50 Years Ago - June 8, 1945 JOE MONTE NAMED GENERAL'S COOK

Farmers expecting to need extra farm labor during the next few months are urged to register their needs immediately at the Emergency Farm Labor Office, Wilkes-Barre. Only by acting now can farmers hope to obtain a better selection of workers.

Sgt. Joe Monte, former executive chef of Irem Temple Country Club, is now personal cook for Lt. Gen. Robert Eichelberger, commanding the Eighth Army in the Philippines. Monte was awarded the Bronze Star for "meritorious achievement" in connection with military operations against the enemy in New Guinea and the Philippines.

Married - Marietta Emmanuel to Ernest Gay; Nancy Jeanne Metz to Edwin Carl Kelch; Agnes Marie Clark to Clarence Corby.

40 Years Ago - June 3, 1955 COPS WILL CRACK DOWN ON SPEEDERS

The Dallas Fiesta Committee at a kickoff dinner at Nothoff's, Harveys Lake, formulated plans for the annual Fiesta, which will be held June 29-30 on Gate of Heaven church grounds. Fiesta is a gala affair which opens each evening with a baked ham dinner. A refreshment stand, country store, doll and candy booths and many other wonderful attractions will be available.

The Kingston Township police will open an intensive campaign against speeders and traffic violators starting next Friday and continuing throughout the summer season. Speed traps will be set up on various roads and special watch will be set at stop signs and all traffic lights.

At a Library Auction planning committee meeting, Stefan Hellersperk announced that a bank of high ground in the rear of the auction grounds would be razed by a bulldozer to give more space for booths and spectators.

30 Years Ago - June 34, 1965 LAKETON POST OFFICE NOT FINISHED YET

American Asphalt Co. in Chase, is presently working on a solution to problems complained of by residents, pertaining to dust, sediment in the air and blasting shocks. The *Dallas Post* learned this week. Jackson Township supervisors met with Hillside-Chase Rd. residents and officials of the company, in several sessions to determine the gravity of the situation and to find out if the board could take legal action if necessary.

Work on the Harveys Lake post office, to be located at Laketon across from the beaches, has not yet begun. Ground was broken in November and equipment for a building which isn't there continues to be shipped in. The post office job was to be finished by March 27 of this year.

Sunday of Pentecost has a triple meaning for members of Trinity United Presbyterian Church, when the new edifice will be formally dedicated. Pentecost in 1962 became a church in fact, naming Rev. Andrew Pillarella pastor. Again, at Pentecost 1964 the congregation was recognized with a ground-breaking ceremony. Pentecost 1965 will go down in annals of the church as Day of Dedication, culminating with the organization, ground breaking, first service in the new edifice on Easter Sunday and laying of the cornerstone.

20 Years Ago - June 2, 1975 DALLAS BUDGET HAS 4-MILL INCREASE

John Sheehan, general chairman of the 1975 Back Mountain Memorial Library, has set July 11-13 as the dates for this year's sale and established the theme as "An Old Fashioned Auction."

The Dallas Post

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

Ronald A. Bartizek
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

