

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Stop signs could make Pioneer Ave. safer

New traffic signals along Route 309 may have unanticipated repercussions on other local roads, principally Pioneer Avenue. Every time traffic on the highway has been slowed by construction, some motorists get around the bottlenecks by taking Pioneer to and from work or shopping. Unfortunately, many of them don't bother to drive at an appropriate speed on that narrow road. The Dallas Borough and Kingston Township police departments are aware of the risks speeding cars pose, and their officers attempt to keep an eye on the most common trouble spots, but they can't be everywhere at once.

Now comes a sensible suggestion from someone who has seen his share of drivers racing to work past waiting or walking school children; install stop signs at some intersections to slow cars down. The idea makes sense to us. Ron Carey has been a crossing guard for more than a dozen years, and while he hasn't witnessed an accident, he's seen plenty of accidents waiting to happen. He thinks stop signs at Overbrook Avenue and Mt. Airy Road — and perhaps another near St. Therese's Church — could keep motorists closer to the posted 35 mph speed limit. But the authorities disagree.

In a comment reminiscent of one a few years ago, to the effect that traffic lights cause accidents, a PennDOT spokesman says stop signs could have "a negative or reverse impact on traffic safety." We disagree. A couple of stop signs, along with warning signs about pedestrians, would do only good things for safety along Pioneer. Most important, if motorists knew they would have to stop more often on Pioneer, they would be unlikely to use it to avoid the highway, which, for all its faults, has fewer spots where pedestrians stand or walk along it.

Offset offers good case for workmen's comp reform

Governor Tom Ridge couldn't have chosen a finer spot to make his point about the need for reforming the state's workmen's compensation insurance program than the one he picked last week. Offset Paperback is a prime example of the opportunities provided by skillfully managed companies, which can choose to locate their operations anywhere in the world.

Offset produces about 300 million paperback books a year in its Dallas plant — one-third of all the paperbacks sold in the United States. Its parent company, Bertelsmann A.G., is headquartered in Germany, and is one of the largest diversified media companies in the world.

Offset competes with two other book printers, located in New York and Tennessee. More important than where it does business, Offset has developed a workforce of 650 people in Dallas who are models of productivity and skill in a rapidly-changing global marketplace. Working together with its union, Offset managers have avoided needless confrontation to concentrate on the issues that will make jobs secure for everyone at the plant. One way they've done that is training, and a new separate training facility is ample evidence of their commitment.

What does all this have to do with workmen's comp? A lot, starting with the value of consistent reinforcement of safe work practices that is part of good training sessions. Companies that practice rigorous safety discipline are paying more than they should because of a lax and overly generous state program. Offset's experience defines the problem. When workmen's comp costs hit \$500,000 in 1989, management created a safety program that reduced time lost to accidents by 80 percent. Rates went down as well, to about \$220,000 in 1992. Now, the safety record remains intact, but last year's workmen's comp costs soared to \$700,000.

Gov. Ridge listed five principles for reform, and they all have merit. The most important may be to crack down hard on abuse and fraudulent claims, which probably exceed even the most generous estimate. Every dollar paid to an undeserving recipient raises the expense for honest, healthy workers. The cost doesn't show up as a deduction from your paycheck, but it's there, hidden in your employer's cost of doing business.

It would be a shame if a company like Offset, which does so many things well, was forced to leave Pennsylvania because of excessively high costs. But that could happen if conscientious employers continue to be overcharged for the errors of a poorly-constructed — if well-intentioned — program.

Do you agree? Disagree?

Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post, and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. We welcome your opinion on contemporary issues in the form of letters to the editor. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Please include 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.



Stone wall at Huntsville Golf Club, both awaiting spring. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Is Florida school conference really necessary

Editor,
Gov. Ridge has made cuts in or frozen some educational opportunities. This inherently means less money for the Dallas School District. In this climate, I would suggest a conference in Lake Buena Vista, Florida might be scrutinized quite closely. However, the Dallas school board solicitor, Atty. Ben Jones, has been given authorization to attend a conference in Florida at the cost of \$1,290. This conference will include information on special education and, according to the committee chairperson, Joe Kunc, "this will be money well spent."
I can recall this same individual standing in front of the Dallas school board, dramatically pointing his finger at us, while literally 1,000 plus citizens filled our auditorium, and asserting we must

oversee these tax dollars entrusted to us with the tenacity of a bulldog. Since we were challenged as to the economic necessity of a plethora of school board decisions by this individual, I felt it is appropriate that I question the economic value of some of his decisions.
Does Atty. Jones have to attend a conference in Lake Buena Vista, Florida to gain this information on special education? I humbly beg to differ:

- (1) Legal briefs are available quite readily.
- (2) The PSBA (PA School Boards Assn.), which is consulted in most litigations for advice, is a phone call away.
- (3) The NEA and PSEA gladly share information.
- (4) Local organizations such as the ARC are available.
- (5) The state Department of Education is a phone call away.
- (6) The L.I.U., which deals with special education and whose president sits on our school board, is located in Kingston.

If this conference is so critical, why isn't the local L.I.U. sending their solicitor, who could then disseminate this portentous material to all of the member districts at a cost savings to all districts?

I shall be interested in reading Atty. Jones's report when he returns from Lake Buena Vista, Florida. He will be so engrossed in these proceedings, he probably won't even have a chance to get tanned.

Clarence Michael
Dallas

Rejecting student teachers not professional

Editor:
The Dallas Teachers' Union's move last week to ban the King's College student teachers from Westmoreland School seems to be a paranoid reaction that is really meant to be directed to Gov. Ridge's attempts to pass a school voucher plan, and to articles like U.S. News & World Reports' Feb.

26, 1996 cover story, "Why Teachers Don't Teach - how teacher unions are wrecking our schools." Yes, teacher unions have reason to feel paranoid...however, while protecting their turf they should try to avoid shooting themselves in the foot. What the Dallas Teachers' Union's treatment of the King's students has illustrated is that dirty little union

secret: that when it comes down to perceived union best interests versus student best interests, the students are pawns.

If you still doubt it, ask a teacher's union representative to explain the rationale behind "work to rule."

Mary Blanc
Dallas

Praise, a suggestion for Dallas Borough

Editor:
As a resident of the Dallas Borough since 1971 I still consider myself a relative newcomer, however, in these past almost 25 years, I could not recall a more effective, progressive, and cooperative Council/Mayor government that we have today. I especially appreciate your efforts to bring reasonable traffic control to the borough. First with the posting of the 25 miles per hour speed limit on Huntsville Road and your continuing efforts to have signal lights installed at strategic locations

along the 309/415 highway. Now if only we could get a No Right Turn sign where Pioneer Avenue northbound traffic intersects with Main Street. Any right turn attempted here is inherently illegal anyway since it is practically impossible not to enter into the oncoming traffic lane on Main Street.
I would be remiss if I didn't mention and praise the efforts of the Borough's road crews in their superb efforts to clear our streets of snow and ice this past winter, as they also did in 1993-94.
I am well aware of your efforts

to operate the borough on a fiscally sound basis, keeping taxes low while continuing to provide full service to the residents. I also appreciate your idea of beautifying the downtown area with banners during times other than Christmas. (The Christmas decorations, by the way, were great.)
Unfortunately or fortunately depending on your point of view, you may not hear from me for another 25 years if you and your successors keep up the good work.

John P. Bergevin
Dallas

Celebrate March — accept challenged citizens

Editor:
During March, celebrated nationally as Mental Retardation Awareness Month, and throughout the year, the community is invited to focus on the growth and achievements of persons with developmental disabilities and join in assuring that the richness of an everyday life be an experience for all citizens to enjoy.
The "Beatitudes of Acceptance," which follow, are poignant reminders of the importance of understanding and encouragement in the lives of persons with developmental disabilities:

- Blessed are you who take the time to listen to difficult speech, for you help know that if I persevere, I can be understood;
- Blessed are you who never bid me to "hurry up" or take my tasks and do them for me, for often I need time rather than help;
- Blessed are you who stand beside me as I enter new and untried ventures, for my failures will be outweighed by the times I surprise myself and you;
- Blessed are you who asked for my help, for my greatest need is to be needed;
- Blessed are you who understand that it is difficult for me to put my thoughts into words;
- Blessed are you who with a smile encourage me to "try once more";
- Blessed are you who walk with me in public places and ignore the stares of strangers, for in

your friendship I feel good to be myself;

- Rejoice and be glad, for you have helped me believe in myself as a valued and gifted person. Your understanding and love have opened doors for me to enjoy life to the fullest. Amen.

We invite each of you to "open the doors" of the community to persons with disabilities to change apprehension to understanding and doubt to belief in the value of all persons.

Nicholas A. Martyak, M.D.
Chairman, Luzerne-Wyoming Counties
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program
Advisory Board

Fino's came through for Meadows during harsh winter

Editor:
It is with great pleasure that we the tenants of the Meadows Apartments are so very grateful to Mr. Fino of Fino's Drug Store and his

staff for the gracious way he delivered medications to his friends during the severe winter months. Nothing stopped them from being the wonderful people they are.

Many, many thanks from all your grateful tenants of the Meadows. God Bless all of you.

Eleanor Ambrose

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Mar. 27, 1936 DONORS HELP AREA FLOOD VICTIMS

Thousands of donors eager to have a part in relieving conditions resulting from Wyoming Valley's disastrous twin floods have contributed a total of \$38,763 for flood victims in the valley. That figure exceeds by nearly \$4,000 the goal set by Wyoming Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross last week.

A contract for completing Dallas Township High School's long awaited gym and sufficient classrooms to relieve present congestion and provide for future growth was awarded at a meeting of township school directors Tuesday night. The new contract permits completion of the annex, and will give the township six more classrooms and an auditorium which can be converted to a gym.

50 Years Ago - Mar. 29, 1946 ENGLISH DAUGHTER-IN-LAW JOINS FRITZ FAMILY

Approximately 500 persons — the majority of them veterans — will be served this week by the Dallas Office of the U.S. Employment Service, located in the former Dallas Borough Building on Mill Street. This is two times the number served last week.

Anxious to meet the new daughter-in-law they have never seen, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Fritz, Idetown are awaiting the visit of their son Lawrence's English bride, the former Bernadette Holland, who arrived in New York with 1,200 servicemen's brides aboard the *Queen Mary*. They now have a small granddaughter, Madeleine.

40 Years Ago - Mar. 23, 1956 BUS LOSES ITS REAR WHEELS ON CORNER

A group of three young men stationed with the A.C. & W. Squadron at Red Rock have formed Audio & Video Products Co. and will open shortly after April 1, on Memorial Highway in the former Swan Electric Store, leased from Sam Ashley. They will specialize in all types custom built and nationally known, high-fidelity equipment including GE, Fisher, Scott, Pilot & Harman-Kardon.

Wilkes-Barre Transit Co., Lower Road Bus 254, driven by Peter Roushey, cast off dual wheels from the right rear Thursday when rounding corner from Main Street to make a run up Huntsville Road. The bus blocked traffic at the intersection until a mechanical crew from the car barn arrived. Nobody was hurt.

30 Years Ago - Mar. 24, 1966 BUDD RETURNS FROM PITTSBURGH HOSPITAL

Kingston Township Ambulance Association has placed its order for a new Pontiac Ambulance with Wolfington Body Co., Philadelphia. The new vehicle, being built to certain specifications, will provide the latest facilities for those needing its services and will be delivered approximately June 15.
Thomas Budd, local survivor of a collision fatal to his driver in the Pittsburgh region early this month, has been returned to this area by ambulance. Budd is being kept in a prone position because of pressure in his head, from injuries, which were termed critical following the crash of a car and panel truck at Industry.

20 Years Ago - Mar. 25, 1976 DALLAS FAN FINED FOR DISORDERLY CONDUCT

The Dallas Fire & Ambulance Inc., the volunteer organization which provides free ambulance service in the Dallas area, this week announced a new ambulance service policy to cope with non-emergency calls received by the unit. Chief Wes Cave said the unit is asking that calls for non-emergency transportation be issued directly by the patient's doctor. Non-emergency calls have increased to the point where they outnumber emergency requests five to one.

Disorderly conduct charges against two West Side Tech fans and a PIAA off duty official were dismissed while a Dallas High School fan was fined for disorderly conduct and harassment after an incident at the Dallas-W.S. Tech basketball game, Feb. 10.

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

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