

EDITORIALS

# Dallas football coach incident was a bad play all around

If the fiasco surrounding the suspension of Dallas assistant high school football coach Brian Brady had been a play on the field, it would surely have led the highlight clips on Sunday night, with enough fumbles and missed opportunities to last an entire season.

First, there was the threat from Ron Pietraccini that he would sue virtually everyone in the school district if Brady wasn't fired. With 20-20 hindsight, he might like to reduce his request something more appropriate. Then, Superintendent of Schools Gerald Wycallis took the handoff and fumbled it when he suspended Brady rather than issue a reprimand, as had been recommended by the district's internal investigators.

After that, head coach Ted Jackson ran completely out of bounds with a threat to call off the team's homecoming game if Brady wasn't immediately reinstated. And, the school board would have been called for too few men on the field as only five of the nine directors showed up at Friday night's emergency school board meeting, at which Brady's suspension was lifted until a formal hearing on the matter can be conducted.

All this has served to reveal a rift between enthusiastic supporters of the Dallas High School football team — and head coach Jackson — and those who feel the sport is overemphasized at the school, and coached overzealously. Critics have had their hand strengthened this year by the ejection of a star player in the season's first game and a later game that ended in a series of fights.

It will take a step back, a deep breath, and apologies all around to quickly heal the wounds caused by the acrimony surrounding Brian Brady's suspension. And healing will take place only if the parties involved truly want it. We hope they do, and will act accordingly.

Perhaps the clearest heads were shown by the leadership of the Dallas Gridiron Club, which requested an emergency meeting of the school board in order to avert a disaster. They should be given credit for making a forceful but restrained presentation last Friday, and keeping order among the 500 or more fans who filled the middle school auditorium.

The school board, or at least the five of nine members who showed up for the meeting, also deserve acknowledgement for being courageous enough to admit a mistake in procedure if not action, and for conducting themselves in a way that averted further escalation.

Beyond this incident, however, it is important to put the football program in perspective. It is, after all, only an extracurricular athletic activity that affords college opportunities to only a few students. Everyone involved would be wise to direct the passion so evident last week toward academic excellence, which is true challenge and purpose of a school system that also happens to have a very good football team.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



It seems there's more than enough foreign money to go around in this year's Presidential election campaign. First came reports of about a half million bucks donated to the Democrats by agents of an Indonesian business family. Oh, and the \$250,000 from South Korea the Democrats returned after being caught with it. Then, *The New York Times* published a list of the top foreign donors to both parties. Surprise, it totalled over \$3 million, and more than two-thirds of it went to the Republicans. And that was just the top of the list.

If love of money is the root of evil, the lust for political contributions — no matter who they come from — must stem from an even uglier source. I wouldn't care, if the only result was that politicians got dirty. But it's our country these folks are buying, and we shouldn't put up with it. The problem is what to do about it. The foxes are guarding the henhouse on this issue, and their election-year spouting about campaign finance reform has never been followed up with action.

It has become more and more obvious that the big money interests get all the attention in Washington, while the rest of us wait outside for the crumbs left from their gluttony. The little nips and tucks that have been made to our system haven't done a thing — this year's election is expected to cost *three times* the 1992 Presidential race. Talk about out-of-control inflation! I don't have an answer, or even a good suggestion on this one. Even candidates whose hearts are in the right place recognize that they need gobs of dough to win, and they get from...the folks who have gobs of dough.

At the very least, we should ban all foreign contributions to our election campaigns and political parties. If I'm going to be bought, I'd at least like it to be by an American.

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## Soaring ambitions

Chris Bittenbender, far right, pointed to the promotional balloon outside the Back Mountain Memorial Library. "Watch Ideas Soar" is the theme of the library's capital campaign to raise funds for a new children's wing. Anyone wishing to donate can stop by the library or call the campaign office at 674-6003. Those who have made pledges are reminded to send them in soon.

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## GUEST COLUMN

# The innocent origins of modern Hallowe'en

By ROBERT KARL BOHM

Late October. Leaves turn brown and fall; vegetation dies. Darkness begins early every evening and the air turns ominously cool. Against winter's onset in our village we huddle around our cottage hearth for warmth and companionship.

Late October. Huddled, chatting, we mention family members who used to gather around the fire with us but who have died. Where are they gone and what are they like now? We wonder if their restless spirits remember the warmth and love around our hearth and in the chill of autumn want to gather with us once again.

Late October. In early darkness beyond our cottage window we hear rustling noises. The gathering of the grim and lonely spirits of the dead? No, surely just the wind in the dry leaves and harvest stubble. And that noise on the roof? Some dreadful haunt seeking entry? No, surely just the tap of a tree branch or settling of the thatch.

Late October. And if the gruesome ghosts of those long gone are gathering once again, what can we do? We try to frighten them away with a fearsome face carved in a gourd and left in a window. Or perhaps we can appease them: let's leave gifts of fruit or cakes outside the door as a sign of good will and let's hope the gruesome horrors do not come inside.

Late October now brings Hallowe'en. All Hallow's Evening, the festival with which the Church once tried, not very successfully, to replace the autumnal pagan fears and rites. Instead of warding off the dreaded dead by tricks or treats, the Church's folk were encouraged to remember the departed, all the hallowed ones, not with fear and appeasement but with thanksgiving and confidence.

Late October, and old habits die hard. Not nearly so many attend the Church's remembrances on All Saints Day as re-enact with variations the practices of the pagan past. The gourd still watches out the window, though in the New World it's more

often a pumpkin, and it grins as often as it grimaces. And the spirits of the dead are appeased at the door with goodies, though instead of real ghosts it's children in costume, role playing the ancient ritual often in the most common Hallowe'en costume, the sheet, the constant costume amid the annually changing fads of other strange creatures: strange creatures: Mutant Ninja Turtles and Power Rangers, Lion Kings and Indian Princesses, Quasimodo and Esmeralda.

Fear of the dead evolved indeed a darker side: appeasement of the ghostly legions by alliances with the powers of the underworld, Satanism and black magic, witchery and necromancy. But it is not from that dark side that our grimacing pumpkins and trick or treaters descend. They are remnants, rather, of a more naive and in some ways innocent practice. And their very parody of fears no longer held reminds us in a playful way of how far we've come.

Robert Karl Bohm is Pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Shavertown.

## As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Fred Allen said, "They call television a medium because nothing on it is ever well done." Wrong. That may apply to today but not back in the 40's when "Your Show of Shows" and "Caesar's Hour" monopolized Saturday nights from nine to 10:30.

That series of comedy-variety shows was not only well-done but were classics which still make superb viewing. There were over a dozen reasons...actors like Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Carl Reiner and Howard Morris, doing material by such writers as Mel Brooks and Neil Simon, each and every week! (Producer Max Leibman was no slouch either.)

These were Broadway-like productions. On Broadway it usually took months to smooth out kinks. These brilliant people started on Monday mornings from vague

## TV's golden age of comedy

concepts, worked all week and performed five or six sketches live on Saturday nights, and then repeated the whole process all over again week after week...They did this from 1949 to 1954 when they were torpedoed by Lawrence Welk. It wasn't too long before situation comedies took over.

One of the writers had said, "Really, what we put on was a rough draft, because you didn't have time to smooth and refine. But that also lent a certain energy to the enterprise." That wasn't what finished them; maybe the TV public was fickle. Judging from today's top 10 they certainly are not too discriminating.

At any rate, for those of you wallowing in nostalgia, there's a video rental still available called "Ten From Your Show of Shows" which will bring back many happy memories...Caesar doing the cool jazz musician Progress Hornsby, Coca in a movie takeoff as "The Sewing Machine Girl," Howard Morris, a longlost relative clinging to Caesar's leg during "This is Your Life," the whole gang doing "The Clock," Caesar arching his German scientist, the archaeologist Professor Ludwig Von Fossil. ("After many, many years, I haff found

ze secret of Titten-Totten's tomb." "What was it, Professor?" "I should tell you?")

Incidentally it was no secret that during the peak of "Your Shows of Shows" popularity this phenomenon managed to kill off most Broadway shows.

If you don't manage to see the video, here is some dialogue from a Caesar sketch:

Two men meet. One is a courier and is being handed a small bag. "Here are the diamonds," says the second man. "You will walk through the station onto the main street. A man will run at you and scream, 'Giff me the diamonds!'"

"Vat do I do then?" asks the courier.

"You don't give them to him," says the second man. "Now...you will walk two blocks and beautiful blond vill say softly to you, 'Giff me the diamonds.'"

"I don't give her the diamonds," says the courier.

"Yes, you will give them to her! That girl will be me!"

The courier does a double take. "Oh, I see," he says, finally. "You'll be in disguise."

"No!" shouts the second man. "I'm in disguise now!"

## ONLY YESTERDAY



### 60 Years Ago - Oct. 30, 1936 LIQUOR LICENSE SALES ON AREA BALLOTS

Opposing forces in this section's Local Option contest will form lines for the all-important battle of ballots next Tuesday. Voters in Lake Twp., Dallas Borough, Dallas Twp., and Kingston Twp., will decide then whether the granting of licenses for the sale of liquor in their towns is to be permitted.

The 10th anniversary of the founding of St. Therese's Church, Shavertown will be observed Nov. 10. A dinner will be served from 5-8 p.m. followed by an entertainment session. Rev. J.J. O'Leary is honorary chairman.

You could get - Turkeys, 8-12 lb. avg, 23¢ lb.; rump roast, 29¢ lb.; lard, 2 lbs., 25¢; lettuce, 2 hds., 13¢; onions, 10 lbs., 19¢.

### 50 Years Ago - Nov. 1, 1946 NATONA MILLS READY TO BEGIN PRODUCTION

With the opening of a finishing department in the former Teen-Age building on Main Street, Natona Mills this week started production of lace in Dallas that will eventually employ more than 500 persons when the new plant is opened along Veterans' Memorial Highway.

Confronted with a depleted treasury containing only \$12, Dallas Borough Band Association will start an immediate drive for funds to put the band back on its pre-war footing as a going musical organization.

Luzerne County Gas & Electric Co. which serves a large part of the Back Mountain area will spend \$3,740,000 for improvement of its plant's facilities. \$1,350,000 will be spent for improvement of its Hunlock Creek plant.

### 40 Years Ago - Oct. 26, 1956 NEW '57 PLYMOUTH ON DISPLAY AT ISAACS

Earth and rock were really moving this week at the site of the new State Institution for Mental Delinquents in Jackson Township at a rate of 4,000 cubic yards per day. Ninety five men are now employed on the project and work is expected to continue at an accelerated pace throughout the winter.

Huston's Feed Services, Fernbrook is installing a new mixing and grinding equipment in order to handle oats, corn, wheat, buckwheat and hay for local growers. There are no other mills equipped for custom grinding in this area.

The 1957 Plymouth will be displayed by Howard Isaacs and L.L. Richardson beginning Tuesday. Lower, wider and more powerful, the new model represents a complete change in styling, body structure and chassis.

### 30 Years Ago - Oct. 27, 1966 ROBERT PARRY NAMED 'MAN OF THE YEAR'

A gentleman who has long been interested in young men and boys of this area was chosen as Back Mountain "Man of the Year" at the annual meeting of the service clubs. Robert Parry, Monroe Avenue, Dallas, who resigned last week as president of Back Mountain Little League after serving in this capacity for many years received a plaque given jointly by the Dallas Rotary, Dallas Kiwanis and Dallas Lion Clubs.

Lake-Lehman Band Sponsors will hold a Holiday Bingo Nov. 18 in the Jackson Fire Hall. Bingo prizes will be homemade Christmas items. Tickets may be obtained from Mrs. Carl Swanson and Mrs. Grace Fielding.

Dallas Mounts two-touchdown underdogs surprised a rugged West Side Catholic 11 last Saturday as they turned in an impressive 14-0 win over the Queensmen. It was Boosters Day and a crowd of 3,000 turned out for the game.

### 20 Years Ago - Oct. 20, 1976 STATE POLICE SHUT DOWN BINGO HALLS

Two Harveys Lake bingo game operations were ordered closed Monday afternoon by State Police at Wyoming Barracks. The operations closed by officers of the Criminal Investigation Unit were Sunset Bingo and Casino Bingo, Lakeside Drive. It was stated only those operations which were bonafide non-profit were allowed to remain open.