

EDITORIALS

It's your turn to help choose a school site

Sometimes courage is defined not by stubborn adherence to established positions but by the willingness to change in the face of new information, despite the accusations of vacillation that are certain to follow. Thomas Landon, the Dallas school board director who switched his vote on a location for the replacement for Westmoreland Elementary School, is a good example.

Landon voted in October against moving the school to the district's main campus. But when his side lost that vote, he joined the majority that preferred the site of the former Dallas Township High School, in part because it kept Westmoreland physically isolated from the other schools, satisfying in small measure the concerns of parents and teachers who feared losing the school's identity. But there was a dark side to that choice: the loss of two or three baseball and softball fields used by hundreds of Back Mountain children. While some board members contend the district has no responsibility to the community outside of low-cost education, preserving the fields by building the new school on the main campus is seen by many citizens as a logical compromise.

The five school directors who voted for the main campus site didn't necessarily do so to save the fields, but that will be the result, and, if not a perfect solution, it is at least better than the one it replaced.

We still would prefer that Westmoreland be kept in the area it serves, whether on the existing site or another. That isn't the most "efficient" option in construction and administrative terms, but it's probably the best for education and parental involvement. There's probably little chance the board will go that far, so now it's up to them — and you — to see that the best location on the main campus is chosen.

The school board will hold a session Sunday at 1 p.m. at the main campus, in which board members and the public will view the potential spots for the building. That kind of open discussion should have been scheduled throughout the months this issue has been active, but it is better done late than never. A large turnout will reinforce the importance of educational issues in our communities.

School directors have seen the turmoil surprise votes and private discussion of important issues cause. Now they must resolve to invite public participation in all major aspects of the district's operation, even if when means holding special meetings like the one this Sunday.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



While not a huge football fan, I follow the sport somewhat and watched or listened to portions of the major college bowl games. There was real excitement and drama in most of them, including vindication for Brigham Young and Ohio State balanced against the disappointment of Arizona State. Penn State, behind perhaps the best bowl game coach ever, again scored a convincing win in Tempe, and Florida was impressive in the shootout in New Orleans.

But that's enough for me. I think a national championship in college football would be a waste of time, or worse, an acknowledgement that the sport predominates over the real work of institutions of higher education. Supporters of an ever-higher profile for college sports will argue that successful programs, especially in football, bring in millions of dollars that help sustain the schools. But, as Heisman winner Danny Wuerffel pointed out, those who judge success by money alone are missing the real point of life and, in this case of colleges. We have one national championship of football now, in the pro ranks where it belongs. We don't need to focus more effort on college sport; if anything the reverse is desirable, promoting schools more for their academic programs than for their ability to recruit athletes who might also be students.

Even the thought of overtime in bowl games strikes me as out of place. The fact that a team gets to play in a bowl is good enough for me, although that may be the minority opinion in our win-crazed culture. And it wouldn't bother me at all if the voting for the top team ended in a tie.

Letters, columns and editorials

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms. Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.
- The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

In addition to letters, we welcome longer pieces that may run as columns. The author or subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be the prime consideration when selecting material for publication.



Ice patterns. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

The anthropologist is familiar enough with the ways of different people so that he is seldom surprised by exotic customs. However the beliefs and practices of the Nacirema are so unusual they are offered as examples of the extremes of human behavior.

This North American group's culture is poorly understood. Little is known of their origin, but according to Nacirema mythology, their nation was originated by a culture hero, Notgnihshaw, who is known for feats of strength, like throwing a piece of wampum across a river and chopping down a cherry tree in which the Spirit of Truth resided.

Nacirema culture features a highly developed market economy which only occupies a portion of their time. The rest seems to be spent on care of their bodies, and to that end each house has a shrine solely for that purpose.

The more powerful individuals in the society have several shrines in their houses, and, in fact, the opulence of a house is often referred to in terms of the number of such ritual centers it possesses.

The shrine's focal point is a box built into the wall in which are kept many charms and magical

Studying the strange people of Nacirema

potions without which no native believes he could live. These preparations are secured from powerful medicine men whose assistance is rewarded with substantial gifts. These men do not provide potions directly, only writing down their ingredients in a secret language. Herbalists, for another gift, provide the potions.

As these magical potions are for specific ills, and the maladies of these people are many, the shrine box is usually filled. So many packets overflow that people forget what their purpose was and fear to use them again.

The Nacirema also perform a mouth-rite nightly, inserting a bundle of hog-hairs into the mouth, along with magical powders and water, and moving the bundle in a formalized series of gestures.

In addition to the mouth-rite, the people seek out a holy mouthman once a year. These practitioners have an impressive set of augers, awls and probes. The use of these objects in the exorcism of the evils of the mouth involve almost unbelievable ritual torture of the client.

He removes decay in their teeth by creating a large hole and filling it with magic material. The rite is so sacred they return year after year as their teeth continue to decay.

In conclusion, mention must be made of their ritual fasts to

make fat people thin and ceremonial feasts to make thin people fat. Other rites are used to make women's breasts larger if they are small, and smaller if they are large. General dissatisfaction with breast shape is symbolized by the fact that the ideal form is virtually outside the range of human variation.

A few women affected with in-human hypermammary development are so idolized that they make a handsome living simply going from village to village and permitting the natives to stare at them for a fee.

Review of the Nacirema ritual life shows them to be a magic-ridden people. It is hard to understand how they have managed to exist so long under the burdens they have imposed upon themselves. But even their exotic customs have helped in their development, and perhaps without them, Nacirema man could not have advanced to his higher stage of civilization.

P.S. now spell Nacirema backwards. And read the column again...

NOTE: We acknowledge with thanks the above excerpted from an article by Horace Miner which appeared in the "American Anthropologist." Like parable writing, good satire is not easy to do, but Mr. Miner succeeded admirably.

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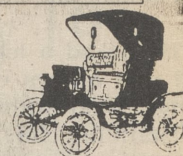
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State Rep. Phyllis Mundy (D)
283-9622 or 655-3375
Suite 107, 400 Third Avenue, Kingston PA 18704
Dallas Borough, Dallas Township except for the north voting district, and Kingston Township.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Jan. 15, 1937

MARAT BLDG DEMOLISHED

One of this section's oldest buildings bowed to progress this week as workmen began demolishing the condemned Marat building on Main Street, Dallas. The frame building stood originally in the rear of the site now occupied by First National Bank.

The new rooms of the Daddow-Isaac Post American Legion were formally opened Monday evening. In connection with the opening it was announced that John Isaac and Wesley Daddow have contributed \$38.50 each to pay for the colors which will hang in the rooms of the local post.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 17, 1947

NEW NATIONAL MILLS PLANT GETS ROOF

The big new plant of National Mills stretching along Memorial Highway just west of Dallas is now three quarters under roof and with good weather prevailing Sordoni Construction Co. expects to have it entirely under roof within the next week and a half.

The January Grand Jury returned a true bill Friday in the case of Atty. William Valentine, Meeker, vs Lehman Township supervisors and secretary. Valentine charged the supervisors with neglect of the township road between Meeker and Lehman after the snowfall of Dec. 20 because they did not plow it until a day later. He also cited other cases of neglect.

Installed just before the opening of the basketball season an electrical board now flashes the score and reports the time during cage games in the Lehman gym. It was purchased at a cost of \$225, which was drawn from the profits of the student magazine campaign during the previous school year.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 11, 1957

DALLAS BORO WORKERS GET RAISE FOR NEW YEAR

Salaries and wages of police and road department employees were increased at the January meeting of the Dallas Borough Council Tuesday evening in the Borough Building. Street Dept. wages for laborers will be increased from \$1.00 to \$1.10. The same hourly rates will apply for all policemen. Salaries of Chief of Police Russell Honeywell and Street Commissioner Alvin Shaffer were increased \$15 per month, bringing their annual salaries to \$3,180.

Among five school districts involved there was a general public approval this week of the five men, Sam Davis, Hugh Gebhardt, Raymon R. Heddon, Harry G. Swebston and Howard Weiner Jr., named this week by their respective districts as members of the Authority to construct a new high school building for Dallas Area schools. Included in their number are a banker, accountant, contractor, engineer and lumber dealer.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 12, 1967

GARRIS IS SECRETARY OF DALLAS BOROUGH

Ralph Garris was appointed the new secretary of Dallas Borough Council at a meeting of the group Tuesday evening. Garris replaces Walter Rowett who resigned for reasons of health.

Due to the increased enrollment in Dallas School District provisions will be made to add two more teachers during 1968 in the Domestic Science and Industrial Arts Department.

There are indications that both Harveys Lake and Lehman Township supervisors will appeal the recent division handed down by Luzerne County Court in the creation of a new borough at the Lake. Latest date to file is Jan. 20 and it is expected that some action will be taken to hold on to the sectors now defined as the new borough. Loss of former township properties which aid in tax upkeep will be felt in both communities.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 13, 1973

DONALD JONES RUNS FOR MAGISTRATE CHAIR

Donald J. Jones, 41, a Jackson Township resident and present chief of police in the township announced his intent to seek the office presently held by Magistrate Leonard Harvey in the Republican primary. Also noted as running for the position are Henry Tuck Jr., Oak Hill and Andrew Denmon Jr. Harveys Lake.

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