

EDITORIALS

For school board, the choice is clear

After last week's frigid tour of building sites on the main campus, the choices from which the Dallas School Board must pick a location for the replacement to Westmoreland Elementary are clear. The school should either be left where it is in Trucksville, or it should be built on site "D" near the Dallas Elementary building, and connected to it by common areas.

From this vantage point, the logic is this: If Westmoreland is to remain an independent school community, it must remain in Trucksville. Placing it anywhere on the main campus will inevitably dilute to some extent the feeling of detachment that now exists, if only because the school will be some distance from its present site, making it less convenient for parents to stop by. We still believe this is the best option, even if it costs a bit more to construct the school and to run it.

A board vote in October would seem to preclude that option, although given the recent history of vote switching, it ain't over 'til it's over, as Yogi Berra was fond of saying.

If the board persists in its stance that the school must be built on the main campus, the obvious choice of sites is the one last proposed, which would put the building roughly on what is now the Neuman soccer field, and connect it to Dallas Elementary with a shared gymnasium, cafeteria and nurse's office. Some Westmoreland parents and teachers are adamantly opposed to this plan, seeing the potential for the administration to at some point mingle the children's classes, which they fear will stunt the spirit that now pervades their school. They may be right, of course, but it's hard to believe the children won't play together anyhow — as they do now in soccer, Little League and other activities — so getting a decent gym and playing fields isn't a bad tradeoff.

Some school directors may be tempted by the vision of lower administrative expenses with this plan, including a single principal for both elementary schools. That would be a mistake; each school should have its own principal to promote pride among teachers and students, just as Westmoreland and Dallas have had all along.

The other three locations are seriously flawed. The site near the Middle School and another where the tennis courts now stand are too near the upper level buildings, while the corner of Hildebrandt and Conyngham is too close to a busy roadway and intersection. And none of them would include the gymnasium, which could double as an auditorium.

We trust the members of the school board will be as careful in their evaluation of sites from here on out as they were during Sunday's tour of the campus. Despite the cold, everyone except Tom Landon was on scene, and he had walked the land previously, before changing his support to the main campus from the Little League fields. Now we can only watch, wait, and hope for the best decision.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Have you ever seen a political party squander its success as quickly as today's GOP? I haven't, and the display of self-centered arrogance so evident in the re-election of Speaker Newt Gingrich is both astounding and disgusting. In essence, the Republican leadership proclaimed their allegiance to Gingrich far outweighed the interests of the House and the nation. But I think it goes even deeper than that. The attitude I sensed was more along the lines of a child who — unconcerned with anything but getting his or her own way — rushes headlong into trouble rather than heed or even listen to warnings of danger ahead. Even Bill Clinton's Democrats gave back more than a million bucks in tainted contributions after being caught with their collective hand in the cookie jar. Not the GOP; instead they first tried to obscure the real wrongdoing, then they strong-armed their members to vote against their consciences .. and good sense.

It was stunning to watch these champions of virtue scramble to rationalize their leader's actions, stooping so low as to say that since no one has shown that Gingrich benefited personally from the money given to his tax-free foundations, he really didn't do anything wrong. Well, how about this? You and I picked up the taxes his benefactors didn't pay on their contributions, and I think we should ask for it back, with interest. Then there was the renowned conservative columnist Robert Novak sputtering that since Clinton may be a bigger crook, Newt is entitled to be Speaker.

In just two years, the GOP leadership has dissipated the advantage it gained in 1994, at least in part by claiming to be more principled than their opponents. Now we learn it was all just a charade; when the chips are down, they can't be trusted to put the good of the nation before their egos, even when it's clear the voters will be nauseated by their conduct.

Your news is welcome

The Dallas Post welcomes submissions of weddings, engagements, birthdays and other items about people and events in the Back Mountain. The deadline for items for the next issue is Friday at 4 p.m. Photos are encouraged. Black and white prints are preferred, but color can usually be used. We will attempt to publish articles based on timeliness, available space and interest to our readers. If you have any questions or comments, call Ron Bartizek at 675-5211.

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Ronald A. Bartizek
PUBLISHER

Charlotte E. Bartizek
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Dennise Casterline
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC

Kylie Shafferkoetter
REPORTER

Paul Rismiller
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Olga Kostrobala
CLASSIFIED/TYPESSETTING

Jill Gruver
OFFICE MANAGER



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LETTERS

Coolbaugh family gives thanks for community's support

Editor:

During this season filled with giving, hope and new beginnings, my family and I wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who assisted with the Community Fund Drive and Spaghetti Dinner for my wife, Joyce Coolbaugh. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the people in our community.

We cannot begin to know how

to express our appreciation for the many thoughts, prayers and words of encouragement we've received since Joyce's recent automobile accident. In a moment, our lives changed forever, but with the help of wonderful people, we know we can move forward one day at a time.

To everyone who donated time, effort, goods and financial contri-

butions, many thanks for your generosity. We are grateful for the effort put forth by *The Dallas Post* to make the public aware of the fundraising events on Joyce's behalf. Your support has been essential!

We truly appreciate the encouragement of our neighbors, colleagues, family and friends. We are grateful to so many people in

our community, many of whom we've never had the chance to meet, but who showed they were willing to extend a helping hand in our time of need.

Please accept our thanks for all you have done to help our family. May your new year be filled with health, happiness and prosperity!

Harold Coolbaugh
Lehman Twp.

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

"Few New Yorkers sunning themselves on their favorite Long Island beach are aware that, only a few dozen miles seaward, there is a canyon on the floor of the ocean that rivals the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River." Thus begins the introduction to submarine canyons in a 1971 anthology of oceanography articles from Scientific American.

I dare say that you are likewise fooled by the seeming flatness of the ocean surface. Most people assume that waves and icebergs and maybe whales or seaweed are the only things that generally move very much in the oceans. We certainly don't often give much thought to undersea mudslides or avalanches - we assume that these mostly happen in Oregon or California near interstate highways.

Scientists have known about submarine canyons like the Hudson off of Long Island for a long time. They have proposed many hypotheses as to the origin of these features. Some people believe that at one time sea level was so much lower than it is now that rivers cut these canyons in the same way that the Colorado cut the Grand Canyon. Many

Avalanches also occur underwater

canyons do appear to be associated with rivers on the mainland, but it is virtually impossible that these systems were completely formed in this way. Perhaps channels were cut in the Continental Shelf when the sea level was 100 - 150 feet lower than now during the ice ages. But, many of these features are older than that and many are deeper than that. And, what would have prevented them from filling in with sand and silt since then?

It seems that part of the answer to this puzzle is a phenomenon known as a turbidity current. Turbidity currents are flows of mud and/or sand that periodically course down the canyons picking up other materials as they move. Until the 1950s, no one was absolutely sure that such flows existed. But, the first confirmation came from a re-examination of some data from 1929. A large earthquake occurred in the Grand Banks south of Newfoundland on November 18th of that year. It so happened that this particular area had the highest concentration of submarine telegraph cables anywhere in the world. And, the time of each cable break was automatically recorded. Dr. Bruce Heezen and his associates plotted these times against the distance of the cable from the center of the earthquake.

Within 60 miles of the earthquake, all the cables broke simultaneously. However, beyond that point, cables to the south continued to break one after another to

a point 300 miles from the epicenter. The quake had started a turbidity current that moved at a speed of more than 15 mph (and perhaps as much as 50 mph in places!) breaking cables in its path over a period of 13 hours.

Similar data has been recorded in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean Seas, but it was not until 1976 that a remote sonar actually recorded such an event in real time. Mine tailings (spoils) were being discharged into Rupert Inlet in British Columbia, Canada, when they triggered a turbidity current that lasted 90 minutes. Sometimes these slides happen so close to shore that they destroy docks and buildings as well as underwater structures. That was the case in 1964 when a large portion of the town of Valdez, Alaska, disappeared into Prince William Sound. (Don't ask me whose brainy idea it was to locate the end of a large oil pipeline there after that happened!)

It should be apparent by now that the investigation of underwater mudslides is much more than an interesting academic exercise. The US Geological Survey has extensively studied slides in the Gulf of Mexico. They are not so much interested in how these might relate to submarine canyons as they are as to how they relate to oil drilling rigs and pipelines. Apparently, many of the oil rigs that have been destroyed in hurricanes were not toppled by wind or wave but went down because of mudslides triggered by the stormy seas. An understanding of these

processes is absolutely essential to the safety of the people and equipment used on these rigs.

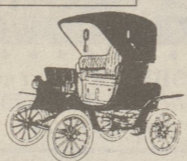
It is also important with regard to environmental safety - a broken pipeline under the Gulf could have disastrous effects on life in the water and along the shore.

Submarine canyons have been proposed - and sometimes used - as repositories for all sorts of wastes generated by our modern society, precisely because these wastes will quickly be covered by sediment carried by turbidity currents. Everything from regular garbage and sewage to mine tailings and obsolete nuclear weapons may be destined for this type of "storage."

I would caution that if these currents are indeed abrasive enough to carve out canyons it's rather foolhardy to assume that they will simply act as bulldozers to cover our trash. They could just as well open these "graves" and spread the contents hundreds of miles into the ocean where currents and biological activity might bring these poisons right back to us.

As is often the case with any new discovery, we tend to assume that natural phenomena are there simply to serve our short term needs. Let us remember that turbidity currents have been "doing their thing" for much longer than we have inhabited this earth. We need to understand them so that we can avoid unnecessary harm to ourselves and our structures. We do not need to find a use for them.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Jan. 22, 1937 DALLAS SCHOOL DIRECTORS DISCUSS TUITION

An aura of mystery surrounds the conference of school directors from Dallas Borough and Dallas Township on Tuesday evening to discuss conflicting claims for tuition. Although directors admitted a meeting was held, they would not divulge details of the conclusions reached.

Mrs. William L. Tracy, of Pioneer Avenue, Shavertown, mother of Lee Tracy, stage and screen star, is rapidly becoming a seasoned member of the movie colony at Hollywood, CA. Mrs. Tracy left here last month for her fourth visit to the motion picture capital and probably will spend the entire winter as Lee's guest.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 24, 1947 LIBRARY HAS GOOD SUPPLY OF BOOKS FOR KIDS

Executive Board members of the Back Mountain Memorial Library at their recent meeting heard Ms. Marian Lathrop, librarian report that general book circulation for 1946 was 15,168 and school circulation 15,501. Miss Lathrop said the library now has a very good supply of children's books, but she showed concern because many children have not been taught to care for them.

The State Sanitary Water Board charged with enforcing the Commonwealth's stream clearance program, said today that a new sewage treatment plant being installed at College Misericordia, Dallas Township on orders of the Board, should be ready for operation this spring if materials are forthcoming. In addition to the treatment works, 1,500 feet of sewers are being installed.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 18, 1957 DALLAS MOTEL'S BUSINESS SLOWS DUE TO WEATHER

Dallas Motel found its business curtailed by icy conditions on the long grade leading from Dallas to

Dallas Outdoor Theatre, and by the steep down-grades beyond toward Beaumont. William Shedleski, owner-operator states that before the icy road condition developed, his main motel was filled and his new addition showed an average of 8 residents. Since the ice he has had cancellation after cancellation with nobody in the annex and the main motel sparsely settled.

Lake Lions Club handed out checks of \$500 each to representatives of Lehman and Harveys Lake fire companies, donated a hospital bed to Harveys Lake Woman's Service Club and added to this gift \$100 toward their purchase of Christmas cheer baskets. Action to implement these gifts was taken at the Jan. 9 meeting at Brokenshire's Hotel.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 19, 1967 GARMENT INDUSTRY IN FERNBROOK TO OPEN

Fernbrook will have a new garment industry. The new operation is expected to be ready by Feb. 1 with renovations now underway at the former Bogdon Economy Market on Demunds Road. At least 20 qualified power

sewing operators will be employed at the new plant.

Residents of Oak Hill were advised that the township is now cleaning their roads. Chairman Clinton Smith reported that a savings of \$700 would be realized from the change. Formerly the job was leased out.

You could get - Porterhouse steak, 85¢ lb.; calves liver, 89¢ lb.; potatoes, U.S. #1, 20-lb. bag 89¢; Campbell's Soups, 6 10 1/2 oz.-cans \$1; Tide Detergent, 3 lb.-1 oz. pkg. 68¢.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 20, 1977 PLANS FOR NEW SCHOOL IN LAKE-NOXEN AREA

Plans for a new building program were launched by Lake-Lehman's school board at a meeting Tuesday evening which established endurance records by continuing until 11:30 p.m. The new school which is proposed for the Lake-Noxen area, represents the next step in the district's 10-year building plan.

U.G.I. Corp. announced plans this week to increase its power adjustment charge for electric utility customers to 1.113¢ per kilowatt hr. for February billings.