

EDITORIALS

Room for compromise on private-school busing

There's a move afoot in Harrisburg to remove the requirement that public school districts transport students to private schools within 10 miles of the district line. Actually, there's discussion about removing many of the "mandates" placed on local school districts on the theory that the costs to be saved will translate into lower property taxes. In some cases this may be true, although there's really no way to be certain absent real experience.

It's useful to recall what circumstances led to the imposition of state mandates. Many of them came into being because local districts weren't living up to their obligation to offer equal access to education for all students. Handicapped access and special education are the foremost examples. Others were simply a means to shift expenses from the state to the local level, so state officials could duck the expense — and taxes — necessary to maintain and expand educational opportunities. Now the chicken has come home to roost, and taxpayers see the mandates only as a cost imposed from above, but not funded from the same place.

It would be easy to view the busing question this way, or even from a more philosophical plane. Why, the question is posed, should public school taxpayers be forced to fund transportation for children who attend private schools? If their parents think the public schools aren't good enough for their kids, let them bear the cost of getting them to and from class. As in physics, though, there's an equal and opposite response; why should families who pay taxes to the public school but spare them the expense of educating their children not expect at least this assistance. A little arithmetic will illustrate the argument. Dallas provides transportation for 441 private-school students. If they all went to public schools, the district would need about 20 more teachers and classrooms than it now provides. The teachers alone would cost about \$1 million annually, well above what it costs for transportation.

This is a case where practical compromise outweighs principle. Perhaps the transportation mandate should be modified by reducing the distance outside a district's borders that busing is required, but removing it entirely won't serve anyone's interests.

Celebrate Woods' victory, and our nation's progress

It is fitting that Tiger Woods' triumph at the Master's golf tournament came only a few days before the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson's entry into Major League Baseball. But let's not assume there's a great deal of connection between the two events, other than the fact that two men of great character shattered the conventional wisdom of their eras. Woods doesn't make a big display of his black heritage, but he does honor the pioneers like Lee Elder and Charlie Sifford who came before him. He appears to recognize that he's from a multi-racial background and relatively comfortable circumstances. It was different for Robinson. He played at a time when other people's bigotry kept him and his brothers from the big leagues, no matter how good their skills, and the subsequent demolition of that attitude is due in no small part to his determination to succeed in baseball and in life.

It is a tribute to the progress that has been made in this nation that Tiger Woods could arrive on the scene a full-fledged hero to children of all races and colors, and not have to fight his way to acceptance. Despite what you may read elsewhere, America is a more tolerant nation than it was 50 or even 20 years ago, and the continued presence of people like Jackie Robinson and Tiger Woods will assure our continued advance to becoming a truly color-blind society.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



the Hale-Bopp comet in my lifetime. I've really enjoyed going outside in the evenings to watch this huge smudge of light make its way around the solar system. Even though it's about 10 times farther away than the last visible comet (That one was so lame I can't even recall its name), Hale-Bopp is much brighter, and its location makes it easy to spot on clear nights. Hale-Bopp is such an inspiration, I went out and bought a telescope a couple of weeks ago, just in time to spend a couple of sub-freezing evenings on the deck looking at the comet and other stellar delights. Actually, the 'scope was a little disappointing; you stare into an eyepiece so tiny that the comet, while sharper, looks less impressive than with the naked eye.

It's a shame that a cult like the Heaven's Gate group saw this stunning natural phenomenon as anything more than a passing bit of mysterious beauty. Of course there's plenty of reinforcement for the crazy beliefs they held; I heard the other day that about a third of the viewers of the X-Files television show think the stories are true. That's a really sad commentary on the state of our collective education and ability to discriminate truth from fiction, but I'm afraid it's widespread. Have UFO's visited Earth? Until I see one, and shake hands with an alien who steps down the gangplank, count me as a skeptic. Does life exist on other planets? I tend to think it does, though the distance between them and us would be too great for anything (anyone?) to make regular visits.



The cows of Poverty Hollow, Franklin Township. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

A simple sunset inspires friendship and a story

Ellen Machovec was so impressed by the bond formed by two women and a sunset at Meadows Manor, she decided to capture the moment by writing the following story.

It was an ordinary Sunday evening at The Meadows Manor in Dallas, PA. The dinner hour began in the usual way. All of the residents gathered into the dining room within a few minutes of each other. The dinner was cheerfully served. Everyone appeared to enjoy their meal, as well as the conversation around the tables.

As my co-worker and I were finishing our dinner, I overheard two residents conversing. They both wanted to watch the sunset before going to the lounge to watch the evening news and a movie.

I was struck by an apparent friendship that was developing between these two residents. They left the dinner table together and



Drawing by Emily Machovec

gingerly walked to the chair by the patio door. One woman sat on the chair, the other on the arm of the chair.

As they watched the sunset, it was apparent that they enjoyed each other's company. They seemed comfortable with the con-



Ellen Machovec, with her children Emily and Thomas.

versation as well as the silence between them. Only six weeks earlier they did not know one another. Yet now their lives were connected by their new residence. The Meadows Manor was now home for these two women. Six weeks earlier they were strangers. Yet, this Sunday evening their new friendship seemed to be cemented

in watching the sunset together.

As I said, I thought it was an ordinary Sunday evening. However, after watching two women in the winter season of their lives watch a sunset together, the evening was no longer ordinary for me.

As I observed these two women, I was reminded of the need for beauty, friendship, belonging, and hope, regardless of one's season in life. That Sunday evening these two women, unknowingly gave me a special gift.

They reminded me that life is full of beautiful sunrises and sunsets and that with each new day there is a new measure of hope.

Most of all, I was reminded by their example, that we all need to take time out of our busy lives to embrace the beauty that surrounds us.

Ellen Machovec, Dallas Employee of Meadows Manor

ONLY YESTERDAY

60 Years Ago - April 23, 1937 IREM TEMPLE TO SELECT CADDIES FOR COURSE

If a sufficient number of recruits can be enlisted locally, Irem Country Club will select its caddies from among Dallas boys this year. Ted Weisser, golf pro at the club announced. In the past the majority of the caddies have been boys from towns in the valley. Weisser reported this week he wants to meet any local boys, 14 years of age who have the qualifications for good caddies. They should report to the golf shop as soon as possible so they can be trained before the season opens.

Shavertown firemen will meet Monday evening in the Shavertown school to discuss further plans for the purchase of a site in the township and the construction of a new firemen's home. A committee will report on the results of its survey since the last meeting two weeks ago.

LIBRARY NEWS

The staff of the Back Mountain Memorial Library entertained at a Volunteer Tea on Friday, April 4 in the community room at the library. The tea was held in recognition of and in appreciation of our 'circulation volunteers'. These people are our 'front desk angels'. They help with the necessary work

50 Years Ago - April 25, 1947 MONTROSE APPOINTED MUSIC DIRECTOR

Ms. Margaret Merrell of Montrose, until last year director of Women's Reserve Marine Corps Band has been appointed director of music at Lake Township Schools. A graduate of Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY, she plays all band instruments but specializes in the clarinet.

After some unknown intruder had killed and carried off several of his mature ducks, Paul Williams of Pikes Creek set a steel trap near the body of a dead duck to catch the culprit. On Sunday when he examined the trap he found in it a golden eagle with wing spread of six feet, 10 inches. The eagle was dead and Williams has lost no more ducks.

Now playing at Shaver Theatre, "Undercurrent" with Robert Taylor, Robert Mitchum and Katherine Hepburn.

40 Years Ago - April 19, 1957 MOTORISTS FINED FOR RECKLESS DRIVING

Three Back Mountain motorists were arrested and fined \$25 each and \$5 costs for passing a Kingston Township School bus discharging school children near Harter's Dairy in Trucksville. All

three were traveling on the heavily trafficked four lane highway approaching the bus which was stopped in the far right lane heading in the opposite direction. All were unaware that they were violating the new State Law regarding overtaking an approaching or approaching a stopped school bus.

Mill Street between Main Street and Memorial Highway was posted with one way traffic signs this week. Traffic will not be permitted to enter Mill Street from Memorial Highway but may enter from Main Street.

You could get - Whole hams, 59¢ lb.; Beltsville turkeys, 6-12 lb. avg., 47¢ lb.; eggs, 53¢ doz.; oranges, doz. 49¢; Heinz ketchup, 14-oz. btl., 25¢; Ocean Spray cranberry sauce, 2-16 oz cans, 41¢.

30 Years Ago - April 20, 1967 KINGSTON TOWNSHIP LOWERS PER CAPITA TAX

Kingston Township Board of Supervisors lowered both the per capita tax and millage at their regular meeting last week, easing the tax burden of community residents. Per capita was reduced \$5 per head to \$2 and millage cut 3 mills to 4.65. Action was taken in anticipation of earned income tax receipts.

A series of loud explosions at 11:30 p.m. awakened residents in Kingston Township and Dallas and

frightened those who are late in retiring. A car sped along Pioneer Avenue and on into Dallas slowing briefly to toss cherry bombs along the way. Chief Herbert Updyke warns that a loss of life may result from the indiscriminate practice and violators will be prosecuted

20 Years Ago - April 21, 1977 LEMMOND PROPOSES LOW RENT HOUSING IN BORO

Dallas Borough solicitor Charles Lemmond will discuss in detail a proposed low rent housing project for the elderly with Charles Sickler of the Luzerne County Housing Authority before Dallas Borough Council enters any agreement with the Authority for construction of the housing facilities in the borough.

Sr. Ann Miriam Gallagher, RSM, president of College Misericordia in Dallas announced Tuesday that the college has been named the prime contractor for a state training program that will involve over \$200,000 in funds and will cover a 15-county area of Northeast Pennsylvania. The State contract calls for the college to provide special training for staff personnel of area agencies on aging that will increase the effectiveness of the delivery of services to the aging in Northeast Pennsylvania

Library staff honors volunteer 'angels'

involved with the returned library materials and the process involved with making the books ready for shelving and accessible for the borrowers. Our special thanks go to Cleo, Betty, Rita, June, Carolyn, Shirley, Elda, Jean, Fran, Mary Ann, Ann, Diane, Mae, Agnes, Kathy, Molly, Jane and Rosemary. Each of these volunteers has their special day and time when they do their particular specialties. We appreciate them so much. "Volunteers are unpaid, not because they are worthless—but because they are Priceless!"

New books: "Small Voices" by Robert B. Parker is a novel that is

both galvanizing action-suspense and a complex meditation on morality and mortality, as Spenser's very future hangs in the balance. Ellis Alves is a bad kid from the 'hood' with a long, long record; but could he commit murder? "McNally's Gamble" by Lawrence Sanders is about Archy McNally, a raffish combination, who is the most delightful and beloved character in the book. He lives a life most people only dream about. He keeps tabs on the rich and famous, while keeping hours only a barfly could love. High drama and high jinks. "The Ordinary Seaman" by

Francisco Goldman is an unsettling and beautiful story about life, death and love. The seaman is Esteban, a 19 year old veteran of the war in Nicaragua who has come to America to form the crew of the boat, Urus, with 14 other men. The Urus is a wreck and the men prisoners.

"Endangered Species" by Nevada Barr begins with the crash of the drug interdiction plane on an isolated Georgia Island.

Park ranger Anna Pigeon is the investigator and involves the 'locked room' plot and creates a harrowing tale of crimes and divided loyalties.

If you missed *The Post* - you missed the news!

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
Jessica Appolo ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC	Kylie Shafferkoetter REPORTER
Paul Rismiller PRODUCTION MANAGER	Olga Kostrobala CLASSIFIED/TYPESSETTING
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PRINTED WITH SOYINK

NNA NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER EXCELLENCE AWARD