

EDITORIALS

# We can compete at math, if we really want to

The most recent study of high school students' math and science performance found the U.S. sorely lacking in these skills, which are so critical to our future. Unlike prior comparisons, which could be somewhat explained away by the large number of U.S. students taking the S.A.T. and other tests, this one was only among those taking advanced classes. Our students ranked near or at the bottom among "developed" nations, which included Cyprus and South Africa, the only two nations we were ahead of.


But before we panic, let's take a look at some students at Dallas High School who are near the top in a nationwide advanced math contest, and the factors that contribute to such a high level of performance. Chief among those factors are students who want to learn, and teachers who will challenge them to perform at their best. In our freelance educational system, those conditions are present at random, since we have no national standards and teachers are expected to reach. Some people call this "freedom," but in truth it's foolish to rely on each of thousands of school districts nationwide to establish their own criteria when most other nations use standards to insure that their students achieve the level of skill necessary in our technological world.

This isn't to say that we should expect all students to be mathematical geniuses; another of our shortcomings is an unwillingness to segregate students by aptitude and ability, so that too many good students are reined in by classes that advance at the pace of their slowest members, some of whom would be better off learning a trade or craft instead of struggling to earn passing grades in disciplines they'll never make use of.

Much is also made of how highly valued — and paid — teachers are in some nations. In return, though, they are expected to maintain high levels of skill and achievement, a prospect that seems bleak at best in America when teachers' unions appear to have little or no concern with anything except pay levels.

We should be grateful for families and teachers that aren't satisfied to go through the motions of education, but who expect more from themselves. We can't be content to ride on their backs, though, in a world filled with people eager to replace us at the top of the economic food chain.

**Publisher's notebook**



**Ron Bartizek**

I know one incontrovertible fact in the entire Bill Clinton/Ken Starr/Monica Lewinsky/Paula Jones/Vernon Jordan/Betty Currie/Sidney Blumenthal/etc., etc., etc. saga - no one is telling the whole truth. Saga is too kind a word for this foolish episode in American political life; if it was fiction it would be called farce, since it isn't possible to imagine so many smart people acting so stupidly.

We dimwitted unsophisticates in bumpkinland look at some of the slant Washington reporters put on this story and scratch our heads in amazement. They think we just don't get it; I think we do. For instance, why does every low-level aide who is called to testify have to retain a high-powered lawyer? Are they unable to tell the truth without the assistance of legal counsel? Not to mention, of course, that it's hard to fathom what most of these people could offer Starr's inquisitors anyway.

Then there's the report that the investigation is in big trouble because ... Starr's approval ratings are low! Pardon me, but isn't he an "Independent Counsel," and wasn't the whole reason the office was created to place investigators outside the political sphere? Now, it's easy to argue that this particular chief inquisitor has on occasion gone way too far, but even so, his success or failure will hinge on the quality of evidence, not his popularity.

Don't get me wrong, I've watched Bill Clinton weasel his way out of so many escapades that I'm no longer among the majority that thinks he's a good President despite his failings. I think my lucky stars I'm not a "Friend of Bill." I couldn't afford it! Perhaps most disturbing, I've never seen anyone in public office so quick to pin else his troubles on someone else. The latest is his loyal secretary, who we are told struck up a close friendship with a ditzzy intern, then took it upon herself to suggest the President buy her gifts, following which she called in the First Pal to help find her a cushy job. Sure.

**Memo to the staff:** It's important you be aware that we do not employ the services of an arbitrator to mediate disputes between you and me, so don't expect that after you try to wring my neck you'll be reinstated with a small fine and suspension. Unlike the National Basketball Association, in which the ability to throw a ball through a hoop makes criminal tendencies irrelevant, we have certain standards for behavior. 1. Cursing about the boss under your breath, even occasionally out loud, is acceptable, as long as it's not in the presence of customers. 2. Stomping off is also okay, as long as you don't come back with a weapon. 3. If you plan to come back with a weapon, please call ahead first.

## Your Sports & News items are welcomed at The Post

**The Dallas Post**

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

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PRINTED WITH SOYINK

NATIONAL NEWS PAPER ASSOCIATION

PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION



Rain, snow and years show on the old Falls post office. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

## Authorities want to be aware of mail scams

**Editor:**  
Several weeks ago, I read an interesting article regarding attempts by con-artists to clean out bank accounts of unsuspecting people by offers to split excess funds held in foreign (usually Nigerian) bank accounts. These offers usually point out that there are vast amounts of left-over funds, often from construction or petroleum projects totaling many millions of dollars, and officials are looking for a way to get it "offshore".

As you noted, people who fall for the scam provide their bank account, thinking they will get 10, 20 or even 30% of the proceeds electronically transferred into

their account. At that point the victims own account is cleaned out, either electronically or via bank payment draft. Very often, victims are asked to front some of the legal costs involved in the scam transaction.

I thought it might be helpful to point out that Federal Authorities want to be made aware of these offers. Currently, these types of scams fall under the authority of the U.S. Secret Service, Financial Crimes Division. The scam offers, which usually come in brown envelopes postmarked Lagos, Nigeria, can be forwarded to:

Fax: US Secret Service FCD - 1-202-435-7481

Mail: US Secret Service FCD, 1800 G Street N.W. Room 942, Washington, D.C. 20223.

If you are a victim you should call at 1-202-435-5490.

Further info can be found at the Secret Service website: <http://www.treas.gov/usss/>

As your article pointed out, you should never provide detailed financial information to anyone who asks you unless you are absolutely sure of the nature of the relationship and who you are dealing with.

George G. Conyngham, Jr.  
Vice-President, Eastern Pa. Supply Co.

## Have time, talent? Donate it to the auction

By KAREN BOBACK

When we think of "donations" to a cause we often think in terms of finance. While monetary contributions are certainly desirable and welcome, we often forget our personal resources and abilities which can be just as valuable. Being the Back Mountain Memorial Library's Antiques Chairperson for the 52nd annual auction allows me to participate in the biggest library fundraiser of the year. Would you consider donating some of your time and talents with me?

If you have ever attended the annual event (what Back Mountain resident hasn't?), then you have some idea of the work involved in the entire auction process. But, seeing the beautiful antiques "go over the block" did you ever consider the effort that goes into their manicure? Here is where you can help.

If you can refinish, rewire, re-glue, upholster, sew, polish (silver, brass, or copper), or have an affinity for tole painting, have I got a project for you! You can help by "signing out" one item. If this item can triple its investment because of your loving care and expertise, than what a contribution you have



Karen Boback checked a lamp that needs help before it can go over the auction block.

made to our wonderful institution!

I am not concerned with original pieces that have not only survived wars but have been cared for and coddled throughout the years. After all it is the integrity of antiquated items that gives them their true value. Instead I am seeking

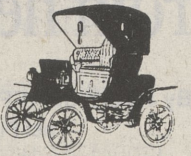
help for those pieces that time has abused and need a "face-lift."

For example, an old chest of drawers does not an antique make, but painted with scenery or storybook characters changes the donated chest of drawers (which may bring \$10 at the auction) into a lovely home accessory that could bring over \$100!

Wouldn't you like to share your talents and help make the 1998 Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction one of the best yet? If you would, please add your name to our list of "Library Angels" by calling me at 639-2265. I'll show you the pieces that could use some tender love and care and, if you are willing to help, your time would be greatly appreciated. (You have until July!)

Please consider making a "talent contribution" today. Your library needs you!

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Mr. 18, 1938  
**POSSIBLE ADDITION FOR DALLAS BORO. SCHOOL**

A plan for the erection of a two story addition on the Franklin Street side of Dallas Borough High School building, was submitted to the State Dept. of Education for approval by the local school board this week. If there are no unforeseen delays, the contract will be awarded within three months. The job will be started as a PWA project. Cost to the school district has been estimated at approximately \$9,000.

The treasurer of Kingston Township School District reported at a meeting this week that all insurance claims amounting to \$46,900 have been paid on the building in Trucksville which burned several months ago. The money was placed in a new account to be called "The new building fund".

50 Years Ago - Mar. 19, 1948  
**TAX ON JUKE BOXES PROPOSED IN LAKE TWP.**

There will be an open forum meeting at Lake Township High School March 25 at 8 to discuss the new tax laws. School Board would like to have all taxpayers present so that the proposed tax on juke box machines, vending machines, and amusements can be thoroughly discussed. The Lake Board has proposed to tax amusements one cent of every 10 cents admission charge and has proposed to tax juke boxes, pin-ball machines and similar devices \$25 per year.

P.M. Malkemes, Trucksville, was appointed school director of Kingston Township schools at a special meeting of the school board this week. The vacancy occurred with the resignation of Thomas Ayre of Trucksville March 1. Mr. Ayre moved to Gettysburg where he has established a business.

40 Years Ago - Mar. 14, 1958  
**MIDGET RACE TRACK TO BE BUILT IN DALLAS**

Work will begin within the next week to 10 days on the new Quarter Midget Race Track at Dallas Outdoor Theatre. The track will be located in front of the big screen and will have an 88 foot straightaway and will probably be surrounded by bleachers. This newest Back Mountain venture is a sport already popular in many sections of the country.

Lehman-Jackson-Ross joint board gave contracts to two dairies for milk for the coming school year at Tuesday's board meeting. Both contracts were already in effect for '57 and '58, Chase Dairy for Lehman delivery, Huntington Dairy for the elementary school at Sweet Valley. Bids for supplies will be advertised shortly.

30 Years Ago - Mar. 21, 1968  
**LEHMAN TOWNSHIP TO BUILD NEW POST OFFICE**

Dan Flood announces that bids for construction of a new Post Office in Lehman will be invited March 26 with bids to be opened in Philadelphia, April 29. The new office in Lehman Center within two blocks of the present Post Office Building will have 768 square feet interior space.

No swimming pool for the new Dallas Junior High School was the decision of Dallas School District at a special meeting Tuesday. The vote was close five against the expense, four in favor. Bond issue as a result of the meeting will be for \$4,500,000 instead of the projected \$5 million.

You could get - Sirloin steaks, 89¢ lb.; Virginia Lee Apple Pies, 3/\$1; Carnation Cofree Mate, 6-oz. jar, 43¢; pascal celery, 2 lg. stalks 29¢.

20 Years Ago - Mar. 16, 1978  
**DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS HIRED**

Dallas School Board directors approved the appointment of two district professional employees to the position of senior and junior high school principals effective July 1, at Monday's meeting. Edgar Hughes, presently assistant principal of the senior high and Fred Case, assistant principal of the junior high was named principal of that building. Although the board has approved the appointment of the two men, it is up to the appointees to decide whether or not they will accept. Since both are assistant principals within the district, Chairman Ashbridge stated that the committee will now seek applicants for positions of junior and senior high assistant principals.