

## EDITORIALS

## Police officers in schools? The younger, the better

In response to a perceived more dangerous environment in schools, the Dallas School District is considering the placement of local police officers in school buildings. Under the plan, unarmed officers dressed casually but sporting a badge would become a common presence in schools. While they would be able to intervene in specific cases as needed, the greater effect, according to school officials, is to promote interaction between students and the police, so both sides can gain a greater understanding and respect for one another.

Dallas has not had an overabundance of discipline problems, and the district was mostly spared during the rash of dangerous foolishness that followed the killings in Colorado this spring. In that tragic incident, an armed police officer stationed at Columbine High School was apparently little help in stemming a murderous student rampage. But it seems the Dallas plan is less about scaring potential miscreants than it is about building a bridge of trust between students and police.

A couple of generations ago, when people were more likely to live in cities and towns than in suburbs, the beat cop was a regular feature of most neighborhoods. His (it was all men at that time, now it's not) presence served many purposes — to reassure law-abiding people that protection was nearby, to dissuade would-be criminals from acting, and to demonstrate that the police are a natural and necessary part of society. Today, areas like the Back Mountain are scattered with "developments," places with lots of homes, but no sidewalks, shops and institutions to tie them together. As a result, the local police must depend on cars to get them around from one place to another, isolating them from incidental contact with the people they serve.

One result is that most young children are frightened of police officers, who they know only from depictions on television, whether the news or a weekly show. Those caricatures don't lend themselves to trust and respect, because they don't include everyday contact and interaction.

What the Dallas School District proposes could be at least a small step toward rebuilding the comfortable trust that should exist between law enforcement and the community at large, especially if it begins with officers in elementary schools, where impressions are strongest.

## This is victory?

So, this is victory. A million people displaced from their homes, thousands murdered, their villages and cities destroyed by bombs and shells, a ruthless dictator still comfortably in power. Only a leader like Bill Clinton and his cast of unprincipled followers would dare proclaim this victory.

Did some good come out of the tragedy in Kosovo? Sure, thankfully, some always does. In this case, the fact that the enlarged NATO alliance held firm was a plus, although the price of solidarity was an anemic response to unspeakable violence. But even that was a big improvement from other times, when the civilized world stood by as the Holocaust and other sickening events took place. Still, should we call this . . .

victory? The only clear point was that few Americans or allied soldiers were counted among the casualties. Thus, by Bill Clinton's standard of self-preservation, this was victory because *we* didn't get hurt. Thousands of Kosovars, who we supposedly were helping, apparently could be sacrificed for that end, as long as we came out unharmed.

In the weeks Slobodan Milosevic massed troops at the border, preparing to attack, we "negotiated." When he invaded, killing and displacing people, we bombed bridges and buildings a hundred miles away, safely out of harm's way. When he was satisfied the renegade province had been reduced to rubble, he ran up a white flag, secure in the knowledge that we wouldn't remove him from power.

So, this is victory?

## LEGISLATORS' DIRECTORY

### Federal Officials

**Representative Paul E. Kanjorski**  
(Democrat)  
Wilkes-Barre: 825-2200  
Washington: (202) 225-6511  
e-mail: paul.kanjorski@hr.house.gov  
# 400M, 7 N. Wilkes-Barre Blvd., Wilkes-Barre PA 18702  
or 2353 Rayburn Building, Washington, DC 20515  
**Senator Arlen Specter**  
(Republican)  
Wilkes-Barre: 826-6265  
Washington: (202) 224-4254  
e-mail: senator\_specter@specter.senate.gov  
116 South Main Street, Wilkes-Barre PA 18701  
or 711 Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510  
**Senator Rick Santorum**  
(Republican)  
Scranton: 344-8799  
Washington: (202) 224-6324  
Fax: (202) 228-4991  
e-mail: senator@santorum.senate.gov  
527 Linden St., Scranton, PA 18503  
120 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510

### State Officials

**State Senator Charles D. Lemmond**  
(Republican)  
(717) 675-3931  
e-mail: smurphy@pasen.gov  
22 Dallas Shopping Ctr., Memorial Hwy., Dallas PA 18612-1231

**State Representative George Hasay**  
(Republican)  
287-7505 or 542-7345 or 474-2276 or 477-3752  
144 North Mountain Boulevard, Mountaintop PA 18707  
Hasay's district encompasses: Harveys Lake, Lehman Township, Jackson Township, Lake Township, Franklin Township, Ross Township, and Dallas Township's north voting district.

**State Representative Phyllis Mundy**  
(Democrat)  
283-9622 or 655-3375  
Suite 113, 400 Third Avenue, Kingston PA 18704  
Mundy's district encompasses: Dallas Borough, Dallas Township except for the north voting district, and Kingston Township.



Barn at the side of the road. Mountain View Drive, Lehman Township. Photo by Ron Bartizek

## A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

When I was in elementary school, geography was relegated to some sort of second cousin of history. I enjoyed learning the names of countries (they've almost all changed since then!) and writing them on the maps of the continents. But, after the test, we really didn't use any of that information, and we were never taught the importance of it. That has changed. In recent years, schools have begun to participate in the Geography Bee sponsored by the National Geographic Society. The national finals are hosted by the same person who hosts Jeopardy! No distant cousin now!

One of the biggest changes in the last thirty-some years has been the realization that geographic information is critically important to decisions made by governments, industries, and all manner of other organizations. And, once this importance was recognized, people began to devise ways of putting various types of information together in a coherent form that

## GIS: Hi-tech tools we can use

could be used by decision-makers and understood by the general public. Personal computers, color printers, satellite imagery, and the Internet have all facilitated this development.

Geographic information systems - or GIS, for short - are computer-based systems which are used to store and manipulate any information which has a location component. Maps of soils and topography can be layered together with aerial photographs so that agricultural or forestry practices can be assessed. In fact, the first national-scale GIS was begun in Canada in the 1960s to keep track of the extensive cropland in that huge country. It has continued to evolve into the Canada Land Data System and includes information on forestry, wildlife and recreation. This system is copied by nations and organizations around the world including the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

The real beauty of GIS is that these systems can be tailored to the needs and goals of the user. They are just as useful to a county or city as they are to countries or international organizations. Since the old adage "information is power" is much more than a truism, GIS can be a tool in efforts to restore justice and to regain control within political systems which tend to be autocratic. Environ-

mental uses of GIS are almost unlimited - local and global, industrial and community organizational, scientific and cultural. Let me give you some examples.

The city of Atlanta has used a relatively simple GIS known as "CITYgreen" to determine that the 20 percent reduction in vegetation cover they experienced from 1986 to 1993 cost the city 2 billion dollars in storm water containment facilities alone! The city is also determining how trees influence cooling costs; where parks and other greenspaces are needed, what the real problems of sprawl are, etc., with the help of GIS. This intersection of population dynamics, climatic data, satellite photographs, and maps of various services can be accomplished quite easily with the help of computer systems, but would be virtually impossible to do by hand or calculator.

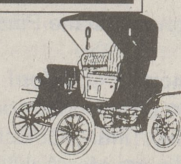
Foresters are some of the most frequent users of GIS. In the USA, the Forest Service has been able to keep track of changes in its holdings on a time period much shorter than the 20 year cycle required under the old system. Now they can see changes in forest health and extent on a weekly or monthly scale. They still have foresters on the ground checking on the reliability of the satellite images, but these foresters are able to go directly to areas of con-

cern instead of cruising (that's a forestry term; it does not refer to driving around and around public square) the entire forest.

It was recently learned that the Russians were underestimating the extent and nature of the fires in their boreal forests by as much as 90 percent. Satellite images were compared with maps of the officially monitored areas. These underestimates were understandable since forest managers in Russia are given incentives for good fire suppression. However, because a large portion of the world's boreal forests are in Russia and because crown fires (those reaching the tops of trees) in boreal forests add a great deal of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, it is essential for scientists to know the total size of the areas affected by these fires.

Maps have always been interesting to people. GIS can make maps even more useful than before. Therefore, whether you are a sales person interested in maximizing coverage of your territory or a land manager looking to allow development of the least ecologically sensitive land, you may find these tools invaluable. Just make sure you get good advice on the kind of software you need or hire a qualified firm to handle your work so that you can depend on the accuracy and relevance of the final product.

## ONLY YESTERDAY



### 70 Years Ago - June 15, 1929 TRAGEDY AVERTED AT LAKE AS TRUCK CATCHES FIRE

One of the large Tarvia tank trucks being used by the State Department of Highways, to oil the road between Harveys Lake picnic grounds and the Wyoming County Line, caught fire Wednesday afternoon on Main Street. Dallas and caused considerable excitement before the flames could be extinguished. The truck was not seriously damaged. Had the truck burned a little longer, it is believed that the Tarvia tank would have exploded and probably have caused loss of life and serious damage to the business section of town.

### 60 Years Ago - June 16, 1939 MANHATTAN PLAYERS DRAW RAVE REVIEWS

Enthusiastic praise was heard on all sides for the Manhattan

Players who opened this week for the season and who expect to duplicate this week's success when they appear in "In Love With Love" starting Monday evening. The new Theatre, the first at the Lake, is located in the old H.L. Supply Co. on the Kunkle Road. The new amusement center is one of the most attractive in this part of the country and is expected to draw patrons of the spoken drama from Montrose to Berwick.

Now playing at the Himmler Theatre, "Dodge City" with Errol Flynn and Olivia DeHaviland.

### 50 Years Ago - June 17, 1949 FLACK APPOINTED TO PA LOCAL GOV'T. COMMISSION

Honorable Harold E. Flack, Representative in the State Assembly from the Sixth Legislative District has been honored with an appointment to the Pennsylvania Local Government Commission according to an announcement made by Herbert P. Sorg, Speaker of the House. Local Government Commission has been in existence for a number of years and has an enviable record of accomplishment.

You could get - Sirlain steaks, 69¢ lb.; Long Island Ducklings, 37¢ lb.; Bing cherries, 29¢ lb.; pascal celery, lg. bnch, 19¢; Supreme Bread, lg. loaf 13¢; mild

Cheddar cheese, 45¢ lb..

### 40 Years Ago - June 11, 1959 MCCRORY'S TO OPEN STORE IN BMT SHOPPING CENTER

Edward Eyermer announced yesterday that Eyermer & Fine owners of Back Mountain Shopping Center, Shavertown will shortly start construction of a large new unit at the northern end of the present center. The new unit with a frontage of 85 feet and depth of 125 will be occupied late this fall by McCrory's Variety Store, a national chain which also has a store in Gateway Shopping Center, Kingston.

Lake-Lehman area jointure adopted a budget and a school calendar, placed orders for typewriters and authorized employment of a new elementary school teacher Tuesday. In a surprise motion, it took the important step of passing a resolution to proceed at once with plans for a building project.

### 30 Years Ago - June 19, 1969 DALLAS SCHOOL BOARD CONSIDERS WATER OPTIONS

Cost of bottled water supplied to Trucksville and Westmoreland Elementary Schools as a result of inadequate and potentially dangerous water supplied by

Trucksville Water Co. during the past year prompted School Director Andy Kozemchak to urge a hard-line policy with that company at the recent school board meeting. Maintaining that purchase of bottled water represented a legitimate charge in view of the State's refusal, through its Health Dept. to approve for use water supplied by the Water Co. Kozemchak suggested that it would be less costly in the long run to drill wells at each of the schools.

### 20 Years Ago - June 14, 1979 NEW BUDGET INCLUDES TAX INCREASE IN LAKE-LEHMAN

Lake-Lehman school directors adopted a \$4,823,474 1979/80 budget at their regular meeting Tuesday. The 89 mill budget represents a six mill increase over this year's budget.

A Harveys Lake business has changed hands. On June 2, Nick and Nancy DiVeronica purchased Puterbaugh's Store from Miss Eleanor Puterbaugh who has owned and operated the general grocery store for years. DiVeronica a plumbing and heating contractor says he plans to change the name to DiVeronica's Sunset Grocery Store but will continue to provide the fine service given by Miss Puterbaugh.

## The Dallas Post

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

Ronald A. Bartizek  
PUBLISHER  
Gregory Culver  
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC  
Ruth Proietto  
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Charlotte E. Bartizek  
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER  
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