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HARBINGER OF THE IBM TYPEWRITER—Charles W. Wiant, owner and operator of the Wiant Museum of Pleasant Valley, demonstrates an antique typewriter that used a cylindrical type hammer similar to the circular ball currently in use in IBM electric typewriters.

Photo by Randy Steele

40 mph on Dallas-Luzerne Highway: legally enforceable or not?

Is the 40-mile speed limit on the Dallas-Luzerne Highway legally enforceable?

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation says that it is and that it is properly posted. According to their interpretation it is properly posted and arrests may be made by the Pennsylvania State Police under sub-section 1002-8 of the Motor Vehicle Code.

Atty. John Aponick, Jr., Shavertown, recently arrested the second time for exceeding the speed limit on the 40-mile speed limit section of the highway, believes that it is not. He has refused to answer a recent citation issued by District Magistrate Earl Gregory and reportedly stated that he would refuse to pay any fine.

Following his first arrest, Aponick took his case to the Luzerne County Court and was heard before Judge Bernard Podcasy, who ruled that Aponick was not guilty.

In accordance with the judge's ruling, Magistrate Gregory found those who appeared before him charged with exceeding the 40-mile limit, not guilty. As a result, the State

Police stopped arresting motorists along that section of the highway.

Gregory said that when Aponick appealed his case, Judge Podcasy ruled that the section of the highway should be posted under sub-section 1002B-4, which means that the responsibility of posting the speed limit belonged to local municipalities. The state police are not charged with enforcing the speed limit under this sub-section. Since three municipalities are involved along the stretch in controversy, this could mean three different postings.

The only difference in penalties between the sub-sections 1002B-8 and 1002B-4 is that under B-8, an operator found guilty would have his operator's license suspended. Under B-4, an operator found guilty would receive points. The fine is the same under both sections.

Sgt. Joseph Derwin, traffic control, Wyoming Barracks, told the Post that following legal advertisement, the state police followed orders of the Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation Jacob Kassab and resumed radar enforcement on the

Dallas-Luzerne Highway.

District Magistrate Gregory stated that a second person arrested after Aponick's first citation by the state police appealed to the same judge in an identical situation to Aponick's on the same section of highway, and this time Judge Podcasy found the man guilty, ruling it was under B-8. So, until further decisions are handed down by the courts, the Gregory said he will hear violations as defined under sub-section 1002B-8 of the code.

The original request for a 40-mile speed limit of the highway came from Kingston Township Police following petitions from township residents. The final decision to post the highway at the reduced speed was made following a study by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation including number of accidents on the highway, residential areas, business centers, and other factors, which they felt indicated the need for a reduced speed. Unofficially, some police officers have indicated they do not agree with the present speed limit believing it can be as much of a hazard as the 55-mile limit.

10-cent opium ad, rock that bends featured in Wiant museum

by Randy Steele

In 1876 for a meager 10 cents you could walk in New York's famous Bloomingdale's department store on any business day and purchase a small amount of opium, usually for medicinal purposes.

Medicinal or not, what may be most fascinating about this information is that it is not hidden in some big city's dusty archives but in a book in a little house in Luzerne County's Pleasant Valley.

To be more exact, this book along with dozens of other ledgers and books is available for anyone to read at the 'museum-home' of Charles W. Wiant, owner, operator and originator for the past 17 years of the Wiant Museum.

The museum serves as a haven for more than 6,000 Indian relics from 15 states. There is also an impressive collection of mounted animals and birds, Civil War relics, some fossils and minerals, butterfly and insect collections and a variety of other paraphernalia.

Wiant, aged well into his 80's, has been collecting for the past 58 years with the help of his wife, Jessica. He

also deals in antiques and has acquired a number of his museum pieces from other antique dealers as well as loans and donations.

The museum itself is only two small rooms stacked to the ceiling with endless piles of bric-a-brac. A few lamps serve as the only sources of light, casting a dull earthy color of the scene. The rooms seemed on the verge of spilling their contents and the slightest misplaced movement would let loose a cascade of feathers and arrowheads.

"We need another room," suggested Wiant as he examined the layout of his fossil specimens. "Look down there. There's a rock that bends."

He proceeded to point to a slab of stone that when picked up would bend in the middle almost like a thick chunk of rubber.

The walls are littered with dozens of stuffed birds and mounted animals. Wiant added that he had performed almost all the taxidermy himself. He had picked up the craft from an old German while he worked for the

wildlife service in the South for over 30 years.

His favorite pieces are the Indian relics. To date he has procured 56 cases of arrowheads, some of highly colored jasper and flint among with spears, beads and larger artifacts, mostly from Southern tribes.

Friends talked Wiant into putting his hobbies on display. "Keeps our minds off our aches and pains," he added. "There's a six-legged frog in that jar. My son found it down South."

When asked why he located his museum in such an out-of-the-way location, Wiant responded that he and his wife would be too busy and are too old to handle the increase in business. More than 3,000 people visited the museum last year and it's listed in "Readers Digest" as a tourist attraction for the upcoming Bicentennial summer season. There is no admission charge. Wiant is pledged to keep the museum open as long as donations can keep the light and fuel bills paid. "We're just about making it now. I don't know what we'll do if (costs) get any worse."

Underneath a table sat a long row of flat irons. "We have almost every kind of flat and smoothing iron ever made. But here's one I'd never seen before until just recently." He stooped over and picked up a small but heavy rusted flat iron and proceeded to take it apart. "This plate comes out of here like this and you set it on the stove until it gets hot. Then you put it back in the iron and when it cools off you replace it."

Wiant's biggest problem is shoplifters. Last week someone stole an entire collection of old Dallas post cards. But his major lament concerned a robbery last October.

"I was sitting right there in that chair," as he pointed to a black

rocker. "It was in the afternoon and a large party had just left and I turned out the lights. I saw four men coming so I turned the lights back on. They came in and one of them walked to the back and picked on a display of corn and brought it up and asked me what kind it was. I told him he could turn it over and read it on the other side."

"Another one of them stood by this door at my back all the time. I couldn't see him. Then someone sprayed something in my face and they hit me with a karate chop in the back of the neck. I fell cold, face-first, right there on the floor."

"When I came to some of my best guns were gone. Four of them were irreplaceable. Between losing my guns and the shoplifters, some of the fun is gone."

The museum on the whole represents more time and work than money, however. "Here's a shovel we had sitting out on the porch." Wiant walked over to a corner and pulled up an old wooden shovel which was battered with gnawing marks. "I brought what was left of it inside. A porcupine got to it."

Behind a door in another corner of a small hallway stood a white hood with a tassel on the top. "The Ku Klux Klan used to be very strong in this area. Indiana was their real stronghold, you know. There was a lot here too. This mask was given to me along with some other things from the family of a man in Shavertown after he died. But I don't know of anyone in the county anymore who is a member."

Despite his years, the occasional frustrations and the robbery Wiant appears clear-minded and healthy. He continues to expand his museum modestly and does a lot of research on his hobby. His daughter lives nearby and helps with the sorting and

displays. Through the two children, the legacy of the museum will be intact.

Those wishing to visit may do so between the hours of 10 a.m. until dark

year around. The Wiant's are located on the Harveyville-Bethel Hill Road, off Route 118 between Pikes Creek and Ricketts Glen or off Route 239 just beyond Huntington Mills.



Photo by Randy Steele

DEATH SCENE—Found dead in their automobile last Thursday morning were Diane Drysdale and Steven Schuckers of possible carbon monoxide poisoning. Surveying the site above from left to right are Trooper Donald Tressler, Shickshinny Barracks, Coroner Joseph Schaffer and Trooper Frew.

Sweet Valley resident shot by unknown gunman

A Sweet Valley man was shot through the arm Tuesday morning between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m. by an unidentified assailant, when he walked to the back of his home.

Charles John Stockage, Jr., 39, RD 1, Hunlock Creek, Sweet Valley, in the vicinity of Updyke Trailer Park, reportedly heard his dogs barking and walked to the rear of his home to determine the reason for the noise. When he stepped out, the unknown assailant shot him through the arm.

The bullet reportedly passed through the arm and lodged near his heart.

Stockage was removed to Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston, by the Sweet Valley ambulance.

Late Tuesday the hospital reported that Stockage was in the Intensive Care Unit and his condition was serious.

Trooper Leonard Peterson of the Shickshinny State Police sub-station is conducting the investigation.

Dallas Township richest

Wonder about your neighbor's financial status?

Keeping up with the neighbor's financial status is generally a "by-guess and by-gosh" haphazard estimate, pursued almost universally by the curious.

The Back Mountain communities of Dallas, Dallas Township, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman Townships can now eliminate a little of the guesswork by referring to a study drawn from the 1970 U.S. Census and released this week by Jackson Township planning consultant Marlene M. Pawloski and Carol Kopf from her planning staff.

The Pawloski study indicated that Dallas Township is the richest in the Back Mountain, with nearly one-fourth of the families residing there earning a combined family income of \$15,000 or more.

Nearly 19 per cent (18.8) of the Dallas Township families reported incomes in 1970 between \$15,000 and \$24,999 and 4.3 per cent acknowledged incomes ranging from \$25,000 to \$49,000.

Only 1.5 per cent acknowledged earning more than \$50,000 per year, but the figure was still sufficient to give Dallas Township the Back Mountain leadership in that range. Throughout Luzerne County only 0.4 per cent of the population reported earnings in the \$25,000 to \$49,999 range and throughout Pennsylvania only 0.7 per cent.

Runner up to Dallas Township in the family income sweepstakes is Dallas Borough, according to the 1970 figures. Some 18.9 per cent of the

borough residents reported family incomes totaling more than \$15,000 per year. Only 2.3 per cent in the borough report annual earnings within the \$25,000 to \$49,999 range and 1.1 per cent in the more than \$50,000 bracket.

However, Dallas borough and Dallas township were the only surveyed municipalities reporting any families in the \$50,000 and up bracket. Jackson, Kingston and Lehman townships reported a statistical zero in that bracket.

The 1970 figures indicated that Jackson Township produced a statistical winner over Dallas borough in the \$15,000 to \$24,999 category with 3.3 per cent in that range as did Lehman Township with 2.9 in the

category. Kingston Township only showed 1.8 per cent with a family income in the \$15,000 to \$24,999 range.

Lehman Township equalled Dallas Borough percentage in the \$15,000 to \$24,999 range with 15.5 per cent followed by Kingston Township with 13.1 per cent and Jackson Township with 6.3 per cent in that range.

The validity of the 1970 figures is noteworthy only when used as a basis for comparing the incomes in the Back Mountain municipalities, assuming that each area has been similarly affected by increases in earnings. There are likely to be considerably larger per centages in the higher income ranges in 1976 and only future census figures will confirm the comparisons.

Jackson Twp. planning commission approves development

Following a joint meeting of the Jackson Township Municipal

Authority and the township's planning commission, March 29, the commission approved the preliminary plans of the Sutton Hill Association for a proposed development, subject to the approval of DER.

The Sutton Hill Association on March 15 submitted proposed plans for a residential development to the Planning Commission for their consideration and approval. The members of the association are John Churnetski, Henry Doran, Charles Hardwick, Clifford Melberger, and Richard Hogoboom.

Following a review of the plans, the association was notified by the planning commission that they would have to increase lot size and submit plans to the Jackson Township Municipal for further study concerning sewage treatment facilities.

At the joint meeting Monday night, the planning commission approved the preliminary plans with the change in lot size to 1.9 dwellings per acre accepted.