

both change and tradition

High School Band, and the music continued throughout the day, compliments of the Dallas High School Band. The Huntsville Christian School served a roast beef dinner in the Dallas Borough School.

Truly a barnyard auction, much livestock arrived at the grounds that morning. Among the animals was a registered Guernsey Bull donated by Col. Reynolds, sheep and pigs from Hillside Farm, baby chicks from Hilbert Hatchery, English and silver pheasants from Harry Ruggles, baby ducks from Wayside Duck Farm, pedigreed Spaniel from Dr. F. Budd Schooley, English shepherd puppy from Mrs. Gordon Yetter, racing pigeons from Nelson Garinger, and several types of rabbits.

There were only three booths at that first auction on June 7, 1947. The refreshment booth run by Mrs. Joseph Schmerer, the baked goods stand with Mrs. Harris Haycox as chairman, and a booth supervised by Mrs. Dana Crump

An Ithaca calendar clock, for example, has returned to the auction at least three times since it was the first item sold at the first auction. Purchased by Fred Howell for \$4, the clock was lovingly restored and put in working order, and returned 20 years later when it was purchased by Albert Davis for \$104. Returned by Mr. Davis for the 25th auction, the clock was sold over the block for \$305.

Herman Thomas is credited with starting another tradition which was especially enjoyable for the youngsters. Each year he donated a fluffy lamb, which he personally delivered in a buckboard wagon. As the story has it, each time the bidding went up a dollar, Herbert Hill Sr. would imitate the lamb's "baa".

A racoon coat has also returned to the auction block more than once. One year Dr. Sherman Schooley showed up at the auction wearing a full length racoon fur coat. Talked into donating it for sale, Dr.

While Newman dolls, paintings and antiques still go over the block, livestock do not. Animals are now discouraged, because they are difficult to auction. Occasionally, a kitten or puppy will show up in the Children's Auction, but often a young buyer returns in tears because he bought the pet without parental consent. Now, the more popular new items include quilts, lawnmowers and television sets. However, almost everything has gone over the block at one time or another. One of the more remembered items was an old commode with auctioneer John Vivian having a seat on it.

Auctioneers are responsible for instituting a tradition too. The second year of the auction the professional auctioneers were late returning from lunch. Howard Risley and Harry Ohlman took over and had so much fun that amateur auctioneers have remained a tradition. Some of the retired auctioneers include: Myron Backer, Doc Jordan, and Bob Bachman. Several of the most recent auctioneers are: Craig Aicher, Kerry Freeman, Sumner Bachman, Jim Eason, Jerry Fritzges, Bill Spurlin and John Rothschild.

Of course, not everything about the auction remains a tradition. Growth and change go hand-in-hand, and as the auction expands, the list of different activities and booths is long and varied. "The Book Stall," as it was named in 1951 when it was first launched, has remained a successful booth. Most people have come to know the book booth and its supervisor, Mrs. Crump, as an "institution" of the library. The baked goods booth and the candy booth are favorites, featuring Welsh cookies and homemade fudge. The Odds 'n Ends booth gets larger each year, and the items more odd.

A fruit-and-yogurt booth was tried one year, as was the ice cream truck from Hillside Farms. Funnel cakes and fresh squeezed lemonade also made an appearance from time to time.

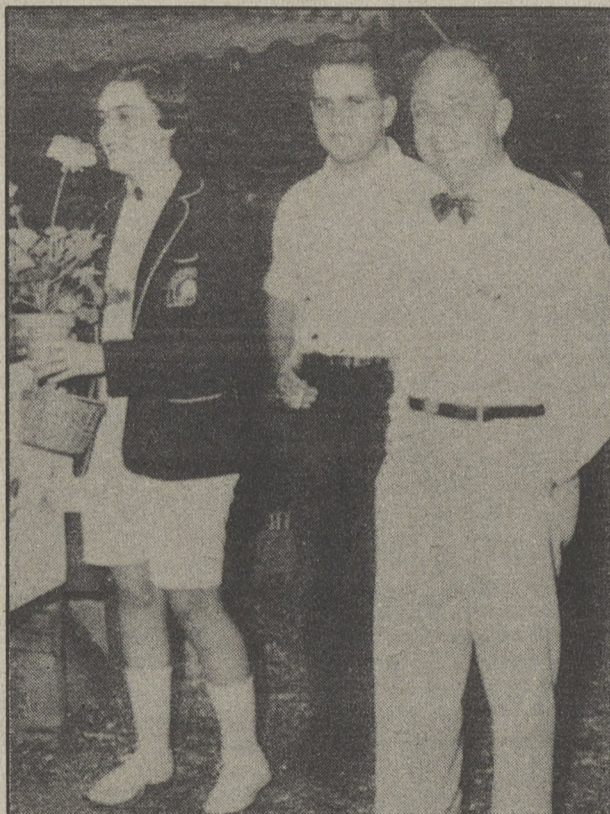


Two past auction chairmen reviewed plans for the 1969 event. From left, Don Anthony, 1968 chairman; and George McCutcheon, 1969 chairman.

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The library auction first received national recognition in 1953 when a story about it was published in Chevrolet Motor Company's publication, "Friends Magazine." More recently, an article about the auction appeared in "The New York Times," written by a local English teacher, Mary Ann Sigworth.

Most likely, the library will receive more attention again, as it begins a new era, moving out of the building it has occupied since 1945, and moving into the Dallas Borough School building. This year's auction marks the end of a chapter in the history of the Back Mountain Memorial Library.



Sylvia Kehoe Mack, left; Ben Jones III, center; and Justice Benjamin R. Jones, Jr., were among visitors at the 1956 auction.

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offering pocketbooks, toys and lace for sale.

The auctioneers, Howard Herman and Ralph Sands, were the only professional help that year.

The Back Mountain residents displayed such an enthusiastic and cooperative effort for the auction, that it seemed nothing could dampen their spirits-not even a rainy day. That's exactly what happened on Saturday, June 7, 1947, as an almost constant drizzle descended upon the auction-goers and auction items. Although there was a much better turnout than expected, just in case the rain did manage to keep some buyers away, the auction was extended to the next Saturday.

Unfortunately, it rained the next Saturday as well. But the profits rolled in anyway. Exceeding Howard Risley's prediction of a \$2,000 profit, the first auction made over \$3,000.

Although much of the auction has changed throughout the years, some aspects of it have remained longer than others.

Schooley promptly bought it back as he couldn't bear to part with it. This became an annual event for Dr. Schooley, as he competed in the bidding with high-spirited community members, pushing the cost of the coat up considerably.

Of course, the auction just wouldn't be the same without the Newman dolls handmade by Mrs. Jennie Newman. For years, the Newman dolls have appeared on the block, and the tradition continues, with dolls that have been saved for future auctions, and those re-donated.

A new tradition has begun where Mrs. Newman left off. For the past six years, Sue Hand, a talented local artist, has donated a large watercolor painting which always includes the library auction bell somewhere on the picture. This year, for the second time, Sue hand is also donating prints of the original painting. She hopes her series of auction paintings will renew the memories of the local landmark series, painted and donated by artist Gregory Beisel in the 1960 auction. Sue remembers seeing the Newman dolls go over the block when she was a youngster. "I was inspired by the Newman tradition," says Sue.



In 1961, "Doc" Jordan auctioned off a pony named Boots who soon surprised her new owner with an offspring.

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The kids can't experience Gus DeRemer's horse rides any more, nor can they get a ride on the back of a fire engine. But a few years ago, as the library kept right in step with the space age, the "moonwalk" was available for the youngsters to enjoy.



"Hix" (Mrs. T.M.B. Hicks), affectionately known as The Iron Horse, grins as she poses in front of her "predecessor."

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38th Annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction
July 5-8, 1984