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## THE DALLAS POST

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## Phil hits the mark!

BY DEBBY HIGGINS  
Post Editor

Fat and sassy, snug in his abode atop Gobbler's Knob, Punxsutawney Phil was again called upon to perform his annual duty, February 2.

Phil, second in reputation only to the Farmer's Almanac for predicting the weather, didn't sew his shadow Tuesday, meaning there will be an early spring.

The folks from the Jefferson County community of Punxsutawney put great store in Phil's abilities, as they make Ground Hog Day a statewide occasion. The town's fathers, true to their local celebrity's stature as a forecaster, do not tout Phil's inaccuracies but instead maintain their mascot's long record on-the-money predictions.

Meanwhile, Phil, looking content and in fine form, emerges each February to let the waiting throngs of Pennsylvanians know what's in store for six more weeks. Eager for even a slight indication of winter's end, state residents anticipate the chubby forecaster's weather verdict with crossed fingers. Scientifically, however, Phil's predictions don't amount to a hill of beans.

Ground Hog Day, brought to America by German and English settlers, is a legend steeped in tradition.

Those early American settlers brutalized by harsh winters, looked for even the smallest hint of the end of cold winter hardships.

The old world traditions sometimes held water in the old country, were believed in strongly enough to be carried over to the new land. More than just a chance to glimpse into future weather conditions, Ground Hog Day provided, (if all went well), a day to celebrate. Cabin fever was as prevalent for those winter-weary pioneers as it is for modern-day folk. Remember, back then, staying indoors was not made more enjoyable by television, compact disc players, and VCR's.

So, Ground Hog Day while being an opportunity for an over-weight, long-footed rodent from west central Pennsylvania to bask in the celebrity's spotlight, is something more. It's a piece of the old ways brought into the 20th century. A pleasant slice of Americana that lives, yet, followed by thousands who ordinarily give no more to the old ways than a smile or a fleeting thought.

## Schedule noted

Newcomer's Club of Wyoming Valley announces its upcoming activities for the month of February.

We will be attending Gus Genetti's Queen of Hearts Ball, featuring music by the Poets, on February 5.

The monthly craft night is smocking at the home of Deborah Arkwood, Kingston, on February 9.

Mardi Gras night will be February 13 at the home of Karen Lambruschi, Dallas.

Executive board meeting is scheduled for February 16 also at the home of Karen Lambruschi.

A general member coffee will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Shavertown, February 18.

Ethnic Dining will be Cajun cooking demonstration by Nancy Tkatch on February 23 at Dorranceton United Methodist Church, Kingston.

A pot luck luncheon will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Shavertown, on February 25.

Call 287-6038 or 696-3368 for more information.



Dallas Post/Linda Shurmaltis

## Friend or foe?

This scene could have been taken from an old Currier and Ives print, but it's really a snow-covered road right here in the Back Mountain. The recent snowfall caused many problems, but the beauty of it all paints a wonderful, wintertime picture.

## Nordic skiing is alive and well in B.M.

BY CHARLOT M. DENMON  
Staff Writer

Bright-colored jackets and ski suits dotted the "Back Nine" of Irem Temple Country Club's golf course as dozens of male and female Nordic (cross-country) skiers made their way across the trails made by others before them.

It was Saturday afternoon and the bright blue sky and warming temperature made it an ideal day for the out-of-door lovers, who took to the trails, down-hill inclines or to frozen ice-covered ponds and lakes.

Among them were Duncan and Kay Whitehead, whom we caught just as they were ready to take off across the snow at the Club. No novices are these two who have been going cross-country skiing for the past 11 years.

"Duncan saw a book in the library about cross-country skiing and found it interesting," said Kay. "So he bought one and both of us read it and tried following the directions. Then College Misericordia had ski classes for two consecutive Wednesday nights and we attended them. They were interesting and a lot of fun, we met all types of people from bankers

to teachers to students."

The first time the Whiteheads tried skiing, they waited until midnight, then went out on the vacant lot near their home and tried the sport. They discovered they were able to maneuver the skis, so decided they wouldn't be embarrassed going out on trails in the area. At the time they started cross-country skiing they were the only ones in the area that they knew who participated in the sport.

"Now there are lots of Back Mountain residents going cross-country skiing," Kay said. "We meet many of our friends when we're out, especially up at the Club."

The couple usually go skiing at the Country Club and occasionally they go to Lake Jean or sometimes to Moon Lake. They used to go in the fields by the bird sanctuary in Dallas the first few years they went skiing.

They used to wear ordinary jeans when they went out but recently they started wearing gaiters to keep out the snow.

Kay and Duncan explained that their doctor approved of Nordic skiing and that swimming and cross-country skiing were considered two of the best cardio-vascular exercises.

"It's inexpensive compared to Alpine skiing," explained

Duncan. "You don't need a pro to teach you, just a few books and some video tapes. The equipment is not as expensive either. You need only good fitting skis and bindings, boots and poles. Depending on what you want, it could cost less than \$150."

Last year their son started cross-country and goes occasionally although his family demands sometimes prohibits him from going as much as his parents go.

According to the Whiteheads, until the recent snow, this year had been a bad year for skiing.

"We thoroughly enjoy it," Kay said. "It is a sport that is good for you and at the same time, you can enjoy nature and the out-of-doors. Everyone from children to senior citizens can go cross-country skiing and enjoy it."

Cross-country skiing may be fairly new to the Back Mountain but in Europe, it pre-dates Alpine Skiing. In the war Finnish troops were cross-country skiers and were able to attack the enemy and disappear quickly into the night. When the Russians realized the benefits of the sport, they soon began training their troops in the sport and have also become excellent participants.

## Garbage crisis not over for residents

BY CHARLOT M. DENMON  
Staff Writer

Regular collection of trash and garbage in Back Mountain communities over the past few months have lulled residents into believing that the problems confronting the haulers over landfill sites have disappeared. Many of the residents have been asking independent haulers when the rates for trash removal will be lowered.

The long-familiar expression 'silence is golden' is not applicable in this case. Local haulers are still confronted with where and when they will be able to dump.

"The problem has not gone away," said Juanita Berti, wife of William Berti of Dallas. "It's not as acute as it was in the late summer and early fall but the situation is not getting better. The opening of the Keystone landfill has made it easier but there are many minor aggravations the haulers are confronted with regularly."

Berti, in the trash removal business for more than 35 years, used the West Side Landfill until it was ordered shut down last year by DER. He then had no alternative but to find another site and began dumping at Amity until that fill's quota was met.

When the Keystone Landfill was opened, it made it easier for local haulers to get into Amity although it was still on a "first come, first served" basis.

The West Side Landfill, whose officials have been ordered to bring in a management company to manage the site, has been operating under the supervision of acting manager, Thomas Doughton of Dallas, an employee of the Pasonick Engineering Company, engineers of the landfill who have been appointed interim management company until West Side board members appoint a new management company.

Since Doughton has been at West Side, the price to dump there has come down to \$18 a load to dump there for non-members. However, the hauler must get a call in to the landfill by 7 a.m. to let management know the amount of their load. If they can't get in West Side, haulers must take a chance at going to Amity in Taylor, or to Buckhorn, the transfer station at Bloomsburg.

"Since Doughton has been operating the landfill, the situation has been running smoother," said Berti, "But it's not going to get any cheaper."

Dan Cornell, who bought the business formerly owned by K. Kocher, dumps at Buckhorn or Amity and like Berti, must get there before the quota of fill is met.

Doughton explained that the landfill's quota is 2,500 cubic yards per week or 500 cubic yards per day. The member communities, on the West Side, Kingston, Edwardsville, Swyersville, etc. have 250 to 300 cubic feet reserved for them daily and the other half, approximately 1,250 cubic feet weekly, are reserved for haulers such as Berti, Cornell and others from the Back Mountain area, on a first come-first served basis.

Back Mountain haulers are hoping that when the new sections of West Side Landfill open,

it will make the problem of dumping easier although they realized, the cost will not be any less. At present, West Side cost is \$16 for members and \$18 to non-members.

Three new areas at the landfill have been designed and there are no out-of-town haulers dumping at the site, according to Doughton.

Some of the municipalities on the West Side have put recycling programs into effect and these programs have been helpful at cutting the garbage dumping from 10 to 15 percent, Doughton explained.

Kingston Township Manager Fred Potzer said that local municipalities have discussed recycling but the most deterrent factor has been the high cost of labor involved in the collection.

Road departments of the Back Mountain boroughs and townships do not have the necessary personnel needed to take care of the roads as well as collect newspapers and glass for recycling. The use of private haulers was considered by the municipalities but the prices of newspaper are too low to make it worthwhile for the haulers. Glass recycling has to have a mandatory program requiring the complete cleaning of the glass before it can be acceptable to the recycling company.

"There's a lot more to recycling than just putting the trash out for collection," Potzer said. "What we have been looking at is a leaf compost program where our residents can take their yard waste and tree branches and those items that are not collected by local haulers."

Potzer also warned area residents to beware of haulers coming in from outside the area quoting unusually low collection prices. There have been cases where this has been done and after the residents pay the hauler, he disappears and their rubbish and trash is never picked up.

There is presently such a situation under investigation in the Pittston area. Potzer explained that the Back Mountain haulers have been around for many years and have the reputation of being reliable. They are appreciative of their customers and are trying to keep costs of collection as low as possible and still allow the haulers to exist.

"Costs of collection are not going to get any lower," Potzer said. "Our communities have been fortunate to date because in most areas of the state and the country, collections costs are much higher."

"For newcomers in the area, we have a list of local haulers that we can provide for them if they call the Kingston Township office. We don't recommend any one hauler but give them a list of reputable haulers in the area."

According to Potzer, incineration appears to be the ideal way to go but local community officials are waiting to hear whether or not the county will decide on such a program. This will depend on whether or not all of the haulers in the county will take their rubbish to such a plant since the cost of such a program will require complete support of all independent and municipal haulers in order to cover the costs of the operation.

## Catholic Schools Week to begin Feb. 5

The faculty and students from Gate of Heaven School are preparing for their Annual Catholic Schools Week celebration beginning with the opening Liturgy on Friday, Feb. 5, at 8:30 in the church. Father Michael Sullivan, celebrant will be assisted by Sister M. Davida Morgan, Principal, as cantor, Mr. Bob Paley, President, PTG, as guest speaker, and students and teachers in full participation.

On Monday, Feb. 8, the annual spelling bee will take place in the gym, beginning at 1:10. The winner of this contest will be eligible to participate in the national spelling bee contest held in Washington, D.C.

On Wednesday, Feb. 11, parents and friends are invited to the school's annual Science Fair and Open House, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

During this special week, from the 5th to the 11th, various activities--varsity vs. faculty basketball games; talent shows; special dinners and desserts; and Student Appreciation Day will take place within the school and all parents and friends are invited to attend these activities. A calendar of events for the week was distributed to all families during the last week of January for their convenience.

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