

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Police officers deserve a better deal

We know the recent raises given to newer members of the Kingston Township police force seem large by today's standards. The contract increases their pay by 13.5 per cent in one year.

But from all that we have heard from citizens of the Township and knowledgeable officials, the higher salaries are still too low to attract and keep the best qualified officers. And the people we talked with think the members of that department are doing an excellent job.

The policemen complain that a salary of \$16,000 a year doesn't go very far in Shavertown and Trucksville these days. The area is one of the most popular in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and housing costs have risen much more rapidly than has their ability to pay for it. That seems indisputable - banks don't make a lot of mortgage loans to families with incomes below \$20,000 these days.

It is also true that the Township's growth has and will continue to put more pressure on the department. Population growth brings with it more need for police services, and large homes filled with goods attract more burglars.

We don't doubt the Township supervisors' concern for the good of their community and we know they didn't take lightly the decision to send the police contract to arbitration. We just think they, like many of us, may not realize how rapidly things are changing in the Back Mountain, and what effect that has on services and people.

There is not much that can be done now, except to plan for the next round of negotiations. We think a little more generosity may go a long way the next time.

Some headlines we would like to write

In the course of our weekly business, we write all manner of headlines, from happy to sad, positive to negative. Here are a few that we hope to write some day.

Developer plans public park for Borough

Says he wants to preserve a little bit of nature for children

Public beach opens at Harveys Lake

Includes changing rooms, parking for free

Council calls for referendum

Questions to be on ballot, "so all can see"

Office park planned for Back Mountain

To employ 2,000 in clean, modern environment

Water problems solved!

Regional planning comes to Back Mountain

Communities say it's time to cooperate on their future

Commissioners vow to bury politics

"No more petty bickering," say Phillips, Trini and Crossin

Coordinated traffic lights installed on 309

Set up so that driving at speed limit means no stops



Sunshine over cracked ice

A recent brisk, sunfilled day on the shore of the Huntsville Reservoir. (Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

Letters

Writer calls for revision of County's tax collection system

Editor: Luzerne County Taxpayers, this is an opportunity for you to help reduce property tax collection costs and reform the outmoded tax collector system. Here is how it works:

Once every four years, the Luzerne County Commissioners, School Boards, and Municipal governments are required to set the pay scale, or method and rate of compensation, for elected tax collectors who perform "busy work" collecting real estate taxes. The rate of pay must be set before these people run for office this year. The deadline is February 14.

Department of Community Affairs (DCA) records show that in 1987, six of Luzerne County's 75 tax collectors were paid \$166,668 to send county taxes they collected to the courthouse. This is essentially all they do! The courthouse prepares and prints the tax bills, maintains records, tracks delinquents and conducts tax sales. However, the amount paid to tax collectors was much more than \$166,668, for 15 of them either failed to file reports, or sent DCA useless incomplete returns. Furthermore, treasurers offices in several communities are also paid to collect taxes, and these costs are not reported. These unreported sums, plus the fact that the county also pays various tax collector expenses, pushes county tax collection annual costs over the \$200,000 mark. Nearly a million dollars in four years! All this for "busy work"! Is it any wonder why county taxes are being raised 15 mills? This is outrageous!

Tax payments could be sent to the courthouse by mail and eliminate the costly, uncalled-for paper shuffling that is now wasting tax dollars. Cost of a stamp: 25 cents.

Tax collectors could still run for office and serve honorably, but handle no tax receipts. Of course,

compensation would be zero. Lackawanna County does this. The county pays tax collectors nothing, because they do nothing. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania collects its taxes by mail; so does the IRS. Luzerne County taxing bodies must do the same, and stop wasting tax money on the archaic, unnecessary, costly and useless tax collector.

Unfortunately, the Governor, and at least a majority of our legislators, are not serious about saving tax dollars. Their "tax reform" does not even mention the tax collector problem. The County Commissioners were not serious in 1984 when they discontinued paying tax collectors on a per bill basis and agreed to a percentage commission that raised tax collection costs 15 percent. School boards and municipalities do business a little more seriously. They pay per bill, salary, and cap commissions. But, they are not serious enough. Tax collector compensation should be zero.

However, dear reader/taxpayer/voter, if you are serious about rising taxes, now is the time to act. But you must act quickly.

Call the County Commissioners' office at the courthouse. Call your school board directors. And, call your municipal government officials. Insist that they set the compensation rate at zero for the unneeded tax collectors who will be running for office in 1989. Luzerne County taxpayers who pay county, school district, and municipal property taxes can save millions of tax dollars that will be wasted on tax collection costs in the next four years. But, that call has to be made NOW. After February 14 it is too late to do anything about it for four more years.

Patrick Sheridan
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702

Only yesterday

50 Years Ago - Feb. 3, 1939

Dallas and State Police seek burglars

Dallas Borough police and the State Police spread an area wide net to try to capture burglars who smashed window of Roberts Jewelry Store and made off with a radio and several watches.

Dallas Council approves borough budget of 15 1/2 mills, the same as last year.

Peeping Tom in Trucksville is being investigated by Constable Francis McCarty.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 4, 1949

Dallas Township plans zoning

Annual meeting finds Back Mountain Library in healthy financial condition.

Eighteen new windows given to Dallas Methodist Church by one individual.

Dallas Township supervisors voted to employ Government Consulting Service, endowed by Samuel Feis Foundation and administered by University of Pennsylvania to make a survey of the township and prepare recommendations for the enactment of a zoning ordinance. The township is apt to be one of the first in Northeastern Pennsylvania to have a scientifically planned and zoned township to meet future needs and expansion.

Wed - Alice Dobinick and Myron Williams.

Engaged - Helen Kocher and Joseph A. Hughes.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 30, 1959

The Post changes to Thursday publication

The Dallas Post changes publication day to Thursday to benefit advertisers, correspondents and readers.

Dallas Junior Women's Club discuss renovating Lehigh Valley Station and Freight house in center of Dallas.

During 1959 Commonwealth Telephone Company will expand Harveys Lake exchange and also construct an unattended dial office at Centermoreland, according to J.N. Landis, district manager.

Back Mountain Baseball for Boys makes plans for coming season with a kickoff meeting at the Dallas American Legion Home Monday night.

Forty nine Commonwealth drivers receive safe driver awards here.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 30, 1969

Brown urges joint police force

Back Mountain may lose 15 peace justices under new division set up for the Back Mountain.

Natona employees are out \$100,000 since the commencement of their strike January 7.

Consolidated police force urged by Dallas Mayor Robert W. Brown.

Dallas Junior Women's Club to finance a Back Mountain playground.

Trucksville pastor Rev. Charles F. Gommer Jr. is named 'outstanding young man' by the Wilkes-Barre Jaycees.

Wed - Beverly Jane Bonning and John G. Bunney.

Coughlin bows to Knights 32-15.

10 Years Ago - Feb. 1, 1979

Borough Council ponders \$250,000

Dallas Borough Council considers use of \$250,000 grant to dress up Dallas.

Lake-Lehman District approves 6-3 to continue with the next step in the plans for the new elementary school at Harveys Lake.

Dallas Junior Women's Club plans art contest.

Jack Stanley named vice president of Native Textiles.

Married - Claudia Warden and Robert Malak.

Constable William Purcell is elected president of Luzerne County Constables Association.

Book Club campaign is off to a good start

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library Book Club membership campaign for 1989 is off to a flying start. As of January 14, the total membership has reached 101, with only two weeks into the campaign. Those 101 members account for \$925.00, which money is used for the purchase of current book selections of fiction, non-fiction, mystery and biographies. The book club has a book selection committee composed of 10 or 12 book club members who study the newest book review journals and choose the titles they think will appeal most to the book club members. The library book club is a unique part of this library and is a dependable financial figure in the library yearly budget. The membership dues are \$10.00 for a single and \$15.00 for a double membership, payable at the circulation desk at the library.

The library's videocassette tape collection is growing. Some of the recent titles added to the special shelf area are: From the America by Design series: "The Workplace"; "The Street"; "The Shape of the Land"; focusing on farms, mills, factories, warehouses, and office buildings and the history of American transportation systems from rivers to railroads and from simple roads to high-speed interstate highways. The Odyssey series include "On the Cowboy Trail" that takes you to a Tongue River Valley

where the needs of the cattle come first. "Maya Lords of the Jungle" takes you to the jungles of Central America and the majestic remains of the Mayan civilization that thrived for thousands of years. The Crafts by Hand collection includes "Ironwork and Holloware" which takes you on location to visit the workshops of renowned artisans and craftspeople of regional New York. "Leather and Wooden Furniture" features the work of artist Pat Halpen in the leather section and wooden furniture design by Bill Keyser and Wendell Castle. "Jewelry and Musical Instruments" introduces you to individual artists who demonstrate the professional skills required for their craftwork. The jewelry workshops are shown and the techniques are examined. Richard Newman displays his skill at creating fine musical instruments and his technique is compared with Jacques Francais, a fine craftsman of musical instruments. This Old House series includes "Kitchen remodeling, Part 1 and Part 2" which features complete projects that begin with architectural plans and run through detailed steps, including carpentry, plumbing and electrical work as well as redecorating tips.

A 3-year old girl named Diane was in the library selecting her books and stopped for a drink of water at our electrically cooled "water cooler." Her comment, "Delicious!"

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The Post asks: "How has the mild winter affected you?"



Don LaBar
Boat mechanic
Dallas
"It's bad for snowmobile business but it's great for our boat business. We have people getting their boats ready early."



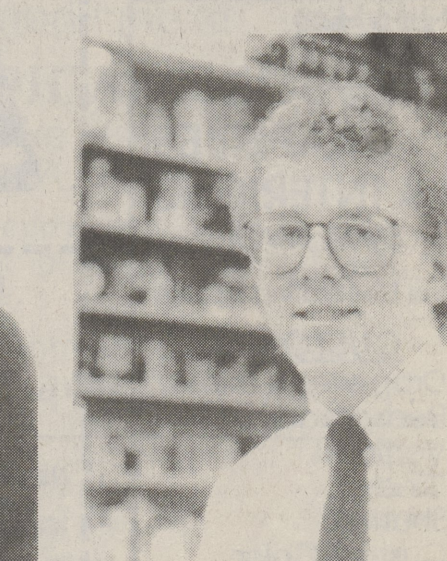
Jim Roth
Jeweler
Dallas
"I don't like it. I got cross country skis for Christmas and haven't been able to use them."



John Wertman
Deli worker
Shavertown
"I can't make any money plowing."



Kris Givens
Student
Dallas
"The weather is no good for skiing. Conditions are too poor to enjoy it."



Chris Busch
Student
Dallas
"It's not good for skiing. I've only gone three times but it makes it easier traveling to and from school in Philadelphia."