

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Safety first in school addition opening

The potential delay in opening the renovated section of the Dallas Elementary School because of a disagreement on the code requirements for a fire door is annoying. However, it's more important to see that the school is as safe as possible than to meet any opening date.

The district has made admirable progress on construction of the addition to the school. Superintendent Gerald Wycallis originally projected completion sometime in March, then moved that up to earlier this month. The delay caused by the door could put off occupancy until late March; still close to the original date.

But whether the school is opened in March or May would be meaningless if sometime in the future a child were to be injured because a fire was not contained properly. Strict building codes have saved countless lives, proving their worth to be far beyond the cost or delay adhering to them may create.

The Dallas Elementary School will be waiting to receive children when it is ready and safe to do so.

More Back Mountain hats in the ring

Three more Back Mountain residents announced their intention to run for state office last week, bringing to four the total who have joined races thus far. The number of persons interested in serving in political office speaks well of them and the area.

Anne Vernon of Trucksville is a familiar figure in the Back Mountain and greater Wilkes-Barre. She brings a distinguished career in public service to her quest for the state representative's post from the 120th District.

Andrew Kotch of Shavertown is a relative newcomer to public life, but has 15 years experience in television news locally. He too will be running for the representative spot, which is now held by Scott Dieterick.

Despite recent accusations of impropriety in his insurance business prior to his becoming a representative, Dieterick hopes to retain his seat.

Charles Lemmond, a Dallas resident and the incumbent State Senator from the 20th District - which includes much of the Back Mountain - has also announced that he will seek reelection to that position. Senator Lemmond was first elected to the Senate in 1985 to fill the unexpired term of Frank O'Connell, and elected to a term in his own right in 1986.

The kind of activism that these capable individuals demonstrate are a major benefit for the Back Mountain. They won't all win, but you can bet they will each stay involved in activities that will lead to a more interesting and higher quality of life for area residents.

Smooth transition for Lake-Lehman schools

Congratulations to John Oliver, who was appointed last week to succeed John Zaleskas as principal of the Lake-Lehman Senior High School. Mr. Zaleskas is retiring at the end of the school year after many years of exemplary service to the district.

Mr. Oliver has been principal of the district's Junior High for several years, so he was no stranger to the board when it came time to select a successor for Mr. Zaleskas. His selection is a credit to his qualifications; it is also a signal that the Lake-Lehman District has done a good job of staffing important positions with administrators who can grow with the district.

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

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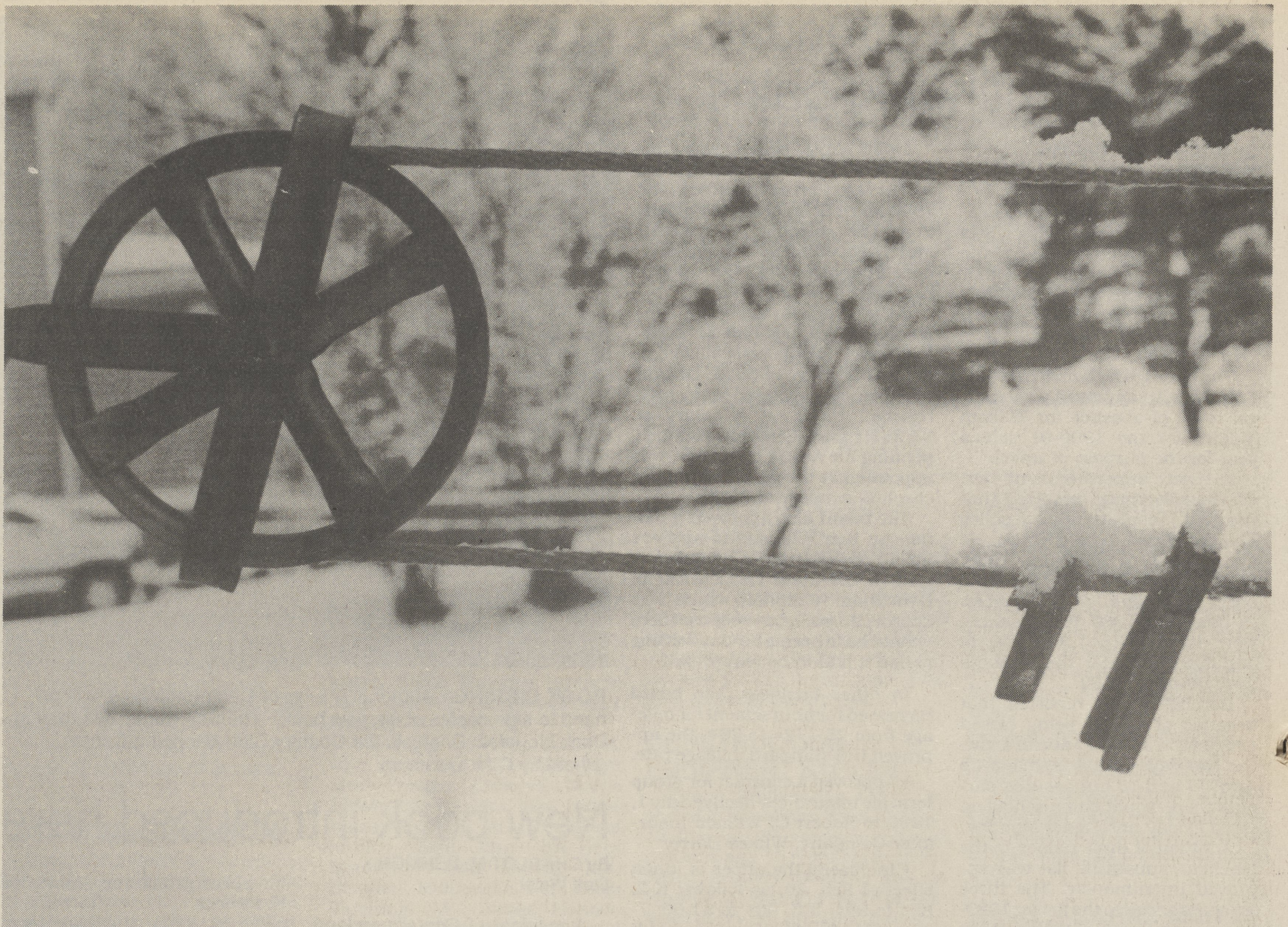
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In the backyard - snow

(Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

Letter

Back Mountain Comm Center isn't only '911' alternative

Editor:

Although I do have a couple of problems with your edition of February 7, let me make clear at the outset that we appreciate your paper and read it regularly. We particularly admire Charlot Denmon's ability to understand complex issues arising in public meetings and then report the issues accurately and in context.

However no individual nor institution is infallible and my comments are intended to be helpful, not critical. The issues are related.

First, your editorial comments on 911: We would have applauded your editorial except for the phrase, "It is virtually certain that when 911 arrives it will be dispatched through the Back Mountain Comm Center." This is clearly Chief Miers' view, but in all the meetings concerning 911 sponsored by the Back Mountain Citizens Council, other participants have made it amply clear that there are a variety of ways dispatching could work in the Back Mountain area.

And, more importantly, the Back Mountain Comm Center will not work as it is presently organized for some of the less populous townships, simply because it is too expensive.

This subject has come up many times—the problem is that the BM Comm Center insists on the same flat rate for all participating police departments (and the same for all fire companies) without regard to the populations they serve, or the numbers of calls they get.

One of the Lake Township Supervisors commented that the cost would be more than 10% of their budget, and Ross Township agrees (I have cleared my remarks with Bob Walsh, Ross Township Supervisor and Fire Chief; I am also Vice President of the SVVFC). Although Carl Miers agreed at one point that the pricing was unfair, he subsequently stone-walled, responding to questions that the pricing was going to stay the way it is.

Your editorial makes clear that part of the problem is in personali-

ties, and I feel it is important to understand that it is not necessarily the officers of the Daniel C. Roberts Volunteer Fire Company that are the bad guys in whatever misunderstanding there may be with the BM Comm Center.

Moving along, on page 3 you list emergency numbers for the Back Mountain Area. Could we please have a clarification? You only list an asterisk for the fire and ambulance number of Ross Township (yet you list the Sweet Valley number for all of Lake Township - which is correct), and if one were to consult your list in the dark, or in a stressful situation, one might think that police were not available in Sweet Valley.

Most of us in the Sweet Valley/Ross Township area do not differentiate between the two. We will respond to any call we get. And if there would be a closer fire or ambulance company, we will suggest they be called or we will call them for you. We will also back-up the other company, if requested.

We are not perfect, either, but we would like to see the list republished, showing 477-5121 as the fire and ambulance number for both Sweet Valley and Ross Township, and list the Ross Township police number (477-2337) for Sweet Valley also.

Although this last may seem minor, over the years both the Bell and Donnelly directories have consistently left us out of their emergency number listings (we are in the white pages...???), 'til the frustration level is at the point that we feel we have to be very specific in every case.

We do agree that the coming of 911 will make such lists unnecessary; but once again, 911 does not depend on the Back Mountain Comm Center.

Laurence J. Law
Sweet Valley

Editor's note: The chart of emergency numbers Mr. Law refers to is republished elsewhere in this issue.

Library news

1989 - Report on a busy and successful year

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library had a very successful year for 1989 in many ways. The total circulation for the year amounted to 93,168, which is 5,008 increase since last year.

Of this circulation, 54,421 were adult books and 38,747 were juvenile titles. Reference questions answered for the year totaled 5,474; Book Club circulated 2,853 books; and 1,395 new members joined the library, 673 adults and 722 children. Interlibrary loan transactions amounted to 349 and our volunteers donated 2,234 hours of their time to help in the library.

Our book inventory at the beginning of 1989 was 56,388; we added 1,738 adult books and 491 juvenile titles to that inventory and

withdrew and discarded 2,082 books; which gives us a year end inventory collection of 56,535 volumes.

We are currently in the process of doing an inventory of our collection, with about three-fourths of the project completed. A security system was installed during the year and the entire collection is receiving the necessary updating to make the process work.

The 1989 library auction was a huge success, realizing a net profit of \$46,000 for the library; the largest profit ever in its 43 year history. The library also received some special grant money; \$1,000 from the Reynold's Foundation; \$1,000 from United Penn Bank; \$500 from the Dallas Lions Club and \$500 from the Coughlin fund for the

children's room.

The children's room held regular pre-school story hours and a toddler story hour, and had a very well attended Summer Reading program. The children's room celebrated Children's Book Week with special programs and sponsored a poetry reading contest. The library also celebrated National Library Week with numerous special programs and projects.

We are very happy to welcome as our new librarian, Mary Ellen Tirpak of Exeter, who will begin her duties on Saturday, February 17. Mary Ellen has a diversified background as a librarian having served at the Hazleton, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre Centers of Lackawanna Junior College for a period

of 10 years. She has been involved in community volunteer work with children and has done film, society, chorus and work study programs.

Prior to accepting the position with the library, she was librarian for Crestwood Junior and Senior High School and at Mill Memorial in Nanticoke, where she served as librarian.

Our library will celebrate five years in our new building on Sunday, March 4. We plan to note the occasion with an open house on Monday, March 5, between the hours of 6 to 8 p.m. and invite the community to come and visit to see what we have accomplished in that time and enjoy some refreshments and also to welcome our new librarian.

Anderson afield

Conservation of land is critical to America's future

By JOHN M. ANDERSON

"I like to go out fishing in a river or a creek, but I don't enjoy it half as much as dancing cheek-to-cheek." So wrote Irving Berlin many years ago in a song later made famous by Fred Astaire. If you can remember when Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were dancing, you may remember when contact lenses became popular. They came in about the time cheek-to-cheek dancing went out. The waltz you saved for me somehow got displaced by the twist.

Unquestionably, contact lenses are here to stay, while contact dancing may or may not stage a comeback. Flashing, blinding strobe lights, and the deafening noises made by current rock stars as they writhe around the stage, make it hard to remember Fred and Ginger. It could be that con-

tact dancing is sadly lacking in role models.

My primary concern, however, is neither dancing nor lenses. It is land that can support a sufficient amount and diversity of vegetation so we can not only make a living, but have something to live FOR. How land is used determines whether condors or condominiums will grow on it, and whether or not both mallards and men can find suitable homes. Man does not live by asphalt alone.

As a wildlife manager, I can take a measure of comfort in the status of several species that are highly prized by outdoorsmen. Such as more wild turkeys today than 100 years ago. The same is true of deer, Canada geese, antelope and coyotes. The modern wildlife manager really knows how to make the land produce more of practically any species of plant or animal.

That being the case, why aren't we up to our ears in prairie chickens, rainbow trout, sugar maples, mallards and pintails? Because the wildlife manager knows how to manage land for: maximum wildlife production, but he or she is not allowed to apply what they know. They are not allowed to take Kansas farms and restore prairie grasses and thus produce prairie chickens instead of wheat. They cannot go to North Dakota, plug the drainage ditches, and restore the prairie ponds and marshes to produce wild ducks. They can apply what they know only on land set aside for that purpose, such as the wildlife sanctuaries of the Audubon Society or The Nature Conservancy and the state and federal wildlife refuges.

But for discussion purposes, let's ignore the ducks and deer that have provided food and fun for

men and women for hundreds of years. It's true, there are about 17 million men and women who hunt birds and mammals with guns, bows and arrows. There are about 47 million who fish, and about 135 million who get up before daylight, drive miles and miles, just to see birds through binoculars and cameras.

But the land on which the hunters, fishermen, and birders depend is the same land (air, soil, and water) on which farmers and city dwellers depend. They are equally threatened by acid rain, global warming, contamination of well water, solid and hazardous waste disposal, and soil erosion. The inexorable pressure of too many people competing for elbow room, food and water - to say nothing of recreation - weighs equally on people indoors and outdoors.

When this land is abused in any way, the quality of life for city folks, country folks, Cajuns and Canadians goes down. In spite of that, conservation of land, is getting nowhere because, to those who have enough political power to determine how an acre of land will be used, land is merely the space between the towns. They look upon land as a commodity which, like a car or loaf of bread, belongs to those who can pay for it.

I must confess, I look upon my two acres in that light, and undoubtedly you do, too. I think my land "belongs" to me; your land "belongs" to you. But in reality, the plants, animals, soil, air and water that make up the land are a community to which my land, my town, my state, my country and you and I belong.

I treated my family with love and respect because I was a member of

it, and depended on it for food and shelter. Likewise, the human race is a member of a community on which it depends entirely for food and shelter. That community is the land, with its green plants that absorb carbon dioxide and make oxygen that we breathe. Plants make sugar which fuels our entire ecosystem. If this headlong human race is here to stay, we must constantly remind our preachers and politicians of that simple fact.

Contact lenses came in, contact dancing - at least as I knew it in the old days - went out. Nowadays, when the music stops, boy and girl can get together again. But if and when the human race loses contact with the land, the show is over.

John M. "Frosty" Anderson was Director of the Wildlife Department of the National Audubon Society from 1966 until his retirement in 1987.