

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

Dispatching change is for the better

The Back Mountain Communication Center's recent decision to allow simultaneous dispatching of paramedic units and ambulances should result in better emergency care for the region's residents. That is the most important consideration the center's board had to weigh in drawing its conclusion.

In the past, paramedics — who are stationed at the Nesbitt Hospital satellite center on Route 118 or at the hospital in Kingston — could be summoned only by an ambulance crew after it had arrived on the scene. In the case of a person with serious injuries, that might have meant a fatal delay in supplying the specialized treatment offered by the paramedics. With their direct radio link to the hospital and advanced training, these crews can improve the odds for survival of those in need of care.

In practice, those involved in emergency care say the paramedics have been responding to calls they overhear on the comm center radio. They do so by leaving their station and driving to a point near the scene so as to arrive quickly when formally called.

There have been arguments against simultaneous dispatching, but none compares with the possibility of lives being saved. The Back Mountain's ambulance crews do tremendous service to the community, but they can't provide every possible service when and where it is needed. The paramedic units, with their round-the-clock staffing and direct radio access to hospital staff, offer a welcome supplement to the yeoman duty the volunteer crews furnish.

Move ahead on water before next drought

Given the success of the Dallas Area Municipal Authority over the years, talk about forming a regional water authority is not without precedent.

When municipalities in the Back Mountain needed to take control of sewage disposal, DAMA was formed to do the job. By all accounts it fulfilled its promise well, but now its functions will be folded into the Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority. That's okay with supporters of a water authority who see DAMA as the perfect vehicle with which to begin one. In fact, DAMA's original charter left open the possibility of its handling water as well as sewage.

Since water respects no boundaries, the region's resources should come under one entity's field of responsibility. There are now more than 30 "water companies" in the Back Mountain, with more to come as population growth continues. For years, it has been easier for developers to link several homes to a common well and form a new water company than to hook up to existing lines. But that doesn't mean many of these wells don't draw from a common source — they tap the same aquifer in different locations. Sooner or later, the wells will run dry.

In addition to rationalizing the present crazy quilt of companies, a water authority should be charged with anticipating the Back Mountain's water needs and developing sources to meet them. At the moment, the region is entirely dependent on ground water and there are no plans to change that. Two summers of plentiful rain have drowned out most people's memory of 1988, when shortages were common, as they will be during the next drought.

Regional thinking is often unpopular, especially with those who stand to lose power or who mistrust others motives. DAMA's proven track record gives it a head start as the agency to take on responsibility for the Back Mountain's water supplies.

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Tumble-down barn in Centermoreland

(Photo by Charlotte Bartzek)

Library news

Betsy Rosenthal's Precious Moments figurines on display this month

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The 44th annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction is now history. The crowds were great, the weather was perfect, the volunteers did a super job, our vendors were happy, new goods, used goods, antiques, books, odds and ends, baked goods, ice cream, funnel cakes, lemonade and pies and cookies; all were doing a tremendous business. A week after the auction, the rains came down and we are very thankful for the dry weather we had for this year's auction. A warm thank you to the marvelous chairmen who ran the auction.

The display case in the library is showing a collection of Precious Moments figurines borrowed from Betsy Rosenthal of Shavertown. Betsy is eight years old and will be in 4th grade at Westmoreland in the fall. Most of her collection has been given to her by her Uncle Pat. He gave her the first one, a donkey which was part of the Nativity Set for Christmas one year.

The other ones included in the display are: Hello World; April; Showers of Blessings; Clowns; Sent From Above, 1986; Wishing You a

Merry Christmas, 1986; Tell it to Jesus; a Tub of Love; Lord give me a song; Brighten Someone's Day; God Gave His Best; Without You, Including Flower Petals in the Water; Waddle I do, featuring a duck; and two tiny timbles. Betsy receives these Precious Moments for Christmas and her birthday. She started collecting them five years ago. The display will be at the library until August 8th.

The library has instituted a new program, whereby each active borrower will receive his personal library card to carry with him and present at the circulation desk when borrowing books. Each borrower will receive his own number and sign books out with the number and not by name. The first person to receive her own card was Pam Allardyce of Dallas. This will be an ongoing program which will take the staff several weeks to organize.

A faithful auction worker and supporter was missed this year. Ann Jordan of Trucksville has worked at the refreshment stand many years; she was co-chair of the stand one year; chairman of the Rotary Ann baked goods booth for two years and worked in the

ticket cart for many years. This was the first year in the past 40 that Ann was not visibly working on the auction grounds. She and her husband, Doc Jordan, have been very faithful workers to the library and the auction. Doc served on the board of directors for many years and the library auction for 36 years. These are dedicated people and we thank them for all their time and talent through the years.

The library has two drop off containers on the grounds for books when the library is closed. However, Dallas Exxon is not an ordinary drop-off place. One of our volunteers saw a book lying on a table at Spurlin's station and noticed it belonged to us and was overdue. She returned it to us on her next trip. Thanks, Virginia, for bringing the book back.

There will be a special sale of books in the basement rooms at the library. These books will be selling for \$1.00 a bag for the rest of the summer or until they are all gone. These were some choice books which did not sell at the book booth during the auction and we are offering them for sale at this special price.

Letter

Paglianite answers concerns about beach

Editor:

I am writing to clarify your concern about the beach area at Sunset Harveys Lake. Namely that I already own over 50 percent of property involved and easily could have precluded its use as beach 36 years ago until the present day had I so desired. Access to the lake is not lost as the property of the Harveys Lake Beach Ass'n. is restricted to its use as a beach.

But some revenue has to be derived from somewhere to sustain it. We have a state park swimming pool in our area. Why isn't that free of cost to use? It gets back to who will pay for insurance upkeep, Maintenance, etc. Simple as that.

I appreciate your concern about access to the lake, but if you will research the lake you will find that Sandy Beach was available. Sandy Bottom and Hanson's lakefront were also available.

In the past 20 years I provided the use of my restrooms to qualify for a beach and leased the land for a dollar a year so you can readily see where my interest was and is at the present time.

The fact that I acquire the beach is not to deprive past members or delinquent members of the beach ass'n. the right to admittance but to do what you are most concerned, about access to the water.

Joseph Paglianite

Business center releases directory

The Wilkes University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has the 1990-91 Directory of Federal Laboratory & Technical Resources available for use by any of its clients in business, industry and academia. The center is prepared to assist in the directory's use and application as part of its service to the community.

The directory is a convenient desktop reference that an engineer, scientist or decision maker can use to locate U.S. Government technology-oriented resources.

The government employs thousands of engineers and scientists to conduct research and engineering activities, located at hundreds of Federal laboratory and engineering facilities across the country. Federal Agencies, laboratories and engineering centers were surveyed to identify services, areas of expertise, equipment and facilities which can directly assist the academic and business communities.

The Wilkes University Small Business Development Center is a unit of the Center for Regional Development under the direction of Ed Sieminski. The SBDC offers a full range of free services to small business owners and those thinking of starting a business. For more information on the services offered by the Wilkes University SBDC or on the 1990-1991 Directory of Federal Laboratory & Technology Resources call 824-4651, Ext. 4340.

Anderson afield

Everyone pays for huge federal waterway projects

By JOHN M. ANDERSON

If one of those engineers that straighten rivers and drain marshes for a living were to ask you for a donation to keep him in business, you'd probably tell him where to go. Having no intention of going there, he goes, instead, to the politicians in the state or states where he wants to spend your money. Just because his project is not built in your state does not mean you don't pay for it. We all pay for it, because it is a federal project.

A case in point is the Tennessee-Tombigbee waterway, a 234-mile waterway that connects Mobile, AB, with the Ohio River. For 18 years, the National Audubon Society, Wildlife Federation, and other organizations that try to keep this

beat-up land capable of supporting people and wildlife, fought and fought this monstrous boondoggle. It is one of the most outrageous in a long list of Army Corps of Engineers projects.

The strategy of the Corps and the big promoters was the same as it always is. First they estimate the cost in dollars. Then they estimate the benefits to our economy, that will come from increased barge traffic, increased recreation, increased flood control and so on. They always claim the cost-benefit ratio shows the latter far in excess of the former.

The only thing about the project that always works well is the political machine and it always works in the same way. The big promoters contact a powerful senator, in this case, U.S. Senator John Stennis of

Mississippi. The senator obeys a golden rule. "If you don't carry federal money to the folks back home, you'd better not go home".

The promoters claim the project will put thousands of men on the government payroll, stimulate all kinds of business, and please the local voters. To my knowledge, no Corps project has ever been built without greatly exceeding the cost estimate. And the economic benefits seldom even approach the estimate. This \$2 billion project continues to cost the taxpayers between \$14 million and \$20 million per year for maintenance alone.

The barge traffic is so far short of predictions that the promoters are saying, "Yes, but, Ten Tom is one of the top 20 bass fishing spots in the nation, and as soon as we build more marinas, the big fancy

yachts from Ohio will bring in tourist dollars galore".

The Corps predicted that the waterway, which took 12 years to build, would carry 30 to 40 million tons per year. Last year, it carried about 5 million tons.

"Never mind", say the promoters, "We've taken an area that offered no outdoor recreation and turned it into a national playground."

Perhaps you never saw the river in its natural state, some 20 years ago. Believe me, it was a fisherman's paradise, to say nothing of the ducks, geese, deer, otters, squirrels, and other wildlife that flourished where the old river meandered in easy curves through the hills and valleys.

As Paul Hartfield, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says, "It's been converted

from one of the most diverse river systems in the world to a series of fishing lakes. I would call it an ecological disaster". Straightening the old river has displaced 43,000 acres of valuable timber and wildlife habitat.

One of the most interesting comments comes from Bruce Hannon, an engineer who used to work for the Corps, who now teaches geography at the University of Illinois. Bruce tried to help us stop the project back in the 1970's. Says Bruce, "I don't know how many times this has to happen before the Congress stops doing this." At least some congressmen are beginning to see the light. After witnessing the disastrous results of straightening the Kistimnee River in Florida, Congress has ordered the Corps to try

to restore the meanders of the original channel.

On the other hand, Senator Johnston has similar plans (with predictable results) for straightening the Red River in Louisiana. When will we ever learn?

Perhaps you can afford the money you lose on these projects. I don't believe you can afford to lose the storage capacity of all those oxbow lakes, the bottomland hardwood forests, and all the wildlife that made our country less monotonous. As the old song says, "In dreams again I see visions of what used to be". A few more Ten-Toms and dreams are all we'll have left.

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