

## THE DALLAS POST

## EDITORIALS

## Local farms show plenty of life

There's no doubt the American family farm is in decline, but several local families are bucking the trend. Farms owned by Gordon and Judith Dawe of Lehman, Ralph and Nettie Miers of Shavertown, Lawrence and Nancy Brace of Dallas, and Willard and Wilma Lansberry of Dallas are among a dozen family farms recognized recently in Pennsylvania's Century Farm Program.

The state honor is presented to farms that have been operated for at least 100 years under descendants of the original owner. Twelve farms in Luzerne County qualified for the award, four of them in the Back Mountain.

At least four generations of Americans have come and gone since the United States was considered primarily an agricultural nation. Industrialization and immigration shifted the majority of population to the cities at the same time that improved farming methods raised yields of the food the growing population required. Then the dust bowl years of the 1930's drove countless thousands of rural residents off the land and into the cities, particularly in the West. Later, so-called "corporate" farms began to dominate many crops, and small family farms were forced to either grow or die.

Remarkably, American agriculture weathered all these storms and set new records for production. Despite its failings, the United States farm system is by far the most productive in the world, giving us a level of security unknown in many societies.

Recent events elsewhere remind us of the importance of individual initiative in farming, as in other endeavors. A newly-liberated Soviet Union faces the real prospect of famine, largely because of an inefficient agricultural policy dictated by state planners. In poor areas of Africa, expertise is regarded as more important than food as residents struggle to learn how to become self sufficient.

Even in America, family farms are being seen as more responsible than large company-owned spreads, leading the way to more efficient, less chemical dependent agriculture.

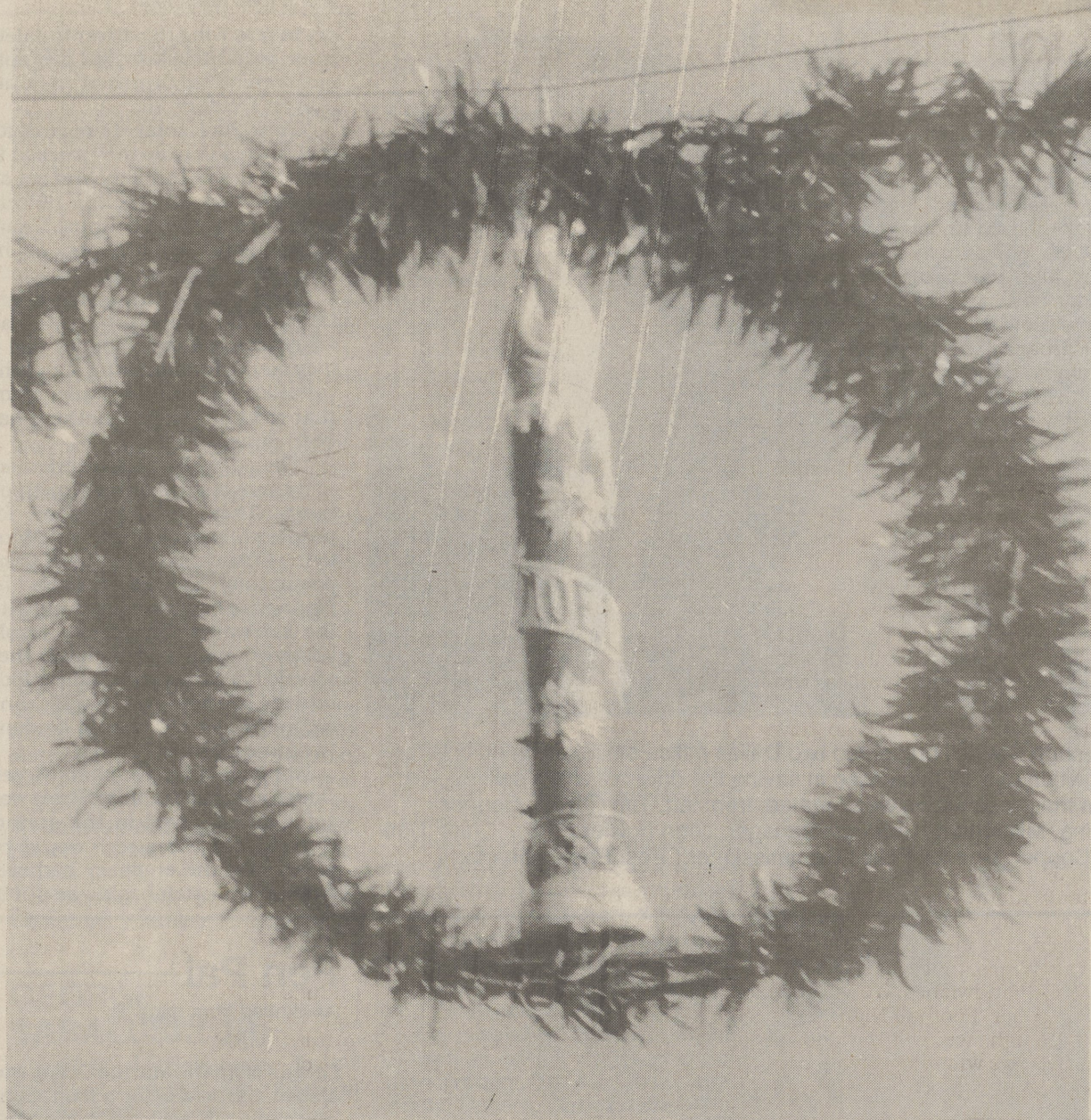
Congratulations to the Back Mountain's Century Farms. May they continue for another 100 years.

## More answers are needed on Gulf crisis

As yet more Americans are committed to the confrontation in the Persian Gulf, the President and his advisors continue to struggle to define the operation's goals clearly. Does that mean the goals themselves are fuzzy, or that the administration simply can't express itself adequately?

As much as any people and more than some, Americans have been able to summon great reserves of strength when military action was seen as the only option in a just cause. Mr. Bush and his minions would be wise not to trivialize that spirit by continuing to present the current operation as some sort of macho assertiveness marked by name-calling and rigidity. The people and the soldiers must be told truthfully the purposes and expectations for the mission, or their support will evaporate like water in the desert sand.

Is there sufficient reason to risk thousands of American lives in the Persian Gulf? Is military action the only way to achieve our goals? The American people, Congress and the soldiers deserve clear, direct answers.



'Tis the season

(Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

## Library news

## Back Mountain Library Book Club has largest membership in its history

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Book Club of the Back Mountain Memorial Library held its November meeting in the reference room at the library. Twenty members and guests were in attendance.

The 1990 Book Club membership to date stands at 235 members, the largest yearly membership in the club's history. The amount of \$2,140 has been collected in dues from the members which goes to buy special books for the Book Club shelf in the library. The spending is pro-rated during the year so that a selection of new books arrives each month.

The annual Christmas meeting will be held Monday, Dec. 17, in the reading room of the library with the Friends of the Library involved in the plans for a Christmas tea and program. Catherine Bolinski of Dallas will present a special program revolving around her affiliation with Scotland with some special surprises pertaining to Christmas. Guests at the meeting included Rosemary Schiowitz, Lottie Karweta, Alberta Cook and June Malmstone. Grace Martin and Frances Linskill presided at the festive tea table. A special birthday cake was presented and served in honor of Mrs. Crump's 96th birthday which will be December 2.

The library has been presented with a beautiful new book titled, "A Dog Named Jamie", written and

illustrated by Sue Hand. The subtitle of the book reads, her life, her love and her legacy; referring to Jamie who was a beautiful, sensitive and devoted beagle-and-shepherd and-? As a dog, she rated low; but as a friend, companion and family member, Jamie rated a "Perfect 10". The book was published by Sue Hand's Imagery and dedicated to all the people who helped Sue love Jamie. The book is not typeset or computer printed. It is handwritten because it is a very personal, first-hand story, a love story to and about a V.I.P.—a very important 'puppy'.

It took a long time to write the manuscript, copy it in Chancery cursive calligraphy, and to draw the illustrations, taken from photos and sketches. Jamie was 16 years old and through the use of steroids, the dog and Sue were given an extra 8 months of love and companionship. This book tells a beautiful story of love from beginning to end; the beginning happened to be when Sue first met Jamie in a small cage behind an auction barn.

Back in 1973, the Back Mountain Library Auction still "auctioned off" a few animals each year. Any child bidding was required to have parental consent. Coming home from a day in the country, Sue decided to stop at the auction, and was allowed to peek at the puppies behind the auction barn. She found

a little girl puppy she wanted and the children—the auction runners—lifted the sleepy little form out of the cage. We went back in the crowd with the auction-goers and waited for the puppy to be put up on the auction block.

Finally, the puppy was held up for the crowd to view, still sleepy. Heather Hand, then 4 years old, raised her hand and bid 50 cents. The auctioneer looked over the crowd and then looked at Heather and said "SOLD". When it was time for Jamie to be called to her real home, Sue leaned down and whispered "good-bye" to her "Baby Beager" and when it was time to bury Jamie, she was wrapped in a white linen shroud, a beautiful piece of Belgian linen given to Joe and Sue for a wedding present. Jamie, the 50 cent auction Shepeagle, deserved royal linen!

Sue Hand has said she wants this book to tell people to love God, your Maker, to trust and obey him, and to live fully the life He gave us to live—as an "Authentic Performance"—just like Jamie did! And that was Jamie's Greatest Legacy. This book is beautifully written and illustrated and heart-wrenching. A very warm thank you to Sue for writing the book and for donating a copy to the Back Mountain Memorial Library. It will be cherished and well read.

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## Anderson afield

## Protected or not, wetlands have big effect on pocketbook

By JOHN M. ANDERSON

So you like to watch birds, hunt, fish and so on. That's fine. But for now, let's forget about these activities and think about your pocketbook.

When it comes to wetlands, the effect on the pocketbook has been the number one consideration when deciding whether to drain them, fill them or leave them alone.

Because you can't build a house, or raise corn in marshes, swamps, or lakes, wetlands seemed to stand in the way of progress. And, in the name of progress, we methodically destroyed them; usually with taxpayers' money.

As in the case of the savings and loans debacle, while we were looking the other way, our government was using our dollars to destroy what we needed for food, clothing and shelter.

We can hardly blame our politicians for appropriating money to the Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and (at times) the Soil Conservation Service to drain and fill wetlands. If they did not listen to those who wanted to build, plant, or run cows in the wetlands, they would lose their jobs, which is bad for their pocketbooks. Most of

us nodded and approved. We just didn't know any better.

But as more wetlands were drained, as meandering streams were straightened so the run off could be speeded up, towns along the rivers were flooded. Houses on the former floodplains were inundated. Owners of Fords and Chevies learned the hard way that their vehicles were not amphibious.

In response, the Army Engineers built dams across the streams and levees along the banks in the name of "flood control". But somehow the floods became more frequent and more disastrous as the years went by. We had several floods this year; the worst in history. There will be as many or more next year, and your tax dollars will be used to repair the damage as various state governors and President Bush agree that they qualify as "disaster areas".

As the floods got worse and more frequent, folks thought we must be doing something wrong. The Corps convinced the politicians that we were not spending enough money building dams and drainage canals so "all that water could get away".

Fortunately, a few people with no axe to grind decided to learn what it costs to destroy wetlands, compared to the cost of leaving them alone.

Freshwater wetlands help prevent floods. They do this because they occur in basins along streams. When rain or melted snow water enters streams, or when streams overflow their banks, wetlands fill with water and hold it for a period of time. During storms water enters the wetlands faster than it flows out because the outlet is narrow and water backs up.

Trees, cattails, and other plants slow the movement of floodwaters which would otherwise rush downstream. In addition, some water evaporates; some is taken up by the vegetation. An outstanding example is sphagnum moss which occurs in northern bogs. Pick up a handful of sphagnum and you'll find it a veritable sponge from which you can squeeze a cupful of water. These natural processes mean less water going downstream to flood homes. This is much easier on your pocketbook.

As you saw on TV recently, if water rushes through town, the

crest is much higher and your pocketbook gets flatter. If that water is let out gradually, fewer bridges wash out, fewer farms and homes are destroyed. So wetlands are a natural form of flood prevention. If they are drained, filled for housing, used for city trash dumps, it will take many tax dollars to replace that protection with dams and levees.

It is not necessary to keep all activity out of wetlands to preserve their flood control value, but we should not allow them to be filled, or to open wider outlets for drainage, or to build structures that will block or raise flood water. Forestry practices, agriculture and recreational facilities without fill or buildings do no harm if planned carefully.

Recently, in Pennsylvania, I came across a tamarack swamp. I was quite concerned to see heavy equipment clearing a swath of vegetation, digging a trench about a yard wide and two yards deep, and laying a pipeline down the mountainside and across the swamp.

Two days later, I was amazed to see the equipment gone, the trench filled and the ground leveled. The flow of water through the swamp was undisturbed, and it was crystal clear. Where another pipeline had been laid a few years ago, the line was completely covered over with grass and forbes, which held the soil in place and prevented erosion.

Pipeline maintenance prevents restoration of the trees on the right-of-way. On the other hand, for the hunter, birdwatcher or botanist, this narrow, open path adds diversity to the region. Which means better hunting, birding, and hiking. In the undisturbed hemlock forest, the shade is so dense the ground is practically bare and devoid of flowers or birds.

The pipeline company, Transco Energy, probably did not have the outdoor enthusiasts in mind when they set out to transport natural gas. Intentionally or not, they did us a favor.

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

## Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - Nov. 28, 1930

## LUTHERANS DEBATE SINGLE COMMUNITY

Indoor golf 9-hole golf course on Main Street, Shavertown, wins people to the sport.

Rabbit hunting becomes a popular sport and principal wildlife game in America.

Wed - Chloe Evans and Joseph Faux.

St. Paul's Lutheran Brotherhood to meet in debate "Should the communities of Dallas, Trucksville and Shavertown join in a municipality?"

Lon Chaney stars in "The Holy Three" at the Himmler Theatre.

Miniature reproductions of the countryside surrounding Dallas play an important part in the setting of the new Indoor Country Club recently opened in the Matheson Building in Kingston.

50 Years Ago - Nov. 29, 1940

## JEAN ZIMMERMAN TO STAR IN COLLEGE PLAY

Dr. F. Budd Schooley's survey gives new impetus to community building discussions.

A state planning zoning expert offers aid on new Dallas Borough ordinances.

Draftees are tardy in returning questionnaires to the draft board.

109th Regiment had its beginning 165 years ago.

Deer season opens Monday with prospects of a big kill.

Jean Zimmerman of Lehman will appear in a Wilson College play "East Lynne."

Wed - Irene Lavan Pealer and Arthur Remphrey Bray.

Lake Alumni to present minstrel.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 1, 1950

## COMMONWEALTH PLANS NEW FACILITY

Commonwealth Telephone to expend \$1 million to build general offices on Lake Street in Dallas in a story building housing executive offices, clerical, engineering, accounting and commercial personnel as well as the central office for Dallas exchange.

A Northeast in the area last Saturday caused damage felling large trees and damaging homes, aeriels and windows throughout the Back Mountain.

Back Mountain Library Executive Board established the weekend following the Fourth of July as the date for the annual auction.

Wed - Joan Ann Hoffman and Evan Evans.

Engaged - Beryl Co'well and S. Paul Fahringer.

Travers Park Ski Tow will soon be in operation for the winter sport enthusiasts.

Kingston Township romps to 32-6 victory over the Dallas Redskins.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 1, 1960

## KINGSTON TWP. FORMS FIRST PLANNING COMM.

Warm sunshine and bright skies blessed the laying of the cornerstone at the new educational building at the White Church on the Hill.

Sixty-five students have been named to the honor roll at Westmoreland High School.

Many Back Mountain residents attended the hearing on the new highway to be constructed from Luzerne through Dallas.

Kingston Township supervisors will name five men to its new planning commission at its December meeting. The township is the first Back Mountain municipality to take such action.

Santa Claus made an early appearance last weekend at the Back Mountain Lumber and Coal Company.

Engaged - Karen Horlacher and Harry Lee Ohlman.

Wed - Marilyn Joan Spencer and Fred K. Gansel; Betty Lawson and Thomas Jones.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 3, 1970

## LARRY LaBAR BAGS A 12-POINT BUCK

Reports that Lake-Lehman School District has plans for a new \$1 million elementary school well underway were labeled as premature by Supervising Principal Robert Z. Belles.

Larry LaBar, 12-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence LaBar, East Dallas, had the thrill of a lifetime when he bagged a six-point, 115 pound buck on the first day of deer season Monday. The deer was topped by Larry's first shot on his first day of deer hunting.

Long hair is still a 'no-no' in the revised dress code released at Dallas Senior High School.

Westmoreland second grade students enacted the "First Thanksgiving" recently.

The Mountaineers win the Old Shoe by defeating Lake-Lehman 24-14, Thanksgiving Day.

Wed - Theresa Sikora and Foster G. Bulford.