

They work

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"For a small-town library, ours offers many services," Connie said. "They do the best that they can to keep everything as up-to-date as possible. People would certainly miss it if it weren't there - especially if they had to travel to Wilkes-Barre or Kingston every time that they needed to look something up."

Connie said that the auction's ability to fund 25 percent of the library's budget speaks well for the community.

Ernie and Betty Ashbridge

Ernie and Betty have worked on the auction since they first moved to the Back Mountain in 1956, both having chaired the antiques committee several times. "We're always on the lookout for good antiques, but don't begin serious collecting until November or December," Ernie said.

Their daughter, Robin, now living in West Chester, has inherited an appreciation of antiques from her parents' work with them at the auction.

While growing up, she also helped out at the auction, working as a spotter until the library moved to its present quarters on Huntsville Road.

Spotters stood on platforms, where they could more easily see the crowd, and indicated bidders to the auctioneers.

"Robin always looked forward to helping out," Ernie said. "She

really enjoyed it."

Ernie has been on the board since 1973; both he and Betty are also "Ham 'n Yeggors." Betty has also been a member of the Friends of the Back Mountain Memorial Library.

"We feel very dedicated to the library and what it provides to the community," Ernie said.

Lois and Jeff Townsend

The couple started working at the auction around 1974. Lois worked with the Dallas Junior Women's Club's homemade fudge stand and made handcrafted items with the Jayceettes, while Jeff worked with the Jaycees.

Later they both manned the Rotary food booth.

Their sons, Scott and David, began working as runners when they were eight years old.

"Under the old bidding system, the runners carried buyers' money to the block after they had bought something and brought the purchases back," Lois explained. "They really had to pay attention to who had bought which item."

In 1990, when chairman Connie Scott brought back the Children's Auction, she recruited Lois and Jeff to head it. Jeff is the assistant scoutmaster of Dallas Boy Scout Troop 281, which obtains new and good used toys and other kids' items for the sale and also supplies the young auctioneers.

Both Scott and David are troop members.

"It's kind of exciting, something special set up by the kids for other kids," Lois said.

Bennie and Ken Matchett

Bennie has worked at Mrs. Crump's Book Booth since 1982, and will begin her fifth year on the board in November.

In 1992, when poor health forced chairman Mrs. Florence Crump to give up her work at the library, Bennie stepped in as co-chairman of the booth.

"With the increasing popularity of the book booth and the heavy work involved, Ken decided to help us out on his days off from work," she said.

Bennie credits the book booth's success not only to Ken, but also to co-chairmen Anne Aston, who handles the phone calls and helps out during her time off from her job, and Jeff Matus, who drives in from his job at Penn State and gives up Saturday afternoons to help categorize, store and move the mountains of books which come in all year round.

Jane McMichael

Retired from Owens-Illinois for the past ten years, Jane, 72 years young, couldn't see herself sitting home for the rest of her life.

So she started working as an aide at the library.

On her days off, she comes in as a volunteer.

"I love it here," she said. "The people and the staff are great. It's a lovely place to work."

Jane works with business manager Nancy Kozemchak on the Rotary/Kiwanis wheelchair loaner program and the book store in the basement originated by Mrs. Kozemchak.

She also selects books and magazines to take to The Meadows Apartments the first Monday of every month, another project which Mrs. Kozemchak instituted.

"The people at The Meadows really look forward to book day," she said. "Often they'll give me specific requests for materials. It's fun trying to find things which will interest them."

Jane is also proud of the book store in the library's basement, reasonably priced books too good to discard, donated by friends and library members.

Last year the book store raised \$1,500 for the library, Jane said.

During her free time, she volunteers at the library, setting up the main desk and taking care of the flower garden.

The untiring efforts of these volunteers, the library staff and the Freeman, Rothschild, Aicher, Kutz and Shaskas families, among others, has made the auction a success for all of its 48 years

Myrtle Hess to celebrate 96th birthday July 9

Myrtle Hess will celebrate her 96th birthday July 9. She is a former resident of Kunkle and now resides at Lakeside Nursing home. She has two daughters, Janet Edwards and Doris Ward.

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Penn State

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Another 8,000 students also are served through the campus's continuing education programs, mini-courses and special seminars.

Community colleges with competitively priced tuition fees are now attracting students who once were attracted by Penn State and its satellite campuses.

Penn State Wilkes-Barre was established in 1916 in Wilkes-Barre to teach mining, engineering and mathematics, long before Luzerne County Community College opened.

Penn State moved to the old Conyngham estate in Lehman in 1968.

It is the county's oldest institution of higher learning, offering both two-year associate degree programs and the first two years of a four-year program, in which students must transfer to other Penn State campuses, the main campus or another school for their

last two years.

While its most popular courses are still engineering and technology, Penn State's Wilkes-Barre campus now also offers the first two years of nearly every degree offered by the university.

A new four-year surveying degree program is one of only two on the East Coast and the only one in the state.

The campus has applied for a grant to fund a second four-year degree program combining electrical and mechanical engineering technology, which will be offered on only four Penn State campuses.

Neither program will be affected by the cutbacks, Pearman said.

Pearman said that the Wilkes-Barre campus is only ten miles from the valley, but those ten miles are a long drive for some people, especially in the winter.

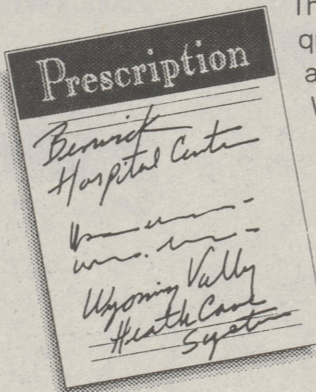
"It's a psychological distance," Pearman said. "Ten miles isn't that far, but people think that it's

way out in the country because we're in a rural area. If we had dormitories, we could attract more students."

Presently 96 out-of-town students live in a private residence adjacent to the campus.

Pearman finished his last day at the campus Tuesday, because he announced several months ago that he was leaving to take a position at the University of Hawaii. His replacement has not yet been announced.

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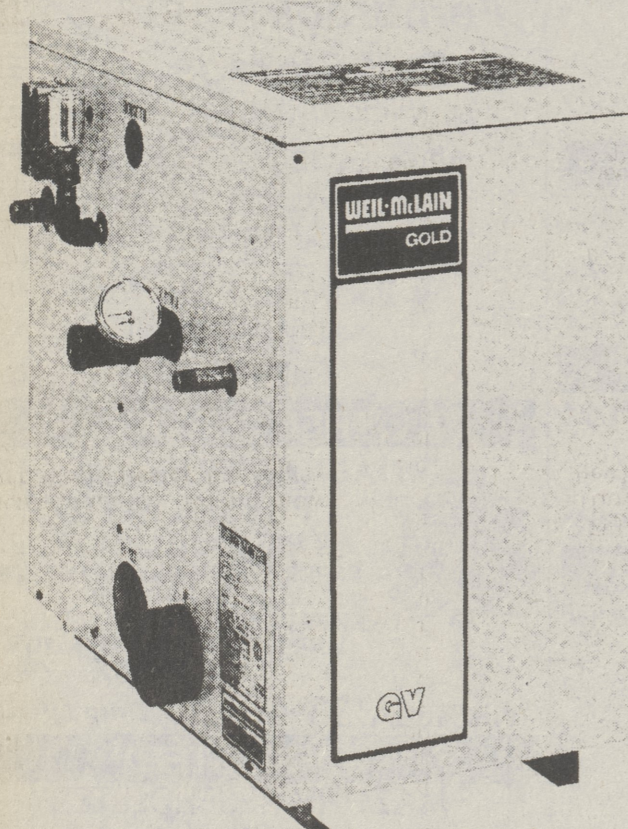
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