

A year of storms, joy and silliness

homes.

The Back Mountain's new trash hauler, Wayne-Pike Sanitation, was trying to recover from nature's rude welcome, as residents complained about late pickups, or none at all.

Feb. 2: Sister Andre Dembowski's "birthday bash" raised more than \$5,000 for the Sisters of Mercy Ministry Fund, with 200 guests attending the event.

Roofs crashed down throughout the area, as the weight of record snows toppled 100-year-old barns in Shavertown and Lehman, carports and garages.

Feb. 9: Marc Bregman, a former dispatcher, sued the Back Mountain Communications Center for wrongful dismissal. Bregman was released after suffering two heart attacks, the second while on the job.

Star Dallas tackle Greg Nadzan announced that he would attend Yale University, where he would play football and pursue a medical career.

Feb. 16: Police arrested 75-year-old Forrest Habbet of Chase Road, Jackson Township on charges of possessing 123 bags of heroin and other "unknown" pills.

Some pieces of mail arrived at The Dallas Post addressed to P.O. Box 366, College Misericordia, PA 18612. Apparently, a computer mail list confused the town and the college.

Feb. 23: Three Back Mountain attorneys told the Dallas school board they would oppose a plan to develop six acres of vacant school district land into playing fields. One of the lawyers lived in a development adjacent to the field.

James "Pappy" Gordon closed out a 52-year career fighting fires. In addition to serving on the Trucksville Fire Company, Gordon helped start the Back Mountain Fire Police and founded the Back Mountain Junior Firefighters, training two generations of volunteers.

March 2: The Luzerne County Transportation Authority cut back some Back Mountain bus runs, including all Saturday service.

Area legislators continued to press the state corrections department to use a new water line to Chase prison, rather than depending on wells. The line was built at a cost of \$663,000, but prison officials insist it should be used only as a backup.

Louise Brown, who operated "The Coop" for many years, anticipated her 90th birthday on March 6.

March 9: The mother of a Dallas High School student accused a teacher of assaulting her son in class. But hospital records and her story didn't match.

Lake-Lehman took the district wrestling title, edging Meyers by one point. Dallas will send four grapplers to regionals.

Jenna Woychick, 2 1/2, matched the feat of a child featured on a CNN television broadcast, assembling a United States puzzle in 15 minutes, while reeling off a few facts about many states.

March 16: The Dallas School District laid plans to make up days lost to the winter's snow, including extending the school day by 30 minutes.

Back Mountain Memorial Library volunteers raised \$239.05 in their "Pennies for Periodicals" campaign.

March 23: The federal Environmental Protection Agency stepped in to oversee the cleanup of gasoline that contaminated wells in Lehman Township's center. A \$1.9 million EPA Superfund grant will pay for the project.

Students at Lake-Lehman middle school "adopted" a school damaged in the Northridge, California earthquake.

Concert promoter Thom Greco threatened to sue Harveys Lake Borough if the council enacted an ordinance that included the amphitheater.

March 30: Native Textiles announced it would close its Dallas plant and move operations to upstate New York. The plant was opened in the late 1940s, and employed 127 workers.

The Dallas Post learned it had won three awards in the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' Association contest. Grace Dove won first place in health reporting, while Dave Konopki took a first in sports column and second for best sports story.

April 6: A Shavertown man, Delroy Henson, was charged with selling over 100 guns without a license. The U.S. Attorney's office said Henson had acquired the guns here and sold them in Baltimore.

Fishermen complained that the Fish Commission's plan to stock 4,200 adult trout in Harveys Lake wasn't enough. Tom Sponseller called for at least 25,000 fish to be stocked before opening day, and more later.

April 13: Franklin Township supervisor Robert Redmond defended himself against charges he didn't live in the township.

Dallas Post sports writer Dave



Snow, snow and more snow. Cars on the L.L. Richardson lot were covered by a January storm, one of three to hit that month, breaking the single month snowfall record.

Konopki wound up his "Weight for Wishes" campaign by donating more than \$1,700 to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

April 20: A trail of jelly doughnuts spelled doom for a bear that had been raising havoc with bird feeders in Dallas Township. Game commission officers caught the bear in a trap baited with a chain of doughnuts in the backyard of an Upper Demunds Road home.

Josh Kupstas of Huntsville was selected as the Geisinger Children's Miracle Network poster child.

The Dallas track team brought home seven medals from an invitational meet at Shippensburg Univ.

April 27: Jackson Township residents expressed their contempt for the Chase prison's continued insistence on relying on wells for water.

The Trucksville United Methodist Church celebrated "Heritage Sunday," one of many events commemorating the church's 150th year.

A family of beavers that had caused water to back up into yards and basements on Outlet Drive at Harveys Lake, were about to be evicted.

May 4: The Back Mountain Communications Center filed a lawsuit aimed at allowing it to remain in operation and not be forced to join a proposed county-wide emergency call system.

A Lake Silkworth cottage recently occupied by Michael and Carol Rayes, which had been the subject of ongoing controversy over its unsightly condition, burned to the ground.

May 11: Local and state police investigated a string of home burglaries, including one in which jewelry and cash valued at over \$30,000 was stolen.

May 18: Phyllis Eckman of Shavertown showed off her recipe for Black Forest Cheesecake, which was included in an article in the June issue of *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

Speakers at a forum on state tax reform, sponsored by the Back Mountain Citizens' Council, agreed that whatever its direction, tax reform should be approved by voters.

The Dallas girls' soccer team captured its fifth consecutive division title under head coach Ron Moran.

May 25: Surprising nearly everyone, Lake-Lehman School District and its teachers announced they had agreed to a new three-year contract. The agreement passed the school board by a one-vote majority.

Two homes in Huntsville received historic preservation awards from the Wyoming Valley Historical and Geological Society.

June 1: As the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion of Europe approached, Emmett Hoover recalled his experiences in the battle that changed the course of World War II. Meanwhile, Vietnam veterans tended a watchfire to commemorate those missing in action.

Both Back Mountain high school baseball teams prepared to play for district titles.

June 8: Caterpillars and inchworms ravaged trees throughout the area, then repelled down and covered the sides of buildings.

Semi-automatic gunshots rang out along Lower Demunds Road and police discovered 11 bullet marks in the ground near a home, but no suspect was found.

Ken Wallace and Dave Daris prepared to set out on the Great American Race in a 1940 Chevrolet.

June 15: Thom Greco blamed the media, residents and the Harveys Lake borough council for his decision not to open the amphitheater this summer. "I've gotten a raw deal here," he said.

A tractor-trailer cab smashed into a utility pole in Kingston Township, then dragged it along Carverton Road where it struck and injured Patricia Zikor and Virginia "Ginger" Ritts, who were out for a walk. Timothy Potoeski, 29, of Sweet Valley was identified as the driver.

PNC Bank announced that the Dallas branch would close June 17, and its operations would be merged with the former First Eastern branch in the Dallas Village Shopping Center.

June 22: The Lake-Lehman School District passed a budget with a five mill property tax increase, but finance manager Ray Bowersox still warned the budget was tight. Dallas passed its fourth straight budget with no tax increases.

Class president Greg Nadzan, speaking at graduation, reflected on the changes he and his classmates had gone through in four years at Dallas High School.



Game Commission officer Jim Jolley showed off a 300-lb. bear that had been captured in the backyard of an Upper Demunds Road home. A trail of jelly doughnuts leading to a trap proved the bruin's undoing.

June 29: Lake-Lehman superintendent of schools Nancy Davis shocked the school board by announcing she would resign to take a job at Wilkes University.

Police and the FBI said they were close to making arrests in a string of burglaries that occurred earlier in the year. But no arrests were ever announced.

Samuel Smith of Jackson Township became an Eagle Scout after completing a project to build and install houses for bats.

July 6: Budget cutting throughout the Penn State University system forced six people to lose their jobs at the campus in Lehman.

The Rangers beat the Phillies 6-3 to take the Back Mountain Little League championship. Mike Faneck struck out nine while picking up the win, and Brian Vetter batted out three hits.

Edward Orloski submitted plans for a combination gas station/convenience store/bank/car wash on the site of the former Exxon station in Dallas Borough.

July 13: The Anthracite Scenic Trails Association released plans to convert two miles of abandoned railbed in Kingston Township to walking and biking trails.

Judy Dickson sent a friend to the 48th annual Back Mountain library auction with a check and orders to buy the quilt made by Dallas Elementary third graders. Spirited bidding took the price to \$950 before the task was accomplished. The auction met its fundraising goal.

July 20: Area residents planned to help out at the Hospice St. John Ride For Dignity, while oth-

ers prepared to compete in the inaugural run of the event. Tom Beezich and Barbara Anzalone were among the entrants.

The Back Mountain senior team captured the District 16 championship with an 11-3 win over Mountaintop. "The whole team has a lot of desire. They want to win," said Larry Kriner, the coach.

July 27: After battling not to do so, Chase prison officials finally agreed to use the new water line from Ceasetown Reservoir as a primary water source.

Lamar Sharpe and five members of his WWII bomber crew gathered in the Back Mountain for their first reunion in 50 years.

General Waterworks asked the Public Utility Commission to approve a rate increase that would take the average annual water cost to about \$340 in the Back Mountain.

August 3: A 4-page questionnaire appeared in some Harveys Lake mailboxes without postage or a

were among the roads labeled "racetracks" by residents and police alike. "They fly up and down here like crazy," said John Emil.

August 31: Area Vietnam veterans laid plans for a 1,000 mile watchfire to take place Oct. 22, in honor of those missing in action.

Kristell Kocher outdrove her father to take first in class at a SCCA skills event held at the Dallas High School parking lot.

Acting campus executive officer Tom Winter said no programs would be cut as a result of belt-tightening across the statewide campus.

Sept. 7: Heidi Jo Allen was ready to receive an award during National Rehabilitation Week. The Sweet Valley woman, though left a quadriplegic by a 1986 car accident, holds down a full-time job and drives a specially-equipped van.

John Law, who recently took over as manager of the Coates Reprographics plant in Dallas Township, told *The Post* his company supplies a large percentage of the copier and printer toner sold in the nation.

Sept. 14: A year-long study of Harveys Lake turned up only minor problems, most related to algae growth. More big trout would help, said a spokesman for the firm that conducted the study.

Dallas school administrators will receive an average 5.1 percent raise, according to a vote of the school board.

The Dallas High School band is playing a happy tune, with participation and quality both at recent highs.

Sept. 21: Tammy Slater, who once operated a bridal shop in the Back Mountain, was arrested for swindling three brides who bought gowns at her new store in Scranton. Meanwhile, five local brides were still trying to collect the money Slater owed them.

Dallas and Lake-Lehman football teams both are off to fast starts, having won their first three games.

Lake-Lehman school administrators will get raises of a bit under 4 percent this year.

Sept. 28: The Yalick property along Route 415 was to be auctioned in two separate parcels Oct. 4.

Luzerne County District Attorney Peter Paul Olszewski confirmed that his office was investigating a complaint against the Harveys Lake police department.

College Misericordia celebrated 70 years in higher education with weekend festivities at the campus.

The Dallas Post won a second-place award for best sports column from the National Newspaper Association.

Oct. 5: A plan to close five of eight watch towers at Chase prison drew fire from citizens and prison guards. "This shouldn't happen," said Sgt. William Lewis, the guard union president. "It's a rash, stupid plan."

Only the smaller, 3-acre parcel of the Yalick farm drew a bid at last week's auction. The Conyngham family bid \$75,000 for it, but the bid was later rejected.

Shelly Kovach, Judy Sichler and Tara Dymond scored two goals each as the Lake-Lehman field hockey team shut out Valley West.

Trucksville United Methodist Church began to wind up its sesquicentennial celebration with a whirlwind two weeks of events.

Oct. 12: Big-city problems began to make their appearance in the Back Mountain, as police arrested three juveniles for "tagging," drawing abstract letters and graffiti art on buildings.

The Huntsville Golf Club held a "coming-out" party of sorts, as golf writers and other members of the media took to the course for a day. Among those attending were Dave Anderson, Pulitzer Prize winning *New York Times* columnist, and Rees Jones, the course designer.

Bill Smith told the story of his WWII experiences, including being aboard the *USS Princeton* when it was struck by a Japanese bomb, and sank.

Oct. 19: The Dallas Area Municipal Authority announced that rates would increase by \$30 because of costs associated with hooking up to a Wyoming Valley system.

John Magagna told *The Post* about his business, Search Associates, which places teachers and administrators in jobs at private schools around the world.

Oct. 26: The Environmental Protection Agency began building a temporary treatment plant near Mill Street in Lehman. The facility will be used to clean up the remnants of gasoline spills from a gas station.

A "rumble" involving a large number of Dallas High School students became hot news. The fight, which was said to involve about 30 people, took place at the Westmoreland School.

Some residents of the Cedar Lane development in Kingston Township told *The Post* about

problems with their water system. "It's absolutely pitiful," said John Kryston. "It's been an ongoing problem which has increased as more homes have been built."

Nov. 2: Two youths, one 14 years old, the other 15, were accused of stealing a pistol from a Trucksville home. The boys said the gun would be an equalizer in a fight with other youths.

Ray and Melanie Harris were on their way to play bridge at the American Contract Bridge League's fall championship in Minneapolis.

Katie Sallitt and Mary Ann Selensky scored goals as Dallas wore the district field hockey crown again.

Nov. 9: Jeff Martin and Brian Farrell, both Back Mountain natives and accomplished musicians, prepared to perform at Wyoming Seminary's 150th anniversary concert.

Ed Roth has returned from Cleveland, having achieved the 33rd degree Masonry distinction.

Dallas beat Lehman 19-0 in the Old Shoe football game, winding up an undefeated regular season. Lehman put up more of a battle than had been expected before falling to the favored Mountaineers.

Nov. 16: Officials of Wyoming Valley Health Care System made it official, announcing groundbreaking ceremonies for a new Dallas Family Practice facility.

William Price of Jackson Township became the Lake-Lehman school board's choice for superintendent, replacing Nancy Davis.

Eric Pimm of Loyallville completed his Eagle Scout project, making him eligible for the honor at age 13.

Nov. 23: Kingston Township police arrested Dean Lee Werts, 30, of Franklin Township, on morals charges involving young boys. Werts had been employed as a bus driver in the Dallas School District, but the charges didn't involve children from the Back Mountain.

Game Commission officials said last winter's severe weather didn't cut into the deer population, giving hunters more reason to hit the woods on opening day.

Dallas won the district football title for the second year, but Lehman lost the Eastern Conference championship to Montrose despite scoring five touchdowns.

Nov. 30: Dallas teachers and the district agreed to a new 3-year contract that begins with the opening of school in the fall of 1995.

The *Post* reported that Dean Lee Werts, the bus driver accused of molesting young boys, had confessed to a charge of providing liquor to minors in 1986. Two years later he was driving a school bus.

The Dallas Mountaineers' hopes for a second straight state championship were dashed by a tough Mount Carmel team. The eventual state champs scored 21 points against Dallas, nearly as many as they had allowed all season up to that game.

Dec. 7: Arnold West of Harveys Lake showed off his Christmas tree, decorated with 400 fishing lures. He said the idea came from a magazine, then he retired, and the rest is history.

A loophole in state tax law allows townships to tax above mandated limits, as long as the revenue is dedicated to a "special" purpose. Lehman and Jackson townships have the tax.

Dec. 14: Saying most drivers on Route 29 seem to like speeding, PennDOT turned down Jackson Township's request to lower the speed limit.

Students petitioned the Dallas school board to give winter track coach Bill Kvashay a raise. "If it weren't for him I wouldn't be where I am," said Amber Coolbaugh. "He makes you work and won't let you give up."

With the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge approaching, Al Baloga recounted his feelings on Dec. 16, 1944. The former platoon leader recalled that green recruits were pressed into service for the unexpected battle.

Dec. 21: Jim Wertman, well-respected owner of J&J Deli, died suddenly at home.

Juniors and seniors at Lake-Lehman High School wrapped up a drive which collected 124 coats and 37 blankets that will be given to an agency that helps homeless people.

Exxon of America is cleaning gasoline and chemicals from the soil at the former gas station on Route 309 in Dallas.

Dec. 29: The brand-new Dallas swimming team was practicing at College Misericordia in anticipation of its first season. Matt Stretanski is the coach.

The *Post* reported how a system to screen school bus drivers and others who work with children failed to pick up a prior conviction on the record of a Dallas bus driver who was subsequently charged with corrupting minors.

Compiled by Ron Bartizek.