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Battle against pesky bugs takes to the sky

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Big hairy ones with light racing stripes or lines of spots on their backs. Little green ones resembling inch-worms.

They're wriggling, squiggling and chomping their way through the Back Mountain.

The caterpillars are here. Late spring is the prime hatching season for four types of leaf-eating caterpillars, according to environmental technician Donna Heffron of the Luzerne County office of environmental special projects.

In addition to the more familiar gypsy moth caterpillars, the elm spanworm, Eastern tent caterpillar and forest tent caterpillar have now invaded the area, Heffron said.

"The county sprayed for gypsy moths several weeks ago, when they were about 1/8 to 1/4 inch long," Heffron said. "Now they've grown too large and strong for our spray to be effective."

The caterpillar killer of choice is BT, a bacteria fatal to all four types of the pesky little critters, she added. Sprayers doing later work often rely on Sevin, a stronger form of the pesticide often used by home gardeners.

Dallas Township supervisor Frank Wagner has organized a private spraying program for township residents, which costs the average homeowner between \$23 and \$30, depending on how

heavy the tree cover is on their properties.

He arranged for East Penn Aviation in Benton to bring a private sprayer for a week's work to spray several large developments and golf courses in sections of Dallas Borough, Dallas Township, Huntsville and Kingston Township.

The residents' money pays for

the helicopter, BT and pilot. Wagner donates his time.

"When we have a problem, my duty as a supervisor is to do what I can to help out," he said. "I do all the groundwork - notifying residents of the program, verifying property lines and whatever else

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Schools, police differ on gravity of youth crime

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

DALLAS - School officials sought to downplay the frequency of dangerous activity among students during last week's town meeting to discuss drug and gang activity in the region. But police officials said they are frightened by what they've seen.

Middle school principal Anthony Martinelli and high school principal Frank Galicki, speaking at the June 2 meeting, attributed much of their students' escapades to copying what they see on television.

"Our boys do have fights, but the last five fights were between best friends egged on by gang wannabees," Martinelli said, referring to kids who imitate gang members on MTV.

"If you define a gang as a group of students joining together for a common purpose, you first have to define that common purpose," Galicki said. "If their purpose is violent or illegal, we don't have that at Dallas."

Although there is limited drug use and distribution in school, the right drug contacts are available, he added.

Both he and Martinelli have discouraged students from wearing bandannas and other high-profile clothing to school.

"A few kids showed up with black or red bandannas last September," Martinelli said. "I told them bandannas give other people the impression they are in a gang and not to wear them."

Dallas Township police chief Carl Miers, who arrested five boys for stealing high-powered handguns in May and six young people and four juveniles for using stolen credit cards in March, said his investigations have been "a real eye-opener."

"Juvenile crimes aren't just petty larceny or vandalism any more."
James Balavage
Kingston Twp. police chief

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HATS ON FOR THE AUCTION

Auctioneers John Shaskas, left, and Vince Carboni, modeled the latest in auction headwear at Monday's kickoff mini-auction for the 1995 Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. About 50 people attended and enjoyed a buffet meal before bidding on a number of items. This year's auction will be held July 6-9 at the library on Huntsville Road in Dallas. Peggy Harvey is chairperson. Anyone with items to donate may call the library at 675-1182. More photos on page 2.

POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Local depot workers fight for their jobs

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Many Back Mountain employees and their friends were among the thousands of people lining the route to Tobyhanna Army Depot June 2 to demonstrate support for keeping the base open.

"BRAC has already rated us number one. There are other depots which are rated lower than we are."
Mike Crain
Harveys Lake

They wanted to show the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), the people who will decide the base's ultimate fate, their support of Tobyhanna and its workers while BRAC toured the facility last week.

Dallas resident Ellen Belles, 26, and Sweet Valley resident Kathie Bobb, 43, represented large area employers supporting the base.

"We want to keep jobs in the area," said Bobb, a member of the Communications Workers of America working at Commonwealth Telephone Company. "Losing jobs would have a snowball effect on the area's economy. And we know the importance of good equipment to the military."

"It's important that one company supports another in the business," added Belles, who has friends who work at the depot. "We need to support large industries in our area."

Among the many shops and laboratories at Tobyhanna is one which evaluates the internal calibration of the equipment which tests the performance and efficiency of the base's electronic products.

Technician Mike Crain of Harveys Lake, who works there believes Tobyhanna's appearance on the closure list is "a mistake from the start."

"BRAC has already rated us number one," he said. "There are other depots which are rated lower than

See JOBS, pg 8

When Tin Lizzies were new, she was young

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

BEAUMONT - When Marie Spencer celebrates her birthday June 7, she'll read her congratulatory letters from President Clinton and Congressman Kanjorski, then have a cake with ice cream and lots of candles.

One hundred candles. Marie has lived at the Star Hill Rest Home since February. She lived in the house her father built at Hays Corners, near where 42nd Street joins Old Lake Road, until several years ago, when a fall at night forced her to relocate to another personal care home.

"I'm still pretty good," she said. "Most other people my age forget a lot of things and can't get around at all."

Marie is the daughter of the late Persis Hilbert and Washington "Wash" Montagne Spencer, who had four other children, Leo, Edward, Mildred and Crystal.

The family originally owned a summer cottage on a small farm at Hays Corners and lived at Kingston Corners, relocating permanently to the Back Mountain after one of the valley's many floods.

"Mother said she didn't want to continue to be chased out by floods, so my father and his brothers, Louis and Horace, built the stone house on the farm," she said. "I helped them pick lots of big, flat stones from the fields for it."



MARIE SPENCER

laughed. "I didn't go much with him. Mother went sometimes, but that was always Father's Lizzie."

Persis Hilbert Spencer's family lived in Beaumont, where Persis taught school until she married Wash Spencer. She had a brother, Wesley, and a sister, Minnie Hilbert Kresge, whose relatives owned Kresge's Store in Noxen.

She raised vegetables and harvested fruit and berries, which she canned for her family to eat during the winter. She also kept a milk cow and a couple of chickens, and a horse for a while.

"I'm still pretty good. Most other people my age forget a lot of things and can't get around at all."
Marie Spencer
Turned 100 June 7

"When Mother picked berries, we poor kids had to go along," Ms. Spencer chuckled. "We'd pick a few to cover the bottoms of our pails. Mother also sewed all of our clothes. Money was scarce then, but we always had enough to eat."

Ms. Spencer recalled the stone house, where she lived until a couple of years ago, as very cozy, with Mother's big cookstove in the kitchen.

After school the children came home and did their homework, then helped with chores, she recalled. Marie washed the supper

dishes and helped with other household tasks.

"I wasn't much of a help with canning," she chuckled.

Saturdays were work days for the whole family.

On Sundays they went to church and Sunday school at the Idetown United Methodist Church.

"I liked to go to church, because we got to put on our good dresses then," she said.

Their neighborhood was "our house, a house way over here and another way up there," Ms. Spencer chuckled. Not far away lived the Andrew S. Durr family, who had two daughters. Nice people, Ms. Spencer recalled.

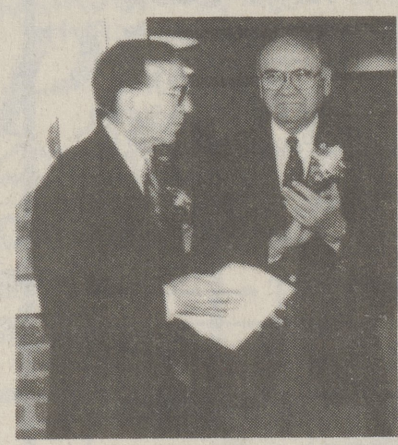
The Durr farm eventually became Irem Temple Country Club, with the stately old home transformed into the country club's kitchen, main dining room and office.

Marie Spencer and her brothers and sisters attended a one-room school, which she called "the little red schoolhouse in the woods."

Her face lit up and her blue eyes twinkled as she described the large class of 20 students, the double rows of desks and the recitation benches, one on each side of the teacher's desk. Several large slate blackboards hung on the wall and a small bookcase occupied one corner.

"My friends, Vergie Spencer

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Hooray for him

Wallace Stettler, member of the board of directors of Wyoming Valley Health Care System, applauds Dr. Irwin Jacobs, founder of Dallas Family Practice, as he was invited to the podium during an open house Saturday at the new Back Mountain Medical Center. Story, more photos on page 16.

POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

■ **Queen for a night**
Lake-Lehman's prom queen and court. Page 7.

■ **One of a kind** Jen Smith became the first Misericordia softball player to make a prestigious all-star team. Page 11.

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