

The Dallas Post

EDITORIALS

Ladder truck could be useful apparatus here

The Shavertown Volunteer Fire Company's drive to raise funds for a new aerial ladder truck will undoubtedly seem like a waste of time and money to some observers. After all, we don't have any skyscrapers in the Back Mountain — at least not yet — so what do we need with a piece of equipment that seems more at home in Philadelphia? It is to be hoped we'll never have a use for it, but that would be unrealistic. When Daring's Market burned to the ground, Kingston sent its ladder truck, which was able to soak the building when extended out over the structure.

There are other uses, and not just on tall buildings. A factory like Offset Paperback isn't that high, but it's wide, and a ladder truck would be able to direct a stream of water onto areas unreachable by smaller pieces of equipment. Using a truck like this could save lives, too, if it eliminates the need to send men out on roofs not knowing what's underneath them. Shopping centers, large homes, schools and other structures could be better protected with a ladder truck.

Of course, we'd all like to have whatever our heart desires, but in the case of something that costs a half-million bucks, it's not that simple. That's why the fire company is holding fund drives such as the aluminum can collection and a car wash, with more to come. There probably is some grant money to be had as well, but only after the community shows its commitment to the project. We think you should, and not just if you live in Shavertown. Obviously not every fire company can or should have this relatively exotic and very expensive piece of apparatus. They don't need to. Back Mountain fire, police and ambulance crews freely share their equipment, and this truck may be parked in Shavertown but it will be available to all. So help the fund drives any way you can, no matter where you live, because you may be helped in return one day if your house or place of employment, or that of your neighbor, is saved.

Harveys Lake plant saga contains lesson for us

The state Department of Environmental Protection is worried about a possibly threatened plant that lives in the outlet of Harveys Lake. Commonly known as the White Water Crowfoot, it is found in only six locations in eastern Pennsylvania. The borough wants to dredge the outlet because silt built up there when beavers built dams in the stream, slowing the water that flows from the lake. When the beavers were still around, the resulting water backup flooded yards and garages. Now there's a danger the remaining silt will cause something similar.

The plant is in the buttercup family, and has no apparent value other than its existence. In fact, it has been virtually eradicated because alien plants have crowded it out of its habitat. DEP says the primary aggressor is the Fanwort, which is not native to the lake or this area.

We would hate to see any species of life erased from existence, and hope there's a compromise solution that will prevent needless flooding while saving the Crowfoot. Let this dilemma be a lesson, though, to anyone who thinks it harmless to transplant a favored flower into their environment. Once unleashed, a foreign plant, insect or animal can raise havoc with the native inhabitants. Just think of Kudzu.

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Lemmond's district includes the Back Mountain.

State Rep. George Hasay (Republican)
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369 South Mountain Boulevard, Mountaintop PA 18707
Hasay's district encompasses: Harveys Lake, Lehman Township, Jackson Township, Lake Township, Franklin Township, Ross Township, and Dallas Township's north voting district.

State Rep. Phyllis Mundy (Democrat)
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Frankie, the pot-bellied pig, lives contentedly, as far as anyone can tell, at Winterview Farm in Dallas. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

A Case for Conservation



Alene N. Case

We hear much talk these days about the concept of "risk assessment" as it relates to environmental hazards. This concept has many difficulties as it is now being implemented. And, as a friend of mine has recently pointed out, these difficulties generally relate to varying perceptions of risk. Before we get into a discussion of the deep implications of risk assessments and cost/benefit analyses, we need to examine our personal perceptions of risk.

How do we decide whether or not a risk is worth taking? I have a brother-in-law who refuses to ride in any vehicle if he is not the driver. Yet, he is the only driver with whom I have surpassed the 100 mph line on the speedometer (I quit looking after that!). Obviously, he is quite confident in his driving skills and must be in control at all times. Otherwise, he perceives himself at risk. I, on the other hand, perceived myself at risk when we passed 80 mph on a narrow two-lane road. I was not in control and I saw no reason for such excess speed.

Thus, there are at least two essential ingredients to any personal decision about risk: control and purpose. All of us make such decisions every day. Living is inherently risky, and we must constantly review the hazards with respect to ourselves and to those we love. We know that we will accomplish nothing unless we run risks. We would never have children, learn to drive, travel to in-

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

My experience in writing a newspaper column would indicate that while people may read your column, possibly thinking over what they have read for about seven nanoseconds, they seldom ever disclose what their thoughts were to the columnist if they know him. And even if they don't.

My mail is non-existent. My phone is silent. Even from a rare personal meeting I usually get, "I read your stuff every week," along with a blank stare.

I wait. Nothing. And so, when I do get a column comment, I treasure and savor it. At my my volunteer cashier job I sold a NY Times to a man who said, "You should write for them. They should stand some whimsy."

I of course basked in the glow from that comment, which lasted until I got home and looked up whimsy. The dictionary defined it as "odd or fanciful humor."

Oh? Really? Well, let's try something out. See if it's whimsy or not.

There is a pay-as-you-go sport

Take care when assessing environmental risk

interesting places, learn about the world, or stay in shape. We would never have an operation, climb a mountain, or fall in love. We also know that we are not always logical in our approach to risk. We have certain irrational fears, such as my fear of snakes, which limit otherwise "safe" behavior. Or, we choose to ignore the risks for the thrill of surviving a bungee jump off a bridge.

But still, the choices we make are our own. Some people become heroes because they risk everything to rescue someone else or to stand up for some principle in which they strongly believe. Captain Jacques-Yves Cousteau expressed his admiration for astronauts this way: "They had judged the threat to their lives to be small in the face of the advancement of knowledge to which they were going to contribute." Such risk is, indeed, admirable. Without it, very few advances would be made in medicine, science, social work, or environmental restoration.

In the self-same article, Cousteau makes the following apparently contradictory statement: "Collective risk in general is the consequence of a decision made by those who do not suffer from it." In other words, the common people are rarely aware of the risks to which they are subjecting themselves and their families and, therefore, cannot make any decisions concerning that risk. They have neither control nor purpose. This has been most evident in recent disasters such as Chernobyl, Bhopal, and the EXXON Valdez. It was also the impetus behind the Pennsylvania "Right to Know" law that has been in effect for almost a decade. That law requires industries and laboratories within

Pennsylvania to provide their workers and the public with the "identity of chemicals they may be exposed to, the potential health hazards that exist and the symptoms that may be experienced because of exposure...so that they may make knowledgeable and reasoned decisions with respect to the continued personal costs of their employment or residence at a particular place and the need for corrective action."

It, therefore, appears that intelligent decisions about risk require another element — knowledge. Would most people continue to keep guns if they knew that their weapon was 43 times more likely to kill a member of their household than to be used in an act of self-protection? Would we continue to fight "clean" air regulations if we all knew that one in four American children is at risk of respiratory illness because of high ozone levels in our cities? We need to encourage our government to continue to protect the innocent who have no other means of avoiding risk. We need to understand that scientists cannot prove that something is "safe" but that they can often provide evidence that something is "unsafe." And, we need to be sure that all pertinent information is openly and honestly discussed before society takes a collective risk. Otherwise, we, our offspring, and the ecosystems in which we live will continue to be in danger from those who may see only the risk to their control or to their profit margin.

It is my hope that each of us will seriously consider our perceptions of risk and our responsibilities to those (human, plant, and animal) who may not be in a position to make such decisions as freely as we.

Paintball — it's not just a 'harmless' kids' game

flourishing not far from here called "Skirmish U.S.A." and its operators call it "The Friendly War Game." It has been in existence since '84 on Rt. 903, about one mile from Jim Thorpe. It is also called "Paintball in the Poconos," which should give you an idea of just what sort of con is being run there.

Each game last 30 minutes and consists of two teams trying to kill each other. Not for real, of course, but they do fire guns and act pretty bloodthirsty about it. The object is to capture the other team's flag. When you do, you win. Along the way, you should kill as many of the opposing team as you can.

A team player is "dead" when he or she is hit by a pellet fired from a CO2 gun. Pellets are about 1/2 inch in diameter and are gelatin capsules filled with mineral oil and food coloring. They break open on impact, scattering their contents like real gore, and are said to be "bio-degradable" — they wash right out.

Pellets cost six cents each. For a \$29 entry fee you are provided with a gun and 50 pellets. You must also wear protective goggles and camouflage clothing, items you can rent if you do not bring your own. (Visa and Mastercard are accepted!)

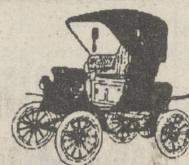
After a period of instruction and safety warnings you will clomp around on one of a number of "playing fields." You are looking for the enemy's flag and he is looking for yours. A participant, when asked why he was there, answered, "Well, it's completely different from what I do every day. I thought it would be a kick to try. I was right. It's a blast!"

Corporate participation is encouraged. Skirmish marketing says, "A flavor of esprit de corps permeates the game as it taps your competitive roots. A Skirmish match requires leadership, team communication and problem solving under pressure, creative thinking, planning and self-esteem. Let us help you build your staff to be the organization of the future."

The foregoing, of course, is in between the kill or be killed role-playing. And don't forget, there are events designed for teenagers only. (Their program is called "Young Guns.") There is also a frontier town being built, complete with an Indian village. Or perhaps you would prefer being in a platoon on a "seek and destroy" mission over the Rung Sat River against the NVA. I believe you get the picture by now.

Whimsy? I don't think so. I find nothing funny about this.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Aug. 9, 1935

DALLAS TWP. OPENS NEW ATHLETIC FIELDS

Dallas Borough Council this week unanimously selected Morgan Wilcox, long-time resident of the borough to fill the position left vacant by the death of Councilman Harry Garrahan last week. Wilcox's appointment was a popular one. He has been active in the community for a number of years, is a property owner and has the background which qualifies him for the position.

One of the finest athletic field in this section has been completed by Dallas Township and will be used for athletics this Fall. The field behind the high school building will provide facilities for all kinds of athletic events.

50 Years Ago - Aug. 10, 1945

DANCE HALL BECOMES EQUIPMENT STORE

Ralph K. Garrahan and George L. Ruckno, Wyoming Valley home builders, have purchased the Shavertown Lumber Co. from Moses Griffith of Plains and will operate the business under the name of Shavertown Builders Supply Co.

Work of renovating the old Ice-Cave Dance Hall and Skating Rink at Hillside into one of the most modern farm equipment stores in the area is rapidly drawing to completion. Owners George Bulford and Clarence Myers expect to open the new store about Oct. 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Kocher, Sorber Mt. observed their 65th Wedding Anniversary, Aug. 2. Of their 19 children, 11 are living. There are 33 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

40 Years Ago - Aug. 5, 1955

DROUGHT HITS AREA

Unless there are heavy rains within the next few days, sufficient to swell streams, the big Armour Leather Co. tannery at Noxen will be forced to close because of its inability to get rid of its wastes. The plant treats its waste from its tanning processes in a filtering plant and then allows it to run off into Bowman's Creek which in normal seasons is able to absorb them without damage to fish life.

Prolonged drought has dried up mountain springs and streams throughout the Back Mountain region, causing reptiles to leave their rocky ledges and dens and seek water in the lowlands. During July 123 rattlesnakes were killed within a seven mile radius of Noxen.

30 Years Ago - Aug. 5, 1965

SWEET VALLEY GETS NEW PHONE SERVICE

Public reaction to the Commonwealth Telephone Company's new Direct Distance Dialing System that went into effect July 19 in the Sweet Valley area, was greater than anticipated, J.N. Landis, District Manager said today. He reported that 834 calls were placed in the first three days that DDD service was available to Sweet Valley customers.

Kickoff meeting for distribution of petitions for formation of Harveys Lake Borough is slated for tonight and an official of the Harveys Lake Executive Association told *The Dallas Post* all mechanics for the drive have been set up and the operation is "ready to go."

After 15 years, the annual Lady of the Lake Beauty Contest has been discontinued. Difficulty in finding contestants is said to be one of the reasons for discontinuing the event.

20 Years Ago - Aug. 7, 1975

HOSPITAL WON'T COME TO BACK MOUNTAIN

Resident of the Back Mountain who has been wondering about the possibility of a hospital constructed on the site along Rt. 118 need not wonder any longer. The possibility of a fully-equipped hospital in the Back Mountain has been completely ruled out by representatives of the HEW Dept. Members of the Back Mountain Medical Center Committee plan to solicit proposals from architects and engineers for limited hospital facilities to be erected. The facilities will be one of three types, emergency care, primary or custodial with emergency.

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