EDITORIALS

Try taking the bus, you just might like it

Ridden the bus lately? The overwhelming majority or readers will say no to that question, then offer a variety of reasons why they don't feel comfortable using municipal bus transportation. They should take another look. For all its faults and recent travails, bus service provided by the Luzerne County Transportation Authority is surprisingly good. Buses serve a number of locations in the Back Mountain with service about every half hour throughout the day, and they're almost always on time. The buses are clean, and the drivers are universally competent and courteous. They also share something with the Maytag repair man — they're often lonely.

Taking the bus is not as fast or convenient as driving your own car most places, but there are a number of good arguments for public transit, both for individuals and the society at large. One that makes sense for many people is the low cost of bus travel compared to automobile ownership. Someone could commute round-trip to Wilkes-Barre five days for as little as \$7.50 per week. That amount — \$390 a year — would barely pay for the gas a car would use to make the same jaunt. Even if you have a car, if you have to drive it to your destination and pay to park it, the bus could save a few dollars each trip.

Public transport offers plenty of advantages on a larger scale. Sharing space in one large vehicle — whether a bus, train or commuter van — saves fuel and decreases pollution. Perhaps more important, economical public transportation gives everyone the chance to travel as necessary to work, worship or family affairs, and that helps make our society stronger.

The tradeoff is time. It will take about a half hour to get to Public Square on the bus, and if you need to transfer to another destination your excursion could take an hour or more. Since time is money during working hours for most of us, the bus offers no advantage on that score much of the time. A weekend trip is another matter, and well worth looking into.

You'll pay more postage, so TIME pays less

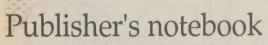
Benjamin Franklin must be spinning in his grave now that the Postal Rate Commission has signed off on a plan that will raise postage for nearly everyone except huge bulk mailers. It will be a sad day for the nation if this proposal is adopted by the U.S. Postal Service.

Franklin, you may recall, in addition to inventing that stove and helping to found the nation, served as our first Postmaster General. In that capacity, he established the Post Road, which knitted together states in the Northeast in part by offering service to all at uniform rates. The rate commission's action would destroy that heritage by offering large-volume mailers lower rates than are available to smaller operations, particularly those that serve suburban and rural communities like the

What does this mean to you? A couple of things: First, you will likely pay higher rates for first-class mail than you do now, while huge publishers pay less. The junk mail that floods your mailbox will get a break, which you'll subsidize with higher prices on letters, subscriptions and the prices charged by all businesses which must use the mail to send invoices and other material. Second, you may not be able to get some publications at all, since smaller publishers may be forced to drop rural subscribers because of the high cost to serve them.

Organizations representing newspapers of all sizes believe the rate commission used flawed data to calculate the cost of delivering mail to small communities. We agree, but would go one step further; adoption of this skewed rate plan will place the welfare of large, profitable businesses ahead of that of ordinary citizens. That is a formula for dissension and distrust, the very emotions that fed Benjamin Franklin and his contemporaries to act against King George.

We're not advocating revolution. But you need to contact your Congressman and Senators now, to let them know fairlypriced universal mail service is more important than Time magazine or Lands End's higher profits.







Uncle! I promise to never again complain about northeastern Pennsylvania's wimpy weather. I have been known to remark that the weather here is bland and uninteresting, with nary a hurricane of major storm in sight. Not! I was ready to write off the winter of 1993-94 as an aberration unlikely to be repeated in the next century. Was I wrong. This winter began with more snow and cold than that infamous season, and then came the floods. We are fortunate it wasn't worse; another two hours of rain and the Susquehanna would have had its way with the valley. As it was, many residents of low-lying areas suffered severe damage, and people to the west of us got hit even worse, with several fatalities and worse damage than Agnes caused.

Perhaps if I swear to give our weather more respect, Mother Nature will lay off. It's worth a try.

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Along a country road in Kunkle. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Smaller elementary schools are the best choice for students

meeting at Westmoreland Elementary School in the Dallas School District last week. Six options which are under consideration by the Dallas School District concerning the closing of Westmoreland were discussed.

is only seriously considering one of these options which would close Westmoreland, build a new grade of the teachers. The results on Middle School, build a new Admintinely show that students from into a facility with 9 First Grades, 9

I attended a very informative Middle School and convert Dallas highest. Elementary to a K-Third Grade

> have a better sense of belonging. They know and are known by ALL

istrative Building attached to the smaller schools score among the Second Grades, etc., and then move

The current philosophy of the Dallas School Board is a campus I have many concerns about this style educational facility. Howproposal. Current research in the ever, adding all of Westmoreland field of education points out that students and all of the traffic rethe best schools are small and stu-quired of a school administrative dents are kept in one building as building to the current educational It seems that the School Board long as possible (K-5). Students complex would seemingly create a problems.

Also, I don't believe it is in the 4-5 school attached to the Dallas National Achievement tests roubest interest of a child to put them

them to another building for 4-5 grades and then into yet another building for Middle School.

In conclusion, I hope that parents of Westmoreland and Dallas Elementary Schools can work together to convince the School Board to look more closely at the option which would build a new nightmare of congestion and traffic Westmoreland on land adjacent to the current building.

Mary Barbara Gilligan

Women's Commission seeks information about summer programs for kids

Editor:

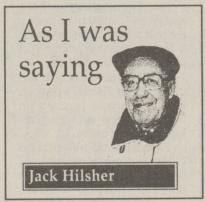
On behalf of the Luzerne County Commission for Women, I am requesting information on summer activities for school age children (ages 7 to 17).

parents about summer activities for their children. If your organiza- Wilkes-Barre, Pa 18711. tion or agency is planning summer events, please send the informa-

We have received inquiries from mission for Women's office at the dessimated to parents upon their Luzerne County Court House, request.

We will collect information and print a calendar of events for the tion to the Luzerne County Com-summer of 1996 which can be

Iran Fahmy



TWO ODDS 'N ENDS: Probably only a handful of readers have seen or will know what is meant by a "Chautauqua." To save you lookmeaning "an assembly for education and entertainment by lectures and concerts.

That says it well. My first Chautauqua, really my only one, was in Canada when I was 12 years old. An aunt and uncle were steady followers of those popular tent

A Chautauqua, Kipling and Lincoln shows, yet the word isn't even in day.

many modern dictionaries. This was, after all, over 60 years ago, row in store, and a lot usually happens in that length of time.

They were magic to a kid. One example of typical Chautauqua fare: a stirring reading of Kipling's "Gunga Din" with, and this what they were called, the elocutionist rendering "your as "yer". His "safe' came out "cife." Veddy British.

for a field report from my ing it up, Webster calls it a noun granddaughter's mom: During homework the youngster referred to an author as "Rude-yard Clipping.")

Now some of Mr. K's verse, ohso-far removed from Gunga:

From men and women to fill our Donaldson asking Abe Lincoln, "Mr. was 140 years ago.

But when we are certain of sor-

Why do we always arrange for Brothers and sisters I bid you

Of giving your heart to a dog to tear.

Rudyard Kipling

One day I should do some col-(We interrupt this story briefly umns on our 16th President, who was assassinated 130 years ago. There are many things our history teaches never even hinted at, and it should make great reading.

His intellect and - in that oldfashioned expression - his "way with words" make one devoutly "There is sorrow enough in the wish we had his like today. A small ferinstance: Picture Sam

President, did you black your own boots?" And the answer, "Whose shoes do you think I shine?"

One example will illustrate his superb word power...in 1855, to a friend: "Our progress in degeneracy appears to be pretty tepid. As a nation, we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal except Negroes.' When the Know Nothings get control, it will read, 'all men are created equal except Negroes and foreigners and Catholics.' When it comes to this I should prefer migrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty - to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.

End of quote...remember, that



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library is featuring a collection of snow globes from Julie Howell of attends 5th grade at Wyoming Seminary Lower School. Julie has with a snow flake, snow man, Santa been collecting snow globes since Claus, lamb, bunny, Liberty Sciquite a large collection now and Washington, D.C. This is a very

Snow globe collection on display her Mom. She now receives new will be over. They will leave left six years ago in circumstances

ones for birthdays and Christmas February 21st. and other occasions. Her newest Lion King that plays the Circle of

are Phantom of the Opera, Unicorn, Winnie the Pooh, two Nativity sets and two Christmas ones. The baby Jesus, angel bear, young girl keeps them on a special shelf in her exciting display and pleasant for

New books at the library: "Crimione is The Wizard of Oz, that plays nals" by Margot Livesey is a stunthe music of the Yellow Brick Road, ning tour de force, suspenseful, which she received this past Christ- beautifully observed, inarguable in mas. Another special one is The its intricate portrayal of character. We find the innocent, the maligned, the yearning and the betrayed, each The larger ones in the display rife with schemes and hope, each with a plan. The bumbling nature Hapsburg Empire and, in their of desire has been turned out with such delicate precision. The story Dallas. She is 11 years old and smaller ones include an angel with testifies to the power of love. A great read and pleasure.

"Flesh Wounds" by Stephen Greenleaf is a new John Marshall she was a young child. She has ence Center, two snow scenes and Tanner novel. The long-sought-Archer meets the world of virtual

too painful to remember calls and reopens old wounds, rekindling old desires. She lives in Seattle and is about to marry a wealthy banker.

"The Bride of Texas" by Josef Skvorecky evokes a crowded midnineteenth-century panorama as it tells the story of a group of emigres who flee the oppression of the pursuit of freedom and a better life, find themselves immersed in the chaos of an American war of emancipation. The kaleidoscopic drama is shaped by two parallel romances: Lida, the bride of the title marries a plantation owner's son; her soldier after heir of Spade, Marlow, and brother, Cyril, falls in love with a young slave woman. We are swept room at home. The smallest one is Valentine's Day and hopefully, reality in this powerful new thriller. into a world at once unsentimental Mary and Joseph and the baby when it's time for the snow globes Peggy Nettleton, Tanner's former and romantic, in which love re-Jesus, which was given to her by to return home, our snow season secretary and former lover, who fuses to be easily snuffed out.