

EDITORIALS

Fire response showed skill, importance of emergency volunteers

Last week's fire in a section of the Newberry Estate condominiums demonstrated yet again the skill and dedication of local volunteer fire company personnel. After quickly responding to the initial call, Dallas chief Brett Slocum assessed the situation and called for more help, which came from the Trucksville, Shavertown, Kunkle and Kingston departments. Support included Kunkle's ladder truck, which was used to give fire fighters a secure lift to the roof of the structure.

While Dallas was the lead department in this case, accomplished chiefs and other members are found throughout the Back Mountain's volunteers, who receive no payment for their invaluable service. In addition to having their lives disturbed at all hours of the day and night, they have the privilege of finding time to polish and upgrade their skills, on their own time. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

And let's not forget the ambulance volunteers, who thankfully weren't needed this time. They, too, devote much of their free time to helping neighbors in need and learning new life-saving techniques.

A few months ago, we offered the opinion that Back Mountain communities might find it useful to consolidate emergency services, eliminating the duplication — and expense — that now exists with so many separate departments. While that route may someday be made necessary by a lack of volunteers, we certainly hope the quality of response and care never declines from its present high level, which is so evident whenever a potential tragedy is averted.

Federal government's help welcome after disasters

Mother Nature reminded our region of her power a couple of weeks ago, as rampaging flood waters tore apart roadways, damaged property and threatened lives. Local towns have added up the damage, and come up with large unanticipated expenses which would strain local budgets to the breaking point, if the state or federal governments don't step in to help. Fortunately, they will, and thus will remove the specter of huge local tax increases to fund the repairs.

There may be a timely lesson mixed with the misfortune; in an era when complaining about taxes has become a favorite sport, events like the flood demonstrate the usefulness of broadly-based government. Few would argue that aiding recovery from natural disasters is an illegitimate use of federal power, and surely those in the thick of catastrophe would be the last to do so.

After being humiliated for inadequate response to Hurricane Andrew a few years ago, the Federal Emergency Management Association repaired its flagging bureaucracy, and has earned high marks for its handling of subsequent disasters. Perhaps the message is that if government at all levels becomes more effective and efficient, complaints about paying for it will disappear.

Do you agree? Disagree?

Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post, and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. We welcome your opinion on contemporary issues in the form of letters to the editor. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Please include name, address and a daytime phone number so that we may verify authenticity. We do not publish anonymous letters, but will consider withholding the name in exceptional circumstances. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar.

LEGISLATORS' DIRECTORY

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or 2429 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Arlen Specter (Republican)

Wilkes-Barre: 826-6265
Washington: (202) 224-4254
116 S. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18701

Senator Rick Santorum (Republican)

B-40 Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Washington: (202) 224-6324
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State Officials

State Sen. Charles D. Lemmond (Republican)

(717) 675-3931
22 Dallas Shopping Ctr., Memorial Hwy., Dallas PA 18612-1231
Lemmond's district includes the Back Mountain.

State Rep. George Hasay (Republican)

287-7505 or 542-7345 or 474-2276 or 477-3752
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)

283-9622 or 655-3375
Suite 107, 400 Third Avenue, Kingston PA 18704
Dallas Borough, Dallas Township except for the north voting district.



An old spring house rests in the snow alongside Old Rt. 115 in Lehman. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

On Monday, February 5th, I sat with a friend in the auditorium at College Misericordia enjoying the lively music of the Women's Sekere Ensemble. As they played and sang piece after piece from the traditions of Nigeria, I was overwhelmed by the contrast between the beauty and grace of the African art and the recent tragic deaths of native Nigerians who worked hard to preserve their culture and environment. Let me tell you the story of Ken Saro-Wiwa.

Kenule Beeson Saro-Wiwa was born in Bori, Nigeria on October 10, 1941. He was a member of the large family of Ogoni people who lived by farming in the Niger River delta. This region, though it had one of the greatest population densities in all of Africa, succeeded in feeding its people because the delta soil was exceptionally fertile. Saro-Wiwa attended the University of Ibadan—Nigeria's foremost college — and became a teacher and writer. His favorite writing style was satire. One soap opera called "Basi and Co." became very popular on Nigerian State television.

Saro-Wiwa's life might have been that of a sheltered academician and author had he not been so concerned for the welfare of his people. You see — Ogoniland was the site of the discovery of oil in the Niger Delta during the late '50s. Royal Dutch Shell, in cooperation with the British colonial government, began to exploit this resource in 1958. Over the years, regimes have come and gone in Nigeria but, as one author puts it, "In such a politically unstable country, Shell is the real status quo." The Nigerian government earns at least 80 percent of its revenue from the sale of oil and half of that is produced by Shell.

Sad tale of Ken Saro-Wiwa, Nigerian conservationist

The Ogonis are a minority group in a nation of 250 ethnic groups in which only two or three "tribes" are given any political power. Therefore, as was described visually in the Catma Films award-winning production, *The Drilling Fields*, Ogoniland was converted from outstanding agricultural land to a haphazard network of pipelines and flares which disrupted the social and economic fabric of Ogoni society. Leaks in the pipelines were often ignored or "cleared up" by setting them on fire and ruining the soil underneath. The constantly burning flares rained soot on villages and contributed to air and water pollution. The people received none of the income from all of this progress.

Ken Saro-Wiwa became the spokesperson for Ogonis who wanted to correct this situation. He brought their plight to the attention of foreign governments, the UN, and environmental and civil rights organizations. He organized Ogoni Day in 1993 in which 300,000 of the 500,000 Ogoni people took part in peaceful marches throughout the land. Shell and the Nigerian government (now a military dictatorship) could not stand by and do nothing in the face of such numbers. Their economic well-being was being threatened. In May 1994, Saro-Wiwa was arrested, jailed for nine months before charges were brought, and then tried, along with several other men, for the murders of four chiefs (although there is proof that he was being detained by the military when the murders occurred). The military tribunal which conducted the trial was characterized by one international observer as a "kangaroo court." He was convicted on October 31, 1995 and hanged with eight others on November 10th.

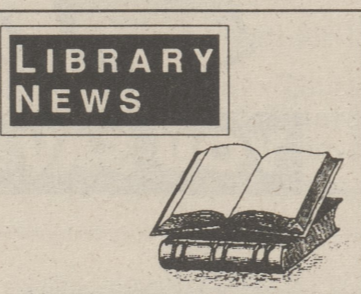
There are several disturbing elements in this story. I was particularly puzzled by the lack of coverage of these events in the popular U.S. media. We actually

found out about it from our son at Franklin and Marshall College, who had attended a discussion led by two faculty members who had personal roots in that region of Africa. Then, we gleaned what we could from the Internet and finally saw a one page "sanitized" version in *Newsweek*. The Goldman Environmental Foundation, which had given Saro-Wiwa one of its six 1995 environmental prizes, released an excellent press brief from their San Francisco office, but I do not think many news organizations picked it up.

Is Nigeria so far away that Americans should not care what happens there? If multinational companies, such as Shell, are causing the devastation of fertile land in Nigeria, is it none of our business? Is Shell within its rights to assert that it cannot get involved in the internal affairs of a sovereign state when it provides almost 50% of that nation's revenue? I say that it is already involved and has been since it began to extract oil in the late 1950s. And, we are also involved. We benefit from the oil that is extracted by Shell and other companies. And, until we harness our appetite for petroleum products, we had better insist that these companies obey all the environmental and human rights rules in other countries that they would have to obey here or in Europe.

It is my deepest hope that Ken Saro-Wiwa did not die in vain. As he said in *The Drilling Fields*, "The struggle itself is about hope. If I didn't think there was hope in the future, I would not be encouraging anyone to struggle the way we are doing now. It's a rich land, it's well-blessed. If we can get the oppressors out of the way, if we can get the pollution to stop, I am sure that Ogoni would be a happy land." The struggle continues. Let us become informed and active citizens of the larger world so that all of us may live in "a happy land."

Tax and student aid forms are available at the library



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library has available for public use the 1995 income tax forms. They are on the take out table in the front of the library. They include the 1040, 1040A, and 1040EZ. Also, Schedule A-itemized deductions; Schedule 2, child and dependent care expenses; Schedule 1, Interest and dividend income for 1040A filers; Schedule EIC, Earned Income Credit; #8822 Change of address; #8888 Direct deposit of Refund. There are also PA-40NR, Nonresident income tax returns available and Schedule PA E; Rent, royalty, patent and copyright income or loss. There is also available the large book of reproducible federal tax forms, which photocopies are acceptable for filing your tax return.

The library has forms available for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid for the 1996-97 school year. There are study books available for use in filling out these forms. There are specific deadlines for filing these forms.

New books at the library: "Blackwater" by Kerstin Ekman begins on Midsummer Eve, 1974, in the far north of Sweden, near the Norwegian border. Annie Raft arrives with her six-year-old daughter, Mia, in the remote village of Blackwater to join her lover Dan, on a nearby commune. But Dan does not meet them. In the eerie light of the midsummer night, a frightened Annie wanders into the forest to find the commune. She comes upon a tent, finds inside two people hideously murdered, sleeping bags in shreds.

"Blood Relations" by Barbara Parker is a powerhouse story of corruption, crime and shattering revelations. The girl is beautiful, the crime ugly. A seventeen-year-

old model alleges she was sexually attacked in the VIP room of a South Beach nightclub by three men—a drug dealer, a film star and a wealthy player in the international fashion industry. They say she's lying. It's up to Sam Hagen, head of Major Crimes for Dade County, to decide if they should be put on trial. He knows how to play the odds.

"The Middle Heart" by Bette Bao Lord is a novel that speaks and tells the dramatic, sweeping, richly emotional story of two men and a woman who are intricately bound to one another and to the cataclysmic events that have shaped modern China. In 1932, three young people who will become a political leader, a writer and a great actress—form a passionate alliance. They swear to defend their country and save our people; we cannot undo our separate births, but on the same day, we mean to die, they vow to be brothers forever.



60 Years Ago - Feb. 21, 1936 HEAVY SNOW CAUSES MANY HARDSHIPS

A tractor which broke through 14" ice about 50 yards from the bridge, near Shawanese, Harveys Lake, was "fished" out early this week by George Casterline, Lake ice harvester. The machine dropped into 20 feet of water last Saturday while being used to clear the ice of snow preparatory to cutting. The operator jumped clear of the machine when he heard the ice crack and escaped injury.

Although State highways have been freed of most of the recent deep snowfalls, many back roads are almost impassable because of drifts and accumulated snow. An example of the hardships inflicted by the recent weather is given in the story of Benny Sky, who told the Post only one car has passed his home on Carpenter Road, Dallas Township not far from Harveys Lake in the last month. His wife has been ill for two weeks and the condition of the road has made it impossible for a physician to reach her.

50 Years Ago - Feb. 22, 1946 DALLAS CORNERS NEEDS A TRAFFIC LIGHT

Dallas Borough PTA on Monday night enthusiastically endorsed a proposal for the installation of a traffic light at the five-point intersection on Main Street, Dallas after hearing Burgess George Williams outline his proposals for traffic control within the Borough limits. He emphasized the necessity for having a light installed before the advent of heavy traffic in the spring.

Alex McCulloch has made application to the Pa. Public Service Commission for the right to operate the Back Mountain Cab Co., a taxi service for the Back Mountain area. He plans to have one cab and will add to the number as business warrants.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 17, 1956 AREA TO GET MODERN BOWLING ALLEY ON 415

Samuel S. Rhoads told Lehman Joint School Board Tuesday that roadside stop signs for school buses are no longer necessary. He said State Police recently passed legislation tightens regulations for passing stopped school buses and that the school bus itself now constitutes its own stop sign.

Location is staked out and ground will be broken next week by Whitesell Brothers, general contractors for what will be the Back Mountain region's largest recreational center under one roof, the \$10,000 air conditioned Imperial Crown Bowl Alleys to be built by Robert Hanson on Memorial Highway. The building will be so constructed that it can be easily expanded to hold 16 alleys if there is a demand for them.

30 Years Ago - Feb. 17, 1966 NEW LEHMAN ZONING ORDINANCE FINISHED

Lehman Township's new complete Zoning Ordinance is ready for public advertisement and the Zoning Board feels that no further changes on it are needed, according to a board member. Gil Tough reported to the board of Supervisors, it was his opinion that the new ordinance was more lenient than that of the county's.

Dallas Community Ambulance Association this week formed a committee to study the possibility of replacing the present ambulance with a new one or later model.

Mr. and Mrs. John Newell observed their 58th wedding anniversary February 14. They are the parents of five children and have 17 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

20 Years Ago - Feb. 17, 1976 COPS BRAINSTORM NABBING BURGLARS

Members of the Back Mountain police departments met at Dallas Township Municipal Building Monday afternoon to discuss the rash of burglaries occurring in the area during the past several weeks. Lt. Donald Dorris a State Trooper from Wyoming Barracks, stressed the importance of cooperation on the part of the residents.

The Dallas Post

Published Weekly By Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
717-675-5211

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