

EDITORIALS

DARE offers parents' help in difficult times

Westmoreland Elementary School hosted a "graduation" last week that was unlike most such events this time of year. A group of fifth grade students completed their Drug Avoidance Resistance Education — known in shorthand as DARE — and received rewards for doing so. Conducted by Frank Zeigler, a Kingston Township police officer who has received special training to lead these classes, the ceremony reaffirmed the youngsters' commitment to live their lives free from drugs and violence.

We're glad that tactics for avoiding violence were included in the training. Glorification of violence is rampant in popular entertainment, and countermeasures need to be more widespread. That they come from a police officer, who regularly sees the ruinous power of drugs and violence, adds weight to the argument against destructive behavior. But DARE is more than the drone of adult voices preaching "Just say no." It is a positive program, sprinkled with activities that reinforce the advantages of making smart choices without withdrawing from society.

No one can predict the success of this program, nor would anyone be foolish enough to suggest a short course in drug avoidance will have lifelong effect. Development of long-term positive values is dependent on many factors, the most important of which is the adult behavior children see every day. If parents and other role models channel energy to productive activity, chances are good their children will do the same; and the reverse is also true.

Late 20th century society offers plenty of examples of the wrong way to live. It's up to each of us to provide the antidote to popular culture images of mayhem and waywardness, and if the DARE program can offer some help, it's well worth the effort.

You too can support the 50th annual library auction

Preparations for the "Social Event of the Year," better known as the Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction, are in full swing once again, with added fervor because this is the auction's 50th year. Begun in 1947 when a new source of funds was needed, the auction has been a staple of the library's operation ever since. The inaugural auction — conducted over two consecutive Saturdays because rain interrupted the schedule — raised about \$3,000, a good deal of it from the sale of animals and food items donated or made by library supporters.

Times, tastes and fashions have changed since 1947, but many things remain the same. Most important, this massive undertaking is still a completely volunteer event. Dozens of people devote time and effort to soliciting items, manning tents, preparing the auction grounds, organizing booths and other activities. Even the auctioneers are volunteers, though you'd hardly know it from the skill in evidence on the block.

Even if you don't have spare time or interest for direct involvement, you can help. Donations of new goods are now being accepted. There's already an impressive lineup, such as a floral arrangement from the Craft Room, a mountain bike from Dallas Bike Works, a deck cleaning from Aqua Spray, a motorcycle helmet from Russ Majors and dozens of gift certificates from area businesses. There's a lot more, of course, and it's still coming in. If you weren't contacted to be a donor, there's still plenty of time. Just call the library at 675-1182, and someone will take your information, and arrange pickup if needed.

You don't have to be a business to donate, either. Good used items are always welcome for the Odds 'n' Ends and Nearly New booths. Auction denizens can point to the record album, ashtray, tea set, toy or other prize they've picked up at past events. And if they don't all sell this year, well, there's always the next auction.

Thanks to all the businesses and individuals who have already donated items. We hope you'll be joined by many more in the next few weeks.

Letters, columns and editorials

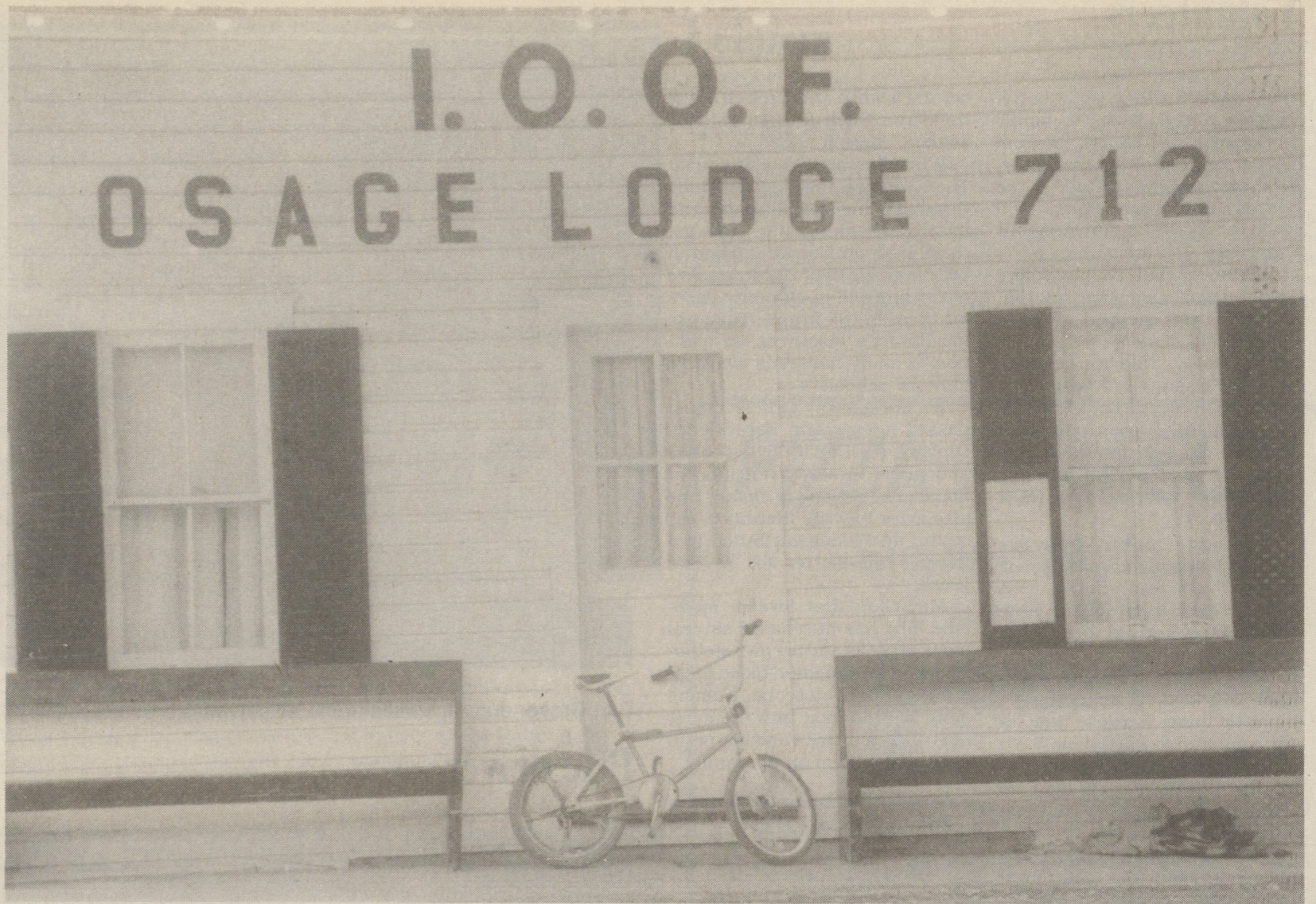
The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms.

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of *The Post*, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.
- *The Post* retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

In addition to letters, we welcome longer pieces that may run as columns. The author or subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be the prime consideration when selecting material for publication.



Perhaps a young recruit visiting the Lodge in Lehman? Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

It is not often that people see with their own eyes a creature that has existed since before the first dinosaur walked the earth. But, every time you see a turtle, you are looking two hundred million years into the past. And, every turtle that has walked the earth since that time would easily be recognizable as a turtle.

Here in Pennsylvania we are blessed with many of these ancient creatures including the wood turtle, the eastern box turtle, the painted turtle, the stinkpot or musk turtle, and the common snapping turtle. It is this last in the list on which I wish to focus attention here.

As you know, all turtles have a shell. The top part of the shell is called the carapace and it is closely united with the ribs. The under side is known as the plastron. This portion is normally hinged so that the entire shell can close to protect the internal parts from danger. But, that is where the snapping turtles differ from most others of their kind — they have a relatively small shell in comparison with the rest of their body. Therefore, they cannot close

The not-so-common snapping turtle

the shell to protect themselves. Hence, the necessity for snapping.

The common snapping turtle is indeed "common" in the eastern part of the United States. But, I learned rather quickly when trying to gather facts for this article that most people know little about them. I looked up turtles on my web browser and was introduced to sea turtles and Mutant Ninja Turtles, but only one page of information did I find on snapping turtles. I went to the library next. There I found many good children's books on the subject of turtles. These also had interesting sections on snapping turtles. But, the only two books for adults were in the reference section and the newest volume was dated 1971. A zoology text from 1939 had excellent descriptions and drawings of turtle anatomy, but a more recent biology compendium only mentioned turtles in three sentences.

So, I did the next logical thing — I asked my neighbor. He does a lot of fishing and was quite familiar with these animals. He said some of his friends caught the big snappers to eat. I asked if he knew of anyone being hurt by them and he said not. That was a bit surprising since, although they have no teeth, they can strike with the speed of a rattlesnake and hang on tenaciously with strong jaws. The fisherfolk apparently know how to handle them.

He also told me that a female

snapper often laid her eggs in a friend's garden about this time of year. In fact, all turtles must lay their eggs on dry ground even if they spend most or all of the remaining time in the water. Often these nests are many meters from the water and that presents a problem for the young.

The adult snapping turtles have no other known external enemy (they are plagued with many internal parasites) besides humans, but the young are often eaten by hawks, crows and various mammals as they try to make their way toward the nearest pond. Once there, they are food for large fishes as well as for mammals. Some eggs never make it to the hatching stage — they are a favorite of skunks, raccoons, and other furry animals.

But, the books and various eyewitnesses were disagreeing on one very important point. Just how large are these creatures? All of the printed material gave shell measurements of 10 to 18 inches, often indicating that most were in the 12-13 inch range. But, the fishermen I talked with were describing a much larger creature — two to four or even five feet in length! Either Pennsylvania snappers were much larger than average or I was being fed some big fish stories.

So, I called the Fish and Boat Commission. They assured me that shells often measure 22-26 inches around here. Given the fact that the snapping turtle's tail is always

at least half as long as the shell and its neck is also long, a turtle of three feet in overall length is not beyond the realm of possibility.

The snapping turtle is so common that it is the only turtle that is commercially harvested in Pennsylvania. It is normally caught on a baited set line and sold to seafood restaurants for use in turtle soup (most seagoing species are protected now). This year for the first time, a season has been instituted and bag limits are enforced. One may "fish" for them only between July 1 and October 1 and may catch no more than 15 in one day or possess no more than 30 at one time.

There is a very good reason that snapping turtle sightings are not everyday occurrences in spite of their "commonness." They spend most of their time buried in the mud or under vegetable debris in ponds, lakes, and other bodies of water. From there they feed on fish, generally small ones; insects; snails, and sometimes an unsuspecting duckling. They also eat a rather surprising amount of plant material, mainly algae. They seldom leave the water to sun themselves but often bask in shallow water or float near the surface to warm themselves. In winter, they hibernate in the mud.

I would hope that this rather unusual creature may continue to share our world with us for many millions of years into the future.

As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

Talking to my dentist recently about the way eye surgeons are able to remove cataracts and replace them with artificial lenses (probably made by a low bidder) he remarked, "Isn't it amazing the things these eyeguys are doing nowadays?"

Yes Doctor, it is. But you are too modest, or blind, or both, for what has been going on in your own field is equally as amazing. While it is true that things like filling teeth date as far back as the 10th century (A Persian physician used

High tech moves into dentistry

resin!) the innovative techniques being used towards the end of our own century border on the unbelievable.

Consider sealing, a practice almost unknown a few years ago. A dentist first etches your teeth surfaces with phosphoric acid, then applies a plastic which hardens quickly under blue light. Sure it wears off, but it's cheap and it works.

That light business is also used to harden filling material. Fillings used to have their bottoms drilled out wider than the top so the filling material would be anchored in place. Today the decay is scraped out, a cement is applied, and the resulting cavity is filled with silver amalgam, a plastic composite or a glass material called an ionomer.

The amalgam will last the longest (it's an alloy of tin, copper, mercury and silver) and the cheap-

est at between \$50 to \$100 a pop. Its use is best when unseen; the other two are more tooth-colored and more satisfactory aesthetically or at the gum lines.

Perhaps the greatest change is something called an implant which dentists have done well over a half-million per year. Bridges are being used mostly by the elderly who can't stand surgery or don't have enough jawbone, since implants involve drilling a hole and planting a titanium anchor directly into the jaw.

This becomes a sort of root which is left alone for months while bone grows around it, then an artificial tooth, or two, is attached to it. Success rate: 90% or better. Price tag: up to \$1,500 bucks per.

And about that drill! If that gadget scares you, look for a dental office equipped with air-abrasion technology. This is not unlike sand

blasting. A stream of aluminum oxide particles hits the tooth while a suction system removes them. Usually novocaine is not used. This technique is now being used to remove stains or etch surfaces preparing for crowns.

Then there is a recently-approved-by-FDA gimmick called CEDETA, or Cell Demodulated Electronic Targeted Anesthesia. Two electrodes on the hands deliver high frequency signals to a pad in the mouth, and this sci-fi idea changes the polarity of nerve-cell walls so the nerve can't transmit pain impulses.

But really, you can tell me that modern water-cooled dentist drills rotate a half-million turns a minute and this means nothing to me. Better than go to these guys I would rather wash and iron my own shirts, even with starch in the collars.

It's a banner year for the library

auction.

The donation of books, new goods, antiques, toys, and good used items has been especially appreciated this year. We are always grateful for the friends and neighbors of the Back Mountain who support their library. Great things happen because of this support.

One of the featured and popular booths at the library auction is the "nearly old" booth, which has been chaired by Maryan Daily and her committee for several years. She has received about 150 sets of salt and pepper shakers this year and we have part of them in the library

ready to be sold ahead of time. There are varied sets and almost every possible item of action and material. The price for these ranges from \$5.00 and up for the set. They are displayed on a shelf in the office area of the library. Come and see!

New books at the library: "Mischief" by Amanda Quick is a tantalizing romance laced with humor, danger, and scandalous passion — as a strong-minded lady and a daring explorer are drawn together by ancient mysteries.

"The Deep End of the Ocean" by Jacquelyn Mitchard is a story of the bond between siblings, the

nature of memory, and the healing power of love. It is a story about a family redeemed and reborn.

"Promises" by Belva Plain shows a brilliant portrayal of a happy marriage eroded by temptation, and of two women who find strength and triumph in the wake of despair. It's the story of two women living in the shadow of despair.

"Chance" by Robert B. Parker involves the search for a Mafia princess's errant spouse that lands the detective on the firing line in a gangland turf war. The tough-but-tender sleuth plunges into a sea of trouble.

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LIBRARY NEWS

The Back Mountain Memorial Library is experiencing one of the most exciting years in its history. In May of 1996, we celebrated 11 years in the new library building, in October of 1995, the library celebrated the 50th anniversary of the opening of the library, and in July of this year, we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the library