

EDITORIALS

For best education, keep Westmoreland close to where it is

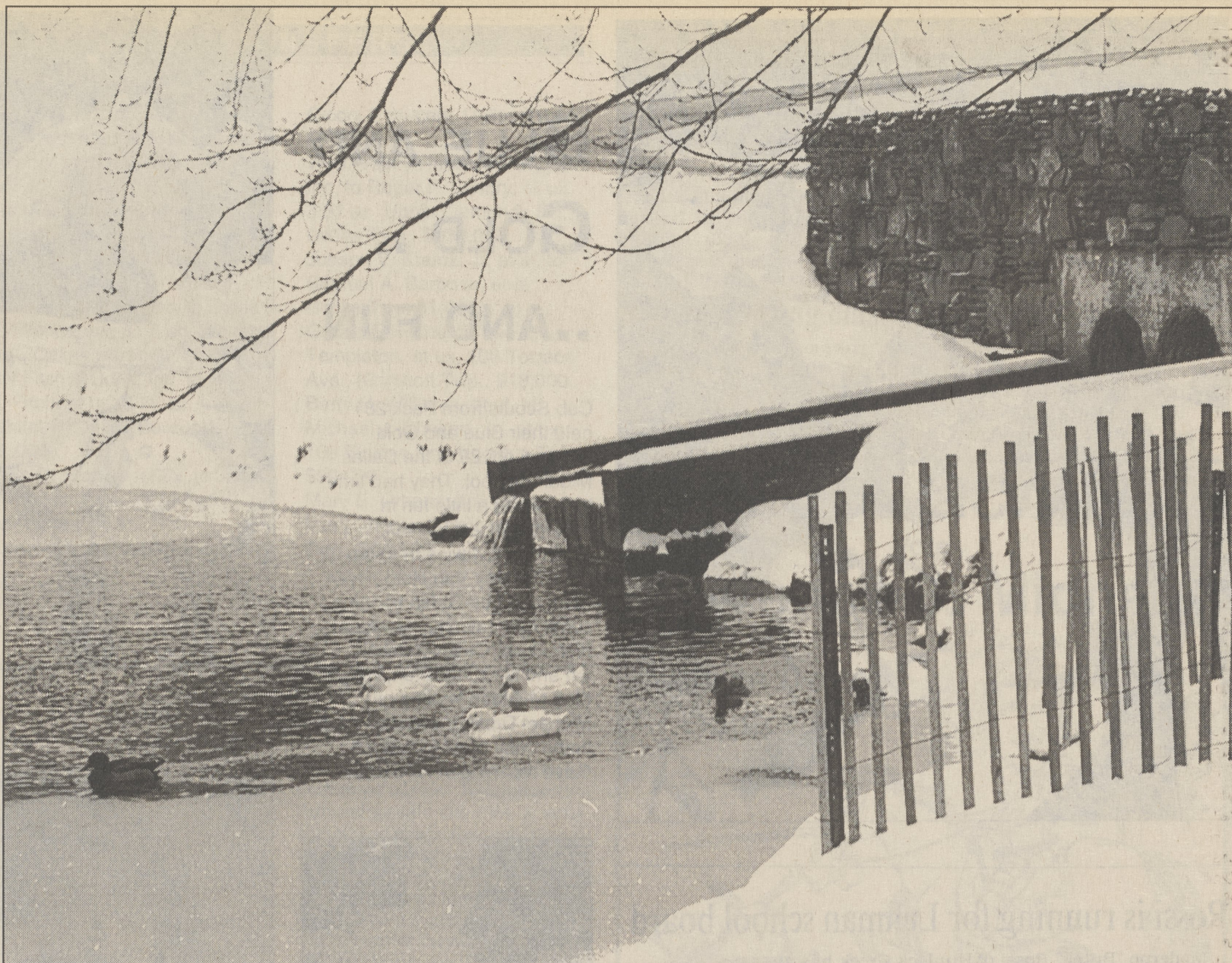
The Dallas School Board will revive discussion on how to replace the aging Westmoreland Elementary School as early as its March 10 meeting, with a decision possible then or in April. With a couple of years of research and debate behind them, most school directors face what is probably the most important vote of their tenure, and one that will set the tone for the district's elementary education for the next generation, perhaps longer.

Two aspects of a school board's responsibility clash when a question like this comes up. On the one hand, the board is charged with providing the best education possible for children; on the other, members must handle the district's finances in a prudent manner. This is not unlike issues faced by private business, and even by most families — is it better to spend a little more now in the belief that the long-term reward will be worth a temporary fiscal squeeze, or should keeping expenses under control take precedence over the perceived, but not certain, benefits?

The answer will depend on many factors, including present-day financial strength, other anticipated expenses and the relative value taxpayers place on competing needs. The Dallas School District is in admirable financial shape, with a fund balance that exceeds \$5 million and an annual budget that has grown in keeping with the region, but that has not required a tax rate increase for many years. With each mill of taxes producing about \$50,000, the difference in cost between options for Westmoreland is unlikely to be great. Since the expense will be spread across 20 or 30 years, the question should come down to whether or not the majority of school directors value a very modest cost savings over the generally accepted conclusion that smaller, neighborhood schools promote better educational performance.

We need only look over a few miles to the Abington Heights School District to find the better answer. There, four small schools were preserved by a school board made up entirely of taxpayer association members. They were able to put the concerns and preferences of parents ahead of absolute cost savings and in so doing will maintain a tradition of excellence that put Abington Heights on a list of the 100 finest public school organizations in the nation. Dallas hasn't yet achieved that level of performance, but it should be our goal to get there.

In the interest of giving teachers and parents in the Dallas School District the best atmosphere in which to nurture children's educational progress, the school board should vote to keep Westmoreland at or near the site it now occupies, even if doing so costs a little more. Like so many expenditures families and businesses make, the extra expense will be long forgotten if the result is satisfying, and that is most likely if smaller schools are maintained.



Like ducks on a pond, at the Newberry Estate. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Dallas students, teachers thanked for their kindness

Editor: Thank you for your coverage of the Random Acts of Kindness project that Volunteers of America of Northeastern Pennsylvania sponsored this past Valentine's Day. The project was a great success.

Your article made it more special because we were able to share it with the community. The coverage you provided helped to make it a special day.

The schools that participated, Pittston Area Primary, Dallas Elementary, Westmoreland Elementary, and GAR Memorial JSHS, did a fantastic job creating the cards which brought smiles to the faces of the people receiving them in area nursing homes.

A sincere thank you to all of the teachers and students whose creativity and imagination made this Valentine's Day special for a lot of people. With your participation

1,250 cards were collected for the project.

Thank you to all of the program and activities directors who took time out of their schedules to make sure all of the cards were handed out.

The cards went to Little Flower Manor, Hampton House, Mercy Healthcare Center, Lakeside Nursing Center, Partridge Tippet Nursing Facility and Anderson Personal Care Residence at Wesley

Village, and the Meadows Nursing Center.

All of the students should be very proud to know their cards were distributed and appreciated.

Thank you for your help with Volunteers of America's Random Acts of Kindness program.

Alan Garner
President/CEO
Amy Gwiazdowski
King's College Intern

30 oz. jars, 27¢; Clam Chowder, 3-10 1/2 oz. cans, 25¢; sweet potatoes, 5¢ lb.; Asco Coffee, 21¢ lb.

50 Years Ago - Mar. 14, 1947 TWENTY-THREE SICK STUDENTS STAY HOME

Epidemic illness which had 23 students out of class at Dallas Borough High School last week moved on to other schools in the Back Mountain over the weekend. Dallas Township, untouched last week, was possibly hardest hit in the area and reported 30% of its pupils Monday dropping to 25% Tuesday and Wednesday.

At the Lehman Township School Board meeting Tuesday, S.W. Rhoads reported the Board operated within its budget on four of eight main items during the fiscal year. Adjustment of teachers salaries was advocated. Rhoads said 16 Lehman teachers receive less than \$2,400 per year.

40 Years Ago - Mar. 8, 1957 HERMAN WEISLER ELECTED VP OF OPERATIONS

Mathew F. Birnbaum president of Native Laces & Textiles Inc. announced today that at the next meeting of the Board of Directors,

Herman L. Weisler will be elected vice president in charge of all plant operations. Weisler has been with the company since 1949 as General Manager of Natona Mills Inc. one of the company's mills located in Dallas.

Perry's Shoe Store operated by Mrs. Joseph Perry, will open its doors for the first time today on 36 Main St., Dallas. The store will specialize in children's shoes and will also carry a line of teenager shoes.

30 Years Ago - Mar. 9, 1957 COMMUNITY STORE CLOSES DOORS FOR GOOD

The Ben Franklin Variety Store on Church St., will soon be a memory removing from the community a popular shopping spot for youngsters and adults. Mrs. Frances Williams expects to close her doors by the end of the month terminating the lease she holds with Harveys Lake Light Co., owner. It is expected that the building will be torn down.

An attempt to remove IBM machines from the Linear Plant was foiled Friday when union drivers of the moving vans complied with the request of the strikers not to cross the picket line without a

court order. No progress has been made in recent meetings of union and management according to a report by Dr. Samuel Rosenberg representing the Citizens Committee of Labor and Management for Wyoming Valley.

20 Years Ago - Mar. 10, 1977 FOUR SEEK SCHOOL DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

Four petitions for the office of Dallas Area school director were filed in the last minute rush prior to March 8 deadline at the Luzerne County Courthouse. Robert Chamberlain, Ernest Ashbridge Jr., Basil G. Russin and Patricia A. Gregory filed nominating positions for the board positions in the upcoming May 17 primary election.

Many residents in various sections have been without water or have had very little for days. The manager of Dallas Water Co. said that during the past two weeks, frost coming out of the ground makes the mains brittle then they crack and break. There were three major breaks in the last two weeks. Finally on Monday, they found a large break which after it was repaired, it remedied the lack of water.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



This month has been designated "March Against Drugs" by Drug Free Pennsylvania Inc., an organization whose primary focus appears to be delivering anti-drug messages through the media. There will be a nationwide effort to present the arguments against drug use in coordination with the ABC television network, which will incorporate the anti-drug theme in some of its programming. The primary focus will be to encourage parents to discuss the dangers of drug use with their children, and there's surely nothing wrong with that, as far as it goes.

Newspapers have received packets of material from the organization, including op-ed pieces, ads and articles filled with frightening statistics about drug and alcohol use among young people. After reading them, you would logically conclude that a substantial percentage of teenagers — and even pre-teens — are stumbling through their young lives stoned and drunk, in large part because their parents don't talk to them enough about killer weeds and demon rum.

I don't mean to minimize the risks to someone who abuses drugs, but this approach strikes me as ineffective at best, and self-defeating at worst. Open discussion between parent and child about drugs is of course appropriate and healthy, and that's true of just about any other topic. But when I read that 21 percent of high school seniors "regularly" use marijuana, or that 80 percent of them "have consumed" alcohol, I take the news with a grain of salt. We should have enough common sense to relate these national statistics to our own experience, and act accordingly, not react as though a crisis looms around every corner.

Perhaps if we spent more time showing our kids the enormous potential they have to lead exciting, fulfilling lives, we might get better results than have been achieved by trying to frighten them with tales of danger and dissolution.

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60 Years Ago - Mar. 12, 1937 TEACHER RESCUES SKATERS FROM HARVEYS LAKE

Although she modestly refused any credit Ruth Jackson, 23, a grade school teacher in Laketon, was being acknowledged as a local heroine as a result of her rescue of two skaters from Harveys Lake last Sunday. The girls whose identity had not been learned by their rescuers or the police, were skating near the Picnic Grounds when they plunged through the treacherous ice. Miss Jackson rushed to them and threw her long scarf across the ice. Jackson's cousin and an unidentified man aided her in getting the girls to solid ice. The two were taken to a nearby cottage where their clothes were dried and they were treated for exposure.

You could get - Supreme Bread, jumbo loaf, 10¢; Apple butter, 2-



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Board of Directors of the Back Mountain Memorial Library met on Tuesday, Feb. 11 for the annual board meeting. The officers of the Board are elected for a two year term: President, Ruth Tetschner; Vice President, Kerry Freeman; Secretary, Pauline Kutz; and Treasurer, Joseph Mazzoni. Board members include: Craig Aicher, Ernest Ashbridge, Char-

Library Board elects new officers

lotte Bartizek, Karen Boback, David R. Duncan, Joseph Dwinchick, Shirley Forney, John F. Gager, Jean Hillard, Charles Kishbaugh, Barbara Lemmond, Benedicta Matchett, Joseph Makarewicz, Bruce Rosenthal, Joanne Runner, Durelle Scott, Joseph Stager and Lois Townsend. The Board of Directors meets once a month on the first Tuesday at 7:30 in the community room of the library.

New books at the library:
"Mrs. Pollifax, Innocent Tourist" by Dorothy Gilman is an "enchantress", hot on the track, stealthily sniffing out some major skulduggery. This time she's on

loan to her retired CIA friend Farrell. Her bag lady act is the first phase of a mission to the Middle East; to smuggle out of Jordan the final manuscript of the dissident Iraqi novelist Dib Assen, who was recently murdered in an Iraqi prison. The script encodes shocking truth.

"Bitter Lake" by Ann Harleman is a novel set in a mill town with the tangled greenery of Pennsylvania's wooded hills as backdrop. Judith Hutchins and her daughters struggle with the latest disappearance of Gort—fisherman, astronomer, and sometime husband and father. Judith, devoting herself to a new job to

keep the family going, finds herself involved with a lover. Daughter, Lil, takes matters into her own hands, determined to find her father for help.

"In the Memory of the Forest" by Charles T. Powers is set in a small town in contemporary Poland, about 50 miles from Warsaw. It is a haunting and evocative novel that explores the impact of a murder on a community. It is an accomplished canvas that courageously probes one of the most disturbing riddles of our time. The body of Tomek Powierza, a young distillery worker, is found in the forest outside of Jodowia. A surprising and powerful climax.

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State Rep. George Hasay (R) 287-7505 or 477-3752

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