

EDITORIALS

## Best teachers know the formula for education

One of the most inspiring movies of recent years, "Stand and Deliver," told the story of a math teacher who cajoled and inspired his inner-city students to excellence despite the low expectations of administrators and the community at large. A favorite last year, "Mr. Holland's Opus," featured the fictional story of a music teacher, a stifled musician and composer, who devoted his life to inculcating a love of music in his students.

They were wonderful tales, and it's hard to imagine anyone leaving the theater without a tear in their eye and a renewed respect for the teaching profession. But you can save the cost of a ticket and popcorn, because there are true-life examples of teaching greatness right in our own back yard. One of them is Charles Preece, head of the math department at Dallas High School. He and his compatriots saw their labors bear fruit when Dallas swept the top spots in a math contest sponsored by Wilkes University. Brian Blase and Chad Newell tied for first place, each winning a full 4-year scholarship, while Jeff Faneck captured third, only a few points behind his classmates.

Mr. Preece's venture into teaching mirrors a movie plot; after teaching for a year he left to work for IBM in Washington. A few years later he gave up the corporate life and returned to his first love, rejoining the faculty at Dallas. That experience combined with the love of teaching has made all the difference, for him and his students. He knows what it takes to make it in the world beyond school, and wants each student to have the skills that will open their opportunities as widely as possible. His obvious success makes a good argument for licensing teachers based on knowledge of the subject, not how many teaching theory courses they've taken, but that's food for another editorial.

Charles Preece isn't the only local hero in our schools. But he is certainly a fine role model for his students and an example for other teachers to follow - an example of commitment and enthusiasm that obviously flows to his students.

## Supervisors have put Dallas Twp. in tough spot

People who live in Dallas Township are dismayed at the tactics being used by the supervisors in their effort to have a 280-foot cellular phone tower constructed on township land. At their March 18 meeting, the supervisors told concerned residents that a request for a height variance for the tower would be heard by the zoning board at that body's April 8 meeting. Then, at their April 1 meeting, the supervisors changed course, saying no variance was needed because the company is a public utility. Therefore, the only action they say is needed is acceptance of the township's plan, which will be taken up by the planning commission May 13. Worse yet, the supervisors agreed to a lease agreement with the company, contingent on planning approval. It was a cruel April Fool's joke to the people who oppose the tower, or at least want a full and open public discussion before it is built.

People opposed to construction of the tower on township land just off Rt. 309 now feel betrayed by their own elected representatives, and it's hard to argue they aren't justified in their opinion. The only saving grace to the confusion is that it gives tower opponents more time to prepare arguments against its construction.

There are too many pitfalls in this scheme to allow it to move forward. A tower this size should not be built in so visible a location; the resulting lowered property values will be a drag on township finances for decades. In the short term, the township is likely to face expensive legal challenges from all sides, and is ill-prepared to defend against them. Perhaps if the supervisors got together with company officials now they can come up with an alternate plan that citizens could review before any formal agreements are reached. Short of that, it's probable the township and its citizens are facing a long, costly and divisive period, for no justifiable reason.

### Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



At least we don't live in South Dakota. This year's extended winter has been annoying but relatively innocuous, at least in comparison to other recent ones. Contrast that with the upper Midwest where record snowfalls, have been followed by flooding, with last weekend's blizzard adding to the misery. What's next, a plague of locusts?

Truth be told, the weather in northeastern PA offers fewer extremes than most anywhere else, at least if you count earthquakes and fires as other natural events that bring inconvenience and devastation. Our worst winters are mild and dry compared to only a couple of hundred miles northward, and summers bring a few storms but nary a hurricane or tornado, both of which are common to our south. When I was younger, such events drew my attention; the excitement far outweighed fear, as it does for most young people. I recall being outside in Connecticut during the 1960 hurricane - Donna. I think - standing at what seemed like a 45-degree angle against the wind, then marveling at bright sun and blue sky as the eye passed over. But age works its magic (black or white, your choice), and the prospect of riding out a storm holds far less appeal these days. Good thing, since we're unlikely to get anything more brisk than last week's breezes.



Natural sculpture on the farm. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

### LETTERS

## Take a walk Saturday, and help handicapped children

Editor,  
The next time you go for a walk, think of a child who may spend his entire life in a wheelchair. The next time you engage in conversation, think of a child who may never tell her mother she loves her. The next time you go out for dinner with a friend, think of the child who may never learn to feed himself.

Children with special needs are a part of your community. And their families live with their special needs on a daily basis.

The Wyoming Valley Children's Association has been available to these children and their families for more than 70 years. The staff and therapists at the Children's Association help children and their families cope with their special needs by teaching them ways to meet those needs.

Without agencies like the Children's Association, special needs children and their families would find life very difficult. With the Children's Association on their side, they can learn how to do

things they would ordinarily not know how to do, offering them opportunities they never dreamed possible.

When walkers in the annual "Do it For The Kids" Walk-A-Thon begin their 3.5 mile trek up and down Wyoming Avenue on Saturday, April 12, every one of them will be walking for children who have been allowed to explore opportunities through the Wyoming Valley Children's Association.

Won't you please join us that day and help us raise money that

will allow more special needs children to explore more opportunities? You can register the day of the walk at 10 a.m. at Bishop O'Reilly High School, Maple Avenue, Kingston or you can call the agency at 829-2453 for a brochure.

Remember - by walking with us on April 12, you can help a child who really has to work at things that come easy to you.

Dotty Martin  
1997 "Do It For The Kids"  
Walk-A-Thon Chairperson

## Thanks to all who made Daffodil Days '97 a success

Editor:  
We would like to thank the people of the Wyoming Valley for their support to volunteerism during this year's American Cancer Society's Daffodils Days.

This year marked the 24th anniversary of the event. As a result of the many adults and children who contributed their time and

effort, we managed to sell more than 28 thousand bunches of daffodils. Based on area population, the Wyoming Valley leads the United States in per capita sales of this "flower of hope". That is a fact you should all be proud of.

Many of you gave your time unselfishly as committee members, contact people, school dis-

tributors, wrappers, drivers, business contacts and sponsors.

This fund raiser wouldn't be as successful if it wasn't for your generous support. The money raised benefits cancer research, education, patient services, and directly benefits Wyoming Valley needy cancer patients.

We look forward to another

successful daffodil campaign in 1998. With your help, we can win our fight against cancer.

Bernadette Ewastation Martin  
Daffodil Chairperson  
Karolina Cimochoowski  
Co-Chairperson  
Wyoming Valley Unit  
American Cancer Society

## The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

New opportunities may abound throughout the Commonwealth, including Northeastern Pennsylvania relative to sports and exposition facilities. With the publication of the 138 page report of the Governor's Task Force on Sports and Exposition Facilities, the recommendations in the report should be studied carefully by anyone interested in exploring future state aid for sports and exposition facilities.

With the funding already in place for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Convention Center and Civic Area, the new recommendations do not apply to that facility. There is the case, however, that future expansions or moderniza-

## New opportunities in sports facilities

tion of facilities within the region that are categorized as sports and exposition type may be affected by the recommendations which are eventually implemented by the Commonwealth General Assembly or the Administration.

The recommendations range in many directions with respect to subsequent funding or revenue sources to help expand, modernize or construct new facilities. With the focus on the potential for new stadiums in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, the potential for use of any of the recommendations in other geographic areas of Pennsylvania may be downplayed. The fact exists, however, that other regions of Pennsylvania may be affected by the results of the new statewide study.

Key recommendations in the study include the following:

- Legislation should be passed to create a Pennsylvania Stadium and Exposition Facilities Financing Authority to serve as the mechanism for Commonwealth participation in sports stadium, cultural facility, and convention

center projects.

- The Authority should be an active participant in the negotiation of financial arrangements between the owner of the proposed facility and the team owner, convention center operator, cultural facility users, and other parties that may be essential to the long-term success of the proposed project.

- The Task Force recommends consideration for privatization of the state liquor store system to fund the Authority and to provide an endowment for the Authority.

- The Commonwealth should closely monitor and oppose the "stop tax" - Exempt Arena Debt Issuance Act (S.1880) currently pending before the US Congress as it would have a significant impact upon the ability of tax exempt bond financing to be used for professional sports facility projects.

- In order for municipal governments to fulfill their roles in the proposed public-private partnerships for facilities development, the General Assembly should en-

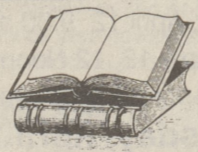
act necessary legislation to empower municipalities with authorization to generate a full range of user-oriented revenue relating to sports facilities, cultural facilities and convention.

Sports represents a substantial part of Northeastern Pennsylvania's economy and quality of life. There is a strong high school sports tradition across the region. Furthermore, convention and exposition facilities are key to travel development and tourism and to the continuing attractions of a multi-state, statewide and sometimes national perspective to the region.

The report should be thoroughly reviewed and assessed by Northeastern Pennsylvania public and private sector organizations. Those who are interested in examining the study and its results may contact the EDCNP, 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, PA 18640.

Howard Grossman is Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

### LIBRARY NEWS



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library has recently connected with Internet, the information superhighway on a new computer at the library. The internet access is open to the public under the following provisions: Patron must sign a user's agreement and abide by its guidelines and patron, if under the age of 18, must have a parent or guardian sign a permis-

## Internet access in half hour blocks

sion form. Patrons will be allowed to access to the Internet in 1/2 hour time blocks during the library's normal operating hours. The service is not set up for E-Mail or for commercial uses.

The library has gained access to the Internet through a state-wide grant to Commonwealth Libraries from Bell Atlantic. We are one of 188 public libraries participating across the state.

The service is free to our patrons; however, we ask for patience and cooperation in using the Internet and abiding by the rules of 'Internet Etiquette' and the Internet Policy.

The library will have an orientation workshop for use of the

Internet on Thursday, May 22, from 6:30 to 8:30.

Information will be presented on what is available on the Internet with an overview of the program. Interested residents should call the library or come in and register for the workshop.

**Newbooks:** "A Slender Thread" by Diane Ackerman is subtitled "Rediscovering hope at the heart of crisis", it is a story sensitive to the author's surroundings and to other creatures. It is poetic, passionate, amusing, with a richly furnished mind that makes leaps of imagination and insight. It is a dramatically different story deeply personal and intimate.

"Bloodhounds" by Peter Lovesey

is a baffling "locked room" mystery, a who-and-how-dunit in the tradition of the classics.

Peter Diamond is not up to his elbows in bodies, he's bored, a bit testy, and ready for an old-fashioned mystery. When one does come along, it's not in his division; it's a half-million-dollar heist by a thief who has sent a riddle to radio stations.

"Death is Now My Neighbor" by Colin Dexter is a baffling mystery that is also a study of the academic and sexual jealousy behind the facade of Oxford College.

The college seems remote from the shocks of the outside world, such as the shooting of a young woman in her North Oxford home.

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