

EDITORIALS

Keep BMT Comm Center for 'non-emergencies'

Advocates for the Back Mountain Communications Center have fought the good fight, but have lost their bid to remain a primary 911 site. Now it's time to make the best of the situation, and find a way to keep the center open to take non-emergency calls.

The dispute over who will take 911 calls - the BMCC or the new county center - may have been seen as a useless exercise meant to retain power for a small group of people. That is, unless you've had reason to call for an ambulance or even to report a barking dog. The local center has been there since 1986 to handle those calls and more with precision and patience, and the excellent service is why police, fire and ambulance officials, and volunteers - and *The Dallas Post* - have so strongly supported the notion of retaining a local center. But the fat lady has broken out in song, and now we must work to see that none of the superb service we're used to is lost in the transition.

The best option is for the local Comm Center to be staffed 24 hours daily to take "non-emergency" calls, if that can be done affordably. What are those? The definition, and the scope of the Back Mountain site's responsibility, will have to be worked out between local and county officials, but it should be more than handling requests for accident reports. There are any number of incidents - barking dogs among them - that are best referred immediately to the Back Mountain center than logged into a queue in Hanover Township.

There are other good reasons to keep the BMCC open, among them its availability if the county center goes out of service, and to assist if a disaster of major proportions occurs. But the best reason to keep it is the same one that brought it into existence: to provide superior service to the men and women who risk their lives to save others.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



In all the hoo-hah about the Boston nanny (au pair for purists), one important point seems to have been missed; there's an element of risk when parents entrust care of infants to a 19-year-old stranger. That fact doesn't absolve the babysitter from responsibility, of course, but it surely should lead to a more reasonable verdict than the initial conviction on a charge of second-degree murder. You can decide for yourself whether the judge was out of line to reduce the charge and sentence as he did Monday.

I think there are other lessons to be learned from this local tragedy that was turned into a worldwide media event. First, parents always bear responsibility for their young offspring. Attempting to convince the public of their complete innocence, the child's parents went on Larry King Live for no other reason I could fathom but to paint Louise Woodward as a heartless killer, and themselves as hapless observers. They said on television, and the prosecutor implied at the trial, that the girl showed signs of recklessness in the months before little Matthew Eappen died. If they sensed the person caring for their child was a danger, why didn't they dismiss her? They have a burden to give as much attention to their child's care as to their careers.

There is an ominous movement in the U.S. to treat young people charged with crimes as adults. I remember a few years ago when the Monroe County DA considered charging a young boy - only nine or 10 years old, I think - as an adult in the shooting death of another youngster. The crimes may be heinous, but I think we need to step back and ask ourselves if children, and I consider a 19 year old 3,000 miles away from her family still somewhat a child, can logically be held to the same standards as adults.

The baby killer case, like so many events of late, was blown way out of proportion for its importance to most Americans. When a trial takes center ring in the media circus, it seems each side competes to persuade the viewing and reading public they are 100 percent virtuous, which of course makes the other entirely evil. The truth is often in between, but is lost in the battle to appear superior to the cretin across the table.

There was also an implication that this incident illustrated the difficulty parents have finding affordable, reliable child care. Give me a break. This couple appears to have more than enough means to pay for trained, professional caregivers, and their situation has nothing in common with the families who truly need help in this area, such as single mothers struggling to get off welfare or subsist on a minimum-wage job.

These distortions combine to give the impression of a society that lacks the confidence to examine issues dispassionately, instead reacting defensively to every perceived individual or collective weakness. I think we're a lot better than that, but you have to look deeper than yesterday's headlines to find the proof.

Do you agree? Disagree?

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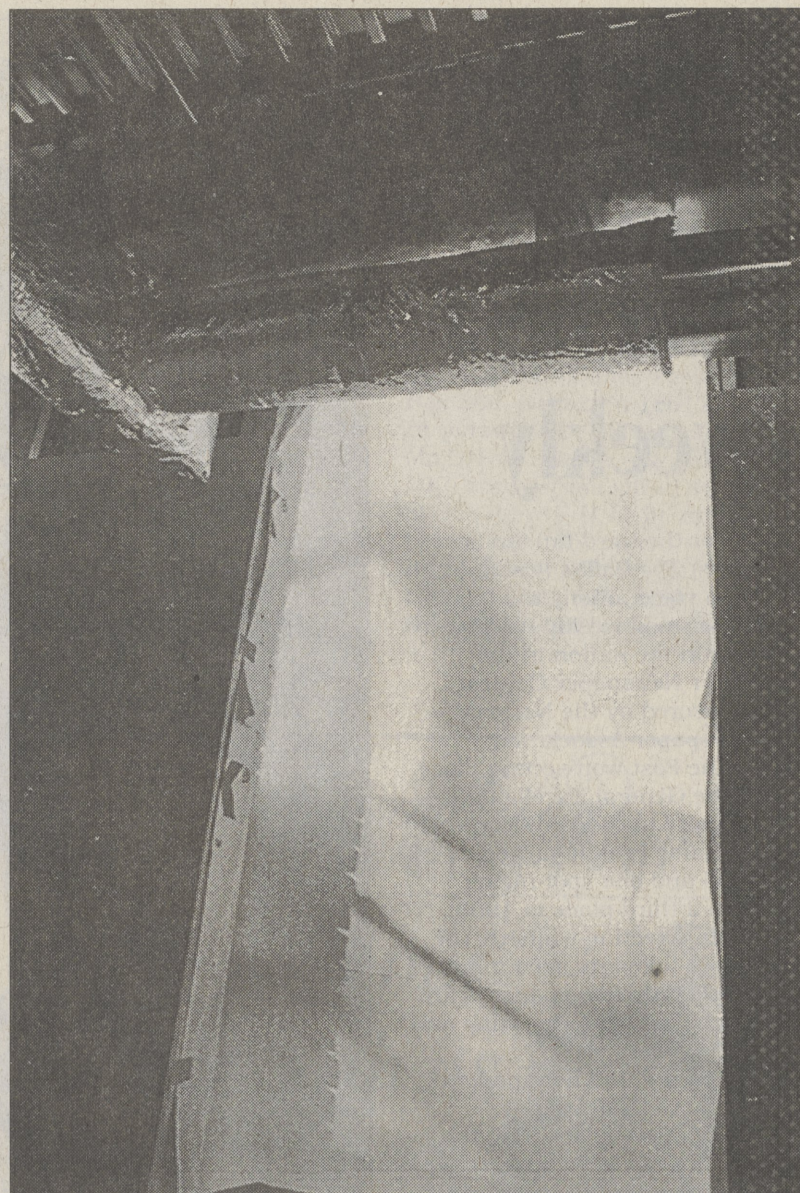


BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Construction is rolling ahead on the new children's wing at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The wing was closed in last week and windows were installed, so work can continue in comfort in coming months.

In photo above, Melanie Evans, a library employee, pointed out the air conditioning ducts. She'll probably appreciate them more next summer. Above right, an employee of Nulton Construction was silhouetted through a plastic window covering as he applied finishing touches to the brickwork. Rachel and Corey Hohol, Hunlock Creek, didn't let the construction noise distract them from reading.

POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



Library news



Nancy Kozemchak

The Back Mountain Memorial Library circulated 6,129 books and materials during the month of October; adult fiction 2,597, juvenile fiction 1,536, adult non-fiction 1,739 and juvenile non-fiction 257. Reference questions answered 311. Book Club books circulated 177. Interlibrary loan



60 Years Ago - Nov. 19, 1937

POSTMASTER RESIGNS AFTER FOUR YEARS

George T. Kirkendall, postmaster at Dallas since 1933, has submitted his resignation to become effective as soon as the post office department names his successor. Kirkendall, it is understood has acquired an interest in H.A. Whiteman Co., Inc. of Wilkes-Barre and is to be office executive for that firm. He will assume his new duties as soon as a new postmaster can be selected.

The State Inheritance Tax Dept. this week promoted Harold Wagner, Burgess of Dallas to a higher position as special appraiser to work throughout the State. Wagner has been engaged in advising appraisers in Luzerne County in inheritance tax matters.

50 Years Ago - Nov. 21, 1947

KINGSTON TOWNSHIP STUDENTS TESTING WELL

Information has reached Shavertown Parent-Teacher Association that the State Department of

Library has healthy circulation

transactions 41, CDs 72, audio tapes 444, and videos 216. New books added to the collection 155; adult 125 and juvenile 30; books withdrawn, juvenile 5. New borrowers joined the library; adult 34, juvenile 38; re-registrations adult 104, juvenile 84. Total active borrowers at the library as of October 31, 11,395.

The library staff is pleased with the number of borrowers using the library during this constant upheaval with the construction of the new library area.

The Friends of the Library is sponsoring the sixth annual fresh citrus fruit sale. Orders will be taken until November 20. Order

forms are available at the front desk. Two/fifths bushel grapefruit for \$11 or two/fifth bushel of naval oranges for \$11. The fruit orders will be ready for pickup at the library on December 12 or 13.

A very special thanks to our volunteers who are willing to work the front desk chores during this time of construction. Most of the adult books are available for circulation and there are a few shelves with children's books for borrowing.

New books: "The River Where Blood is Born" by Sandra Jackson-Opoku, is a delicate tapestry which unfolds within the pages a story stitched together with the

threads of Ananse, the spider of African myth, and the wisdom of the ancestors. It takes us on a journey along the river of one family's history, from ancient Africa into today's America.

"The Cobra Event" by Richard Preston is the story of a secret counter-terror operation. It is a dramatic, heart-stopping account of a very real threat, told with skill and authority. The story begins one spring morning in New York City when a 17-year old student wakes up feeling vaguely ill. She seems to be coming down with a cold.

Hours later, after violent seizures, she is soon dead.

Directors of Lehman-Jackson-Ross Joint School will honor retiring members of the board, Jesse Hann and Laing Coolbaugh at a testimonial dinner Mon. evening. Hann is retiring after 36 years on the Ross Township Board; Coolbaugh, Jackson Township, was president of the triple jointure board at the time the new Ross Township Elementary School was built.

You could get 4 Turkeys 10-17 lbs., 43¢ lb.; chuck steaks, 49¢ lb.; Ideal peaches, 4 #303 cans, \$1; Fruit Cake, 1 lb. size 99¢; Beech-Nut baby foods strained 6/59¢; Mazola Oil pint bot. 37¢.

30 Years Ago - Nov. 16, 1967 DALLAS BOARD WILL HAVE NO FEMALE MEMBERS

Dallas School Board will have no women members after the reorganization meeting early next month. President Mrs. Ann Vernon is pursuing graduate study at University of Pennsylvania in the field of sociology has been unable to attend the last several public meetings and her place was taken by Mrs. Louise Steinhauer, vice chairman. At the conclusion of the meeting, Mrs. Steinhauer thanked members for their cooperation and said her tenure had proven a source of enlightenment.

Another first has been introduced in the Back Mountain. Wilbur Hauck, Ashley and Boyd White, Dallas, who have built and are now operating an Automatic

Car Wash on Main Street, Dallas, located next to White's Furniture and Appliance. The new establishment, which offers speedy service in a matter of minutes, will wash and rinse your car while you sit at the wheel. Completely automatic and coin operated, the Dallas Whirley Car Wash is low priced.

20 Years Ago - Nov. 17, 1977 LAKE-LEHMAN DISTRICT APPROVES CONTRACTS

With the unanimous approval of a four year contract for its non-professional employees, Lake-Lehman's school directors completed bargaining efforts that continued for nearly nine months. Dr. Gilbert Tough announced that the new package contains provisions for a \$1.15 per hour increase over a four year period. In addition to wage increase the new contract provides for a major medical coverage increase from \$50,000 to \$100,000, life insurance increase from \$15,000 to \$17,000 and the additional of one emergency day off with pay.

Customers of Commonwealth Telephone Co. will have at least a 6-month reprieve before they find an increase in the cost of their basic local telephone service. Petitions was filed with the Public Utilities Commission by Commonwealth seeking approval of the rate increase was suspended by the PUC pending a 6-month investigation of the company's rate request.

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