

EDITORIALS

## The real 'hometown' touch is good for Back Mountain

A few weeks before Core States Bank, headquartered in Philadelphia, announced it would merge with First Union Corp., out of some place a few states over, the bank ran big ads touting that it was "still" our hometown bank. The Times Leader, whose profits are sent to Miami, touts that it has "good news from home." Countless other chain businesses, from glorified hardware stores to supermarkets, promote their "hometown" touch and values, while shipping excess cash out of the area. And now, even inquiries to the Back Mountain's largest water company, United Water Pennsylvania, will be routed to Harrisburg, as the local office has closed.

To some extent, this is the price of progress in an economic system that rewards sheer size in business enterprises — a variation of the old "rich get richer" theme. While there is no denying that selection and price may sometimes move in consumers' favor, they aren't the only important considerations when deciding where to shop for products and services. Local businesses have devoted years to learning about the communities they serve, and have supported causes from Little League to food banks to churches with little fanfare, unlike the Wal-Marts of the nation that seek publicity for every self-serving act of charity, at least until they've knocked off enough competitors to no longer need to care about their public image.

As you wrap up your holiday shopping and prepare to begin a new year, think hard about the benefits a strong local business community offers to the wider society. It goes beyond the friendly service you'll get from the person behind the counter — the one who might own the store and live across town. Think about where the donations would come from to support your child's sports team, or what it would be like if you had to drive 10 miles to get a pair of sweatpants or a drill bite. Think about what makes a community more than just a place to sleep and a good housing investment. Those big businesses obviously do, or they wouldn't try so hard to convince us they've got the "hometown" touch.

The Back Mountain is a good place to live, work and play. It can get even better if all of us recognize that we need to support our infrastructure of shops and offices with as much zeal as we show rooting for the home team and as much care as we lavish on our front yards.



Katie and Carl's Beanie Babies, getting together for a party. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

### A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

Earlier this fall, we joined the local Audubon Society on an outing to Hawk Mountain to watch part of the southward migration of birds of prey. What a view! And, we saw our first two peregrine falcons! Hawk Mountain is uniquely positioned along the Kittatinny Ridge which provides hawks, osprey, eagles, and other birds of prey with buoying air currents to speed their journey south. In a typical year 20,000 of these birds may soar overhead between August and November.

To whom do we owe gratitude for this wealth of birding experience so close to us (it is just south of Tamaqua and north of Reading)? You may think of Rachel Carson who was instrumental in pointing out the dangers of DDT and other pesticides. In fact, since the ban on DDT in the early 1970s ten of the sixteen kinds of birds routinely counted at Hawk Mountain have increased in numbers. But, Rachel Carson did not set aside this special sanctuary and she was not the first important female conservationist. The lady who founded the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in 1934 was Rosalie Edge.

After we returned from our birding expedition, I became more and more curious about the person who had purchased this mountain. And, it became more and more obvious that informa-

## Rosalie Edge: An unsung heroine

tion was not easy to come by. First, I tried the encyclopedia. There was no entry on Rosalie Edge. I found Hawk Mountain in the "refuges and sanctuaries" section of the "Bird" entry, but nothing about its founder. Then I looked on the Internet. The Hawk Mountain homepage was very informative about the birds and their migrations and about the geographic features of the land, but again there was very little about the founder. Then, I went to the university library and consulted a variety of reference materials. Nothing. Finally, a young librarian helped me search for books in other libraries around the country and I hit pay dirt, as the saying goes. Most of the information in the rest of this article comes from a 1995 masters thesis by Laura K. Sumner of Oklahoma State University.

Rosalie Edge was, in Sumner's words, "one of the major preservation activists during the 1930s." She was born in New York in 1877, the youngest of eight children in a well-to-do family. Her father, John Barrow, was a first cousin of Charles Dickens and a friend of Prince Albert. She was never quite content with high society, but her education and cultured up-bringing proved useful in the many battles she fought on behalf of the causes she championed. The suffrage movement of the early 1900s also prepared her for future confrontations with men in positions of power.

Bird watching became one of Edge's favorite pastimes when her two children were growing up. She used to telephone her son, Peter, at school and tell him which birds to look for on his way home through Central Park. His teach-

ers tired of these interruptions and refused to relay the messages. Not to be dissuaded, Mrs. Edge sent Peter telegrams instead! Now, that's a cool mother!

In 1929, Edge became aware that there were problems within the organization of the Audubon Society of which she had been a member for fifteen years. She decided to attend the annual meeting of the board of directors and ask them some probing questions. Not only did she attend, but she sat down in the middle of the front row and proceeded to grill the executive director and the other board members. The meeting was adjourned early in order to shut her up with the excuse that she had "ruined" the meeting. In fact, her impertinence was just the beginning of a long fight to clean up the Audubon Society which had sold out to industrial contributors and had become dysfunctional with regard to advocacy and conservation issues. They were even hiding the fact that they were profiting from the trapping and selling of furs on a refuge in Louisiana.

Rosalie Edge, along with a few like-minded men, formed the Emergency Conservation Committee (ECC) which published and distributed approximately 70 pamphlets on controversial topics throughout the 1930s. They also published a highly acclaimed series of educational materials on waterfowl and birds of prey for use in classrooms around the country.

In 1934, 1655 acres at Hawk Mountain came up for sale for the sum of \$4000. Edge had seen photographs of the carnage wrought upon the mountain as local farmers took aim each year

in a misguided attempt to rid the world of "vermin." Thousands of birds never made it past the summit. She could not stand by and let this situation continue.

The Audubon Society was dragging its feet, as usual, and she was afraid that the opportunity to procure the mountain and protect the birds would be lost. With her friends in the ECC, she put up \$500 to lease Hawk Mountain with an option to buy. That very same year she hired Dr. Maurice Broun to be the first curator of the sanctuary. He began the annual bird counts which have continued to the present with the exception of three years during W.W.II. He and his wife also had the awesome responsibility of turning away hundreds of armed men who wanted to continue their autumn tradition of killing as many birds as possible.

The protection of Hawk Mountain may be Rosalie Edge's claim to fame, but it is by no means her only triumph. She was instrumental in the reform of waterfowl protection laws, in the creation of the Olympic National Park in Washington state, in the fight to save the sugar pine forests of Yosemite in California, and in the expansion of Teton National Park to include lands owned by John D. Rockefeller. And, she made it possible for other female voices to be heard in debates over resource and pollution issues.

Yes, we all owe a great debt to the lady from New York. Let us continue her fight to protect species and habitat. Her motto could be our own: "The time to protect a species is while it is still common. The way to prevent the extinction of a species is never let it become rare."

### Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



More good news for us moderate drinkers of alcohol. A study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* reports that middle-age to older people who imbibe a little each day have a 20 percent lower death rate than non-drinkers. I hope that means a fifth (pun intended) of us won't die at all, but that could be a misinterpretation. Anyway, this study followed nearly a half million people for nine years, matching their habits with death rates and the causes of their demise. It found the greatest benefits of a glass of wine, bottle of beer or a cocktail accrued to men and women who had risk factors for heart disease, because of the anti-clotting and good cholesterol-boosting qualities of alcohol.

Researchers found out more than this, especially when they counted both the benefits and drawbacks of factors such as smoking, diet and drinking. For example, smokers were much less likely to develop Parkinson's disease than non-smokers. But before you buy a carton of cancer sticks, keep in mind that a tiny percentage of the population gets Parkinson's, but hundreds of thousands die from smoking-related illness each year. Drinking has its shortcomings too, especially when taken to excess, best demonstrated by the estimated 100,000 deaths a year linked to alcohol abuse.

I didn't need this good report to continue a habit of enjoying a glass or two of wine at dinner, or a martini now and then. There are lots of reasons people take pleasure from a drink or two, and have done so for time immemorial, among them relaxation and "social lubricant" value. We wine fans have other reasons to drain a glass; the challenge of finding the best inexpensive (cheap wouldn't taste as good) bottle. That task has become more difficult lately, with California vineyards suffering from a blight, but there are usually alternatives. I've found some great values from Spain in the shop in Clarks Summit, but don't understand why I have to drive 25 miles to get them. The Back Mountain state store rarely gets new labels, in contrast to the Clarks Summit "specialty" store that has cases of several Spanish and French wines at under \$10 a bottle — some of them way under. I guess the LCB doesn't think it's worth the effort to provide more choices to us bumpkins.

### Do you agree? Disagree?

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### ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Dec. 24, 1937

#### DALLAS TO SELECT NEW POSTMASTER

An open competitive exam to select a permanent postmaster for Dallas will be held in Wilkes-Barre probably next month, according to announcement made by U.S. Civil Service Commission at Washington, D.C. this week. Joseph Polacky is acting postmaster at Dallas having succeeded G.T. Kirkendall, who resigned several weeks ago. Polacky was appointed by the Postmaster General to serve while steps are being taken to make a permanent appointment.

Final obstacles in the way of the long-awaited Luzerne bypass disappeared this week as county and state officials conferring at Harrisburg gave the Back Mountain section the finest Christmas present it could ask definite assurance that the highway will be constructed next spring. Unless unforeseen problems arise this section's 12 year crusade to eliminate the trouble-

some Luzerne "bottle-neck" will end about April 1 when construction begins.

#### 50 Years Ago - Dec. 26, 1947 FIRE DESTROYED BOHN HOME AT LAKE

Fire of undetermined origin Wednesday evening destroyed the Sorber Mt. summer home of Thomas Bohn, Wilkes-Barre. Because of the isolated location of the property near the old Rock School House, Daniel C. Roberts Fire Co. was not notified until the flames made great headway. House was a complete loss with damage estimated at \$4,500.

Cold weather of the past few days has coated the Alderson end of Harveys Lake with thin scum of ice. There is, however, no skating at the Lake except at the Sunset end beyond the bridge.

You could get - Turkeys over 20 lbs., 51¢ lb.; oranges, doz. 23¢; raisin bread, loaf, 15¢; 1 lb. fruit cake, light or dark, 69¢; imported chestnuts 25¢ lb.; grapefruit, 5¢ ea.

#### 40 Years Ago - Dec. 27, 1957 INSTITUTE WORKERS GET HOLIDAY OFF

Most of the 400 men employed at the new State Institute for Mental Delinquents in Jackson Twp., will enjoy a vacation until Tuesday after New Years. Work has continued throughout the fall but

has been hampered somewhat by bad weather and the deer hunting season when many took off a couple of days. Thirty buildings are now in some phase of construction with two, the warehouse and garage rapidly approaching completion.

Seven very large Christmas baskets were delivered to needy families in the Lehman-Jackson-Ross School District, after assembly Friday afternoon. Two grades shared each needy family and students contributed, food, clothing and toys. Several community organizations contributed also. Each family was provided with a chicken and a sack of potatoes.

#### 30 Years Ago - Dec. 28, 1967 KINGSTON TOWNSHIP POSTMASTER RETIRES

The office at the Draft Board in the Kingston Post Office won't look the same after New Year's. Joseph MacVeigh after 27 years as chairman of Draft Board 92 will not occupy his desk. MacVeigh could paper a good sized room with certificates of merit and various acknowledgements he received from top brass over the years of voluntary duty with no thought of re-embursement or pay. He holds a certificate of appreciation for 25 years of service to the nation signed by Gov. William Scranton and President Lyndon Johnson dated 1967, Congressional Medal of Honor

given 20 years ago plus many more.

John G. Henninger Jr., a loyal and active member of Dallas Kiwans Club was honored by that organization at a special program Wednesday evening when he was awarded a bronze plaque for faithful service. Henninger who recently observed his 80th birthday has been a member of the club for 25 years.

#### 20 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1977 LATE PAYMENTS SOAR IN KINGSTON TOWNSHIP

Kingston Township Supervisors presented a tentative budget for 1978 at their Wednesday night meeting. They also expressed concern at the large amount of delinquent sewer payments owed DAMA by township residents. The township is responsible for these delinquencies which amount to \$35,293.72. This is quite a dramatic rise from last year's \$9,000.

Huntsville Dam is among 34 dams in Maryland and 712 in Pennsylvania in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers inventory as having a high hazard potential and will be among those in the safety inspection by the Baltimore District Corps of Engineers. The inspection effort gained momentum recently following the collapse of a dam near Toccoa, GA causing numerous casualties and considerable property damage.

## The Dallas Post

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

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