

EDITORIALS

# Quick, someone call 911, Luzerne County needs help

It seems our worst fears about Luzerne County's 911 system are coming true, months before it even becomes active. A staff shakeup is in the offing and charges of incompetence and waste have surfaced, just as opponents of the countywide system had warned. While it's minimally comforting that officials are acting now to make corrections, there is really no assurance these and other shortcomings won't creep back into the system that is at the frontline of public safety.

County officials are also expected to announce that the system won't be up and running until June, several months behind a schedule put out last fall. To add insult to injury, we've all been paying a \$1.25 per month phone line charge since February, 1996, on the assumption the system would have been operational last year. Now, we will have paid for at least nine months more than we should have, and we haven't heard anything about refunds. Don't hold your breath waiting for that announcement.

Local municipal officials and emergency services personnel focused on responsiveness as they fought to keep the Back Mountain Communication Center open. They were reluctant to raise the issues of incompetence and corruption, which have now surfaced, to few people's surprise. And while county officials pledge that 911 must be done right the first time, we have little confidence that will be the case, given the progress thus far, and Luzerne County government's history of waste, fraud and abuse of the public trust.

The only comforting facet to this story is that the local comm center's treasury contains enough funds to last through 1998, and we can rely on continued high-quality service this year. But once the switch is pulled, all bets are off.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek

SNEAKER KING



I'm inspired after watching a couple of college football bowl games. Not by the play, but by the wholesale commercialization of these so-called amateur sporting events. This is obviously the wave of the future, and we're jumping on the bandwagon.

The first order of business is to find a major sponsor for The Dallas Post. We thought about all those faceless bureaucracies that sponsor the bowls, you know, like BellSouth and Tropicana. Not for us; we're a community newspaper. But it needs to be a company big enough to come up with some cash — we're not going to do this for nothing! So we approached Myron Mickiewicz and Richard Adamchick at Pizza Perfect with the idea, and they were gracious enough to become our primary sponsor. (Not to mention what they're paying for the privilege!)

Of course, this will mean some changes, but I'm sure you won't mind. Even if you do, tough cookies, those bucks are more important than a few lousy readers. Uh, excuse me for getting carried away with the tough-guy business talk. Anyway, the first order of business is to change our flag to reflect our corporate sponsorship. It's going to look something like this:



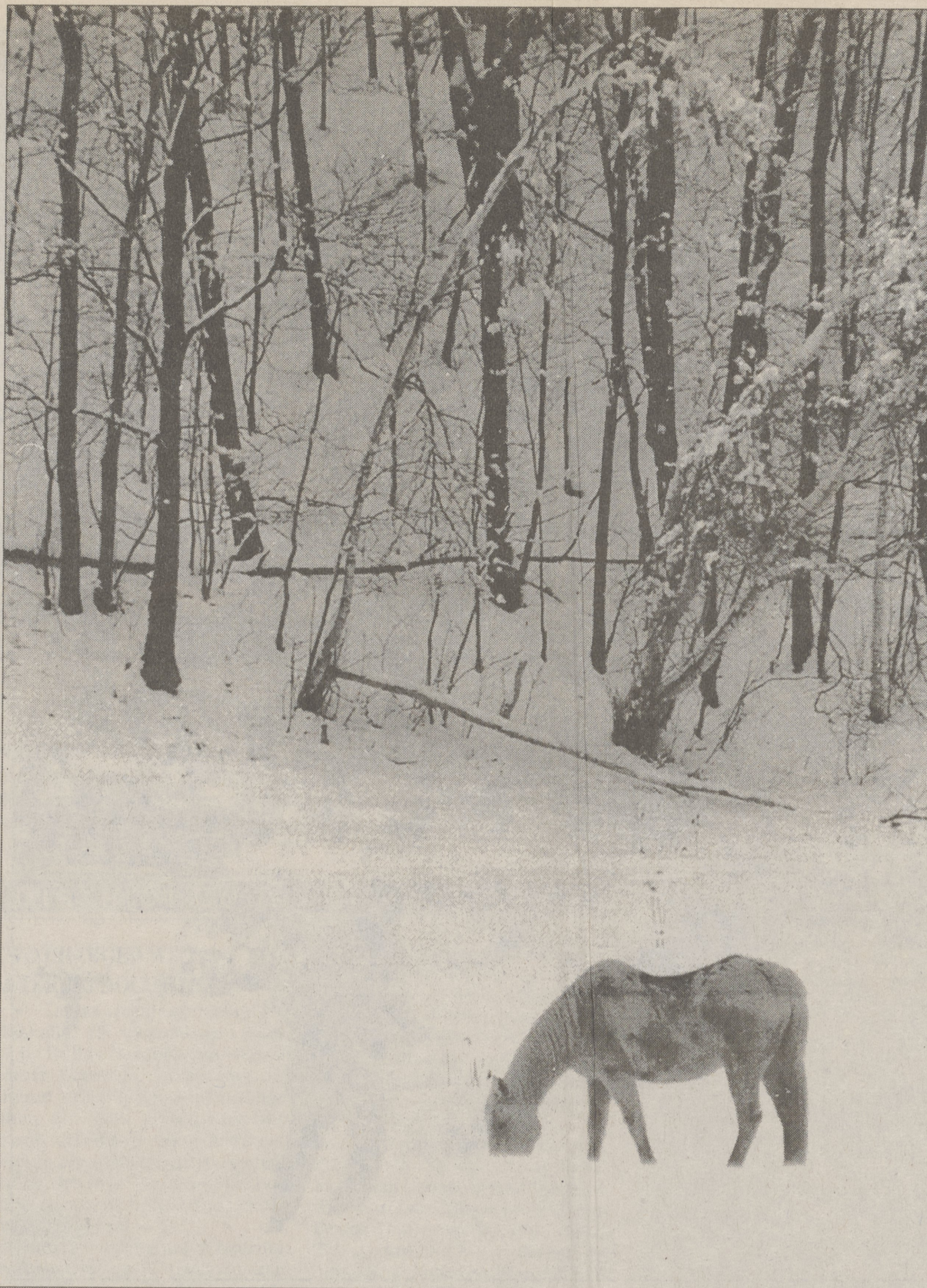
Not bad, huh? Adds a bit of flair to the page I think, but the eagle may have to go. Now, this change is more than skin-deep, if you know what I mean. Since Pizza Perfect is our major sponsor, you won't be finding any other pizza ads in the Post, nor any mention of them in articles. Also, Jim Phillips is required to give pasta recipes at least once every three months, and photos can't show other restaurants in the background. Before you raise some silly complaint about fairness, just keep in mind that we're emulating the biggest and best in American capitalism here, so buzz off. Do you have any choice but to watch the AT&T timeout or put up with those cute little golden arches in the corner of the stats box?

Now that we have the major sponsor lined up, we're trying to expand the idea. A few slots are left for enterprising advertisers who don't care if they annoy the heck out of people with incongruously placed messages. Here's what's still open:

- The \_\_\_\_\_ senior menus. Sorry, no pizza shops allowed.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ obituaries. Should be great for a funeral home.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ court report. Some sharp lawyer should pick up on that one.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ property transfers. What real estate agency could resist this.

Sponsors will get their logo in the heading each week, plus at least three mentions per issue, no matter how silly the context. For example, last week's article about new, lower recycling rates might have read like this: "While there was some resistance to the program when it was first implemented, most has died down. (If you're one of the protesters, call Atty. at \_\_\_\_\_, and he'll help you get the lien taken off your property.)"

All this is available for as little as, oh how about \$100 an issue. That's a whole lot less than those big guys are paying for absolutely worthless advertising during the bowl games. And you'll be supporting something almost as precious to the nation as football, a somewhat free press.



Snow pony, along Atherholt Drive, on Bunker Hill. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

Have you taken a look recently at your local public library? In a recent editorial in the Philadelphia Inquirer, the following recommendation was made: "The Governor should order the state education department, which oversees libraries, to reconfigure that formula so that communities that put more into their libraries are rewarded with more state aid. In return for backing that new formula, the lawmakers should demand that communities, especially in struggling areas, share library services - even if it means closing buildings, to save money and win that increased aid."

Whether or not you agree with that recommendation, the importance of libraries needs to be restated, the support for libraries needs to be reinforced, the status of libraries needs to be reinvigorated, and the capacity of libraries needs to be promoted, marketed, and expanded for the benefit of the 12 million citizens of Pennsylvania. Clearly, this is true for those living in areas such as the Back Mountain, the Abingtons, Scranton and Wilkes-Barre and the entire library system across Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Good things sometimes are

## Libraries; society's lifeblood

taken for granted. This may be especially true for libraries and for the astonishing and outstanding services provided by these resources. Sometimes supported with private funds, sometimes with limited public funds, sometimes with one time fund raising efforts, sometimes energized by special fund raising campaigns and sometimes brutally neglected, libraries are the foundation and touchstone for the new generations of leadership who will be the responsible citizens of tomorrow.

All of the residents of the regional community of Northeastern Pennsylvania have an obligation to seriously and substantially support the role which libraries play and the holistic contributions which libraries make to the quality of life, the educational values, and the reading and literature goals which are too often found declining across America. as the Inquirer editorial notes:

"Libraries do much more than just supply reading material. They help create and sustain a lifelong interest in literacy and learning. Yet this Commonwealth spends just \$14.05 per capita on libraries - far below the national average of \$19.93 and \$20.00 less than New York, the leading state. Pennsylvania also has fewer books on its shelves - barely two per person - than most states.

We are heirs to a history and tradition which few people across the world enjoy. We are the progenitors of future descendants whose view of their world will be permeated and dominated by what we do today - in this generation.

How we treat the public library system, how we maintain and support this system, and how we energize the hope and well-being which libraries bring to community life represent the best quality which the citizens of Northeastern Pennsylvania could offer.

The voices of doom who consistently down their own area, who express displeasure and discontent over the places they live and the institutions which form the community of life such as libraries need to change their view and perception of their region.

Libraries are not just another asset of importance to the future of a region; they determine whether or not a community, county, region, indeed nation represent a basic structure of humanism which can be the finest contribution to an excellent quality of life.

Despite the birth of computers, the storage of information in electronic format, the availability and distribution of such information, libraries and books have and will continue to provide a strong and vital function for the generations to come. Libraries are the well-spring of hope, the inspiration for truth, and the foundation for American 21st Century pride. Libraries can be, should be, and must a critical part of community and personal life of each Northeastern Pennsylvanian as we seek the best quality of life for this and future generations.

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

## Library news



Nancy Kozemchak

The construction of the children's wing and the main library operating area is progressing on schedule. The carpet was installed on December 26 and 27; the cabinets for the offices are mostly installed; lighting is complete and in working order; the rest of the office furniture is to arrive shortly. The ground in back of the library is being readied for final pavement application.

The library reopened Monday and is back to a regular schedule

## Schedule back to normal

of hours and services.

**New books at the library:** "The Collected Poems of Amy Clampitt" includes the author's five collections in a single volume, allowing us to experience anew the distinctiveness of her voice; the brilliant language that poured out with such passion and was shaped in rhythms and patterns entirely her own. Her themes are the very American ones of place and displacement. She moved frequently, but wrote with lasting and deep feeling about all sorts of landscapes. The collection offers a chance to consider her vision and poetic achievement.

"A Century of Sonnets" by James A. Michener tells of the author's 90-year-old passion for poetry. Several of his poems have appeared in his novels and he has often written about the great importance and influence of the poets and poetry on his own life.

Millions of readers are not aware that he, too, has been writing poetry since his student days. He has polished his poetry over the past few years, dating back to his first sonnet written 70 years ago. This volume of poetry will both astound and delight Michener fans.

"The Ordinary Seaman" by Francisco Goldman brings the author's incredible talents to the fore in an unsettling and beautiful story about life, death and love. The ordinary seaman is Esteban, a 19-year-old veteran of the war in Nicaragua who has come to America with 14 other men to form the crew of the boat Urus. Docked on a desolate Brooklyn pier, the Urus turns out to be a wreck, the men—without the ability to return to their homes—become its prisoners, and the city of New York is transformed into a mysterious world.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Jan. 14, 1938

## TAXES INCREASE WITH SCHOOL SALARIES

Taxpayers in local school districts may find their school taxes are climbing steadily in the next four years as their school districts come up against the problem of meeting the annual salary increases which the State has demanded for teachers. In Dallas Borough alone where there is a faculty of 13 increases demanded by the State will cost the district approximately \$8,650 during the next four years.

Football was dropped from the athletic program of Dallas High School at a reorganizational meeting of the school athletic council. The action ended a long struggle to keep the sport alive at the school. Lack of interest among students, lack of a convenient playing field and inability to finance the sport were given as reasons for the decision.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 16, 1948

## NIGHT COURSES AVAILABLE AT HIGH SCHOOL

For the second successive year Wyoming Valley Playground and Recreation Association under direction of Miss Ruth Sweezy will present a series of night courses at Kingston Township High School for all adults in the Back Mountain Region. Last year the course proved unusually popular with nightly attendance of 60 to 85.

Three fire companies fought stubbornly for 1 1/2 hours Monday to save the home of Mr. and Mrs. G.L.C. Frantz on Idetown Road at Lehman. Damage was estimated at \$3,500. Mr. and Mrs. Frantz and members of the family lost practically all of their clothing and personal possessions. Fire originated near a stove in the rear of the two story dwelling and rapidly spread to the second floor.

Dallas Borough Council at a special meeting last night at the library established a property tax of 22 mills, same as last year and fixed the budget at \$26,890. Members indicated they expect additional revenue from new properties erected during the past year.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 10, 1958

## DALLAS HARDWARE STORE ROBBED IN THE NIGHT

Dallas Hardware & Supply was entered sometime between closing time Saturday evening and Monday morning. Stolen was a .22 Remington pump rifle, a hunting knife and a quantity of ammunition. Entry was gained by thief or thieves through a basement window on the Bulford side of the building. Employees discovered the loss when they came to work Monday morning.

You could get - Center cut pork roasts and chops, 79¢ lb.; Lobster Tails, 4-6 oz. size 99¢ lb.; cauliflower, lg. hd., 29¢; carrots, 2 pkgs. 23¢; pineapple pies 45¢ ea.

30 Years Ago - Jan. 8, 1968

## DALLAS BOROUGH PASSES NEW BUDGET

A budget of \$74,177 was approved by Dallas Borough Council Thursday evening. A millage of 9, same as 1967 was set and a per capita tax of \$5 retained. A question as to the status of High Point Acres was answered by Atty. Robert Fleming: High Point Acres is definitely part of Dallas Borough, having been accepted by the borough upon petition and relinquished by Dallas Township.

Lake-Lehman Band Parents are adding another bus to the two already engaged to take parents and well wishers to the Cherry Blossom Parade in Washington early in April when the Lake-Lehman Band will march.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 12, 1978

## PRITCHARD APPOINTED TAX COLLECTOR

Vern Pritchard was appointed school tax collector for Kingston Township at the Dallas School Board meeting Monday evening over numerous objections by Director Basil Russin. Pritchard's appointment was for a period of one year on a commission rate of 2% during discount period; 3% during face value and 4% during penalty period up to a total of \$15,000. The commission rate will then be reduced according to the board but the reduced commission rate was not revealed.

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