

EDITORIALS

Board's influence on hiring must be kept in check

The request by Lake-Lehman school directors to be more involved in hiring teachers seems innocuous on its face. Lois Kopcha, the school board chairperson, says she just wants to be able to tell the public more about why a particular teacher was hired over other candidates. That way, she says, public skepticism about the process can be quickly and easily diffused by the logical response that the best candidate was hired. So far, so good, but there's the chance this could be the proverbial camel's nose under the tent, leading to board members not just requesting information, but expressing favoritism for applicants. That would not be good.

Rumors of preferential hiring by schools are rife in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and probably other places as well. Most of us have heard the story that aspiring teachers are told to deliver tribute to this school director or that one in order to get a full-time job. Or, better yet, just be related to someone on the school board or in the administration and you're a shoe-in for the position. Most of these stories are untrue, of course, but the fact that they continue to be told illustrates their power to influence our thoughts. That's why it's a mistake to take action that feeds cynicism that already infects many people in this region. If all the school directors wanted was to review the candidates — which most of us assumed they already did — they surely could simply have asked to see the files or to sit in on interviews, as is the practice in many districts.

That raises a question: Why does Kopcha think it necessary to vote on what appears to be a routine matter? Is this simply an effort on her part to assert herself, in the belief that giving weight to trivia is a sign of leadership, or is there something more sinister at work? Only time and experience will tell.

Probably the best aspect of this episode is that the public now knows some board members want a larger role in hiring teachers, and more eyes will be watching the results. That is almost always a good thing, especially at Lake-Lehman these days.

Inspiration beats self pity

In an age when it sometimes seems anyone who has not won the lottery is considered a victim, Eileen Rockensies sets an example for all of us to follow. Mrs. Rockensies has suffered with Multiple Sclerosis for nearly three decades. As the disease has progressed, she has faced challenges that could easily have sapped her spirit and changed a positive attitude to bitterness. But she resisted, giving birth to and raising three children who are healthy in mind and body while continuing to volunteer to help others in need. For her, MS is "just another problem in life that has to be dealt with."

The perception that most people would rather complain about every little discomfort while asking for special treatment is probably inaccurate, fueled more by attention seekers and a willing media than by our experience. Still, it is unusual for someone facing such large obstacles to adapt to them so graciously, keeping so much room in their heart for others. Perhaps that is Mrs. Rockensies' secret; that she takes time to think about and work for the benefit of people whom she can help, even if she is denied some of the pleasures of life they enjoy. Whatever the recipe she's using, we could all use some of the ingredients.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I am proud to have been awarded first place for headline writing in the Keystone Press Awards contest. I'm far from mastering this art — as I'm sure you can tell each week — even though I've spent years trying. But when they let you pick your three best headlines from an entire year of work, well, maybe a monkey couldn't win it, but he might stand a chance at honorable mention.

I'm troubled though, by the judge's comments, at least the ones she put on the back of the evaluation form. After praising my heds (that's newspaper lingo for headlines) as accurate, appealing and telling the stories well, she couldn't resist suggesting that I work on finding "punchy words that have a little 'attitude' (without editorializing)." Maybe this "attitude" is one of the reasons the "media" is now held in about the same high regard as penny stock salesmen.

I don't know about you, but I'm not sure how to cop an attitude without slanting the end result. But I'll try. Instead of writing:

Winner miffed at judge's comments

I could write:

Judge's comments suck

Hey, it's even shorter ... and punchier.

Do you agree? Disagree?

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The Dallas Post

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

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Bleeding hearts aren't just political liberals. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

Have you ever wondered what is happening in parts of Northeastern Pennsylvania to which you may have never traveled, even though some of these areas are only one hour distance away? For example, Tobyhanna Army Depot in Monroe County, the largest employer in Northeastern Pennsylvania, will be receiving 825 new jobs as a result of a transfer of jobs from McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, California to Tobyhanna over the next three years. Monroe County will have a referendum on the May 1998 ballot asking for a \$25 million open space bond issue. Monroe County also is undergoing an extensive visioning process which is designed to help guide the county into the next century.

Pike County has received funding for the development of a new business park. Pike County is the fastest growing County in Pennsylvania. A feasibility study was recently released concerning the opportunity to establish a major performing arts center in that county which would be equivalent to the legendary Tanglewood in Massachusetts.

Places to go, things to do

Wayne County, which contains the communities of Honesdale and Hawley, has one of the finest land preservation sanctuaries on the east coast, Lacawac Sanctuary. It also contains the Dorflinger Sanctuary, which holds summertime concerts and is a cultural mecca of great substance.

The Lackawanna Valley Industrial Highway, a 17-mile, \$461 million project, should be completed sometime in 1999 and will connect Scranton with Carbondale and open up new land areas for development in Lackawanna and Wayne Counties.

A proposal based upon a major study has advocated the restoration of rail passenger service between Scranton and New York City, traversing Lackawanna and Monroe Counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Grey Towers, the former home of Gifford Pinchot, a 1930's Governor of Pennsylvania and nationally known conservationist and forester, is an outstanding facility which attracts tourism as well as a special workshops with benefits of national significance.

Lake Wallenpaupack is the largest man-made lake in Pennsylvania with a 52-mile lakefront. The Lake Wallenpaupack Area Management District is a model lake protection program including Pike and Wayne counties, eight municipalities and a small part of two other counties.

The Nature Conservancy be-

lieves that sections of the Pocono Plateau in Monroe County represent "one of the last great places" in the nation, has an office in Monroe County, and is working on the preservation of thousands of acres in the Pocono Mountains.

The Stourbridge rail line is an excellent excursion rail system in Wayne County, and connects Honesdale to the former home of author Zane Grey.

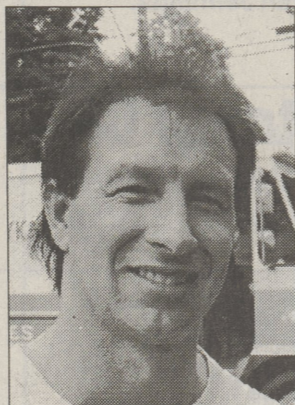
The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area in Pike and Monroe counties is the 10th most used national park facility in the nation. The Upper Delaware Wild and Scenic River facility is a national asset which impacts Pike and Wayne Counties.

The region is blessed with outstanding facilities and assets which may not be widely known to Wilkes-Barre/Scranton/Hazleton Metropolitan Area residents but which are part of the Northeastern Pennsylvania experience. Those who want to know more about these and many other facilities within the Pocono Northeast should contact the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP) at 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, Pa 18640 to find out more about the heritage, current activities, and the 21st Century future of one of the great regions of the world.

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

WORD ON THE STREET

Q.: Should school directors be more involved in teacher hiring?
Where asked: Cook's Grocery and Sun Palace Sunoco in Lehman



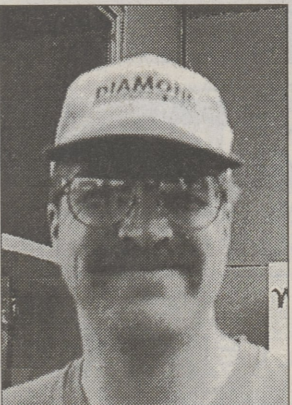
DAVID PUCHALSKY
Lehman



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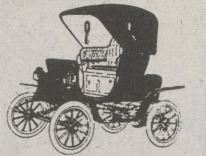
"I'm a proponent of states holding general elections for teaching positions. I don't know if board members would be helpful."

"I don't think they should be involved at all. There's going to be favoritism with the board or administration."

"The board should do most of the hiring, if not all. They should sit in on interviews."

"The board should be very involved."

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - June 24, 1938 PRINCE OF PEACE BUYS LAND FOR NEW CHURCH

The Church of the Prince of Peace Protestant Episcopal, bought from Fred Renard this week, a large tract of land situated to the right of the intersection of the Fernbrook Rd., Pioneer Ave. on which the rection of a new chapel will begin in the near future. The action of the church which was formed in 1929 in Shavertown, has received the formal approval of Bishop Frank W. Sterrett and plans for the new structure to be built on a 200x200 foot track are being drawn up by Col. Thomas A. Atherton.

WPA project for the improvement of Dallas Township High School was approved this week by President Roosevelt. An appropriation of \$7,350 has been allotted, which will be used towards the construction of courts, driveways, gutters drain, catch basins, post and railings, excavation, grading, spreading, filling, loading and hauling and the performance of incidentals and apparatus tenant work.

50 Years Ago - June 25, 1948 HILLSIDE FARMS HOLDS FIELD DAY

Hillside Farms Inc. will welcome the Luzerne and Columbia Counties, Holstein Association and others interested in Holstein cattle at the annual Field Day on July 8. Visitors will inspect the cattle and visit the farm. There will be a basket lunch at noon. In the afternoon there will be interesting talks by interesting people.

A gift of \$750 from Russell Frantz, head of Motor Twins, and a resident of Chase was announced at a meeting of Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Dept. Monday evening at Rome School. Members were informed that an elaborate record of contributions and payments has been set up under the supervision of Paul Gross and James Twaddle.

40 Years Ago - June 20, 1958 PET OWNERS URGED TO INOCULATE DOGS

Panama Williams Corp., Houston, TX has been awarded the contract for laying 130 miles of 24-in. and 30-in. gas pipeline across Pennsylvania and New Jersey for Transcontinental Transmission Corp. About 100 miles of 24-in. line will be laid in Pennsylvania from Picture Rocks to the State line at the Delaware River. From there changing from 24-in. to 30-in. the line will extend 30 miles ending near Princeton, NJ.

Back Mountain residents are urged to have their dogs inoculated at once against rabies. Two foxes showing peculiarities of conduct have been killed recently in the Kunkle Area. Looking back to the mad-fox scare six years ago, inoculation is a small price to pay for peace of mind.

30 Years Ago - June 27, 1968 DISQUE APPOINTED DEPUTY CORONER

Richard H. Disque II has been appointed by Luzerne County Coroner Dr. John Gibbons as a deputy coroner of the Back Mountain area which includes Trucksville, Shavertown, Dallas Borough, Dallas Township, Lehman Township and Harveys Lake Borough and Harveys Lake Township. Due to the large territory covered and the increased need for the services of a coroner, Disque will alternate with his father Richard H. Disque in this field.

For the first time in 11 years, Rabbi Abram Barras will not take the pulpit at Shavertown Methodist Church during the vacation of Rev. Robert D. Yost. The vacation schedule of both clerical leaders coincide. Barras has been enormously popular with the Shavertown congregation. He is spiritual leader of Temple Israel in Wilkes-Barre and a close associate of Rev. Yost.

20 Years Ago - June 22, 1978 TRUCKSVILLE FIRE CO. CELEBRATES 60 YRS.

Trucksville Volunteer Fire Co. will celebrate its 60th anniversary with the annual "Summer Fair" June 22-25. F. Allen Nichols and Paul Sabol, co-chairmen have announced the fair will be held on the Howard Isaacs Used Car Lot, Rt. 309, Trucksville.