

EDITORIALS

# Twin Stacks center bodes well for Back Mountain

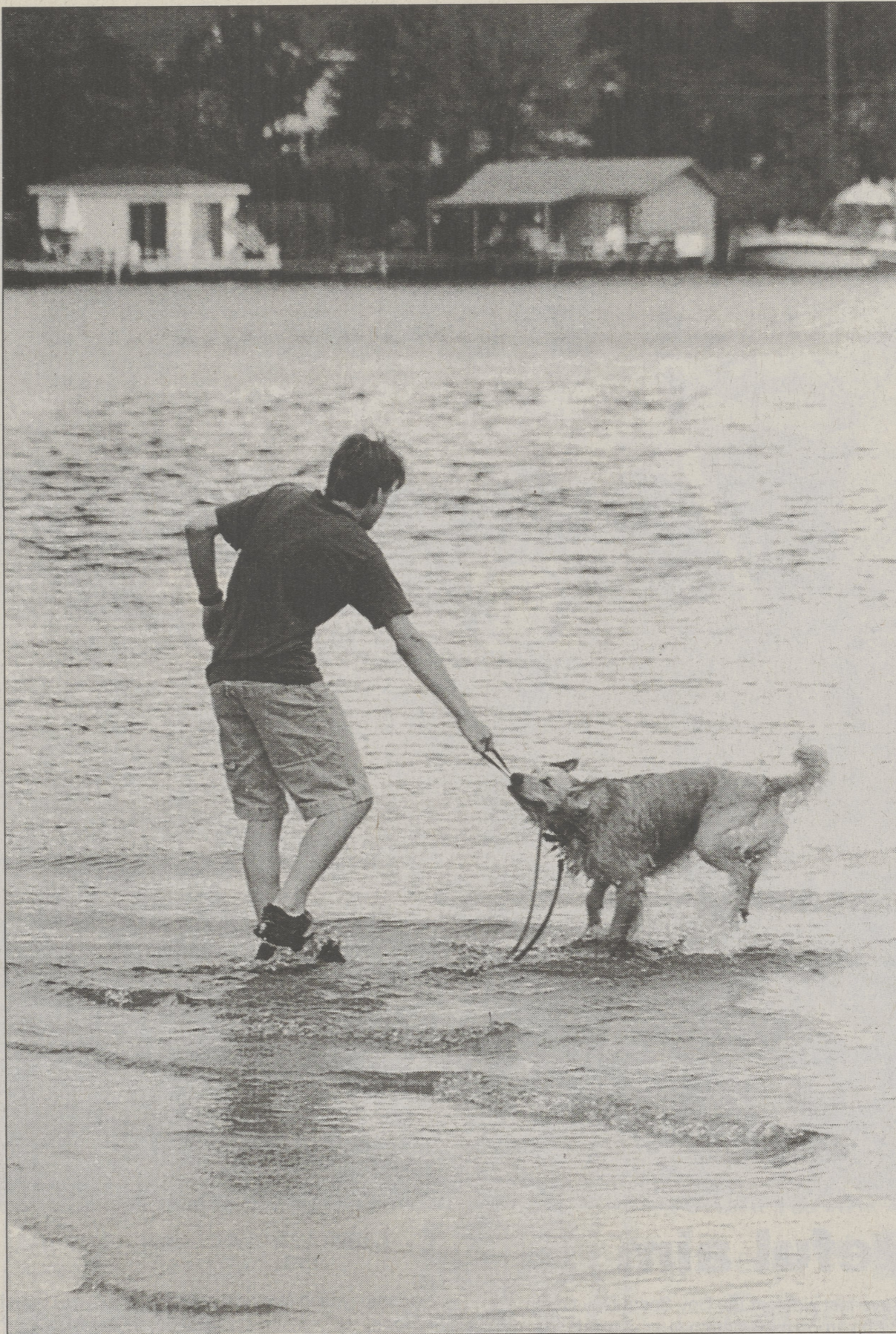
A physical and spiritual renaissance is taking place where just a couple of years ago only grime and despair could be found. The 50-year-old former Native Textiles building, once the Back Mountain's largest source of employment, is being reborn as a commercial and retail center, and it is raising some eyebrows along the way.

When Native abandoned the plant in May, 1995, it was feared the structure would go the way of too many "outdated" buildings, and become a vacant eyesore. That fate was deemed even more certain because of the presumption that toxic wastes and dyes permeated the property, since, as everyone in the Back Mountain seemed to know, six-legged frogs and other mutants lived in the small pond by Rt. 415. Even economic development officials, whose calling is supposed to be to attract commerce and jobs to the region, gave the old factory short shrift, particularly since it is located in what many see as an upscale bedroom community, not a fully functioning region where people can live, work and shop.

Fortunately, Lynn Banta, who grew up in Luzerne, and her husband Rick Haas hadn't heard that the building was a lost cause. They replaced resignation with a dream that new uses could be found for a place that possessed the charm of another era, but needed a great deal of work to meet modern needs.

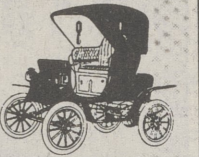
So, like the frogs, the certainty that the building would never be useful again was a will-o-the-wisp, vanishing before our eyes as Twin Stacks Center opens for business. As it does, its direction is startling even to the developers. Not only will the building soon receive a shiny new face, the rear portion will be home to about 200 jobs and several new enterprises instead of the expected 50,000 square feet of warehouse space. Add the employment opportunities when the retail stores, offices and restaurant are completed, and the Back Mountain will have at least 300 more jobs, new places to shop and dine, and an attractive addition to the landscape.

Banta and Haas deserve every bit of credit for their commitment to the development, since it is their vision — and money — that has turned a potential detriment into a symbol of the Back Mountain's vitality. But they are quick to thank others who have helped, especially officials in Dallas Borough and county commissioner Frank Crossin, who helped smooth the building's path from abandonment to usefulness. Maybe the people of the Back Mountain deserve a pat on the back as well, for fostering the kind of spirit that makes this a welcome place for people with dreams instead of fears.



Ben Bennett, from Virginia, visiting his grandmother and grandfather Evans at Harveys Lake, played with "Goldie" on the shore. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

ONLY YESTERDAY



## 60 Years Ago - Aug. 12, 1938 THE FEDERAL HOUSING BOOM HAS HIT DALLAS

Thirty four men were busily at work laying out a road and building four new houses this week at the Goss Manor Development as the Federal Housing boom struck Dallas. Further down the Tunhannock/Dallas Highway route the Luzerne Lumber Co. was building two houses facing on Center Hill Road.

Announcement was made yesterday that Dallas School Board will meet within a week to appoint a new teacher for the Commercial Department. The appointment has been held up for some time because of the absence of Supervising Principal T.A. Williammee who has been investigating qualifications of applicants.

## 50 Years Ago - Aug. 13, 1948 AMERICAN LEGION PLANS FOR NEW DALLAS HOME

Daddow-Isaacs Post, American Legion has approved plans for a new \$15,000 home at the junction of Center Hill Road and Memorial Highway. The Quonset Hut type structure similar to the Naval Armory in Kingston will be erected parallel to Memorial Highway and will have ample facilities to serve as a meeting place for civic and fraternal organizations as well as for the Legion.

A dozen or more \$12,000-\$17,000 homes all F.H.A. approved will be built shortly on a new plot of land being opened along the Tunhannock-Dallas Highway in the vicinity of Goss Manor. Two of the two story homes will be built facing Rt. 309 while the others will be built along a new street which is being constructed at right angles to the highway and in the direction of the Lipp farm.

## 40 Years Ago - Aug. 8, 1958 BACK MOUNTAIN SHOPPING CENTER TO OPEN SOON

Construction is moving along rapidly with every expectation that the new Back Mountain Shopping Center at Shavertown will be open shortly after Sept. 1. Workmen are now installing plate glass store fronts and refrigeration and many of the cases have already been placed in the new Acme Markets.

A strike in progress for the past four weeks, has completely closed the big Armour Leather Co. plant at Noxen. About 150 men are out in protest against an increased work load in the hide cutting department where the installation of new machinery has reduced the number of employees from six to three. The company contends the new equipment makes it possible for two men to handle between 600-650 hides a day but is willing to make a concession and have three men do the work.

## 30 Years Ago - Aug. 15, 1968 BMT LIBRARY CUSTODIAN COLLAPSES FROM BEE STING

Dr. Robert A. Mellman announced there are still openings for an Industrial Arts teacher and Physical Education instructor in the Dallas School District. The resignation of four new teachers at so late a date angered Director Andrew Kozamchak who said it was a hardship for supervising principal and students.

Earl Layou long-time custodian at Back Mountain Memorial Library apparently suffered a near-collapse when stung by a bee early Wednesday morning. Dallas Ambulance delivered him to Nesbitt Hospital. Diagnosis was he had not suffered a heart attack but was sensitized to bee stings.

## 20 Years Ago - Aug. 10, 1978 NEW RECREATION BUILDING TO BE BUILT AT LAKE

Groundbreaking for the new recreation building at Harveys Lake is set for Aug. 10 at 3 according to Harveys Lake Borough Council President Robert DeRemer. The 24 x 40 foot building in Sandy Beach area of the lake is being financed primarily through a grant of \$27,700 from Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.

"Are we beautifying America or are we letting Harveys Lake go down the drain?" was the question posed by a resident at Harveys Lake Borough meeting last Thurs. Complaints by residents of conditions at Center Street and also on Rte. 415 near Idetown were stressed at the meeting. Various properties were described as "junk yards" some infested with abandoned vehicles and rodents.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I have a confession to make, and I hope you won't think less of me after you read this. I, I, um, well, I don't have the absolute latest computer equipment. There, I said it. Oh heck, now it's out, so you might as well know the whole story. Not only is the computer this is written on three years old, it uses operating software that's at least four generations behind the times. And the word processing program itself; well, let's just say it's version 4.0 and leave it at that.

I feel much better now that I've come clean. You see, I've just been reading the latest issue of a computer magazine, and feeling very inadequate. You know the ones I mean, books so stuffed with ads that it's hard to find the stories, and when you do the writers assume that everyone has the latest and greatest equipment. This becomes really annoying in the question-and-answer columns where I hope to pick up a little free information or a shortcut. But no such luck, even if the newest OS has been shipping only a month, you can bet most of the answers presume you own it.

Then there's the pocketbook problem. I don't dare calculate what it would cost to bring all of our computer equipment up to date. I just know it's more than I want to contemplate. Actually, we're not alone. When Windows 95 came out, and then Windows 98, businesses were slow to buy in, having so many systems to upgrade and software and add-ons that might not be compatible. Besides, who needs 500 megahertz chips to type? Certainly not me.

## Letters, columns and editorials

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms.

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.

The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

In addition to letters, we welcome longer pieces that may run as columns. The author or subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be the prime consideration when selecting material for publication.

## A Case for conservation

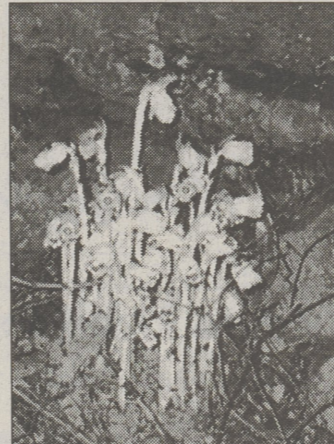


Alene N. Case

We've all heard more than we want about El Niño this year. There have been hurricanes in the Pacific, fires in Florida, drought in Texas, and floods in many places. There have been animals starving on the beaches, fisherfolk with nothing in their nets, and houses crashing into the sea. All over the world, the weather is affected by a few degrees warmer water in the tropical eastern Pacific Ocean.

Here in the Northeast, we also have been affected. But, ours is a lighter side of El Niño. As the polar front jet stream shifted north it allowed us to have an unusually mild winter and a wetter-than-normal spring and early summer. This has meant early peach crops, farmers' markets filled with local produce, gardens and orchards that did not experience the usual late-season frost, and a longer than usual boating season on the local lakes.

Perhaps the most stunning effect of our El Niño weather has been the incredible abundance of flowers. In our yard, the forsythia had never been as full nor bloomed as long. The combination of no heavy freeze during the winter and plenty of moisture in the spring has made almost every flowering plant - trees, bushes, vines, annuals and perennials - blossom prolifically this year.



Indiapipe at Frances Slocum State Park.

## The lighter side of El Niño

The two photographs accompanying this column illustrate the lighter side of El Niño quite well. Mountain laurel is the state flower of Pennsylvania. I was sort of wondering why until this June when it was spectacular wherever we went. It is a common understory bush (sometimes a small tree) that grows throughout the Appalachians. There is even a town in western North Carolina named Kalmia after the generic name of the mountain laurel. The name Kalmia derives from the Swedish botanist, Peter Kalm, who travelled to North America early in the 18th century and was more impressed by the mountain laurel than by any other flower he saw here.

Mountain laurel is closely related to azalea and rhododendron. They are all in the Ericaceae family, or heaths. Showy flowers and evergreen leaves characterize many, but certainly not all, of the members of this group. Cranberry, Labrador-tea and blueberry are also among the 2000 species of heath plants with which many of us are familiar.

Deer are among the few animals which can browse mountain laurel without ill effect. Humans and goats should not eat the leaves. Mountain laurel wood is very dense and was a favorite of spoon makers in former times.

As I have learned more about our state flower, I have come to understand the rather ornate language with which Neltje Blanchan began the discussion of mountain laurel in a 1900 book called "Nature's Garden": "It would be well if Americans, imitating the Japanese in making pilgrimages to scenes of supreme natural beauty, visited the mountains,

rocky, woody hillsides, ravines, and tree-girt uplands when the laurel is in its glory."

Another plant that has bloomed prolifically this year is the



Mountain laurel, the state flower, on Shaver Hill. Photos by Alene Case.

Indianpipe (some books use it as two words and others as a hyphenated word). The naturalist at Frances Slocum State Park alerted me to the area of

moist wood where I took the picture. But, we have seen many others in woodlands closer to home. Perhaps you, too, have noticed this strange little flower. Yes, the Indianpipe is a flower. It is not a mushroom or fungus as many people suppose. It has no green chlorophyll because it gains all its nourishment from the fungi in the soil that decompose wood and other debris. Such a plant is termed a "saprophyte." And, this ghostly white plant is very closely related to the heaths, including the mountain laurel. Some references actually include the Indianpipe in the Ericaceae family, but most put it in the Monotropaceae, meaning that which turns once. The flowers point downwards until seeds begin to form and then they "turn once" upward. Another member of that group is a pinkish plant called the pinesap that you might see in the sandy woods of New Jersey.

No matter what your favorite flower, it is probably going to bloom better this season than in recent memory. It is a good year for hiking, picture taking, gardening, and simply "smelling the roses," as the old song advised. Enjoy El Niño's lighter side.

## The Dallas Post

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**Q:** Where do you find the most Back Mountain news?

**A:** Only in The Dallas Post