

EDITORIALS

Let's get behind plans for recreation center

It appears action to develop adequate recreation areas for the Back Mountain are replacing talk. Spurred by space shortages made even more acute by construction of a new elementary school at Dallas, a diverse group of people is exploring ways in which fields and trails - even perhaps a swimming pool - could be constructed so that there's room for everyone, and for many activities.

This is only the beginning, of course, but it is heartening nonetheless. The present helter-skelter arrangement just isn't working. The Dallas School District fields off Church St are owned by the taxpayers, and used for baseball and softball, but little else. Intramural soccer, a growing sport, must shuttle between a couple of other school fields, the Kingston Township park, and Jackson Township's field. But all that combined isn't enough, and many games are played out of the Back Mountain, even when two local teams are facing each other.

There are many people, young and old alike, who participate in other sports and activities for which there is little or no public space. A survey that reached most Back Mountain homes this week listed biking, tennis, walking trails, roller blading, saunas, child care, even a coffeehouse as potential offerings. Some of those undoubtedly won't pass muster with enough people, but many should.

But those are the details. The critical mass needed to attempt this most worthwhile project will be achieved when all 10 towns and both school districts combine forces to make a persuasive argument for government funding to defray most of the cost. With land prices as high as they are here, the 20 to 40 acres that are required are likely to be the largest expense, especially if they are to be found in anything approaching a central location.

We can all help this process enormously in two ways: First, respond honestly and optimistically to the survey. Don't ignore it, or pencil in a minimum of interests just because "it can't be done." Maybe it can, and the best information is needed to do it right.

Second, make it a point to go to a meeting of your township and school board to voice your support for a recreation center. If you can't make a meeting, place a phone call to make sure your support is counted.

We're only beginning this process, but every step is important. Don't be left out.



Grasses sprout from Harveys Lake. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I just don't understand all the fuss over the President and Monica Lewinsky. I mean, since when is someone's private life sooo important. And how could anyone think Bill Clinton ought to quit or be impeached just because he had a sexual affair in the Oval Office with an intern, then lied about it and tried to prevent the truth from coming out. I mean, come on, let's grow up already, this is just no big deal. Why, I'll bet 90 percent of men have had affairs with low-ranking associates, and 89 percent have lied about it. At least, that's what many women I hear being interviewed say. I have to assume their husbands do the same thing all the time, and now they won't have to hide it anymore. "I regret honey, that I had an 'improper relationship' with DeeDee down in the mailroom," they can now say, without ever apologizing or promising not to do it again.

This is just about sex. Lots of people say, and I couldn't agree more. The lying, cheating, hiding, misrepresenting - they're nothing to worry about. I can say this with confidence because I'm certain this is the only time Bill Clinton has ever lied to us, or to Hillary for that matter. So, he lied for seven months to his Cabinet staff and the American people. So what, I say. To paraphrase comments I've read: He's doing such a good job running the country, this doesn't matter. I'll second that. Why, if it wasn't for The Big Guy, what a mess we'd be in. The stock market would be in the tank, war would have broken out all around the globe and Beanie Babies would be subject to high tariffs. It would be awful.

Besides all that, this isn't even about sex, at least not the way the President defines it. Sex is different - it requires lying down. This was just a warm, friendly relationship, similar to what he's had with many women. Just like he said about pot, "I didn't inhale." And I for one, believe him.

It would be a shame if this fine man, who was elected by nearly 25 percent of eligible voters, is driven from office on such trivial grounds. I mean, sex and lying are inextricably linked in American culture, so Bill "didn't do anything any man wouldn't do," I've heard people say. How dare we set such unreachable standards for our President, especially when he's always so eager to "get back to the business the American people elected me to do," as he apparently did on the Easter afternoon when he summoned Ms. Lewinsky after attending church with his family. Sheesh, that's gratitude for you.

More of the news you want
The Dallas Post

The Dallas Post

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

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A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

If I were a toy designer, I would make a transformer called "Pfiesteria piscicida." It could be changed rapidly into any one of twenty-four different forms ranging from a tiny ball to a large blob-like amoeba to a swimming form with two long whips, one that wraps around its body and the other that propels it through the water. But, as with many things in nature, this particular "transformer" is not on a toy-maker's drawing board; it is alive and well in many coastal waters and estuaries along the southern coasts of North America. And, where it is alive and well, many fish and shellfish are not.

Pfiesteria piscicida is a dinoflagellate (a one-celled alga that swims) that one author termed the "microscopic murderer." In fact, though the generic name is

'Transformers' that are not child's play

in honor of a researcher named Dr. Lois Pfiester, the species name literally means fish killer. And in 1995, this little transformer caused the deaths of at least 15 million fish over three months in the estuary of the Neuse River in North Carolina. It has been blamed for many fish and shellfish kills over the past several years; but, before about 1980, it was not known to the scientific community.

Although children are fascinated by changing shapes and motion, this organism is positively scary. It can be in the form of an armored cyst buried in the sediment (mud) at the bottom of a river and the presence of fish swimming above it can trigger it to emerge quickly. It is not known what exactly triggers this awakening but it is some chemical either secreted or excreted by the fish. Almost immediately, the Pfiesteria produces toxins that slow the fish's swimming, cause respiratory distress, and weaken the skin. Holes appear in the skin and these allow the dinoflagellates to consume body tissues and blood cells. Death can be the result in as little as a few hours. This "ambush-predator" behav-

ior is unique in these Pfiesteria-like organisms. Other dinoflagellates may produce toxins that make people and other animals ill (as in "red tides"), but they do not intentionally attack the victims. Pfiesteria does. It also can change into a large amoeba that engulfs other organisms that might want part of its lunch or that might want to eat it.

You may be asking yourself, "If this creature is as bad as all that, why haven't we heard about it before?" Scientists think that it has probably been around for thousands of years, but they also have evidence that the excess nutrients like phosphate and nitrate discharged into the water has been especially beneficial to Pfiesteria. Many of the fish kills have been in estuaries of rivers that have hog or chicken farms upstream or phosphate mining operations along their banks. Such large inputs of nutrients may have upset whatever natural checks and balances had kept these microbes relatively harmless.

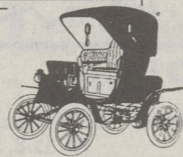
Yes, this creature and the toxins it produces are dangerous to many fish and shellfish including Atlantic menhaden, blue crabs

(parts of shells eaten away!), eels, scallops, flounder, etc. Unfortunately, it is not only the economic viability of the fisheries that are in jeopardy; it is also the health of fisherfolk and researchers. Contact with the water in which fish are dying can cause lesions on human skin. The air above such water contains enough toxic substances to cause breathing difficulties, irritated eyes, headaches, and various mental and nervous system disorders. Research is now done with the same sort of extreme hazard precautions that are used in the study of rabies or HIV.

Pfiesteria outbreaks are yet another in the long litany of problems that we are likely bringing on ourselves by our careless and uninformed land-use practices. Control of nutrients either at the source (treating farm wastes, curtailing use of fertilizers on lawns or golf courses, etc.) or along streams and rivers (planting or maintaining forest buffers, restricting the amount of land that is paved, etc.) may be a cheaper and less complicated way of dealing with such problems.

Remember, "transformers" are not always child's play.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Sept. 23, 1938 FRED KIETER COMES HOME WITH GRIZZLY PELT

The two story brick building at 30-32 Main Street, Dallas owned by Warden Kunkle, Dallas was sold this week to A.C. Devens owner of Devens Milling Co. The building is adjacent to the post office and is occupied by the Tally Ho Grille and Dallas Pharmacy. A beauty shop, the offices of Dr. Robert C. Bodycomb and two apartments make up the second floor of the building.

Fred Kiefer of Shrine View has been deep in the Canadian Rockies hunting, is homeward bound with the pelt of a silver-tipped grizzly as a souvenir of his expedition. Kiefer has a number of trophies from hunting trips in Eastern Canada but this was his first jaunt into the Canadian big game country.

50 Years Ago - Sept. 24, 1948 COON DOG IN GOOD STATE AFTER SNAKE BITE

A valuable coon dog owned by Jack Baloch of Luzerne was bitten by a copperhead snake Monday evening while Baloch was exercising the dog on Bunker Hill. Baloch killed the snake, put the dog into his auto and drove to the office of Dr. G.H. Flack, Trucksville vet. The doctor administered anti-venom serum and although the dog remained in critical condition for some hours, he is coming along nicely but is still in Dr. Flack's hospital.

At a brief meeting of Dallas Business Association last Monday at the Back Mountain Memorial Library plans were discussed for the fall and winter program. Among matters discussed were support of annual Halloween Parade in late October and plans for Christmas lighting in the Back Mountain area with awards for best lighted and decorated homes.

40 Years Ago - Sept. 19, 1958 SHAVERTOWN UM TO EXPAND BUILDING

Contract for church expansion at Shavertown Methodist Church

was awarded to Raymon R. Hedden, Monday evening at a congregational meeting held in the sanctuary. The building at Shavertown will be 45x95 feet according to plans drawn up by Architect Thomas A. Porter, Wilkes-Barre. The structure is estimated to cost \$165,000, will provide extra rooms for Sunday School classes and an expanded and remodeled kitchen. Work will start within two weeks.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Harvey of Dallas will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on Sept. 26 with luncheon for the family at Irem Country Club. There are six living children, 14 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

30 Years Ago - Sept. 26, 1968 QUAKER MOTEL IS TORN DOWN, GAS STATION BUILT

Kingston Township supervisors initiated two more steps forward in progress at a meeting Wednesday evening when the secretary was authorized to advertise two ordinances, that in the Housing Code and the other on the Burning of Refuse. Many complaints have been received on the latter practice which is also a fire hazard. Housing Code will impose stricter regulations.

A four-pump colonial style service station is to be built in Dallas on the site of the former Quaker Motel, Main Highway. Workmen are presently tearing down the 24-unit motel which has occupied the site for 15 years.

20 Years Ago - Sept. 21, 1978 DALLAS BOROUGH ISSUES WORK STOP ORDER

Dallas Borough Council will issue a work stop order against the construction of the new dental offices on Rte. 309 until the builders come before the council and make arrangements about tearing up the road and determining which property is owned by them. Decision was made following a complaint by Mrs. Thomas Kingston that the street that provides access to her residence has been torn up preventing her from getting in or out of her residence.

"It was a great day for our kids. They've been working for eight years to defeat Dallas and take possession of the old shoe. This year we got the breaks and it made the game a 42-12 runaway," said Lake-Lehman coach Rich Gorgone. "Our kids executed well and they capitalized on Dallas turnovers."

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.