

EDITORIALS

Low-tech learning still has some advantages

Lake-Lehman and Dallas, along with other schools, are adding computers and other technology as fast as their budgets and government grants allow. This is good; there's no doubt it's a high-tech world, and those who keep up with the times have an advantage in the job market, and will have access to more forms of information if they know how to work a computer. But let's not forget that for all the power this hardware has crammed into the box, computers still only spit out what a human mind puts in.

That's where programs like the American Literature Field Studies Association at Dallas High School come in. In its 15th year, the program centers on a trip to historical sites in New England, taken each May. About 35 students and three teachers make the trek, visiting monuments and museums that showcase the early American history that has been taught in the classroom. This is no junket; students prepare for it all year, and must complete a project based on what they've learned and experienced.

We don't hear much about the value of learning for its own sake these days. Perhaps our ever-increasing focus on material goods and pampering services has left little time for the pure enjoyment of discovery and enlightenment. Hollywood doesn't help much; few are the heroes or heroines in modern film or literature who aspire to an enlightened, if materially meager existence. Nearly every celluloid family lives in a big house, has new cars, and spends little or no time pursuing anything but more stuff, although they seldom seem to work for it.

Trips like the one to see early Pilgrim landmarks can offset to some extent the stifling world projected from the television screen, replacing it with vibrant, living history that can help young people make the best choices for their future by drawing on the lessons from the past. Hopefully, one result will be a recognition that life didn't begin with the personal computer, but it can end there if we're not open to the world around us.

Maybe it's time to be alarmed about our Earth

Let's just say a recent report that claims 30 percent of the natural world has been destroyed is overstated by half. Let's say that instead of freshwater ecosystems declining by 6 percent a year, it's only 3 percent; that carbon dioxide emissions are only one-fourth greater, not one-half, and that wood and paper consumption have grown by one-third and not the two-thirds the report found.

Even if all that is true, this report and others like it ought to make us sit up and take notice, since even at half the rates claimed, it will be only some time in the next century that resources we have come to depend on will become scarce enough to bring chaos to our society.

The Living Planet Report, by a trio of economic and conservation organizations in England, paints a bleak picture of the world we'll leave our children, and pins most of the blame on out-of-control consumption, which carries the double whammy of using up resources while producing pollutants. This hardly seems like a popular conclusion in an era when vehicles are ballooning to ever-larger dimensions and the stock market has become the lead item in the news every other day. But it's looking more and more that we will someday look back on the last couple of decades and shake our heads in wonder that we could have been so selfish and shortsighted.

Protecting the earth means more than buying t-shirts with pictures of frogs on them, and it can require self-sacrifice, which is not a common individual trait. That's where responsible government can help, setting standards and limits to save us from our weaker natures. A good start would be to raise the federal gasoline tax by 50¢ a gallon and to use the money for mass transportation projects. But that would make voters angry, so today's spineless politicians won't even consider. So, we'll all pay a much higher price, or at least our children and grandchildren will.

About 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.

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Mirror image. Photo by Monica Marzani.

LETTERS

Let's plan ahead for the inevitable dry spells to come

Editor,

Recently, I received an interesting investment newsletter from William Bonner, a Baltimore publisher. The letter contained a number of historical charts which showed the timing and effects of La Nina (which generally succeeds El Nino) upon prices of selected commodities. In the past, it is shown that various commodities' prices were very substantially boosted by the drought effects of La Nina. Obviously, one expecting La Nina to perform in accordance with past history, would therefore now buy futures in such commodities as soy meal, corn, cotton, oats, etc.

Of course, most of us are not commodities speculators, but the charts do suggest that this winter and the coming spring may be somewhat different from "normal." Already, local officials are warning that water supplies are low and that water tables are dropping. Water conservation measures are being urged. Residents in the Back Mountain area could be quite adversely affected.

Years ago, in the mid-1920's or early 1930's, published projections of population growth for the greater Wilkes-Barre area indicated poor prospects for growth in the Back Mt. area because of its lack of potential water resources.

Today, underground water (wells) is its principal resource. A prolonged drought would undoubtedly have dire consequences for the region's residents.

One "emergency" solution might be to tap Harveys Lake. This would entail setting up a facility for filtering, water processing (chlorination, etc.), testing, and delivery (pumping & piping) to augment existing water supplies. Given sufficient "lead-time," this could be done quite economically. But, on an emergency basis, it could be very costly.

Of course, no one knows whether this year's La Nina effect will be severe enough to call forth

the "water buffaloes" (portable emergency water tanks) in the Back Mt. area. But I'm reasonably certain that, sooner or later, in the light of our population growth, that will be our fate. Consequently, it seems to me that a prudent course of action is to build, right now, a "standby" water processing facility near Harveys Lake which can eventually be tied into Back Mt. water systems. If present population trends continue, it's certain we'll need it eventually. Why not get ready for the future?

Hugh P. King
Dallas

Light a candle this season in memory of deceased children

Editor:

"It's the most wonderful time of the year." 'Tis the season to be jolly." The words of those carols we hear each Christmas season do not ring true for everyone.

Parents whose child or children who have died feel somehow removed from the excitement, glitter, and spirit of the season. They would rather not hear those songs and others like I'll Be Home For Christmas, when they know their child won't be. For many such bereaved fathers and mothers, it

is in reality, not a joyous time but a time more touched with pain. It is a time when the absence of their child is acutely felt and when they long to have them share in family gatherings and exchanging of gifts.

"Christmas is for children," another carol tells us. This year when most families remember and enjoy the children we are blessed to have, we parents whose child (children) have died, ask you to remember them too. If you knew them, please talk to us about them. If you didn't, say a prayer that we

may have peace this Christmas. For the second year, The Compassionate Friends are asking all people worldwide to join us on December 13 in remembering all children who have died by participating in National Children's Memorial Day. All you need to do is light a candle at 7 p.m. As the candles burn down in one time zone, they will be lit in the next, thus creating a virtual 24-hour remembrance of all children who have died.

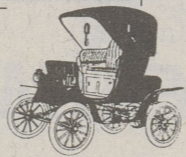
Let these candles send out a

warm glow in a world that sometimes seems so cold to those mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters who mourn their children or siblings.

Let the light from the candles be a symbol of the love that brightened our lives because of them, a love that will never die.

Lois Linsinbigler
Harveys Lake
The Compassionate Friends
Wyoming Valley Chapter

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Dec. 16, 1938 PETER CLARK RECOGNIZED FOR SERVICE

Outstanding figures in Luzerne County Republicanism joined with local leaders Tuesday at Irem Country Club to recognize the vigorous leadership of Peter D. Clark, 6th District G.O.P. chairman in the recent election. Clark the speakers agreed is typical of the young aggressive, liberal element which is leading the Republican party back to power throughout the nation.

Lehman Township cagers, champions of last year, scored a decisive 27-19 victory over Laketon and extended their winning streak to eight straight games. Dallas Borough-Kingston Township game was postponed and will be played January 14.

50 Years Ago - Dec. 17, 1948 DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES TO RISE IN BACK MOUNTAIN

While there may be some tapering off of building activity in other sections of the State the trend continues up in the Back Mountain Area especially in residential construction. Two of the biggest commercial ventures now underway are a new store building for the American Store Co. in Dallas and Back Mountain Lumber and Coal Company's big project in Shavertown.

Need for suitable office space for professional and business men was made evident again this week when Wayne Gordon's temporary office was moved from the site of the new Acme Market to a spot back of Dallas Service Station. The building was formerly the Dallas waiting room of the Wilkes-Barre Railway Co.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 12, 1958 RAYMON R. HEDDON & CO. WINS BID FOR CHURCH

With an addition to one Back Mountain church just completed and another under construction,

Raymon R. Hedden & Co. has been awarded the contract for the construction of the new \$750,000 church for St. Mary's of the Maternity Parish, Park Avenue, Wilkes-Barre.

Clair LaBarre, 36, Kunkle, brother-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Dan Mecker was found dead of asphyxiation in his house trailer shortly after midnight Wednesday at Rochester, NY. Death is believed to have been caused by carbon monoxide from a defective heater using bottled gas to heat the trailer.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 19, 1968 HARVEYS LAKE TRIES TO CONTROL BUILDING

In an effort to prohibit absolute private control of Harveys Lake and since increasing development which if uncontrolled could adversely effect the recreational aspects of this popular resort, state Water and Power Resources Board has adopted a new resolution. The resolution will also control the issuance of permits for new docks, repairs and established an annual charge applicable to both existing and future docks.

You could get - Hams, whole, 69¢ lb.; smoked kielbasi, 89¢ lb.; Naval oranges, 69¢ doz.; pascal celery, stalk, 19¢; Campbell's Pork and Beans, 4 1-lb. cans, 53¢; Maxwell House, 1 lb. can, 69¢.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 14, 1978 COMPANY WITHDRAWS FROM CABLE STATION

Gamma Communications has withdrawn from its franchise agreement to construct a new cable TV system in Harveys Lake Borough. "We cannot participate in the construction, operation or maintenance of a cable system in Harveys Lake" said the letter. Gamma's withdrawal leaves the incumbent Back Mountain Cable TV unchallenged as cable TV supplier for the borough.

A dividend of 30¢ per share for the fourth quarter in '78 was declared Tuesday by the Board of Directors of United Penn. Bank according to an announcement of Robert L. Jones, president. The dividend is payable Jan. 15, 1979 to stockholders of record as of Dec. 15.

Better to Give. Even better to receive.

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