

EDITORIALS

Free medical, legal clinics have room for everyone

The U.S. economy may be sprinting along at a record clip, but there are still plenty of us who aren't reaping the benefits of rising stock prices and busy factories. Fortunately, there are others who are willing to share their good fortune, by providing vital services at no charge to anyone who needs them.

In the Back Mountain, two of the most important services are available at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown. That's where free medical and legal clinics are open from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Friday evening, staffed by caring professionals who believe they have a responsibility to provide service to anyone who needs it, regardless of ability to pay. Dr. Fred Bloom started the medical clinic a few years ago, and Atty. Bernard Walter followed suit in 1997 with the legal clinic.

To hear the critics of "big government," you might think there wouldn't be a need for these kinds of services. After all, if public institutions are so bloated, surely they can at least offer basic health services to everyone, right? Wrong. More than 40 million Americans do not have health insurance, most of them either because they can't afford it, or because insurance companies won't accept them because of existing medical conditions. Despite the robust economy, the number has been growing, not shrinking. That means not only is there a need for free clinics, there is a growing demand on their services, for children, the elderly and everyone in between.

In a similar vein, many of us find it nearly impossible to afford legal assistance, and as a result miss opportunities that may help improve our lives. For instance, the legal clinic put Raquel Alvarez of Dallas in touch with an attorney in South America who helped her obtain a family inheritance. Others have received assistance with child support, small business questions and — tying in with the medical clinic — insurance claims.

Different factions in American politics and government can argue about whose responsibility it is — if anyone's — to help the less fortunate in areas that require professional expertise. Meanwhile, caring volunteers like the ones who staff the free medical and legal clinics at St. Therese's Church will welcome anyone who comes to them with a problem, and will do their best to provide solutions.



A lonely apple tree, braced against the cold winter snows, waiting for spring. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Unless you've been living under a rock (or in a fallout shelter like the family portrayed in a new movie), you've heard all about the Y2K "crisis." Okay, so half the people who are preparing for the End of Life As We Know It don't know what Y2K stands for, that doesn't stop them from eagerly expecting the worst. In fact, they've been waiting for this for years, being disappointed to see the Cold War end, the Second Coming not come and Seinfeld go off the air. (At least original episodes. The reruns will probably go for another century or so.) Hey, I confess — when Reagan was first elected and threatening to blow up the Soviet Union, I had a box of canned food and drinks in the garage, just in case. Had to throw it all out a few years later, after green stuff started oozing out of the box.

But, let's be rational about this latest crisis. Just what is it we'll be missing if the power grid goes down and the banks close? Here are a few things you might not have thought about.

- Without television, families can sit around and . . . talk to each other! It may be awkward at first, since coherent thought and speech have been rarities in the age of O.J. and Monica, but if the lights are out long enough, we may be able to revive them.
- Speaking of lights, we'll all get enough rest since it will be too much work to keep candles and lamps glowing. Besides, there's definitely a shortage of whale oil these days.

- As for the evil instruments of our destruction — computers — well, this may be a problem, since we won't be able to rely on spell checking programs and spreadsheets. Quick, ask you kids to teach you the times tables again. Maybe instead of stockpiling food we should be buying up alkaline batteries, so at least the calculators (and Gameboys) will work.
- No ATM machines? Thank goodness; when the crisis is over, our retirements will be secure.

Actually, I'm all for taking reasonable precautions against the disappearance of Western civilization. If this gives me an excuse to quit working and hole up in some quaint town in South Carolina, maybe it's not such a bad thing. Now, where did I put those gold coins.

Do you agree? Disagree?

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Library news



Nancy Kozemchak

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will sponsor a special program in the children's room of the library on Saturday, March 6 at 1 p.m. The program will be for children ages four to eight. The program is funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and sponsored by University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology. Puppeteer

'Aesop's Fables' in performance March 6

Steve Abrams, will perform "Aesop's Fables". Reservations are required and may be made by calling the library at 675-1182.

The children's room is busy with a special project. Marilyn Rudolph, children's librarian and Mary Daley, the new children's assistant have been categorizing special books on the shelves with identifying spine labels. The three classes include Randolph Caldecott Award, John Newbery Award and EZ reading. These books will be shelved in their normal location but the special label will make them easier to find. There are many new titles on a variety of subjects.

The bookstore in the lower level of the library has announced a

special sale of "Top of the Shelf" books. These are older books of fiction selling at half price. There are over 250 books available and they are in a prominent location.

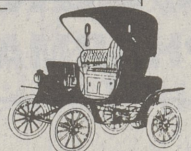
The bookstore was visited by Dr. Karen Boback's elementary education students from College Misericordia, who purchased some children's literature books. The store has many books on children's literature on the shelves at reasonable prices. A part time instructor from Luzerne County Community College in the field of chemistry found some WW 2 books to purchase for a research paper he was working on. The bookstore also has some new jigsaw puzzles and stuffed animals for sale. The new special book-

store subject featuring gardening will begin on March 15. There are some new and different titles in this field.

The orders for daffodils sponsored by the American Cancer Society must be received before March 4 with delivery during the week of March 15. The cost is \$5.00 for an individual bunch of 10 daffodils.

A new memory book has been presented by Susan and Gary Thorne in memory of Michael Passerella. "Pillsbury, best desserts" features more than 350 recipes from America's most trusted kitchen. It features dessert basics, cakes and pies, cheesecakes, frozen desserts, bake-off desserts, cookies, bars and brownies.

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - Mar. 2, 1929

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TO HAND DOWN FINES

Construction of the new school building is practically ready for occupancy the coming week. All the furniture and necessary equipment is on hand excepting the teachers' desks and if these do not arrive soon the old ones will be substituted temporarily.

The State Highway Department announced that after midnight last night, 1928 motor vehicle drivers' licenses will be void and that offenders will be arrested. A fine of \$35 may be imposed and the drivers will be compelled to secure a license before permitted to continue driving.

60 Years Ago - Mar. 3, 1939

COUNTY LOOKS INTO PAYROLL PADDING

Faced with the task of disposing of 311 criminal bills, the Luzerne County Grand Jury moved slowly this week toward the anticipated investigation of the "padding" of State Highway

Department payrolls in Luzerne County during last year's bitter election. Although District Attorney Leon Schwartz declined to set the day when he will begin presenting his evidence to the jurors, it was intimated that the investigation will probably begin early next week, perhaps on Monday.

In the face of steadily diminishing property values throughout the rest of Luzerne County, the growing rural-suburban region about Dallas continued during the last 12 months to register gains in the value of real estate. Civic leaders anxious for the development of the Dallas suburban area hailed the new assessment figures as indisputable evidence that this is the fastest growing section in Luzerne County.

50 Years Ago - Mar. 4, 1949

LIGHT COMPANY PRICES GOES UNDER SCOPE

Proceeding on the theory that residential as well as commercial users of electricity served by the Harveys Lake Light Co. should seek further reductions on rates, Back Mountain Consumers League has thrown its weight back of the businessmen's efforts to have the rate structure of the company reviewed by Pennsylvania Utility Commission. Back Mountain Consumers League obtained a reduction in rates from the company some months ago, but there has been agitation ever

since by certain groups in the community that the reduction is not enough.

Now playing at Shaver Theatre - "The Crusades" with Loretta Young, Ian Keith and Henry Wilcoxson.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 26, 1959

LOCAL SCHOOLS IN GOOD SHAPE TO PREVENT FIRES

College Misericordia has a minimum of fire hazards and four other Back Mountain schools are in good shape. These are the findings of Dr. Henry Laing, Harry C. Smith, Shavertown and Trucksville Fire companies who this week completed a thorough survey of the schools to reveal any previously unnoticed hazards. "With the exception of a few minor recommendations, we feel that every thing is being done at these buildings to prevent the outbreak of fire" Chief Shaffer concluded.

You could get - Porterhouse steak, 79¢ lb.; Long Island Ducklings, 43¢ lb.; broccoli, lg. bunch, 23¢; snow white mushrooms, 39¢ lb.; Duncan Hines cake mixes 2 19-Oz. pkgs. 55¢.

30 Years Ago - Mar. 6, 1969

LONG URGES BOARD TO GIVE WATER CO. MORE TIME

William Long, member of Kingston Township Water Commission, urged a little patience in continuing action against the

Trucksville Water Co. at a meeting of that body last week. Long urged that the board give the water company to May 1 to see if any repairs are started by then. "If the June 1 deadline is not met, I'll go to high heaven to get something done. If we go to court now the action could run a year or two and in the meantime we would get nothing."

20 Years Ago - Mar. 1, 1979

DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION

In a special meeting Monday, Dallas Area School District announced plans for long term financing of a substantial construction and alteration plan. According to figures presented by the board, the program will be financed by a bond issue of either \$24 or \$17.4 million dollars depending on whether work on Westmoreland Elementary is financed through the bond issue or by its present short-term note.

Terms of an \$8 1/2 million insurance policy carried by Lake Lehman School District will provide "full replacement value at current costs" of the recently destroyed Lake Elementary School. The district's school board members learned at a special meeting Tuesday evening. Coverage on the Lake school was given by Donald Ralston general adjuster for M.D. Casualty Co. at approximately \$720,000.

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