

EDITORIALS

Student initiatives deserve more respect, support

Remember the '60s? You know, that glorious decade when it is presumed American youth changed the direction of our society, for good or ill depending on your perspective. For sure, plenty of bad things came out of those times, the current confusion of celebrity and character, notoriety and heroism being perhaps the worst. But at least one very good thing grew from the student protests and civil rights marches — the belief that individuals can make a difference if they stand up for what they believe in. That principle has been tested lately, in an unlikely place, the schools.

First, there was the third grader at Lackawanna Trail who wanted her class to skip a visit to the circus because she believed animals are abused there. The spunky girl took around a petition, garnering 34 signatures before she was told to stop making a pest of herself. Administrators then tried to hide behind a rule that bans pencils in the playground to explain why she was stopped.

Then, at Dallas, an enterprising junior opposed to a scheduled donkey basketball game was told that if she would just check her beliefs at the door, the school would think about whether to hold a similar event next year. And that's the best thing that happened to Emily Mallick. Perhaps the worst was being greeted by "hee-haw" as she walked down the hallways, courtesy of fellow students who find it easier to ridicule other people's beliefs than to understand or even tolerate them.

There's nothing new, of course, in adverse reactions to fresh ideas. Resistance is a common response, and a few thoughtless jibes are certainly an improvement over lynchings and beatings. But it's unsettling the school administration didn't recognize the opportunity these students presented, not just to explore the merits of their positions, but to show the student body that personal initiative is greeted with dignity, not derision.

Mallick is to be commended for refusing to back down when offered a chance to debate the issue with donkey basketball promoters — next school year — if she would leave her protest signs home the night of the event. Since the game was cancelled due to inclement weather, we'll never know what reception she might have received.

We hope this episode doesn't mean that Dallas High School regards strong-willed, caring students more as an embarrassment than an asset, and that future bursts of initiative and compassion are greeted more warmly.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek

Last week — remember, this is March, 1999 — two intrepid adventurers probably did not succeed in flying (?) a balloon around the world, and ditched their multi-million dollar craft in the drink. The flight by Andy Elston and Colin Prescott, who are poster boys for people with too much money and time on their hands, was just the latest attempt to go non-stop around the globe in a balloon. The question is, why? When anyone with a few thousand bucks to blow can fly around the world in a couple of days, ensconced comfortably in a climate-controlled airplane, why do these loonies want to spend millions of dollars and two agonizing weeks in a cramped, cold gondola strung from a giant inflatable trash bag? I know the answer, first given by Sir Edmund Hillary in response to questions about why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest: "Because it is there." Well, Everest is still there, and they haven't made any higher mountains, so I can almost understand that one. Sailing around the world in a contraption that has been outdated for nearly 100 years . . . that I can't understand. Still, in the spirit of Sir Edmund, here are a few more meaningless challenges for the incurably adventurous:

- Sailing around the world. This is done all the time of course. But to be consistent, these fellows have to do it with nothing more than a sextant, like Magellan did. And they have to use those awkward old wooden boats. Sadly, there would be few restless natives to interrupt their silly journey.
- Climbing up Mt. Everest, then racing down on mountain bikes. There, that's a way to combine two pretty lame avocations in one swell foop.
- Driving a snowmobile across the Sahara. Oops, that one's almost been done; I saw some imbeciles racing snowmobiles on sand the other day on one of those "sports" programs that are used to fill the time between real games.
- Calculating the value of pi by hand. That will keep them busy for a while.

Well, you get the idea. That's it for now. I've got to go out and try to smack a little white ball into a hole 400 yards away, using a skinny stick with a hunk of steel on the end of it.

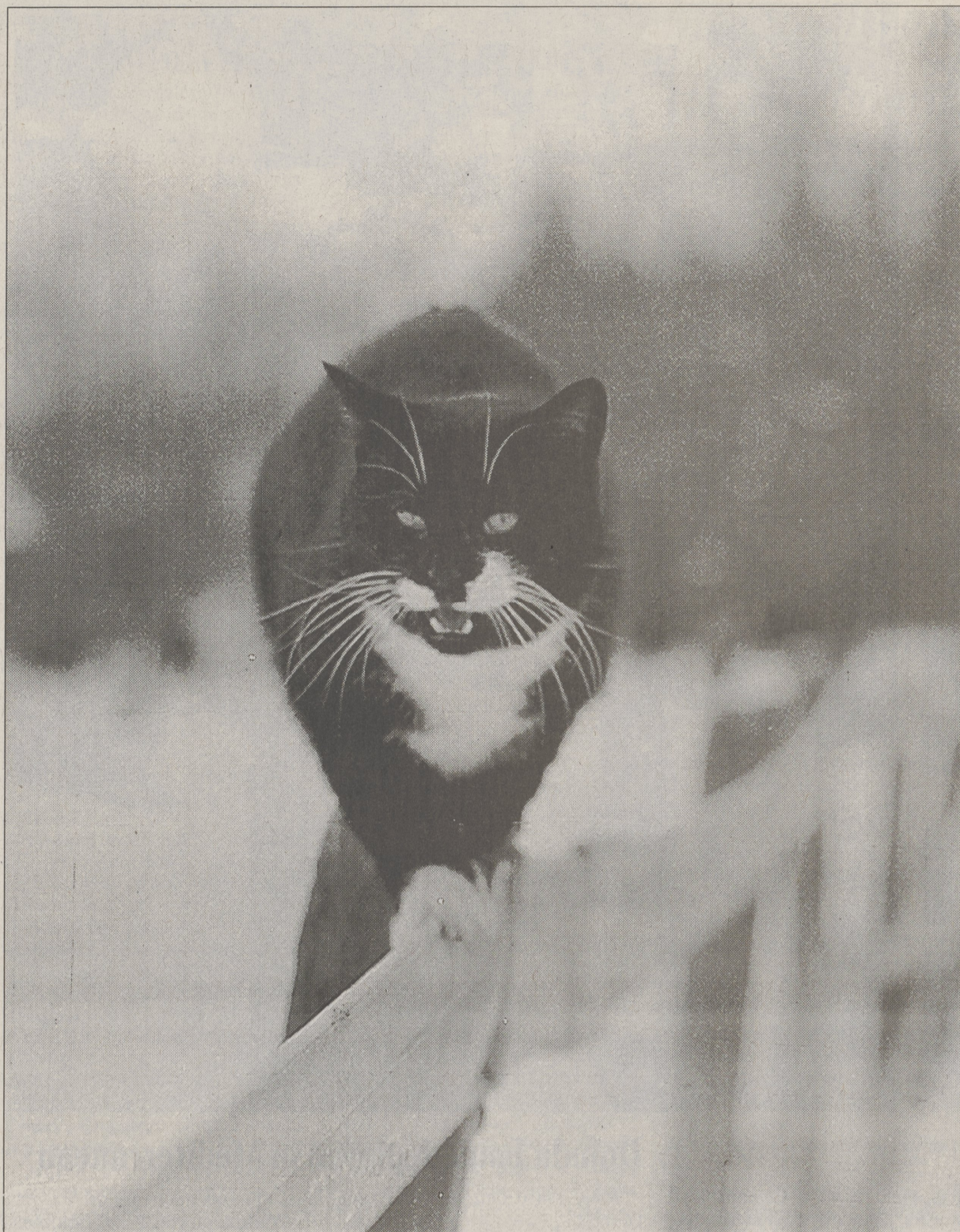
Do you agree? Disagree?

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Cat on a cold, wood fence. Photo by Monica Marzani.

Food 'n' fun

Jim Phillips

"If you look into the seeds of time and say which grains will grow and which will not, speak."
William Shakespeare

Couscous (pronounced Koos-Koos) is a pasta-like product that is made from durum semolina, the same wheat that makes great pasta. But instead of being cut and rolled into long strands, the semolina granules are rolled in salted water and coated with flour to form small pellets.

Couscous is a staple food of North Africa where it is served with many main dishes, much the same as potatoes are served in the United States. In Egypt it is sprinkled with sugar and nuts and served as a dessert. It can also be mixed with milk and honey to serve as a hearty start to your morning.

Library news

Nancy Kozemchak

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will become involved in a county-wide automation project to automate our checkout desk and card catalog. When completed, books and materials will be checked out by computers. Patrons will be issued new county wide library cards which can be used at any library in Luzerne County. The project should be completed by July. Until that time patrons should use their current library cards to check out materials at the library.

Along those lines, the library will be closed on Thursday, March 25, Friday, March 26 and Saturday, March 27. The library personnel will be barcoding the books

Funny name, great taste

While not technically a grain in and of itself, couscous is made from wheat, which as you are probably aware is one of the United States main commercial grain crops. Around the world, grains account for about 80 percent of all the calories consumed by humans. Unfortunately in our country more grains are fed to fatten beef cattle than to provide energy and nutrients directly to us.

Americans may feel they eat their share of grains but when compared to other countries our per capita grain consumption doesn't match up. Consequently, our health habits don't match up either. Of the thousands of grains that abound throughout the world, many of us have tried only a few different ones.

When it comes to couscous don't let the name stop you, believe me. The hardest thing to get used to about this grain is pronouncing its name. Once you master that, enjoying its unique texture and flavor will come naturally. Plain couscous is usually steamed over boiling water than mixed with any number of flavorings to complement the flavor profile of your meal.

I encourage you to give couscous a try. It really is an interesting and flavorful food that can complement almost any meal.

RAISIN COUSCOUS SALAD

Yield: 6-1 cup servings.

- Ingredients:
- 2 T. olive oil
 - 6 ea. green onions, sliced
 - 2 tsp. garlic, chopped
 - 10 oz. chicken stock
 - 2 oz. lemon juice
 - 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
 - 1/4 tsp. salt
 - 1/4 tsp. pepper
 - 6 oz. instantized couscous
 - 4 oz. raisins
 - 1/2 bunch parsley, chopped

Directions:
Heat oil in Dutch oven or large pot over medium heat. Add green onions and garlic, cook and stir 3-5 minutes. Add chicken stock, lemon juice, oregano, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil and turn off the heat. Add couscous, raisins and parsley. Stir and cover. Let stand five minutes.

Serve with grilled chicken or vegetables, or as a chilled salad with a fresh fruit side dish.

Library will close for work on automating card catalog

on these dates. We apologize for this inconvenience. Please contact other public libraries for reference questions. We thank you for your patience and cooperation during this time. The Slightly Used Bookstore in the lower level of the library will be open on Saturday, March 27 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for regular hours. The library will reopen to the public on Monday, March 29 and resume normal hours.

An announcement for the future: The 11th annual Luncheon With A Special Author will be held on Thursday, April 29, sponsored by the Friends of the Back Mountain Library. Reservations will begin at a later date.

The children's wing of the library has received four new books in the "Conserving Our World" series. "Protecting The Oceans" by John Baines tells oceans cover 70 percent of the earth's surface. People have learned to gather fish

from them and even to sail across them, but until recently, they remained a mystery.

"Farming and the Environment" by Mark Lambert tells how steep mountainsides have been terraced to grow crops, while grain, fruit and vegetables have been encouraged to flourish in the desert. Farmer's yield better crops today than they did.

"Conserving the Atmosphere" by John Baines tells us atmosphere provides us with the air we breathe, controls our weather conditions, and protects our planet from meteorites and harmful radiation. However, our air is polluted with smoke and fumes.

"The Spread of Deserts" by Ewan McLeish reminds us that deserts are a natural part of the world's environment. Plants, animals and people have gradually become adapted to it. They are swallowing up farmland and settlements.

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - Mar. 9, 1929

RED CROSS SEEKS SWEATERS FOR TB PATIENTS

The Wyoming Valley Chapter of American Red Cross has been requested to furnish sweaters for the men in the tuberculosis hospitals and Miss Margaret Elliott, secretary of the local chapter, has issued an appeal for volunteers who will knit the required quota. Sweaters are to be tuxedo style as the former slip-ons caused too much exertion on the part of the invalid men.

60 Years Ago - Mar. 11, 1939

'WORKERS' TESTIFY ABOUT FALSE HIGHWAY JOBS

A parade of witnesses filed before Luzerne County Grand Jury all day yesterday, relating how they secured work cards from the State Highway Dept. last fall and were paid without even reporting. It was the second day of the anxiously-awaited probe into District Attorney Leon Schwartz's charges that more than \$500,000 was distributed illegally as "election graft" in Luzerne County last year through the State Highway Dept.

Striking American Newspaper Guildmen and publishers of Wilkes-Barre's three suspended daily newspaper appeared to have reached another deadlock this week. No meetings have been held since the parleys were discontinued last Thursday. Spokesmen for the publishers said they had made their "best effort" in the last proposal they made to the Guild.

50 Years Ago - Mar. 11, 1949

FLOODLIGHTS ADDED TO BOROUGH STREETS

To promote greater protection for pedestrians, Dallas Borough has ordered the experimental installation of four mercury vapor flood lights on Main Street. The lights are similar to those used on the new Plymouth Bridge and will each be of 1125 candle-power as compared with the present four and six hundred candle-power lamps in use at the intersection of Main and Huntsville Roads.

You could get - Rolled veal roast 59¢ lb.; hams, whole, 59¢ lb.; chuck roast, 45¢ lb.; onions, 5 lbs., 19¢; apples, 3 lbs., 35¢; mild cheddar cheese, 49¢ lb.; Supreme Bread, 15¢.

40 Years Ago - Mar. 5, 1959

SEN. SORDONI GIVEN COMMUNITY AWARD

Back Mt. Protective Association's community award goes to former State Senator Andrew J. Sordoni of Harveys Lake and Wilkes-Barre. Unanimous approval was given recommendations of the award committee headed by Robert Laux. The committee felt that the constituents of Sen. Sordoni to the area over a period of years outweighed other claims as estimated in growth of the community and of manpower hours of employment afforded by his various organizations.

30 Years Ago - Mar. 13, 1969

ICE FISHING RESTRICTED ON HARVEYS LAKE

Harveys Lake Borough Council after receiving a ruling from the Dept. of Forest and Water and the Power Resources Board passed an ordinance last week setting forth regulations on ice fishing at the resort area. Ice fishermen will have to pay \$2 license fee to set up a shelter and each will bear a number visible from the nearest highway. An additional \$5 permit will also be issued.

Committee chairmen have been named and committees are being formed for the Fete Champetre to be held June 6, and 7, at Penn State Campus, Lehman. The Fete Champetre, a community project modeled after the rural holidays held in 18th Century London and Paris, will provide a showcase for the activities and projects of Back Mountain civic organizations.

20 Years Ago - Mar. 8, 1979

ZONING ORDINANCE DRAWS CALLS FOR REPEAL

The Jackson Township Zoning Ordinance adopted last month remains a controversial issue. Both American Asphalt Paving Co. and Concerned Taxpayers of Jackson Township are proceeding with legal action against the Board of Supervisors. Concerned Taxpayers voted to institute legal proceedings against the board to repeal the ordinance.

Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news, week after week?

A: Only in The Dallas Post, the Back Mountain's newspaper since 1889.