

**EDITORIALS**

**Voters should cast a wary eye at AWOL candidates**

So, what if they gave a candidates' night and nobody came? That's not exactly what happened in the Lake-Lehman School District last week, but it was close to that for voters in one region of the Lake-Lehman School District. The Lehman-Jackson PTA sponsored an evening event to let members of the public meet candidates for school board, and to hear their responses to a set of questions. This is a practice that has been used in America since the early days of the republic, and it's a good way for voters to make at least a passing acquaintance with the men and women who want to represent their interests in perhaps the most important elected local public office. But neither many members of the public nor half the candidates vying to represent Region 1 seemed to care.

Lake-Lehman's Region 1 will have two board seats filled from this year's elections, and there are four candidates. Two of them, Michelle Coombs and Robert Albee, took the time to come to the forum, answer questions and get to know the voters. The other two, incumbent Lois Kopcha and Jeffrey Pauley, apparently didn't think it important or necessary to attend.


On the other hand, Region 2 was fully represented, with all four candidates, Carl Kern, Angelo DeCesaris, Joe Shaughnessy and Charles Boytin in attendance. Joseph Kapitula is the lone candidate for the Region 3 seat, so his absence is unlikely to hurt his chance of being elected, but it would have been a nice gesture for him to have shown up.

There has been a lot said, and justly so, about the public's apathy toward elections in recent years. Potential voters make up all kinds of excuses for not getting to the polls — they're too busy, it doesn't matter who we elect, they're all crooks, etc., etc., etc. We have never accepted any of those complaints in the past, and won't start now.

But when candidates — the people who ask for our vote and our trust — can't take a couple of hours to present themselves for inspection, their action raises other questions. Both Kopcha and Pauley gave excuses for their absence, but we're hesitant to accept them, because it would seem logical that if they truly wanted to reach out to parents and other voters, they could have arranged their schedules differently. We hope the reason they don't feel compelled to seek votes from the larger public isn't because they are comfortable that a large bloc of voters, members and supporters of the Lake-Lehman Taxpayers Association, are sure to press their levers in the May 18 primary, since they are active members of that association.

In the end the voters will decide how much they expect of elected public officials. The slim audience at the event did not engender confidence that most voters will take any more interest in the election than these two candidates did in the forum.

**Publisher's notebook**



**Ron Bartizek**

As this year's primary election season nears an end, the rhetoric in campaign commercials becomes more heated... and more ludicrous, especially when the office at stake is judge. You may have noticed the symbol of our judicial system is the "scales of justice," a now quaint notion that the rights of the accused and of alleged victims are to be balanced, so as to reach the most reasonable and responsible verdict. But most of the ads on radio and television scoff at the idea that the accused have any rights. Just like the queen of *Alice in Wonderland*, the candidates vie to shout "off with their heads" the loudest, believing that people don't want justice, they want blood.

The ads I've heard are composed mainly of a laundry list of "accomplishments" such as number of convictions gained, number of "cases" tried, severity of sentencing and on and on. Only one I've happened to catch suggests that a judge's duty is to dispense justice in an even-handed manner, not to simply lock up every suspect and throw away the key. Another appeals to senior citizens — who happen to be most likely to go to the polls — by promising to throw the book at anyone who harms an older person. Anyone under the age of 60 apparently doesn't merit the same attention from this would-be judge.

Do these candidates realize how far their groveling to base desires for retribution is from the ideals of Truth, Justice and the American Way? Scratch that; of course they do, but they don't really care. What they care about is getting elected to a high-paying, cushy job for the next 10 years or so, and they figure a tough guy — or gal — image is just the ticket to get there. But maybe we should care about how fair-minded a judge will be if we, our spouse, child or best friend ends up before them on an erroneous charge. It happens, and if I'm ever in that spot, I'll hope to appear before someone who thinks about more than manipulating voters before election day with mean talk.



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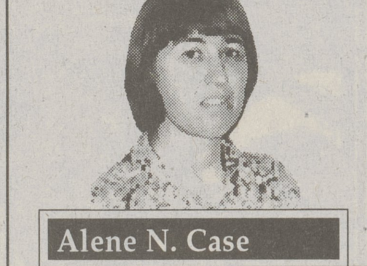
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It won't be long before these are hanging on front porches. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

**A Case for conservation**



Did you ever read a book that you just had to tell other people about before you finished it? I am reading such a book now. It is called *The Wilderness World of John Muir*, edited and annotated by Edwin Way Teale. It may seem strange that a person who considers herself both an ecologist and a conservation writer has never before sat down with the writings of one of the greatest ecologists and writers of all time. Actually, it seems strange to me, too, especially now that I see what I have been missing.

Another question all of us are asking lately is "Why do some abused or neglected children turn out to be murderers and others do OK?" Well, in Muir's case, his tyrannical father could not quell his natural curiosity or adventuresome spirit. He was born in Scotland in 1838 and his father routinely beat the children for the slightest infraction and, sometimes, for no infraction at all. In his book *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*, John Muir wrote about Saturday runs into the countryside with his brother and friends: "Indeed, we never cared about time until it began to get dark. Then we thought of home and the thrashing that awaited us. Late or early, the thrashing was sure.... But no punishment, however sure and severe, was of any avail against the attraction of the fields and woods.... How our young wondering eyes reveled in the sunny, breezy glory of the hills and the sky, every particle of us thrilling and tingling with the bees and glad birds and glad streams. Kings may be blessed; we were glorious, we were free...."

After Muir's father moved the family to Wisconsin when John

**The adventures of a young John Muir**

was 11, he worked on the family farm instead of attending school. He had a strict bedtime which he kept breaking so that he could read. He finally came up with a plan to go to bed on time to satisfy his father and to awaken early to work on his own projects. Often he was up by 1:00 a.m. carving, reading, or working on inventions. One of the most clever of those was an alarm clock/bed that set him on his feet at the appointed time.

At the age of 22, Muir took leave of his family and exhibited his inventions at the World Exposition in Chicago. Then, he moved to Madison and hung around the University of Wisconsin so much that they admitted him as a student. A paragraph sums up his education: "Although I was four years at the University, I did not take the regular course of studies, but instead picked out what I thought would be most useful to me, particularly chemistry, which opened a new world, and mathematics and physics, a little Greek and Latin, botany and geology. I was far from satisfied with what I learned, and should have stayed longer. Anyhow I wandered away on a glorious botanical and geological excursion, which has lasted nearly 50 years and is not yet completed, always happy and free, poor and rich, without thought of a diploma or of making a name, urged on and on through endless, inspiring, Godful beauty."

One of Muir's stops on his wanderings was Savannah, Georgia, shortly after the Civil War had ended. He was not comfortable sleeping outdoors (although he was penniless at that time) for fear of bands of marauders who made their living by robbing people. He surmised, correctly, that these robbers would not venture into a cemetery at night for fear of ghosts. So, he slept for almost a week in the Bonaventure cemetery. "Bonaventure is called

a graveyard, a town of the dead, but the few graves are powerless in such a depth of life. The rippling of living waters, the song of the birds, the joyous confidence of flowers, the calm, undisturbable grandeur of the Oaks, mark this place of graves as one of the Lord's most favored abodes of life and light." (from *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf*, published in 1916)

In the spring of 1868, John Muir finally arrived in the California wilderness that is so synonymous with his name (he helped preserve Yosemite and other parks and forests there and he founded the Sierra Club). "When I first saw this central garden, the most extensive and regular of all the bee pastures in the State, it seemed all one sheet of plant gold, hazy and vanishing in the distance, distinct as a new map along the foot-hills at my feet. Descending the eastern slopes of the Coast Range through beds of gilia and lupines, and around many a breezy hillock and bush-crowned headland, I at length waded out into the midst of it... Sauntering in any direction, hundreds of these happy sun-plants brushed against my feet at every step, and closed over them as if I were wading in liquid gold.... The great yellow days circled by uncounted, while I drifted toward the north, observing the countless forms of life thronging about me, lying down almost anywhere on the approach of night. And what glorious botanical beds I had! Oftentimes on awaking I would find several new species leaning over me and looking me full in the face, so that my studies would begin before rising." (from *The Mountains of California*, published in 1911)

Oh, that we could all be as observant and excited by our surroundings as John Muir! I'll race you to the library to get another book of his works!

**ONLY YESTERDAY**



**70 Years Ago - May 4, 1929 DALLAS SCHOOL OFFICIALS MEET ABOUT NEW SCHOOL**

In an effort to stimulate better harmony between the two school districts, directors of Dallas Township and Dallas Borough schools met Thursday in the new high school building to discuss common educational problems. Although nothing of note was accomplished, there was considerable discussion and presentation of facts and figures. Most noteworthy accomplishment of the joint session was the decision of both boards to go along with Kingston Township schools in the hiring of a part time music teacher.

**60 Years Ago - May 5, 1939 WELL DRILLED AT CENTER HILL ROAD**

A crew of workmen will begin drilling a deep well at Center Hill Road and Columbia Avenue, opposite the Shiber home this morning as the first step in Dallas Water Company's promised \$7,000 improvement program. Contract for the well was awarded this week to Cresswell Drilling Co. of Forty Fort. It is expected that the well will be about 300 feet deep and that it will take about a month to drill.

Transportation between Dallas and Wilkes-Barre was speeded up considerably this week by the change from street cars to buses. The fast 30-passenger vehicles travel on a 20-minute scheduled, giving alternate service to Pioneer Avenue and Main Street in Shavertown and cuts 10 minutes from the old street car schedule.

**50 Years Ago - May 6, 1949 24TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED AT ST. PAUL'S**

On Sunday morning, members of St. Paul's Lutheran will celebrate the 24th anniversary of the church. A large attendance is expected as the day will also mark the burning of the first and second mortgages on the building. The canceled mortgage will be presented for destruction by an officer of the church.

You could get - Roasting chickens 49¢ lb.; rib roast, 53¢ lb.; new cabbage, 5¢ lb.; Supreme Bread, 1g. loaf 13¢; Nabisco Graham Crackers, 1 lb. pkg. 29¢; Hudson paper towels, roll 15¢.

**40 Years Ago - April 30, 1959 BEN FRANKLIN STORE TO OPEN AT NEW LOCATION**

Dallas Ben Franklin Store will move to new quarters in what was once Dallas Hardware Store, opening there with any kind of luck, the last week in May. With the move to new quarters, occupying a 40 x 115 foot floor space with plenty storage room in the basement and on the second floor, Williams will be able to set up attractive displays, relieve present crowded conditions of aisles and counters and handle a wider selection to greater advantage. The building on Church St. was vacated by Back Mountain Lumber Co. February 15.

Now playing at Himmler Theater, "Separate Tables" with Rita Hayworth and David Niven.

**30 Years Ago - May 8, 1969 CHASE BRIDGE TO BE REPLACED**

Residents of Church Road in Trucksville will be heartened to learn that the dilapidated bridge in Chase will soon be replaced. The structure built in 1913 has been closed to truck traffic for nearly two years necessitating the rerouting of huge asphalt-carrying trucks over precipitous Church Road. Plans for the \$70,000 structure have been Ok'd by the Power and Water Resources Board and must be approved next by the Department of Highways.

**20 Years Ago - May 3, 1979 SALON DESTROYED BY SUSPICIOUS FIRE**

State Fire Marshal Ron Ramage is investigating the strong possibility of arson in the fire which completely destroyed Mr. Pat's Beauty Salon in Dallas. Dallas Volunteer Firemen upon entering the building found 34 gallons of gasoline in plastic windshield washer containers. Asst. Fire Chief James B. Davies III said that the firemen were fortunate that the gasoline was in plastic bottles which melted thus avoiding a potential bomb which could have caused a major explosion.

**Tell the Back Mountain about your good works?**

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