

**EDITORIALS**

# Don't let flawed system keep you from the polls

Voters will go to the polls Tuesday to cast their ballots in a variety of local and county primary elections. The ability to elect those who will represent our interests is surely the most precious of our rights as citizens of the world's longest-lasting democratic society, and the one from which nearly all of our other rights and privileges spring. While this is hardly a perfect system, it is still the one most open to change and correction at the will of the people, not the ambitions of an iron-fisted dictator or the greed of an elite class.

This does not mean that all shades of human character aren't evident in our politics, and sometimes one or the other gains too much of a foothold. When that has happened in the past, it has eventually been turned around by the election of government leaders who promise a return to our core values, and who deliver. That is still possible, but seems to become less likely with each passing election cycle, and we will have no one to blame but ourselves if we squander this precious.

Think about it: In the presidential election of 1996, Bill Clinton was re-elected by barely more than a fourth of the people who were eligible to vote, since he won a slim majority of slightly more than half of all potential voters. The turnout for local elections is often even lower, although it varies tremendously from town to town.

"Voter apathy" is the name often assigned to this dangerous condition, and individual irresponsibility is a key element. But there also are institutional factors that conspire to hurt both the turnout at the polls and people's confidence in elected government. Two of the most serious will be on display Tuesday — cross filing and a dearth of candidates.

Allowing candidates to appear on both party ballots defeats the basic purpose of primary elections, which is to select the most popular person from each party. When a cross-filed candidate wins both sides, the election is over, except for formalities in November. This deprives the electorate of time to hear from and choose between two leading candidates to represent them. This practice is not allowed in most states, and should be abolished in Pennsylvania.

The lack of candidates is equally disturbing, along with the inability of anyone with fresh ideas to gain a foothold in either party, at least at the county level. While there are a good number of contestants for some county offices, proposals for real change are few and far between, and are virtually nonexistent among the endorsed candidates. Instead, we will choose from many of the same tired faces, trying to edge their way into positions of influence by speaking platitudes and planning little in the way of improvement other than a shift of who benefits from the courthouse patronage system. At the local level, at least there are some people running because they believe in doing things differently and better in our towns and schools.

These two concerns may be related. If candidates could not cross file, the parties might have to work harder to come up with candidates who would have a chance at winning the general election, and issues that could attract voters' attention. Wouldn't it be a joy to have candidates for county commissioner, for example, who dared speak openly about the need for professional management, or who would tell the truth about the horrendous amounts of money that have been poured into projects like the bloated but inefficient 911 program.

Despite all the negatives, though, we urge everyone who can make it to go to the polls Tuesday. The choices may be unappetizing for now, but a healthy turnout may inspire new entries the next time around. At the very least, you will be able to take satisfaction in having upheld your end of the bargain that has sustained our society for more than 200 years.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Are you insecure about your child's reading skills? Do you worry that little Johnny or Janie isn't keeping up with high-achieving classmates. Just how much do you care about your child, anyway? The sellers of quick-fix audio and video tape learning programs hope you care at least \$39.95, often much more, that your child isn't left in the dust when it comes to basic skills. Even better, they Guarantee!! a letter grade improvement if you'll just spend an hour a week with your child and their program, or Your Money Back.

Well, old P.T. Barnum is alive and living quite well at the expense of the American people, or so it would seem given the apparent success of these schemes. Did you notice that in order to get your dough back, you have to buy their program, and spend an hour a day with the television off working with your child. I'd hazard a guess that if we all spent an extra hour a week on math or reading with our kids, they'd do better, without any assistance from these games.

Then there's the radio ad I heard the other day for Hooked on Phonics. At the end, the announcer said to "call 1-800-phonics; that's 1-800-p-h-o-n-i-c-s. It may be wonder, though, why he didn't say to call 1-800-f-o-n-i-c-s, or even 1-800-f-o-n-i-x. Maybe the game's not the secret, after all.

Well, yule haf two exkuse mee now, I haf to go reed sum copee.



Under the blooming old apple tree. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## Library news



The 53rd annual Back Mountain Memorial Millennium Auction will be held July 8 through July 11. A kick-off dinner will be held Monday, June 7 at Yesterday's Restaurant in Shavertown. The public is invited to enjoy the cash bar cocktails at 6 p.m. and the dinner at 7 p.m.

Karen Boback, Ernie Ashbridge and Peggy Harvey have chosen a select group of antiques and new goods items to be auctioned off that night. The cost of the dinner is \$25 per person payable at the library with your reservation. This dinner is always fun and the proceeds are used as seed money for the annual auction. Seating is limited so call the library soon.

Plans have also been started for a memorial garden in memory of Nancy Kozemchak, the library's

## Auction kickoff dinner set for June 7 at Yesterday's

office manager and long time employee, who died on April 10th. The garden will be located at the front of the building. Persons interested in making a donation toward this project are asked to contact Martha Butler, library director.



NANCY KOZEMCHAK

In the month of April there were 7,274 books borrowed, 165 new books added, and 124 new borrowers.

During National Library Week there was a striking display in Beseker's window on Main Street. Mary Daley's father created the large standing figures of the book characters—Madeline, Arthur, and Cat in the Hat.

The Homework Club from Meadowcrest toured the library April 13th.

Voting machines will be at the

library in the basement book store on May 18th. Please remember to vote.

The summer reading program at the library has a new and exciting format. The reading groups will be age and ability appropriate and will include special activities. Scheduled are the following: "Route for Reading" children pre-school through 6th grade enjoy summer reading along with three special events from June through August 6th. "The Adventurer's Club" six to eight year olds will meet every Tuesday for 6 weeks reviewing reading skills and introducing new ones through games, stories, writing, and more. "Donuts & Discussion" for ages 9 through 12, will meet every two weeks to read, talk, and eat doughnuts.

Registration is required for these programs and is June 7-12th. Space is limited so call the children's librarian early at 675-1182.

## New items on shelves at BMT library

The Back Mountain Memorial Library, 96 Huntsville Road, Dallas, announces the addition of the following books to their collection:

### FICTION

- "I Thee Wed" by Amanda Quick
- "A New Song" by Jan Karon
- "We'll Meet Again" by Mary Higgins Clark
- "The Emperor's General" by James H. Webb
- "Candles on Bay Street" by K.C. McKinnon
- "Ashes to Ashes" by Tami Hoag
- "The Pilot's Wife, by Anita Shreve
- "Crowfoot Ridge" by Ann Brandt
- "The Law of Similar" by Chris Bohjalian
- "Bittersweet" by Danielle Steel
- "Conspiracy in Death" by J.D. Robb
- "A Certain Smile" by Judith Michael
- "East of the Mountains" by David Guterson
- "While I Was Gone" by Sue Miller

### YOUNG ADULT

- "Cecil in Space" by Sid Hite

### LARGE PRINT

- "The Martyr's Chapel" by D.J. Delfis
- "Edge of Dawn" by Esther Loewen Vogt
- "Secrets of the heart" by Al Lacy
- "Justifiable Means" by Terri Blackstock
- "Whatever Tomorrow Brings" by Lori Wick

- "The Breast Cancer Prevention Diet" by Dr. Bob Arnot
- "Say Please, Say Thank You" by Donald W. McCullough
- "A Time to Live" by Robert Arnold Raines
- "Jeanne Calment: From Van Gogh's Time to Ours, 122 Extraordinary Years" by Michel Allard
- "Just Jackie" by Edward Klein
- "Elegy for Iris" by John Bayley

### NON-FICTION

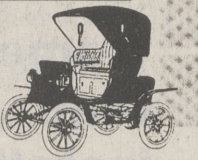
- "Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800-1915" by Sandra L. Myres
- MYSTERY
- "Mariner's Compass" by Earlene Fowler
- "Dar River Legacy" by B.J. Hoff
- "Pride and Predator" by Sally S. Wright
- "A Haunting Refrain" by Patricia H. Rushford
- "Kissed a Sad Goodbye" by Deborah Crombie
- "Death of an Addict" by M.C. Beaton
- "Movie Cat" by Garrison Allen

### REFERENCE

- "The DK Illustrated Oxford Dictionary"
- BIOGRAPHIES
- "American Inventors of the 20th Century" by Laura S. Jeffrey

- "Women Inventors" by Linda Jacobs Altman
- "Of Ice and Men" by Bruce Dowbiggin
- AUDIO TAPES
- "Four Corners of Night" by Craig Holden
- "Playing for Keeps" by David Halberstam
- "The Law of Similar" by Chris Bohjalian
- "A Sight for Sore Eyes" by Ruth Rendell
- "Dave Barry Turns 50" by Dave Barry
- "Amy and Isabelle" by Elizabeth Strout
- "Charlotte Gray" by Sebastian Faulks
- "Traveling Mercies" by Anne Lamott
- "Mistaken Identity" by Lisa Scottoline
- "Night Magic" by Tom Tryon
- "River's End" by Nora Roberts
- "Midwives" by Chris Bohjalian
- "Found Money" by James Grippando
- "The Greatest Generation" by Tom Brokaw
- "The Select" by F. Paul Wilson
- "A Sudden Change of Heart" by Barbara Taylor Bradford
- "Snow Falling on Cedars" by David Guterson
- "Memoirs of a Geisha" by Arthur Golden

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - May 11, 1929

### PEDESTRIANS MUST USE SIDEWALKS IN BOROUGH

Dallas Borough Council met Tuesday evening with a full quorum. Bills to amount of \$750.16 were paid, Del DeWolfe was appointed special policeman in conjunction with his duties with the Cemetery Association. Chief Avery was instructed to break up the practice of pedestrians using the roadway on Lake Street instead of the sidewalks.

60 Years Ago - May 12, 1939

### THE LUZERNE POST MAKES ITS DEBUT

Published by Dallas Post Inc., a new weekly newspaper The Luzerne Post will make its bow to the people of Luzerne, Swoyersville, Pringle and Courtdale today. This latest expansion move by Dallas Post emphasizes the bond of interest between Luzerne, western gateway to Wyoming Valley and Dallas, center of Luzerne County's most progressive rural suburban area. The new weekly is born in The Post's 50th Anniversary year.

50 Years Ago - May 13, 1949

### KINGSTON TWP. SCHOOL BUDGET AT \$175,708

At a special meeting of Kingston Township School Board Monday evening, a tentative budget for the year was adopted in the amount of \$175,708.44. The proposed budget will be on file in the office of the High School principal by anyone interested, after which it will be permanently adopted. James Lacy of Lacy, Atherton and Davis registered architects revised plans for the proposed cafeteria and modernized home economics department.

A permanent blue and gold glass plaque bearing the inscription "In memory of those who so nobly fought in World War II" was placed on the Dallas Borough Honor Roll by employees of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. The plaque was purchased by Dallas Borough Council who took over maintenance of the Honor Roll some months ago after the agencies that let it fall into neglect.

40 Years Ago - May 7, 1959

### SALES TAX TAKES EFFECT ON PHONE BILLS

Application of the 3 1/2% Pennsylvania state sales tax effective April 16, to telephone bills has caused many subscribers to call Commonwealth Telephone Co. and raise questions in connection with their billing according to J.N. Landis, District Manager. The new 3 1/2% sales tax signed by Governor Lawrence on April 16 is in addition to the present 10% federal excise tax which has been applicable theretofore. Now subscribers pay 3 1/2% not only on their local exchange but also on such items as installation charges, move charges, colored telephone charges and toll calls within the state of Pennsylvania.

30 Years Ago - May 15, 1969

### CAMPAIGN RAISES FUNDS FOR HANDICAPPED VAN

A new campaign has been kicked off in the Back Mountain Area for the purpose of purchasing mobile equipment for Fred Hennebaul. The community has always supported any effort to help Fred since he was paralyzed as a result of an injury suffered in 1962 while an athlete in high school. Goal of many organizations in the Back Mountain is to get Fred an economy-size van truck with side windows and a side entrance automatic ramp.

Twenty seven Back Mountain community organizations will participate in the first annual Fete Champetre, Bernard Banks program chairman has announced. Festival planned for June 6 and 7 will be held on the Hayfield Estate in Lehman and will boast nearly 50 exhibits and performances by area civic groups.

20 Years Ago - May 10, 1979

### LL BUDGET CALLS FOR 8 MILL TAX INCREASE

Lake-Lehman School Directors adopted a tentative 1979/80 budget Tuesday evening which calls for a tax increase of eight mills. The \$4,861,661 budget brings the district proposed tax millage to 91 and provides for other taxation in the form of a \$10 per capita tax, 1/2% earned income tax, 1% real estate transfer tax, 10% occupational privilege tax and \$10 mechanical devices tax.

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## Tell the Back Mountain about your good works?

The Dallas Post will gladly publish columns about Back Mountain organizations and their activities. To get the word out about your group, send The Post a column of up to 700 words, along with your name, address and a daytime phone number for verification. Mail it to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612, or drop it off at our office at 45 Main Road, Dallas (across from Offset Paperback).