

## EDITORIALS

## Keeping farms vital is important to all of us

America is at a crossroads on the question of what to do about the farms that produce our food. It is, some would say, a happy problem, since crop yields and production of nearly everything else are at record levels. The dark lining to this silver cloud, though, is the decline of family farms, the plots of land nurtured by generations of farmers who bought feed and supplies in their hometowns and sold their meat, milk and produce at local markets.

Those days are long gone, and in many ways the new age has been good for consumers. We can now get fresh fruits and vegetables all year long, shipped from southern states and even other nations with warmer climates. Each acre of land grows more corn or wheat, and each cow produces more milk, often through the application of chemical agents that boost production, a step that is easier to take by well-financed "factory" farms run by large corporations. Meanwhile, prices paid to farmers have not kept pace with increased costs, with the practical effect that family farms must work harder keep up, and often do not. No one knows this better than local dairy farmers, who struggle to make ends meet while providing nutrients that are vital to good health.

Advocates of laissez-faire capitalism think this is all a good thing, that "the market" is the best judge of what's best for us. But the market is notoriously shortsighted, and is concerned entirely with money. While economics might dictate that family farms be subdivided into condominiums this year, a decade from now we might think otherwise, but then it would be too late to go back.

That's why it makes sense for society as a whole to take modest steps that safeguard small local farms, which do not have access to the financial opportunities available to large corporate operations. Setting a reasonable floor for milk and other food prices is one small way we can maintain the vitality of Back Mountain farms, and the benefits they provide.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



I have reached a point in life from which I'm allowed to look back to the old days (or "back in the day," to use the modern parlance) and wax poetic about how things have changed. It's usually best to do this about mundane activities that "kids today" take for granted, like pumping your own gas. This may seem unremarkable, but there once was a time when you pulled into the gas station, which was not a convenience store, and someone came out in the pouring rain to pump your gas. If he (never she) was a go-getter, he would ask to check the oil and other fluids under the hood, in hopes of earning a nickel commission if you happened to be a quart low. (More avaricious attendants would try to sell you a quart even when you didn't need it!) In times even before my memory, it wasn't unusual for the attendant to check the air in the tires, and fill them as needed.

So, what happened? I can finger a couple of reasons why the full-service gas station is now as rare as the spotted owl. For one thing, cars are much less likely to need oil between changes than they were in those days, and tires, which no longer have tubes inside them, don't lose air very quickly. The air was free, but the oil was a source of profit for station operators, who made only pennies on each gallon of gas, but perhaps a quarter on a single quart of oil. Then, there's King's. No, not the college in Wilkes-Barre, the original self-service chain discount store. King's, which went out of business before Wal-Mart moved into Texas, pioneered the wide selection store in which customers waited on themselves. As far as I'm concerned, it's been downhill ever since.

But there are upsides to our becoming slaves to the store owners. We don't have to wait for a clerk to notice the money bulging in our pockets before she'll come wait on us, and we aren't confronted with commission-hungry salespeople every time we want to pick up a pair of socks at clearance prices.

More important to the American psyche, we're all equals at the gas pump. While putting his last \$3 into the tank of a rusted '87 Taurus, a high school kid can stand next to a bank president filling the tank of his new Mercedes coupe, or a Junior League trophy wife topping off her Lincoln Navigator. No class distinctions here. When they're done, they can take their pick of a Gatorade or a cappuccino, and each jump back into the driver's seat with the faint aroma of hydrocarbons on their hands. What a country!

## Your news is welcome

The Dallas Post welcomes submissions about Back Mountain people and events. In order to plan each issue, we must adhere to self-imposed deadlines, as well as those of our printer. To have the greatest likelihood of publication, items should be received at our office by 4 p.m. the Friday prior to each issue. Items will be accepted until 4 p.m. Mondays, although much of the paper is already assembled by that time. Send or bring items to: The Dallas Post, 607 Main Road, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Our normal business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. A deposit box is located at the front of the building for after-hours submissions.

## The Dallas Post

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Seasonal rental, water vu, available until April. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## LETTERS

### California student seeks info about area

Editor:

I am in the fifth grade at Neil Halley School in Manteca, California. I have adopted your state as a class project. I will be doing a report and making a display about Pennsylvania. In May my class will be having a state's fair. I will display and show every thing that I have gotten and learned about your state to my whole

school.

It would be helpful to me if you could ask your readers to send me postcards of your state, maps, brochures, statistics, sports teams and any other information and iteams your readers feel would be helpful.

I hope your readers will help me with my project. I'm looking forward to hearing from them,

and I promise to send thank you to them for helping me. I am excited about learning about your state.

Thank you from California.

Jessica Mendoza  
Mr. Rumble Class  
Neil Halley School  
849 Northgate Drive  
Manteca, CA 95336

### The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

The Back Mountain, the Abingtons in Lackawanna County, the Pocono Mountains, Mountaintop in Luzerne County and other places across Northeastern Pennsylvania should be aware of a resource manual published by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. This 79 page report outlines county projects and initiatives that call for planning, land use, visioning and other sustainable development functions. In Northeastern Pennsylvania, the report points out the 20/20 visioning project in Monroe County and the visioning project in Schuylkill County. However, other county projects and initiatives are suggested in Cambria, Chester, Dauphin, Erie, Lancaster, Lycoming, Mercer, Union and York.

There are other projects which have been initiated dealing with visioning such as those in Wyoming Valley, Greater Hazleton, Scranton-Lackawanna, Pike, and a region-wide NEPA 2000 visioning project completed three years ago by the Economic Development Council of Northeastern

### Help available to build 'sustainable communities'

Pennsylvania (EDCNP). The report defines a sustainable community as "not one singular type of a sustainable community, these can be urban, rural, or suburban - but rather they often share common traits. Generally, these communities are healthy, livable, economically viable, promote equity, and do not place excessive demands on infrastructure and the environment."

The County Commissioners Association has a Sustainable Communities Task Force. The manual is designed to provide an overview of specific county efforts in the area of sustainable communities and sustainable development concepts as well as information on individual counties and intergovernmental services.

For example, in Northeastern Pennsylvania, the report points to Monroe County, a land area of 607 square miles with the county seat of Stroudsburg. Twenty local governments exist in that county. Its 1990 population was 95,709 and a variety of sustainable community projects exist, such as planning for growth and land use, infrastructure funding, multi-municipal planning, open space preservation, tourism/economic development partnerships, farmland preservation, quality of life/sustainable development and heritage resources preservation. A

county comprehensive plan was prepared in 1981, but a major effort is underway, called 20/20 visioning, which incorporates a variety of activities designed to help guide the county into the 21st Century. Monroe County is the second fastest growing county in Pennsylvania with the adjoining county of Pike being first. It should be noted that Monroe County voters recently approved a \$25 million bond issue for open space preservation, the first such effort in Northeastern Pennsylvania's history.

Other activities across Pennsylvania which relate to sustainable development include 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania which is inclusive of eight (8) statewide organizations joining together to promote land use and growth management, and legislative bills introduced by Senator Jim Gerlach as Senate Bill 270 and House member David Steil, who has introduced House Bills 1613, 1614 and 1615.

For further information, contact the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, Pennsylvania 18640.

Howard Grossman is executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

## LEGISLATORS' DIRECTORY

### Federal Officials

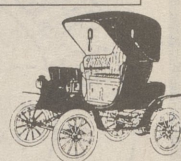
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ONLY  
YESTERDAY



### 70 Years Ago - Nov. 30, 1929 COVERED BRIDGE LOST TO HIGHWAY EXPANSION

One of the oldest landmarks in this section will fall before the advance of progress this spring when the State Highway Department begins work on the new bridge across Bowman's Creek near Noxen and not far from where the covered bridge now stands. The old covered bridge is one of the few remaining structures of its type to be found in Pennsylvania.

### 60 Years Ago - Dec. 1, 1939 QUICK ACTION STOPS SCARLET FEVER OUTBREAK

A threatened epidemic of scarlet fever at Dallas Township schools was checked effectively this week when health authorities, swinging into action after five cases had been reported in the township took 600 cultures and placed 16 detected carriers under observation. John Yaple, health officer of District 18 which includes this section, promised constant vigilance to prevent another outbreak but he expressed the opinion that any danger of a spread of the disease had already been checked. No other cases have been reported anywhere else in his district.

### 50 Years Ago - Dec. 2, 1949 PHONE RATES TO GO UP 30%

Telephone subscribers in the Back Mountain Area will receive a 30% increase in their rates for local service effective Feb. 1. A new rate schedule for all of the telephone companies controlled by Sordoni interests was filed yesterday with the Public Utility Commission in Harrisburg. Harold G. Payne, general manager said the increase is necessary to meet an automatic increase of \$120,000 a year in telephone workers' wages brought about by the Government's 75 cents per hour minimum wage law which will take effect on January 25.

### 40 Years Ago - Dec. 3, 1959 TRAFFIC LIGHT ADDED TO RT. 309 AT MAIN ST.

Secretary of Highways, Park H. Martin has authorized installation of traffic lights at the intersection of U.S. Route 309, Lower Main Street and Fernbrook Road, Dallas Township opposite Forty Fort Dairy and the Linear Inc. plant. Borough and township officials were notified that semi-activated type traffic signal controls are to be installed. With this kind of control the light will remain green for traffic on U.S. 309 until a vehicle crosses one of the treads in the other roadways.

You could get - Center cut pork chops or roast, 69¢ lb.; bananas, 9¢ lb.; Virginia Lee pumpkin pies, 49¢ ea.; Hunts tomato sauce, 2-15 oz. cans 29¢; Gerber's Baby Foods, strained, 10 jars, 99¢.

### 30 Years Ago - Dec. 4, 1969 VALLEY PAPERBACK PREPARES TO OPEN

The old Linear plant on Route 309 in Fernbrook is being scrubbed from the top of its high water tower to its new 5-inch thick concrete floor in preparation for printing operations which will commence early in January. Valley Paperback controller Robert Fritz announced recently. In addition to the thorough clearing the plant is receiving the executive notes that lunchroom renovations and extensive office re-decorations are being undertaken by the firm and that new equipment is being installed which will permit the employment of 150 persons by the end of March and 250 persons in one year's time.

### 20 Years Ago - Nov. 29, 1979 BOND SALE TO ADD FAIR LAND GOES SLOWLY

Alan Landis, chairman of Fall Fair Association fund drive reported that the sale of debenture bonds for the purchasing an additional 25 acres of land adjoining the property on which the medical center is located, is progressing slowly. According to Landis, members of the organizations affiliated with the Fall Fair have their cards but to date only one or two persons have turned in reports totaling approximately \$2,000.