

## EDITORIALS

Yes, Virginia,  
there is a Santa Claus

The *New York Sun* was started in 1833 by Benjamin H. Day, then just 23. The publication - which became one of the great newspapers in America - was the first New York "penny paper." The *Sun* ceased publication in 1950, but every Christmas its memory is revived by an editorial printed on Sept. 21, 1897. Virginia O'Hanlon, a New York City youngster, wrote this letter.

Dear Editor: I'm 8 years old. Some of my friends say there is no Santa Claus.

'Papa says. "If you see it in *The Sun*, it's so.' Please tell me the truth. Is there a Santa Claus?"

Virginia O'Hanlon  
115 W. 95th St.

The letter wound up on the desk of Francis Pharacellus Church, an assistant editor of *The Sun*. A more hardened person might have thrown it away, but Church felt differently.

He wrote this reply.

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.

"Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith, then no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world, would be extinguished.

"Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?"

"Nobody sees Santa Claus. But that is not a sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering in the unseen world which not the strongest man, not even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond.

"Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now Virginia, may ten times ten thousand years, from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



President Bill Clinton said recently that America should set as a priority closing the "Digital Divide." I don't know about you, but that was the first time I was aware of such a problem. Actually, I wondered if he wasn't maybe slipping into dementia, and had watched one too many Ronald Reagan western movies, with dialogue like this: "Hank, we need to split up 'til we shake these lawmen. I'll meet ya Tuesday in the Digital Divide." Or, maybe that was where the Gates party was lost in a blizzard while trying to make their way to Seattle.

But Clinton wasn't talking about cowboys and Indians, instead he wanted to be sure we all knew that everyone in America didn't yet have a Pentium III in the rec room, and that he *really* cares about those who don't. I've said before that I once would have been considered a liberal, but ideas like this one are passing me by. I realize that as a middle-aged dinosaur from the age of newspapers I don't stand a chance of becoming a billionaire by the age of 30. Heck, I don't even have the chance to be 30, but that's not because my computer's not fast enough.

Bill's plan is to provide equal access to the Internet, so in the 21st century everyone can be so rich they'll have trouble getting a plumber, since it's hard to see how spending six hour a day on ebay will help that trade. You see, it's easier for Bill to tout a pie-in-the-sky program like this than to support programs that really might make a difference in people's lives, and — this may be a foreign concept — *decide for themselves* if they want the Information Superhighway running through their homes. It's true that minorities and poor people have less access to the Internet. It's also true that the terminally lazy or stupid won't get anything out of it even if you force it on them, and I don't think we should all have to pay for them to play video games all day.

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A traditional Christmas decoration, in a fresh color. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

The economic  
viewpoint

Howard Grossman

The future of geographic places in Northeastern Pennsylvania such as the Back Mountain is bright and optimistic. Public/private sector partnerships represent an important ingredient to the overall economic growth of these places.

When Census 2000 occurs, beginning April 1, 2000, a telling point will be made. Continuing growth of areas such as the Back Mountain will be demonstrated with new population figures. growth of the commercial sector through private sector investments will be an important ingredient, and community development activities will be a continuing part of the area's ability to be economically and quality of life competitive. Community development funding occurs in the Back Mountain through cooperative partnering with the Office of Com-

## Cooperate to make region's future brighter

munity Development of Luzerne County and funding being provided for a variety of key community projects.

In the Back Mountain, the area has seen the development of community organizations, such as the Back Mountain Citizens Council. Serving for a number of years, the Citizens Council disbanded but left behind the Back Mountain Regional Land Trust which provides tremendous capability for land preservation and conservation with a staff director and board looking at a variety of projects important to community life.

The Back Mountain Business and Professional Association, the Dallas Area and Lake-Lehman School Districts, the Dallas Area Municipal Authority, and the various local governments make up the governmental framework for the improvement of community life in the 21st century. Added to this is the work of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry; utility companies such as UGI, Commonwealth Telephone Company, the United Water Company and others which have the ability to be of significant importance to the future of the Back Mountain. Several industries contribute to the life of the

Back Mountain, such as Encon; civic associations provide an opportunity for neighborhood development and connections between Greater Wilkes-Barre and the Back Mountain through projects such as the Trails Program and other activities represent a great future. Citizens have joined together to form a Back Mountain Recreation group, looking at a major recreational facility to serve the Back Mountain, similar to what occurred 25 years ago when there existed the Back Mountain Recreation Council.

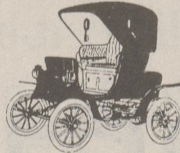
What would be helpful and desirable, as is the case in other parts of Northeastern Pennsylvania, is long-range planning. Each municipality defined as a Back Mountain community should join together with its neighbor to create a Council of Governments or, at the very least, a loose confederation of joint planning to enable the Back Mountain to craft a great opportunity for the future with a substantive planning process designed to improve how and in what manner future development may take place. Back Mountain Tomorrow should incorporate the best which planning can provide, looking at the potential which exists to expand the future of the

area. As new development occurs along Route 309, special attention needs to be given to transportation, traffic movement, and modern planning and zoning techniques.

Several years ago through the cooperation of the Back Mountain Citizens Council, planning seminars were held designed to train municipal planning commissioners, zoning hearing board members, and others interested in this topic. This process should be reinstated on an annual basis to enable the best training and educational programs to occur in the Back Mountain.

Leadership should occur through the involvement of elected officials, private sector partners, as well as members of the non-profit sector. Public/private sector partnerships represent a strong response to the needs which are likely to arise over the next several years as growth continues in the new millennium toward shaping a creative process which might be best termed Back Mountain Tomorrow.

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

ONLY  
YESTERDAY

70 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1929

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE  
OPENS DALLAS TWP. OFFICE

Robert Knorr of Dallas Township has opened a new office opposite Fernbrook Park, where he will attend to his various duties as justice of the peace of the township. The new office is centrally located and will be a great help in the pursuance of his legal duties.

Now playing at Himmler Theatre, "Bride of San Louis Rey" with Raquel Torres.

60 Years Ago - Dec. 22, 1939  
HIGHWAY DEPT. PROMISES  
EFFICIENT SNOW REMOVAL

A flood of complaints provoked by the delay of State Highway Dept. crews in clearing roads in the Dallas area after last week's snowfall brought assurance yesterday from a source close to high-

way officials that there will be no repetition of last week's delay during the rest of the winter. The Post's informant explained that the sudden snowfall followed by treacherous sleet caught the highway dept. without adequate equipment and manpower to cope with the situation and as a result some sections were neglected. Precautions taken in the last week will assure prompt clearance and ashing of highways.

pt. can, 69¢; celery, lg. stalk, 19¢; mixed nuts, 43¢ lb.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 23, 1959  
BURN VICTIM WILL SPEND  
HOLIDAYS AT HOME

Robert Broody, son of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Broody will be home with his wife and children for Christmas, the first time he has been out of the Veterans Hospital since his terrible injuries almost two years ago when exploding gasoline turned him into a human torch. Robert will be taken by ambulance to the home of his wife's parents where he will spend five days before returning to the hospital for further treatment.

50 Years Ago - Dec. 23, 1949  
O'MALIA'S LAUNDRY PLANS  
TO EXPAND SERVICES

O'Malia's Laundry is embarking on a \$100,000 plant expansion program which will more than double its floor space and permit the addition of two new services, fur storage and dry-cleaning. O'Malia's Laundry has experienced rapid growth since construction in 1937 of its new plant on the Harveys Lake Highway near the Old Toll Gate. The firm now employs some 70 persons and will probably employ almost as many more when its new dry cleaning and fur storage departments are open.

Your could get - Turkeys, 17-20 lbs., 47¢ lb.; pork loin roasts, center cut, 43¢ lb.; fresh oysters,

merger.

It has been announced that the former Newberry Estate will be developed into a condominium apartment project beginning early next spring. The Troup Fund, Inc., which bought the estate early this year, has engaged architect Peter Bohlin of Bohlin & Powell, Wilkes-Barre to plan the luxury housing development on 85 acres.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 20, 1979  
LEMMOND TABBED COURT  
OF COMMON PLEAS JUDGE

Dallas resident Charles Lemmond, Jr., was named by Governor Richard Thornburgh to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas Tuesday. Atty Lemmond will fill the unexpired term of Judge Richard Bigelow, who resigned in March. The appointment of Lemmond to judge-caps a lengthy selection process which began several months ago and which involved both representatives of the legal community and lay persons.

Dallas Township Board of Supervisors announced that the new 1980 police cruiser will be on the road before the Christmas holidays. It is a Plymouth Volare and replaces a 1976 vehicle which was used as a trade-in.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 23, 1969  
DALLAS BUDGET INCLUDES  
NINE MILL INCREASE

Dallas Borough will spend \$96,250 in 1970, the new budget passed last week indicated. The budget is to be financed by a real estate tax levy of 9 mills and a \$5 per capita tax and the various state and county funds that contribute to local government revenue. Included in the spending plans for the next year is \$9,000 for a proposed playground and \$2,000 for the proposed police

## Library news



Carol King

There is a collection of lovely Christmas bells, made of porce-

## Happy holidays from the staff

lain and glass, on display at the library. Gladys Soss Chapple was given two bells as Christmas gifts in 1963 by her aunt and uncle, and from that beginning the collection has grown to over 150 bells, all gifts from family and friends. They're in the shapes of animals, angels, elves, Santa Clauses and Christmas people.

A reminder that the library will be closed on Friday and Satur-

day, Dec. 24 and 25, and Friday and Saturday, Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

The entire library staff wishes all of you a holiday rich with the love of family and friends and the warmth of happy memories!

Martha, Marilyn, Millie, Margaret, Mary, Melinda, Anna, Bonnie, Debbie, Elaine, Jane, Nicole

Newspaper office  
closed for holidays

So that our staff may enjoy the Christmas and New Year holidays, the office of *The Dallas Post* will be closed Friday, Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 31. Items may be left in the deposit box at the front of the office. Late news and advertising deadlines will be the following Mondays.