

EDITORIALS

Three weeks to go, and you can still help the auction

Some people living in the Back Mountain don't realize that one of the nation's most unique community events takes place every year right around the corner — the Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. This year's edition, the 54th, promises to serve up all the features devoted auction-goers have come to expect along with a few new twists. The four-night event does more than raise money to support the library. Between bidding and munching, newcomers and old hands renew acquaintances, make new friends and share in the "social event of the year." If you've never attended, make it a point to stop by this year; you'll find a slice of American society that has disappeared from much of the nation.

Perhaps the auction's greatest feature is that it is put on entirely by volunteers, many of whom contribute countless hours over several weeks and months planning the event, then work the block, booth or tent for hours each of the four nights. These are not dilettantes out to take as much credit as possible for the least amount of work. Many of them have been volunteers for years, perhaps starting when their children were young students who relied on the library for research and reading materials. Others have only recently discovered this most-worthwhile of causes, and have jumped in feet first to help out. But don't be put off by their zeal and ease in this massive undertaking; they'll welcome any and all offers of help, because they love the auction and the library and are eager to share both.

There's still time to help the auction in another way; by donating items to be sold over the block or in several booths. Businesses and individuals can help this cause, which accounts for about one-fourth of the library's operating budget, while earning a tax deduction for their contribution. If you have something old or new, call 675-1182 and someone will get in touch with you about picking it up in time for this year's auction, which takes place July 6-9 on the library grounds along Huntsville Rd. in Dallas.

Even if you can't volunteer and have nothing to donate, plan to visit the Back Mountain's "social event of the year." You'll be glad you did.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Given the success of the CBS "reality" television program, *Survivor*, I've heard the other networks are feverishly at work developing shows with a similar theme - a dozen or so "ordinary" people placed into extraordinary circumstances. Here are a few that are rumored to be in the works:

Defender - In which 15 lawyers are given the challenge to represent a California star athlete who has been charged with murdering his estranged wife and her boyfriend. Since the killings took place on a boat, the "cast" must swim offshore where they are surrounded by sharks, the most difficult scene to film, since it is difficult to tell which is which. Lawyers are voted out of the competition for various offenses, such as failing to get booked on Larry King Live.

Rapper - A game that locks 10 black and white performers in a bar/disco for one night where they compete to see who can get away with the most stupid, violent behavior. Points are scored by getting arrested, with incentives if carrying a gun and double bonus if it's pointed at someone. Actually shooting someone earns bonus points along with jail time. There can be several winners, as long as the records keep selling.

Investor - In this show, 12 stockbrokers are locked into a room, each with a phone and a computer terminal hooked to Wall Street. The one who is able to drive up the price of stock in a worthless Internet company the most is the ultimate winner, with losers being those who recommend Procter & Gamble, IBM or other real enterprises to clients.

Candidate - This game has only two players, who must vie for the championship by making the most outlandish claims and promises about things over which they have little control or influence. For example, one might claim to have a plan that will "save" education, knowing all the while that the federal government's contribution to local schools is minimal. The other might warn that if he's not elected, Social Security will disappear and retired folks will be begging for food in the streets. In this game, though, the viewers decide who wins. Unfortunately, one of them must.

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.



Textures of an old barn in summer. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek

What's on the Horizon?



Matt Lloyd

"Horizons" is a monthly column written by members of the North Branch Land Trust, which is headquartered in Trucksvill.

I learned a lesson today that involves taking note of the small but important things in life. Inventory and catalog all the meaningful things in your life, make a list of these things - merely a mental note will do, stand back and look at your list.

It is so easy to overlook some of the finer points in life because of the busy lives that we lead. Like so many other people I know I tend to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of everyday routines. I slowly begin to lose touch with the significance of the small things that are very important. But today I found time to go on my first land assessment with the North Branch Land Trust (NBLT), the organization formerly known as the Back Mountain Regional Land Trust. The mission of NBLT is to provide the opportunity and means for landowners to preserve land in its natural state. The purpose of the NBLT includes providing for the long-term stewardship of natural and historical resources by the conservation and preservation of forests and woodlands, watersheds and waterways, wildlife habitats, agricultural lands and open space, and significant historic sites and structures in both rural and urban areas.

Our work today is on a 45-acre parcel located in Sweet Valley. The landowner is very fond of this site. His intent is to convey an easement on this land so as to provide a tranquil retreat setting for people with creative urges such as artists, scientists and philoso-

Assessing value in ferns

phers. It is a place of unique and impeccable beauty. One of the events during the placement of an easement is the land assessment. A land assessment with NBLT is truly an exciting event and is not at all what I expected. For starters, when appraising the natural state of land, there are no clumsy surveying instruments or menacing property stakes to fumble with - at least not during this part of the land assessment. Actually, the technical act of surveying land - and tying those bright fluorescent pink ribbons around trees to mark property boundaries - takes place before today's land assessment. The job today is to take inventory and to catalog all the natural things within those bright fluorescent pink boundary ribbons. The natural things that we record are any objects that add to the conservation value of the property. These include trees, plants, animals, land features such as streams, wetlands, fens, meadows, and even intangible objects such as the property's historical significance. Executive Director Linda Thoma, Board Member Alene Case, and volunteers Sam Merrill, Jean Pope and I inspect the varieties of flora and fauna on the property. We look for animals that live on or wander through the land. I find out what a swamp buttercup looks like. I learn how to use a field guide to identify the plants and flowers I do not know.

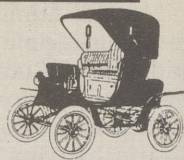
I also learn from today's land assessment that value does not always equate to economic worth. Take the ferns we inventory for example. I discover that there are many different varieties of ferns in Pennsylvania. If you look closely enough you may even be able to distinguish the difference between the leaves, called fronds, on a Christmas fern and the leaves on a Lady fern. Ferns are actually really neat specimens if you stop for a minute to think about them. And if you take the time to stop and think about Christmas ferns and Lady ferns, a forest floor covered with these ferns is even more

spectacular to think about. Ferns are valuable things. All it takes to realize the marvels of nature, such as Christmas ferns and Lady ferns, is to take a half-hour out of your busy day to go assess the value of the ferns. So, take off work a few minutes early tomorrow and go for a walk in the nearest wooded lot or meadow. Do not, whatever you do, concern yourself with any other matters - such as the more productive things you could be doing with your half-hour. Your only preoccupation is to look at those ferns. Look at a single little fern that catches your eye. Run your fingers though it. Think about the life cycle of that fern. Wonder where it came from. Ask yourself what is required to make it grow. Imagine what that fern may be like a week from now, two weeks from now, a month from now. Now, look up. Notice the other ferns - their differences, their similarities. Marvel at the land on which they grow.

Think of yourself standing on this land. Compare yourself to that fern and repeat the same observations from above for yourself. You see, you begin to envision things in a new light, a fresh perspective. Value is added to your day. The land assessment with the NBLT today reminds me that I'm not unlike the little Christmas fern. We are all but ferns growing in our particular lots in life. Take an inventory of yourself, your life, your place in life and the things that are important to you. Appreciate these things. Cherish them. Protect them. Take a moment to assess the importance of the natural environment around you. Appreciate all the wonderful privileges gained from nature and open space. Cherish your opportunity to be able to live in an area that still has so much natural beauty. Protect these things that matter most. Now please excuse me, I'll be out with the ferns.

Matt Lloyd, a recent graduate of the University of Vermont, is a Dallas resident.

ONLY YESTERDAY

70 Years Ago - June 13, 1930
LARGEST AUDIENCE EVER FOR DALLAS TWP. PLAY

Between five and six hundred people from Dallas and surrounding areas gathered to watch the Fairy Garden and The Riddle, two plays that were produced by the students of the Dallas Township schools. The performances took place on the school grounds, using the natural background of trees and shrubbery for the setting. Never before had such a large crowd attended a local school performance.

60 Years Ago - June 14, 1940
PENNSYLVANIA TURNPIKE SCHEDULED TO OPEN

Contractors were putting the finishing touches on America's first high-speed, super highway. When the Pennsylvania Turnpike opened to the public on July 4, 26,000,000 cubic yards of earth and rock had been moved in 20 months, to make room for the 4,300,000 square yards of reinforced concrete pavement stretching 160 miles from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh.

50 Years Ago - June 16, 1950
VICTIMS OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENT WALK AWAY

Tunkhannock Highway was the scene of a traffic accident that could have been much worse than it was, considering it involved a 15-ton coal truck and a 1938 Buick sedan. It was raining steadily, and there was a drop of oil from the truck as it labored up a long hill. The driver of the Buick blew his horn and pulled out to pass the truck. The driver then saw a car rounding the curve at the top of the incline, and tried to swerve to pull back behind the truck. The combination of rain and oil caused the car to skid wildly when the driver tried to apply the brakes, and the car nosed itself under the truck, reducing itself to \$30 worth of junk. The occupants of the car were taken to Nesbitt Hospital, but only sustained minor injuries.

40 Years Ago - June 16, 1960
BICYCLE SAFETY CHECK PROGRAM HELD

Wyoming Valley Safety Council announced that the Bicycle Safety Check Program was scheduled to take place June 29. Parents of children who own bicycles were asked to have their children bring their bikes so that the Bicycle Safety Committee Members could inspect them and install reflector tape on each bike. Children were given a pamphlet on how to ride and drive a bicycle like an expert, and were given a speech by Trooper John Loftus, of the Pennsylvania State Police.

The school bell that hangs in the belfry of Shavertown elementary school was to appear on the Library Auction block to be sold to the highest bidder.

30 Years Ago - June 18, 1970
COMPLAINTS MADE AGAINST BUS DRIVERS

Several complaints were made at the Dallas School Board meeting regarding the operation and condition of the school buses in the district. One incident noted regarded an incident when a substitute bus driver decided to unload a number of students at the Forty Fort Dairy Bar telling them he would come back for them later. The bus in question was overcrowded with the number of children on board stated to be between 77 and 90. It was later determined that four regular drivers, one of whom had quit, were absent and the substitute driver was unfamiliar with the route and had made a mistake by discharging the students. School board president, John La Berge stated that the school system moved 2,200 students a day on 23 buses and that was not a simple problem.

20 Years Ago - June 12, 1980
10-MILE RUN HELD AT MISERICORDIA

500 runners participated in the 10 mile run that started and finished at College Misericordia. William Reifsnnyder of Williamsport High School won with the time a 53:01, tying the record set by Ray Krombel in 1978. Anne Farley, of Ithaca, NY, won the girls division with a time of 67:01, breaking the previous year's record by 1:11.

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