

## EDITORIALS

## Hoping 'Mayor's Club' can inspire imitators

Tim Carroll, the mayor of Dallas Borough, has a splendid idea, and it's one other local communities would do well to emulate.

As is the case nearly everywhere, there are a few projects and programs in the borough that fall somewhere between the purview of the private sector and government. One of the most pressing is the decrepit state of the Rice Cemetery, the oldest in town and one of the most historic in the region. More than a century ago, the owner of the cemetery land opened it for use by others, and the title has long since been lost, so it is in effect owned by everyone in the borough, and by no one. That might not be a problem, except that no one has cared for the plot in recent years, ever since Jim Davis, who lives nearby, was forced by his health to give up his volunteer service.

Now, the mayor has stepped in with the "Mayor's Club," a fund supported by contributions, including Carroll's annual salary of \$600. There are already other donors to the cause, and plans are in the works to arrange maintenance for the cemetery once Sean Smith, and Eagle Scout candidate, finishes sprucing it up.

It doesn't take long to bring other worthwhile projects to mind. Once we've taken care of the dead, how about something for the living, especially the young, such as a skateboard area in the borough park? The Mayor's Club could provide funds to buy materials, and kids could supply the labor, under adult supervision, of course. While on the subject of parks, a "Supervisors' Club" in Dallas Township might provide the impetus for refurbishing that community's tiny, hidden park off Rt. 309. We'll bet most people don't even know it exists.

We hope residents of each Back Mountain community will urge public officials to create "clubs" of this type to tackle projects that offer long-term value, but that in our shortsightedness are overlooked. The partnership of public and private effort will pay dividends in renewed community pride and progress.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Oh happy day! I'd been sitting around the office, wondering what to do with my life, when in came a press release that showed me the way to peace and contentment. It seems the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT), always on the lookout for ways to add to quality of life for the state's citizens, has come up with a new program in which we can contribute to the beauty that surrounds us - or at least reduce the ugliness - by planting flowers and shrubs. I can't say it with any more joy than does the gushing press release: "You've heard of PennDOT's Adopt-A-Highway program where volunteers pick up litter on our highways? Well, now volunteers can do more than just clean up the roadside, they can also beautify the highway too!" (You can tell they're really excited about this by the inclusion of "also" and "too" in the same sentence.)

You don't know what this opportunity means to me. Now, in addition to sending in my taxes, I can actually perform some of the work those taxes are supposed to pay for! It's like getting two rotten apples in each bushel of good ones, or something along those lines. Better yet, when I volunteer, I have to agree to keep it up for two years, virtually guaranteeing that I'll feel good all over until 2002.

And talk about satisfaction! Not only will I be making the world a better place, I'll be relieving some PennDOT employee of the need to do his job, maybe even allowing him to take another week off to spend cavorting with his family on vacation. Or - think of this - he might drive past the very shrubs I've planted and marvel at their beauty! It's almost too much to contemplate. This is such a good idea, I'd like to offer PennDOT suggestions on expanding these outstanding opportunities.

- Issue snow shovels to all of us, so we could clear the roadways in front of our properties after a storm. The state could then sell the plow trucks, and give drivers the winter off, with pay of course.

- When road repairs are necessary, enlist squadrons of us to hold those signs that tell drivers when to stop and go. What fun that would be eight hours a day!

- Here's one that would have us breaking down the door: Let volunteers paint the lines on highways, but let us pick the colors! No more boring white lines in the middle and yellow on the side. Each neighborhood could pick its own color scheme, kind of the way teenage gangs do, making the motoring experience in PA more stimulating.

It's a wonder other state agencies haven't found a way to take advantage of citizens - oops, I mean offer fulfilling opportunities. Can you imagine how much fun a "Prison Guard for a Day" program would be? And we'd get to wear those suave uniforms!

## Deadlines for news copy

In order to plan each issue, The Dallas Post 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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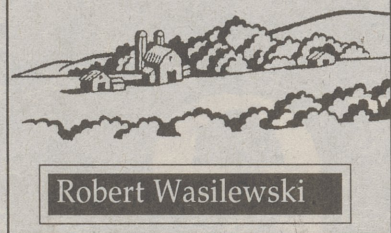
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Maybe he knows about the coming winter. Wish he'd tell. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## What's on the Horizon?



Robert Wasilewski

This is a monthly column written by members of the North Branch Land Trust, which is headquartered in Trucksville.

The Wyoming Valley's peregrine falcons experienced another successful breeding season this past spring and summer. The adult peregrines that nest on the Cross Valley Expressway bridge matched last year's reproductive output by again producing three young falcons. However, whereas last year saw the adults produce two females and one male, this year that ratio was reversed. The two males and one female hatched sometime in early May. About one month later, when Pennsylvania Game Commission ornithologist, Dan Brauning, placed leg bands on the nestlings, they already weighed as much as their parents. Two weeks after the banding, all three youngsters were flying in the vicinity of the Cross Valley bridge, and by the third week in July, the young falcons had left the area to find territories and mates of their own.

Claiming territories on six continents, the peregrine falcon is a widespread species that feeds primarily on other birds. The peregrine's ability to capture prey on the wing by diving at speeds approaching 200 m.p.h. has long attracted humans' attention. Throughout history, man has variously regarded the peregrine both as friend and as foe. Revered by the ancients for their hunting prowess, peregrines were trained to capture game birds for their keepers' dinner tables. The practice of hunting with captive peregrines developed into the sport of falconry in the Middle and Far East as early as 2000 BC. Following the Crusades, the sport became popular in 13th Century Europe, where ownership of peregrines was reserved for the nobility, while members of the lower classes hunted with "lesser" species. The peregrine falcon remained a prized and protected species until the advent of firearms brought it into disfavor as a competitor rather than a hunting

## Good year for falcons

companion. British game keepers began to exterminate hundreds of peregrines each year. Even when other birds of prey received official protection in Britain in the late 1800's, the peregrine was excluded from the list of protected species. Later, during World War II, the peregrine's habit of preying on carrier pigeons, which were used to transport military information, led to a government-sanctioned destruction of the falcons. Since the 1950's, however, the British peregrine has been protected, as is its North American counterpart.

North American peregrines were once much more common than they are today. Prior to the 1950's, peregrine falcons were known to nest at 34 locations in Pennsylvania, including Council Cup Scenic Overlook in Wapwallopen. However, during the middle of the twentieth century, peregrine populations began to decline due primarily to the use of pesticides such as DDT. Pesticides were applied to seeds and crops in agricultural areas in the United States and in other countries. Peregrines ingested the pesticides by eating birds that had fed on the treated seeds and crops. Some peregrines may have died as a result of ingesting the pesticides. However, the birds' numbers were also reduced by DDT-induced reproductive failure. DDT interfered with the falcons' ability to process calcium. This caused the peregrines to lay thin-shelled eggs that often cracked under the weight of the incubating adults. As a result, very few peregrine chicks hatched, and by 1961, no peregrine falcon nests could be found in Pennsylvania. By 1965, the peregrine had vanished from the eastern half of the United States, and western populations had declined by 90%. In 1969, the peregrine falcon was designated an endangered species.

With the extinction of the peregrine falcon from North America seemingly imminent, a number of steps were taken to reverse the species' fortunes. Three of those steps were especially significant. First, the falcon's designation as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act outlawed harming or disturbing peregrines. Second, the 1972 ban on DDT resulted in a slow, but continual, decline in levels of that chemical in the birds' environment. Hence, eggshell thickness increased. Fi-

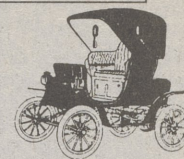
nally, a successful reintroduction program begun in the early 1970's put captive-bred peregrine falcons back into the wild. One of these captive-bred peregrines is the Cross Valley Expressway's adult male, Hatched in Idaho, but released in Williamsport, "Ida Greene," as he is known, found his way to the Wyoming Valley. Somewhere in his travels, he met "Wandering Wilma," a wild-reared bird who, in 1997, had wandered south from her birthplace in Vermont. The pair set up housekeeping on the Expressway bridge in 1998, and successfully bred in 1999, thereby producing Luzerne County's first wild peregrine falcons in nearly forty years.

Having increased to a population of more than 1600 pairs nationwide, the peregrine falcon was removed, in August of 1999, from the federal list of endangered species, although it retained its state endangered species status. Encouraging as this news may be, the peregrine falcon is nevertheless still uncommon. The Cross Valley peregrines are one of fewer than a dozen pairs known to nest in Pennsylvania, and the only nesting pair documented in the northern two-thirds of the Commonwealth. No Pennsylvania peregrine nests have been found on natural cliffs, which are the falcon's traditional breeding habitat. With peregrines still absent from their traditional haunts, some conservationists view the Nation's peregrine falcon population as not yet fully recovered.

To consider the peregrine falcon's recovery assured, many conservationists believe that the birds must reoccupy their traditional breeding sites. If peregrines are to reestablish their traditional nest sites, both historic and potential nest sites must be protected. Private land owners, as well as municipal governments, can help by ensuring that their landholdings that contain steep ledges and cliffs, especially those that overlook large rivers like the Susquehanna, remain free of development and excessive human encroachment. If such areas can be preserved, perhaps someday Ida's and Wilma's offspring will return to nest on the cliffs that overlook the North Branch of the Susquehanna River.

Robert Wasilewski is Vice President, Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society, which meets in Dallas.

## ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - Oct. 3, 1930

## DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL ISSUES SCHOOL PAPER

The first issue of *The Student*, the new semi-monthly publication of Dallas Borough High School was released. The paper contained news from each grade, athletics, editorials, a story written by a student and numerous advertisements from Dallas residents' and businesses.

All boys aged 2-16 who were interested in forming a Boy Scout Troop in Dallas were asked to attend a meeting held at the high school.

60 Years Ago - Oct. 4, 1940

## FAITH TO STAY WITH BOTH OF HER PARENTS

"The whole thing was a misunderstanding and it was a pity for Faith that it received so much publicity," was Mrs. Harding's comment on the collapse of a threatened custody battle between Mrs. Harding and her husband over their five year old daughter Faith, "The Little Prophet". Mr. Harding had asked local court's to give him custody of Faith, who was in North Carolina, where patrons who believed she could foretell the future had established a colony to perpetuate her teachings. An amicable settlement between the parents made the court's intervention unnecessary.

50 Years Ago - Oct. 6, 1950

## BOWMAN INSTALLS LATEST GADGET IN KITCHEN

Al Bowman installed the latest thing in steamless steamtables in the stainless steel kitchen of his new restaurant. Heated by bottled gas, it kept the covered containers hot without danger of scorching or of being smothered in steam. It was the second major addition to the kitchen.

You could get: Gold Seal pancake mix, two 20 oz. pkgs., 27¢; Ideal apple butter, lg. jar, 19¢; Armour's corned beef hash, 1 lb. can., 40¢; Flako pie crust mix, 8 oz. pkg., 17¢; Keebler Townhouse crackers, 8 oz. pkg., 19¢; Crackin' Good party cookies, 1 lb. pkg., 51¢; Tide detergent, lg. pkg., 31¢; 3 Little Kittens cat food, three 8 oz. cans, 23¢; Speed-Up glass wax, pint can, 29¢; Wilburt's floor wax, quart can, 65¢; Wilburt's shoe polish, 10¢.

40 Years Ago - Oct. 6, 1960

## LOCAL MAN TESTS SPEED ON HIGHWAY

A local banker, disturbed over repeated charges that the Luzerne-Dallas Highway is one of the most dangerous in the state, decided to discover for himself why it was considered more dangerous than other highways. Timing himself with a stopwatch, he started from the Luzerne Lumber Company in Luzerne and made three trips at constant speeds to the stoplight in Dallas Borough. He made the first run at 50 m.p.h. in seven minutes and 24 seconds; the second run at 40 m.p.h. in eight minutes and 19 seconds; and the third run at 35 m.p.h. in eight minutes and 33 seconds.

30 Years Ago - Oct. 8, 1970

## THREE FIRES IN SAME LAUNDROMAT

Shavertown Volunteer Fire Company was called out three times to the same location in one day. They answered alarms at the Shavertown Shopping Center at 3:45 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Each time lint in gas dryer flues had caught on fire. Firemen were able to keep the building itself from catching fire; most of the damage caused was due to water and walls being ripped out to get to the flues.

20 Years Ago - Oct. 2, 1980

## NESBITT ENHANCES PATIENT EDUCATION

In an ongoing and continuing commitment to improving the extent and quality of patient education, Nesbitt Memorial Hospital initiated a Patient Television Network. Patients would be able to view specific medical education programs while in their hospital beds. The programs were designed to provide patients and their families with specific information concerning the patient's health as well as teach better health habits through prevention and recognition of diseases in their early stages.

**Q:** Where do you find the most Back Mountain news, week after week?

**A:** Only in The Dallas Post, the Back Mountain's newspaper since 1889.