

EDITORIALS

Dallas Borough raises suspicions with secrecy

The kindest comment that can be made about the government in Dallas Borough of late is that there's plenty of room for improvement. Less kindly words might be chosen by recently dispatched personnel, the press, at least a couple of members of the borough council, and the public, if there is anyone who cares about the state of their local government.

From the standpoint of the public, the most egregious shortcoming is the unwillingness of officials, especially William Peiffer, the council president, to release the full text of the borough's latest audit. After a couple of weeks of badgering, a copy of the basic audit was grudgingly given to reporters, but not two key sections that would elaborate on the state of the borough's finances and the auditor's observations and recommendations about how the borough does its business, and how it might improve. *The Dallas Post* is continuing to press for release of those documents, which should have been included all along.

This is, after all, about the people's money and how it's being handled. Dallas Borough has done an admirable job in recent years of maintaining a reasonable tax rate while providing adequate services, but that doesn't mean there isn't room for improvement. Equally important, the longer officials appear to be hiding something, the larger suspicions grow about hanky panky.

Personnel matters haven't been handled much better. The borough council recently fired Sally Buttorff, who had been part-time clerk since February and had done a fine job, according to several people who saw her in action. Buttorff was replaced by a full-time borough manager even before the council determines how he will be paid. Council members disagree whether Buttorff was fired for cause or to save her salary, and even the order of business at the meeting where she was canned is confused, with the first motion being to fire her and the next to eliminate her position. Buttorff's termination followed the abrupt departure of the part-time borough manager, about which little has been discussed.

Perhaps borough officials should be given some latitude on the manager/secretary issue, but there is no room for forgiveness when it comes to the release of records that are clearly in the public domain, and are of interest to every taxpayer.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



There are some things I just don't talk about, things that I believe are no one's business but my own. Many family matters fall into this category, and so does money. And I don't usually tell anyone except my family and closest friends how I voted, but this year I've decided to make an exception. See if you can figure out who I pulled the lever for Tuesday by using these clues:

- There are four letters in his last name. (Sorry, Ralph, you missed by one.)
- He's a member of the "Baby Boom" generation, just like me.
- He's in excellent health, and is often seen out for a run.
- He comes from an established political family, and many observers think he is fulfilling his father's destiny by seeking the highest office in the land.
- His wife and daughters were often seen on the campaign trail.
- He says he wants to cut taxes.
- He wants to spend more on the military than we do now.
- He supports tax incentives for conservation and new energy technologies.
- He would continue moratoriums on oil and gas drilling off the coasts of Florida and California.
- He says he'll save Social Security, but his plan doesn't assure its survival for 75 years, the commonly accepted standard.

Now, you may have your suspicions based on this list, but it's a little confounding, since some items seem to apply to _____ and some to _____. But here's my little secret: the positions listed here were held by both candidates — at least until Tuesday — the difference was in the details. Perhaps the decision did come down to character after all, and that means I voted for the one who was honest, straightforward and clear about his life and his politics. Now you're really confused, I'll bet.

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

Published Weekly By Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
570-675-5211

Ronald A. Bartizek
PUBLISHER

Charlotte E. Bartizek
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
OFFICE MANAGER

Ken Brocius
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC

Elizabeth Skrapits
REPORTER

Ruth Proietto
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Joanna Cease
OFFICE/TYPIST/CLASSIFIEDS



Wheelbarrow silhouette at Huntsville Nursery. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

What's on the Horizon?



Rick Koval

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

Anyone with a profound interest in observing wildlife undoubtedly makes it a point to revisit that favorite place. The size of these unique habitats can be small backyard bird feeders and butterfly gardens to the larger city parks and State Game Lands. Depending on the diversity, these habitats can support various numbers of plant and animal species.

During the past 10 years of conducting wildlife inventories, I would have to say the area known as Bear Hollow Road offers the most bio-diversity. I was introduced to Bear Hollow Road by my best friend and birding partner Jim Hoyson. This area is referred by the Wyoming Valley Audubon Society as a "must visit hotspot." Many Audubon Society bird walks and wildflower tours begin at Bear Hollow Road.

Bear Hollow Road is located in Lake Township about one-half mile northeast of Loyalville. The mile long dirt road is paralleled by mixed forest transitions. The southern end travels through narrow old farm fields that are in the regeneration process. Vari-

Local 'hotspot' for watching nature

ous species of native and alien shrubs like American Dogwood, Serviceberry and Lilac are intermixed with goldenrod and grasses that provide thick habitat. Northward intersects a dark canopy of intermediate sized Eastern Hemlocks, which shadow the road. The cooling capacity of these conifers is most noticeable during the hottest days of summer. The temperature is as much as 15 degrees cooler in this section of forest. The final two-thirds of the road is guarded by gentle hillsides of mixed hardwoods like American Beach and Red Oak. A slow moving stream located on the west side runs the entire length. Several vernal ponds and sphagnum wetlands occur within this riparian forest. Three springs are found on the east side on the road. The land on both sides of the road is privately owned by several parties.

From a naturalist's perspective, Bear Hollow Road is a cornucopia of wildlife. I have recorded 104 species of birds that either nest or migrate through Bear Hollow Road. Uncommon birds of Luzerne County that nest along or near Bear Hollow Road are: Great Blue Heron, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, three species of owls, Red-bellied Sapsucker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Brown Thrasher, Blue-headed Vireo, Northern Water thrush, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Dark-eyed Junco and Purple Finch.

I have found evidence of 30 species of mammals that during some part of the year utilize Bear Hollow Road. Several unique species include Star-nosed Mole, Red Bat, Woodland Jumping Mouse, Eastern Coyote, Black Bear and Mink.

The small pockets of sunny openings that heat sections of the road are reliable locations to find butterflies like Eastern Comma, Question Mark, Mourning Cloak, Milbert's Tortoiseshell and Wood Nymph. The grassy meadows on the southern end provide habitat for many more species of butterflies.

Wildflowers abound throughout the year. During the cold month of February one can observe Skunk Cabbage in bloom near the spring seeps. Early spring wildflowers include Colt's Foot, Hepatica, Spring Beauty and Trailing Arbutus and Trillium species. A splattering of yellow clusters enlighten the shady creek when Marsh Marigold comes into bloom. Summer brings blooms of Day-lily, Panicked Hawkweed, Black-eyed Susan and Wild Bergamot. The fall offers plumes of Sweet Goldenrod, Woodland Sunflower and New England Aster. Uncommon wildflowers located here are: Blue Lettuce, Cardinal Flower, Turtlehead, Lowrie's Aster, Fringed Loosestrife and three species of Orchid which includes the rare Purple-fringed Orchid, currently found in only two locations in Luzerne County.

The cool moist understory is most suitable for the Reptiles and Amphibians (collectively "herptiles"). I have recorded twenty-five species of herptiles to the Pennsylvania Herpetological Atlas Project. In fact, of the thirteen possible species of sala-

manders that can be found in Luzerne County, eleven species occur along Bear Hollow Road. I have found all eleven species in a fifty-foot section of suitable habitat! While assisting in field studies with world-renowned herpetologist Dr. Michael Klemmons, he indicated that this area has the largest biomass of salamanders that he has observed anywhere, especially the Mountain Dusky Salamander! Bear Hollow Road has one of Pennsylvania's largest breeding sites of the very rare Jefferson Salamander. Along with Jefferson Salamander, other uncommon species I have documented include Long-tail Salamander, Smooth Green Snake and Red-bellied Snake. This past summer I observed thousands of Wood Frog tadpoles in the process of metamorphosis swimming in the vernal pools.

The region known as Bear Hollow Road is truly unique and certainly needs to be preserved and protected from disturbance and pollution. At least for now it remains in a natural state. Let's help keep it this way. I would encourage any nature oriented person to visit this area and observe from the roadway. You will truly enjoy your experience.

Rick Koval is a volunteer for the North Branch Land Trust. He resides in Plains. He participates in a wide variety of bird counts and animal and plant surveys within Northeast PA. Rick is also a consultant for public agencies and private individuals.

order blank on page 11.

New display The collection of white ironstone and a few copper luster pieces now on display belongs to Joyce Hislop and her husband Richard. Natives of Dallas, they are antique dealers and members of the Pennsylvania Antique Dealers Association, of which Richard is president. They have been collecting white ironstone for about 9 years. The pieces on display range from 100 to 150 years old, but the ware had been made centuries before that.

English potters decided to sell white ironstone to New World settlers when they were just setting up their homes, loading it on ships from England as ballast. Joyce says they were very shrewd in their choice of the "Ceres" pattern, incorporating images of wheat and corn. The ware was sturdy and did not chip easily, and the pattern became very popular in the American market.

Be sure to look at this interesting display the next time you're in the library.

Book discussion group The Monday morning group discussed Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone at its recent meeting. All we really need to say is that we fell under its spell, like millions of other people. The overwhelmingly positive vote (nine 10s, the rest 9s, for an average of 9.7 out of 10) resulted partly, I think, from our pleasant surprise (astonishment?) at finding the book so enjoyable. The group felt the book was moral (not "on the dark side"), a mirror of life, and, above all, imaginative and charming. In talking subsequently to cousins in IN, UT and CA, I have learned that adults everywhere are deciding that the Harry Potter books are not just for kids.

Citrus fruit sale deadline: November 20 November 20 is the deadline for getting your orders for citrus fruit in to the library. This is one of the Friends' best fund-raisers for the library, so please order now! Look for an

Holiday hours and Open House The library will be closed on Thanksgiving Day; on Saturday, December 23, and on Christmas Day; and on Saturday, December 30 and New Year's Day.

You are cordially invited to drop in to enjoy refreshments at the library's Holiday Open House on

several software programs. The programs include: World English Dictionary 2000, Encarta Encyclopedia, Encarta Africana 2000, World Atlas 2000, and Streets and Trips 2000. POWER Access, a statewide-sponsored online reference resource, is available to library patrons and includes: Ebsco Magazine database (like Infotrac, only full-text), Sirs Discoverer, a research tool for elementary and middle school students; the Grolier Encyclopedia, and Accunet-AP Photo Archive, an extensive collection of newspaper photos.

The staff is available to assist you with any of the library's computer programs, the Internet, and online resources.

Holiday hours and Open House The library will be closed on Thanksgiving Day; on Saturday, December 23, and on Christmas Day; and on Saturday, December 30 and New Year's Day.

You are cordially invited to drop in to enjoy refreshments at the library's Holiday Open House on

Library news



Carol King

Amnesty Week Martha Butler announces that next week, Nov. 13-18, is Amnesty Week. You are urged to return any and all overdue library items. No late fee will be charged!

National Children's Book Week Come to visit the children's library during National Children's Book Week, Nov. 13-18. The theme is "Fuel Your Mind." Stop at Mrs. Rudolph's desk and pick up a crossword puzzle based on the Caldecott Gold Medal books — solve it and win a book!

New software programs This past summer the library received a grant from the Bill Gates Foundation, which included four workstations with Internet Access and

Send The Post to a friend. It makes a great gift.

Call 675-5211 for details.