

EDITORIALS

Local candidate could shake up the courthouse

Clarence Michael may not be on everyone's list of personal favorites, but his candidacy for Controller of Luzerne County offers some intriguing insights and possibilities. One thing you can be sure of; should he be elected, the controller will no longer sit silently while the commissioners decide how to spend our taxes.

Michael, whose "I Like Mike" posters are seen around the Back Mountain, appears at first to be a Don Quixote type character, tilting at the windmills of sloppiness and graft that have been the hallmarks of Luzerne County politics for generations. But he also has experience that could give him the tools needed to clean up a lazy, corrupt courthouse population — if only he could get elected. That's unlikely, since he's a Republican, and he's outspoken. About the only position anyone like that has gained in recent memory is minority commissioner, which is the equivalent of being baby brother tagging along on big sister's date.

Will Clarence Michael win election? Not likely, but if along the way he adds to the ruckus that is beginning to shake the foundation of county politics, he's certainly doing the public a service.

Looking at the past, projecting a great future

Critics are fond of pointing out American students weaknesses in geography and history. Each year an article appears in which a college professor lists the things freshmen don't know about the nation in which they've grown up in comfort and peace, and the wider world that awaits them. But he won't be able to use material from some Dallas and Lake-Lehman students who just won a slew of awards at the annual History Day competition held at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre and Hazleton campuses.

With topics that ranged from John Locke to the birth of rock & roll, these students have shown not only that they have an interest in history and all its implications, but that they can understand and interpret the valuable lessons each era, personality and movement leave behind.

Congratulations to all the participants, and best of luck to those who are moving on to state competition.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



Travel is broadening, so they say, so I must be considerably wider than a week ago, at least in the waistline. I was away, you see, to a place most of you wouldn't think of as a destination in mid-March — Duluth, Minnesota. I know what you're thinking: "Why in the world would anyone go to a god-forsaken, rust belt, falling-down city on the 47th parallel in March?" Well, I was thinking the same thing before I left, but then, as happens far too often, I was pleasantly surprised to find Duluth a few things going for it that I never suspected to find on the shores of Gitchi Gummee. (Don't laugh; we also drove past the Minnehaha Elementary School in one small town.) But I'm rambling. Here are the unexpected surprises in Duluth, just in case you have too much time on your hands and too many miles in your frequent-flyer account. First, from what I'm told, the weather was better there than here, with daytime temperatures in the 40s to 50 most days, and evenings about 20. Then there's Canal Park, which is a restaurant/shop/hotel district hard by Lake Superior and next to the convention center, which propagandists said was the third busiest in the nation. A few blocks from the tourist district was a large, brick former brewery converted to more shops and restaurants. Is this beginning to sound familiar? I hate to admit it, but Duluth sounds a lot like what Wilkes-Barre wants to be. Oh, and there's one more thing I'm guessing Duluth has that we should steal, famously straight-laced political leaders who — egads! — put public interest ahead of personal aggrandizement or no-show jobs for supporters. But maybe I'm being too hard on our area. My traveling companion and I agreed that visiting a city isn't like living there, and perhaps we just don't appreciate all the cultural and material amenities in our own backyard. That's why this weekend I'm going to wake up and pretend I'm a tourist, looking for a good time. (No, not that kind of good time, just a place to sit down, have a meal and a drink, listen to some good music and stroll the shops.) If you have any suggestions on what I've been missing, I'd sure appreciate hearing them. Call me at 675-5211 with your tips on where to find places that wash sweet Duluth from my mind.

Send your letters to the Post.

Include a phone number where you can be reached.

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Summer tourists return to Perrin's Marsh. Photo by Jim Phillips.



70 Years Ago - Mar. 27, 1931

LEHMAN HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS WIN CHAMPIONSHIP

The girls basketball team of Lehman township high school closed its season by winning 39-19 over Beaumont. This eleventh victory of the season in which the Lehman girls have been defeated but once, brought the championship of the Bi-County League. Playing for Lehman were: F. Johnson, 23 pts; F. Conner, 11; C. Kinsman, 0; S. C. Parrish, 0; G. Anson, 0; G. Searfoss, 0; G. Roushey, 0; C. Wheeler, 0; S. S. McCarty, 0; G. Lamoreaux, 0; F. Major, 0. Beaumont players: F. Fritz, 10 pts; F. Doll, 9; C. Wall, 0; S. C. Jones, 0; G. Fritz, 0; G. Denman, 0.

Workmen began the demolition of the old paint shop back of Stanley's Garage on Main Street, Dallas. The removal of the old building will further reduce the fire hazard in the heart of the borough and will make way for the construction of a modern fire proof building on the Moret property.

The nucleus for a Little Theatre group has been organized in Dallas and will present its first play, "The Silent Shape". Members of the group are: Marie Woolbert, Lettie Lee, Barbara Hoffmeister, Walter Rau, William Rau, Art Culver, Clarence Adams and Phillip Anderson

60 Years Ago - Mar. 28, 1941

LEHMAN PLANS BACK MOUNTAIN MEMORIAL DAY

Plans for a Back Mountain Memorial Day celebration, the greatest in history, got under way with the appointment of committees by Osage Lodge, I.O.O.F., of Lehman. For a number of years Lehman has staged a Memorial Day Celebration with band concerts, parade, baseball games and special dinners in the Lehman and Idetown churches. This year the committee hopes to make it an All-Back Mountain program.

The Armour Leather Company plant at Noxen is back on a five-day schedule, working near normal production in most departments after several months of short time work. During the first World War the plant enjoyed the greatest volume in its history and was working on war orders when it was destroyed by fire.

Admirers of Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, famed Catholic radio orator, in Dallas and vicinity,

will be afforded an opportunity to hear him over Station WBRE. The current speaker on the nationwide Catholic hour, Monsignor Sheen holds the world's record for religious radio mail.

50 Years Ago - Mar. 30, 1951

ROBERT BACHMAN JOINS THE POST AS AD MANAGER

Robert F. Bachman, Kunkle, assumed his duties as advertising manager of The Dallas Post. Mr. Bachman brings to the Post and the Back Mountain area, ten years of experience in the advertising field. Mr. Bachman was associated with Wilkes College as a night school instructor in advertising, and had more recently had taken a position with Brown and Bigelow, world's largest producer of Remembrance Advertising, when the Post prevailed upon him to join its staff, feeling the need for a trained advertising man to assist local businessmen with their advertising problems.

Fees charged by Back Mountain physicians will be increased for the first time in a generation. New fees will be \$3 for office calls; \$4 for home calls between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.; \$5 for home calls between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. Some of the local physicians who will be increasing their fees are: Dr. H. A. Brown, Lehman; Dr. Malcolm Borthwick, Dr. Sherman Schooley, Shavertown; Dr. Richard Crompton, Dr. Charles Perkins, Trucksville; Dr. A. A. Mascali, Dr. H. G. Gallagher, Dr. F. B. Schooley, Dallas; Dr. Lester Saidman, Noxen.

Dr. Ralph Decker, president of Wyoming Seminary is going to "kick-off" the first Career Day program of Dallas Borough High School. Cooperating in the project are the Dallas Kiwanis Club, Dallas Borough Hi-Y Club, Dallas Borough High School, and the Back Mountain YMCA.

40 Years Ago - Mar. 30, 1961

HEDDEN TO BUILD GENERAL OFFICES IN DALLAS BOROUGH

Ground was broken for the new general offices of Raymond R. Hedden & Company, general contractors, on a plot of land on the former Grand View Estates opposite Crown Imperial Bowling Lanes on Memorial Highway. The ground was formerly owned by Benjamin and David Jenkins. Harold Cornell is clearing it of trees and underbrush.

Community Service Award of Back Mountain Protective Association will be awarded to Misericordia College, according to an announcement of Rev. Robert Yost, president of the Association. This award goes to an individual or organization in recognition of achievement, industry and advancements benefitting the Back Mountain Area.

Charles J. Natitus, seaman, USN, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Natitus of Harris Hill Road, Trucksville, is serving aboard the anti-submarine warfare support aircraft carrier USS Valley Forge operating out of Norfolk, Va.

30 Years Ago - Apr. 1, 1971

DALLAS GIRL LOOKS FORWARD TO SUMMER IN FRANCE

The thrill of a young life is anticipated by Nancy Gordon, a junior at Dallas Senior High School. Miss Gordon has learned that she has been accepted by the American Institute for Foreign Study for summer classes at the University of Vichy in Vichy, France. She will study French language and civilization.

C.V. Products, manufacturers of precision optical equipment, is a new industrial addition to the Back Mountain area. The plant is in the process of moving into the former Kern Distributor building on Route 415, Idetown. The plant will manufacture precision optical equipment from raw materials. Although small in scope presently, the two partners, Robert Vanderhook and Edmund Castellani, optimistically expect and plan for expansion in the future.

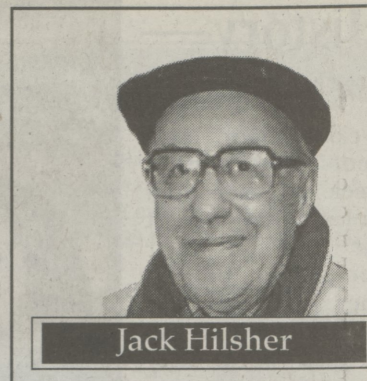
The Dallas Senior High School girls' basketball team, along with their coach, Jane Millin, boarded a bus for the trip to see the world renowned Harlem Globetrotters in Philadelphia. At the Spectrum, they enjoyed the Globetrotters play their game of "basketball", and then watched a game between the Philadelphia 76ers and the Cincinnati Royals.

20 Years Ago - Mar. 25, 1981

VERN PRITCHARD WILL RETIRE

"Mr. Republican" as he is known to his many friends and constituents in a large part of the Back Mountain, is retiring after 20 years as the Kingston Township tax collector at the end of his term in December. Vern Pritchard, 205 Maple St., Trucksville, confirmed he also will semi-retire from his insurance business. It is doubtful he will ever really retire from the political scene, but will only change perspectives from participant to knowledgeable spectator and some say "advisor."

Twin brothers Ricky and Rocky Bonomo joined heavyweight Mike Leskowsky in capturing state titles to lead Lake-Lehman to the PIAA Class AA team title at Hershey Center. This marked the first time in 36 years that twin brothers won state titles. This was also the first time that a Wyoming Valley team took the Class AA crown.



Jack Hilsher

Where is he now? Mort Sahl

I suppose, you either worship Woody Allen or hate him, no middle ground. You'll admit his was an amazing transformation... from a shy Brooklyn boy to gag writer to standup comic to director of award-winning films, not to mention his acquisition of Mia Farrow, Soon Li and season courtside seats to the Knicks games.

Not to worry, Woody won't be today's subject. Instead we shall recall the guy who got Mr. Allen started as a comic... Mort Sahl. Sahl started a revolution in night-club and TV comedy. He began performing in 1950 after his graduation from USC. Within a few years he was appearing at the Blue Angel, a Manhattan club where his act was light-years away from the typical comic. Acts like Milton Berle and Jack Carter drew their laughs by cavorting with chorus girls. Jokes were about women's underwear.

In contrast Sahl talked about philosophy, politics, jazz, cars, and psychiatry. He wore no tux, or baggy pants, but walked on stage attired in a sweater, jeans and an open-necked shirt. He carried a rolled-up newspaper which he would pretend to read. Actually it contained key lines he could glance at when crowd silences would cause him to forget a routine. This was a comedian? One of his routines had a group of college students trying to hold up the Fairmount Hotel in San Francisco, and I can remember it because it is so typical of his humor. They planned to use the money to live in the hotel for the rest of their lives. The cashier they are demanding the money from is also a college student.

"Give us the money and act normal," they say. "First you must define your terms," the cashier tells them. "What is normal?" And the routine goes on from there.

Sahl describes a 16-year-old girl in the Village dressed in a short skirt and long earrings, saying, "Western religion has failed me." Richard Nixon's answer to the questioner who asks if he was born in a log cabin: "That was Abe Lincoln. I was born in a manger," and he imagined the comments of the three leading contenders for the 1960 Democratic presidential convention

John F. Kennedy: "I am here to accept the nomination."

Lyndon B. Johnson: "I am a candidate, but I can't be here because I have to run the country."

Adlai E. Stevenson: "I am not a candidate and I'm not here."

Twenty-eight years later Sahl described another presidential candidate with his usual subtle dig: "Jesse Jackson... the Reverend Jesse Jackson... A man of the cloth... cashmere."

Because Sahl's act depends on his audience being familiar with sometimes far out subjects, and certainly different from usual comics, people thought of him as an intellectual. Bob Hope once introduced him at the Academy Awards with, "Here he is, the favorite of nuclear physicists everywhere."

That is probably not true. Intelligent, yes, but as one writer put it, "the first entertainer in years who contrived to smuggle his brains past-a velvet rope." You cannot laugh at Sahl without knowing the facts, and he explains them first. He did what they say S.J. Perelman did in his stories... he explained the runway before he took off.

Woody Allen watched Sahl perform on Broadway and television for several years before he got up enough nerve to think he could "maybe be a comedian, too." So really if anyone could be blamed (given credit?) for Woody's rise to fame it was Mort Sahl. Wonder where he is today?
I'd go see him.