

EDITORIAL

School boards must keep focus on education

It's getting to budget time for school districts, whose fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30, and already there are warnings that revenue growth may fall short of prior years. The preliminary plan for Lake-Lehman shows an increase in tax revenue that is less than what the district has come to expect, and is below anticipated expenses. It's likely that Dallas will feel a similar pinch. At the same time, both districts are immersed in ambitious renovation programs, which seem to grow in scope and expense with each passing month.

Athletics command a large portion of the construction plans in both districts, and it may be time to ask if the funding and attention devoted to sports is appropriate for the times, and for the means of most taxpayers. Dallas recently completed a major renovation of its football stadium and construction of a fieldhouse. Now Lake-Lehman is considering similar plans, including the installation of artificial turf on the main playing field for football, soccer and field hockey. The projected cost of a fieldhouse seems excessive in itself, and the basic concept of a 3/4 million dollar expenditure raises the hackles of frugal taxpayers, as well it should. As for the turf, it's surely less expensive and probably safer for players to refurbish the grass fields that have served so well.

The Back Mountain is not immune to the economic twists and turns that are now evident across the nation. This would be a good time for school board members and administrators to adopt a wait-and-see approach to large expenditures, at until the future seems clearer.

Voting: Our greatest right

Will you make it to the polls when the 2001 primary election is held next Tuesday? If you don't, you will be neglecting the basic right from which all others spring in our democratic system.

While this is a primary, not a general election, in many instances this vote will decide local political leadership. There are two reasons this is so. First, because in many cases one party dominates local politics, and then because of Pennsylvania's odd "cross filing" system, under which candidates may be listed on the ballot of an opposing party as long as they have collected a minimum number of signatures from members of that party. This scheme works to deprive the electorate of a choice in November if the same person wins the primary on each party's ballot.

A lot can happen between May and November, and it is unfair to take from voters the opportunity to have an honest choice in the general election.

Regardless of shortcomings like these, the American electoral process still is the envy of most other nations, and its faults are not an excuse for not participating. If you have a choice on Tuesday, be sure to take the time to make your voice heard through the ballot box.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



Recent developments in national defense policy have changed the way I think about failure and success. That in turn has led me in the direction of a new career as a professional golfer, which I expect will be subsidized by the federal government. What, you might ask, do defense policy and this idiot's non-existent chance of playing pro golf have in common? Let me explain.

When President Ronald Reagan suggested the U.S. construct a space-based missile defense system, it was jokingly referred to as "Star Wars." No one laughed at the price tag, though, which was projected at many billions of dollars. Subsequent administrations continued work on a missile defense, if at a reduced rate. They got so far as testing the scheme against dummy targets. Some of the targets were really dummies, balloons made to look as far from an actual missile as possible to give the defenders an easy shot. But no matter how hard they tried, developers could not make the defensive missiles hit a single target.

This, of course, has not deterred the new occupant of the White House, who is determined that we spend many more billions of dollars to build something to protect us from rogue states like Zambia and Borneo, should they get twitchy trigger fingers on some as yet unseen nuclear attack vehicle.

Here's how this relates to my pro golf aspirations. Like the missile defense scheme, I've never played well enough to earn a spot on the tour - in fact I haven't even been close. And you could easily find more people who would give me no chance of success than would bet a nickel on my chances. But since abject failure has done nothing to deter the President from spending billions of unbudgeted bucks on missiles, I figure 100 grand or so a year for me isn't too much to ask. Just to sweeten the offer, I'll volunteer to keep an eye out for shady looking characters around the 19th hole once I'm on tour.



Spring has sprung. Photo by Jim Phillips

LETTERS

DAMA litigation grossly exaggerated

I and the rest of us directly involved with the Harveys Lake General Municipal Authority have had to sit back, gagged and with our hands tied behind our backs, and endure cheap shots, in regard to the litigation with D.A.M.A.

To make any statements or accusations could have jeopardized the entire legal case.

This has been extremely difficult for all of us who knew the facts, and had to sit by and watch it played out in the press and see things blown so out of

proportion and taken to extremes. In this case, the word exaggeration is a gross understatement.

Our board asked our residents to be patient and understanding, explaining they were confident we would prevail in the end, and assuring them it was their money they were fighting to protect. They encouraged our residents to attend our public meetings and view our Federal Audit and our budget, assuring them all other bills were paid and current,

welcoming them to come and see for themselves.

I am not only proud to say this, I am also grateful, that for the most part, our residents stood behind our board and supported them through this difficult time. This was important, crucial and helpful. I cannot thank the citizens enough for their trust and faith in us at this time.

To those few, who for political reasons choose to point fingers and make groundless accusations, shame on them!

This board has not only saved the community over a half a million dollars, but many millions more, as these gross overcharges would have continued forever and ever had they not taken a legal stand.

Justice prevailed in the end, which goes to show you that working together and being patient has its rewards.

My thanks to the good people of Harveys Lake!

Richard H. Boice

What's on the Horizon?



by Dorne White

Note: This month's column is authored by Dorne White who is a resident of Harveys Lake. When he is not involved with his duties as President of the Bowmans Creek Watershed Association and as a board member of the North Branch Land Trust, he enjoys spending time with his family and also hunting and fishing.

The first step in a watershed conservation effort is to identify the major issues, concerns and threats that exist with regard to the watershed. A plan for the Bowmans Creek Watershed will be developed through the efforts of the Northeast office of the PA Environmental Council (PEC) and Pa Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). A Rivers Conservation Grant was awarded by DCNR in the spring of 2000. Public meetings are currently being held with the help of municipal officials and the Bowmans Creek Watershed Association (BCWA) members with PEC leading the steering committee.

The BCWA promotes responsible land use in the watershed. This can include keeping trees and shrubs intact along streams; redeveloping land that has been used previously; and preserving open space and farmland. A partnering group of the BCWA, the North Branch Land Trust provides the means for landowners in Luzerne and Wyoming

Bowmans Creek Watershed Association

Counties (also in Susquehanna County, but that is outside of our watershed) to preserve land in its natural state. This is achieved through a "conservation easement," the tool of the land trust trade, which protects lands in perpetuity from undesirable land use changes. In addition, the BCWA puts great value on the mountain headwaters of Bowman's Creek. Made up of tracts of preserved land, like state park and state game lands, as well as large and small tracts of privately-owned land, these forested and vital "wilderness areas" of the watershed must be protected by the Association.

A significant issue in the watershed is the possibility of restoring Mountain Springs Lake. A partnership among the PA Fish and Boat Commission, BCWA members, and civil engineers is working to estimate the cost of a full restoration, including the lake's recreational fishery and its dam. Many citizens cite recreation and historical value as reasons to restore the 40-acre lake. One obstacle, in addition to the lake's aging dam, is the harsh acid rain conditions in its headwaters environment.

Flood and Erosion Control

Bowmans Creek Watershed Association, the Wyoming County Planning Commission and Borton Lawson Engineering are partnering to improve storm water management and promote the protection of the watershed's valuable wetlands as part of this work.

While some degree of erosion is natural in a watershed, Bowmans Creek has many sites of heavy stream bank erosion. At the present time, the process of identifying these areas (pictures, mapping, etc.) and planning to

gether with our partners to put plans in place to fix these problems. Grants will be sought by the municipalities for repair of these sites.

The Association also volunteered to plant a riparian (streamside) vegetative buffer along a tributary of Bowmans Creek in cooperation with the landowner, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Ducks Unlimited and the Wyoming County Conservation District.

The BCWA, in cooperation with Eaton Township, Noxen Township and Monroe Township, is planning a major stream cleanup project, which will be funded by a Growing Greener Grant from the state. The Alliance Landfill is picking up the tab for hauling and disposal of the collected trash. Clean-up will begin in mid-September.

The watershed volunteers have been performing chemical water quality tests and aquatic insect surveys. Some of the groups are: Teachers and students from the Tunkhannock Middle School, King's College, Wilkes University, RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), and watershed members. We are participating in the Citizens Volunteer Monitoring Program sponsored by the PA Department of Environmental Protection. Volunteer monitoring helps watershed residents develop an understanding of the resources they wish to conserve.

Fish Habitat Improvement

There are on-going efforts to improve fish and insect habitat. Members working with schools and Trout Unlimited are working in the creek in key spots to build small trout dams using the creek's stones, rocks and debris and to add overhead cover.

60 Years Ago - May 9, 1941

POST OFFICE MAY GET HIGHER RANK

Because of increased business during the past year, Dallas post office will probably be advanced to second class rating. Change in rating will mean an increase for the postmaster, bringing his salary to \$2,400.

Miss Betty Naugle, clarinet soloist of Lehman High School Band, will be this section's only representative in the All-State-Band when 175 musicians from eight district bands of the State gather at Lock Haven High

While not a typical habitat improvement, the Association is employing a safe method for fighting the effect of acid rain. While routinely monitoring water quality, pH alkalinity etc., limestone, sand and rock are added to the creek and affected tributary streams to help reduce the effects of "Acid Events" on the downstream waters. Some projects to date are a limestone pilot study on Roaring Run, a liming project on Baker Run by Dr. Mike Case and students of Wilkes University, and a lime addition project on the main stream of Bowmans Creek from Mountain Springs Lake outfall and in other headwater streams. These projects have been approved by the DEP and other governmental agencies.

It is hoped that Bowmans Creek will once again support a viable trout population after these improvements are in place. It may take many years of effort on our part, but the satisfaction of once again fishing in a good local trout stream will make it all seem worthwhile.

We would like to thank the groups that have given us support. Besides those named in the preceding article, these partners include the Noxen-Monroe Sportman's Association, Wyoming County Planning Commission, College Misericordia, Nanticoke Conservation Club, National Wild Turkey Federation, South Mountain Land Association, and the Eastern Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. If you would like to help or want additional information please contact BCWA officers: Dorne White, President, 639-2723; Josh Longmore, Secretary, 298-0913; Mervin Shaw, Vice President; or Bob Bartos, Treasurer.

School for their annual concert.

Approximately one hundred people attended the card party of the Kingston Township Parents and Teachers Association at the High School. Proceeds are to be used for the purchase of band uniforms.

50 Years Ago - May 11, 1951

RAYMON HEDDEN WILL CONSTRUCT LEHMAN ADDITION

Construction will start on the proposed addition to Lehman-Jackson high school building.

See ONLY YESTERDAY, page 5

The Dallas Post

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

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Julie D. Imel
EDITOR

Heather B. Jones
REPORTER

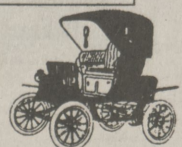
Ken Brocius
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.

Ruth Proietto
Production Manager

Ron and Charlotte Bartizek
PUBLISHERS EMERITUS

Stephen Peterson
PRESIDENT & CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
1-800-427-8649

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - May 8, 1931

NEW ROLLER COASTER AT HARVEY'S LAKE

Work is well under way on the new roller coaster at Harvey's

Lake picnic grounds. Miller & Bitler, of Homewood, Ill., have the general contract for construction of the big coaster.

Improvements are contemplated by the congregation of St. Therese's Church, Shavertown, to the church property. Landscaping has already started. Two new altars have been placed in the Shavertown church.

The Shavertown baseball team managed by herbert Williams, lost its opening game of the season to East Dallas nine by the score of 10 to 4.