

EDITORIALS

Keep school ratings in perspective

Standard & Poor's, which is best-known for its list of 500 stocks, has joined other organizations that attempt to rank the nation's schools in numerical fashion. This would seem on its face to be an admirable undertaking - after all, access to an adequate public education is one of the principles of our society. But the S&P rating, like its counterparts, is just one way of expressing a school's quality and value.

These rating systems often compare student performance in relation to districts with ostensibly similar socio-demographic makeup, or they make allowances for differences in family income, work status and other measurements. They are well-intentioned and have some value in offering broad brush comparisons. But parents and taxpayers must guard against giving them too much weight as they evaluate their schools' record. And there's a hidden danger in this type of rating system; one component is usually the percentage of low-income households in the district. The clear implication is that children from poor families can't be expected to compete with more fortunate peers, a concept that should be foreign to our way of thinking, and that has been disproved countless times by youngsters who have risen from poverty to be doctors, lawyers and successful business people.

Rating systems can be a handy starting point for the evaluation of a school's performance, but they are no more than that. The best judge of a school, its teachers and its administrators is still a conscientious parent who refuses to accept limitations on his or her child's opportunity.

Be prepared, not scared

As the events that began with vicious attacks on New York City and the Pentagon have spread far and wide, people are wondering what they can do to defend themselves from senseless, random acts of violence. Governments of all size are thinking along the same lines, and so are hospitals, police and fire departments and emergency medical personnel.

It's important that individual citizens and families think about how they would respond if tragedy were to strike locally, but we shouldn't allow such concerns to prevent us from pursuing activities that enrich our lives and act as buffers to the stress of the moment, or of everyday life for that matter. We can be grateful the institutions and organizations charged with protecting us are moving ahead with revised plans that reflect new threats. The best way we can assist is to keep our heads and think in advance about what we need to do and where we need to go should an unexpected disaster strike, whether it might be an unseen agent or a snowstorm.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



Now that the baseball playoffs are in full swing, it seems appropriate to take a peek at one of the peculiarities of the national pastime. There's a cable television show titled, "American Justice;" this column is about "Baseball Justice," and what the two have in common, and what not.

In the American judicial system, you are innocent until proven guilty. That's why news media sprinkle the work "alleged" in the body copy when huge headlines name a suspect - as if most people have the faintest idea that we're protecting his or her innocence. Baseball Justice doesn't concern itself with such niceties, particularly if the infraction is throwing a 100-mile-per-hour fastball at an opposing batter's anatomy. What happens next demonstrates that baseball has some spiritual roots, at least in the Old Testament. See, if the other pitcher threw at your guy, your pitcher is obligated to hit one of their batters. In the National League, where pitchers must come to the plate, the target of choice is - you guessed it - the offending pitcher. Pitchers don't bat in the American League, so those bent on retribution aim at the next best thing, the opposing team's top hitter. In the precise terminology of the game, this is called "plunking" him.

Sometimes the player who has been hit doesn't accept his sentence. In American Justice, he would scamper away into the great unknown before being led to the hoosegow. Not so in Baseball Justice; in that case, he would throw down his bat and head straight toward the pitcher. Since the catcher would follow him out to the mound and be joined by four other players ready to defend their pitcher, the furious batter usually shows enough common sense not to bring along a heavy wooden object that could be used against him. (There have been creative variations on this theme, such as the batter who shoved the catcher to the ground before racing to the mound.)

Baseball is a team game, so once a batter has engaged the enemy he will be supported by his teammates, at least in principle. (It's always interesting when a melee breaks out to watch the fringes of the action for players who are lingering there, raising little more than their voices.) The comparable scene in American Justice might be if the defendant and his lawyers stormed the bench after an unfavorable verdict, and were met by the prosecution, fists flying.

In the end, the judge (umpire) will toss a couple of guys out of the game - often the best pitcher and hitter on their respective teams - everyone will return to stations and the innings will drag on; unless after that point an unfortunate pitcher's fingers slip off the ball and it grazes another batter. Then Baseball Justice begins its cycle yet again. Fortunately, even in the playoffs there are 25 players on each roster.



It's punkin-pickin' time! Photo by Jim Phillips.

What's on the Horizon?



Alene N. Case

"What's on the Horizon?" takes on particular significance during the month of October. The North Branch Land Trust is sponsoring two events that will provide the public with a new appreciation of our natural surroundings. One is an art show and sale and the other is a multimedia concert.

On Saturday evening, Oct. 20, from 5 to 8 p.m., the Pennsylvania En Plein Air Society will hold its Tenth Anniversary Member's Exhibit Opening Reception at the Luzerne National Bank on Public Square in Wilkes-Barre. This is a group of local painters who love to do their work in the great out-of-doors. Under the able leadership of a Dallas resident, Sue Hand, they have held several "paint-outs" in the watershed of the North Branch of the Susquehanna River over the past few months and will be exhibiting the results of their work. A portion of the proceeds of the sales on the opening night will benefit the North Branch Land Trust, which provided guides and special locations for many of these "paint-outs." A silent auction of at least two paintings - one by Sue Hand herself - will also benefit our organization. This Preview Reception is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be provided. I should also point out that the paintings will be on display throughout the following week at that branch of Luzerne National Bank at 67-69 Public Square near the Kirby Center.

Art and Nature combined to aid North Branch Land Trust

Then, on Friday, Oct. 26, at 7:30 p.m. we will be treated to the sights and sounds of a multimedia "Forever Wild" show by the very creative Walkin' Jim Stoltz in the McAuley-Walsh Auditorium at College Misericordia in Dallas. Walkin' Jim has covered approximately 25,000 miles during the past 15 years. During his treks, he carries his guitar and camera so that he can share his experiences in song and photographs with those of us who cannot get to the remote places in North America to see them for ourselves. In fact, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded him with their Outstanding Achievement Award for his sharing of nature and wilderness across America.

Walkin' Jim expresses a great love and respect for the Earth and the wild places he knows so well. Since his home is in Montana, many of his treks take place in the West: the Utah wildlands, the Northern Rockies, the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada, and, most recently, a Yellowstone to Yukon walk. His baritone voice and stunning slides will transport us there long enough to join in this celebration of wilderness with him. Mr. Stoltz has produced eight CDs, several of which get regular play on Public Radio stations, and these will be on sale at the concert along with other memorabilia from Walkin' Jim and the Land Trust. If you missed the Art Show the weekend before, you will enjoy the opportunity to bid on three framed wildlife prints that have been donated by a Land Trust board member and his wife.

So, call The Land Trust office at 696-5545 for your tickets to this "must-see" event. Adult tickets are \$10 each and Student tickets are \$5 (college students must present a college ID at the door). Tickets are also on sale at Hillside Farms Dairy Store, Plains Animal Hospital (a major sponsor of this event), Dallas Photo Shop, and from any board member of the Land Trust. A few tickets may be available at the door on the night of the performance.

Our horizons will be stretched and our spirits lifted by the artists who share their impressions with us. Some take a small local scene and give it vibrant color. Others take far-away places and make them real to us in word and song. Come join us this month and share the art of nature.

For more information, please call North Branch Land Trust at 570-696-5545. Alene N. Case is a board member of the Land Trust and lives in Trucksville with her husband and son.

Back Mountain Memorial Library new books

The Back Mountain Memorial Library, 96 Huntsville Road, Dallas, announces the addition of the following books to their collection.

FICTION

- "A Bend in the Road" by Nicholas Sparks
- "The Smoke Jumper" by Nicholas Evans
- "The Surgeon" by Tess Gerritsen
- "September Song" by Andrew M. Greeley
- "On the Night Plain" by J. Robert Lennon
- "City of Dreams" by Beverly Swerling
- "Fury" by Salman Rushdie
- "Total Recall" by Sara Paretsky

- "Blowback" by Eric James Fullilove
- "Miss Julia Takes Over" by Ann B. Ross
- "Bird's-eye View" by J.F. Freedman
- NONFICTION**
- "Misconceptions: truth, lies and the unexpected on the journey to motherhood: by Naomi Wolf
- "How to Write Your College Application Essay" by Kenneth A. Nourse
- "The Annotated Huckleberry Finn: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain
- "Sensational Bouquets by Christian Tortu" by Corine Delahaye
- MYSTERY**
- "Scene of Crime" by Jill McGowan
- BIOGRAPHY**
- "It's True! It's True!" by Kurt Angle

- "Marie Antoinette" by Antonia Fraser
- LARGE PRINT FICTION**
- "The Forgotten" by Faye Kellerman
- "The Woman Next Door" by Barbara Delinsky
- "Long Time No See" by Susan Isaacs
- "Hard News" by Jeff Deaver
- "The Last Time I Saw Paris" by Elizabeth Adler
- "Resort to Murder" by Carolyn G. Hart
- BOOKS ON CASSETTE**
- "A Different Drummer" by Michael K. Deaver
- "The Power of Positive Thinking in Business" by Scott W. Ventrella



70 Years Ago - October 16, 1931

APPEAL DAMAGES AWARDED BY COUNTY

Local interest if being shown in the appeal being made by Margaret Roberts of Hillside from the award for damages to her property which was made by the county viewers when the new Trucksville-Luzerne highway was constructed. The viewers placed the damage at \$2,500 by Mrs. Roberts has appealed from the award claiming that the damage far exceeded this amount.

At the American Stores Co., you could get Morton's table salt, 2 pkgs 154; butter 2 lbs., 85¢; eggs, 1 carton, 39¢; tea, 1 lb. pkg, 23¢; 1 loaf of bread, 10¢; Ivory Soap, 4 cakes, 25¢.

At the Himmler Theatre, some of the shows that played: Trans Atlantic, with Edmund Lowe; The Two Gun Man, with Ken Maynard; Caught Plastered, with Bert Wheeler and Robert Woolsey; Riders of the Cactus, with Wally Wales.

60 Years Ago - October 17, 1941

DR. G.K. SWARTZ ENTERS PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Sixteen years of medical practice in Dallas Borough and surrounding communities will come to a close for Dr. George K. Swartz when he is sworn into the United States Public Health Service. In giving his reasons for the change, Dr. Swartz said Public Health work will give him the opportunity to specialize in his chosen field.

Shavertown Methodist Church, of which Rev. Russell J. May is pastor, will celebrate the thirty-eighth anniversary of the building of the church with special services during Anniversary Week. The first Methodist Episcopal Church of Shavertown was built in 1903.

B. Frank Bulford, only surviving signer of the original Dallas Borough Charter, will celebrate his eight-sixth anniversary with an open house to all his friends and relatives. Mr. Bulford is probably the oldest living person born and reared in Dallas.

50 Years Ago - October 19, 1951

ST. PAUL'S TO BE REDEDICATED BY FIRST PASTOR

A service of rededication will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church with Rev. G. Elson Ruff, Lift. D., as guest preacher. Rev. Ruff is the first pastor of the church. During Dr. Ruff's pastorate at St. Paul's, he also served as pastor of Reformation Lutheran church at Harveys Lake. The present pastor is Rev. Frederick W. Mook, Jr.

Mrs. Calvin Hall, Shavertown, has been appointed chairman of training on Dallas District Girl Scout Council. She was captain of Shavertown Girl Scout Troop 66 for two years, and unit leader for Intermediate Girl Scouts at Camp Onawandah this past year.

Captain Alfred Camp, left recently for Fort Sill, Oklahoma, en route for California, with Korea his objective. Captain Camp, former supervisor of music at Dallas Township High School, has recently graduated from the Advanced Officers Field Artillery School at Fort Sill.

40 Years Ago - October 19, 1961

TRUCKSVILLE NATIVE COMMENDED IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

A former Trucksville girl, Mrs. Robert A. Brinkworth, formerly Elsie Updyke, sister of Chief of Police Herbert Updyke, has received commendation from Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire for forwarding an editorial from the Dallas Post. Mrs. Brinkworth is the wife of Robert A. Brinkworth, Chief Financial Clerk of the senate.

Ann's Apparel Shop in Luzerne has moved to larger quarters, making the move from the former location at the corner of Bennett and Main Streets to the store formerly occupied by Reeves, in the main shopping area.

Airman 1st Class Robert Nice-

See YESTERDAY, pg 9

The Dallas Post

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

P.O. BOX 366, DALLAS, PA 18612 • 570-675-5211

Julie D. Imel
EDITOR

REPORTER

Ken Brocius
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.

Ruth Proletto
Production Manager

Ron and Charlotte Bartizek
PUBLISHERS EMERITUS

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