

EDITORIALS

Pay hikes show who majority commissioners aim to please

A year after handing property owners a 17 mill hike in taxes - raising them to the maximum rate allowed by law - the majority Luzerne County commissioners have added insult to injury by granting retroactive 2001 raises to 400 county management employees. The two Toms, Makowski and Pizano, also voted to give similar raises for 2002, using more than \$1 million in funds that suddenly became available. At the same time, the county has added several jobs, including one that was handed to Makowski's "executive administrative assistant," three jobs in the controller's office to replace four that were transferred to the new "Office of Personnel, Budget and Finance," and a \$32,000-a-year deputy director post for the Department of Voter Services, presumably to do the work of Kevin Jordan, the director who is on indefinite leave.

That's not all; while the majority commissioners were handing out cash as quickly as they could, the county is committed to a multi-million dollar expansion and renovation of the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport, even as passenger traffic is declining. Not to worry, though, officials say floating a huge bond to pay for this and other capital projects is one factor that frees up money for raises.

Anyone with half a brain can see by these actions the majority commissioners think taxpayers are spineless suckers, willing to have their pockets picked so the Democratic political machine can pay off supporters and line up votes to keep them in power. Up to this point they've been right; with rare exceptions the courthouse is filled with personal and party loyalists who know their jobs and pensions depend on the largesse of the elected majority, and never rock the boat.

The overwhelming approval of a government study commission hasn't slowed this con game down, even though in-crowd candidates for the panel lost big in November. Voters had better pay careful attention to the shenanigans that take place in the Luzerne County Courthouse, and they'd better follow through by endorsing systemic changes when they have the opportunity to do so. Otherwise, progress will continue pass by this region, and our best and brightest minds will look elsewhere for a fair shake and representation by public officials who have at least a grudging interest in the public good.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



Those of us who enjoy sliding down a hillside with boards strapped to our feet have been disappointed with winter's reluctant start. Ski resorts that opened at Thanksgiving a year ago are at half capacity as the new year turns, and all the snow has come from mechanical monsters, not from the clouds. Even so, a quick trip to Elk Mountain last weekend was worth the effort. Skiing isn't for everyone, of course, especially anyone who thinks frostbite means eating ice cubes. Fortunately, today's winter clothing is far superior to that of even a generation ago, both in warmth and comfort, making a day on the slopes more enjoyable. And the new "long johns" don't itch!

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New Year's Eve in New York City was a remarkable testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Only four months after the city was targeted for one of the most horrific attacks in American history revelers filled the streets as the crystal ball dropped at the stroke of midnight. The interviews I caught between catnaps showed people determined to overcome the scars of September 11 and to carry on with lives that are strangely richer than before. This is not the outcome anticipated by the fanatical lunatics who turned airliners into flying bombs.

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With apologies to a son who lives in Omaha, I hope Miami beats Nebraska in the Rose Bowl, which is being played after these words go to press. A Miami victory will quiet, but not silence advocates of a playoff system in college football, who insist that the current system doesn't crown a "true" champion. Well, here's a news flash for them; the best team doesn't win every game, and a real playoff scheme would need at least a best two-out-of-three format. I don't think anyone is prepared for that - at least I hope not.

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During a brief Christmas vacation to Connecticut, I noticed something that hadn't been true in years - gasoline prices in Connecticut were comparable to what they are here. For several years, prices in the New England states were anywhere from 10 cents to a quarter per gallon higher. The difference was mostly attributable to higher state taxes. What gives now? Here we are in a relatively low income area paying as much even though taxes are lower. A recent report about prices in Pennsylvania noted the same statistic - our prices are near the highest in the state. Anyone know why?



Remember this? Our cover photo from January 24, 2001 showed off the handiwork of Kyle and Mike Hazleton, foreground, and Karen and Doug Ogle. Caps from gallon jugs were used for the buttons and facial features.



70 Years Ago - January 1, 1932

ELECTRIC RATE CUT ANNOUNCED

A reduction in the electric rate in Luzerne County Gas and Electric Corporation that will effect a saving company officials say, to all residence, commercial and agricultural customers has been announced by A. J. Liewellyn, president of the company. This is the third reduction since 1928.

Shavertown and Lehman won their games in the fourth week of games in the rural league played at Meridian Hall, Dallas, before the biggest crowd of the season.

At the Himmler Theatre some of the shows that played were: Street Scene with sylvia Sidney; Homicide Squad with Noah Beery; Waterloo Bridge with May Clark and Kent Douglas; and The Cisco Kid with Warner Baxter. Admission for children was 10¢.

60 Years Ago - January 2, 1942

STARK HONORED BY LAKE GROUP

More than 300 Harvey's Lake Cottagers and residents of the Back Mountain region attended the first annual dinner dance of Harvey's Lake Protective Association in the Grand Ballroom of Hotel Sterling, Wilkes-Barre. Tribute was paid to one of Wyoming Valley's native sons, Admiral Harold R. Stark, chief of United States Naval Operations. A portrait of Admiral Stark by Nicholas Cortilia, Beaumont, was unveiled.

Twenty-one cakes were delivered to shut-ins the day before Christmas, by the Back Mountain Shut-In Workers. This is sponsored by the Women of Rotary. Mrs. A.N. Garinger of Dallas was in charge of the delivery.

At Acme Markets some of

the items you could get were: turkeys, all sizes 1lb., 33¢; pineapple juice, 2 cans 25¢; corned beef can 24¢; coffee, 2lbs., 23¢; bread, 2 lge loaves, 17¢.

50 years ago - January 4, 1952

REDSKINS WILL ENTER STRONG TEAM IN LEAGUE COMPETITION

Dallas Township for the first time in six years enters the season with an even chance for honors in the Back Mountain League Basketball. The Redskins coached by Bob Thomas, figure to be one of the strongest outfits in the league and will right in the thick of the championship scramble.

The Pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Shavertown, Rev. Frederick W. Moock, Jr., formally tendered his resignation as a special meeting of the congregation, to accept a call to St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Phoenixville, Pa.

Ralph Sands and I.R. Elston were sworn in as new Supervisors of Kingston Township on New Year's Day and Howard Edwards was sworn in as newly elected auditor.

40 Years Ago - January 4, 1962

BOROUGH OFFICIALS SWORN IN AT REORGANIZATION MEETING

Three Dallas Borough Council men, Grace Cave, Robert Moore and Wilbur Davis, reelected to their second terms, were sworn into office by Mayor Thomas Morgan at the annual reorganization meeting of Borough Council in the Borough Building.

Dallas Outdoor Theatre has been sold to Richard Fox, owner of Fox Drive-In Theatres, with headquarters in Reading. The sale was consummated in November. Officers were John Coom, president; Vern Groff, vice president; A. Harden Coon, treasurer; Thomas Graham, secretary.

James Besecker moved his Real Estate Offices to a newly purchased and redecorated building across Main Street from his former quarters in

the Gregory Building, completing the move during the holidays.

30 Years Ago - January 13, 1972

TREATMENT PLANT NEARS COMPLETION

Brandywyne, the apartment complex being developed currently on Route 309, Dallas Township has been accepted for sewer extension by Dallas Area Municipal Authority and officials of Dallas Township, Dallas Borough and Kingston Township.

Commonwealth Telephone Company, Dallas, has acquired Leesport Rural Telephone Company, Leesport, through an exchange of common stock. The acquisition involved the exchange of 42,660 shares of stock for 1,840 shares of Leesport common and 545 shares of preferred.

Six more Dallas youths have joined The Dallas Post Staff as news carriers. The latest members are: Mike Muldoon, Carol Layaou, John Bittner, Lori English, Charles Youngman, and Scott Prater.

20 Years Ago - January 6, 1982

FIRST BABY OF YEAR

it will be a "Happy New Year" for Katrina Marea Fanti, the first Back Mountain baby born Jan. 1, 1982. Katrina Marea was born Jan. 1, 7:10 a.m., at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, to Richard and Cynthia Fanti, Dallas. Weighing eight pounds and 21 inches in length, Katrina Marea is the Fanti's first child.

By a two to one margin, members of Wilkes-Barre Printing Pressman and assistants' Local 137 have accepted a new contract with Offset Paperback Manufacturers Inc. The three-year agreement, became effective January 1 and runs through December 31, 1984.

Navy Equipment Operator Constructionman Recruit John P. Lemmond, son of Barbara N. and Charles D. Lemmond Jr. of Dallas was graduated from Equipment Operators School, conducted at the Naval Construction Training center, Gulfport, Miss.



Carol King

Reminders for the New Year:

- The Slightly Read Bookstore re-opens on Saturday, Jan. 5. Manager Fred Krohle continues the biography special through January; buy two biographies, at \$2 each, and get a third one free.

- Registration for the children's story hours will take place January 7-13. The story hours will begin on Tuesday, Feb. 5. Call 675-1182 for further information.

- As you fill in dates on your new calendars, don't forget to write in the Friends' 14th Annual Luncheon on Thursday, April 18, at Appletree Terrace at Newberry Estate. Note that the 18th is the third Thursday in April, a departure from tradition. The speaker will be editor Esther Davidowitz of Kingston. She is receiving great acclaim for her latest publication, a collection of catechetical writings of the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, titled "Your Life Is Worth Living: The Christian Philosophy of Life."

Back Mountain Memorial Library memorial books

In memory of Ruth Maskalis, "Feeling Good is Good For You" by Carl J. Charnetski, presented by Ben and Debbie Maskalis

In memory of Art Fraley, "Leader Effectiveness Training, LET: the proven people skills for today's leaders" by Thomas Gordon, presented by The Shaw Family at Jilly's

In memory of Erma Devine Evans, "Retribution" by Stuart M. Kaminsky, presented by Karen A. Yamrus

In memory of Ruth Foley, "Smuggler's Moon" by Bruce Alexander, presented by The Ladies English Tea Group

In memory of Cynthia Galletly Cave, "No Finish Line" by Marla Runyan, presented by Jacqueline Biscontini

In memory of Elizabeth C. Laycock, "American Chica" by Maria Arana, presented by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Nicholson

In memory of Ruth Foley, "Great Rubber Stamping" by Judy Ritchie and Jamie Kilmartin, presented by Florence and Jim Finn

In memory of John L. Allen, "American Colonies" by Alan Taylor, presented by Sasha and Simone Allen

In memory of Mrs. Dorothy Eckroat, "The Avery Complete Guide to Medicines" by Ian Morton, presented by John and Florence Juris

In memory of Ruth Foley, "The Next Accident" by Lisa Gardner, presented by Roslyn and Sandy Rudin

In memory of Ruth Foley, "The Magic of Ordinary Days" by Ann Howard Creel, presented by Mr. and Mrs. William J. Lopasky

In memory of Ruth Foley, "Gift Wrapping and Greeting Cards" edited by Lydia Darbyshire, presented by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hawk

In memory of Mrs. Anne Tetschner, "German Castles and Palaces" by Claus Merten, presented by Dallas Rotary Club

In memory of Dr. Frank E. Halstead, "Labs Afield: the ultimate tribute to the world's greatest retriever" edited by Todd R. Berger, presented by Andrew and Diane Molitoris

In memory of General Frank Townend, "The Hungry years" by T.H. Watkins, presented by The Thursday Club

In memory of General Frank Townend, "Love Stories of World War II" compiled by Larry King, presented by Lynn Gonchar and Barbara Shaffer

In memory of William J. Lipo, "The World War II Reader" edited by the Editors of World War II Magazine, presented by Matthew Lipo

In memory of Cole Christopher Szczecinski, "First Comes love: all about the birds and the bees-and alligators, possums, and people too" by Jennifer Davis, presented by Kristina and Curtis Szczecinski

In memory of Cole Christopher Szczecinski, "I Miss You" by Pat Thomas, presented by Kristina and Curtis Szczecinski

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A: Only in The Dallas Post