

EDITORIALS

# Crime, punishment and lessons for all of us

There are all kinds of lessons to be learned from the arrest of six juvenile boys charged with at least 43 thefts and three burglaries in Jackson Township last year. One of the most important may be that you can't be too careful — with your possessions or your kids.

There is no justification for stealing, at least not when the criminals' children aren't starving and the items they steal aren't life necessities. That said, a lot of people made it easier for these children to get their hands on cell phones, compact disks, computers and other items they plucked off the seats of unlocked cars or from inside unlocked homes. And they were only caught after they inadvertently left a stolen cellular phone in a rental car, which they had "borrowed" from a parent without permission. Oh, and not one of these kids was old enough to drive.

So, lesson one is not to toss fuel on the fire of youthful irresponsibility by leaving valuable items in easy-to-see and easy-to-steal locations.

There's also a lesson for adults, even if they aren't parents of young lawbreakers. This one is that children — yes, they're still children at age 13 and 14 — need supervision and correction to keep them on the path to productive maturity. All of us share a responsibility to guide young people in a direction that will lead them to success and satisfaction in life. To use a well-worn phrase, it really does take a village to raise a child; just ask anyone who is over 50 to describe a time when an adult who was not their parent warned them to stop running around in a store's aisles or to pick up after themselves. Such intervention is terribly unfashionable in our kid-centric age, when the common impression provided by television and the movies is that adults are incompetent dolts in need of repeated rescue by their wise-beyond-their-years children.

Are all adults saints who grew up unstained by wrongdoing? Not a chance, but that doesn't allow us to duck our duty to raise children. Maybe one of the first things to demonstrate is the wisdom and practicality of locking the doors at home and in the car.

# Fuzzy math from the state may cost local taxpayers

So you think costly economic disasters only happen in the private sector? It seems that Enron may not have anything on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, given the enormous hike in pension contributions being demanded from school districts.

According to local school officials, last year districts contributed 1.09 percent of payroll toward employee pensions. This year, the rate has shot up to 5.64 percent, more than a five-fold increase. Placing this overwhelming burden on local taxpayers undoubtedly allows state officials to "hold the line" on spending, much as Enron shifted unwieldy debt off its books and hid it among allied partnerships. But phony accounting is phony no matter if it's being done by a corporation or government, and someone has to pay the bill. In the case of Lake-Lehman, this cost shift could result in an added four or five mills on the already high property tax rate.

The pension fund may need the volume of cash it soaks up, but it is cowardly for the state to simply send the bill down the line rather than face up to it in a way that is more equitable. After all, this burden is being added after years during which state contributions to education were substantially reduced. That's just not fair, and we support local school administrators in their protest of this shameless redistribution of expenses.

# Letters, columns and editorials

The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms.

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.
- The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

In addition to letters, we welcome longer pieces that may run as columns. The author or subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be the prime consideration when selecting material for publication.



Any takers? Photo by Jim Phillips

LETTERS

# Watershed land deals casting a wide shadow

Editor:

Enron is a name that is rapidly becoming synonymous with corporate greed, mismanagement and total disregard for ethical business behavior. Enron is not alone in the business world. Over the last two years we have witnessed our own version of Enron here in Northeastern Pennsylvania. This has been the wholesale dismemberment and destruction of our watershed for the profit of the chosen few. Two years ago, 40,000 acres of land, that for a century was protected and preserved for the benefit of the citizens of the area, was sold in a deal that can only be characterized as an outright gift to reported recipient Louis DeNaples.

The reasons that both of these atrocities were perpetrated on the public and shareholders are similar. There was a failure of government agencies to provide effective oversight and review of the dealings. In the case of our

watershed, the PUC allowed a Land Use Management Agreement to be signed that failed to protect at least the 27,000 acres that was designated for conservation. We are left with 500-foot buffers around our reservoirs but nothing to guarantee the safety of the aquifers and recharge capacity of the reservoirs. It is also evident from recent revelations that additional sweet deals between the former Pennsylvania Enterprises and Mr. DeNaples transferred valuable land assets of the corporation to Mr. DeNaples for right of ways of questionable value and utility. Certainly the relationship between Mr. DeNaples and Mr. Karam (former board member of Pennsylvania Energy and now COO of Southern Union, its new parent company) must be reexamined. The University of Scranton is also in a difficult position since these two men are members of the board of trustees. The University's com-

mitment to moral and ethical behavior along with protection and stewardship of the environment is on the line.

Southern Union, the Texas based utility that sold our watershed is now moving some of its corporate operations here to Northeastern Pennsylvania. We will soon have the opportunity to confront the dealmakers and perhaps find out why the assets of the shareholders were manipulated for the sole benefit of Mr. DeNaples. Mr. Karam must also come clean and explain his actions if he is to have any credibility in this community.

Given the fallout from Enron, I hope that for the sake of our community and the future of Northeastern Pennsylvania that we discover the truth.

Paul E. Niezgoda  
Jackson Township  
Treasurer,  
Defend Our Watershed



Carol King

The Librarian's annual report to the Board provides a wealth of statistics which are very impressive. Some of the highlights are: proceeds from the 2001 Auction: \$65, 651.47; funds raised by the Friends organization, including over \$14,000 in the annual membership drive, \$20,206.79; contributions of over \$10,000 from other private individuals and from service organizations.

The present staff includes two full-time persons; two three-quarter time people and nine part-time individuals. Volunteers contributed over 8,000 hours of their time at the library. Sales by the book store, staffed solely by volunteers, the upstairs book sales and the auction totaled \$11,637.06. The total circulation at the li-

# Library's volunteers are impressive fund raisers

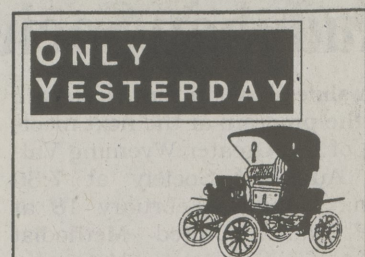
brary was 87,312 for the year. There was an increase in juvenile circulation of 1,985 (children still love books!). The total number of books added to the inventory was 2,664. The estimated active borrowers as of December 31, 2001 numbered 14,227.

The overall impression of the report is that the library is heavily committed to the community, and that many individuals contribute to its successful program. We are fortunate to have such a vibrant organization, under the leadership of librarian Martha Butler, that continually expands and improves its services.

**Book review:** The book discussed by the Monday morning group, "Henry of Atlantic City," by Frederick Reuss, tells the story of an appealing little boy who is handed around from one type of child custodial situation to another. He also happens to be a genius with a photographic memory. Among the first books he reads, the sum-

mer he turns six, are ones on gnosticism and Byzantium. Henry consistently baffles and frustrates adults by speaking as a gnostic in response to their questions. This is a very unusual book, and those who liked it — about a third of the group — were extravagantly enthusiastic about it, finding, among other attributes, a great deal of humor despite the serious theme. The rest of the group probably disliked it with the same intensity. I think a reader may be able to decide whether he/she will like the book by reading the first three or four pages. I recommend trying it.

**Display case:** Dolores Slesimsky of Dallas has loaned her collection of miniature copies of eight presidential homes to the library. The set was obtained from the Danbury Mint. The explanatory material which is displayed with each piece adds to the interest of the display. Very appropriate for this presidential month!



70 Years Ago - February 12, 1932

# ELECTRIC STORM CAUSES DAMAGE

A severe electrical storm did considerable damage in the vicinity of Dallas. A number of trees were struck by lightning and Dallas was without electric light and power. The Home of C.W. Kunkle was struck by lightning and considerable damage done to the kitchen of the home.

At the Himmler Theatre, some of the movies that played: Over the Hill, with Sally Eillers, and James Dunn; The Rainbow Trail, with Walter Huston; Way Back Home, with George O'Brien and The Ruling Voice, with Seth Parker.

Checks, representing the State subsidy for the support of the public school system in fourth class districts, were received by the following schools: Dallas borough, \$3,701.76; Dallas township, \$3,567.99; Jackson township, \$989.20; Franklin township, \$951.92; Kingston township, \$3,082.01; Lake township, \$3,082.01, and Lehman township, \$3,194.93.

60 Years Ago - February 13, 1942

# WOMEN'S CLUB ELECTS MRS. ECK NEW PRESIDENT

Mrs. Fred Eck was elected president of the Dallas Woman's Club at their meeting in Shavertown Hose House. First vice president, Mrs. Harold Shiber; second vice president, Mrs. Kenneth Oliver, recording secretary, Mrs. George Stolarick; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Clarence Adams; treasurer, Mrs. W.H. Derolf.

Pay increases totaling more than \$7,000 were distributed to employees of Armour Leather Company, Noxen. The wages represent an increase in the minimum hourly rates to 68¢ for all employees.

William G. Knecht, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Knecht of Church street who is with the Air Corps at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, has been promoted to Corporal.

50 Years Ago - February 15, 1952

# JOINT BOARD VOTES \$550 TO LIBRARY

At the regular meeting of the Dallas Borough-Kingston Township Joint School Board, the board voted to pay the amount of \$550 to the Back Mountain Memorial Library.

The rabbit industry is becoming important to the Back Mountain area. Tommy Andrew of Shavertown is the largest packer of rabbit meat in northeastern Pennsylvania. Some of the other Back Mountain breeders are: William Long, Stanley Moore, Joseph Stager, and Henry Blank of Trucksville.

Poor attendance at its meeting at Memorial Library Annex prevented the Ways and Means Committee of Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company from electing a chairman or taking a concrete action.

40 Years Ago - February 15, 1962

# APPEAL DELAYS THE OPENING OF THE NEW POST OFFICE

Acceptance of the new Shavertown Postoffice by the United States Government is being held up pending an appeal from the contract rental price by Wyoming National Bank of Wilkes-Barre, owner of the building, according to the Superintendent of Mails G.P. Finn, Wilkes-Barre.

John Wardell, junior at Dallas senior High school, will play in the State Band at Troy. John is the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Wardell of Westmoreland Hills. John had also placed first in the cornet section at Honesdale.

Mrs. Dwight Fisher who reproduces miniature rooms of period furniture, was featured in the "Hobbies", the Magazine for Collectors."

30 Years Ago - February 24, 1972

# AUTHORITY GIVES APPROVAL TO DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A proposal for a master plan for development of Dallas Area

Continued on page 9

# The Dallas Post

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