

EDITORIAL

# Test scores aren't the final answer

The grades have been distributed, and public school administrators are explaining why scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment tests went up, or down. Sometimes they sound a lot like students talking to their parents about that unexpected C- mixed in with the As and Bs. But if recent federal law stands up over time, the consequences for underperformance will be much more meaningful than being grounded for a week.

The No Child Left Behind legislation states that in 2014, students in any school that hasn't achieved "proficient" or better performance across the board will be able to leave for other schools that have met the standard. That seems like a ridiculously high target, and it's one that apparently ignores the sometimes enormous differences between individual students and even entire school districts. At Dallas Elementary, for example, 75 percent of fifth graders tested proficient or advanced in reading, among the highest in Luzerne County. But if even one student fails to test proficiently a dozen years from now, the school will have been judged a failure, and students will be able to transfer to a better-performing school, if there is one.

Skeptics say this formula for failure is nothing more than an excuse for the government to replace public school funding with vouchers, thus greasing the wheels for the creation and expansion of private schools. Voucher proponents contend that competition will bring improved performance at both public and private schools, but that outcome is uncertain. There already are examples of for-profit education companies cutting corners and fudging statistics to hide their mediocre results, and in some cases they have been removed from cities that were disappointed with their results.

The imposition of statewide standards has proven that test scores can be raised when enough attention and resources are focused on students' performance. Expecting more, and providing the necessary resources to achieve more will probably produce even better scores; but setting unrealistic goals will only lead to disillusion and deceit.

## Be aware, be safe on the road

Last week's fatal accident along Route 309 in Shavertown is a reminder that driving safety requires constant vigilance. A dose of extra care is in order on this busy highway, where an average of 40,000 vehicles a day travel.

Not so many years ago, at least a couple of fatal accidents occurred each year along Route 309. Many of them were the result of rear-end collisions that were much more common before the center turning lane was constructed. The widening to five lanes and installation of coordinated traffic signals has greatly reduced the severity of crashes and the resulting injuries. Unfortunately, the improvements have had other effects, including an increase in speed and a tendency by some motorists to run red lights, sometimes with disastrous effect.

Everyone who uses this busy corridor must be especially careful when entering from a side street, even on a green signal. If you are hit broadside by a speeding car or truck running a red light, the fact that you weren't the one breaking the law isn't going to protect you or your passengers from injury or death. And please slow down. Doing so can help you to avoid a careless driver, or can reduce the severity of impact if it is unavoidable.

### Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



I must confess to an extremely un-American act last week. I didn't go shopping. That's right, despite the temptations lurking in countless circulars and the appeal of ads that seemed to burst from newspaper pages, I stayed home. In fact, no one in my family — at least as far as I'm aware — set foot in a retail store Friday, Saturday or Sunday. I hope the government doesn't find out, although I suspect John Ashcroft already knows about my lack of patriotic fervor on a subject as important as consumption.

It's not that we don't spend enough. If you need proof, I can provide toll-free numbers to a few credit card agencies. All we try to do is not spend too much, which I think is now defined as an amount higher than the combined total of family income, home equity, store charges and 0 percent (Don't you love that phrase? It sounds so much more appealing than "free financing.") loans available just before the holidays. This pseudo thriftiness is all that remains among baby boomers of our Depression-era parents' admonitions to be careful with a buck. You could argue that we haven't listened well, but at least we still have a few choice words of wisdom to throw at the kids when they ask for that Tiffany bracelet or fifth video game console.

**Q:** Where do you find the most Back Mountain news each week?  
**A:** Only in The Dallas Post

## The Dallas Post

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

Ronald Bartizek  
**GENERAL MANAGER**  
 Kari L. Wachtel  
**ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.**

Erin Youngman  
**REPORTER**  
 Claudia Blank  
**AD PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Darlene E. Sorber  
**OFFICE MANAGER**

Terry Quinn  
**PAGE DESIGN**



The Laketon High School girls basketball team of 1922 posed for a photo. From left: Christine Clark, Dorothy Anderson, Mildred Hausch, Pearl Edwards, Marion Whipple, Pauline Davis. Davis and Hausch later became teachers at Laketon. Davis taught 1st grade; Hausch, 4th grade.

## Kingston Township Holiday Homes Decorating Contest deadline is Dec. 13

The Kingston Township Board of Supervisors announce the annual Holiday Homes Decorating Contest, to be judged on Tuesday, December 17. The Holiday Homes Decorating Contest is sponsored annually by the Board of Supervisors and judged

by the Recreation Commission. All residents interested in registering their home for the contest are urged to contact the Municipal Building Administrative Offices in person or by mail at 180 East Center Street, Shavertown, PA 18708, or by calling 696-

3809. Members of the commission are looking for attractive original displays that best exemplify the holiday spirit.

Prizes will be awarded to the top three displays as determined by the judges with a first prize of \$100, second prize of \$75, and

third prize of \$25. When registering your home for the contest, please provide your name, address and phone number. Any questions about the contest may be directed to 696-3809. The deadline for registering will be December 13, at 4:30 p.m.

## New books added to collection at Back Mountain Memorial Library

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

- FICTION**  
 "Four Blind Mice" by James Patterson  
 "The Christmas Train" by David Baldacci  
 "Daughters of Joy" by Deepak Chopra  
 "The Last Promise" by Richard Paul Evans

- "Breakout" by Richard Stark  
 "The Fifteen Streets" by Catherine Cookson  
 "The Rana Look" by Sandra Brown  
 "The Human Pool" by Chris Petit  
 "I Don't Know How She Does It" by Allison Pearson

- NON-FICTION**  
 "Portrait of a Killer" by Patricia Daniels Cornwell  
 "In Ruins" by Christopher Woodward

- BIOGRAPHY**  
 "Kitchen Privileges" by Mary Higgins Clark

- LARGE PRINT FICTION**  
 "Chasing the Dime" by Michael Connelly  
 "From a Buick 8" by Stephen King  
 "Four Blind Mice" by James Patterson  
 "The Christmas Train" by David Baldacci  
 "City of the Beasts" by Isabel Allende

- BOOKS ON AUDIOTAPES**  
 "Chesapeake Blue" by Nora Roberts

- YOUNG ADULT**  
 "Great Poems by American Women" edited by Susan L. Rattiner

- SPECIAL DONATIONS**  
 "Pennsylvania Battlefields and Military Landmarks" by Arthur P. Miller, Jr., donated by Daddow-Isaacs Post 672 American Legion.



70 Years Ago - December 2, 1932

### GEARY NEARS END OF TRANSCONTINENTAL TREK

L.F. Geary, seventy-five-year-old native of Centermoreland, is on the last lap of his transcontinental trip from Southern California to Johnston. He left Centermoreland twelve years ago to start a new life in California, then he decided to spend his final days and his long, lonesome trip across the continent.

Some of the items you could get at the A&P Stores were: peaches, 2 cans 25¢; pears 1ge can 17¢; butter 3 lbs 79¢; cleanser 2 cans 13¢; rolled oats 1ge pkg 15¢.

Six dramatic groups from different parts of Luzerne county will compete in the Luzerne County tournament to be held at the Dallas borough high school.

60 Years Ago - November 27, 1942

### LAING FIREMEN RECEIVE ANOTHER PAYMENT

Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company received an additional \$25 payment for its sale of scrap to George Solomon & Sons, Wilkes-Barre scrap metal dealers. The final payment made a total of \$135 received from the Solomon

firm. One of the top awards for scale model aircraft of frame construction has been given Ray Jones Jr., Dallas Township High school student, for his entry in the Wings of Youth contest conducted jointly by Piper Aircraft Company and the New York Daily Mirror.

Faced with declining business because of gasoline and tire rationing, Gerald Frantz, Hunstville merchant, will close his store for the duration on Christmas Day. Frantz will sell his stock of merchandise and has accepted a position in the clerical department of the Martin bomber plant in Baltimore.

50 Years Ago - December 12, 1952

### MASONS APPROVE PLAN TO BUILD \$40,000 HOME ON MAIN STREET

George M. Dallas Lodge F & AM at a special meeting commissioned James Lacy of the architectural firm of Lacy, Atherton & Davis to proceed with plans and specifications for the construction of a new masonic home on Main Street, Dallas.

Lake-Noxen and Lehman-Jackson schools will inaugurate a wrestling program challenging Forty Fort and Kingston Borough in the freshman class, each other in heavier weights and older ages. Larry Drabick and Lester Squier will instruct wrestlers at Lehman-Jackson, Thomas Longmore and George Taylor at Lake-Noxen.

Dallas Township has dropped its appeal in the Natona Mills Annexation case, John Jurista,

preident of Dallas Township Supervisors, announced at the Board's meeting that there will be no further court litigation in connection with the Township's appeal on annexation of Natona Mills by Dallas borough.

40 Years Ago - December 6, 1962

### EIPPER ELECTED FOR THIRD TERM IN CONNECTICUT

Robert J. Eipper, a graduate of Dallas Township schools, had just been reelected to a third term as a Connecticut State Representative. Mr. Eipper's victory was noteworthy because he is a Republican and Connecticut went Democratic.

The biggest Santa Claus that ever came to the Back Mountain region arrived in Dallas and stood twenty-four feet high in front of Dallas Hardware. The huge Santa Claus was obtained by James Hutchison, owner of the store, from a Danville Merchant.

Tommy Andrew, Shavertown made an appearance on Mel Allen's NBC Radio program, Monitor, which emanates from New York City. Andrew, who serves as a judge in all the major rabbit shows, was interviewed by Mel Allen but never expected to be on his show.

30 Years Ago - November 30, 1972

### BOROUGH RESIDENTS REVIEW ZONING ORDINANCE

A tentative zoning ordinance complete with a map of the borough has been completed for consideration by the residents of Dallas Borough and their coun-

cilmen. Atty. Charles D. Lemmond Jr. informed borough council at its last regular meeting.

Commonwealth Telephone Company recently celebrated its 75th anniversary and the installation of its 150,000th. The 150,000th telephone was dedicated to Commonwealth's 650 employees who were honored at dinners given throughout the company's territory.

Army Specialist 4 Paul E. Scovell, Harveys Lake, recently was assigned to the 1st armored division in Germany. Scovell is a surveyor with headquarters batter, 2nd battalion of the division's 16th artillery.

20 Years Ago - December 1, 1982

### FIRE COMPANIES SHARE FEDERAL DOLLARS

Kingston Township supervisors have decided to offer the community's two volunteer fire companies and Ambulance Association \$3,000 each from Revenue Sharing Funds for fiscal year 1983.

Harveys Lake Mayor Frank Picchi introduced an innovative crime-fighting concept for the community. He is formulating definite plans for a Neighborhood Crime Watch for the area.

The State Environmental Protection Office probably will allow Dallas Area Municipal Authority to transport sludge through Jackson Township for dumping on the 80-acre Manzoni farm in that community. Against public protest, DER officials have indicated they intend to approve an application for the dumping.