

EDITORIAL

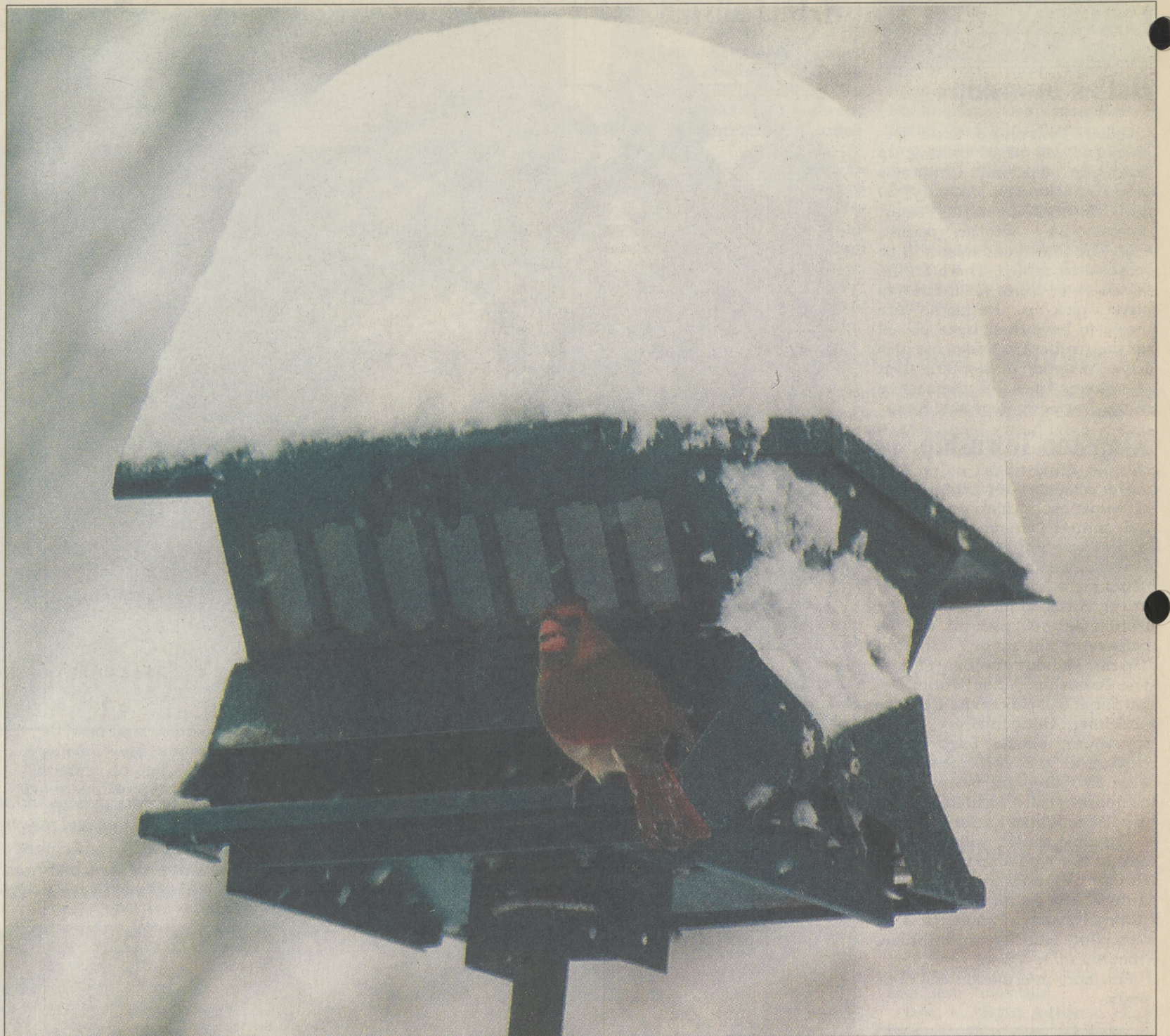
# Back Mountain must be more than a big bedroom

There was an ironic contrast in two articles that appeared on last week's front page. One recounted the relatively upbeat performance of Back Mountain retail stores through the just-completed holiday season. The other told a sadder tale, the imminent closing of Energy Converters, Inc., the Dallas company that employed more than 200 people at its peak.

Energy Converters, known as Encon, is a manufacturing concern that builds specialized electric heating elements, such as the ones found in glass top kitchen stoves. Founded here 30 years ago, its management successfully carved out a niche by developing products and processes that were superior to those offered by other companies. Encon was acquired nearly five years ago by the largest company in the field, and now the work being done here will be transferred to other plants in the Midwest. None of the nearly 100 workers left in Dallas will be offered the opportunity to go along.

Encon's closing continues a disturbing recent trend of employment leaving the Back Mountain, even while the region continues to grow as a residential community. First, 300 Commonwealth Telephone jobs were lured to a tax-free zone in Wilkes-Barre; then Epix followed and now Encon is leaving. None of those losses came about because the Back Mountain isn't a good place to do business or because our work force is inferior; it's simply a case of financial engineering that benefits the companies and leaves no room for community concerns. And the path is often made easier by state and federal government programs that encourage irrational activity, such as Commonwealth's move of 10 miles.

In order to stay vibrant, the Back Mountain needs to be more than an oversized bedroom for people who work somewhere else. Without varied local employment, the retail stores and restaurants that have sprung up won't have a reliable base of customers and they, too, will pull up stakes and head elsewhere, or worse, go out of business. We hope the same folks who worked so hard to lure Commonwealth down the block will turn their efforts toward filling the now-vacant spaces here.



Food and shelter, all in one place. Photo by Ron Bartizek.

## Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



There are plenty of complaints to be made about television advertising, including that there's just too much of it. My personal beef is with content that flaunts illegal, irrational and unsafe behavior. Ads for cars are among the worst. In one, a Cadillac Escalade, billed as the world's most powerful SUV, approaches a railway crossing where trains on opposing tracks seem frozen in time awaiting its arrival. But as soon as the bloated pickup truck races through, the trains are shown moving at speed, with the obvious implication that the Caddy has crossed just in time to avoid a collision. This is not the only Cadillac commercial to show a car challenging a train, a mismatch that there ever was one, and one that results in hundreds of deaths at railroad crossings each year.

These are simply the most egregious examples of auto advertising that encourages reckless, dangerous driving. Believe it or not, your government is supposed to review ads for this kind of content, but either no one's home or no one cares to do so.

Another ad that sticks in my craw features the driver of a Dodge that is tailgating an 18-wheeler. Egged on by an elf-like racer on his shoulder, he pulls out to pass when it's clear that he is in no position to see the opposing lane or the road ahead.

This is not to mention the innumerable commercials in which drivers race up, down and around winding roads, clearly at speeds well above any reasonable limit, as a nearly illegible warning not to try this yourself is posted on the screen.

I know all the arguments about how people can decide for themselves to drive safely or not, and that government ought to just get out of the way. Laissez-faire types also like to say that television doesn't really influence people anyway.

But if advertising isn't persuasive, why do companies spend billions of dollars a year on it? Granted, 99 percent of viewers aren't going to careen out of the driveway and burn rubber until they hit top speed, but surely the constant display of reckless driving influences the impressionable 1 percent.

I could go on, but maybe this is becoming a foggy rant. Don't even get me started on the beer ads.

## Letters are welcome

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.

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<p>Ronald Bartizek <b>GENERAL MANAGER</b></p> <p>Kari L. Wachtel <b>ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.</b></p> <p>Darlene E. Sorber <b>OFFICE MANAGER</b></p>	<p>Erin Youngman <b>REPORTER</b></p> <p>Claudia Blank <b>AD PRODUCTION MANAGER</b></p> <p>Terry Quinn <b>PAGE DESIGN</b></p>
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Carol King

Author Susan Vreeland will participate in a Times Leader Community Book Club discussion of her historical fiction novel, "The Passion of Artemisia," at 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 30 at Wyoming Seminary Buckingham Center for the Performing Arts on Sprague Avenue in Kingston. The free event is sponsored by the newspaper and The Tudor Book Shop. Call Tudor for further information.

**Librarian's report:** Martha Butler and Brian Fulton attended a meeting at the Osterhaut Library in December to discuss updates on automation systems and to resolve issues that have arisen.

Statistics for the month of December include total circulation, 5,630; books added, 121; new borrowers, 29; and active borrowers, 15,098.



70 Years Ago - January 20, 1933

### VALUABLE CLAY DEPOSITS ARE FOUND AT NOXEN

Considerable interest is being shown in the drilling operations being carried to completion on the former Hettisheimer property at Noxen. Drilling equipment has been at work for several months, and rich deposits of clay have been found at more than forty feet.

Two new candidates for the Dallas postmaster position have developed recently. The candidates are W.B. McGuire, and Bernard McNellis.

At a special meeting of the Dallas School Board, Homer E. Nelson of Cochranton, Crawford County, was elected from a list of fifty applicants for the position on the school faculty left vacant by the resignation of Donald Wormley.

60 Years Ago - January 15, 1943

### THREE MEMBERS NAMED TO RATION BOARD

Three new members of the

## Noted author to appear locally

the woman she becomes, as she is raised solely by her father. Nothing in this book is ever quite what it seems; those who are strong turn out to be less than heroic when the Nazi regime comes to town, and vice versa. It is not an easy read and is quite thought-provoking."

**Children's story hours:** Registration for the story hours for toddlers and 3-5-year-olds has begun. Call the library, 675-1182, for the exact dates and times for the programs, which will start in February.

**Slightly Read Bookstore:** Fred Krohle, the bookshop manager, announces big clearance sales during the month of January. Especially low prices will prevail for children's books, selected adult non-fiction, and mysteries that have been withdrawn from library circulation. Come in for some real bargains!

**Book reviews:** In December the evening book discussion group read "Stones from the River," by Ursula Hegi. Pam Oliviera reports that "the book was either really loved or really disliked, no middle ground. It is the story of a girl who is a dwarf living in Germany during the two World Wars. She is surrounded by quirky characters who shape her into

through her family situation, but it occurs to her one day that she has been living a life she hadn't intended to live. She looks up a former beau from high school days — when she was "grown up" — but the relationship doesn't flourish and she returns to her familiar routine, realizing that she "really had been having a wonderful life." A few members found it a trivial book, but the majority found Rebecca endearing and the details of her frenetic life drawn in an interesting style, with humor and compassion.

The group will discuss "The Founding Brothers," by Joseph Elias, on Monday, January 20. Members are reminded to come prepared to pay for the four books ordered for the rest of the year.

**New display:** Viola Gommer has loaned to the library a set of figurines of women dressed in their native costumes which she has collected as she and her husband have traveled in African and South American countries and other places around the world.

Dallas War Price and Rationing Board were sworn into service. They are H. Austin Snyder, supervising principal of Lehman Schools; Walter Elston, owner of Shady Side Dairy, Kunkle, and Howard Risley, editor of The Dallas Post.

Majority of the selections who will make up the quota of 114 men to be called for induction into the army during February by Draft Board No. 1 of Wyoming will be from the eighteen to twenty age group.

Some of the items you could buy at Acme Markets were: lettuce, head 11¢; sausage, 1lb.35¢; corn flakes, 11-oz pkg .7¢; flour 24 lb. bag 83¢; Palmolive toilet soap, 3 bars 22¢; Octagon toilet soap, 3 cakes 14¢; scrapple, 1 lb., 15¢.

50 Years Ago - January 16, 1953

### LEHMAN-JACKSON APPROVES PLAN FOR INSURANCE

An insurance policy to protect school children while under school auspices was discussed by Lehman-Jackson school board. Cost of \$1.25 per child would be borne by parents.

The first Back Mountain resident to appear on television is John C. Bush, Dallas, a member of the "Sports Tonight" panel seen over WBRE TV Channel 28.

More contributions were needed for Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company's new American LaFrance fire truck. Harold Smith, chairman of the drive,

stated that many of the solid citizenry have pledged but have not yet come forward with the cash.

40 Years Ago - January 17, 1963

### KEY CLUB AND CHEERLEADERS PACK CLOTHING

In early December, students from the Dallas area made a concerted drive for warm garments. Key Club boys worked three days boxing the clothing. Twenty-eight boxes, including food, were delivered to needy families in the area the day before Christmas.

David Kozemchak, 13, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Kozemchak, Huntsville, was official Key Club photographer at the inauguration of Governor William Scranton.

Dallas ambulance's new stretcher is too big for anybody short of 300 pounds weight, the Ambulance Association decided at its meeting it will be returned, if possible, for a smaller one.

30 Years Ago - January 18, 1973

### NEW CLASSROOM CONSTRUCTION HAMPERED BY FRIGID WEATHER

Wet weather has hampered construction of the \$1 1/4 million 23-classroom building which will house 690 elementary students. Wet ground hampered grading and pouring of concrete footing.

Kingstown Township Board of Supervisors instructed their solicitor, Ben R. Jones III, to draw up an ordinance establishing the position of township manager, at the regular monthly meeting. Michael J. Stanley, present secretary-treasurer, will be named to the position when the ordinance is passed.

20 Years Ago - January 19, 1983

### DUCK NETTING UNPOPULAR MOVE AT HARVEYS LAKE

Some residents at Harveys Lake were upset when Game Commission employees conducted a duck netting operation at Old Sandy Bottom Beach. Over 200 ducks have made their home in the waters near the beach because they can count on a constant supply of food from patrons at nearby Taft's market.

Shavertown Water Company has received a \$26,800 rate increase retroactive to Jan 1. The company had asked for \$58,800, which would have increased billing rates for its 916 customers to \$335 annually. The present increase will raise the average customer's bill from \$265 to \$287 or about \$22 per year.

Some of the items you could get at Daring's Market were: smoked franks, 1 lb. \$1.59; cooked salami, 1 lb. \$1.79; Perdue chicken breasts, 1 lb. 59¢; naval oranges, 10 lb. bag 99¢; honey ham 1 lb. \$2.99; swiss cheese, 1 lb. \$2.49.