

EDITORIALS

Take a serious look at county government reform

We in the Back Mountain can be proud that several of our neighbors are members of the Luzerne County Government Study Commission, and are thus contributing their time and talent in a serious effort to reform county government to make it more effective and efficient.

Neil Allen, J. Carl Goodwin, Rob Seeley and Ruth Tetschner agree that the group will offer a blueprint for positive reform by the July 26 deadline for inclusion on the November general election ballot. Then it will be up to us to decide whether we're satisfied with the current state of affairs, or want a change.

Some of the proposals sound absurdly logical, such as open budget hearings and professional management that is free from political pressure. But these elements have clearly been lacking in Luzerne County, or at least they have been overshadowed by the shortcomings of the current system in which a majority of two commissioners wields enormous power.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that an outdated structure in which cronyism runs rampant has held this region back for decades, as other areas of the state and nation have prospered. Businesses that might consider a Luzerne County location are likely to feel uncomfortable making a substantial investment in an atmosphere where more effort seems to go into protecting cherished insider relationships than to attracting new blood and opportunities. While there is no guarantee that a revised framework will change things overnight, there's also no reason each of us should not consider the merits of the proposal when it appears on the ballot.

Keep the letters coming

This week's Post contains something we don't see enough of — your opinions. The letters to the editor column contains readers' thoughts on current Back Mountain topics that may or may not match yours. Some of them clearly don't agree with what we've written, and that's okay with us. One of the most important responsibilities of a newspaper is to act as a forum for ideas, so that all sides of an issue are presented for review. Far too often, we run across people who have something to say, but are afraid to speak up. That limits what we can present in articles, and leads to stories that are more one-sided than we would like, but given the choice of no story at all, we must go with what we have.

A lively letters column is an asset to any community. Please keep writing, and we'll continue to do all we can to present your opinions accurately and completely. There's no reason why your voice shouldn't be included on issues that affect you, your family and your neighbors.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



I never saw the movie, "Field of Dreams," because the entire premise sounded just too sappy to be worth an evening that could better be spent peeling potatoes. But no one can escape its premise of "build it and they will come." For that alone, I think the movie's creators should be forced to watch reruns of Joe Millionaire for eternity.

My reasoning is simple; everyone who has a cockeyed scheme to use taxpayers' money for construction of an unneeded edifice has adopted the theme, with the result that dozens, perhaps hundreds of stadiums, arenas and other "public" buildings dot the American landscape like so many Monopoly pieces. The board that oversees the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport is the closest entity to embrace this supply-side theory, as they attempt to justify pouring \$33 million into a facility that has an anemic record of activity and lacks a reliable major tenant. One supporter of this scheme even had the temerity to suggest that we need only look to Charlotte, North Carolina for an example of a city that prospered because it invested in its airport. I guess the weather, location in a booming growth area and highly successful local companies contributed little to Charlotte's ascension. If this premise is true, I look forward to Northeastern PA becoming the Atlanta of the north, as national firms that have avoided us flock to the region for its superior air transportation opportunities.

Let's get real; airports expand because there is demand from users for them to do so, not the other way around. Ours may be in need of renovation — even some expansion — but don't swallow this backwards logic as justification. What our little airfield needs more than anything are lower fares and better connections, whether from existing or new carriers. Until we have those, there is little reason for most travelers to choose AVP over Lehigh Valley or even Philadelphia and New York, since the convenience of proximity is overshadowed by the time and expense it takes to get to most destinations from here.

Do the Lackawanna and Luzerne county commissioners who oversee the airport have good intentions? Who am I to say they don't, and if they can keep the bite from local pockets small, maybe it's worth seeing if they're at least partially right. I just wish they wouldn't treat us like fools who don't understand fundamental economics.



Apple trees stand like chilly sentinels at Brace's Orchards. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Media portrays Harveys Lake negatively, and wrongly

Editor,

As a lifetime Harveys Lake resident and one who takes as active role in my community, I am writing to express my disappointment in your editorial. People showed up at the council meeting in record numbers to voice their support for our Mayor, Council, and Police Department

and you refer to their effort as phony? I was there, and saw and heard residents from every section of the lake from a fair representation of our citizens. How is that phony?

For people to come out to a council meeting on a cold winter night, young and old, you know something was on their mind! I should know, as I attend the

meetings on a regular basis, and a typical meeting brings out a mere dozen residents. They came out in strong support of the elected officials and voiced deep concern over the recent media assault on our community. Could it be because we have had no real estate tax increase in 20 years, we have a new borough garage, a new police head-

quarters, a road crew that's done a good job in this tough winter, a peaceful community?

If you ask me, what has been phony is the media's portrayal of our community, not the proud people of the community who are fed up with the media.

Alene Forster
Harveys Lake

Turnout at Harveys Lake meeting was genuine

Editor,

Through your editorial, you conveyed a message, that if people truly care about their town, they should quit whining and assume some responsibility. Everyone is entitled to an opinion.

I feel, anyone saying the show of moral support at the council

meeting was phony, should remember these people are residents. They are entitled to ask questions, voice opinions, defend their community and people they trust and believe in. These residents — from lakefront to side street, young and old, any political affiliation are showing concern and responsibility to their "home" town. I believe it is

wrong to even suggest these people or their interest is phony.

Generations of Harveys Lake natives built this town into a community which has much appeal. Many people have moved into our town to get away from the unpleasantness and the hectic pace of the big cities. I am sure our ancestors made mistakes along the way, but they

managed to create a nice place, which I call "home."

Please don't let egotism and destructive natures destroy "our heritage, our home." Please help keep "my home" a place people want to move to, where neighbor still helps neighbor.

Cheryl Harris
Harveys Lake Native

Complainers should use their energy to help community

Editor,

I read the comments in your editorial the other day. Now this is my comment:

1. I'm not a phony, I am a lifetime resident of Harveys Lake.
2. I was there in support for our Mayor, the Police Department also our elected officials.

3. I was not asked to come to the meeting; I came as a concerned borough resident where I have lived all my life.

4. If the mayor, and elected officials didn't do a great job they never would have been re-elected. Duh!

5. I also came to the meeting because of our Chief of Police. I

feel that he has done a lot of good things for our borough, and the community, why isn't he given any credit there? This is my comment to the person or persons that sent their comments to your newspaper. "Instead of running our officials down, why don't you try and help the community don't try to

hurt us." Stop throwing mud and be a responsible resident, stop trying to put a good man down. I would appreciate it if you would also print the positive side of the story.

Linda Bennett
Harveys Lake

Realignment of Dallas schools would bring benefits

Editor,

I have been reading all the articles The Dallas Post has been writing about the possible realignment of the Dallas School District's elementary schools.

I am wondering how anyone, after reading your articles or attending the recent meetings, or both, could possibly still be against a realignment.

I am a parent of a kindergarten student in the Dallas Elementary School and our younger son will be in kindergarten in 2005. I am completely in favor of realignment. There are a variety of reasons (very good ones) to show why realignment is a good idea, even a ne-

cessity, while the best reason given to remain with the status quo is the neighborhood school or family atmosphere that is wanted by those who want to keep things the way they are.

That is all well and good and I can see where that would be a nice thing to have if having it didn't mean sacrificing the list of benefits Dr. Speziale cited as reasons for realignment. I would think it would be an obvious decision to choose smaller classes, better spending of funds and more consistent education over this neighborhood school feeling some parents are looking for.

One other argument against realignment was that some students had just been moved out

of Dallas Elementary and would have to move back if realignment took place. No matter what, when things change, someone has to be the first to go through the changes until things are established. Unfortunately that's the case for many students now attending these schools but surely our children are capable of going through some changes for something that will be a long term benefit for the school district and the children to come after them. Change is a part of life and not a bad thing for children to learn and even experience and no one has mentioned, in everything I've read, that the current set up is simply unfair because it

means that some students get to experience and benefit from the new, state-of-the-art, mind-stimulating Wycallis building and others do not. Simply not fair. You recently had an article saying the school was recognized for many wonderful reasons and every child that goes through the district should get a chance to experience it.

I have read many opinions of parents who are against the realignment and I just wanted to write and express the opinion of someone who is for it, because I'm sure I'm not the only one.

Molly Davies
Kingston Township



70 Years Ago - March 17, 1933

SHEEP NEAR HERE ATTACKED BY DOGS

Dogs killed five sheep on the W. T. Payne farm in Dallas township. Three of the yews had five lambs with them and two those killed would have had lambs within a few days. Within recent months killer dogs have de-

stroyed sheep in Dallas township, Dallas borough and lower-Wyoming county to the extent of about \$500 damage.

Girl Scouts of Dallas celebrated the twenty-first birthday anniversary of the organization in Dallas borough high school. One of the features of the program was the cutting of a large birthday anniversary cake on which there were twenty-one candles representing the years the Girl Scout organization has been in existence.

Some of the items you could buy at American Stores Co. were: tomatoes, large can 10¢; cheese, lb. 15¢; ketchup, 16-oz bot 10¢; ASCO coffee, lb 21¢; Jigsaw puzzles, each 15¢.

60 Years Ago - March 12, 1943

MARRIED MEN ARE NOW BEING CALLED TO SERVE

Married men in large numbers-many of them married 14 to 16 years but with no other dependents beside their wives are being called for immediate induction into the army by Shickshinny Draft Board which has exhausted its supply of single men.

The Red Cross campaign for funds is lagging in the Back Mountain county with less than one-half of the \$2,575 quota raised as the drive passes the midway mark.

Thirty-one young men from this area have been called by draft Board No. 1 of Wyoming for

their final physical examinations prior to induction into the United States Army at the Induction Station, Wilkes-Barre.

50 Years Ago - March 13, 1953

PETITION FOR LIQUOR STORE IN DALLAS

Steps toward obtaining the establishment of a State Liquor Store in Dallas were taken by Back Mountain Business Association at its meeting.

Harold Smith, chairman of Dr. Henry M. Laing Volunteer Fire company's current drive for funds for a new fire-truck, states that a substantial number of pledges remain unpaid, and

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The Dallas Post

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