

OUR OPINION

Don't miss the library auction — it's fun and for the best of causes

It is always a surprise and disappointment to talk with someone who hasn't attended the Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. It's easy to assume that after 56 years and countless volunteer hours, there wouldn't be a person in the area who hasn't been captivated by the charms of this annual event. Just in case you are one of those deprived souls, here are a few reasons why you should come to the 57th edition of this remarkable community gathering.

1. You'll have a great time, even if you don't buy a thing. The auction truly is "the social event of the year," where you are sure to see old friends and new acquaintances. If they're not raising their hands to bid they'll be browsing the Odds and Ends tent, the Book Booth or one of the other spots where all proceeds aid the library. Or perhaps they will be one of the dozens of volunteers who staff those attractions, help with the bidding or handle the money.

2. Children love it, too. There are games and storytelling for younger kids, and plenty of opportunity to hang out with pals for the older ones, in an environment that is secure but still affords some independence. Just say, "Meet me at the food booth at 10," and you're set.

3. Speaking of food, it's an auction tradition. The Rotary Food Booth serves up all the auction favorites along with some new treats each year, and vendors dispense your favorite indulgences. Even better, the calories don't count when they're consumed outdoors!

4. If you need or want anything for the home, cabin or garage, you're likely to find it at the auction. From prime antique furniture to a new weed whacker, just wait long enough and it will come over the block, and possibly at a bargain price. Don't have the time or patience for the bidding process? Stop in at the Nearly Old tent for items that didn't make the cut for the block and pick up decorating accessories that you can't find in any mall store. Or check out the plant tent for outdoor needs.

5. Most important of all, you will be supporting the library, a truly Back Mountain institution that provides services used by more than 15,000 active borrowers. With cuts in state funding, a successful auction becomes more important than ever, as the auction profits provide a larger share of the budget.

It sounds trite, but really, if you haven't gone to the auction, you don't know what you are missing. You could travel far and wide and never come across a community effort that so perfectly blends volunteer service, public good and personal pleasure. It's an event that has earned the support of everyone in the Back Mountain, and that provides a most enjoyable setting for

PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

These words are being written on a personal computer running Microsoft Windows software, which makes the equipment indistinguishable from more than nine out of 10 other PCs. And if Microsoft has its way, the number of people using competitive software will be about the same as the roster of a basketball team. But no one seems to care, particularly not the government agencies that are supposed to guard against monopolies.

Younger readers may not know it, but there was a time when big business was regarded with suspicion, and not just because it tried to influence elections and policy. Believe it or not, there once was a school of thought that huge corporations — particularly ones that had few or no competitors — weren't the most efficient producers of products and services. Nor was it accepted dogma that big companies were the most likely to advance technology or create new products. Instead, many people had the outdated notion that, given the choice, humongous companies would opt to fatten their bottom lines rather than innovate. I'm sure glad that doesn't happen any more!

Even more bizarre, a Republican president was the greatest enemy of monopolies, and as a result we have more choices in gasoline stations than Esso and .. Esso. Now, rather than expand the field, national leaders of both parties are more than happy to grab campaign cash, as they willfully ignore a concentration of economic power that far exceeds anything John D. Rockefeller ever dreamed of.

Anyway, back to Microsoft, a company that wants not only to dominate the operating system market, but tries its best to drive out competitors at every level. The result, as 90 percent of computer users know, is a bloated, slow, crash-prone program that is also a stealth private eye, sending back to headquarters reports about users habits and preferences. Why, for all I know, Microsoft's lawyers are preparing a defamation suit against me as these keys are stroked, in their ever-vigilant drive to protect the company's name. And no one seems to care.

Letters welcome

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published. We also invite 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. Always include a daytime phone number for verification.



Butterfly and lavender. Photo by Jim Phillips.

GUEST COLUMN

A nation with a principled heart

By M. David Stirling

A French professor familiar with U.S.-French relations recently offered this perspective on the French mistrust of President George W. Bush: "What is a little disconcerting for the French is an American president who seems to be principled. The idea that politics should be based on principles is unimaginable because principles lead to ideology, and ideology is dangerous." This pseudo-sophisticated attitude on principle's disconnect with politics — no doubt held by many world leaders — is shocking to most Americans. The notion that the making of public policy should be unrelated to or devoid of principle is anathema to American political thought. In his epic work, "Democracy in America," written in 1840, the young French traveler in America, Alexis de Tocqueville, depicted principle as the foundational rock upon which the early settlers of the colonies, and later, the founding fathers and mothers, built the new nation. Speaking of what he considered America's highest principle — the freedom of the people — de Tocqueville states: "In America, the principle of the sovereignty of the people is neither barren

nor concealed, as it is with some other nations; it is recognized by the customs and proclaimed by the laws; it spreads freely, and arrives without impediment at its most remote consequences."

It was principle that guided those inspired and courageous Americans who birthed our nation — demonstrated on countless occasions, large and small, through their words and actions. Some bear mention on this 227th anniversary of America's independence.

• The young Massachusetts lawyer, John Adams, who, in 1770, despite much public scorn, defended the British soldiers tried for killing five colonists in "the Boston Massacre," on the principled belief that "no man in a free country should be denied the right to counsel and a fair trial." (See "John Adams," by David McCullough.)

• The Massachusetts rebels who, in 1774, staged the "Boston Tea Party" on the democratic principle that no free people should be compelled to pay a tax without a voice in its imposition — for which the King ordered British troops to close the port of Boston.

• When the King dissolved Virginia's board of delegates after their outspoken opposition to

his strangle-hold on Massachusetts' port city, Thomas Jefferson responded with a pamphlet challenging the principle of the King's authority: "(A) free people (claim) their rights, as derived from the laws of nature, and not as the gift of their chief magistrate. . . . kings are the servants, not the proprietors of the people."

• When, in 1775, the King's Virginia Governor burned the town of Norfolk, the fiery freedom fighter, Patrick Henry, concluded his eloquent call for armed resistance with the historic words: "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

The Declaration of Independence, drafted by 32-year-old Thomas Jefferson, was signed by the members of the Second Continental Congress on the evening of July 4, 1776. Its second sentence contains the immortal words:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. . . ."

Five hard years later, the American War of Independence ended on a battlefield in Virginia,

with the British surrender to General George Washington. Historian Joseph J. Ellis writes, "At the dawn of a new century, indeed, a new millennium, the United States is now the oldest enduring republic in world history, with a set of political institutions and traditions that have stood the test of time." ("Founding Brothers, The Revolutionary Generation.")

After two centuries of often painful struggles, Americans can feel pride and gratitude to live in a nation with a principled heart. Those countries that find America's allegiance to principle disconcerting, or unsophisticated, or even dangerous, may well point to instances where she has fallen short, or occasionally, missed the mark altogether. But it cannot be said that America shrank from the challenge, or abandoned those in need, or stood silently when circumstances demanded commitment. On the 40th anniversary of the Allies' Normandy invasion, President Ronald Reagan said: "We will always remember, we will always be proud, we will always be prepared, so we may always be free."

M. David Stirling is vice president of Pacific Legal Foundation.

70 Years Ago - July 7, 1933

SEWAGE PLANT POSSIBLE WITH FEDERAL FUNDS

Dallas is entitled to obtain financial aid for construction of a sewage plant under provisions contained under the National Industrial Recovery Act, which provides a gigantic fund of \$3,300,000,000 for immediate use in behalf of industry and labor.

The largest orders ever received by a local printing plant had just been completed by the job printing department of The Dallas Post. The finished order of 10,000 thirty page pictorial booklets contained more than a ton of coated enamel book paper and one half ton of cover paper.

60 Years Ago - July 2, 1943

2 TOWNSHIP ATHLETES ARE NOW FLYERS

Two Dallas Township boys were among the hundreds graduated from the Army Air Forces-Gulf Coast Training Center, with headquarters at Randolph Field, Texas. They will join the thousands of youths from all over America who are adding to the throbbing demands which is carrying warfare to the

Axis all over the globe. The boys names are: Frank Kamor and Frank Matukitis.

Fire caused by defective wiring seriously damaged two classrooms and for a time threatened destruction of Lake Township High school. In addition to the two class rooms which were gutted there was considerable damage from smoke to the walls of other rooms which will have to be redecorated.

The first man from the Back Mountain region to hold a major county office in a score of years, Peter D. Clark, Republican chairman of the Sixth Legislative District, and president of Dallas Borough Council was named Luzerne County Treasurer.

50 Years Ago - July 3, 1953

DR. CROMPTON TO REOPEN OFFICES

Dr. and Mrs. Richard E. Crompton, returned from Mineral Wells, Texas, where he has been stationed for the past two years as head of the Obstetrical department at Walters Air Force Base. Before returning to Trucksville, Dr. and Mrs. Crompton covered 7,000 miles touring the western part of the United States. Stanley Henning of Trucksville was made General Foreman of the Buffalo plant of Bethlehem Steel Company. Movies that played at Dallas Outdoor Theatre: "High Noon" with Gary Cooper, Thomas Mitchell, "Look Who's Laugh-

ing" with Fibber McGee and Molly Bergen; "The Greatest Show on Earth" with Betty Hutton, Charleston Heston.

40 Years Ago - July 3, 1963

LIGHTING SPARKS FIRE THAT DESTROYS HOME

A bolt of lightning struck their home and Meadow View Christian Book Store owned and operated by Rev. and Mrs. Rolland Updyke of Sweet Valley. The severe electrical storm swept through the area set the garage on fire and spreading flames destroyed the entire back section of the home.

Some of the items you could get at Whitsell Bros. were: Devco paint, \$5.59 gal.; slider window, \$14.95' wood screen door \$8.30; screening, 6¢ a sq. ft. Harveys Lake Lions Little League team took the Bob Horlacher League pennant in a walkaway game, with Beaumont, 21-3. It was the first time in five years that the Lakemen had won that honor.

30 Years Ago - July 5, 1973

EPA GIVES AUTHORITY ADDED SEWER FUNDS

The Harveys Lake Municipal Authority had learned they would be receiving \$2,376,070 from the Environmental Protection Agency for construction of waste water treatment works. The announcement for approval of funds was made by

U.S. rep. Daniel J. Flood. The three-day annual Lehman Horse Show was big success. Show officials report that the affair began with best opening night in the long-running vent's history, and that the trend continued throughout the show. The year's program was dedicated to Lanceford Sutton and Lewis Ide for their years of service to the Lehman Volunteer Fire Company. Navy Constrecion recruit James E. Regan of Dallas, graduated from recruit training at the Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill.

20 Years Ago - June 29, 1983

L-L BOARD MEMBERS GIVEN SUPPORT

A group of concerned taxpayers of the Lake-Lehman School District met to voice their support of the school board and directors in their efforts to provide quality education to the district. A petition was signed by 30 to 40 taxpayers at the meeting. Therese Young, a former Dallas resident, knitted a quilt and donated it to the Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. The quilt is made of crazy patchwork blocks separate by deep maroon velour borders. Some items you could get at Daring's Market: cooked salami lb. \$1.89; london broils lb. \$2.29; ground chuck lb. \$1.69; cantaloupe lg. size 79¢; mangos ea. 89¢.

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