

OUR OPINION

Grateful donors are key building block for Back Mountain

A commemoration ceremony at Shavertown United Methodist Church reminds us that a strong community is composed of many different and distinct parts.

The congregation — and anyone who would like to attend — will be treated to a performance by Rev. William Summerhill as he portrays Theron Ferguson, who operated a butcher shop a century ago and donated the land on which the church now sits. Such benevolence was not only welcome, but often necessary at that time, since wealth was spread less evenly in the population and institutions were still in their formative stages.

We are fortunate that prosperous Americans continue to share their good fortune with the communities and nation that have provided them the opportunity to build wealth. The Back Mountain Memorial Library, the soon-to-be regional recreation center and every one of the region's churches have benefitted from the philanthropy of neighbors who have done well and wish to do good.

A consistently rising standard of living, expansion of government services and the financial strength of public and private institutions has helped to relieve many of the burdens individuals and organizations face in today's America. But we still rely on generous people like Theron Ferguson to help smooth the rough edges of society.

Perfection exists only in bureaucrats' minds, if there

Test scores have been consistently positive for students in the Dallas School District. That's the good news. The other side of the story is that no matter how hard teachers, students and administrators try, the district's schools cannot satisfy the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act. Why? Simply because perfection is not a human trait, and the act requires nothing less by 2014. That's a long time, you might say, and there's a reason; by then, the architects of this ridiculous mandate will be long since out of office and collecting hefty speaking fees on the lecture circuit.

Aside from a requirement that 100 percent — 99.9 isn't good enough — of students perform at "proficient or advanced" levels in math and reading, NCLB demands that attendance levels be above 95 percent and never decline. Hello! If they're 95 percent now and can only go up, they too will have to be 100 percent by 2014. There goes your winter vacation.

Anyone with the mental aptitude of a "proficient" fifth grader recognizes that this act is not just about better performance, it's a free pass to vouchers. Well, it's not free, because you and I will be paying for them in our school taxes, whether our kids benefit or not.

But not to worry. The NCLB will go the way of other ideological mandates when a new administration takes over in Washington. The only question is when that will be.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

The first edition of what will undoubtedly become an annual event illustrated the best qualities of the Back Mountain. Not only was the turnout for the first Dallas Harvest Festival stupendous, visitors were exposed to the impressive variety of



RON BARTZEK

products, services, organizations and talents that combine to make this a desirable community in which to live and work. Commercial exhibitors ranged from long-standing produce farms like Brace's and Darling's to Cathy Blum's hand-crafted breads. Organizations covered the gamut of interests from 4-H — with Kurt and Sylvia Mass staffing the table and dishing out the burgers — to the Back Mountain Trail group's display set up on the porch of Alan Boonin's magnificent restored Victorian. As for talent, well it bridged any generation gap with performances by tiny dancers, the "Sister Act" singers and others in between.

Best of all, the crowd was filled with neighbors mingling and chatting, in the process universally praising the event. Among the comments were some like this: "I didn't have to take the kids to the mall or the arena to have a good time."

Some festival organizers stopped to shake hands with Mark Albrecht, who in his day job helped lobby for coverage on WBRE-TV, where he is a cameraman.

Spotted among the enthusiastic visitors were Jeff Box, the former Kingston Township Manager, and Shirley Moyer, a supervisor who once suggested a similar event be held at Center Street Park. How about this idea — do it in the spring and hold it on Shavertown's old Main Street. Combined with the family festival sponsored by the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association, we could bookend the best seasons and keep the spotlight on the full range of Back Mountain amenities.

Noticeably absent were candidates for county political office, which seemed odd given that an election is looming in a little over a month. Do they think we don't matter, or does our reputation as a reliable Republican voting bloc lead them to take us for granted? It would have been nice to see at least Greg Skrepenak, who lives a few blocks from Main Street, out shaking hands. Unless I missed him, although that's unlikely, since he's so easy to spot!



A good walk, not spoiled, at Irem Temple Country Club. Photo by Jim Phillips.

Land Trust nature walk, bake sale, raffle at Hillside Farms

The North Branch Land Trust (NBLT) invites members and the public to a nature walk, raffle drawing and bake sale on Saturday, September 27 at Hillside Farms in Trucksville.

Naturalist Rick Koval, a new staff member of NBLT, will lead the walk as part of an afternoon of activities that include a bake sale and raffle.

"Rick has the ability to reveal the world of nature in the most amazing way," said Will Conyngham, of Hillside Farms. "Any walk with him is totally enlightening."

This is a peak time of year for a number of migratory birds that frequent the area and that participants are encouraged to bring binoculars for bird watching.

The bake sale will be held outside of the Dairy Store in the greenhouse parking area, starting at 10 a.m.

The raffle drawing will occur at 12 noon. Tickets can be purchased until noon.

The Nature Walk will begin at the Hillside Dairy Greenhouse at 1 p.m. and will wind along a creek that ambles through the farm property.

The Percheron draft horse wagon rides will run 12 noon until 4 p.m. and will cover points of interest and the natural scenic beauty of the Hillside Farms property. Seating is limited. Tickets are available at the dairy store.

Raffle tickets are available at Hillside Dairy Store; at the Plains Animal Hospital, 242 S. River Street, Plains; and by calling Donna Schuler, 639-1447; Sarah Carr, 836-0889; and the North Branch Land Trust, 696-5545.

Will the small 'urban' business district fit here?

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN
AICP

Northeastern Pennsylvania is replete with small urban business districts, especially in the many boroughs that dot the regional landscape. The prime example may be Luzerne Borough where special activities and leadership resulted in the revitalization of that downtown area.

Others are in the Pocono Mountains in Hawley and Stroudsburg. Stroudsburg is a Main Street community, meaning that Commonwealth funding has helped stimulate the way that municipal and business leaders plot the rebirth of these urban districts.

Examining the way business districts can be shaped and organized for 21st century life is an important action that may be applicable to the small urban districts that exist in the Back Mountain.

A clear direction for the future of these geographic places is represented by Dallas Borough, which serves as a center for commerce and is a central business district that has always been a gathering point for development opportunities. Shavertown is another commerce area that has a cluster of businesses. Harveys Lake has long been a place of business in light of the development that continues to occur around the largest natural lake in the region. All of these examples call for the best ideas and thoughts to be applied to enable commercial development to continue through the responsive activities of municipal and business leaders. Whether or not in some of these situations governmental funding can be utilized, such as the Main Street program, remains to be seen. Think of the opportunities that can accrue if a well-designed plan and action program were to be

created and implemented, one that looks at all of these sectors simultaneously and can adjust to the residential development that continues at a strong pace in the Back Mountain.

Many of the older boroughs in the state have required significant and sometimes massive redevelopment programs, utilizing a variety of state and sometimes federal assistance monies. The federal community development program is widely utilized in Luzerne County, since this jurisdiction is the only so-called urban county in the region and receives much more of this type of funding than do others across the Pocono-Northeast. Community development is an important adjunct to the overall means by which small communities can improve their competitive posture and

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70 Years Ago - September 29, 1933

DALLAS HELD TO OBSERVE NATIONAL RECOVERY ACT DAY

Indicating its whole-hearted approval of the principles advocated by President Roosevelt's national recovery Act, Dallas and vicinity joined with Wyoming Valley in a colorful parade which symbolized the unity of purpose behind the movement. Many men and women from the Back Mountain region were in the line of march with different organizations.

ONLY YESTERDAY

Attendance records for the Bloomsburg Fair were broken when the turnstiles clicked 15,853 paid admissions. Thirty percent of the patrons, were from Luzerne county.

Some of the items you could get at American Stores Co.: Asco coffee, lb. 19¢; cooked spinach, 2 big cans 25¢; peaches, 2 big cans 29¢; pickles, 2 qt. jars 29¢; lettuce, head 10¢.

60 Years Ago - October 1, 1943

COL. NORMAN SMITH WILL HEAD ATHLETICS IN PACIFIC AREA

Chosen by officers of the Air Corps to supervise the establishment of athletic programs at all of the major air bases in the Pacific area, Lieut. Colonel Norman Smith, of Huntsville, left for Lexington, Va., after spending a brief leave here.

William Baker resigned as Street Commissioner of Dallas Borough and Ralph Eipper, veteran employee of Oliver's Garage has been appointed to the vacancy.

Movies that played at the Shaver Theatre: "China" with Alan Ladd and Loretta Young; "Reveille With Beverly" with Ann Miller, and Frank Sinatra; "Aerial Gunner" with Jimmie Lydon, and Chester Morris.

50 Years Ago - September 25, 1953

GEORGE TAYLOR RESIGNS FROM LAKE-NOXEN

George El Taylors resignation as supervising principal of Lake Noxen Township Schools was accepted at a special board meeting. Robert Belles, principal, will take over until definite replacement arrangements can be made. Taylor will assume supervision of South Middleton Schools in Cumberland County.

Repatriated prisoners of war have been insturcted not to give too much information about conditions in Korean prison camps, according to Sgt John Vavrek, Demunds. Vavrek was wounded through the chest, and was taken prisoner at Kunri. Vavrek enlisted in the Army when he was seventeen.

Forty seven children from other localities or schools have been enrolled at Dallas Brough-Kingston Township schools, some of the most distant newcomers children of Air Force personnel stationed at Red Rock and living in Meadowcrest.

40 Years Ago - September 26, 1963

BISHOP OF SCRANTON DEDICATES NEW BUILDINGS AT MISERICORDIA

In solemn procession led by Bishop Jerome D. Hannan, trustees, officers of administration, president's advisory council, the building committee, notables and guests, and Sisters of Mercy, visited the two new buildings, Merrick Student Center, and Alumnae Hall. Dedication addresses were delivered by Rt. Monsignor James T. Clarke and his excellency Bishop Hannan.

Charlie Gosart's Grocery Store in Dallas will be under new management. William Davis, Shavertown purchased the stock of Gosart's Grocery Store and will rent a portion of the building

Sweet Valley telephones will change to all-number dialing, said Commonwealth

Telephone Company The letters "GR" preceding the number become "47" which correspond to them on the dial.

30 Years Ago - September 20, 1973

POST TO CARRY COLLEGE COURSE

Twenty of the academic world's most distinguished scholars will be featured in America and the Future of Man, the unique Courses by Newspaper a program to be printed by this newspaper over 20 weeks. The Dallas post is one of 13 newspapers carrying the course statewide.

Harveys Lake Borough council chairman William Hoblak read from a report that the annual sewer rate for a borough home will actually be \$225 rather than the \$178 that the Harveys Lake Municipal Authority (HLMA) has been projecting.

A vandal or vandals fired three shots at the Daniel C. Roberts Fire company building, Harveys Lake. The bullet which did the most damage entered through the door of the garage and struck the front end of the fire engine.

20 Years Ago - July 20, 1983

INMATES EARN ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Three inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas have received Associate Degrees from Luzerne County Community College. Larry Stephenson, Clinton Anderson and Mike Vaccarello recently completed the necessary requirements of the college and were awarded their degrees of the college. Their achievement were made possible through a program instituted by the Pennsylvania Jaycees.

After 30 years as a mailman for Dallas Postoffice, Andy Sokol will retire. He was known as "Andy the mailman" to those he delivered mail to.

Airman Joseph Tomaselli, Dallas, has been assigned to Lowry Air Force Base, Colo, after completing Air Force basic training. Tomaselli is a 1982 graduate of Lake-Lehman High School.

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