

OUR OPINION

With effort, compromise can be achieved on trail

What a shame it would be if the fledgling Back Mountain Trail should come to a halt because supporters are unable to secure an adequate right-of-way along the old railroad bed that is its foundation. If that were to happen, walkers and bikers wouldn't be able to travel safely from Luzerne to Harveys Lake — perhaps one day even beyond — and local businesses would not benefit from increased traffic off the trail.

Reluctance to embrace transient visitors is not unique to the Back Mountain. The same careful negotiations that are taking place now between the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association and land owners have been rehearsed for decades along the length of the Appalachian Trail, at least on portions that skirt populated areas. The main concerns are the same, too; liability for accidents and potential vandalism.

Those are valid points, but they can be addressed with sufficient open-minded discussion. One key sticking point, and one that is big enough to disrupt the trail's completion, is an 800-foot section behind New Mart and Newell Fuel Service in Trucksville. The owners of the business are wary that the trail association's insurance is inadequate to protect them from a damage suit. And while there has been talk of building a wall to both prevent falling and to discourage thieves and vandals, the trail group's budget is stretched thin until right-of-way commitments are obtained, making it difficult to provide more detailed plans for the barrier.

Surely there can be a meeting of the minds that will satisfy both sides in this disagreement. While the business needs to protect itself from risk, it also stands to benefit from walkers and bikers who will stop by for a cold drink and a bite to eat. The trail's organizers, on the other hand, can't do anything less than what is reasonably necessary to calm the Newells' jitters, and if that means coming up with a more concrete safety plan, they'll need to do so.

The Back Mountain Trail is yet another arrow that can be added to the quiver of amenities that make this a satisfying place to live and do business. We simply can't let it slip away without exhausting every possible strategy to make it a success.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

If you've read the article on the front page about changes at The Dallas Post, you may still have concerns and questions about its status. Rest assured, there is no desire or intention to eliminate this newspaper, only a change in strategy for its continued health and relevance.

The newspaper business isn't unlike others in the sense that competition and consolidation are the order of the day.

We aren't the first publication to combine with a larger daily, and surely won't be the last. And frankly, without the support of a sugar daddy, it's not at all certain The Dallas Post would have survived anyway. That's not because we weren't committed to keeping the Post going after more than a century, it's because maintaining a thriving independent weekly has become more difficult with each passing year. An increasing challenge has been shoring up the advertising base while serving a limited geographic area. Every time a bank merges or a chain store replaces one with local ownership, it becomes more difficult to reach decision makers who tend to care little about the character of a community and who avoid dealing with small papers or other media that in their minds are unimportant.

Unlike "country" weeklies, The Dallas Post also had to contend for more than 20 years with two daily competitors, and for most of that time with the Sunday Independent as well. As the saying goes, "When elephants do battle, the ants get trampled." Thanks to the support of the community, it has never gotten to that point, but there's no question that competition for readers and advertisers is more intense here than in rural county seats far removed from daily newspaper cities.

So, here's the good news. Beginning Sunday, October 5, The Dallas Post will reach more than twice the number of readers it has in recent years. That means your news and advertising will be seen by far more of the people who are potential members of your club, volunteers for your church or customers of your store. And we are more committed than ever to getting your news out, so we're asking you to continue sending it in. The best way to do that is by e-mail (dallaspost@leader.net), but if you need to drop off printed copy or photos, you can continue to do that by mail or at the box on the front porch. We plan to set up other drop points soon, and will tell you about them when we do.

If you want to talk about the Post, have a news tip or a suggestion, don't hesitate to call me at 970-7157. I'll be here.

Letters, columns and editorials

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.

THE DALLAS POST

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

P.O. BOX 366, DALLAS, TX 75201 • 570-675-5211
dallaspost@leader.net

Ronald Bartizek
EDITOR/GENERAL MANAGER

Justin Wisnosky
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.

Erin Youngman
REPORTER

Darlene E. Sorber
OFFICE MANAGER

Greg Stauffer
AD PRODUCTION MANAGER



Colorful cabinets, outside at Lake-Lehman High School. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

New Blood Alcohol Content measure meets federal mandate

The Senate on Sept. 24 approved a conference committee report on a bill that meets a federal requirement to lower Pennsylvania's blood alcohol content (BAC) level to .08 and would establish a three-tier penalty system for those caught driving while intoxicated, according to Senator Roger A. Madigan, Chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, and Senator Charles W. Dent, author of the legislation.

"This measure will make Pennsylvania's highways safer," said Senator Madigan, who spearheaded the conference committee of Senate and House members that developed the legislation.

"I believe we came up with a great compromise. We are changing the penalty system to reflect the severity of a driver's impairment. Right now, there is only one level and the penalties are the same whether a driver's BAC is .10 or .25."

"I appreciate the efforts and assistance of my colleagues in the Senate and the House, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys Association, MADD and many others who helped put together

this important legislation," said Senator Dent. "This bill meets a federal requirement and protects Pennsylvania's share of federal highway funding and will be a deterrent to drunk driving that will save lives."

Under the provisions of Senate Bill 8, individuals with BACs ranging from .08 to .099 would face penalties somewhat lower than the current minimums. Those with BACs ranging from .10 to .159 would face penalties similar to current law. Those with BACs of .16 or higher would face mandatory minimum sentences that are higher than the current law. The penalties within each of the three BAC tiers also increase based on repeated offenses.

"We recognize that people make mistakes and this measure reflects that," Senator Dent said. "However, we also know that some people don't learn from their mistakes and the bill recognizes that as well."

SB 8 also redraws certain requirements for evaluation and treatment designed to provide more timely and direct av-

enues for treatment for drivers who are diagnosed with real addiction problems. The bill addresses situations where insurance companies fail to meet a state requirement to provide certain coverage for treatment because the addiction was determined as a result of a DUI.

"The legislation puts more emphasis on treatment than what currently exists," Senator Madigan said. "It's important that we, the state and local communities, work together to help those who are fighting addiction problems."

The legislation also removes a loophole that allows some repeat DUI offenders to avoid a requirement to use an ignition interlock system in their vehicles. Under SB 8, offenders can no longer "opt out" of the requirement by accepting an extra year of regular license suspension.

The Senate originally passed SB 8 in April. The House amended the bill in July. The two chambers could not reach an agreement on the bill and sent it to a conference committee.

In addition to Senator Madi-

gan and Senator Dent, Senator J. Barry Stout, D-46th District and Minority Chairman of the Transportation Committee, served on the conference committee. The House members serving on the committee included: Representative Dennis O'Brien, R-169th District, Representative Richard Allen Geist, R-161st District, and Representative Keith McCall, D-122nd District.

The conference committee report is now headed to the House for a vote early next week. Pennsylvania stands to lose 2 percent of its federal transportation funding if it does not adopt the mandatory BAC limit by Oct. 1. That would increase to an 8-percent loss in funding if the standard is not adopted by 2007.

Pennsylvania would lose \$10.24 million if the statute is not in place for 2004, according to PENNDOT estimates. The penalty would increase to nearly \$20.5 million in 2005; \$30.7 million in 2006; and, almost \$41 million annually from 2007 on if Pennsylvania fails to meet the federal requirement.

70 Years Ago -
October 6, 1933

INSTALLMENT PLAN FOR TAX PAYMENTS

The installment plan for the payment of taxes was adopted by Kingston Township School Board as a means of and facilitating the administration of the business of the district.

Boys, who were using an old railroad tie, which they had placed on the rails in the vicinity of Birch Grove might have caused a

ONLY YESTERDAY

number of lives had it not been for the alertness of William Hufford, motorman on a car from Dallas. Hufford saw the tie and applied the air brakes just in time to prevent a severe jarring of passengers.

Some of the items you could get at A&P Stores: Eight O-Clock coffee, lb. 17¢; Maine potatoes 15 lb 33¢; Lifebuoy soap 4 cakes 25¢; ginger ale 3 small bottles 19¢.

60 Years Ago -
October 8, 1943

WATER SUPPLY RUNNING LOW

Leslie Warhola, manager of Dallas-Shavertown water Company, said that water supplies throughout Pennsylvania are running "alarmingly low with the drought continuing in spirit

of recent rains. many rural wells have dried up, Warhola said, and farmers in some instances are carrying water to their stock.

H. M. Hendricks, supervising principal of Lehman schools, announced that the enrollment at Lehman is higher this year than last year, in spite of the apparent exodus from the valley. There are 466 students enrolled in the Lehman schools.

Concerned that a shortage of raw hides may cause further curtailments in production, a number of employees of the Armour Leather company plant, at Noxen, have moved their families to other localities where they have obtained employment in defense plants.

50 Years Ago -
October 2, 1953

FIRE COMPANIES CO-OPERATE TO CONDUCT PROGRAM

Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company in co-operation with Shavertown and Trucksville volunteer Fire Companies is planning an educational program of school fire drills, demonstrations and lectures during Fire Prevention week.

Construction is moving along rapidly on the new 24-unit motel being constructed by S. & S. Construction Company at the intersection of Routes 309 and 115. The entire building will be faced with native stone.

Movies that played at the Sandy Beach Drive-In: "Rawhide" starring Tyrone

Power, Susan Hayward and "The Hitch Hiker" with Frank Lovejoy, Edmond O'Brien; "Houdini" with Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh.

40 Years Ago -
October 3, 1963

BIGGEST PARADE EVER FOR DALLAS FALL FAIR

The largest parade in the history of the Dallas area will precede the Fall Fair. Colorful floats will be numerous, Harveys Lake Boat Club will show three sailboats with sails. The parade will be led by the color guard of the 109th Field Artillery.

Unidentified vandals broke into Dallas High School by smashing a window late at night, according to Police Chief Frank Lange, then made their way for teacher Donald Evans' homeroom where they expected to find about \$300 in receipts for class pictures.

Some of the items you could get at Daring's Market: rib steaks, 79¢; ground beef, 3 lbs. \$1.29; pork butts, 37¢ per lb.; beef liver, 33¢ lb.; ring bologna, lb. 49¢; roast beef, 1/4 lb., 50¢.

30 Years Ago -
September 27, 1973

DAMA RECEIVES \$140,500, PAYMENT FROM DER

A check in the amount of \$140,500 has been received by the Dallas Area Municipal Authority. The amount represents the fifth and final payment by

the Department of environmental Resources of a \$1,080,600 grant to help in the design and construction of the Back Mountain sewerage system.

Construction on the one-half million dollar Encon Plant in Fernbrook is underway with all steelwork erected to date. The building itself will be of pre-engineered fabricated steel.

Mrs. Edward Johnson, Trucksville had been hired by the personnel committee of the Back Mountain Memorial Library to replace Fran Rinehart, who resigned as assistant librarian.

20 Years Ago -
September 28, 1983

PSU DONATES GYM TO LAKE-LEHMAN

At a regular meeting of the Lake-Lehman board of school Directors, Jane Griffin, Athletic Director at Penn State University of Wilkes-Barre Campus presented to Mr. Joseph "Red" Jones, a donation of a Universal Gym. This a piece of athletic equipment involving weights and various stations for exercising.

Offset Paperback Manufacturers Inc. received a \$935,000 loan from the Luzerne County Board of Commissioners for business expansion efforts.

Some items you could get at Daring's Market: chuck roast, lb. \$1.49; ground chuck, lb. \$1.49; Kraft Dressing, 8 oz. 69¢; Velveta Cheese, 2 lb. \$2.99; Miracle Whip 32oz. \$1.59.

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