

## OUR OPINION

## Eliminate static in emergency services

Our region is blessed with an abundance of volunteer talent and dedication. From Little League coaches to those who stock library shelves, whether as individuals or within organizations, they add extra touches that make life easier, more complete and more fulfilling.

Perhaps none are more committed — or important — than volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel. Theirs is a task that serves the most fundamental of needs, safety and security at times of distress. And as anyone who has seen them in action knows, they are very good at what they do. Even at that, we are witness to only a small slice of the time, effort and sacrifice that go into making someone an effective protector of public safety. Under the demands of state and federal regulations, as well as a desire to do their job well, these volunteers spend dozens — even hundreds — of hours in training so they can master their equipment and advanced life-saving techniques, going so far as to devote weeklong vacations to classes that enhance their skills.

But a changing society has put pressure on even the most dedicated of these volunteers, with work often found far from home and demanding more hours during the week, leaving precious little time to spend with one's family on evenings or weekends. And it is becoming more and more rare that an employer will allow his staff to leave the workplace unannounced to respond to a call for help. Two local departments — Dallas Fire and Ambulance and Kingston Township Ambulance — have addressed this dangerous trend by blending paid personnel with volunteers in order to provide consistently quick reactions to emergency calls.

That change should not be misread as a criticism of volunteer performance, but only as a pragmatic response to a difficult situation. There are still plenty of departments that rely solely on volunteers and provide excellent service, and we have no doubt that members of every single fire and ambulance company in the area put forth the best effort they can muster. But the practical truth is that not every town has the necessary combination of talent, time and location that allows them to put together a crew at a moment's notice.

This is not an argument for fully-paid emergency services. Not only would the expense of such a system be unbearable, eliminating volunteers would change the character of our small towns and separate us from the people we count on when we are most in need. Developing a combination of paid and volunteer emergency response personnel is a positive step toward assuring that the high-quality service we now enjoy will continue, or even improve.

The secret to success for such a meld is open communication among everyone who will be affected. That has not been the case in this first experiment, with the result that rumors, assumptions and misunderstandings have been flying about like ladybugs on a sunporch. There is still opportunity for the architects of this apparently worthwhile expansion to bring the people they serve into the process, particularly as it seems likely additional paid staff will be added in the future.

We urge officials from the departments and municipalities involved to hold a "town meeting" type of gathering, well-publicized in advance. Not only could this eliminate harmful rumors, it could provide a showcase for the fine work that is being done and progressive plans to make our lives even more secure.

## School director should not be appointed at Courthouse

It was an awkward moment Monday, when four members of the Dallas School Board walked out of a meeting in order to preclude the possibility that a motion would be made suggesting a replacement for Anthony Barbose, who resigned unexpectedly November 1. Earlier in the meeting, board member Frank Natitus had been blocked — twice — from reading a letter of interest from Dennis Gochoel, who finished just out of the running in November's general election after earning a place on the ballot by finishing ahead of three incumbents in the May primary.

Some sitting board members suggested it would be unseemly to entertain thoughts of a replacement at the last meeting for the defeated incumbents. That seems like a lame excuse for putting off an important decision, which if not made by the board before December 1 will be in the hands of a Luzerne County judge with little intimate knowledge of the opportunities and challenges that face the Dallas district. After all, the incumbents had been serving since May while knowing they would not continue.

Or could they? It is possible — some say likely — that one of the incumbents will be appointed to the open position. The justification for this line of thinking is that with three brand-new members, the board could benefit from the experience and institutional memory of a veteran. On the other side, the argument is that voters made their feelings known when they gave Gochoel their votes, and their will should be obeyed.

The worst way to handle this situation is to hand it over to the political bureaucracy. The best way is for the school board to schedule a special meeting before December 1, accept nominations and seat whoever wins a majority of votes. That's the American way, and it should be the Dallas way.

Send your news to The Post by e-mail.

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Digital photos welcome, too!

THE POST

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Fall's brilliance in Lehman. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## GUEST COLUMN

## Finding a sense for our past on a walk in the woods

By MATTHEW LLOYD

I make a right turn out of my driveway and head south on Machel Avenue. I start off slow and cold, the early morning air condensing in front of me with each breath. I'm out for an autumn jog, but I feel more like plodding along. Today is a gorgeous fall day, the colors are late in turning, but they are here just the same.

I reach the end of Machel Avenue and turn west onto Reservoir Road. Until a few years ago this was a gravel road. I still call it the "Dirt Road."

To my left I catch a quick glimpse of the Huntsville Reservoir through the yellow and red treed canopy. I'm out with my dog, Oslo, and he, too, sights the cold, sparkling water. He looks back at me, pointing with anticipation of a swim.

"Not yet, Os," I say as we pass by an opening in the trees which affords spectacular views: lapping water upon rocky shoreline, a rolling golden hillside, and the sweeping green meadow of a distant farm.

I begin climbing towards Center Hill near the old Wakefield estate. I notice the rusted-old lightning rods and weather-vane atop the white clapboard barn; I wonder about all the storms these long forgotten instruments have seen from atop their perch.

Before I know it I'm headed



Dallas Post correspondent Mary Barbara Gilligan snapped this photo of wild turkeys near her Dallas home.

out on Route 118. Cars and trucks blow past me at high rates of speed, one after another. There is more traffic on these roads than I ever remember. I take a tight leash with Oslo and move well onto the shoulder.

Looking for the nearest exit point I plunge east onto Old Huntsville-Idetown Road and then north onto the cool and dark forested Fern Ridge Road.

Oslo catches a scent and runs ahead to investigate. I

poke along. I stare upward to view the changing maples, oaks and other species of trees I have yet to identify. A formation of geese fly in a "V" across the northern sky.

Oslo stands motionless, pointing down a side trail. Then, Whoomph! We jump — Oslo with excitement and me with surprise. Up flutter a dozen wild turkeys noisily clucking and flapping into the underbrush. My heart races and I speed on ahead. In no

time I've reached the end of the road, Valentine's Farm, and then the woods beyond.

I come across a lone hunter who suits up in camouflage and bow and arrows. We startle each other; both he and I pause for a moment. I give him a nod and a broad swath and we vanish off-trail into the deep woods.

I pass by a formal white sign stapled to a young tree. It reads:

No Trespassing  
No Fishing  
No Hunting

Trespassers will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Penalties for trespassing include fines and/or imprisonment. (PA. Crimes Code, 1972, Dec. 6, P.L.1482, No.334)

Pennsylvania — American Water Company (PAWC)  
800 West Hersheypark Drive  
Hershey, PA 17033

I take this sign as an ominous reminder that I am not welcome here. I am nervous about this company's rights to develop, sell and profit. I later visit Pennsylvania American Water Company's website: <http://www.amwater.com/awpr/paaw/start/index.html>. I read that PAWC "protects our water resources." But I wonder how devoted PAWC is to the environment when earning a profit remains top priority.

I pick up the pace to a run. I See WOODS, pg 7

70 Years Ago  
November 17, 1933

## RURAL BASKETBALL LEAGUE ORGANIZES

— Representatives of Orange, Noxen, Shavertown, and Trucksville, were present at the second re-organization meeting of the Rural Basketball League.



## ONLY YESTERDAY

— Dallas Post Office will close each Saturday at noon if petitions signed by a majority of the business men of Dallas are approved by the United States Post Office Department.

— Harley Misson of Main Street, Shavertown, widely known around these parts, suffered a fractured knee when he slipped and fell while working as an employee of Wilkes-Barre Railway Company on South Main Street, Wilkes-Barre.

60 Years Ago  
November 19, 1943

## SORDONI CO. SUES FILES \$1 MILLION LIBES SUIT

— The Sordoni Construction

Company of which Andrew J. Sordoni of Harveys Lake and Wilkes-Barre is president and founder, has filed a \$1,000,000 libel suite against Arthur W. A. Cowan, Philadelphia Attorney.

— The current issue of American Photography, nationally known magazine and leader in its field, contains an interesting article on "Photographing in a Coal Mine," by Albert Williams, Trucksville.

— John Hildebrandt, E. Dallas, has recently acquired a registered Holstein-Friesian bull from the herd of Carl G. Wooster, Union Hill N.Y.

50 Years Ago  
November 20, 1953

## FIRST WOMAN FUNERAL DIRECTOR IN REGION

— Mrs. Alfred Bronson, Sweet Valley, has received word that she has successfully passed the state board examination in August and is now a licensed funeral director. Mrs. Bronson, is the first woman funeral director in the Back Mountain area.

— Dorothy Pellam, Beaumont, spent three days at General Hospital after being bit by a neighbor's monkey Sunday. The monkey, property of Ed Freeman, was up a tree, to enjoy the mild weather, and curbed only by a chain.

— Another 15 minutes and

Anthony Javor's store at Alderson would have gone up in smoke Sunday night. Chief Edgar Hughes found the building smoldering, and helped to extinguish the fire.

40 Years Ago  
November 14, 1963

## NEW SCHOOL DIRECTOR

— Following in the political footsteps of her father, Mrs. Barbara Vivian, Huntsville, was recently elected to office — the first woman school director in Lehman Township.

— Demolition of Carverton homes in the proposed park site area in that vicinity is proceeding rapidly under the direction of John Parrish and Son, who hold the contract for dismantling.

— Walter Prokopchak, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Prokopchak, Orange, was grazed on the foot by when his 22 accidentally discharged late Monday morning. The boy was target shooting behind his home at the time.

30 Years Ago  
November 15, 1973

## BACK MOUNTAIN ENJOYS BUILDING BOOM

— A building boom seems to be taking place in the Back

Mountain area. Structures for four new businesses and one addition are now under construction.

— Walter A. Zell, Lehman Township candidate for tax collector, reported on election day that his large political signs posted on Route 118, had disappeared.

— Shots were fired Monday at three Dallas Borough businesses. At least one person, woman at Bernie's Pizza Shop, was hit by flying glass.

20 Years Ago  
November 16, 1983

## DEMOCRATS WIN AT HARVEYS LAKE

— Democrats won all six open seats on Harveys Lake Borough Council in last Tuesday's election. Democrat Daniel Blain, whose term has not expired, holds the seventh seat.

— The Maggie Publick House, located at Newberry Estates, closed its doors for good Sunday, thus joining the growing number of restaurants that have been unable to succeed in the prime location.

— Andrew J. Sordoni III of Warden Place, Harveys Lake, has been re-elected chairman of the board of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce.