

OUR OPINION

May our troops' Christmas be safe

It's a good bet that several hundred thousand American families would welcome one Christmas gift over all others this year, the safe return of their loved ones from Iraq and Afghanistan. But that will not happen; only a minor replacement has appeared in the capture of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi dictator who has defied and taunted the world community for three decades.

Thanks to 21st century communication devices, those of us living comfortably in Northeastern Pennsylvania can feel just a small fraction of the pride and elation savored by our troops and the Iraqi people at this turn of events, as described by Spc. Eric Pimm of Harveys Lake in an e-mail message to The Post earlier this week. Dr. Juan DeRojas of Jackson Township also knows firsthand the joy that has replaced the frustration confronting U.S. soldiers as the months wore on, no weapons of mass destruction were found and Hussein remained at large, presumably directing mortal attacks on our soldiers. DeRojas, on his second tour of 2003 as an Army Reservist, was attached to a medic unit that traveled with a strike force tracking the dictator.

So, that part of the job is over, and we at home can get back to the tasks of shopping for gifts, watching football games and preparing a sumptuous holiday feast. As we do, let's not forget the daily sacrifices made and risks faced by the men and women who are serving our interests in dreary, dangerous places far from home and family. Their holiday will not be the merry and bright one of song, but we can hope and pray it brings them one day closer to a healthy and happy return.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

The New York Sun was started in 1833 by Benjamin H. Day, then just 23. The publication - which became one of the great newspapers in America - was the first New York "penny paper."

The Sun ceased publication in 1950, but every Christmas its memory is revived by an editorial printed on Sept. 21, 1897.

Virginia O'Hanlon, a New York City youngster, wrote this letter.

Dear Editor:

I'm 8 years old. Some of my friends say there is no Santa Claus.

Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth. Is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon
115 W. 95th St.

The letter wound up on the desk of Francis Pharacellus Church, an assistant editor of The Sun. A more hardened person might have thrown it away, but Church felt differently. He wrote this reply.

"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy.

"Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith, then no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world, would be extinguished.

"Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove?

"Nobody sees Santa Claus. But that is not a sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering in the unseen world which not the strongest man, not even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond.

"Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus! Thank God he lives and he lives forever. A thousand years from now Virginia, nay ten times ten thousand years, from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

Send your news to The Post by e-mail.

dallaspost@leader.net

Digital photos welcome, too!

THE POST

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

15 N. MAIN ST., WILKES-BARRE PA 18711 • 570-675-5211
dallaspost@leader.net

Patrick McHugh
PUBLISHER

Ronald Bartizek
EDITOR

Justin Wisnosky
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.

Erin Youngman
REPORTER

Greg Stauffer
AD PRODUCTION MANAGER



Waiting for spring in Sweet Valley. Photo by Ron Bartizek.

LETTERS

Supervisor: Open burning ban sufficiently aired

Editor,
The article on a proposed open burning ban for Kingston Township was biased and unfair to the present Board of Supervisors. Kingston Township's solicitor was to examine two ordinances on the books in the Township, BOCA fire code ordinance adopted in 1994 and the Open Burning Ordinance adopted in 1985. Solicitor Ben Jones handed down an opinion which clearly stated the two named ordinances were in conflict and that in fact the earlier ordinance was cancelled by the second one. That meant that

all burning permits that were issued after that date were illegal.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection issued a letter to the Township stating that it was out of compliance with Act 101 and Act 97 because of its permitting of open burning. The Dallas Area Municipal Authority was also informed that unless the participating municipalities should adopt open burning bans so as to increase the possibility of obtaining future recycling state or federal grants.

As to the charge that remov-

ing from the table the motion to consider an open burning ban was some how considered to be "underhanded," "sneaky" or "undemocratic" is absurd on the face of it. Citizens came to the Township Planning Commission and complained about open burning. The Planning Commission sent it on to the Board for consideration. The Board of Supervisors discussed in four public work sessions and four regular meetings and took input from residents. The Board then held a public hearing on the proposed new ordinance where again public input was sought.

I would suggest that those meetings represented democracy in action and allowed for a huge volume of citizen participation. The ordinance will be written by the township solicitor and then there will be a public hearing and then two successive votes by the Board of Supervisors. I believe all residents need to be free of smoke and stinking fires because the smoke does not stop at your neighbor's border.

Carl Goodwin
Vice Chair, Kingston Township Board of Supervisors

LIBRARY NEWS

Training for Life program to be presented at library

Gary Barnes, Tactical Master Instructor at the NE Kenpo Karate System of Dallas, will present the "Training for Life" system in the children's room at the library on Monday, December 29, at 2 p.m.

This program is aimed especially at helping young adults who are attending high school, or plan to attend college and live on or off campus, to take control of their own safety. The program is not physically demanding, but uses everyday movements to provide personal protection basics that will last a lifetime.

The course is free and open to the public. No special attire is required. Call the library, 675-1182, for more information or to register.



CAROL KING

The young adult craft program scheduled for December 13 was postponed until Tuesday, December 30, at 1 p.m. in the children's room. There is a fee of \$3 for supplies. Call the library to register.

"Peepers" reading glasses are now available at the library. Whimsical and useful, they make great holiday gifts. This is a fundraising project of the Friends of the Library. All you need to know is the magnification that would be best for your recipient. Don't forget these other items for last-minute giving: library tote bags, slate chalk boards, Entertainment Books and last, but not least, contributions to the "Giving Tree," which would allow you to honor a family member or friend, and support the library at the same time. The trees will be up until the end of the month.

During the month of November, the Dallas Kiwanis presented the library with a check for \$200; the Schiowitz Family Foundation donated \$300; and an anonymous donation of \$250 was also received. Visits to the library were made by Maureen Devine and a group of twenty 4-5 year olds; and by sixteen 3-5 olds and their teacher from Head Start Dallas. Statistics for the month included: total circulation, 7,316; books added, 241; new borrowers, 64; total active borrowers, 16,152.

Best wishes for a holiday filled with the love of family and friends, and the warmth of happy memories, from all of the library staff, starting with the M's, as always — Martha, Marilyn, Millie and Margaret — and Anna, Brian, Cara, Cindy, Dan, Debbie, Edie, Holly, and Janet.

A Happy New Year to you all!

70 Years Ago
December 22, 1933

CWA PROJECTS TO BRING 250 JOBS

— Temporary employment for at least 250 men during the next few months is assured by the different Civil Works projects, which are either under way or about to be started in the region.

— Mrs. Margaret Hope, Shavertown, died Tuesday at 7:15 of pneumonia at the home of her daughter Mrs. R.L. Richards of East Orange, N.J.

— A Dallas Borough High School Gymnasium Team has been reorganized under the

leadership of George Lewis, a post-graduate of the school.

60 Years Ago
December 24, 1943

CHRISTMAS MASS MARKS FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. THERESE'S

— The foundation for the beautiful stone church on Pioneer Avenue was started in June 1928. On Christmas Eve that year, the first mass was sung.

— It is announced by Mrs. Samuel Buckman, chairman of the Red Cross, that Dallas schools have enrolled 100 percent of their students in the Junior Red Cross.

— U.S.O. Lounge in Wilkes-Barre, is greatly in need of Ping Pong balls. Ping Pong seems to be the favorite game of service men. Anyone who wants to

contribute should get in touch with headquarters.

50 Years Ago
December 18, 1953

KEIL IS MADE HEAD OF KIS-LYN SCHOOL

— William Keil, widely known former head of the Veteran's Vocational Agricultural School in Dallas Township, and the man who organized the Veteran's School at Lake-Lehman in '47, has been named superintendent of Kis-Lyn Industrial School.

— Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Robowski, hunting with their friends, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Hynick, each shot a hundred and thirty pound doe at Red Rock, Monday. Each dressed his own deer, dragged it to their car and placed it in their trunk where it was taken to their Pike's Creek home.

40 Years Ago
December 19, 1963

DARING DOUSES EXPENSIVE FIRE

— Billows of raging smoke pouring from the chimney of his Memorial Highway smokehouse caught the eye of Ray Daring Saturday night, allowing him to keep a rampant fire from completely destroying the building.

— Arthur Smith was named vice-president of Kingston Township Supervisors at a meeting of the board Wednesday night.

— Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stoss, Dallas, became parents for the sixteenth time when a daughter, Brenda Lee, was born December 8.

See YESTERDAY, pg 7

Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news each week?

A: Only in The Post