

OUR OPINION

Depot is a monument to a nearly forgotten past

Anyone who attended the open house for the Noxen Train Depot restoration project was able to take a peek into the history of Noxen and other once-thriving villages. It seems an oxymoron now to put "Stull" and "boomtown" in the same sentence, but 100 years ago Stull, Noxen, Mountain Springs and other towns were at the center of some of that era's biggest industries — ice, timber and leather tanning. Nearby Harveys Lake was hopping then as well, with tourists arriving by train, then boarding a steam-powered excursion boat for a ride to resort hotels like the Oneonta.

Not only is the economic vitality of that time only a memory, so is the transportation network that fostered it. Roads and highways filled with cars and trucks crisscross our valleys and hillsides now, in place of winding tracks and clattering locomotives. Today's arrangement surely satisfies our need for instant gratification — no need to wait for a scheduled train, just jump in the car and go — but it leaves a lot to be desired in other ways. Train travel was a shared experience, not a solitary one, and required that people tolerate one another for at least a few hours. It also was less wasteful of resources in the movement of both passengers and freight than is the fleet of cars and trucks needed to transport an equivalent load. The tradeoff for that savings was the inconvenience of having to arrange life around scheduled service, which seems like a huge imposition to people accustomed to heading "up the mall" on a whim.

It will be interesting to see if future generations value the institutions of our time as highly as some of us do those from the age of rail. Will there someday be a drive to restore a dilapidated service station or convenience store? Only time will tell. For now, we should be grateful for the effort, money and interest being invested in the Noxen depot, which will stand as a reminder of the transitory nature of "progress." Not only will the structure itself be restored, it will house displays about that proud past, assuring that the generations who came before and their accomplishments are not forgotten.

If you'd like to know more, or get involved in this worthwhile project, call the North Branch Land Trust at 696-5545, or check out their web site at www.nblt.org.

'School news' is more than controversy

Almost certainly more than it would choose to be, the Dallas School District has been in the news lately. The latest headline grabber was the disclosure that a teacher had been involved with a student in an intimate relationship. That incident took a new turn last week when the teacher resigned, but it will surely be back in the spotlight if he is subsequently charged with wrongdoing.

A few weeks earlier interest focused on Ted Jackson, the intense high school football coach who was said to have scuffled with a student, and the school board's disinclination to respond. Before that, a murky process that left a board seat open was the subject of speculation that the apparent people's choice might be passed over in favor of an insider. That didn't happen, and the new board seems off to a positive start, even if it has been interrupted by the teacher/student allegation.

Those are the stories most people would probably mention if asked what they've heard lately about Dallas. That's in part because the stories have received wide reporting by both newspapers and broadcast outlets. And let's face it, they're unusual, controversial topics that get people's attention.

There have been other articles that recounted more common aspects of life in the schools, such as an after-school remedial math program and the recognition of two teachers for their outstanding work. This is not to mention the routine publication of honor students, coverage of plays and dozens of other events and activities that take place day after day.

The fact that occasional bad news catches our imagination is a testament to the consistent positive message coming from Dallas, and Lake-Lehman as well. If good news was exceptional, it might get more notice, but as long as it's the norm, we take for granted that our schools are doing the job we expect. In that climate, apparent breakdowns leap out as interesting, at least to people who aren't directly involved.

A public school district is a large, complex enterprise with dozens of employees and thousands of students. In that context, it is inevitable that some complications will crop up. What we should expect from administrators is not an absence of controversy but consistent attempts to maintain high standards in the face of unanticipated adversity.

And one more word of advice to superintendents, principals and board members: Be open about problems and your responses to them, so rumors don't displace facts and common sense. We're all in this together.

Letters are welcome

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- 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.

Send letters to: The Post, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18711, or by e-mail to: thepost@leader.net.



Nuzzling in the cold, Machell Avenue. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

New books at Back Mountain Memorial Library

The Back Mountain Memorial Library, 96 Huntsville Road, Dallas, announces the addition of the following books to their collection:

FICTION

"The Cat Who Talked Turkey" by Lilian Jackson Braun.

"Mr. Paradise" by Elmore Leonard.

"The Second Chair" by John Lescroart.

"Divided in Death" by J.D. Robb.

"Sunny Chandler's Return" by Sandra Brown.

"Dating Dead Men" by Harley Jane Kozak.

"Three Marys" by Paul Park.

NONFICTION

"The Gospel of Mary of Magdala" by Karen L. King.

"The Irish Way" by Robert Emmett Ginna.

LARGE PRINT NONFICTION

"I'm Not Slowing Down" by Ann Richards.

BIOGRAPHY

"Over the Edge of the World" by Laurence Bergreen.

YOUNG ADULT

"Eragon" by Christopher Paolini.

"Positively 4th Street: the lives and times of Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Mimi Baez Farina and Richard Farina" by David

Hajdu.

"Indigo" by Alice Hoffman.

"The Ear, the Eye and the Arm" by Nancy Farmer.

"Nightmare" by Joan Lowery Nixon.

AUDIOTAPES

"Odd Thomas" by Dean Koontz.

SPECIAL DONATIONS

"Gifts and Giving: stampin' up" presented by Cheryl A. Sut-

Wyoming County awarded grant to help meet building code standards

The Department of Community and Economic Development recently approved a grant for the Southeast Wyoming County Council of Governments that will help communities meet new construction standards, said Rep. George Hasay (R-117).

"Back in 2002 we enacted

legislation to bring all municipal building codes in the Commonwealth into conformity with federal standards known as the BOCA Code," Hasay said. "However, the legislature realized that such requirements could place additional financial burdens on many of our communities. Therefore, we ex-

panded the Shared Municipal Services Grant Program to cover these requirements."

The \$8,000 Shared Municipal Services grant will be used toward establishing building inspection programs in Eaton, Monroe and Northmoreland townships.

"Specifically, the funds will

help cover the costs of purchasing computers, printers and other office equipment and training and testing the building inspectors," Hasay said.

The program is part of the legislature's and the department's efforts to stimulate economic development within the state.

Post drop box update

The building that housed The Post until October has been sold, and the drop off box there has been closed. A box at the Uni-Mart in Dallas, across from the Dallas Shopping Center, remains open.

News items, photos and other correspondence can be deposited there at any time. Please do not place cash or checks in the box.

The deadline for submissions is Tuesdays at 5 p.m.

70 Years Ago
February 9, 1934

RULING FORCES KINGSTON TWP. TO POSTPONE BUILDING

A ruling by the Pennsylvania State Department of Justice brought an abrupt end to the plans of Kingston Township School Board to construct a new \$100,000 building.



ONLY YESTERDAY

The proposed Luzerne by-pass, which would afford a quicker route from Kingston to Dallas by avoiding heavy traffic in Luzerne, will be discussed at the summer home of Senator A. J. Sordoni, Harveys Lake.

Andrew Diamond, aged 23 of Tunkhannock, driver of the truck that crashed through the ice at Harveys Lake and sank 80 feet, grasped a loose floor board which floated up and clung to it and the edge of solid ice until he was rescued.

60 Years Ago
February 4, 1944

FIGHTER PLANES FLY OVER DALLAS

Several groups of fighter planes on night flying operations flew over Dallas Tuesday, between 8:30 and 10:30 p.m.

Henry Lee of Machell Avenue and son of Captain Larry Lee was one of seven members of Wyoming Seminary's senior class to be elected to Cum Laude membership at the school this week.

The sudden death of Mrs. Jennie Austin Brickel, outstanding resident of Dallas, was a shock to many as she was on the road to recovery when struck with a heart attack.

50 Years Ago
February 5, 1954

NEW ELECTRIC SIGN AT HALL'S DRUG STORE

An attractive 12-foot electric spectacular sign was erected last week for Hall's Pharmacy in Shavertown by Plastic Arts Sign Company of which Elmer Nagle, Shaver Ave. is owner.

William Burnaford, popular Back Mountain soloist, takes the lead in Little Theater's forthcoming production of Carrousel.

Malcolm Nelson was elected president of Harveys Lake Rod and Gun Club Monday night at Herman Kern's Restaurant.

40 Years Ago
February 6, 1964

MARTZ DEATH SHOCKS COMMUNITY

Frank Martz Jr., of Wilkes-Barre and East Dallas, met a tragic death Monday afternoon when the helicopter he was piloting struck high tension wires at Topton, Pa.

Sheldon Evans, proprietor of Evans Drug Store, Memorial Highway, was elected president of the Rural Building and Loan Association recently, and J. F. Besecker, vice president.

Dallas Borough was unable to meet part of its payroll last week, but will be operating all right next week.

30 Years Ago
February 7, 1974

SWEET VALLEY MAN KILLED IN CRASH

Charles Long, 55, a community leader of long standing in the Back Mountain, was killed in an auto accident in his home community.

Back Mountain Memorial Library reports it had a record breaking circulation in 1973; 40,311 adult books were circulated and 66,566 juvenile.

Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Evans, 111 Church Street, Dallas, celebrated their silver wedding anniversary February 5.

20 Years Ago
February 8, 1984

DALLAS MAN HONORED FOR 55 YEARS OF SERVICE

Bruce Davies Jr., Dallas, was honored by Boy Scout Troop 281 for 55 years of scouting service.

Twenty-two unionized employees of the Banks Equipment Co. in Jackson Township went on strike February 8 in a contract dispute.

Seven-year-old Alton Nulton of Harveys Lake was the grand prize winner of an 800 Atari computer given away from Commonwealth Telephone Company.

THE POST

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

A: Only in The Post