

OUR OPINION

Let's cooperate to help people, too

Pressures on the region's natural and aesthetic resources continue unabated, but local community leaders are at last taking steps to meet and direct them. The obvious issues are much the same as they have been for a couple of decades: burgeoning traffic, commercial expansion seeking the greatest advantage at the least expense, and housing development on formerly vacant land.

Until recently, each township or borough faced these challenges alone, even though occurrences in one town often had an impact on neighboring communities. The best example of that is the traffic congestion expected at the center of Dallas Borough if a Wal-mart or similar store is built on land a mile and a half away in Dallas Township. The spectre of such a development spurred the search for a more efficient traffic pattern that may replace the present confused intersection with a roundabout. Even better, a more attractive town center could accompany improved traffic flow.

If this project proceeds as hoped, it will be a testament to the power of participation, since the roundabout idea arose from members of the ongoing visioning effort that strives to preserve the best aspects of the Back Mountain while preparing it for a vibrant future. The visioning committee will continue to be a prolific source of ideas and assistance, but there is something more solid behind the latest efforts to control our destiny, a council of governments. That organization, which presently has four member municipalities, is gearing up to sponsor a study that will address the Back Mountain as one region, not a collection of islands connected by ribbons of asphalt. Such a study could eventually produce a master development plan to rationalize zoning and planning throughout the Back Mountain by recognizing the influence each community has on its neighbors and coordinating their interests.

Other influences are at work that bolster the regional thinking process. State mandated building codes may force small municipalities to share the resources of code enforcement officers or approved subcontractors; water sources do not respect artificial boundaries, nor do air, light or chemical pollution. We each have a stake — directly or indirectly — in what happens in nearby communities, and thus a reason to offer our insights and efforts to move the region forward. The council of governments provides a forum for us to exercise that responsibility.

There is much more to be concerned about than traffic congestion and the latest subdivision. Those topics may be enough to hold our attention, and addressing them may help to build a strong foundation for citizen participation. But there are issues involving people, not pavement and patios, we must pay more attention to if ours is to remain a healthy community. Perhaps the biggest and scariest at the moment is the rising tide of drug use destroying the lives of our friends and neighbors. While concentrated among young people, this scourge is not confined by age group, and it affects all of us, not just the individuals who are hooked.

As soon as it is practicable to do so, the region's communities must put their collective resources to work fighting this devastating epidemic. This is an issue that should claim our best efforts and energy, and that will not go away without their application.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

A sigh of relief seemed to echo across Harveys Lake Saturday afternoon, mixed with the screaming of fire engine sirens that marked the safe return of a Back Mountain soldier from Iraq. Eric Pimm, a 1999 graduate of Lake-Lehman High School, was the focus of the celebration, and he was joined by Ricky Blaine, his best friend, who had come back a month earlier. Both are now stateside, where they and their families hope they'll stay for the duration of their enlistments.

Both soldiers have their share of war stories to tell, to be sure. One of the most important aspects of their deployment had nothing to do with fighting and death, though. Instead, it reflected the role all of us — even small children — play when American men and women are put in harm's way. That role is to offer support and encouragement to the people who are asked to risk their health and safety, even their lives, carrying out the orders they have been given, even when the cause and eventual outcome seem uncertain or unequal to the cost.

"I always knew there was a lot of support back home," Eric said during an interview last week. But he did not learn until arriving in Iraq that people he did not know and who did not know him cared enough about his commitment and sacrifice to write notes and letters that boosted his spirits and strengthened his resolve. And he was not alone, Ricky Blaine said he received similar messages while on duty half a world away.

Surely some of those writers do not condone the war, and others are too young to understand what armed conflict can do to participants and disinterested bystanders who end up victims for no other reason than bad timing or bad luck. But it is important that we recognize the difference between applauding the action and supporting those who are charged with carrying out a mission on our behalf, even one we don't agree with. That important distinction was lost to some extent when the U.S. was at war in Vietnam, and returning soldiers were greeted by protests, not parades. We seem to have recovered our senses this time around, and none of us should be bashful about expressing appreciation for the dangers faced and hardships endured by the troops.



View of Back Mountain hills from Derhammer Hill Road. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

THANKS

Shavertown Fire Department thanks lettering sponsors

The Shavertown Volunteer Fire Department would like to extend its thanks to the various local businesses and business people for contributing to the lettering and striping of the department's new engine. The department raised over \$2,300.00 for this cause.

With their contributions the department was able to properly equip their vehicle to keep fire fighters and victims safe during emergencies. The striping and lettering was required for Shavertown's new engine, Engine 64. This truck was placed into serv-

ice on February 2, 2004.

Members of the Dispatch contributors are, M&T Bank of Shavertown, Phil's Auto Body, and Sign Werks.

First Alarm contributors include The Parish of St. Therese's, Chris and Helen Yankovich, and an anonymous businessman.

Pen Fern Oil Co., Humphrey's Bootery and Bags, Back Mountain Shopping Center, Kingston Township Ambulance and Rescue, Cook's Pharmacy of Shavertown, Burger King, Offset Paperback Inc., Francis

J. Collini, M.D., Autoworks Int'l LLC, Newell Fuel Service Inc., Louis Pugh, First National Community Bank, Hillside Motor Co. Inc., State Representative Phyllis Mundy, In Memory of Jack Berti, Waste Management of Dunmore, and First Federal Bank all make up the Second Alarm contributors.

Also making donations included in the Third Alarm contributors are Maken Waves, Dreier Auto Sales, Gina's Take and Bake, Michael S. Melnick Law Offices, Thomas' Family Market, and McDonald's.

LIBRARY NEWS

Library's annual circulation tops 100,000 items

The Annual Report to the Board of Directors of the Back Mountain Memorial Library for the year 2003 by director Martha Butler is truly impressive, not only statistically but in the scope of the activities in which staff and volunteers participated. Area residents are very fortunate to have the resources of the library at their fingertips, and are obviously appreciative because they support it through volunteer work and financial contributions.

This support has made it possible for the library to maintain its staff with no cuts, despite state budget reductions. It also allows the library to continue to fulfill its efforts "to provide the community with current resources, access to technology resources, and a well-balanced collection of books and materials to enhance and enrich the lives of our library users".

The impressive statistics include the following totals for the year: circulation, 100,045; books added, 2,971; and new borrowers, 1,101.

Fred Krohle's annual report for the Slightly Read Bookshop shows a slow but steady increase in business, rising from 817 customers in 2001 to 1,491 in 2003. Fred gave high praise to the staff of 15 volunteers who are "friendly, outgoing, dependable, and knowledgeable, ... (whose) sociability definitely enhances the bookshop operation." Speaking of the many generous donations of used books the shop receives, Fred added, "Our cup runneth over." Please patronize the bookshop whenever you can. Throughout the year Fred will have a number of special bargains and attractions for the youngsters. The bookshop has its own parking lot and handicapped entrance at the rear of the library.

The Friends of the Library are firming

up plans for their 16th Annual Luncheon, to be held at 11 a.m. (note the new time) on Thursday, April 29, at Apple Tree Terrace, Newberry Estate, Dallas. The speaker will be Melanie Maslow Lumia, local businesswoman and editor of "Got Verse," an anthology of Wyoming Valley poetry. In connection with the luncheon, the Friends are sponsoring a poetry contest open to school children and adults alike. Visit the library or log on to www.bmmfriends.org for a copy of the registration form. The deadline for entries is April 1. Watch The Post for further details about the luncheon and the contest.

The display case contains an unusual and mind-boggling collection of 198 superballs, owned by McKenzie Kelly, 10, a fifth-grader. Can't you see all of them in motion at one time? Actually, most of them are too pretty to be bounced high in the air and end up who knows where. I am told that the youngsters viewing the display are enthralled.



RON BARTIZEK



CAROL KING

70 Years Ago
March 2, 1934

LOWEST TEMPS ON RECORD, -30°

— Sub-zero temperatures swooped suddenly down again this week bringing temperatures in some Back Mountain places to 30 below zero.



ONLY YESTERDAY

— As part of reforestation projects, 100,000 trees will be planted in Luzerne County by the Department of Forests and Waters it has been announced from Harrisburg.

60 Years Ago
February 25, 1944

ALFRED HOYT SEES ACTION ON REPAIR SHIP

— Alfred Hoyt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daisy Hoyt, Kunkle, is serving with distinction as a gunner's mate on the U.S.S. Delta, a rugged fleet repair ship converted from a merchantman by Cramp's Shipyard

in Philadelphia.

— Lewis Doll has been appointed principal of Noxen Schools to replace Elmer Pogar.

— A series of informal programs to discuss various branches of government has been arranged by the Dallas Rotary to take place at Lundy's.

50 Years Ago
February 26, 1954

AUCTION GOODS ARRIVE AT BARN

— Several large loads of furniture, household equipment and books arrived at the Barn on Lehman Ave. this week for the 1954 Library Auction.

— The elevation of Dallas Borough at the benchmark placed in front of Miners National Bank by the United State Geodetic Survey is 1127.531 feet.

40 Years Ago
February 27, 1964

NEW BAND PROVING POPULAR WITH LOCAL TEENS

— One of the swingiest

sounds heard recently in the Back Mountain is furnished by the new group which calls itself the Comets. Members include Jack Ryan, Bud Mahler, Janet Roberts, Don Lawson, James Balavage and Bob Dungey.

— Carverton Road was tied up yesterday as a house being moved toppled off its skids blocking the thoroughfare.

— Fate of the Noxen tannery plant, abandoned since 1961, will be partially resolved this month according to Armour Leather Company's real estate division, Chicago.

30 Years Ago
February 28, 1974

POLICE ASSOCIATIONS OFFER TO BACK COOPER

— The Back Mountain Policemen's Association and the Luzerne County Police Chief Association have recently declared their support of former Jackson Township Police Chief Robert Cooper.

— At a recent meeting of school and municipal officials, many suggestions were made including the need for a Back Mountain-wide community

center that would provide athletic opportunities for all ages.

— Items that could be purchased at the ACME Market: Lettuce, three heads, \$1; Starkist Tuna, 6 1/2 oz. can, 29¢; pork chops, 1 lb., 68¢.

20 Years Ago
February 29, 1984

COUNCIL OVERRIDES VETO OF GARBAGE FEE

— Harveys Lake Borough Council voted Feb. 21 to override Mayor Frank Picchi's veto of a \$26 a year garbage tax.

— Cub Scout Pack 155, Trucksville, celebrated its 35th year of scouting at its annual Blue and Gold Dinner held recently.

— Friends of the Sisters of Mercy and members of College Misericordia's community gathered recently for ceremonies dedicating the college's library to the memory of Sister Francesca McGlaughlin.

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THE POST

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