

OUR OPINION

Teacher turnover is two-edged sword

Four hundred forty-nine years. That's the combined experience that will leave the Dallas School District when 11 teachers and two administrators put away their red pencils in June. They'll be leaving a workplace that has been a second home for an average of 34 1/2 years, and their retirement presents a host of problems and opportunities for the district.

In our tax-conscious age, there's good and bad fiscal news. First the bad: the district will spend \$603,000 in early-retirement incentives next year, as the teachers collect lump-sum payments averaging 70 percent of their annual salaries. The good part? Replacements will come in at much lower pay rates, saving the district a net half-million dollars over five years, and a smaller amount for the next five.

Similar arithmetic will be necessary looking forward, as about 15 teachers are expected to retire each of the next two years, with an accompanying first-year deficit followed by long-term savings.

But teaching is about more than money, and there's no doubt that a great deal of the retirees' skill and wisdom will not be immediately replaced by less-experienced new hires. That concern is offset by the prospect that fresh energy and ideas will permeate classrooms that may have gone stale as teachers looked ahead to retirement. That comment is not meant to criticize the retiring teachers; they have "paid their dues" as they taught and guided generations of young people. But there is no denying that eager new teachers will bring with them fresh insights and ideas that may spark enthusiasm in their classrooms.

If projections hold true, one-quarter of the Dallas teaching staff will retire over the next three years, and there will be some musical chairs among administrators as well. The school board will be challenged to hire the best replacements, something board member Maureen Matiska is concerned about. She suggests a more empirical and open system than the current protocol involves, and fears the district is gaining a reputation as one that favors the well-connected over the best-qualified.

Whether or not that is the case is at this point a subjective judgment, and one we hope will not prove out. But rumors of favoritism are running rampant, and the board must do everything in its power to assure the public that all job openings are adequately advertised and applicants are fully and fairly considered.

Given the looming turnover rate, that may mean more work for board members and administrators. They must commit to placing the integrity of the hiring process ahead of their convenience, for the good of students and to retain the support of the community.

A well-earned accolade for good citizen Eric Lee

Every community needs leaders who excel in their chosen fields, while directing time, ideas and energy to a greater good. Eric Lee of Shavertown was recognized at Saturday's Penn State Wilkes-Barre commencement as one of those people, and the honor could not have fallen to a more deserving individual.

Known by most of us as the owner of the region's premier Chinese restaurants, Mr. Lee has done much more than serve high-quality food in restaurants decked out with his hand-picked Asian furniture and decorations. With little fanfare, he has worked to discourage alcohol and drug abuse, to protect women and children from abuse, and to promote appreciation for diverse cultures, among other worthwhile endeavors.

No one can do as much good alone as with a good partner, and Rosa Lee certainly earns credit for the support and encouragement she has provided to her busy husband every step of their exciting life's journey.

A fitting aspect of the Outstanding Community Service Award is a one-time scholarship, in Mr. Lee's name, that will be given to a student exemplifying the qualities that led the campus to bestow the honor on Mr. Lee.

Unfailingly polite and professional in his relationships, Mr. Lee has had a profoundly positive influence on his adopted hometown. We are pleased to join in saluting his quiet but meaningful contributions to this region's progress in both economic and humanitarian terms.

Letters, columns and editorials

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

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 addressing the same topic 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.



Splish splash, duckies taking a bath. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LIBRARY NEWS

Something for everyone this summer

Now is the time for parents to encourage their children to sign up for this summer's reading game at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The theme is "Discover New Trails at Your Library." Come in to the library, beginning on June 1, and fill out a game card. The ladies in the children's library will tell you how to play the game to win prizes for completing eight books at your grade level.



CAROL KING

There will also be special programs during June and July. Write the dates on your calendar now, and be ready for summer fun:

Tuesday, June 15, 1:30-2:30 p.m. in the children's room: "Feeding the Birds in Your Backyard" will be presented by Wild Birds Unlimited, Dallas; Friday, June 25, 10:30 a.m., King's College, Wilkes-Barre: "Hersey Park's ZOOAMERICA" (details later); Wednesday, July 14, 1:30-2:30 p.m., children's room: "Nature Fun and Safety", presented by Judy Adamic, Ricketts Glen State Park; Friday, July 30, 1:30-3:00 p.m., children's room: "Final Party and Take the Trail through the Swamp," presented by Kathy Kelchner of Francis Slocum State Park. Certificates and refreshments, too.

Registration has started for the Donuts

and Discussion group to be held this summer for 10-13-year-olds. You may call the children's room at 675-1182 to register. Try, too, to stop by and look at the list of books being considered. The organizational meeting will be held on Monday, May 24, from 4:30-5:15 p.m. Come prepared to suggest other books, too, if you like, and order your books and decide on meeting days and times.

There's a program for young adults, 12 to 18, as well, starting June 1 and continuing through August 5. In a nutshell, you're invited to act as a YA book reviewer. Any category in either the adult or YA sections of the library, is fair game. After you've finished a book, fill out a review slip and hand it to a clerk at the main desk for posting on the bulletin board. The more books you read and review, the greater the chance that you'll win a prize. A book discussion group meeting will be held midway through the summer. The next time you're in the library, stop by and get more details — and than start reading and reviewing!

Time to think AUCTION, too! The committee is asking for contributions of antiques, as well as items for the Odds and Ends Booth (costume jewelry is especially popular) and the Book Booth. Contributions may be brought to the library at any time. If you haven't yet volunteered to serve in some capacity at the auction, offer

your talents soon. There are plenty of opportunities out there, and it's great fun to be involved in this traditional summer event.

On Thursday, May 20, at 7 p.m. at Wyoming Seminary's Stettler Learning Center, the Tudor Bookshop will sponsor a discussion of "Blue Suburbia" by author Laurie Lico Albanese. It's unusual in that it's written entirely in free verse.

The book of poetry, "Got Verse", which was highlighted at the recent Friends luncheon, was chosen by the book discussion group for its meeting a few days before the luncheon. Claudia Malleson presented a brief history of poetry and led a discussion which revolved, in part, around the question of what poetry is. The last meeting of the season will be held on Monday, May 24, when the group will discuss "Glory Cloak", by Patricia O'Brian.

A special Bon-Ton coupon book for library patrons is available at the desk. For a \$5 donation, it will be valid for purchases on Saturday, June 5, from 7 a.m. to noon. Here's another practical way to help your library.

Sara Eneboe has put on display her carousel collection, consisting of pictures and snow globes.

70 Years Ago
May 18, 1934

DRIVER WALKS HOME AFTER CRASH NEAR HILLSIDE

Five men from Luzerne escaped serious injury in an accident that shattered posts and a concrete abutment along the main highway near Hillside. Cal Chilok of Main St. Luzerne, driver, caused concern when he disappeared for several hours after the accident. He was found at home after he had walked away from the wreck in a daze.



ONLY YESTERDAY

The J.A.B. Sunday School class presented a play entitled "Fun on the Podunk Limited." Cast members included: Walter Davis, Josephine Kramm, Jennie Brown, Kathryn Karns, Erma Van Horn, Laverne Race, and Merrill Thomas.

Ralph Antrim won a seat on the county committee in the South District of Dallas Borough. Morgan Wilcox won in the North District.

60 Years Ago
May 19, 1944

HOWARD COSGROVE DIRECTS OPEN AIR SPRING CONCERT

Howard Cosgrove directed the first open air spring concert of the Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company Community Band composed of Back Mountain musicians. Firemen erected a 20 x 20 foot bandstand along the Harvey's Lake highway about 500 feet beyond the Dallas Borough Honor Roll on land owned by Warden Kunkle.

An editorial announced that the public health program in Dallas Borough Schools under the direction of Dr. F. Budd Schooley, assisted by Mrs. Robert Moore, school nurse, is one of the outstanding programs of its kind in the state.

Kingston Township School held its Field Day with a formal coronation followed by athletics.

50 Years Ago
May 14, 1954

TAX EQUALIZATION IS HOT TOPIC IN BACK MOUNTAIN

Leslie Barstow, Carl Benett, Roberta Williams and Allan Williams, students at Westmoreland High School, were delegates to a Safety Council at Bloomsburg State Teachers College.

Atty. James Lenahan Brown and Robert Pickup appeared on opposite sides of the question: "Equalization of Assessments as a Method of Taxation" at Dallas Township High School.

Three Back Mountain high school bands and the Drum and Bugle Corps of Kingston VFW led the parade to open the Back Mountain Little League season.

40 Years Ago
May 14, 1964

LEHMAN TOWNSHIP BUYS BEACHFRONT AT LAKE

Lehman Township acquired a strip of shoreline at Harvey's Lake near Sunset bridge for use as a Township Beach. It was leased for a nominal consideration to Lehman Township.

Key Club Rifle Team and Keyettes from Dallas High School performed at Red

Rock. George McCutcheon, Doris Mallin, William Wright, and Sandra Hinkle accompanied the team.

Mrs. Warren S. Taylor, Rice Street, Trucksville, was hostess to members of the Dallas Senior Woman's Club program.

30 Years Ago
May 16, 1974

KOEHL, CARTER IN DISTRICT TENNIS SINGLES

Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Hudak, Overbrook Avenue, Dallas, entertained Mr. and Mrs. Louis Sledziewski, Brown Manor, at a dinner held at the Castle Restaurant to celebrate Mr. Sledziewski's birthday.

Nick Taddei invited boys and girls to participate in the annual Soap Box Derby. The course was on Mount Olivet Road, Carverton Heights.

Dallas High School hosted the PIAA District II tennis singles competition. Chip Koehl and Donald Carter represented the Mountaineers.

20 Years Ago
May 16, 1984

POLK FAMILY HONORED BY GENERAL HOSPITAL

Our Lady of Victory's Church at Harvey's Lake broke ground for the construction of a parish center.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Polk and daughter Ruth Polk of Orange and Mrs. Michael Dobbs, Shavertown, were among those honored at a Volunteer Recognition Dinner for Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

The Back Mountain Jay-Cettes installed Connie LaJeunesse as president.

THE POST

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