

OUR OPINION

No escaping taxes, so make collection as economical as possible

Looking for savings wherever they can find them, the Luzerne County Commissioners are considering a change in the method used to collect county property taxes in certain municipalities. According to an analysis by the county Treasurer's office, the switch, which was made in the City of Wilkes-Barre last year, lowers county expenses by \$342,000 a year, not an insignificant sum even when compared to a projected \$20 million deficit.

But what is good for the county could be harmful to Kingston Township, one of the six municipalities that may be affected. That's because the county now pays the township \$3.50 per tax bill — about \$12,000 per year — as a fee for the services of the township's tax collector, who accepts county tax payments, then forwards them to the county treasurer.

It is hard to argue with the principle that Luzerne County shouldn't be in the business of subsidizing local tax collectors. The county's position is made even stronger when the rate of payment to cities is considered; \$15.91 per tax bill in Pittston, \$6.93 in Nanticoke and \$10.77 in Wilkes-Barre. The Treasurer's office says the change in collection methods for county taxes in Wilkes-Barre resulted in savings of \$161,722 in 2003.

The loss of \$12,000 in revenue is not the only potential adverse effect on Kingston Township; the county now prints and mails bills that list both county and township taxes. So it is possible the county could decline to continue that service, shifting those expenses to Kingston Township. That is one of the issues Eddie O'Neill, the township manager, raised in a letter to the commissioners, dated July 20. A week later, he had received no reply to a request for a meeting to discuss his concerns.

Surely the least the township should expect is for the commissioners to make a change like this as painless as possible. That means getting bills into the hands of taxpayers at no additional expense, and assuring them that payments will be handled accurately, fairly and promptly. Lancaster County has proven that can be accomplished, with cooperation between the two levels of government.

The process can begin here with an active dialogue between officials from both sides.

Their old house harks back to our beginnings

The Back Mountain and adjoining communities have a rich history that reaches back to a time when giant trees populated forests through which Native Americans blazed trails. After white settlers arrived, they built homes, mills, barns and roadways, some of which survive to this day. It is important to preserve reminders of times gone by, so that we do not forget where we came from and the paths we took on our journey to the present. Sometimes that preservation is done with words on a page, in other cases it involves something more substantial, such as restoration of buildings and other landmarks.

Much of the latter is underway now, with the Back Mountain Trail taking shape on the former Lehigh Valley Railroad bed and the ongoing maintenance of historic buildings, such as those at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. A more modest, but equally important project has been occupying Paul and Pat Paci, as they patiently restore their old house on King Street in Dallas Borough. This is not a grand or glorious domicile, but rather a home more representative of those owned by the people who settled and developed the region 100 or more years ago, when having two enclosed rooms was sufficient to satisfy most families. As they stripped the walls to their bones, the Pacis discovered evidence in wide wall panels of the timber that was such a striking feature of the Back Mountain.

It probably would be cheaper — and certainly easier — to tear down this remnant of the 19th century. But nothing could replace it as a link to our history, so we hope the Pacis and other people who own historic properties large and small will always sense their irreplaceable value.

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 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.

Letters can be sent many ways:

By e-mail to: thepost@leader.net

By mail to: The Post, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18711.

By using the drop box located in the Uni-Mart convenience store on Route 309 in Dallas, across from the Dallas Shopping Center.

Always include a daytime phone number for verification.



An entrance no longer grand, but charming nonetheless. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LIBRARY NEWS

Summer activities winding down

The "Relax and Read" group of Young Adults who have been writing reviews of books throughout the summer will meet on Thursday, August 5, at 4 p.m. in the Children's Room for a short book talk session. Refreshments will be served, and the names of the winners of the \$50 award offered by Target and the runner-up prizes awarded by Pepsi of Wilkes-Barre will be drawn. Everyone who has submitted a review has a chance to win. Call the library, 675-1182, to let them know you're coming.

Other summer programs are coming to

an end as well. The summer reading game, "Discover New Trails at Your Library," had a final party on July 30. The final meeting of the Donuts and Discussion group will take place at 4 p.m. on Monday, August 9, when they will discuss "Ruby Holler," by Sharon Creech.

A Farmer's Market opened yesterday on the library grounds, and will be held every Saturday from now until October 2. The hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The recent auction was a great success, thanks not only to the many volunteers who served at the auction, but to those who have helped all year long in preparing for it. The weather was perfect, there was a good turnout, and everyone seemed to be

enjoying himself. Here are some of the lucky raffle winners: antique items donated by David Hall in memory of his wife Kathryn Hall: 1st prize, Pam Allard; 2nd, Raelene Olszewski; 3rd, Mary Ann Daily. Judy Rimple won the grill, and Gail Morris won the \$200 savings bond donated by Pennstar Bank. Total figures for the auction aren't available yet, but a special thank you goes out to the story-hour moms and others who donated baked goods for the bake sale, and made the whopping sum of \$350 in just one evening.

Look for details of the Fall Festival scheduled for Sunday, September 19. One of the features will be the library's mini-auction, which will be held this year in the center of Dallas.

70 Years Ago
August 3, 1934

P.S.C. PROMISES TO INVESTIGATE CAUSE OF WATER PROBLEMS

Attorney Peter Jurchak, who wrote to the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission last week asking that a state engineer be sent to this section to investigate causes for interruptions of

ONLY YESTERDAY

water supplies, was informed this week that action will be taken by the commission. In Dallas borough, conditions were considerably better this week and there were no reports of severe water shortages.

Readers of The Post who voted in the Serial Story contest announced last week gave Zane Grey's thriller, "Robber's Roost", an overwhelming majority as their choice of the novel they want to read each week in this newspaper. Consequently, the great author's gripping Western story starts serially in The Post today.

Weather permitting, the annual picnic of the Dallas M.E. Sunday School will be held at Fernbrook Park today. Teachers of classes will provide silverware and two dozen sandwiches. The committee in charge has as members, Mrs. J.L. Kintz, chairman; Mrs. R.L. Brickel, Mrs. Donald Frantz and Mrs. Arthur Thomas.

60 Years Ago
August 4, 1944

PAUL NULTON JR. IS MISSING AFTER BOMBING ATTACK

Believed to have taken part in the largest mass bombing attack ever directed against Germany, Staff Sgt. Paul F. Nulton Jr., crew chief and top turret gunner of a B-17 Flying

Fortress has been missing in action since July 19, according to a War Department message received Wednesday morning by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Nulton Sr. of Beaumont.

Dallas Borough six fire plugs began to pay extra dividends this week when the Middle Department Rating Association announced that starting Sept. 1, fire insurance rates on dwellings located within 600 feet of a fire hydrant will be dropped almost 50%.

Dallas Borough Council at its meeting Tuesday night approved a two weeks vacation with pay for Chief-of-Police Walter Covert and Street Commissioner, Ralph Eipper. Timothy LaBar was the only councilman absent.

50 Years Ago
July 30, 1954

STUDY TANNERY WASTE DISPOSAL

Armour Leather Company is making a survey of the Wilson Harding farm at Noxen to determine the feasibility of constructing a big new filter plant which will permit the company's Noxen tannery to operate without interruption during the summer season when water is low in Bowman's Creek. The company has obtained a 90-day option on the Harding Farm.

In order to render more efficient service to meet the expanding needs of the Dallas District, Co. H.H. Butler, vice-president and general manager, Commonwealth Telephone Company announced today that approximately 400 telephone numbers in the Dallas, Harveys lake, Center Moreland, Sweet Valley and Harding exchange areas have been changed.

John Hewitt, Idetown, Agricultural Chairman of Wilkes-Barre Kiwanis, and Eugene Zehner, Nescopeck, Agricultural chairman of Berwick Kiwanis, are proud to announce that their respective service clubs

are sponsoring the Luzerne County 4-H Dairy and Vegetable judging teams at the Penn State Campus during the 4-H Club Week Aug. 9-12.

40 Years Ago
July 30, 1964

NEW LIBRARIAN STARTS TUESDAY

Mrs. Mary Dale, elected to the position of librarian at the May meeting of the Back Mountain Memorial Library Board, takes her official position Aug. 1. Plans are in the making for a formal welcome to Mrs. Dale.

Two drivers raced on Memorial Highway between Natona Mills and Center Hill Road on Thursday night, according to Dallas Borough Police, and will lose their licenses. Officer Ray Titus said his own speedometer read 75 m.p.h. when he gave up tailing the boys because they were out of sight, but he caught them turning on Center Hill Road.

While swimming at Bowman's Creek near Sorber's Bridge, Noxen, Bruce Atkinson, formerly of East Dallas, and his uncle, Asa Shotwell, killed a three-foot rattlesnake last week.

30 Years Ago
Aug. 1, 1974

IRISH TEACHERS VISIT IRISH DAY PICNIC AT HANSON'S

A bit of the "auld sod" came to the Back Mountain area last weekend when College Misericordia hosted a group of 15 teachers from Ireland. The teachers were invited to the Wyoming Valley by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick for the annual Irish Day picnic at Hanson's Park, Harveys Lake.

Legal maneuverings apparently again foiled the adjourned hearing in Robert Cooper's demotion from chief to assistant chief of police of Jackson Township. A dozen res-

idents, three supervisors and two newspaper reporters were dismayed when they arrived at the appointed time and place. For some unknown reason, the township solicitor, Atty. Blythe Evans, Mr. Cooper and his attorney, Ben Jones III, were conspicuously absent.

The Kingston Township recreation Association held a pet show last Thursday at the Shavertown School playground, followed by horseback rides for about 30 kids. The services of the horses, Baron Beau and Schnautzel, were donated by Cindy and Nancy Roberts, Trucksville, and Beth Ann Delaney, Dallas.

20 Years Ago
Aug. 1, 1984

STEVAN DAVIES WILL SPEAK ON SCRIPTURE

Stevan Davies, Ph.D., assistant professor of religious studies at College Misericordia, Dallas, will speak on "The Institute on Sacred Scripture" at College Misericordia. The institute will be held Aug. 5-10 and is under the direction of Sister Marie Noel Keller, R.S.M. The six-day institute is held annually as part of College Misericordia's traditional mission to preach the word of God.

Several Back Mountain youths were honored at a luncheon at the Irem Temple Country Club on July 27. The three youths, Donny Ide of Idetown, Albert Sweitzer of Lehman and Bobby Adams of Trucksville, were, at one time, patients at the Shriner's Hospital in Philadelphia.

The Back Mountain area will soon be losing a vital part of its heritage. Those who enjoy the finer things in life will be saddened to discover that the Back Mountain Cultural center has decided to completely disband itself. Mrs. Priscilla Allison, board member and past president and vice president of the center, cited a lack of leadership and interest as the reasons.

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