

OUR OPINION

We can't let signs obscure our charms

Signs, signs, everywhere signs — some of them illegal and many unattractive. That is now the state of affairs along major roadways in the Back Mountain, but hopefully not for long.

The proliferation of garish signs is not in keeping with the image of this region most of us like to hold. While our population, housing and business community have been swelling, we still like to think of the Back Mountain as a place that is pleasing to the eye and easy on the spirit, and that is by and large still true. But glaring commercial signs are taking their toll, and unless they are brought under control, they could overwhelm the positive appeal that remains.

This is not to blame businesses that erect signs, as long as they are within the framework of zoning ordinances. They are only following the rules of free enterprise, looking for an advantage over competitors and opportunities to catch the eye of customers. The fault lies not with them, but with outdated and weakly enforced regulations allowing signs that are too large, too many and too ugly.

The subject has come to a head in Dallas Borough in part because of a rejected variance request, but it has been overlooked for far too long in most of our towns. Change will not come easy, or fast, but it is necessary to help our little corner of the world retain some semblance of the charm that has drawn — or kept — many of us here.

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."

Letters are welcome

Letters to the editor are welcome.

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.



What's black and white — and gray and orange — and loved all over? Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LIBRARY NEWS

Library open house December 21, 22



CAROL KING

refreshments.

Christmas is fast approaching, and we want to remind you of the library's annual open house, scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, December 21 and 22, from 1 to 4 p.m. each day. Everyone is cordially invited to attend and to partake of

A Friends of the Library volunteer will be on hand during many of the operating hours of the library this next week to explain the Giving Tree project. Contributions of \$5 and up for the adults' tree, and \$1 for the children's tree, will be greatly appreciated.

Registration for the children's winter story hours will begin on Tuesday, January 4. The programs will begin during the week

of February 1 and end the week of April 4.

Again this year, best wishes from a holiday filled with the love of family and friends, and the warmth of happy memories, from all of the library staff, starting as always with the M's — Martha, Marilyn, Millie and Margaret — and Anna, Brian, Cara, Cindy, Dan, Debbie, Edie, Janet and Katelyn. I would like to join them, as well. A Happy New Year to all!

70 Years Ago
Dec. 21, 1934

NOTED ARTIST
PAINTS TOBY'S
CREEK SCENES

Aston Knight, a noted American painter, spent two days painting scenes along the banks of Toby's Creek. The two paintings were to be exhibited at the

ONLY
YESTERDAY

contrast between the once-undisturbed creek and its present condition at the East Boston Colliery.

A pickup team consisting of former high school players and other local athletes defeated Dallas Borough High School team 6-0. The game was a benefit promoted by friends of Clarence LaBarr. Bob Hislop scored the winning touchdown.

Mrs. Karl Kuehn, first vice president of the Dallas Women's Club, was chairman of a dance to be held December 29 at the Irem Country Club.

60 Years Ago
Dec. 22, 1944

LT. CHARLES W. KERN
EARNS SECOND
OAK LEAF CLUSTER

Second Lt. Charles W. Kern, of Alderson, has been decorated with his second Oak Leaf Cluster to his Air Medal for "meritorious achievement" on combat missions over Europe.

Lt. Kern, 22, is a B-17 Flying Fortress bomber pilot with nineteen attacks to his credit.

Haddonfield Farm, Idetown, will ship hundreds of English pheasants to out-of-state buyers, purchased as Christmas presents. After they are bled out, male and female pairs are packed for shipping in natural pine shipping boxes decorated with pine sprigs, holly and red berries.

Mrs. James Sands was elected president and Mrs. Herman DeWolfe vice president of the Anderson Sunday School class at the Carverton church.

50 Years Ago
Dec. 17, 1954

LITTLE DOG
RECOVERS AFTER
SAVING OWNERS

Bambi, the heroic little Chihuahua that roused the Gary Cuppels family in time to avert grim tragedy, is recovering from pneumonia contracted when he braved dense smoke to reach her owners and give the alarm.

Mrs. Iris Kitchen and her husband Walter have given tower chimes to the Alderson Methodist Church in memory of her parents and grandparents. The Schulmertronic tower chimes are manufactured in Sellersville, Pa.

Mrs. Fred Swanson directed a performance of "The Youngest Shepherd" for nearly 100 members of the Harveys Lake Women's Service Club. Alan Swanson held the title role. The show took place at the Kunkle

Community Hall, since the Lake-Noxen high school remained without water.

40 Years Ago
Dec. 17, 1964

GROUNDBREAKING
FOR NEW DALLAS
POST OFFICE

Ground was broken for the new Dallas Post Office, in the site of the old passenger rail station. Congressman Daniel J. Flood, who fought to keep the Dallas office separate from Wilkes-Barre, turned the first shovel of dirt.

Jack Stanley, plant manager of Natona Mills, hosted 300 employees at a Christmas party held at O'Connell's Twin Lakes.

Susan Strohl will play Mary and Carl Goeringer will be Joseph in the Christmas Pageant at Prince of Peace Episcopal Church. Mrs. Sanford Kellogg, director, has written an original song, "The Christmas Gift," for the show.

30 Years Ago
Dec. 19, 1974

TAXPAYER GROUP
CITES PROGRESS
WITH AMERICAN
ASPHALT

The Jackson Township Resident Taxpayers Association heard about 14 points that have been negotiated with American Asphalt, including monitors for blasting, fencing and erosion control. Efforts to limit early starting times for blasting have failed.

Back Mountain residents

braced for a trio of big utility rate hikes. The Dallas Area Municipal Authority plans an increase of about 28 percent. UGI Corp. has filed for a 9 percent hike in electricity rates and PG&W is seeking 15 to 20 percent higher fees.

The Lodge at Newberry Estate was advertising a Christmas Eve dinner with a choice of four entrees, vegetable, salad and a dessert table for \$6.75 per person, \$3.75 for children under 12.

20 Years Ago
Dec. 19, 1984

CLEARY WINS
CONTESTED SCHOOL
DIRECTOR POST

After a series of fruitless votes, John Cleary was elected to fill a vacant position on the Dallas School Board. Votes for Cleary and James Richardson had been deadlocked at four each until an exasperated Richardson offered to withdraw his name. The vacancy was created by the resignation of Barbara Mead.

Sandra Cooper and her daughter, Elizabeth Cooper, both of Shavertown, passed their state boards for cosmetology and are now licensed cosmetologists.

The new auxiliary of the Meadows Nursing Center completed its first project, brightening the holidays for residents. Auxiliary members hosted parties that included refreshments and music, while Pearl Gruver, Glenne Wilson, Mazie Mazar and Marcella Birkbeck decorated a Christmas tree.

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

• On Dec. 23, 1931, Bette Davis signs with Universal after years of work as a struggling actress, and she makes her film debut the following year in "Bad Sister."

• On Dec. 24, 1953, "Dragnet" becomes the first network TV series with a regular sponsor when Fatima cigarettes signs on to back the show.

• On Dec. 20, 1963, the Berlin Wall is opened for the first time in more than two years, as nearly 4,000 West

Berliners are allowed to cross into communist East Berlin to visit relatives for one day. Under an agreement reached between East and West Berlin, more than 170,000 passes were eventually issued to West Berlin citizens.

• On Dec. 26, 1966, the first Kwanzaa is celebrated in Los Angeles under the direction of Maulana Karenga, the chair of Black Studies at California State University at Long Beach. The seven-day holiday, which has strong African roots, was designed by Dr. Karenga as a celebration of African-

American family, community and culture.

• On Dec. 22, 1973, a federal speed limit of 55 mph is imposed throughout the United States. Although the new limit led to widespread speeding, studies showed it achieved its goals of increasing safety and fuel economy.

• On Dec. 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 from London to New York explodes in midair 31,000 feet over Lockerbie, Scotland, when a bomb hidden inside an audio cassette player detonates inside the cargo area. All 259 passengers, including 38

Syracuse University students returning home for the holidays, were killed in the explosion.

• On Dec. 25, 1996, singer-songwriter Jimmy Buffett departs with his family on a three-week cruise in the Southern Hemisphere that will inspire his book "A Pirate Looks at Fifty" (1998). The book hit No. 1, making Buffett one of only a handful of writers including Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck and Dr. Seuss — to top both the fiction and nonfiction bestseller lists. (c) 2004 King Features Synd., Inc.

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