

GUEST OPINION

Let's look to the past to assist in our future

Maybe its time to do some grave robbing in the Back Mountain. Not in the traditional sense of taking material items as in the old days, but to pick the brains and ideas of a distinguished group of citizens who served on the local school boards in the middle 1950s through the 1960s.

The accomplishments achieved by these people were extraordinary. Long before school consolidations were mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania these men found a way to successfully form a jointure of the schools for the students of Dallas Borough and Dallas, Franklin and Kingston Townships. While they had their share of problems to overcome they stayed the course and steered the ship in the right direction. In the beginning, the meetings were usually long and spirited. Rarely did they ever agree on anything at face value but they would negotiate and achieve consensus that all could live with. And at the end of the meetings they would go out for refreshments and socialize.

One of the keys to success in the formation of the jointure was to get the right leadership in place. They had the foresight to go take local politics out of the equation and went out of the area to select Robert Mellman as the first superintendent.

When the new high school was built, they went out and bought 80 acres of land for \$1,000 an acre. Some felt that this was a ridiculous purchase as it was far more land than was needed for a school building and some athletic fields. These men had the foresight to see that in time newer schools would have to be built to sustain the needs of the school district. Imagine the additional costs if land had been purchased piece meal as new buildings were built. As the middle school, Dallas Elementary and Wycallis Elementary Schools were built the land was used and their dreams of a central campus school district were achieved.

Maybe a little grave robbing would have been a good 10 years ago. The high school was old and antiquated when the Wycallis Elementary School was built. Maybe the old school board would not have succumbed to the wishes of a few to build an elementary school specifically for the displaced students of the Westmoreland Elementary. A new high school would have been expensive at the time. But the problem did not go away. It was just delayed. A new high school is still needed today and at what cost? Maybe the old school board would have built the much needed high school and renovated the existing high school into an elementary center.

In the past several years several opportunities have come and gone to make the Dallas area a more progressive place to live. Attempts to form a regional police force are dead. The local council of governments is about to suffer the same fate due to the two largest municipalities choosing to opt out.

Maybe its time to do a little grave robbing to renew the thoughts and ideas of a group of civic leaders who served 40 years ago.

The above column was written by Ted Wright, a resident of Dallas. You may reach him at news@mydallaspost.com

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

- If you're like the average American eating an average meal, that bite on your fork traveled between 1,500 and 2,500 miles before getting to your dinner plate.

- Some people claim to be able to spot when someone is lying by how much they blink. What does it tell you, then, that women blink nearly twice as much as men do?

- In 2004, Al Eaton, a Canadian farmer, grew a pumpkin that weighed 1,446 pounds.

- It was noted humorist Bill Vaughan who made the following sage observation: "Economists report that a college education adds many thousands of dollars to a man's lifetime income - which he then spends sending his son to college."

- The real name of John le Carre, the famed author of suspense novels, is David Cornwell. When he was a young man, he worked as a spy for the British secret service. He didn't really like his job, though - he said that life as a spy was "spectacularly undramatic" - so he started writing novels in his spare time. Since he was still working for the secret service, he had to keep his name a secret, which is why he had to choose a pen name. Finally, in 1963, his novel "The Spy Who Came in From the Cold" was successful enough that he could quit the unsatisfying day job that had, nonetheless, provided fodder for his writing.

- The plant that produces marijuana is useful for many things, including making rope and paper goods. In fact, a single acre of hemp can produce as much paper as four acres of trees.

MOMENTS IN TIME

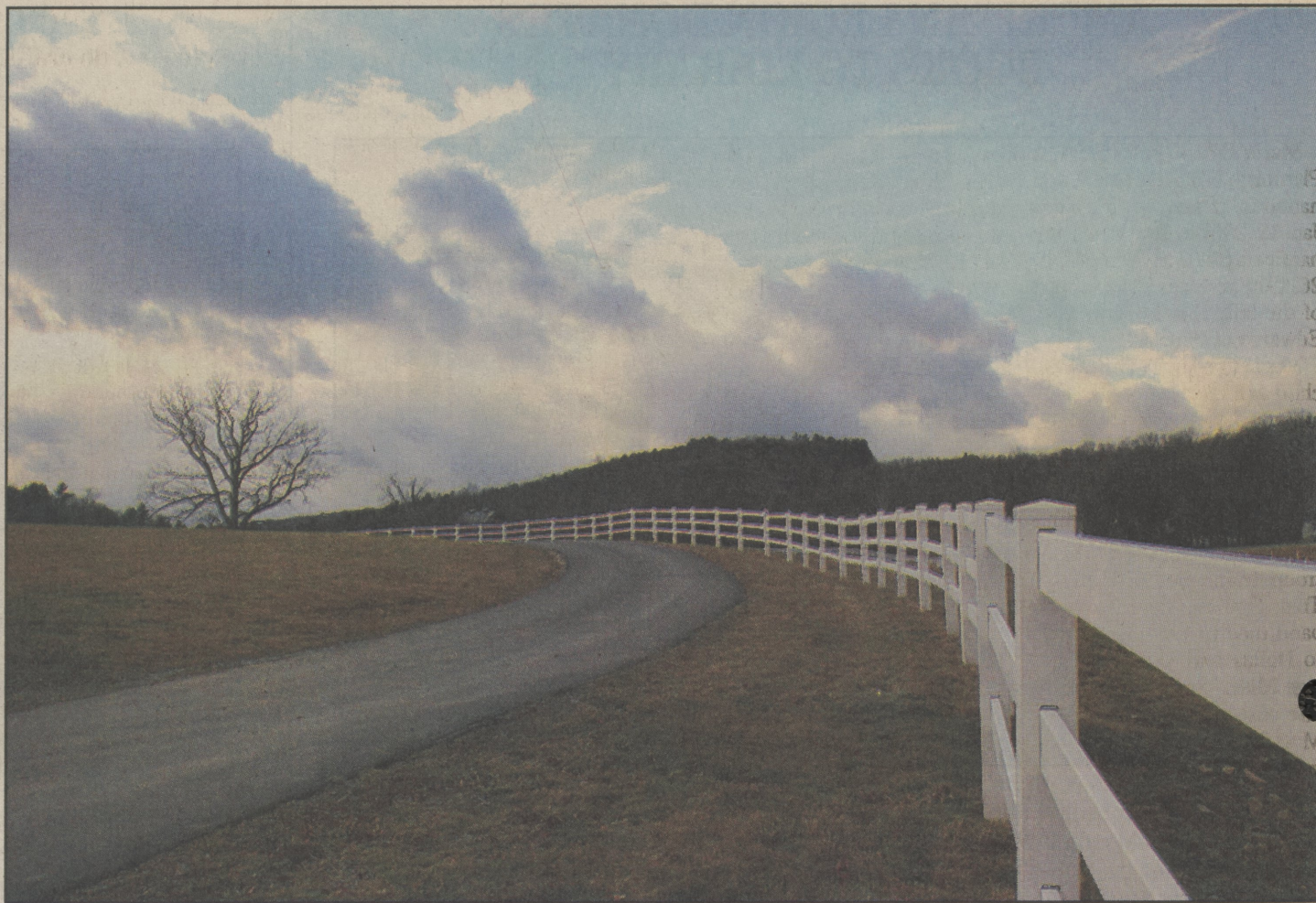
- On Jan. 24, 1907, Florida engineer Glenn Curtiss sets an unofficial land-speed record on a self-built V-8 motorcycle: 136.29 mph. In 1911, Curtiss built and demonstrated the world's first seaplane for the U.S. Navy.

- On Jan. 28, 1917, American forces are recalled from Mexico after nearly 11 months of fruitless searching for Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa, who was accused of killing 17 Americans. In 1920, the Mexican government pardoned Villa.

- On Jan. 23, 1922, at Toronto General Hospital, 14-year-old Canadian Leonard Thompson improves dramatically after becoming the first person to receive an insulin injection as treatment for diabetes.

- On Jan. 26, 1934, producer Samuel Goldwyn buys the film rights to "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank Baum. The film was released in 1939.

- On Jan. 22, 1950, Tucker auto builder Preston Tucker is cleared of all 31 counts of fraud that had been brought against him. But it was too little, too late - the Tucker automobile was history.



Follow the fence, follow the road. One opens to new possibilities, the other stops you short. Stick to the road, or strike out into forbidden territory? Tie your shoes, heft your sense of adventure and create your own way.

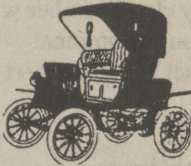
70 YEARS AGO
Jan. 15, 1937

FRANTZ TO REMAIN AS BANK PRESIDENT

Local grocer Corey A. Frantz was re-elected president of the First National Bank of Dallas following the annual meeting of the shareholders on Tuesday morning. Mr. Frantz, who has been closely allied with business affairs in the borough for a number of years, was named president of the local bank first in 1938. This will be his fifth term.

Other officers named at the meeting were: Sterling Machell, vice president and W.B. Jeter, cashier. Those named as directors were R.L. Brickel, W.R. Neely, Clifford Space, A.C. Devens, Herbert Hill, Frantz, Jeter and Machell.

Edwin Lumley, 16, is a patient at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, the result of an injury suffered Wednesday night at a roller skating rink in Edwardsville. X-rays were taken of the East Dallas resident to determine how seriously the lad's injuries are. It was



ONLY YESTERDAY

thought that he may have suffered a broken back.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. John Lumley was a member of a group of about 40 young people who went to the roller skating rink for a party. Sometime before 11 p.m., the boy fell and is believed to have struck his head. He fainted but quickly regained consciousness. He also fainted on the ride back home.

Yesterday, Lumley was reported in "good" condition by the hospital.

60 YEARS AGO
Jan. 17, 1947

TUNKHANNOCK MAN CONFESSES TO CRIMES

The Christmas crime wave in the Back Mountain was fully solved this week when state police at Dushore questioned a Tunkhannock man about his activities in the Dallas area on Dec. 27, 1946. Raymond Tilley, 21, confessed to the attack on Mrs. Ralph Balut at Hays Corners in Dallas. Tilley, who had been held since Jan. 5 on charges of larceny and burglary in Beaumont, also confessed to the theft of a car belonging to the Rev. Joseph Fiske on the same night.

In his confession, Tilley said he attempted to draw a \$20 serviceman's readjustment allowance in Tunkhannock, but was refused because he did not have enough time in service. He wandered around Tunkhannock for a while before hitch-hiking his way to Dallas. He went to the Himmler Theater, but did not like the show and left after five minutes. He walked around Dallas and eventually saw Mrs. Balut leaving her home.

Balut, who was on her way to the hospital to visit her husband, hit Tilley with a flashlight repeatedly until he left.

Following the sudden resignation of James Gensel, the Dr. Henry Laing Fire Company elected Leslie Warhola to the position on Friday night during a largely-attended meeting. Warhola had been the fire chief since 1936 until Gensel was elected to the post last month. He resigned, however, a few days later stating he could not give enough time to the job.

Alvin Shaffer, one of the most active of the younger members of the fire company, also resigned his position as assistant fire chief. He stated his residence in Idetown precludes him from being near the firehouse when calls come in.

Gensel will remain active with the company, as Warhola named him as one of three assistant fire chiefs. The other two are Atlee Kocher and James Besecker.

50 YEARS AGO
Jan. 18, 1957

FIRE DESTROYS KUNKLE BARN

William Haddle's cattle barn in Kunkle was reduced to ashes with the loss of two cows and a calf within a few minutes of the first sign of smoke at 10:30 Tuesday morning. Mr. and Mrs. Haddle had left for General Hospital fifteen minutes earlier, headed for the operating room where Mr. Haddle submitted to an appendectomy the following morning.

Kunkle firemen, alerted by a barrage of calls from neighboring hills as smoke rose ominously in the air, rushed apparatus to the scene, but the hay in the barn was furiously ablaze by that time and the two cows - showing signs of desperate attempts to escape - were smothered with the calf beneath. The only major piece of equipment lost was a manure spreader.

The cause of the fire has not been determined and the loss will not be covered by insurance. A nearby pond, which should have provided plenty of water to fight the fire, was frozen solid.

The morning of the day when she was scheduled to appear in court to testify against a neighbor, a Jackson Township woman was found dead in her bed by her husband. The 35-year-old woman, worrying about the ordeal of appearing in court against a woman who had threatened her life with a shotgun, had been unable to relax and had been taking sleeping tablets. An empty bottle of a barbiturate, originally containing twenty tablets, was found under her pillow.

The Dallas Motel finds its business curtailed by icy conditions on the long grade leading from Dallas to the Dallas outdoor movie theater, and by the steep downgrades beyond Beaumont. William Shedleski, who owns and operates the motel, states that before the icy road

conditions developed, his main motel of 20 rooms was filled and a new addition showed an average of eight visitors each night. Since the ice, he has received cancellation after cancellation.

40 YEARS AGO
Jan. 19, 1967

FIRST LOCAL MAN KILLED IN VIETNAM

Four days after Second Lt. Richard Michael Cummings was killed in action on Friday, Jan. 13, his parents received a letter from him, announcing his safe arrival in Vietnam. Cummings was the first resident of the Back Mountain to be killed in action in Vietnam. In a military operation north of Saigon, Cummings was killed on his first day under enemy fire.

The news of his death by small arms fire had been received by Cummings' wife, who was with her parents in Randon, Ohio and transmitted to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Cummings of Sutton Road in Trucksville.

Cummings was a graduate of the first class to finish at Gate of Heaven School and was a member of St. Therese's Church in Shavertown. As a young boy, he played Little League in Jackson Township, where he was a catcher and helped lead his team to the championship in 1952 and 1953. He later became an excellent bowler and was a member of the Trucksville Volunteer Fire Company team.

Cummings was buried with full military honors at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Kingston Township.

It was cold on Tuesday, when a contingent from Dallas High School gathered to march in the inauguration parade of Governor Shafer in Harrisburg. There was a long spell of waiting while members of Dallas High School band and marching units tried to keep warm. Members of the junior high drill team wore earmuffs and sweaters to combat the cold temperature.

The trip was made possible by support from the Dallas Rotary Club, Dallas Kiwanis Club and the Dallas School Board. This was the second time in four years the Dallas band appeared during the inauguration of a Pennsylvania governor. Four years ago, the group made its way to Harrisburg to play for Governor Scranton.

Fernbrook will have a new garment industry. The new operation is expected to be ready by the first of February with renovations now under way at the former Bogdon Economy Market on Demunds Road. Through a special arrangement, the Wilkes-Barre office of the state employment service will conduct interviews for qualified garment industry workers, sewers, and machine operators.

30 YEARS AGO
Jan. 20, 1977

L-L PLANS TO BUILD SCHOOL IN

LAKE-NOXEN

Plans for a new building program were launched by Lake-Lehman's school board during a meeting Tuesday night, which established endurance records by continuing until 11:30 p.m. The new school, which is proposed for the Lake-Noxen area, represents the next step in the district's 10-year building plan.

The motion to begin planning for the new school was passed by an 8-1 vote, with director Mark voting against it after suggesting that a feasibility study to determine population density should be undertaken first.

The motion which passed called for the initiation of plans for a new building program in the Lake-Noxen area and "other areas where facilities are needed."

Members of the Dallas Borough Council approved the appointment of Edward Lyons of Sterling Avenue in Dallas to police chief at an annual salary of \$11,200 during a meeting Tuesday night. After being without a chief for four months, police committee chairman Willard Newberry recommended the appointment of Lyons. The appointment was unanimously approved.

Lyons is a graduate of the University of Scranton and served 21 years in the U.S. Army, retiring with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He is the commander of the Dallas American Legion Daddow-Isaacs Post 672. He is married and is the father of two boys, ages 12 and 7.

20 YEARS AGO
Jan. 21, 1987

VEHICLE MISSING AFTER ACCIDENT

Harveys Lake police are continuing the investigation of a car theft that was reported to Dallas Township police early Sunday morning that was also involved in an accident.

According to township police, a 1986 Chevrolet Blazer was traveling east on the Kunkle-Alderson Road when it failed to negotiate a curve, hit a bridge and went down an embankment before landing in a creek. A passing motorist called the township police and said a man was bleeding badly and standing near the car. When the police arrived, however, the man was gone. Shortly afterward, a Harveys Lake man reported his Chevy Blazer had been stolen. It turned out to be the same vehicle that was involved in the accident.

The search for a Back Mountain Senior Citizens Center is over.

The Luzerne County Commissioners approved a 10-year lease between Timothy Carroll and Carol Carroll of Machell Avenue in Dallas and the commissioners to provide a senior center located at 79 Main Street in Dallas.

The senior citizens had been housed temporarily at the Huntsville Christian Church.

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