

WHY NOT A HIGH SCHOOL AT SEELEY LAKE? (Supplement)

The foregoing information was gathered in January and February, 1961:

By way of substantiating our figures on the anticipated growth, we want to point out that the grade-school enrollments at the beginning of the year in the affected areas and schools are as follows:

Seeley Lake-----	123		
Swan Valley-----	40	Woodworth-----	3
Ovando-----	40	Greenough-----	12

We have 24 children riding the bus from this area. There are approximately 10 children now boarding in town. There are numerous families where the men are working here and have to keep their families elsewhere because of the school situation. We know there are children who have dropped out of school because they could not afford to board and were physically unable to endure the bus ride and do their home work.

The

The committee of the high school board who investigated possibilities for improving bus facilities found the following:

At present a standard 66-passenger bus makes the 69-mile trip to Missoula County High School, a trip of nearly 2 hours each way. Students start boarding the bus at 6 a. m. and some ride until 6 p. m. In an effort to make this long trip more bearable, the Missoula County High School Board selected Messrs. Gray, Kinney and Deschamps to serve as a committee to provide more comfortable seating. A new bus with reclining seats could be furnished on a long-term contract for about \$11,500 a year, but this would seat only 32 passengers. Since there are presently 47 riding the bus, two busses would be required, one from Seeley Lake, and the other from the Blackfoot Valley. The second bus would cost an additional \$4,000 a year. This would solve our problem for this year only, as there would be an additional 14 to 16 students from Seeley Lake next year, thus requiring a second 32-passenger bus. By 1962 this would be filled at Seeley Lake, and a third bus required. After much deliberation, the committee agreed to delay any action until next year, hoping that the people would provide the more practical solution--A High School at Seeley Lake.

The problems of this bus run have been seriously pointed up already in the current 1960-61 school year with two mechanical failures, two electrical failures, and one impassable road condition due to ice, that resulted in 3 days or part days lost, at least 2 times tardy, and at least 2 days when the trip was made with no heat in the bus. One of these trips made with no heat involved the electrical system to the extent that the trip was also made without lights. In normal bus runs for a short amount of time these problems can be handled, but when applied to a 69-mile, 2-hour run through a sparsely-populated area, the safety and physical well-being of these children is at stake.

Who is responsible? Who will accept this responsibility? We who have children affected can no longer pacify ourselves with the thought that our answer may come some day. We want action now!

Potomac, Mont.

Feb. 23 - 61

Dear Mr. Wald -

I understand there are representatives in your community who will go out and speak about a high school for Seeley Lake. They are very interested and would like to have someone speak at our P. T. A. meeting Monday, Feb. 27 - 8 o'clock at the Potomac school house.

Would you inquire and let us know if this is possible?

Thank you very much.

Sincerely

Mrs. Leonard Cook  
Program Chairman

*Missoulian Mar 3 '61*

Letters intended for publication in this column should be on a subject of general interest and not more than 300 words long. Any letter exceeding that length by more than a few words will be returned to the writer for condensation. For publication each letter must bear the writer's signature and address or other identification.

## Seeley Lake School

Taxpayers, watch your pocket-books.

Taxes, taxes and more taxes. Where is this upward spiral of taxes upon the property taxpayer going to end? It is time all the people shouldered this tax burden instead of those who through hard work and perseverance have acquired property.

My target this time is the proposal to build a Seeley Lake high school. Is this really necessary? This may sound good but is it going to cure all the faults of the bus system to MCHS.

Parents should have some responsibilities in the education of their children. They, the parents, knew when they settled in the Seeley Lake area that there was not a high school. Now they want the taxpayers of all of Missoula County to provide for their children. In this wonderful country, which by the way was founded by people who sought relief from high taxes, one is not compelled to live anywhere, especially any place that inconveniences them if they do not wish to.

How do the taxes paid by the people residing in the Seeley Lake area compare with the taxes paid by the people in the other areas of the county? Where is the major part of this burden going to fall?

Why can't the people of the Seeley Lake area form a high school district of their own? Then they could build their own building and if the population changes in the area the problems arising will be their own.

A high school at Seeley Lake will not solve the problem of the children being able to take part in school activities any more than it is solved with the present system. Only a few will be close to the school and as I see it the rest will have to ride a bus the same as now. There again the parents can shoulder a bit of duty and perhaps one should say privilege.

As I understand it the area to be taken in will have to be transported by buses. That does not eliminate that problem, but just adds another. Some of the children will ride on a bus longer than if they were to go to MCHS. But these people have not been given any chance to retain their privilege to go to the existent high school.

Having helped put four children through high school and all by bus to MCHS, for which I am very thankful, I feel I am qualified to ask the people of Missoula County to stop and think and vote "no" on the levy for the proposed high school building at Seeley Lake.—**Henry and Gladys Allen, Bonner.**

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## Seeley Lake School

"As I Misunderstand It" should be the caption over the letter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Allen in the Opinions of Readers column on March 3.

I am sorry that until this time the Allens haven't been able to receive accurate information on the high school for Seeley Lake situation. I will attempt to furnish accurate information on their letter, point by point.

The Allens ask: "Where is the upward spiral of taxes going to end?" We wonder too, but do the Allens recommend we start our cutback on education and eventually work our way around to the large accounts that really cost, such as "giveaway" foreign aid programs, surpluses, price supports, etc?

The Allens say: "It is time all people shouldered the tax burden." Is this an inference that we of Seeley Lake are exempt? Records show that we voted Missoula bridges, South Avenue High School and all other questions which we understood to be needed. Also we are not a group of people sitting around holding out our tin cups to the rest of Missoula County taxpayers. Our apportionment of the federal timber sales from the Seeley area paid directly to Missoula County in lieu of taxes amounted to \$39,313.11 for the year of 1959. Succeeding years should pay more because of increased timber cuts. Aside from this we all pay our property and real and other taxes other people pay. All our land isn't federal or state—just a large enough portion to make it impossible for us to build a high school after we bonded ourselves to maximum for the grade school we now have.

The \$39,313.11 is not a gift from Uncle Sam. It represents a lot of hard work and time invested on our jobs for the people from the Seeley area. Isn't that taxes? Legislators who conceived it thought so.

The Allens say: "Parents should have some responsibilities in the education of the children." I venture to say that the people of Seeley feel their responsibility and work toward a satisfactory end as hard as any other group in Montana. We are reminded of it each day at 5:30 a.m. when we awake our high school students to prepare for their near 65-mile one-way trip by bus to Missoula. After we see them off we hope they will return to us safely some 12 hours later. As the Allens point out in their self-contradictory article: "No one is compelled to live anywhere, especially any place that inconveniences them." Is this the pioneer attitude that fought through and established the bus route and the modern high school that their four children had the opportunity to attend and enjoy? Until this country has populated all its areas and has schools sufficient to its needs, it will always be necessary for people to pioneer in our frontier areas. We can't all flock to places where someone else has worked and established comforts and conveniences for us to take advantage of. We who live here do so because we feel we can contribute more to our county, state and nation, as well as ourselves, by our jobs here instead of adding our names to the unemployed rolls in some congested area.—Bernard I. Wold, member of the High School for Seeley Lake Fact Finding Committee, Box 84, Seeley Lake.