

Opinion

Grossman says 1974 study of region's image is still valid

BY HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

In May, 1974, the firm of Wilbur Smith and Associates published a report titled "Wyoming Valley Area Appearance and Image Study". This sixty-one page report including appendices represented the first ever analysis of natural and man-made elements of the Wyoming Valley which influence its overall appearance. The report was accomplished as a result of the long-range flood recovery planning program carried out following the tropical storm Agnes flood disaster of June, 1972. Not long after the flood, funds were made available by a number of federal agencies including the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Economic Development Administration, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purpose of carrying out a variety of plans, programs, and studies designed to rehabilitate Wyoming Valley and to serve as a pathway for long-range renewal.

While there are many reports which have been published through the auspices of the Luzerne County Planning Commission, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP), and others which are helpful to an evaluation of Wyoming Valley, and in particular, the Back Mountain, the aforementioned report provides a benchmark by which community appearance and image can be changed to reflect as positive a view of the Back Mountain as may be possible. The report itself chose to recognize its purposes as follows:

1. To identify those Wyoming Valley appearance and image factors which impede the area's economic growth and development.
2. Present recommendations for physical improvements.
3. Outline a demonstration improvement project for a specific area of the Valley.
4. Present material to be used in a free standing exhibit which will highlight Wyoming Valley appearance factors.

There is no question that the physical appearance of major sections of Wyoming Valley has improved astonishingly as a result of the flood recovery program. In fact, the City of Wilkes-Barre and areas around Wilkes-Barre have an amazingly different tone and shade as a

result of the injection of substantial governmental and local resources since June, 1972.

Now a new dilemma has surfaced in parts of Northeastern Pennsylvania. This is the dilemma of growth and its positive or negative impact on the region. The case in point is the Back Mountain area, which is undergoing as much growth as ever before in its history.

Some of the wisdom and insight offered in the above mentioned report, much of which is still valid today, needs to be dusted off and discussed in terms of new actions which can help stem the tide of poor development and/or development which adversely affects the basic community structure. For example, the report recommends the following actions which can be taken to help improve community appearance and image. The recommendations apply as much to the Back Mountain as they do the entire Valley:

Recommendations:

- A. Enact trash and junkyard ordinances
 - B. Enact comprehensive code enforcement programs
 - C. Restructure zoning ordinances to include environmental requirements
 - D. Enact a comprehensive signing ordinance
 - E. Restructure development regulations to include landscaping and open space provisions.
 - F. Enact a building, structure and sign removal ordinance
 - G. Petition local government to make maximum use of new state and federal regulations to improve appearance and environmental quality
 - H. Enact a Planned Unit Development Ordinance
- Land Use:
1. Update local land use plans to:
 - A. Reflect environmental areas of concern
 2. Require new development to be more compatible with established land use patterns.
 3. Completely restrict strip commercial development
 4. Provide an open space and park plan
 5. Be more sensitive to the rich cultural and architectural heritage of the area.
 6. Include small area and neighborhood revitalization plans

7. Include more citizen participation in the planning process

B. Where possible, direct new development to areas that have potential for corrective action.

C. Organize community efforts to remove debris and trash from water areas and highways.

1. Programs and Funding
A. Create an areawide Physical Improvement Council and coordinate this with environmental and industrial development efforts.

B. Insist that local and regional agencies begin to apply for funding that will support a physical improvement program for the region.

C. Petition local business, industry, foundations and private interests to become actively involved in improvement programs, e.g. tree planting programs as sidewalks are replaced.

D. Institute programs in the schools to make future leaders aware of their heritage and environment.

E. Structure vocational and technical projects in high schools and colleges that will aid community improvement efforts.

F. Insist that local government investigate tax abatement programs that will support neighborhood and home improvement efforts.

In addition to these general suggestions, the report recommends that local governments have two basic tools at their disposal. The first tool is the ordinance and the second is an appearance improvement program. In the cases where municipalities have adopted certain ordinances, enforcement may be necessary to achieve improvements desired. Where this is not the case, a carefully planned and implemented program will usually reveal the need for an ordinance restricting a particular activity that adversely affects the environment.

One of the suggestions made is the need to consider conservation districts to preserve and/or control development along scenic highways, waterways, steep slopes, or other visually sensitive features. Such restrictions can be enforced through the use of zoning ordinances. The report recommends conservation district areas with maps delineating the location of these areas.

Some of the sample recommendations made which would impact the Back Mountain include the following:

1. Clean up debris in and adjacent to Toby Creek.

2. Develop a portion of Route 309 as a conservation district.

3. Scenic amenities such as stone retaining walls along Bunker Hill Road should be preserved.

4. Junkyards should be screened in specific areas of the Back Mountain.

One of the interesting suggestions in the report was the development of an exhibit with design criteria. The exhibit included a series of panels identifying the geographic boundaries of the study area, a photo montage depicting natural features, a second montage showing opportunities for employment, a panel showing positive attributes, photos of unusual natural views, a panel showing negative aspects of appearance and image, photographs of negative visual aspects, suggestions for enhancing natural beauty, kinds of architectural changes to benefit the area, parks, playgrounds, and plazas to help make the area people oriented, and a panel on who can help change appearance and image. It would seem desirable to once again reconstruct this type of exhibit.

The report itself is available in the Back Mountain Memorial Library or in the offices of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania at 1151 Oak Street, Pittston Township, PA 18640.

Howard Grossman is executive director of The Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Adopt-A-Pet Month features poster contest

October is Adopt-A-Dog Month at the SPCA of Luzerne County and more than 800 shelters nationwide.

A National Poster Contest is underway to find the 1989 Adopt-A-Dog Month Poster Dog. Grand prize is \$5,000. The contest is sponsored by Meaty Bone Dog Biscuits and Jerky Treats. It is open ONLY to dogs that have been adopted from a shelter.

Applications and rules are available at the SPCA of Luzerne County, 524 E. Main Street, Plains Twp. For more information call 825-4111.

Police report

DALLAS BOROUGH

Driving under the influence

Dennis Dewy Spaniel of Putnam Street, Tunkhannock was charged with driving under the influence by Dallas Borough Police following an accident at the intersection of Routes 309 and 415.

Spaniel was traveling south on Route 309 in a 1981 Cadillac sedan when he failed to make a right turn off 309 and crossed into traffic then on to the island striking the light and continuing down Route 309. From fragments of headlights and front end parts torn from the vehicle, police apprehended Spaniel 16 minutes after impact.

Spaniel had no driver's license and tests done by police showed .20 percent alcohol in his bloodstream. He was charged with driving without a license and driving under the influence by Dallas Borough Officer Robert G. Jolley.

DALLAS TOWNSHIP

Tires, wheels stolen

Karen Thompson, Haddonfield Hills, on October 10 reported that four tires and four magnum wheels valued at \$2,200 were missing from her 1987 Thunderbird parked in her driveway. Someone jacked up her vehicle and removed all four wheels and tires. Investigating officer was Douglas Lamoreaux.

Window broken

October 11 at 3:30 a.m., a person or persons threw a rock into the window of Bonanza Beverage, off Memorial Highway, and set off the alarm system. Owners told investigating officer Jack Appel that cost of repairing the damage was \$300.

Vehicle stolen

Gerry Hartels, Shrineview Drive, Dallas Township on October 12 reported the theft of a 1980 yellow Yamaha three-wheeler valued at \$1,000. Investigating officer was Elliott Ide.

Possible arson

A fire, October 13, at a house on Lake Catalpa Road, Dallas Township, owned by the Nesbitt family, was reported to Dallas Township police as the result of arson. The house was empty at the time of the fire. John Appel was the investigating officer.

Attempted theft at Newberry

On October 14, the maintenance supervisor at Newberry reported an attempted theft of gasoline to Dallas Township when he discovered that a padlock on the gas tank had been cut with a hacksaw. Investigating officer was Jeremy Torr.

KINGSTON TOWNSHIP

Two arrested for assault

Kingston Township Patrolman Robert Weiss was called to the scene at Carverton Road across from Sunrise Estates October 16 at 8:30 a.m. where it was reported a fight was in progress. When Weiss arrived at the scene, he discovered John Daubert of Church Street, Dallas, chasing William Rogowski of Ransom Road up Carverton Road with a knife. When Daubert saw Weiss he hid the knife in his pants.

Both men were charged with simple assault, reckless endangerment, and disorderly conduct and arraigned before District Magistrate Andrew Barilla of Swoyersville. Each was released under \$5,000 bail on their own recognizance. Officer Weiss was assisted by State Trooper William Gately, Dallas Township Officer Jeremy Torr and Dallas Township Jack Appel.

Car broken into

Sometime over the weekend of October 10, someone broke into a black Chrysler owned by Anita Ankner, Church Road, Mountaintop while it was in Howard 'Duke' Isaacs lot. The individual or individuals removed a \$150 leather protective bonnet. Investigating officer was Robert Weiss.

Car strikes deer

Bruce J. Kline of Dushore was driving in the vicinity of Hillside Road on Route 309 when a deer jumped out in front of his 1988 Dodge Omni. Kline was unable to avoid the animal which was killed on impact. His car was towed by Schmid's tow truck to Schmid's

Car flips over

On October 15 William Nolan of Limewood Road, Shavertown, was traveling east on Harris Hill Road in his 1987 Plymouth Duster when he said he came upon a vehicle stopped in the middle of the road. He swerved to avoid the car and ran into a ditch and struck a tree. The force of the impact caused the car to flip over and rest on the roof.

Nolan was thrown from the car and found 126 feet away in the bushes by police. He was bleeding profusely from head wounds and was taken by Kingston Township ambulance to Nesbitt Memorial Hospital for treatment.

Responding to the scene were Dallas Township police, Dallas Borough officer Jim Martin and Paramedic Unit No. One.

COME MARCH WITH US AT OUR ANNUAL

HALLOWEEN PARADE

Oct. 30th at 12:00 (noon)



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- Assembly time 12:00 Noon
 - Judging of costumes 12:30 p.m.
 - Parade begins 1:00 p.m.
- Parade will feature the Dallas Senior High School Marching Band



PARADE ASSEMBLY AREA:

Old Dallas Township School
(School building above the Little League baseball field)



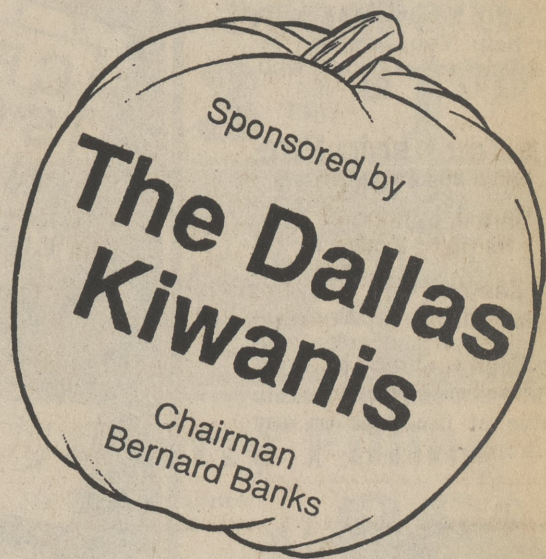
PARADE ROUTE:

Start at Old Dallas Township School, down Church Street to the corner of Center Hill Road. Follow Center Hill Road down to Lake Street, then down Lake Street to downtown Dallas. Across ACME parking lot and ending in Eastern Star parking lot.



PRIZES TO BE AWARDED IN 5 CATEGORIES:

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1. Prettiest | 4. Most Original |
| 2. Funniest | 5. Best Group |
| 3. Ugliest | |
- There will be five Cash Prizes awarded in EACH category.



This Space Sponsored by: PATIENT CARE PHARMACY

In the event of rain, the parade will be held indoors at Dallas Elementary School, Hilderbrant Road, Dallas.



FREE HALLOWEEN GOODIE BAG For All Participants.

