

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

County tax hike only increases inequities

Possibly because the Luzerne County Commissioners approval of a 53 per cent increase in the county property tax rate is so onerous, the issue of the fairness of this levy hasn't even been discussed.

The last general reassessment of property in Luzerne County took place in 1965 - 23 years ago. That means that if one house on your block was sold last week, it will be valued at its sale price and taxes assessed on that value. But if another hasn't changed hands since 1965, or has been transferred between family members, that house will be assessed at 1965 values. On top of that, it won't matter if the house has seen major improvements in that time, since the county doesn't upgrade values when improvements are made.

That strikes us as patently unfair. We know as well as anyone that those who benefit from old valuations may feel no reason to support regular reassessments. But we think fairness and logic dictate that revaluations be done at some consistent interval. Then the county could not only place realistic values on existing properties, but could pick up new ones that may avoid being detected and thus being taxed. Generally, when major reassessments are done the property values increase but millage rates decline and the attendant tax increase is less than often imagined.

Besides, how much worse than 53 per cent could it be. Many states now require their counties or municipalities to revalue at intervals of 10 years or less. The present tax reform legislation before the Pennsylvania legislature contains some incentives for similar action here. We hope that will be enough to spur Luzerne County to move on this issue.

John Anstett, the county's chief assessor, said in an interview with The Post last week that he and the commissioners are very aware of the inequities in the present system. He also pointed out that a thorough reassessment of Luzerne County's estimated 140,000 parcels would cost about \$7 million. That cost, and the political fallout of raising the taxes of the majority of residents (read, voters), has discouraged any movement thus far. And we are sure the commissioners remember that the last administration to revalue was kicked out of office in the next election.

Beyond fairness, which doesn't win elections, there are some practical reasons to reassess regularly. One is that businesses and individuals coming into the area or expanding to provide jobs would not be overtaxed as they are now. Another is that regular revaluations provide the county and its municipalities with good information about their progress and growth. A third is that tax hikes like the one we now face could be kept to more palatable levels if all properties were valued properly.

In the end, it will undoubtedly take action at the state level to move this process along. Our present county commissioners seem much more concerned with the perpetuation of their own political careers than with doing what is right for their constituents' future.

Blood donors needed

As the article in this week's Post points out, supplies of blood needed for use in area hospitals are at an all time low. There are many reasons why blood contributions have dropped in recent years. Fear of the Aids virus is one; less time available as more couples work is another.

The problem is that shortages will force the importation of blood from other areas and even other countries. The least concern that causes is the additional time and red tape involved in getting blood when it is needed.

There will be several blood drives in the Back Mountain in the next few months; the first will be January 9 at the Meadows Nursing Center. The Post will remind readers of drives as they come up, and we hope all who are able to will participate.



Overnight surprise

Just in time for the holiday season, one inch of the white stuff graced this field on Ransom Road Sunday. (Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

Library news

Christmas Open House December 21-22

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will host a Christmas Open House and party at the library, 96 Huntsville Road, Dallas, on Wednesday, Dec. 21 and Thursday, Dec. 22 between the hours of 1 and 3 p.m. Christmas cookies and other delights along with coffee and punch will be served. Friends, patrons and residents of the Back Mountain area are invited to the open house to share in the Christmas spirit.

The newspaper and old coin display in the library display case is receiving a lot of attention. The items have been borrowed from Andrew Schlosser of Dallas and the newspaper is dated Wednesday, April 20, 1910, which was the day Mr. Schlosser was born. In April of 1988, Andrew Schlosser received a copy of the newspaper as a birthday gift from his daughter, Lillina Balchus of Pittsburgh, 78 years after his birth. The 24 page newspaper sold for one cent in 1910, which includes the front page story regarding the city's determination that the corner didn't need an automobile because, "at a cost of \$1,800, it would be a luxury". The newspaper birthday gift included an authenticity certificate from the Library of Congress. Andrew has a strawberry farm in Lehman where his family helps every year with the harvesting of the crop. The display includes a \$5.00 bill from 1934 with an entirely different format and three \$2.00 bills from 1976. There are many silver coins, bicentennial coins and wheat pennies. There is also one old zinc penny. This display will be at the library until December 21.

The members of the library staff started getting into the Christmas spirit and began the decorating of the library for the season last week. Our office lighted scene has been set up including the two Christmas trees, the nativity scene, a church, a snow slope with skiers and pond with skaters and Santa Claus's workshop.

New books at the library: "Till We Meet Again" by Judith Krantz is the story of three women of matchless daring. The world of Eve de Lancel and her daughters, Freddy and Delphine; Paris in the last years of the Belle Epoque; the thrilling backstage intrigue of the music hall; the romance of great vineyards and a

towered chateau in Champagne; the adventure of Hollywood in the glamorous 1930's; all this is part of the lives of three extraordinary women who never failed to accept a risk-joyously. This is a uniquely romantic, courageous, humorous and exuberant novel which also includes heartbreak.

"Golden Girl" by Alanna Nash is the story of Jessica Savitch was a commercial for the American dream. Beautiful, blond, a network news

anchorwoman by the age of 30, she was the stuff of fantasy, a cool but vulnerable vision who wafted into millions of households every night. This is a harrowing tale, including the series of tragedies that haunted her life.

The library will be closed December 24, 25 and 26 in celebration of the Christmas season and also December 31, January 1 and January 2 to begin the festivities for the year of 1989.

Low income, elderly may not have to pay Kingston Township tax

The Kingston Township Board of Supervisors wish to remind township residents that the township has an ordinance which exonerates individuals who have a gross income of less than \$5,000 per year from paying the Township Per Capita Tax.

Individuals who are eligible for this exoneration are required to file an exoneration application with the Township Secretary before January 11 of each year. Each request for exoneration will be reviewed by the Board of Supervisors who will either approve or disapprove the application for exoneration at a regular meeting of the Board.

High School graduates of 1988 will be assessed in the 1989 Per Capita Tax Levy. Students, depending upon their income, may also choose to file for an exoneration.

The "Age 65" exoneration is available to all residents who will turn 65 during 1989, by furnishing proof of age to the Tax Collector and filing the proper exoneration form with the Township Office.

Residents having any questions are asked to contact Janice Castellani, Tax Collector, at the Township Building, Monday, Wednesday, or Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 696-3809.

Aid sought for victims of house fire

On Sunday, Nov. 27, fire destroyed the home of Joseph and Pamela Hoyt, Evans Falls. The Hoyts have two small children, a 2 1/2 year old girl and a 9 month old boy. Everything the family had was lost in the fire. Joseph (Scott) is an active member of the Kunkle Fire Co.

To aid the fire victims, donations

of clothing and other necessities can be dropped off at the Kunkle Fire Hall after 7 p.m. or arrangements can be made for pick-up. To make pick-up arrangements call 675-3161. Any cash donations can be made at the Dallas Branch of the Northeastern Bank of Pennsylvania.

Letters invited

The Dallas Post encourages readers to share their opinions with the community by writing a letter to the editor. All letters for publication must be signed and include a telephone number so that we may verify their authenticity. We will not publish anonymous letters. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Letters received by Noon on Monday may be included in that week's issue.

Only yesterday

50 Years Ago - Dec. 16, 1938 Kingston Township to become Home Rule

State prepares to aid consumers on water service through PUC.

Kingston Township to get Home Rule again, supervisors are told at meeting.

Dallas Township will hold its annual Community Christmas program for town people on Monday night.

Lehman basketball team defeats Lake team 27-19.

Engaged - Marion Shaw and Lawrence Brown.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 17, 1948 Building boom in Back Mountain

Residential construction remains at high level in Back Mountain and commercial building includes Acme Store, Dallas; Back Mt. Lumber and Coal; Henry's Jewelry Store.

Church League announces its team rosters with games to start Monday.

Engaged - Frances M. Shappelle and William Walker.

Football mothers entertain sons at banquet in Kingston Township.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 19, 1958 Commonwealth helps local kids call Santa

Rev. Francis Kane, Gate of heaven, gives eye-witness account of coronation of Pope John.

Commonwealth Telephone arranges special hook up with North Pole so local kids can communicate directly.

Christmas Cheer prevails at Dallas School District party held at Irem.

Engaged - Joan Guyette and Leonard Kavanagh; Audrey Klein and John Albert Lyons.

Wed - Laura M. Smith and Lee S. Watson.

Shavertown defeats East Dallas 71-34 in the Church Basketball league.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 19, 1968 Trucksville school using bottled water

A Hazleton hunter lost in the Noxen mountains for two days was found by Carl Hackling, who knew just where to look for a lost hunter.

Dallas School Board seeks a solution to how long they will have to use bottled water in the Trucksville School to provide protection of the students.

Engaged - Ellen A. Kytte and Robert W. Casterline.

Walter Brunges is stucken with a fatal heart attack while deer hunting in Montrose with his son Gerald.

Lake-Lehman record their first win 73-68 over Wilkes-Barre Township as the season opens.

10 Years Ago - Dec. 21, 1978 Dallas Township to get full-time policeman

Dallas Township to seek federal aid for a full-time policeman.

Kingston Township budget to stay at seven mills for 1979.

Lake-Lehman School Board directors voted 5-2 to continue plans for construction of a new elementary school on the side of the Lake Township School.

Dallas Area Medical Center approved new plans for the new paramedic center.

Deadline for entries in The Dallas Post decorating contest has been extended to December 22. Judging will start December 26.

Dallas wrestlers tied District 12 champion Mountainview Eagles 12-12 Saturday night at the Dallas gym.

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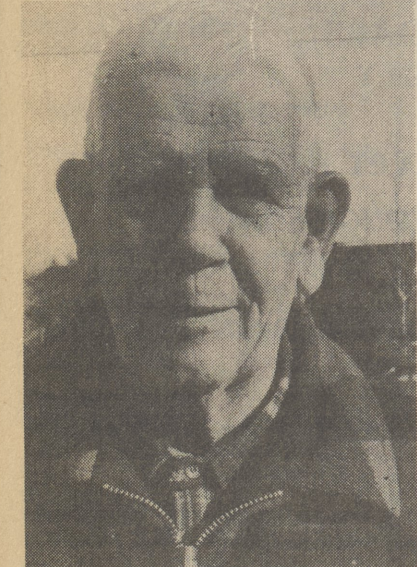
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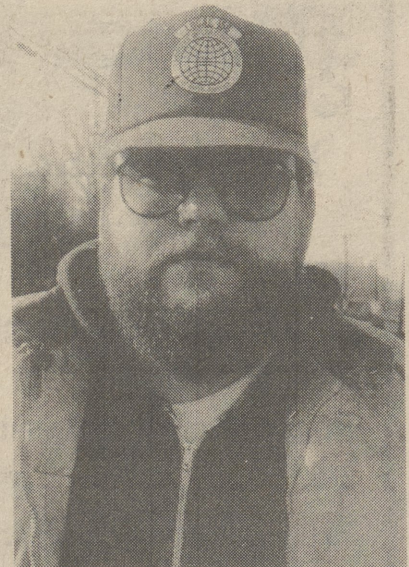
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The Post asks: "What kind of tree do you prefer for Christmas?"



Ed Jones, Esq.
Vernon
"Blue Spruce, they hold up longer and I happen to like them."



Alex Coveleski
Self-employed
Harveys Lake
"A natural one, this year we'll be getting a live tree, it's our daughter's first Christmas."



Frank Gosart
Retired
Lehman
"We have an artificial one, the daughter and son in law do our tree up for us."



Peg Fallon
Teacher
Dallas
"We have an artificial one, but I love the fresh trees."



Margaret Shultz
Housewife
Hunlock Creek
"I like a real one but the artificial ones are more convenient."



Michele Roback
Sales Person
Wyoming
"A fresh one, I like the scent."