

EDITORIALS

Land Trust can preserve beautiful landscape

The Back Mountain Regional Land Trust now has a concrete example that demonstrates how it can help preserve open land in our rapidly developing region. The organization is putting the finishing touches on a conservation easement that will protect 42 acres of land in Salem Township. We hope that is the first of many such transactions to exempt portions of our beautiful landscape from development.

The land trust, which isn't really a trust in the legal sense of the term, is a private, non-profit organization "dedicated to the protection and preservation of lands of special natural and historic value," according to its charter. It offers a variety of mechanisms by which the owner of open land can protect it from future development, essentially forever. The most popular of these is the conservation easement, by which a land owner places legal restrictions on the land in agreement with the land trust, which takes responsibility for enforcing the easement. Other options are outright donation of land to the trust; sale to the trust at bargain prices; a life estate, under which the owner remains on the land throughout his or her lifetime; or a limited development agreement that allows controlled development on part of the land while preserving the rest.

All of these protective measures can offer generous tax benefits to the land owner, but Will Conyngham, president of the land trust says that isn't the main reason people protect their land. It's mostly, "love for the land," he says.

Many individuals and families own hundreds of acres of beautiful property in the Back Mountain, and the land trust intends to approach them this year to explain the benefit of protecting their part of our environment. While the financial rewards of selling acreage for development are great, there surely will be some people who value the untouched nature of their property more highly than the income it could represent. They may call Will Conyngham at 696-2881 to find out more about how to add their land to the roll of protected areas in the Back Mountain.

Slam on Franklin Twp. uncalled for, undeserved

This page doesn't usually comment on the activities of other newspapers. We each have our slot to fill in the local media, and if others operate differently than we choose to, that's their option. But we must make an exception for the recent editorial remarks about Franklin Township that appeared in a daily newspaper.

In an editorial published January 10, *The Times Leader* implied that most people who live in Franklin Township have barely emerged from their caves into the modern world. Citing their own incomplete story about a political controversy which the paper blew into an example of egregious racism, the TL's editors make the unconscionable leap to ponder aloud the thought that perhaps most people in Franklin Township—and perhaps the "region"—need to search their souls for any trace of intolerance. We're not sure what they mean by region; is it the Back Mountain? Greater Wilkes-Barre? Luzerne County? Anyone who doesn't share their perverse fixation on racial division?

We don't know with certainty that Ed Dorrance, the once and present planning board member, didn't slander blacks. We only know that a few people—the ones used as sources for *The Times Leader's* article—say they heard racist rhetoric either directly from Dorrance or at a planning meeting where he was present. What the TL didn't tell you is that most of those people have an ax to grind with Dorrance or the new majority on the Franklin Township board, from lost township jobs to potential lost revenue if the zoning changes Dorrance championed had been passed. The *Times Leader's* reporter and editors either didn't know about the stake each of these people had in the last election, or chose to ignore that aspect of the story. But telling the complete story may have mattered less to them than telling a good story, since 99 percent of their readers live somewhere other than in Franklin Township.

Township government and "racism" have at least one thing in common; they aren't as simple as they may seem on the surface. Just as there often are mixed motives in political rhetoric, there can be confusing signals in the words people use to describe one another. This is in no way a defense of racist words or feelings, but the two sometimes don't go together as neatly as the TL would like to believe. It is in no way racist, for example, to observe that a greater percentage of blacks than whites is involved in drug crimes in Wilkes-Barre. That is simply an unpleasant fact that should have no effect on anyone's view of law-abiding black individuals. People who cast aspersions at all black people for the crimes of a few can legitimately be condemned, but those who simply observe what is happening around them can't.

All this seems not to matter to the TL though, because once a story fits its racism fetish, complicating circumstances are conveniently ignored.

We know lots of people who live in Franklin Township, and we don't find them any less or more racist than most other folks we meet. That means for the most part they judge people by their actions, not the color of their skin. That doesn't mean they're all perfect; some are undoubtedly lacking in tolerance, and a few might even have other faults. While that might make them unacceptable to the high-and-mighty editors of *The Times Leader*, it just makes them human to us, and we're proud to have them as neighbors.



Geese at Shadyside Lake, Kunkle. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Dorrance faces unfair, untrue criticism

Editor,
As a Franklin Township resident, I'm a bit confused with the verbal insinuations made against our new zoning commissioner by his opponents.

Ed Dorrance is far removed from the negative depiction presented. Many of us in Franklin Township have come to know Mr. Dorrance. We never heard a racist remark fall from his lips. Sadly, fabrication is falling from his op-

ponents' lips.

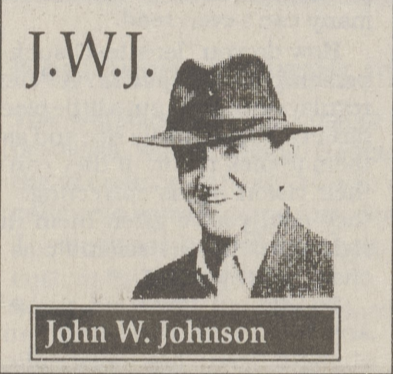
The fact is, Mr. Dorrance's zoning requirements have nothing to do with racism. They are about setting limits on overdevelopment, protecting residents' well water from potential contamination and maintaining our present agricultural setting. There would still be room for new residents.

Ed Dorrance has heard from many of us in Franklin Township

who signed petitions regarding these concerns. We and Mr. Dorrance have no problem with new African-American neighbors; that is not the issue.

Maybe it's not so confusing Ed Dorrance is facing these verbal attacks; his opponents are very poor losers with their own self interests at stake.

Lisa Augustine
Franklin Township



John W. Johnson

The bitter wind of the major December 19 snowstorm, howled angrily behind me as I entered the Denny's restaurant, just off I-84 in Southington, Connecticut. Rubbing my hands briskly, I followed the hostess to a window table, "where," she offered wryly, I "could watch it snow."

Continuing to rub my hands but, and as it also my wont while eating, I was reading a magazine when my server approached. Her name tag said Robyn. But I might have guessed that anyway because, and like her feathered friend namesake who puts a welcoming period on the beautiful paragraph of spring, Robyn's smile, and the efficient attentiveness of her service, melted the snowy afternoon, drowning in with genuine warmth.

It all came down to her attitude. Simply put, she understood, and acted upon that understanding with joyful efficiency, the cardinal rule of successful commerce: treat all customers as the only customer.

This column has many times discussed attitudes as they are shaped by public policy. That

Her name was Robyn, her example a lesson for all

discussion continues.

With continued trade deficits, the economic emergence of Pacific Rim countries the emergence of the European Economic Community, and a declining trust in our financial institutions from politicians living their own coffers through political aid to those who've stolen billions from American taxpayers, the United States is facing the real prospect of becoming a second rate, perhaps third world economic entity.

Agreed...current U.S. per capita income is the highest in the world, exceeding \$18,000 per year. But that measurement is deceiving when learning that more than 50 percent of our citizens get some form of government assistance; in short, with government establishing policies that filter economic activity through least common denominator sieves, i.e., quota systems for employment, government, not private industry, is the prime economic force in our nations today.

We call ours a representative democracy. Some 200 years ago, British historian, Prof. Alexander Tyler commented:

"A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse from the public treasury. From that moment on,

the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury with the result that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, always followed by a dictatorship."

Frightening, yes. But are we not, in fact, headed down that path?

Beyond that, a major reason (the loss of ethical public servants, the growth of a legal system which encourages circumvention rather than respect for the law, and a morally and otherwise bankrupt labor union movement notwithstanding) we are losing the battle for increased productivity and market share to Japan, and likely soon to the new European Economic Community, because we have forgotten one simple rule: Acquire new customers and then treat each of them as if they were the only customer we had.

Robyn knows and applies that rule very well, making at least one snowy afternoon for me a bit brighter, and at the same time giving me even more cause for hope in both our economic system and, if by nothing but Robyn's shining example, for the fragile creatures called humans who try to make the system work.

Happy New Year, Robyn....and thank you.



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library has received an interesting portfolio of information on the neighborhood of Idetown which was compiled by Janice Lohman who has lived in Idetown for the past few years.

The project was a requirement for a history course she was taking at Luzerne County Community College, to research in depth a specific area and its historical interest.

Some of the special interest exhibits she used include the 100th Anniversary of the Idetown Methodist Church in 1965; the Idetown Street car memories from 1986; The Pennsylvania Branch of the Ide Family, 5th through 8th generations of June 1992; and an in depth history of Idetown, which started in 1799. Idetown is currently located in Lehman Town-

Library displays historical information on Idetown

ship and Harveys Lake Borough. An item of interest: Harveys Lake was created December 6, 1966 from portions of Lake and Lehman Townships, which were originally included in Old Dallas Township. Idetown has never had a post office.

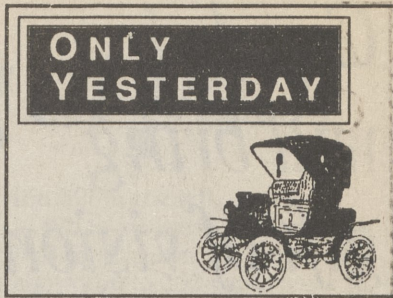
The current mail delivery is on Dallas Rural routes. There are no schools in Idetown. A very exciting historical study of Idetown.

New books at the library: "Jerusalem" by Cecelia-Holland is a remarkable novel about the last years of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. Set in the Holy Land in A.D. 1187, Jerusalem is an epic of war and political intrigue, of passion and religious fervor. Rannulf is a thorny warrior-saint under vows of chastity and humility as a penance for his wild, sinful youth. Now a hardened veteran, he has little use for the politics of Church and Crown. He has, however, been drawn into the councils.

"Days of Drums" by Philip Shelby is the story of a senator's

assassination and of a young female Secret Service agent in the vise of a conspiracy as the tension builds, heartbeat by heartbeat, toward a terrifying climax. Holland Tylo has landed one of the top jobs in Washington—guarding the respected Senator and this is a clear sign that her career is right on track. Suddenly, it all blows up in her face when the Senator is gruesomely murdered on her watch. She becomes devastated, censured, isolated.

"Contagion" by Robin Cook is the story of a deadly epidemic spread not merely by microbes but by sinister sabotage—a terrifying cautionary tale for the millennium as the health care giants collide. Dr. Stapleton loses his ophthalmology practice to a for-profit medical giant and then his family to a commuter airline tragedy. His life is transformed to ashes. He finds himself in an uneasy niche in the concrete maze of New York, a city that suits his changed perspective; cold and indifferent.



60 Years Ago - Jan. 24, 1936 MICKLO BABY ARRIVES DURING BLIZZARD

The old lithograph showing a race between a doctor and a stork came true at Alderson last Sunday during the blizzard—and the stork won. A healthy baby girl was born to Mrs. Charles Micklo at 10 a.m., while Dr. S.V. Schooley of Dallas was trying to get through the storm to the home. At the same time, Micklo, with the aid of a snow plow, was out searching for a nurse. A neighbor reached the Micklo home with Mrs. Jacob Condon, who assisted with the birth. The doctor and Micklo arrived 30 minutes later.

Hundreds of alumni of Wyoming Seminary in Dallas and its vicinity are being invited to attend the dinner being held in Irem Temple Feb. 22 to honor Dr. Levi L. Sprague, venerable educator who has been at Wyoming Seminary for 69 years and its president 53 years.

50 Years Ago - Jan. 25, 1946 OLIVER BROTHERS TO SELL HUDSON CARS

Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Sutton, Lehman, marked their 55th wedding anniversary Jan. 6. They were married by Rev. Jenkins at the Lehman Parsonage in 1891. They are the parents of four children and 10 grandchildren. A surprise anniversary party was held in their honor.

Kenneth and James Oliver, sons of the late James R. Oliver, one of the outstanding automobile men in northeast Pennsylvania, have formed a partnership and purchased the interest of the James R. Oliver estate in the business established in Dallas by their father. The firm will shortly open a new building at the corner of Market and Goodwin Streets in Kingston, where it will continue to distribute Hudson motorcars for northeastern and central Pennsylvania. It will also continue to maintain its retail outlet and garage in Dallas.

40 Years Ago - Jan. 20, 1956 SCHOOL BOARDS BEGIN WORK ON JOINTURE

Faced with necessity for a building program, two delegates from each of five school boards, Dallas Borough, Dallas, Kingston, Franklin and Monroe Townships met in Dallas Borough school to feel their way toward the inevitable jointure, long proposed but never yet accomplished. Francis Ambrose, temporary chairman, set the stage for sober discussions by saying "Let's agree to agree. Our aims are exactly the same, the best education possible for our children. We all agree that we must have a senior high school and as soon as possible."

30 Years Ago - Jan. 20, 1966 PURVIN BOWLS A PERFECT 300 GAME

The Wage Tax, better street lighting, clean-up work, accelerated police action and municipal building sewage highlighted the recent meeting of the Kingston Township supervisors. No action was taken on the Wage Tax, as the board would like to know the feelings of the populace before making a decision. A notice of intention was filed prior to the passing of the Wilkes-Barre City Wage Tax of 1 percent, which entitled the municipality to counter act that of the city if they so desire. Kingston Township Board is interested in keeping funds thus derived for the benefit of its own citizens.

The biggest news out of Crown Imperial Lanes at Dallas was that made by Donald Purvin last Thursday evening when he rolled a 300. It was the first perfect score sanctioned by ABC at the local house since it opened 10 years ago.

20 Years Ago - Jan. 22, 1976 DAMA MULLS SHUTTING OFF DELINQUENTS

Members of DAMA agreed unanimously at their meeting Thursday night that no definite action could be taken on shutting off water of delinquent accounts until a meeting is held with councilmen, supervisors and solicitors of the three municipalities involved, Dallas Borough, Dallas and Kingston Townships.

The Dallas Post
Published Weekly By Bartsen Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
717-675-5211

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