

EDITORIALS

# Township smart to hike size of planning board

Awash in controversy, the Franklin Township supervisors have made a wise decision which could easily slip by unnoticed by most observers. The supervisors will expand the planning commission, recently the target of complaints, from five to seven members.

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code allows three to nine members on a township planning board, but it's not unusual to find five or fewer seated. As the Back Mountain's smallest town, it would be understandable if Franklin Township was at the low end of the range. But the supervisors feel that increased development pressures demand greater oversight. There are other advantages. More commission members will add fresh perspectives to the group, and may help alleviate concerns that a majority can dominate decision making. Extra hands and new skills will also be useful as the commission looks over subdivisions and other proposals that may come before it.

A larger commission is not an unmixed blessing, however. The more members, the more difficult it becomes to reach consensus, and the more time it can take to resolve questions or make decisions. While that can be frustrating to the ones making a request, a deliberate approach to planning and zoning issues is probably best for the township.

Now that they've committed to enlarging the planning commission, the supervisors could go one step further. The present three-person board of supervisors could be expanded to five if the voters support such a change in a referendum. The Franklin Township supervisors — and those on three-person boards in other towns — should be encouraged to make their own body more representative of the citizens they serve by moving to a five-person board.

# National Utilities got what it deserves ... nothing

Bravo to the state Public Utility Commission, which has voted to stop plans for a rate hike by National Utilities, the rogue water company that operates in several Back Mountain communities. The company, with a years-long record of poor service and sloppy repairs, had asked for increases of as much as 63 percent. Since National Utilities last raised rates in late 1994, and its justification for the latest attempt to gouge its customers was as flimsy as its repair record, the commission put off consideration of the matter for at least seven months.

Also deserving credit for this proper action are the dozens of National Utilities customers who wrote the PUC opposing the request. Their graphic tales of life as NU customers were surely enough to win the day.

Public hearings on the company's request will likely be scheduled in coming months, and the turnout at them will have great influence on the final outcome of this case. We'll try to keep you informed of the dates; you keep up the pressure on this second-rate utility until it learns to operate with its customers' needs, not just its bottom line, in mind.

# Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Maybe it's the season, but I've been bemused lately by what passes for news on television and radio, and in most large newspapers. Here are a few of the items that, when you take the time to think about them, don't seem like news at all.

**Clinton and Gingrich at odds over budget.** This may be interesting the first few days or weeks of the argument, but at this point, is it really news? If they suddenly agreed on everything, that would be news.

**It's very cold in Minnesota in January.** Duh, like, tell me something I didn't already know.

**Bob Dole isn't warm and fuzzy.** This ranks with the discovery that there may be planets somewhat like earth among the 50 billion galaxies in the Universe.

**Michael Jackson, Lisa Marie will divorce.** This is probably news to the 1/10 of 1 percent of the public who thought the marriage would last.

This and other "news" confirm my suspicion that there are more news outlets than there are stories of interest, so what would otherwise be barely noticed gets blown out of proportion. National politics offers the prime example, as each candidate's slightest move in the polls is touted as significant — 10 months before the election! Even my favorite, National Public Radio, has fallen prey to the horse race presentation of politics, devoting a lengthy session last week to Steve Forbes's rise and Bob Dole's fall in New Hampshire, with not a word about issues.

This is understandable because the political season is simply too long. All the candidates have made their positions known by now, so there's little new of substance to report. I think campaigns should operate on the British system, within a strictly-defined time frame of a few weeks, followed by the election. I won't even begin to get into financial reforms, although the time limit combined with free television exposure might take care of that, too.

As for the weather in Minnesota, I have no explanation for that. Brrr.



BY CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



## 60 Years Ago - Feb. 14, 1936 NEW W.P.A. PROJECT EMPLOYS AREA WOMEN

The drive to achieve the long-awaited Luzerne by-pass gained new momentum this week and proponents were optimistic yesterday regarding the possibility of having the project underway by summer.

A new WPA project to sew garments for needy families in Dallas Borough and Dallas, Lake, Lehman and Jackson Twps., employing 25 local women, was announced this week. Women who will be seamstresses will be selected from families which are on relief and in which no person is working.

## 50 Years Ago - Feb. 15, 1946 SWEET VALLEY FIRE CO. EYES SURPLUS TRUCKS

The first anniversary meeting of Shavertown Youth Center will be held Sunday, 3 p.m. It is just one year since the organization meeting of the Adult Committee responsible for establishing the center and conducting it successfully through its first year.

Sweet Valley Fire Co., organized Jan. 31, has made application to the U.S. Surplus Commodities Corp. to buy a pumping unit. The equipment, same as the auxiliary pumpers owned by Daniel C. Roberts Fire Co., Alderson, was originally built for civilian defense and is now being offered to tax-supported organizations as surplus property.

## 40 Years Ago - Feb. 10, 1956 LUNDY'S RESTAURANT IS SOLD

Frank Policare, 41, of Pittston has purchased Lundy's Restaurant business, according to an announcement made this week by Herbert Lundy. Policare an experienced country club and restaurant man has purchased the liquor license and leased the building and equipment with an option to buy. He plans to continue the restaurant and bar on the same high plane set by Mr. and Mrs. Lundy.

Dallas Borough Council adopted a \$38,831 budget and approved a borough tax of 22 mills, the same as previous years at its February meeting Tuesday night.

You could get - Porterhouse steak, 69¢ lb.; cooking onions, 3 lbs., 19¢; apple pies, 39¢; crisp carrots, 2 cello pkgs, 10¢

## 30 Years Ago - Feb. 10, 1966 LAKE TWP. SETS UP PLANNING COMMISSION

Over an objection from the South District representative, Lake Township voted to implement a Planning Commission at the Feb. Board of Supervisors meeting. Motion was made by new North District (Harveys Lake) supervisor Alger Shafer and second by Middle District's Walter Hoover. Dissenting Sharon Whitesell at first suggested that the matter be tabled for another month to see what the court was going to decide on the proposed Lake Borough movement which threatens to split the township apart. On the vote he abstained.

Mr. and Mrs. Ferrence Naugle, Sweet Valley celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary February 9. The couple has lived in the community all their married life with their present home being erected 60 years ago. The couple are the parents of two children; three grandchildren and one great grandchild.

## 20 Years Ago - Feb. 12, 1976 FRANKLIN FEDERAL HAS GRAND OPENING

A National Labor Relation Board hearing last week regarding a union petition by Dallas School District non-professional employees seeking to join the Pennsylvania State Education Association-Pennsylvania Service Personnel Association ended when the PSEA/PSBA representative Walter Glogowski withdrew the petition following a legal objection by school district solicitor Ben Jones III.

Franklin Federal Savings and Loan Association will hold a grand opening Feb. 14 through Feb. 28, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the new offices located in the Dallas Shopping Center.

## LETTERS

# Thanks to those who helped Scouton family

Editor:  
On behalf of the Harveys Lake Lions Club and the Thomas Scouton family of Noxen we would like to thank the people of the Back Mountain and surrounding areas who so generously donated to the Scouton's in their time of need.

As you know the Scouton family lost most of their possessions to a house fire the night before Thanksgiving. Because their loss was not considered total it was

difficult for them to obtain aid through the normal established relief outlets. The Harveys Lake Lions thought we could help and called on the public for donations. Needless to say we were overwhelmed by the generosity of the people who gave.

We also wish to thank all of the newspapers who published our request so quickly. A special thanks to WARM and Terry McNulty who made it possible to broadcast our message several

times per day throughout the month of December and most of January. Thanks also to Franklin First Savings Bank on the Tunkhannock Highway in Dallas for assisting us in establishing the fire fund.

Again, thank you to all who so generously donated and helped in our efforts to assist this young family in their time of crisis.

Keith Harry  
Harveys Lake Lions Club

## Reporter's notebook



Grace R. Dove

In case you haven't noticed, I'm very picky about the uses and abuses of the English language. Maybe it's because I write for a living.

Foreigners will tell you English is the hardest language in the world to learn — even worse than Russian, Arabic, Chinese or Japanese, which use completely different alphabets. Add our strange spelling rules and their many exceptions, and toss in our equally confusing punctuation for good measure, and you have a language which is completely incomprehensible even to some of its native speakers.

In my travels I've run into tons of grammatical mistakes and bizarre sentence constructions, some of which are even worse than the many boners I've pulled off myself.

"I am a former person who..." If the writer is a former person, what was he before?

"...to illicit information..." Either the writer meant "elicit (to obtain)," or else he was looking for some pretty racy material!

"My uncle didn't have a phone for 170 years and he's still living." I heard this one at a local municipal meeting. Boy, I'd sure like to have that gentleman's recipe for

# Uses, and abuses, of language in the news

longevity!

"I haven't seen you in 27 years and you just ruined my day." Again, I heard this at a local planning commission meeting. Sometimes I've had that same feeling.

"End of government shutdown nears conclusion." This was a headline in a local daily newspaper. Since "end" and "conclusion" mean the same thing, could the writer have been less redundant?

"No dogs shall be allowed in public without their masters on a leash." I caught this one on a rerun of "The People's Court" on TV. Why should Bowser or Fido keep their owners on a leash — do they bite? Or has the author of this rule taken a walk through my neighborhood lately?

"Woman shovels snow from sidewalk in fur coat during recent storm." This appeared as a caption under a front-page photo of a local daily newspaper. It really must have been cold for that poor little sidewalk to need a fur coat!

"Unfortunately the uniformed voters were misled." From an editorial in a small area weekly paper. What about voters not wearing uniforms?

"Multiple individuals." This appeared in a press release which crossed my desk. Isn't there a better way of saying "lotsa folks"?

"The coyote, an illusive predator..." Granted, Trickster Coyote can certainly pull the wool over our eyes occasionally, but I think the writer of this press release

had "illusive" (deceptive) confused with "elusive" (to be able to easily slip away unseen.)

"...authored a monogram on heart disease." There are two problems in this headline from a local daily newspaper. First, the correct word is monograph (article written by a single author), not monogram (a decorative design made up of a person's initials.)

Second, "author," like parent, bath, gift and a hundred other words, is a noun, not a verb.

"...to see if Tobyhanna will pass mustard." A local TV newscaster uttered this gem. The correct phrase is "to pass muster," as in passing inspection or being officially approved. Passing mustard implies that one has a severe digestive problem.

"As for the traffic...well, there isn't any today." A local TV station's helicopter-borne traffic reporter made this wise observation during the '96 Blizzard, when the entire eastern half of the state was under a snow emergency and no one was allowed out on the roads.

"Vince said it would be like this!" Wilkes-Barre mayor Tom McGroarty popped this one off while standing on the dike during Melt-down '96, when the river nearly came over. True — Friendly Weather Guy Vince Sweeney and just about everyone else who knows the river said it would come up high and fast — but oh, how tacky!

# Goodies for sale, great new opera CD's now available

public. The titles include: Great Opera Stories by Jeremy Harwood; The complete Dictionary of Opera and Operetta by James Anderson; The Metropolitan Opera Guide by Mary Ellis Peetz and Robert Lawrence; The Complete Operas of Verdi by Charles.

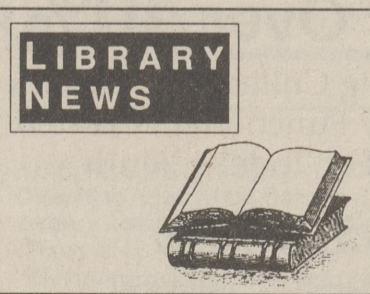
The library is selling Sweet-heart Mugs in honor of Valentine's Day at the front desk. These are selling at 2 mugs for \$5.00. Also, the library cookbook is available for \$12.95.

**New large print books at the library:** "Stormy Weather" by Carl Haasen is wickedly hilarious and whirls through southern Florida with gale-force con games, car-petbaggers, capers, rip-offs and romance. When a ferocious hurricane hits, Max and Bonnie Lamb decide to trade their honeymoon

for a trip to Dade County. They meet a mysterious man with a tranquilizer gun.

"Enigma" by Robert Harris puts Tom Jericho in a desperate race against time. He knows that to ensure Allied victory he must crack the Nazis impenetrable Enigma code before German U-boats sink hundreds more American convoys bringing supplies and munitions to Europe. If he solves the puzzle, thousands of Allied troops will live. If not, a massacre.

"I'm Only One Man" by Regis Philbin with Bill Zehme begins with, "It's not always easy being me", then goes on to prove just that by traveling across time and behind scenes for unforgettable encounters. He tells of his boyhood stomping grounds and his days at Notre Dame.



By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The Back Mountain Memorial Library recently purchased a collection of well known operas on compact discs. Some of the titles are: *Tosca* by Puccini; *IL Barbiere Di Siviglia* by Rossini; *Evallieria Rusticana* by Mascogni; *Un Balla in Maschera* by Verdi; *La Boheme* by Puccini; *Otello* by Verdi; *Rigoletto* by Verdi; *Nabucco* by Verdi and *Aida* by Verdi. Enclosed with each opera is a libretto.

To aid opera goers and enthusiasts to better understand and appreciate opera, the library has several opera reference and non-reference books available to the

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