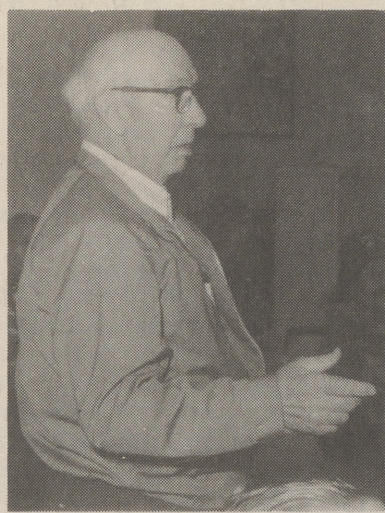


## Florists

(continued from page 1)

"We're competing in a free-enterprise system, like Wendy's and Burger King setting up on opposite corners," he said.

"Do they pay taxes?" asked Norm Darling, who sells flower and vegetable plants from the family farm on Hildebrand Road in Dallas. "The main attraction of the Flower Tents is that there's a tent set up. Why can't they put up a building and pay rent and taxes like we do? They shouldn't just come in out of the blue and set up for a few weeks. Only in the flower and agriculture business can you do this. We don't blame the public for patronizing them. We just hope the public is there for us."



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

**Norm Darling Sr.** said he hoped his customer would support his business.

**"We just hope the public is there for us."**

**Norm Darling**  
Darling's Greenhouse

Darling said he has accounts with Penn State Seed and Newell Fuel, both located in the Back Mountain.

"I do business with people like Rave's and Darling's," said Agway manager Ralph Gott. "We all deal with each other. We should all be on equal ground. I don't think a man should go into business for \$10 a year."

Rave's manager Ron Woolbert asked the supervisors if the town-

ship couldn't raise the permit fee and make the Flower Tents absorb some of the same expenses other businesses have. "Dallas Township raised their fee to \$300," he said.

"I might as well shut my doors, set up a tent and work only four months a year," said Jeff Hoslie, owner of Hoss's Garden Hut at Harveys Lake. "This kills my business. The general public doesn't realize what they're doing. It's just easy access for them. I'm at the end of the line at the lake."

**"This kills my business. The general public doesn't realize what they're doing."**

**Jeff Hoslie**  
Hoss's Garden Hut

"Are the people who run the tents their own agents?" asked Marge Gorko, who works at Rave's Garden Center. "Did the township check to see if these people have state and federal tax identification numbers? Did you check to see if they pay payroll taxes?" Paul Sabol, chairman of the supervisors, said no one did.

Dee Graziano of Fort Durkee Florists in Hanover disagreed with Ansilio's comparison of his business with fast food places.

"You have to eat three times a day," she said. "You buy flowers only with your extra money. Flowers aren't a necessity. Local businesses contribute to the tax base. You supervisors won't have jobs without a tax base. You saw the tent - didn't it register? I don't understand why township officials don't have their fingers on the town's pulse."

John Sirack of Hunlock Creek

suggested a solution which he felt might appeal to both sides. "Why not limit size of tent to 10 x 10 area, just like a farmer selling produce?" he asked. "What's attracting people is the size of the tent. Limiting the size of the tent would allow everyone to compete." "Would you be happy with that?" he asked Ansilio. "No," Ansilio fired back.

After members of the audience asked the supervisors when they would be able to follow up on the situation, Herb Hill suggested the florists and growers pitch in.

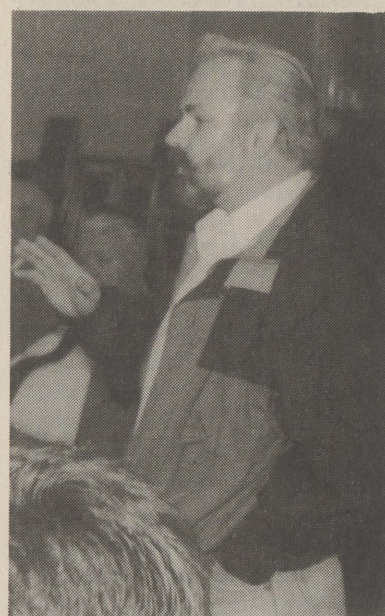
"Why don't you people draw up an ordinance and tell us what you want, and then we'll make it legal?" he asked.

"I can't write an ordinance," Darling said. "I'm speaking only for myself, but it's way beyond my means."

"We just can't take another municipality's ordinance and use it ourselves," explained Randall Glidden. "Our solicitor must first review it to make sure it complies with our ordinances. Just because an ordinance hasn't been tested in court doesn't mean it's legal."

The supervisors said they would take the matter under advisement and possibly have something for their May 8 meeting.

After the meeting Tim Ansilio said, "It bothers me that they say



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

**Ralph Gott** pointed out that local stores support one another.

we don't do anything for the community. We're members of the Back Mountain Jaycees and I'm the vice president. Last year the Jaycees ran several projects for the community. We worked on the Fall Fair. We visit The Meadows four times a year and adopted a two-mile stretch of Route 415 between Pickett's Charge and the Castle Inn."

His brother, Tom, who came in

after the meeting, described the Flower Tent chain more thoroughly.

"We aren't a temporary business," he said. "We are a full-time business that is seasonal in nature, like a miniature golf course or the concessions at Harveys Lake. It just so happens the product we sell is only available at Easter and in May. We can't sell them any other time."

There's nothing that tells people how to structure their own business, he added. "We go by every single local law and pay all applicable taxes wherever we're set up."

He wondered if the other dealers are buying in the wrong spot.

"If I found good prices, why can't they?" he asked. "If people are coming back to us it's because we offer a quality product at a fair price. We compete with the supermarkets and chain stores like Wal-Mart and K-Mart. We're not cheaper than they are, but our quality is how we compete with them."

He described his family as local people from Kingston. Their parents live in Dallas. "We're a good family and honest businessmen," he said proudly.

Flower tents are nothing new, Tom Ansilio said. "We didn't invent it. People have sold flowers from tents for hundreds of years."

## Unfair

(continued from page 1)

worth it. The tents are a magnet for customers."

Hoslie said when he and another grower approached the Dallas Borough council about the flower tents five years ago, officials promised they would change the ordinance. When he obtained a copy of the ordinance Monday, it hadn't been changed at all, he said.

Kimberly Hillman, owner of Kimberly's Floral on Route 415, in front of the roller skating rink in Dallas, says she had a unique encounter with Ansilio this winter.

"He asked me to run the tent for him," she said. "I told him to go take a hike. It took a lot of nerve for him to do that."

The tent is about 100 feet from her front door, halfway between her shop and the Dallas Nursery, she added.

Hillman, a full-service florist open the entire year, said her sales of potted plants were down until customers told her they purposely came to her shop after reading about the tents in a daily newspaper.

"It's not fair to take business away from other merchants," she said. "It's not right. We're here all year round and they're not."

Ron Reese, owner of Southfork Floral on Route 309, said his potted plant sales are down by about 50 percent. The rest of the year he sells arrangements and other fresh flower products.

"They (the flower tents) really messed up Easter for me," he said. "If they were here all the time and paid the same taxes, rent and utility bills that I do, it would be different. They just come in here for Easter and Mother's Day and walk off with all the gravy - then say they aren't competing with us."

"It's an insult to our intelligence that they can come in here and pay \$10 a month to set up, while we pay hundreds of dollars a year in taxes," said local grower Norm Darling, whose business is located on Hildebrand Road in Dallas Township.

**"He asked me to run the tent for him. I told him to go take a hike."**

**Kimberly Hillman**  
Kimberly's Floral

"I could say they're cutting in on me," Ansilio said. "Our competition is supermarkets, K-Mart and Wal-Mart. You can find fresh cut and potted Easter flowers on any corner of any street and even in convenience marts."

He said he hasn't totaled up all the figures yet but knows he has had "a pretty good year."

"I believe in the free enterprise system," he continued. "My customers benefit from me. I provide something they may not be able to get locally. We don't give our flowers away, we must make a profit from sales."

**"They (the flower tents) really messed up Easter for me."**

**Ron Reese**  
Southfork Floral

All plants sold in his tents come from "local greenhouses in Northeastern Pennsylvania," he said.

According to zoning officer Len Kozick, Dallas Township raised its fees to \$300 for 60 days in 1994.

"It was increased partially because of the flower tents," he said. "They're the same as the farmers coming into the township from Clarks Summit to sell corn during the summer - or the guys from North Carolina selling furniture from the back of a rig along the highway. They take business away from our local farmers and merchants."

According to Dallas Borough's ordinance, a peddler's license is either \$25 for 30 days or \$75 for an entire year.

## EGG..CITING

Hundreds of youngsters turned out for the first Easter egg hunt sponsored by the Back Mountain Business and Professional Ass'n. The event was held Saturday at Penn State in Lehman. In the lower photo, Erin Elizabeth Fallon, Dallas, jumped to touch a bunch of balloons. Near right, Samantha Shriner, 2 1/2, Dallas, brought her own fine basket. Sarah Brin, Loyalville, far right, won a special prize.

POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



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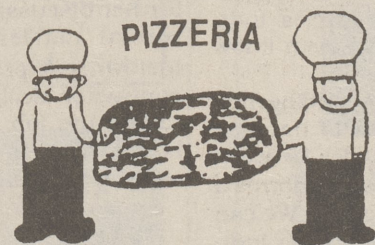
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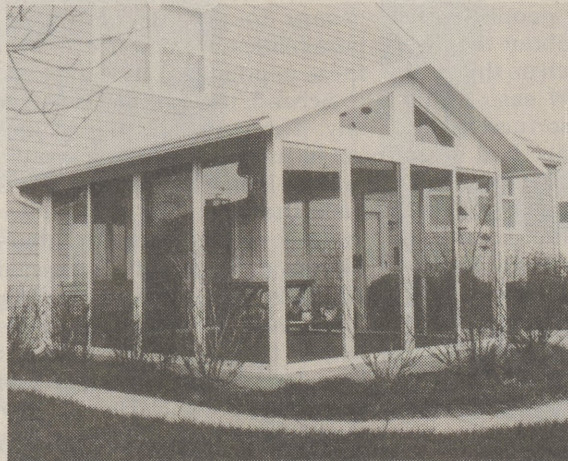
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