

EDITORIALS

Don't waste time; prepare now for development

Anyone who doubts the strength of development pressures on the Back Mountain should be startled by the price asked for one commercial parcel. An international real estate corporation has listed 46 acres of the former Yalick farm along Route 415 in Dallas Township for an eye-popping \$2.5 million. As the full color brochure used to promote the land says, it's a "prime commercial tract" suitable for lodging, retail, food, professional services, entertainment facilities and other uses. At \$54,000 per acre, the land is too expensive for housing development, so it appears likely that a substantial commercial development will eventually occupy the now-open fields.

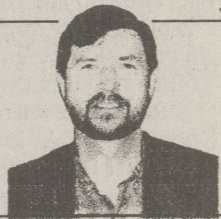
There's nothing improper about a property owner trying to sell land for the greatest possible price. One of the principles of real estate is to assign land to its "highest and best use." That is usually interpreted as whatever brings in the most money, and a shopping center developer would pay more than a farmer for prime highway frontage.

While most of the property is zoned for commercial use, some is not. And even within the commercial zoning structure, there are measures that can be taken to assure that any development is attractive, safe and doesn't overtax resources. Dallas Township, which hasn't revised its zoning regulations in more than a decade, would be wise to review rules that apply to large commercial uses now, rather than after the land is sold and proposals put forward. And they should be prepared for significant challenge from a potential developer; anyone who can spend that much money will also have an expensive, skillful and tenacious lawyer ready to resist restrictions on their plans.

Business development is certainly welcome in the Back Mountain, although it's hard to envision an immediate need for a large retail facility. But whatever use is made of this and other parcels of land, it should be in a form that preserves as many of the region's charms as possible, since they are the bedrock of the Back Mountain's appeal to those who want to live and work here.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



The spectacle of Washington politicians scrambling over one another to repeal the last 4.3¢ increase in the tax on gasoline is not a pretty sight. Such obvious pandering to supposed consumer outrage tells me two things. First, true leadership qualities are few and far between, whether from a youthful President or an aging Senator. Second, there is a yawning gap between their perception of most people's priorities and the real thing. This episode reveals what they really can be in their worst moments — typical vote-buying candidates, ready at the drop of a hat to disown common sense for political advantage.

As nearly everyone else accepts, there are basic supply/demand reasons for the spike in gasoline prices. Don't forget, the ones clamoring to scale back the tax are the same people who fought to strike down fuel economy standards and hike speed limits, two of the greatest contributors to upward pricing pressure. The measly tax increase is a minor factor, one that was hardly noticed for nearly three years. The truth is, responsible leaders would have raised gasoline taxes 25¢ or even 50¢ a gallon when they had the chance, and used the money to support mass transit, which is withering nearly everywhere.

Having lived through the oil supply crises of the 1970's — I was a gas pumper myself in 1972 — I've been amazed ever since at our unwillingness to rein in our appetite for petroleum. There's a real danger that overdependence on imported oil will do our nation more harm than any other force, when supplies begin to run thin. It appears to be too much to ask our political leaders to recognize that essential fact.

Most Americans understand that getting our collective fiscal house in order must take precedence over temporary tax relief. I think the first candidate who shows that he or she understands the importance of our long-term financial health and has the backbone to talk seriously about how to achieve it will win the electoral sweepstakes. Provided, of course, they can get past the party elders who value transient political gain over responsible governing.

Letters, columns and editorials

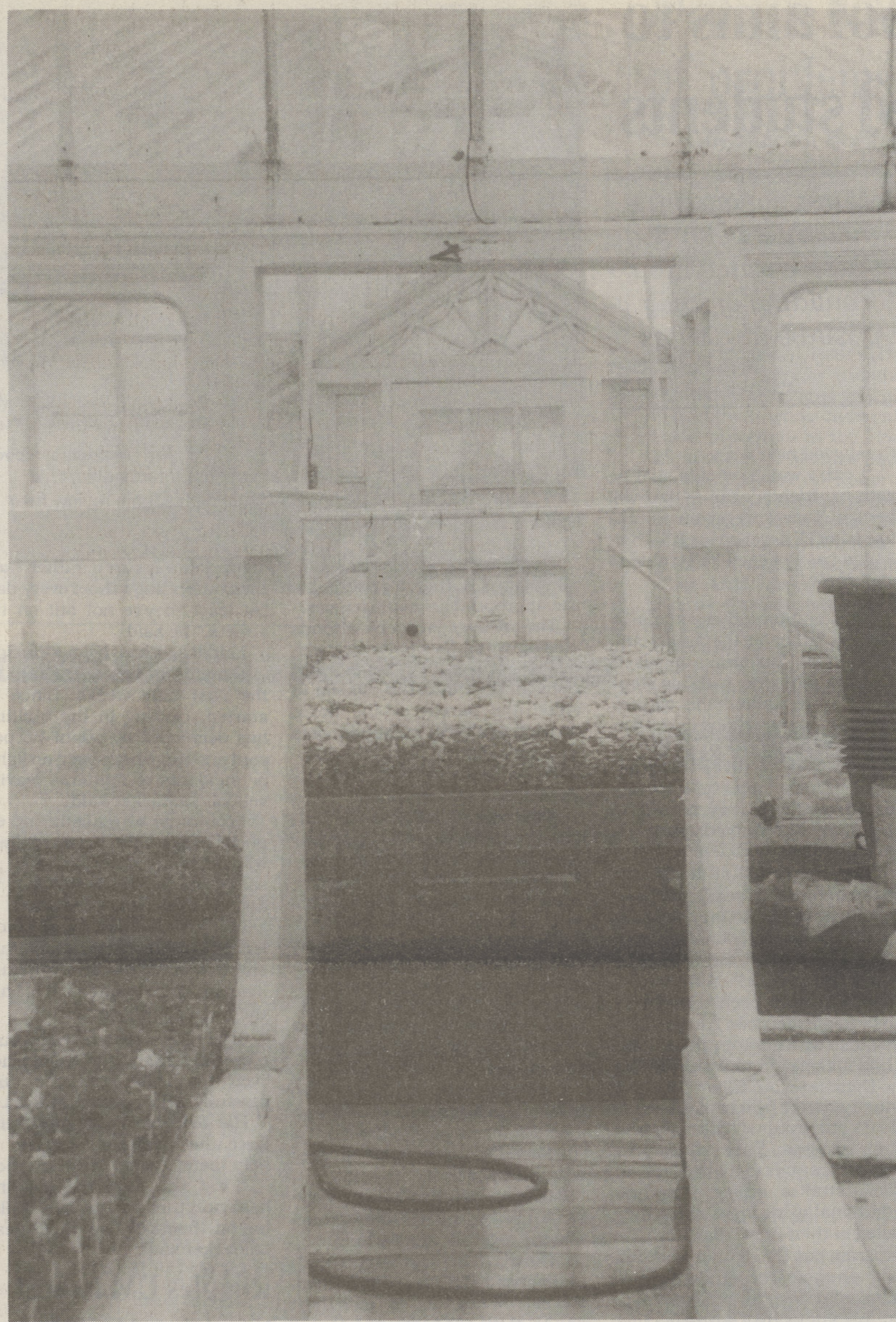
The Dallas Post attempts to publish opinions on a variety of topics in many forms.

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- No writer may have more than one letter published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear threat to the writer.
- The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.

In addition to letters, we welcome longer pieces that may run as columns. The author or subject's relevance to the Back Mountain will be the prime consideration when selecting material for publication.



Hillside Farms greenhouse, before the Mother's Day rush.

Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

B.A.D. Attitude Tour is excellent for youth

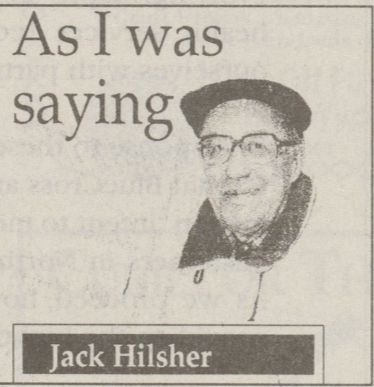
Editor:
On Thursday, April 25, students at Dallas High School, Dallas Senior High and Lake-Lehman High School were treated to rallies with national youth speaker Chuck Kish. Mr. Kish's program, entitled "the B.A.D. Attitude Tour," has received accolades from President Bush and President Clinton and Governor Ridge, as well as numerous governors, mayors and school principals throughout the nation. The focus of the tour is to encourage young people to make

responsible decisions and to have a "bad attitude" toward alcohol and drug abuse. Students are encouraged to think for themselves rather than "follow the pack" or do what "everybody else" is doing.

With all the choices facing our next generation of leaders, we applaud our local principals for bringing in programs such as the B.A.D. Attitude Tour to equip young people to make right choices. Back Mt. Harvest Assembly was honored to play a roll

in bringing Chuck Kish to our area. In addition, we would like to thank Back Mt. Servistar, Dreier Automotive, Hillside Farms and Dairy Store, Mimmo's Pizza and Restaurant, and Pizza Perfect for their commitment to our schools. Their financial contributions helped make this program possible.

Rev. Robert D. Coscia, Jr.
Youth Pastor, Back Mt.
Harvest Assembly
Dallas



Jack Hilsher

Hey Bill Gates! Beware! In your haste to pile up big bucks, don't overlook that in humans, a brain cell is said to die for each dollar accumulated.

For proof, the Microsoft genius who peddles tons of a product called software - which I do not understand, nor do I intend to - need look only briefly at the life of Howard Hughes, the richest man ever. (And that's in our entire solar system.)

Howard died a nut. Simple as that, in spite of being a billionaire. So you see, money isn't everything. And the only thing I would ever have envied Howard was Terry Moore, but even that didn't last.

Before I give you some unbelievable stuff, things which only came out long after he passed away, a recap should refresh your memory: Born in 1905, at age 18 Howard inherited the Hughes Tool Company. Worth less than a million on paper at that time, he made a profit of \$750 million by

Like brain cells, money and fame are short-lived

1972.

Then he also had accumulated hotels and casinos in Reno, Las Vegas and the Bahamas, plus Hughes Aircraft, the largest military contractor in the U.S., and he had sold TWA for \$546 million. All this is quite incredible because he was not a very good businessman. He ran RKO into the ground and lost money on countless other deals which didn't matter because others automatically took up the slack.

Hughes legends abound, but my favorite will always be the ice cream story. It would be too depressing to write about his deterioration...like at the end he never bathed or brushed his teeth. His finger and toenails grew inches long. In 10 years a full-time barber cut his hair only three times. He became a drug addict and injected with a dirty needle. Skip all that. For months Hughes insisted on having banana-nut ice cream with every meal. His aides panicked when they learned the flavor had been discontinued. Contacting Baskin-Robbins, they learned it could be produced as a special favor but only with a batch of 350 gallons. There was no choice - they ordered it.

A refrigerated truck sped the ice cream from LA to the Desert Inn, where the food manager had been told to expect it, but not 350 gallons! Asking a Hughes aide where in hell he was going to put 350 gallons of ice cream, he was told to rearrange his frozen food somehow and pack it all away, and they relaxed, knowing there was enough to last Hughes' lifetime.

When it was served to Hughes the next day he declared, "That's great, but it's time for a change. From now on, I want French vanilla."

Howard Hughes died in 1976. There were 17 mourners present at his funeral, and no one wept. No top official of his company was present. The corporate PR director requested his casinos hold a moment of silence out of respect, and this request went out over the public address systems.

One casino fell silent. The slot machines grew quiet and the blackjack games stopped. At the crap tables, stickmen held the dice.

Then the pit boss looked at his watch and said, "OK, roll the dice. He's had his minute."

ONLY YESTERDAY



**60 Years Ago - May 15, 1936
K.T. HIGH GRADUATES LARGEST CLASS EVER**

Was it necessary for Dallas Borough School Board to give Supervising Principal Norman Dinger a two-year contract extension? Could such action be interpreted as an attempt by the old board to usurp the power of the incoming board? Upon the answers to these questions will rest the outcome of a complicated controversy which neared its climax as Dinger asked Luzerne County courts to refrain the local directors from dismissing him and employing a new principal in his place.

Kingston Township High School will graduate the largest class in its history, June 12. There will be about 52 seniors in the graduating class.

**50 Years Ago - May 17, 1946
LEHMAN U.M. RECEIVES NEW GLASS WINDOW**

Based on 90% collection of taxes, Kingston Township School Board will probably adopt a budget calling for a 35-mill tax at its May 28 meeting. Increased millage will permit the board to increase all teacher salaries \$100 as required by the State and will also make it possible a \$2,100 minimum salary for all teachers who have been in the school system two or more years. Five of the present teachers will have to be dropped from faculty in order for the board to stay within the 35-mill budget.

A lovely colored window depicting "Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane" will be presented to the Lehman Methodist Church at special services May 19, at 3:30 p.m. The window measures five by seven feet, is the gift of the Friendship Class and was purchased with funds raised by presenting plays, holding teas and rummage sales during the year.

**40 Years Ago - May 11, 1956
STATE PLANS JAIL FOR DELINQUENT KIDS**

A \$10 million Pennsylvania Institute for Defective Delinquents will be built shortly within a 35-acre wire enclosure atop a hill at Chase in Jackson Township. Some 1,250 acres of land have been acquired for the entire project. There will be adequate facilities to house 1,000 inmates with provision for future expansion. The Institution will ultimately have a staff of 300-400.

A large shipment of fresh Hawaiian Orchids is due to arrive by plane here today. They are to be given away at Evans Rexall Drug Store, Shavertown as Mother's Days gifts, a custom started by Mr. Evans a number of years ago.

You could get - Steaks, 69¢ lb.; ducklings, 49¢ lb.; Beechnut Coffee, 1 lb. can, 99¢; Strawberry preserves, 2 lb. jar, 59¢.

**30 Years Ago - May 12, 1966
SWEET VALLEY FIREMEN REVIVE PARADE**

Dr. Robert Mellman, Superintendent of the Dallas School District, was honored recently when he received an invitation to teach at Penn State University Graduate School this summer. Due to the feeling of school directors that this would impose heavy additional duties upon the busy administrator, they urged him to decline the post.

With a flourish of high school bands, greased pigs, and "Hillbillys" one of the great historic Back Mountain celebrations will be revived after a lapse of 10 years, the Sweet Valley Memorial Day Parade.

**20 Years Ago - May 13, 1976
AREA BICENTENNIAL ART CONTEST PLANNED**

Residents within the Dallas School District may face a tax increase of 12 mills for the coming year, according to the Earl Fritzes, chairman of the Dallas School Board Finance Committee.

The Art Committee of the "Back Mountain Bicentennial Celebration" will sponsor an art contest as part of the celebration to be held at College Misericordia, May 4, 5 and 6. Pictures of "Yesterday" will be featured in the contest and all Back Mountain residents are invited to enter. Cash prizes will be awarded.

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

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Peggy Young ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC	Grace R. Dove REPORTER
Paul Rismiller PRODUCTION MANAGER	Olga Kostrobala CLASSIFIED/TYPESSETTING

Jill Gruver
OFFICE MANAGER

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

NNA NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

PENNSYLVANIA NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

If you missed The Post - you missed the news!