

EDITORIALS

# BMT Baseball has right idea for fields

Supporters of Back Mountain Baseball aren't waiting for the next time the fields they worked so long and hard to create are threatened. They have begun a process they hope will end with ownership of the land that has been home to the league for nearly 40 years. Despite assurances that use of the fields is secure, no crystal ball exists to tell parents, fans and volunteers whether each successive school board will perceive the fields more valuable as a place for boys and girls to learn about sports and sportsmanship than as a source of quick money.

We'll cast a vote for BMT Baseball, and hope their plans are only the beginning of uses for the 12 1/2 acres presently owned by the Dallas School District. The district will have little reason to hold on to the land once administrative offices move to the main campus in 1999, but lots of other people could put it to good use. There is a great need for more recreational space in the Back Mountain, and — as with Back Mountain Baseball — a community-wide commitment is needed to make the most of the opportunity. While the baseball and softball fields take up most of the property, there's space at the fringes for basketball courts, a jogging track, tennis courts, even a nature trail, especially if one or both buildings are removed. In the past there have also been suggestions that a year-round youth recreation facility be placed on the site, either in an existing building or a new one.

This would be an expensive project, one that would require the cooperation of each town and borough whose residents would use the facility. But that challenge is itself an opportunity for Back Mountain government officials to finally accept the reality that this is no longer a balkanized region of self-sustaining communities but a place with far greater potential working together than separately. Not only can our towns combine financial resources, we hold a rich assortment of skilled individuals who would jump at the chance to improve the area they call home. The talents are limitless, from fund raising to engineering to environmental expertise to actual construction, and they are waiting to be tapped.

With the families of more than a thousand players behind it, Back Mountain Baseball may have the clout to get this ball rolling. They can count on our support in this extremely worthwhile effort.

# Lakeside properties should not be penalized

A few homeowners at Harveys Lake have a legitimate gripe with the effect rezoning had on their properties. When new zoning took effect in 1974, all property on the water side of Lakeside Drive was designated Shoreline (S1). The other side was zoned Residential (R1). Being in the S1 zone makes even a routine modification of the homes more costly and time-consuming, since a variance is often needed; the same change in an R1 zone may require only a building permit.

Only a handful of property owners are in this fix, as the vast majority of structures on the lake side are bathhouses and docks. It seems prudent for council to waive the added fees and obstacles for existing homes in the S1 zone, even if some of the strictures they live under due to their proximity to the water are left in place.

## Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



We paid a visit to the big mouse in Orlando last week, and I must admit it was more fun than I expected. The Walt Disney company isn't what it once was, but there are some things they can still do better than anyone else, such as running a theme park. In a frenetic four days, we walked, rode and ate our way around all three areas — Magic Kingdom, Epcot and Disney/MGM Studios. The latest additions, Pleasure Island and Planet Hollywood, didn't fit in the itinerary, but they are outside the old Disney family activities universe anyway. No one should harbor the outdated idea that Disney is dedicated to "family values," not when nightclubs, auto racing tracks and soft-porn movies are in their arsenal. The only thing Disney values today is a buck, and they certainly take in lots of them. A four-day adult "park hopper" pass was \$162 each with our package. But there was a break for the little ones — they're only \$132!

It's hard to judge whether you get your money's worth. The parks are certainly clean, bright and offer more than you could ever want to do, including stand in line, but even at that no one's better at moving people to their destination. And the rewards for all the waiting were high, especially on Splash Mountain and the Tower of Terror. (Yes, I went on both, and it was great.) I guess the test is in children's reaction, and the Mouse wins hands down; best vacation ever, they said.

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A red-winged blackbird flew up from the reeds at Harveys Lake.

POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

## The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

Have you noticed recently what has been happening in the Back Mountain and other growth areas of Northeastern Pennsylvania? There is a noticeable absence of the future. While development continues to take place along major strip corridors such as Rt. 309 along the Dallas Highway, along Rt. 6 on the Scranton/Carbondale Highway and on other strip corridors, there is an absence of coordinated planning.

Lack of a long range plan to guide how development should take place, and the updating and training of local governmental officials on the latest planning and zoning techniques are highlighted by a lack of usage of comprehensive planning and zoning techniques.

There is nothing wrong with encouraging economic growth. The business community of Northeastern Pennsylvania needs to be strengthened and supported but at the same time business devel-

# Growth good, planned growth better

opment needs to be incorporated within the context of updated, modernized, planning and planning processes. It is a characteristic which has been a long-term failing throughout much of the region. This does not negate the amount and intensity of planning that is taking place in parts of the region. For example, Monroe County is undergoing a wide scale, public focused, planning and visionary process unlike any seen in the history of Northeastern Pennsylvania. It is comprehensive, expensive, dynamic and designed to leap into the 21st Century in a growth county which has even more substantial growth on the way.

Planning was incorporated into the municipality structure which exists along the corridor of the Lackawanna Valley Industrial Highway, that 17 mile stretch between Scranton and Carbondale which will open up much land for new development through the completion of the \$461 million dollar funded construction infrastructure project. Mid-Valley communities within Lackawanna County now have modernized planning documents to utilize as guides for land use decision making.

Earth Conservancy, the non-profit corporation which has own-

ership responsibility for the former 17,000 acres of Blue Coal lands commissioned a \$600,000 comprehensive planning process to help guide how and in what manner land should be used over the next 25 years.

While there is a select number of examples within Northeastern Pennsylvania where planning has been accomplished in the modern stage, there is much more which remains to be completed. This is why the absence of the future is a condition which needs rectifying as quickly as possible, especially in those areas which are undergoing tremendous growth pressures such as the Back Mountain.

When the Back Mountain Citizens Council existed as a group to help stimulate coordinated responses to major issues such as those dealing with planning and zoning, much was accomplished. With the abandonment of that organization, there is no areawide entity designed to enhance and encourage appropriate land use planning and the use of modern zoning and other types of techniques to control and manage growth. This is a situation which should be corrected as quickly as possible.

The Back Mountain Citizens Council proposed that nine Back Mountain municipalities join to-

gether to develop an areawide plan.

This would still seem to make great sense, especially with the continuing growth shown in much of the Back Mountain area. In fact, the need to balance the tax base in Back Mountain municipalities is more evident than ever before, and the opportunity to find ways to create a planned business base should be a priority with all Back Mountain organizations.

One suggestion might be to bring together representatives of all appropriate Back Mountain organizations into a planning and land use task force and to find answers toward a coordinated, balanced, land use and taxation policy which would benefit present and future generations of Back Mountain citizens. The plea to resolve the absence of the future is to make the future what you want it to be.

Extending this strategy across Northeastern Pennsylvania would be an excellent technique for a product focused, business oriented, client based (government and the private sector), meaningful, continuing, cooperative and comprehensive planning process for the benefit of all generations.

Howard Grossman is executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

**ONLY YESTERDAY**

## 60 Years Ago - June 18, 1937 WILKES-BARRE TO ENLARGE FARMER'S MARKET

Local truck farmers who sell produce several times weekly at the Wilkes-Barre farmers' market were enthusiastic over the news that Wilkes-Barre intends to enlarge facilities at the market thereby relieving the congestion problem which has existed for years. The first step towards improving conditions at the market was taken this week when Wilkes-Barre Council acquired an option on a tract of land near South Street bridge in Wilkes-Barre. Buildings will be torn down and space will be used as a new site for a farmers market.

A corps of supervisors have been busy at work making a new survey along the route of the proposed new highway. Authoritative information this week said the State Highway Dept. has not given up plans for starting at least a part of the new road this year.

## 50 Years Ago - June 20, 1947 DESPITE RAIN SHOWERS AUCTION CONTINUES

In spite of the weather that failed to cooperate and poured forth rain for two successive Saturdays, Back Mountain Memorial Library concluded its auction last Saturday evening with a profit of \$3,000.

Advance ticket sales indicate that more than 400 persons will attend Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company's Community Dinner which will be served by the Ladies Auxiliary of the company in Dallas Borough High School Auditorium starting at 5 p.m. June 26.

You could get - Smoked whole hams 63¢ lb.; hamburger, 42¢ lb.; Supreme bread, 11¢ loaf; cabbage, 2 lbs., 11¢; Boscul Coffee, 47¢ lb.; Ideal tea balls, 50/35¢; Lipton Noodle Soup Mix, 3 pkgs. 28¢.

## 40 Years Ago - June 21, 1957 'GIANT' PLAYING AT THE MOVIE HOUSE

Sacred Heart R. C. Church, Wilkes-Barre is improving its park grounds near Sacred Heart Cemetery with a completely new baseball diamond, swimming pool and outdoor fireplaces. The park is just off Orchard Farm and was used extensively a number of years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. James D. Hutchins, Trucksville, will talk about the Library Auction over Binghamton TV station WBNF July 2, at 10 a.m. They have been asked by Fran Touth to bring with them a few choice samples of what may be expected at the 11th Annual Library Auction, July 5 and 6 at the Barnyard in Dallas.

Now playing at the Himmler Theatre, "Giant" with Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor.

The Library Auction refreshment committee announced two windfalls at Monday night's meeting in the Library Annex. Charles Gosart, Harveys Lake Highway will furnish 300 dozen rolls and Lloyd Williams will furnish George Washington Instant Coffee.

## 30 Years Ago - June 15, 1967 DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT NEED TEACHERS

Dr. Robert A. Mellman, Superintendent of Dallas Schools announced at the school board meeting Tuesday evening that teachers were needed in the elementary grades. He declared that present vacancies existed in second grade, kindergarten, second and third grades transition and sixth grade and a English teacher was needed for the Junior High School.

More effective lighting, a playground for kids and paving of more roads in the community was ap-

proved at the meeting of Dallas Borough Council Tuesday evening. Lake and Main Streets, Huntsville Road and Machell Avenue will be the first to secure the new illuminating lamps which will provide a 500% increase in lighting to those presently in use. A playground area with volleyball and basketball courts will be erected on Burndale Road.

## 20 Years Ago - June 16, 1977 HARVEYS LAKE SEWER READY FOR USE

At long last Harveys Lake's new municipal sewer appears ready for use. The borough's municipal authority this week announced hookups may begin June 15. Residents have 60 days to connect at a discount rate of \$300. After Aug. 15, the rate for connecting will be increased.

A tentative budget with an increase of 10 mills has been proposed by the Lake-Lehman School Board for the 1977/78 school year in order to cover minimum expenditures. Taxpayers of the school district are hoping for a reduction in the millage, but following the meeting of the directors Tuesday night, it appears the proposed budget will remain as is unless two bills, or at least one of them now in the legislature are approved.

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