

EDITORIALS

We must plan now for the Back Mountain's future

It is heartening to hear that housing developers endorse zoning in the Back Mountain's communities, as those interviewed by Kylie Shafferkoetter for this week's front-page article do. Not many years ago, it seemed home builders resented zoning and building codes, feeling they imposed unnecessary restrictions on their industry while adding to the cost of construction. The latter is probably true, but most people recognize that standards benefit nearly everyone in the long run, since consistent neighborhoods and quality construction mean higher resale value.

Zoning shouldn't be static, though, and given the growth of the region, requires nearly constant fine tuning if we are to have viable communities that are home to a diverse population. Lately it seems the Back Mountain is becoming a haven for upper-income families at the expense of those of more modest means, a circumstance that can be credited to a lack of imagination among both builders and zoners. While the concept of "cluster housing" has been around for some time, it has been slow to take root here, at least beyond a couple of condominium complexes. At the same time, an overabundance of 2,500 square foot and more larger homes have been built cheek by jowl on 1/3 to 1/2 acre lots, affordable to a limited segment of our families.

Before zoning comes planning, a process that is painfully difficult, but necessary. The Back Mountain needs to plan its future not as six or seven individual municipalities, but as a unit, so that we define areas that are appropriate for large houses and small ones, shops and offices, even industry, as well as areas that should be left alone. Before we can take this step, though, we must accept that it is needed, and that requires exceptional foresight. Anyone who has traveled much in the United States knows the areas that have looked ahead and built the most attractive communities are few and far between. It would be wonderful if the Back Mountain could be counted among them. Perhaps with the cooperation of concerned individuals, enlightened developers, officials and organizations such as the Back Mountain Regional Land Trust, we can grasp our future and turn it to our collective advantage. It's worth the effort.

Public should have say in new school board member

Members of the Dallas School Board were right to question and then vote down a nomination to replace Reese Finn, the school director whose letter of resignation was read at Monday night's meeting. While we have the greatest respect for Dr. Richard Coslett, whose name was offered for approval, board members and the public deserve more time to ponder and suggest Finn's replacement.

The resignation caught the board by surprise. It "appeared" on the table in an unmarked envelope during the break between the work session and the regular meeting, when most board members had left the room. No matter what the intentions of the individual who planted it, this is no way to conduct the affairs of the Dallas School District.

We urge the board to hold a special meeting in the next two weeks, so that different candidates for the post can be presented and their qualifications discussed. Since the late resignation has denied the public the opportunity to select a candidate, this is the least the board can do.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Here's my two cents worth on the flood of "news" coverage of the death of Britain's Princess Diana. Besides making me wonder about the state of the human race, it makes me think real newspapers have a more important role than you might have suspected. I say that because, unlike television, newspapers didn't turn a week's worth of issues over to one irrelevant topic. They continued to bring people a wide range of items each day and week, the kinds of things most people want to keep up on. Television, in contrast, apparently turned Diana Week into a feeding frenzy of tidbits that frequently contradicted each other, and in the process blocked out or at least shortened most other topics.

I think you can attribute the networks' perverse interest in this item to two things: First, an open acknowledgement that television is an entertainment medium, sometimes wrapped in news packaging; and second, big-company ownership. In the last decade or so, every network has changed hands, and in doing so lost whatever direction the founders and early executives provided. While they weren't exactly saints, William Paley and his contemporaries wanted respect for their work, and constrained their baser instincts so as to stay out of the gutter. The corporate types running networks now have no similar compunction - the bottom line rules, the money comes from ratings, and ratings come from titillation, at least at this point in time. It's also cheaper to run a "news" department than to buy shows, so it becomes a no-brainer to produce their own entertainment from the newsroom. And since they're all doing the same thing, they don't have to worry about being original.

You can probably also lay some of the blame at the doorstep of a society that appears unable to discriminate the relative value of events. Or maybe it's just the fact that, absent wars and pestilence, we've gotten lazy.



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

If a child came to me and said "I'm worried; I think I have E. coli," I would look up rather knowingly and say, "Yes child, you have billions and billions of them." *Escherichia coli* is the most common bacterium inhabiting our gut. It also inhabits the guts of other mammals such as dogs, deer, and cows. Bacteriologists call E. coli a commensal, which means that it lives in close association with us and is benefited by that association (that is, it has a nice warm place to live and grow where there is plenty of water and nutrients) and we as its host are neither helped nor harmed.

Some would argue that E. coli is a true symbiont, living with humans to our mutual advantage. Many sources, especially textbooks and the popular press, state that we are dependent upon E. coli for our vitamin K and biotin. But, since our bodies also harbor many other species of bacteria which produce these materials, perhaps we are not dependent on E. coli in particular. Other scientists see less obvious advantages. For instance, perhaps E. coli simply takes up so much space in our intestines that other, more harmful, bacteria are prevented from multiplying rapidly enough to hurt us. And, metals tend to adhere to the outside of E. coli cells which may help to prevent certain types of metal poisoning.

One distinct benefit of E. coli in recent years has been its role in medical research and in the detection of fecal contamination of food and water. The choice in both instances was made because of the relative harmlessness of this species of bacteria. Technicians can grow E. coli in the lab,

The scoop on E. coli

view it under the microscope, and clean up afterwards with very little concern about their personal health. That is certainly not true of other bacteria that might be found in our guts, such as *Proteus* or *Enterobacter*. And, E. coli is particularly easy to grow and identify. Since it is present in all mammal feces, its presence is a good indicator of fecal contamination that might cause serious disease.

So, why are people suddenly so worried about E. coli? Because certain strains, or types, of E. coli are not harmless or beneficial. Some can cause illness and even death. Some of these strains have been around for a long time and others are more recent additions to the family. Many people try to explain these different strains by making an analogy to the fact that not all people are harmless. Some are dangerous to the point of becoming homicidal. But, with bacteria the situation is much more problematic. If one person is homicidal, it can multiply so fast that there are millions of identical cells before we are aware that there is a problem.

The usual E. coli strains within our bodies generally do not cause illness. However, if they are introduced into parts of our bodies where they do not usually occur, we can become sick. E. coli is the most common cause of urinary tract infections, especially among women. Ninety percent of cystitis cases are the result of E. coli being in the wrong place.

There are more than 150 known strains of *Escherichia coli*. Some of these cause most of the cases of diarrhea among infants and travelers in less developed countries. If you do not have cholera, you probably have an E. coli strain to which you are not adapted. These E. coli are spread through water and food. Babies who are breast-fed rarely contract the disease. Therefore, breast-feeding becomes an important weapon in the fight against this type of infant dis-

ease. After infancy, these types of E. coli rarely are life-threatening.

There are other strains including O157:H7 that cause a much more dangerous disease. They produce toxins that resemble the toxin produced by *Shigella* and thus have a similar effect on the body. Diarrhea leads to hemorrhaging. Complications such as kidney failure also may set in. This is the disease that has killed people in the Midwest, West, Canada, Japan, and other places in recent years. E. coli O157:H7 does not normally live in our guts. It has developed within the past few decades in our domestic animals, particularly cattle. One veterinarian with whom I spoke was convinced that this is such a problem now because of all the antibiotics we regularly feed our cows so that they will produce more milk and beef. Cows do not usually get sick from harboring E. coli O157:H7, although calves have been known to become ill. Therefore, perfectly healthy animals may pass this strain along to us if we fail to kill it by adequate heating (greater than 160 degrees F.).

Most of the recent news reports on E. coli O157:H7 have been very misleading. In fact, in many cases they have totally failed to point out that this strain is different from the "normal" inhabitants of our guts and have led to the assumption that all E. coli are bad. They have, however, done doctors and public health officials a service in reminding all of us that hygiene and proper food handling is an important part of staying healthy.

We will always live with bacteria. But, we need to obey certain rules in order to keep this a commensal arrangement, not a parasitic one. Maintain clean water supplies. Cook all meats well. Carefully wash utensils and cutting surfaces after handling raw meat. Wash fruits and vegetables before eating. And, most importantly, thoroughly wash your hands before eating or preparing food.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - Sept. 19, 1937

CHECK FOR UNLICENSED DOGS BEGINS IN BMT

Four field agents from the Pa. Dept. of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Husbandry, will start a check of all unlicensed dogs in the Back Mountain beginning Monday. Owners of unlicensed dogs will be fined \$14 and \$2.50 costs.

As a precautionary measure, following the discovery of a second case of infantile paralysis in Dallas Borough schools were closed this morning for a week. Rev. Francis E. Freeman, pastor of Dallas Methodist Church also announced there will be no services this Sunday.

50 Years Ago - Sept. 19, 1947

HENDRICKS RECEIVES MEMORIAL AWARD

Howard L. Hendricks, supervising principal of Lehman Township Schools and teacher of Men's Bible Class at Lehman Methodist Church received the annual Frank Hemelright Memorial Award for community service in the Back Mountain area at a joint dinner meeting of Dallas Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs at Irem Temple Country Club Wednesday evening.

The formal opening of College Misericordia will be solemnized Sept. 26 with a high mass at the school. Largest enrollment on record will be present for the 23rd opening of the institution.

40 Years Ago - Sept. 20, 1957

DALLAS FOOTBALL TEAM DECLARES OPEN SEASON

Coach Anthony Roan and assistants Bill Morgan and Tom Carr, have declared open season on the Tunkhannock Tigers for Saturday afternoon when Dallas Area High School opens its 1957 football season. Tunkhannock with a victory over St. Michael's enters the fray on odds as favorite to protect its two year win streak and the complete domination over local teams it has enjoyed the past few years.

Dr. Ray Cleaver, coordinator of the Pa. State Bureau of School District Reorganization spoke to a large audience at the Township School Monday evening when PTA groups of Dallas Schools gathered to hear the State's attitude toward a Union School District. He outlined the advantages from a financial and workable viewpoint, mentioned road blocks to its accomplishment, stated that Harrisburg considered the present juncture a good one and threw the meeting open for discussion.

30 Years Ago - Sept. 14, 1967

DALLAS DISTRICT GETS THREE MORE BUSES

Three more school buses will be added to Dallas Schools to take care of the overload of pupils, particularly in the kindergarten and lower grades. The directors passed a motion on recommendation of Dr. Robert Mellman, Superintendent at a meeting of the School Board Tuesday.

Lake-Lehman School Directors drew a breath of relief Tuesday when they obtained a physician to serve at football games. Dr. W.J. Daw agreed to attend. Regulations call for the presence of a doctor on the sidelines.

Lehman Township Supervisors approved the proposal of Roy W. Weston for a feasibility study of sewage needs in the community at a meeting of the Board Saturday. A number of residents previously serviced by Haddonfield Water Co. now going out business and operated by Harry W. Ruggles asked aid of the supervisors in continuing this supply.

20 Years Ago - Sept. 15, 1977

MEDIATOR NEEDED IN MIDST OF DISCUSSION

Anthony Andriole, regular director and mediator assigned to the local school district stated that it would be sometime in October before he could set up any mediation between representatives of the Dallas Education Association and Dallas School District. Mediation sessions between DEA and representatives of the District became necessary last week after DEA voted to refuse the final proposal offered by the negotiating committee of Dallas School District.

Lehman Supervisors announced at the Monday meeting that formal action has been taken against the developer of Town and Country Manor. The developer has repeatedly ignored instruction from the supervisors to install drainage and proper berms on two roads in the development.

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Your news is welcome

The Dallas Post welcomes submissions about Back Mountain people and events. In order to plan each issue, we must adhere to self-imposed deadlines, as well as those of our printer. To have the greatest likelihood of publication, items should be received at our office by 4 p.m. the Friday prior to each issue. Items will be accepted until 4 p.m. Mondays, although much of the paper is already assembled by that time. Send or bring items to: The Dallas Post, 607 Main Road, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Our normal business hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. A deposit box is located at the front of the building for after-hours submissions.