

EDITORIALS

Keeping your eyes wide open is always good advice

Unhappy that the new Dallas fire station was built across the street from his house on Center Hill Rd., Vito Balice is waging a one-man campaign to expose what he says are violations of zoning regulations and procedures in the building's construction. He makes some interesting points, but his main one, that people who live in R-1 (residential) zoned areas are at risk, is not among them.

In letters to the Post and other newspapers, Mr. Balice contends that the Dallas Township Planning Commission, Zoning Board, Supervisors and Zoning Officer Leonard Kozick played fast and loose with the township's zoning rules, particularly those regarding parking and setbacks. But one man's trickery may be another's reasonable flexibility, and the law grants township officials wide latitude to accommodate a variety of land uses.

The primary point — that a municipal building was improperly placed across the street from private homes — is moot. The fire station land has been zoned commercial for years, long before Mr. Balice bought his home, and the fire company has owned it for two decades. The other half of the block was a restaurant, and is now physicians' offices and a day-care center, so it should have been no surprise when something other than a home was built on the lot.

Perhaps the people who live on the residential side of the street are luckier than they feel at the moment; the corner occupied by the fire station would have made an ideal site for a 24-hour convenience store, which would have easily passed zoning muster, and would have been a far less welcome neighbor.

The best point Mr. Balice makes in his letter is the last; that people who are concerned about their communities need to get involved. They must attend meetings, pay attention to the changes that are going on around them, and consider a vote in municipal elections as important as that for President. They may not always get their way, but they won't be surprised by the turn of events, either.



A traditional symbol of the Easter season. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

Student says book rumors not unfounded

Editor:
In the March 25th edition of The Dallas Post, principals in the Lake-Lehman School District stated that there was no book shortage, it was all just a rumor. I am a student at Lake-Lehman High School, and upon reading this article I felt that our principal, Mr. Oliver, was calling not only me, but my entire American Studies class and our English teacher, liars.

Until a few short weeks before the publication of that article, stu-

dents from our class had to go to our English teacher's room to bring back books for class, and take them back when class was over.

Mr. Oliver stated that we had enough books for our purposes, and we did finally each get our own Literature book at the end of the third marking period. It would have been nice, however, if everyone in the class could have received the same book. There are three different editions in our American Studies class alone, and

the comment has been made, "This book is older than I am."

So, yes, now we do have enough books, but Mr. McLaughlin-Smith was right in stating, "Less is more" — the fewer editions of books we have the better our education can be, as we can follow along with what the teacher is reading instead of everyone searching through the index of their own edition to find where the work is located in the book.

Gennifer Pauley
Noxen

Firehouse neighbor contends corners cut

Editor,
So you live in a residential area in the Back Mountain and think your safety and residential status are assured by the R1 zoning regulations? Think again. That small vacant, undevelopable lot across the street from your home could be in the development stages right now, and you wouldn't even know it until the bulldozers arrive. How could that happen? Read on, you'll find out.

At the Feb. 10, 1998 Dallas Township planning commission meeting, the request for an occupancy permit by the Dallas Fire and Ambulance Co. was tabled. Mr. Kozick, township officer said the fire department didn't like the report done by the engineering firm of Borton and Lawson. Hadn't anyone realized that Borton and Lawson had to go by the "book" and show any discrepancies in the actual building?

We requested the Feb. 10 report for a month; our attorney had to formally request our zoning officer to provide it to us. We received it five minutes before the March 10 planning commission meeting, only because we knew it existed and legally requested it. However this report was never acknowledged at the meeting, a

new report appeared, dated March 6, 1998. The earlier encroachment magically disappeared; change in the building, restriction in driveway to parking spaces, insufficient parking spaces, all solved. The master magicians on the planning commission can shift roads and building and make it fit. They can even make extra parking spaces magically appear. A court-ordered 20 parking space requirement is no way apparent except to a few elected township officials. And, by the way, are all these plans approved and recorded? And who enforces the court order for specific setbacks and requirements? You'll never guess on this one; the same people we are fighting against. The same ones who look the other way.

A lingering question: Why was the building wanted so badly right where it is? Dallas Fire Chief Brett Slocum said they build a firehouse to "fit" into the neighborhood. Well it does not fit on this less than one-half acre lot. Zoning officer Leonard Kozick said that the spot by the municipal building was offered to the firehouse. Why didn't the firehouse build by the municipal building with more space and

more convenience? Why was this project under "microscopic exam?"

It seems to me that a project done in good faith and in accordance with the law wouldn't need to be so scrutinized. There were problems and there are new ones that you are choosing to ignore. Where your errors have no consequences, you admit your mistakes by changing your final plan. Where your errors have serious consequences, you deny them.

While reading this we hope you look out your window and see if that vacant lot next to your house or field in the back that gave you pleasant comfort does not become a misguided, unlawful development. Look for stakes in the ground, find out about zoning and planning commission meetings and get an agenda. And if you are not pleased with your officials you have one weapon in your hands — your vote. Get involved, talk to your neighbors, hire an attorney and fight what is wrong. Call your representative and ask for legislation about posting all public meetings and minimum-size lot requirements. Remember, it could happen to you.

Vito Balice
Dallas

WORD ON THE STREET

Q: If you could go anywhere on vacation, where would it be and why?
Where asked: The Dallas Senior and Middle schools.



RAELENE OLSZEWSKI
Dallas

"Bermuda. I've been there twice already. It's quiet, sunny and there is golf there."



LISA FINO
Dallas

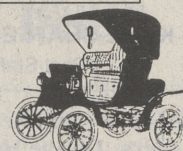
"Hawaii. It's beautiful with clean, fresh air. You can see the fish in the water."



YVONNE MOULD
Lehman

"Alaska. It's beautiful, educational and an important natural resource."

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - April 22, 1938
NEW SHAVERTOWN THEATRE TO OPEN

The opening date for the new Shavertown Theatre, was set yesterday for Fri., April 29. Projection booth equipment was installed this week by the Penn Theatre Supply Co. of Philadelphia and RCA sound engineers tested the sound equipment. Russell DeReemer of Dallas has been engaged as operator. Daniel Shaver, owner announced.

"Mystic De Yong, a professional magician, will be presented in Kingston Township High School auditorium April 29 at 8 p.m. under the auspices of Shavertown M.E. Church Epworth League. The performance will be for the benefit of the New Hymnal Fund. Many audiences have marveled at the skillfully presented magic of Ed Young, who was for several years on stage as "Mystic De Yong."

50 Years Ago - April 23, 1948
HUMPTY DUMPTY STORE OPENS IN KUNKLE

Paul E. Hilbert has opened a new Humpty Dumpty Store at Kunkle with a full line of nationally advertised brands. Before entering business for himself, Paul had several years experience with Devens Milling Co., Trucksville Mills and GLF. He expects to add to his lines as rapidly as possible and will be assisted in the store by Mrs. Hilbert.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Laux of Shavertown will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on April 27 with a Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Therese's Church, Shavertown. The couple were blessed with nine children, eight of whom are living. They also have 15 grandchildren.

40 Years Ago - April 18, 1958
TWO JOINT DISTRICTS WORK TO MAKE ONE

Lehman-Jackson-Ross and Lake-Noxen joint school district are still attempting to find some basis of agreement on formation of a larger district and to this end, two delegates from each of the five boards met Monday evening at Lehman. Directors with advice of E.S. Teter, superintendent of Luzerne County Schools and Wesley Davies, assistant, felt their way toward a tentative basis of agreement. They planned to take the proposals back to their own school board for further discussion.

Four generations of the Eyerman family, one of Wyoming Valley's oldest contracting firms, along with executives of Acme Markets and other business leaders took part in groundbreaking ceremonies for the new Back Mountain Shopping Center at Shavertown Wednesday. The Center will have nine and possible 10 stores with ample space for parking. Biggest of the stores will be the new Acme Market.

30 Years Ago - April 25, 1968
GROUNDBREAKING FOR DALLAS JUNIOR HIGH

Groundbreaking ceremonies will take place May 1 at 7 p.m. on the site of the new Dallas Junior High School. Presiding will be Harry D. Swepston, chairman of Dallas School District Authority. Dr. Robert A. Mellman, Dallas School District Superintendent will explain the building program.

Some orders have already been received for the 100 page book of pictures taken during Olde Dallas Sesquicentennial. The book is now being bound and will be ready for distribution soon. This book is one you can get out years from now and look back over those months when the communities in this area were one, those friends working and playing, eating together, sharing.

20 Years Ago - April 20, 1978
DALLAS WOMAN'S CLUB DISBANDS AFTER 45 YEARS

Dallas Woman's Club closed the book on 45 years of service to the Back Mountain communities last Wednesday evening at their buffet dinner held at Prince of Peace Episcopal Church, Dallas. Members decided to disband the club after much deliberation. With so many members working, retired or suffering from illness had reached the point where the work of the club fell on a few active members - members who as one described it "were getting tired."

Publisher's notebook
Ron Bartizek

Those staunch defenders of morality, the tobacco companies, have launched a counteroffensive against anyone who stands in the way of their quest to replace the 1,000 smokers who die each day. They contend their use of Joe Camel to lure young smokers is no worse than the Minnesota state lottery's display of Bullwinkle J. Moose to entice Minnesotans to empty their pockets in hope of becoming rich. I think the cigarette pushers are correct. I'm also old-fashioned enough to believe two wrongs don't make a right.

Since state lotteries began — being a New Englander I remember when New Hampshire opened the floodgates — they have saturated the airwaves with come-ons worthy of the most accomplished huckster. "Be an instant millionaire." "Relax for the rest of your life." "Get the reward you deserve," they seem to say so frequently that many people come to believe it's their God-given right to win the big one. Not to mention the sham that your money isn't being thrown in a black hole, it's for a good cause — education, senior citizens, all manner of uplifting social causes.

Oh, really? Well, if I want to help society, I'd rather donate to the charity of my choice or, *sacre bleu*, pay it in taxes. Yes, gentle reader, you get more bang for your buck feeding the bureaucracy than spending your lunch money on lottery tickets. But, since players think it's all a game — and they'll come out ahead — the fleecing appears to be painless.

Don't get me wrong, this is not a defense of Big Tobacco, which clearly has earned the scorn it is now receiving. But it's curious how some of the states that see RJR and Philip Morris as their cash cows show no shame at taking advantage of the most gullible in their societies even as they teach new generations that gambling is swell — why, it's even good for them and their society.

If you haven't yet received the call, you probably will soon, at least if you bought this copy of the Post on the newsstand. We've hired a professional telemarketing firm to solicit new subscribers, and they don't seem to miss many chances to make a sale. I don't like these calls any more than most of you, but there's one compelling reason why we all get so many — it works. In an era when the most common reason given for not reading a particular newspaper is "I don't have time," we can't rely on people finding us on their own. They won't, and advertisers then won't be satisfied, and then the price of a subscription will have to go up, and then...well, you get the picture.

The firm we're using works for newspapers much larger than ours, as well as other companies, and has a reputation for making high-quality sales. But that doesn't mean they're perfect, and since most telemarketers burn out in just a few months, call quality is likely to be inconsistent. Callers have a tough job; they are part time for the most part, and probably are rejected 99 times for each sale they make, so they are trained to press for an order, but not to the point of being abusive or obnoxious.

We want to know if the callers are doing their job, so don't hesitate to call me at 675-5211 if you have a comment.

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