

EDITORIALS

Here's hoping field standoff is settled soon

We hope it's true that an accommodation is near between the Dallas School District and neighboring property owners who object to the construction of new fields behind their homes on Westminster Drive. For the first time in months, both sides appear positive about resolving this sticky issue, which affects a small number of properties but hundreds of other families because of the shortage of playing fields for youth sports.

Atty. Bruce Phillips, who has been leading the home owners in their fight against the fields, says open lines of communication have led to optimism. We hope he is right. Much has been made on his side of perceived hardship construction of the fields will create, while the school has countered with evidence that property owners have encroached onto school land. That kind of Hatfields and McCoys talk hasn't accomplished much, but a little compromise on each side may.

In the end, there is little chance the school will not be allowed to build the fields, so it's only right to end the standoff now, and get to work to provide adequate recreation opportunities for all residents of the Back Mountain.

Hey, Gov. Ridge, how about fixing the roads?

Gov. Tom Ridge is touting a record of accomplishment in campaign ads, ads that it seems are hardly necessary to win reelection. He mentions jobs and education, claiming credit for a healthier economy and better achievement, attained at least in part because of the state's spending in those areas. But he doesn't talk about the condition of the roads.

A few days of rain such as we've had lately bring out the worst in Pennsylvania's infrastructure, as potholes yawn open on highways and byways. The only saving grace for motorists is they are the same holes and ridges that appear month after month and year after year, because they have never been properly repaired, so we know when to zig or zap to avert major suspension damage.

Perhaps if he wins re-election, and the economy remains strong, Gov. Ridge will find a way to put our roads in shape, and to keep them that way. That legacy just might make him one of the state's most popular chief executives.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



Now that every shortage, accident or misfortune is being blamed on El Nino, I expect California winemakers to jump on the bandwagon and claim the weather phenomenon forced them to raise prices even higher. I've written before that my vinuous (is that a new word?) goal is to find the best cheap wine. By cheap, I used to mean under \$6 a bottle, but every wine I once found at that level has jumped in price by at least \$2 a bottle, some by \$4 or \$5. I'm not dating myself by saying Napa Ridge used to go for \$5.99. It's now more like \$8.99, and the wine isn't any better, but more people have discovered it. Same for Monterey, which was my "best buy" a couple of years ago. Now, the price is higher and the quality may be lower.

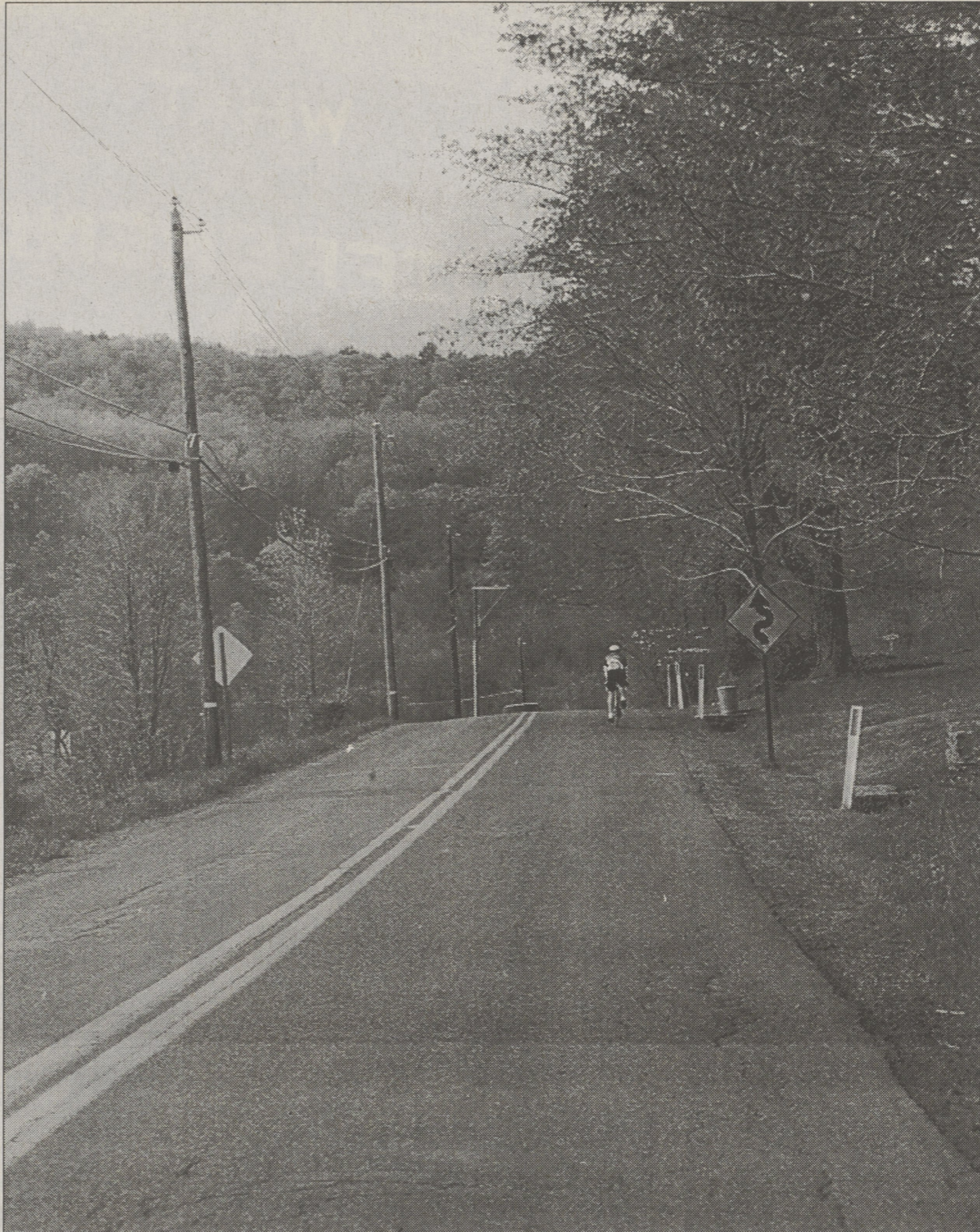
What is a dedicated, but cheap, wine drinker to do? Go south, way south, to Chile and Argentina, where supply seems endless and quality is pretty good. The first cheap wine we had from there was Undurraga (pardon the spelling) Sauvignon Blanc, which was delightful at under \$10 for a 1.5l bottle. But I was buying the '94 two years ago, and the shelves are still full of that vintage! That seems much too long for a modest wine to last, so now we've switched to Concha y Toro, red and white, and it's proving to be a good substitute at \$8.99 or \$9.99.

Speaking of price, I was in one of our inadequate, overpriced state stores the other day and a clerk pointed out the "great" price on a bottle, announcing that it was lower than in New York. "Wonderful," I said, "now, what about the prices on the other 99.9 percent of the stock?"

If you've read any of the stories about giddy Wall Street traders and their wine buying habits, you know that I compete in a different league. There are restaurants in New York charging \$5,000 for a bottle of wine that sells for \$1,000 in another eating place nearby, and probably can be bought in a liquor store for less than half that. Let's see, \$5,000 divided by \$9.99, with each bottle lasting four days, that means for the price of one of those bottles, Charlotte and I could imbibe for 5 1/2 years! Oops, forgot, the kids are getting bigger, so maybe we'd only get half a decade.

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.



Rough road ahead. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

I started this line of inquiry by wondering what barn swallows and chimney swifts did before we humans invented barns and chimneys. And, now, I come full circle to the realization that swallows and swifts have taken this proclivity for human habitation much further than any other group of wild birds. They have taken it so far, in fact, that purple martins (the largest North American swallows) east of the Rocky Mountains now nest only in human-supplied housing!

But, let's begin with the chimney swifts. From what I have been able to glean from various books on birds, these very fast flyers once used hollow trees as nesting sites. In Europe, where they first came to be called chimney swifts, the forests have been managed for hundreds of years. All dead trees are carefully removed. It would have been very difficult for these birds to survive if they had not been able to adapt to some other nesting site. So, they have come to use barns, silos, or abandoned chimneys for their roosts and nests.

The only colony I remember seeing in Pennsylvania (I'm sure there are others) was on the campus of Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster - most interesting entertainment for students during exams.

Caves, cliffs, and branches were once the main nesting sites for barn and cliff swallows. They require sturdy vertical surfaces

Swallows, swifts, and us

with easy access and have found that buildings meet that need quite satisfactorily. The swallows' return from wintering grounds has been the subject of legend and poetry for centuries. John Masefield wrote "It was an April morning brisk with wind / And overhead the first-come swallow darted." In California, this return has for generations been recorded as the time (usually in mid-March) when the cliff swallows arrive in the Mission San Juan Capistrano from their winter homes in South America. Actually, these swallows not only nest in the shelter of the mission but also on rocky cliffs, in caves, and under the eaves of a variety of buildings throughout the Capistrano Valley. They are of great benefit to the farmers of the area because they and their young eat many kinds of insects in great quantities.

All swallows eat insects. They have short bills with wide bases so that they can hold the mouth open in a broad gape during flight and scoop up insects on the wing. Therefore, they consume large numbers of the various types of insects that are about during the day when they feed: flies, midges, mayflies, Japanese beetles, butterflies, moths, bees, flying ants, cicadas, boll weevils and many others. They do not generally eat mosquitoes since these tend to be lower to the ground and come out more at night.

These dietary needs might give us more clues as to why these birds are content to live in close proximity to people. They prefer open space where they can fly fast and gather lots of insects. Agricultural fields are perfect. Where in prehistoric times could a bird find such abundance?

Purple martins were living in gourds put out especially for them

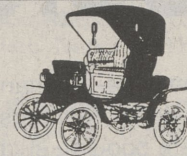
long before Europeans "discovered" America. The Native Americans found that the martins not only ate annoying insects but they also acted as efficient scarecrows, chasing away crows from corn patches and vultures from meat and hides hung out to dry. The martins, on the other hand, found the gourds larger and generally safer than the woodpecker holes in which they had previously built their nests and managed to fledge more young under these conditions. Colonists, being familiar with similar birds in the Old Country, continued and expanded the tradition.

Now, although western purple martins still nest in woodpecker cavities in cacti or on cliffs, those east of the Rockies are entirely dependent upon housing provided by humans. The Purple Martin Conservation Association headquartered at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania (Edinboro PA 16444; phone 814-734-5803; e-mail pmca@edinboro.edu) provides much useful information on the construction and care of such housing. If you are interested in becoming a "landlord" of a different sort, please contact them. You will need a fairly large area without trees or large buildings. Apparently boat docks are excellent locations (Any takers from Harveys Lake?).

Lester L. Short in his book *The Lives of Birds: Birds of the World and Their Behavior* makes the following statement: "For most of us, those birds that inhabit our backyards and city parks may represent one of our few remaining links with the natural world."

We should be grateful that the swallows and swifts consider us part of their communities. Let us continue to provide living space in our communities for these graceful birds.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - May 20, 1938 DALLAS RESIDENT GRACES SATURDAY EVENING POST

When artist Robert Robinson, visiting in Dallas 20 some years ago, set out to find a typical "bad boy" for his magazine cover found his model in Dan Waters and that lad, who was to grow up to be one of the town's most prominent citizens and present secretary of its school board, became a Saturday Evening Post cover. Walters chuckled this week as he recalled his only experience as an artist's model. "Robinson wanted a bad boy and I guess I was it."

Youthful aviation enthusiasts from Dallas Borough and Dallas Township High School will test their model airplanes tomorrow in a contest which will climax this section's observance of Air Mail Week. The builder of the best plane will be treated to an airplane ride over Dallas from Wyoming Valley Airport. Trial flights will take place in Oliver's used car lot at 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

50 Years Ago - May 21, 1948 HILLSIDE FARMS TO HOST HOLSTEIN BREEDERS

Conyngham-Hillside Farms, one of the oldest breeders of Holstein cattle in the east, will be host to the Holstein breeders of Luzerne, Columbia, Wyoming and Lackawanna Counties, July 8 at Hillside Farm. A program has been arranged by William L. Conyngham, chairman for the day, who extends a cordial welcome to all Holstein breeders, registered in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Dr. Eugene Farley, president of Wilkes College will be the speaker at the 50th annual Commencement exercises of Monroe Township Schools next Thursday night. There are 15 seniors in the graduating class.

40 Years Ago - May 16, 1958 RACE TRACK TO OPEN AT DALLAS OPEN THEATRE

The new quarter-midget race track at Dallas Outdoor Theatre will open May 24 when eight racers and 12 drivers from the Lehigh Valley Quarter-Midget Racing Club in Allentown will put on an exhibition for theatre patrons. The racers who will have a top speed of 20-25 miles an hour are exact replicas of larger racers and will be driven by boys and girls 6-15 years of age who are patrons of the theatre.

Work at the Jackson Mental Institution came to a halt May 1 when members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 163 went on strike. A dispute over a union steward dismissed by the Ross Electric Construction Co. of Philadelphia resulted in laying off about 95% of the men employed. Ninety percent of these men were employed from the Back Mountain.

30 Years Ago - May 23, 1968 DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT PASSES BUDGET

The tentative budget of Dallas School District was adopted last week by the school board at a public meeting. Based on 48 mills, \$10 per capita tax and one half percent earned income tax, the budget was voted against by Andrew Kozemchak and L.L. Richardson. Changes can still be made on the budget. It will be open for public inspection for 30 days.

D.C. Roberts Fire Co. of Harveys Lake has added a modern method of fast communications in calls for fire and ambulance assistance. With the installation of a "Telephone Alert-System" persons who call the fire company number are automatically connected with 10 Fire Phones in the homes of voluntary firemen, any one of whom may turn in the alarm by activating a switch on his phone.

20 Years Ago - May 18, 1978 MCDONALDS GETS OKAY TO COME TO BMT

Kingston Township supervisors announced at Wednesday's meeting that approval has been given by the planning and zoning commission for construction of a MacDonald's Family Restaurant on Route 309, Memorial Highway, Shavertown. Bullock's Tire and Service Co., presently located on the site has been purchased and will be dismantled.

WORD ON THE STREET

Q: What was the best advice you ever received and who gave it to you?
Where asked: Back Mountain Shopping Center



JANET TRACY
Dallas

"Be true to yourself. My minister told me that."



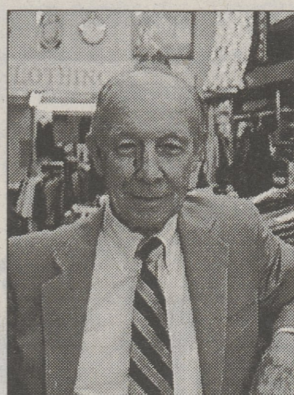
JASON POPLASKI
Trucksville

"My mother always told me to do my best and to compete with myself instead of others."



MARGE MAREK
Sweet Valley

"My mother gave me the best advice when she said, 'Still water runs deep.'"



ROBERT J. RILK
Forty-Fort

"A man named Mr. Hirsh told me to never deny where you come from."

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