



Getting ready for the goodies, clockwise, starting with head of table at left, are: Mariah Yantz, Michael Cease, A. J. Mazula, Shequoya Bonner, Kahli Kotulski, Jamie Niedjaco, Alec Jones, Anthony Baldiga.

Dallas Little People parade

Children at Dallas Little People had a Halloween parade for friends and family Oct. 27 around the grounds of the Back Mountain Library. Each class enjoyed its own party with plenty of treats afterward.



Tommy Stitzer, left, makes a realistic Harry Potter. Center: Alec Jones, Christopher Bagley, and Nicole Perez line up to march. Right: Barbara Kohler, School Director, leading the parade.



POST PHOTOS/JOANNA CEASE

Sheetz

(continued from page 1)

friendliest service, quality products (including our delicious Made To Order subs and salads and quality Sheetz gasoline) in the cleanest, most convenient locations."

But those opposed allege Sheetz uses unfair competitive practices, that its bright lights and garish colors will be an eyesore, that speakers at the eight gas pumps might create a noise problem, and that the proposed location may cause safety concerns due to the already high volume of traffic along that stretch of Rt. 309 which might be increased with the institution of a Sheetz.

"I don't want to turn this into a lynch mob pro or con — I just want this to be known," said Eric May who, along with Russell and Sherri Newell, organized a citizens' meeting in the social hall of the Shavertown Fire Company on Oct. 26 to discuss the Sheetz situation. May, of the Pen Fern Oil Co., owns the Texaco station on Rt. 309; Russell Newell, Jr. is the vice-president of Newell Fuel and owner of the New Mart on Rt. 309 across the roadway from the proposed Sheetz location.

May and the Newells claimed the main problem they had with Sheetz opening at that particular location was traffic safety. They said it was known to be a dangerous area and traffic was already congested on Rt. 309; with an eight-pump gas station the volume of traffic would be heavier and there would be more potential for accidents in a spot with an existing history of them. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) is currently in the process of preparing a report on traffic conditions at that section of Rt. 309.

Well over 100 people showed up at the meeting to get more information and to voice their concerns. Chris Evans, a co-owner of Thomas' Market, was particularly vocal. "I have a Sheetz near my Hazleton location. [May] mentioned it being lit up like the Vegas Strip — well, that's exactly what it looks like," he said. He also voiced concerns about traffic — "You're going to have an ungodly amount of traffic at that light," safety — "I've seen friends of mine killed on this highway," and what he perceived as the Sheetz philosophy of business —

"They sell gas and cigarettes as cheap as they can," Evans said. "Outside of that, you're not going to get a bargain. They're going to create a lot of traffic, they're going to sell you cigarettes at state minimum, gas a penny or two below the competition, and charge you an extra dollar for a sandwich."

Sheetz officials say their stores are well-illuminated primarily for practical purposes. "In general,

"This is a typical Sheetz location. The site basically meets the criteria we look for."

Mike LaCesa
Sheetz Director of Real Estate for the Eastern Region

we like the stores to be well-lit because our customers want a safe place late at night," said Mike LaCesa, Sheetz's Director of Real Estate for the Eastern Region. He said Sheetz was open 24 hours and so required bright lighting at night for safety reasons, but most of the lighting would be under the canopy above the pumps and directed downwards. The Sheetz executive offices could not be reached for comment on pricing policies.

"We don't want to get into a pricing issue," May said at the meeting. Instead, he admitted, the ultimate issue is competition. Places like Sheetz and Wal-Mart kill off small businesses, he argued: "Where they are, there is no competition."

Some people at the meeting agreed that it was unfair for major corporations and conglomerates to use the tactics they did; others said that competition was the American way; and some wondered to what extent May and the Newells were more concerned with competition than safety. May countered the latter with the comment that neither he nor the Newells put up a fuss when the Orloski's opened down the road.

One of the major concerns among the audience members was the perceived overdevelopment of the area, particularly the commercial stretch on Rt. 309. "There are no checks and balances on development here in the Back Mountain," one resident complained. Another said he had lived in Dallas Twp. for 50 years and "watched the sprawl — it won't stop until it gets to Harveys Lake."

A man who said he lived near the future Sheetz location wasn't happy with the idea of a gas station being so near his house because of the fumes and the noise. He said he moved from Wilkes-Barre to what he thought was a

"quiet, clean suburb" and didn't want to have to move out because a huge gas station opened practically in his backyard. Another audience member said businesses such as Sheetz only served to generate a greater tax base for commercial properties, and stated "there was a time when you could see an actual tree" on Rt. 309. "We need another gas station like we need another bank," someone in the audience said, to spontaneous applause.

"This is a typical Sheetz location," said LaCesa. "The site basically meets the criteria we look for." He said Sheetz has been and will continue to "go through the same process everyone else must go through" in regards to obtaining the necessary permissions from Kingston Twp. supervisors and PennDOT. "We are permitted use in that type of zone. As usual, we plan on following the law and the zoning process," LaCesa said.

The process hasn't gone far yet. "The township has not yet received their preliminary land-development plan review," Jeff Box, Kingston Township Manager, said of Sheetz. This is the set of engineering plans showing such things as the building location, building size, landscaping plans, ingress/egress, storm-water controls, and so on. An application and the required fees must be sent in to the zoning officer. Then the plans are given to the township engineer and planning commission, who then make a recommendation to the board of supervisors, who ultimately are the ones to make the decision.

Box said Sheetz must make its submission by November 14 in order to make it for the December planning meeting. "The township will give their application and plans the usual thorough review that all plans get when submitted to the township," he said.

And so far, for all the sound and fury about the Sheetz proposal, there have been virtually no formal objections to local authorities. "We received one postcard in opposition," Box said.

LaCesa said Sheetz plans to have its application ready by the deadline, and to attend the December meeting. "We're excited about the prospects for this store," he said. "We've won awards for operating this kind of business."

BIRTHS

NESBITT HOSPITAL

Davis, Steve and Colleen, Dallas, a daughter, Monday, Oct. 2, 2000

Raspen, Brett and Renee, Dallas, a son, Friday, Oct. 6, 2000

Dixon, William and Dawn, Dallas, a daughter, Friday, Oct. 6, 2000

Kasko, Charles and Karen, Shavertown, a daughter, Sunday, Oct. 8, 2000

Krakosky, Kenneth and Jennifer, Shavertown, a daughter, Monday, Oct. 9, 2000

Price, Terry and Beatrice, Dallas, a son, Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2000

Mahoney, Robert and Erica, Sweet Valley, a son, Thursday, Oct. 19, 2000

Shaw, Timothy Jr., and Mary, Sweet Valley, a daughter, Thursday, Oct. 19, 2000

Novitski, Joel and Renee, Shavertown, a son, Thursday, Oct. 19, 2000

Kelly, James and Lisa, Dallas, a daughter, Wednesday, Oct. 25, 2000

GEISINGER

Barre, Bruce and Tamara, Dallas, a son, Saturday, Oct. 7, 2000

Murray, Scott and Sharon, Dallas, a daughter, Monday, Oct. 9, 2000

Slacktish, Michael and Christine, Dallas, a daughter, Sunday, Oct. 15, 2000

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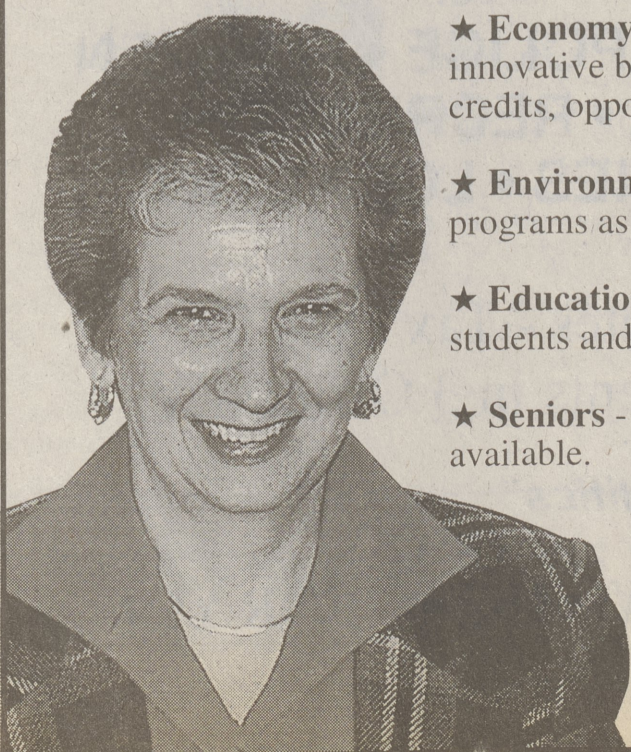
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