

EDITORIALS

Zoning proposals should spur us to pay attention

If you've never bothered to look into the doings in your town, now might be a good time to start. A flurry of requests for zoning changes or variances are before local boards and bodies, most of them dealing with increased commercial space. The largest of the group will be heard Tuesday, Dec. 19 by the Dallas Township Board of Supervisors, at a meeting slated to begin at 7:30 p.m. It deals with a proposal that the entire former Yalick acreage near the intersection of Routes 415 and 118 be zoned B-4, General Business District. Presently, the land is a mix of agricultural, highway business and general business zones.

Changing the zoning to B-4 would allow development of nearly any kind of retail or office space on the land, and would eliminate the need for the developer to come back to the township again and again as prospective tenants express interest. This may be a good thing for the township, or maybe it won't. The surest thing is that a decision of this magnitude should be made after the wishes of the populace, not just the land owner, are taken into account. But it's usually the case that few interested citizens bother even to learn about changes that could affect them deeply, then are only left to grouse about how powerless they feel in the face of big government and big money.

Anyone who lives in Dallas Township would be well-advised to show their face at next week's meeting, and make known their feelings about this plan. And all of us throughout the Back Mountain need to keep a sharp eye out for changes that can affect our quality of life and our pocketbooks.

School survey is good sign

It's quite rare that a public body in Northeastern Pennsylvania goes out of its way to find out what people think of its performance. You need look no further than the Luzerne County Courthouse for a prime example of elected and appointed officials ignoring the concerns of constituents and blithely going about their business without regard for the impact on the people who count on them to provide services efficiently. The Dallas School District appears to be taking a different approach, and is inviting comment about the kind of job it is doing. The school administration wasn't satisfied after sending survey forms home with students, and has now posted a questionnaire on the Internet for use by residents of the district. It's available at www.dallassd.com. Look for the "District Wide" section, then click on "Community Survey."

Given all that is going on in the district now - with three construction and renovation projects either completed or pending - it makes sense for every citizen to make their feelings known. If you don't have Internet access at home, you can stop by the Back Mountain Memorial Library and use the computers there to put in your two cents worth of comment, which are as valuable as anyone else's.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



"You're only as old as you feel," the saying goes, but it doesn't say precisely at what point in the day or week you should check. I've noticed lately there's been a change in my general outlook. It seems when we're young (or at least younger), feeling pretty good is the norm. I recall being able to go out two or three weekend nights in a row, and still feeling fine come Monday morning. Now, a single evening of too much food and drink, and its three days of recovery. In fact, it dawned on me recently that the days I feel really good now stand out because they're the exception, not the rule. When did this happen? I don't remember any warning signs of this change, and I don't like it.

Don't get me wrong, despite an assortment of ailments and conditions, I like to think I'm more of a "30 something" than a "50 something" most of the time. Then I realize that I've been fooling myself - I'm not 30 any more! How do I know, you ask. Well, there's the need for Tylenol (or generic acetaminophen for less money, frugality being another sign of the aging process) after a round of golf. Another symptom is those visits to the bathroom in the middle of the night, which are wholly unnecessary in someone the age I think I am. Eyeglasses? I humor myself with the reminder that some people need correction when they're in grade school, so it's no big deal.

I'm not giving up, you understand. Instead, I've decided to ignore the four or five days a week when I'd just as soon take a nap as go skiing, and focus on the day or two when I'm ready to take on the world, or at least the neighborhood. You'll be able to tell which those are because my eyes will be open more than a crack.

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Orchard Knob Farm, Dallas, after an early winter storm. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

The Senior Side



Jack Hilsher

Whoever said laughter was the best medicine had it right. Laughter stimulates lots of good stuff in humans. Always has. Always will. Before surgery jazz drummer Buddy Rich was asked if he had any allergies. His reply: "Yes, I am allergic to country-western music." I tried that, also before surgery, and the OR staff laughed so hard they cancelled my operation.

No they didn't. Just kidding. But having grown up listening to Hope, Benny, Berle and Allen, I found it easy to laugh. Today it's different - you have to be selective with all those standup comics around. Some of them aren't funny. Just dirty.

A funny guy in the classic style

One exception is Stephen Wright, who writes his own material. He has been called a genius, a "visionary" and once headlined with Robin Williams and Jerry Seinfeld. When George Carlin leaves Wright will inherit his crown.

Slight of build, he stands quietly at the mike, delivering his mostly one-liners in a monotone, almost apologetically. He looks something like the guy next door, and sometimes a sly grin appears briefly, and you know he is having a ball. I can see you need an introduction to Mr Wright and his brand of humor, so a sampler of his observations follows. Read them slowly. Think about what you have just read. Laugh out loud (no internal chuckles please) then become a Stephen Wright fan.

- What happens if you get half scared to death twice?
- I spilled spot remover on my dog, and now he's gone.
- Borrow money from pessimists... they don't expect it back.

- If you think nobody cares about you, try missing a couple of payments.
- Do married people live longer than single people, or does it just SEEM longer?
- Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of a bottle?
- I collect rare photos. I have two. One of Houdini locking his keys in his car, and the other is a rare photo of Norman Rockwell beating up a kid.
- A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- The sooner you fall behind the more time you'll have to catch up.
- Plan to be spontaneous tomorrow.
- 99% of all lawyers give the rest a bad name.
- Half the people you know are below average.
- A fool and his money are soon parting.
- The problem with the gene pool is that there is no lifeguard.
- If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.

- Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of checks.
- Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
- Success always occurs in private and failure in full view.
- Many people quit looking for work when they find a job.
- How come "abbreviated" is such a long word?
- Just think how deep the ocean would be if sponges didn't live there.
- I went for a walk last night and my kids asked me how long I'd be gone. I said, "The whole time."
- I sat beside a beautiful blonde on the bus and she was crying her eyes out. I asked what was wrong and she said she did not bare her soul to strangers. I said, you can tell me and maybe I can help. She said, "I need a man badly and my therapist just told me he couldn't help. My problem is I get turned on only by Jewish cowboys. By the way my name is Kim." I replied, "Nice to meet you Kim. I'm Bucky Goldstein."



70 Years Ago - Dec. 12, 1930 BOYS HURT WHEN TRAIN STRIKES CAR

Milton Doughton, 17, of Shavertown and James Kozemchak, 17, of Dallas, were badly injured when the car they were in was struck by a light engine at the D.L.&W. crossing at Union St. in Kingston. They were taken to Nesbitt West Side Hospital where their condition was called favorable. Witnesses said they heard no sound of an approaching train, and traffic was not stopped at the crossing.

Thirty hopefuls showed up at the Dallas High School gym for practice of the Kingston Township High School boys' basketball team. Coach is Ralph Hazletine, who said seven members of last year's team turned out. A girls' team, under coach Prof. Gordon Gregory, is also practicing.

60 Years Ago - Dec. 13, 1940 ALVA EGGLESTON BAGS EIGHTH STRAIGHT DEER

Alva Eggleston, of Vernon, shot

his eighth deer in as many seasons last week. He also shot a bear earlier this season. He said he liked the meat from both animals. "Anybody that doesn't like bear meat, never tasted it," he said.

Mrs. Ruth Daniels was the featured speaker at a supper meeting for the leaders, executive committee and auxiliary of the Dallas District Girl Scouts. Mrs. George Metz presided at the business session, before Mrs. Daniels spoke about crafts in relation to badge work.

50 Years Ago - Dec. 15, 1950 DALLAS, KINGSTON SCHOOLS PLAN TO JOIN

School directors of Kingston Twp. and Dallas Borough agreed informally to a tentative plan to combine the schools, with the Kingston Township High School serving older students and all elementary grades in the Dallas Borough school. The hope was to begin the new arrangement in September.

The community tree was to be a casualty of a recent storm. A blue spruce that was felled in Arlean Bowman's yard was to be placed near the war memorial, and decorated by Girl Scouts. After decorating, the scouts will be entertained by Mrs. Stanley Davies.

Durelle Scott Jr. succeeded Reed Travis as head of the Advisory Board for the Salvation Army.

40 Years Ago - Dec. 15, 1960 YOUTH HURT WHEN HOME-MADE ROCKET EXPLODES

George Layou, 15, a sophomore at Westmoreland High School, suffered injuries to his hand and forehead in the explosion of a homemade rocket he and his brother, Donald, 11, and William Kingsbury, had made, filling an empty CO2 cartridge with 300 match heads.

For the second consecutive week, fire broke out at an area home. The James Besecker Jr. family on Ryman Rd., Dallas, was driven from their home at about 11 a.m. when Mrs. Georgia Besecker noticed a haze inside the home. A check of the basement revealed thick smoke and an ominous glow. After calling for the fire department, she gathered up her children, James III, John and Laura and tried to take them by car to a neighbor's home, only to end up stuck in a drift left by a large snowstorm the day earlier. Fire crews from throughout the Back Mountain responded, including the James Besecker Jr.

30 Years Ago - Dec. 17, 1970 TREES STOLEN FROM NESBITT FARM

William Casey of Bridgeport, CT, has been charged with stealing 146 Christmas trees from the Nesbitt Tree Farm at Lake Cat-alpa. Police said Casey arranged to buy the trees, which were loaded

onto a rental truck. Casey then said he was short of money, and would return the next day with the money. When workers showed up at the farm that morning, the truck and trees were gone.

The Lake-Lehman school board turned down a request from the Lehman taxpayers association to put the question of a new elementary school on a referendum ballot. Thomas Rupe and Malcolm Heffernan appeared before the board to make the request. School director Dr. Carl Kern pointed out the need for a new school.

20 Years Ago - Dec. 18, 1980 DALLAS CHEERLEADERS WIN CYC TITLE

The Dallas High School cheerleaders, coached by Mrs. Carole Morris and Mrs. Maryann Storz, won the Wyoming Valley Catholic Youth Center Cheerleading Competition. Mrs. Carol Hart, a judge, described the local squad as "dynamic, impressive, incredible and gratifying to watch."

Members of the Dallas American Legion Daddow-Isaacs Post honored Steve Tkach for his 60 years of service as a Legionnaire.

The Back Mountain Cultural Center announced its slate of future events, which included a children's party at Penn State, tobogganing at Eagle's Mere, a dinner theater and spring classes. There was also to be a Backgammon Club, under the tutelage of Jerry Ross, Shavertown.

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