

EDITORIAL

Tom Makowski's good deed

Luzerne County Commissioner Tom Makowski has received more than his share of criticism during his time on the board, and much of it has been well-deserved. But if he follows through on a pledge to vote for reassessment of property next month, he will have taken a positive step that outweighs all the negative accusations. And he can improve his legacy even more by adding a simple requirement to the plan — a mandated reassessment every 10 years.

The expected plan calls for county-wide reassessment to be completed in 2006, more than 40 years after the last time such a task was undertaken. A lot has changed in those four decades, but anyone who lives in a home or occupies a factory that was built before 1965 is still being taxed on that outdated value. And if you've built anything recently, you could be paying more than your fair share simply because you chose to invest in a new home or plant — generally considered to be positive actions, for which you are instead penalized.

Reassessment will level the playing field for taxpayers, and will likely mean a modest rise in taxes for people living in older homes and an offsetting reduction for owners of new ones. The reason it has taken so long to get around to doing it is obvious once you realize that this region has nearly the oldest housing stock in the nation. That means the vast majority of taxpayers — and voters — are getting a break, and they are likely to throw out the bums who raised their bills. Since Makowski has announced that he will not run for reelection, he is in a position to disregard that threat and do the right thing.

But what about the future? Absent a statutory requirement to revalue on a regular basis, it's likely commissioners will duck the issue over the next 20, 30 or 40 years, leading to similar inequities. But if the law requires reassessment every 10 years, future commissioners will be able to claim immunity from blame, and after one or two cycles, no one will think there's any other way to conduct the county's business.

It's a shame this issue has not been addressed at the state level, where it belongs, but two successive lame-duck governors chose to ignore it, leaving the decision up to lower level government entities. Through a series of unforeseen circumstances, a man who seemed among the least likely to champion such a bold move has emerged, and he should be given credit for his willingness to take a responsible, if unpopular, step.

Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



Now that drinking alcohol is not only fashionable, it has been given the stamp of approval by health nags, I can come clean. That used to mean attending AA meetings a few towns from your home and admitting you had a problem. Not anymore; now it means boring dinner guests with a listing of all the exotic wines and cocktails you've consumed while traveling to posh resorts and the positive result on your cholesterol readings.

This development could have both heartening and discouraging consequences for those of us who have been imbibing without guilt ever since the "French paradox" was first postulated. If you aren't familiar with that, here's a brief recap: The French diet is composed primarily of all the foods we've been warned not to consume in portions larger than a thimble, such as cheese, goose liver and assorted animal parts you'd rather not know the origin of. Yet the French have measurably lower rates of heart disease, stroke and other nasty ailments than Americans, who have been obsessed — at least in television commercials — with weight control and exercise. This seeming conundrum is explained by French fondness for another consumable, wine, especially of the red varieties. Welch's is now trying to claim the benefit is in the grapes, but don't let them spoil your fun.

The latest research suggests that moderate and consistent intake of alcohol, whether in a glass of \$200 Bordeaux or a couple of cans of Old Milwaukee, can do more to prevent heart disease than giving up smoking or dieting until you look like Twiggy. This is good news for many American drinkers, since so much alcohol is consumed by overweight smokers sitting on their behinds on a couch or at sports bars. It's also welcome for people like me, who are on an eternal quest to get the best booze for the buck, particularly in wines. This is an easier task in states that trust private citizens to sell the stuff, resulting in wider selections and better prices, but that's a subject for another column. For now, I'm happy that my cheap Dago red offers the same health benefits as a passion fruit martini made with Purple Martin vodka, or some similarly overpriced and prettified concoction.

Letters welcome

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, as space, subject matter and relevance allow.

Send letters to:

The Dallas Post, 607 Main Rd., Dallas PA 18612

Letters also may be sent by e-mail to dallaspost@leader.net

In either instance, please include a daytime telephone number for verification of the author.

The Dallas Post

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

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Different steps for different folks. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.



Carol King

Auction committee meeting: Planning for the 2003 Library Auction, July 10-13, will continue at the meeting to be held Thursday, January 30, at 7 p.m. in the Community Room at the library. Anyone interested in serving on an auction committee is cordially invited to attend.

Friends meeting: The Friends of the Library will hold their next meeting Friday, January 31, at 1 p.m. in the Community Room.

Library activities for every age and interest

The major topic of discussion will be preparation for the Friends' 15th Annual "Luncheon with a Special Author", to be held on Thursday, May 1, 2003. Our author will be Richard Klein, Cornell University professor and author. Mark your calendars!

If you would like to help the library through volunteer work, you are welcome to attend the meeting, whether you are a long-time resident or a newcomer in the community. Call the library, 675-1182, or the chairman of the Friends, Jill Kryston, at 696-3209, for further information.

Story hours: There are still a few places left in the story hour groups for 3-5-year-olds. Call the children's library, 675-1182,

to make inquiries and to register your child. The story hours start next week.

Programs for young adults: Several programs are planned at the library in the coming youths for young adults, ages 12 to 18. The first will be a "Pizza, Pop, and POWER Library" presentation on Saturday, February 8, from 1 to 3 p.m. Brian Fulton, head of circulation at the library, will discuss several of the databases available online in the POWER Library, a valuable study tool for middle and high school students. It gives access to thousands of full-text periodicals, newspapers, and a major encyclopedia, plus photographs, pictures, and charts. Materials can be printed out at the library,

or e-mailed directly to the student's computer at home.

Pizza and soda will be served. There is no charge for this program, but registration is required. Call the library at 675-1182, or come in and check out the new YA section and get a special Young Adults library card.

Slightly Read Bookstore: The super sale on children's books continues in the bookstore.

Renewing books: Did you know that you can renew books over the phone, at 675-1182, or on the library's website, www.backmountainlibrary.org? Either way, you'll need the barcode number on the back of your library card.

Arbor Day Foundation offers free trees for the asking

Ten free flowering trees will be given to each person who joins The National Arbor Day Foundation during January 2003.

The ten trees are two White Flowering Dogwoods, two Flowering Crabapples, two Goldenrain trees, two Washington Hawthorns, and two American

Redbuds.

The trees were selected for planting in large or small spaces together will produce a combination of pink, white, and yellow flowers. In addition they provide winter berries and nesting sites for songbirds.

The trees will be shipped postpaid at the right time for

planting between February 1 and May 31 with enclosed planting instructions. The six to twelve inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of charge.

Members also receive a subscription to the Foundation's bimonthly publication, Arbor Day, and The Tree book with in-

formation about tree planting and care.

To become a member of the Foundation and to receive the free trees, send a \$10 contribution to Ten Free Flowering Trees, National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410, by January 31.



70 Years Ago - February 3, 1933

CASTLE INN HAS NEW MANAGEMENT

Announcement was made that Castle Inn has been leased to Gene Gabriel of Bear Creek for a long term. Mr. Gabriel announced that the interior of the Inn will be completely renovated and redecorated.

Boy Scouts from the Dallas district, including troops from Jackson, Dallas, Shavertown, Trucksville and Idetown attended the West Side district meeting in Kingston. Dallas had the top honors in the knot tying contests.

Some of the movies that played at the Himmler Theatre were: "Prosperity" with Marie Dressler, Polly Moran; "Kongo" with Walter Huston; "He Learned About Women" with Stuart Erwin.

60 Years Ago - January 29, 1943

DALLAS BOARD IS ORDERED TO MAKE DRASTIC CUT IN B AND C RATIONS

OPA ordered the Dallas War Price and Rationing Board to review all previously issued B and

C rations. "All rations to non-eligible drivers." the order said "must be revoked." H. Austin Snyder, of the gasoline rationing panel of the board, said that the order would require long tedious hours on the part of the Board to carefully review more than 1,500 B and C rations issued in this area.

Serving a little less than a week of his appointment as leader of Dallas High School Band, Smith has been called into United States Army service. Smith had previously been rejected by his draft board.

Arthur Gay & Son, Dallas, have recently been granted membership in the largest purebred dairy cattle organization in the world, The Holstein-Friesian Association of America.

50 Years Ago - January 30, 1953

WATER COMPANY LOCATES BREAK IN LARGE MAIN

A break in one of the large mains supplying the higher sections of Dallas Borough with water caused Dallas Water Company to call out all of its available men, as well as the maintenance crew, from its Tunkhannock associate, to find the leak which was allowing thousands of gallons of water to go to waste.

Ralph Dixon, owner of Dixori's Super Market, purchased Bowman's Early American Restaurant from Arlean T. Bowman.

Eight were dropped from the Board of Directors of Luzerne County Humane Association at a stormy annual meeting during which the rights of several members to vote were challenged for

tardy payment of dues.

40 Years Ago - January 31, 1963

BOYS PAROLED IN FRANKLIN "DELINQUENCY"

Teenage members of a local group involved in several Franklin Township farm thefts, were sentenced in Juvenile Court, and a Carverton boy 18, was convicted of larceny before Justice of the Peace George Prater for stripping a truck.

Dr. Henry M. Laing Fire Company received its first new chief in five years as Al Shaffer handed in his title for lack of time, and one of the largest assemblings of firemen this year, elected Danny Richards unanimously.

Toll-free calling between Dallas and Wilkes-Barre-Kingston will become effective soon. Question of establishing toll-free service between these communities was affirmatively, decided by the majority of Dallas' 3885 subscribers in a poll conducted under supervision of the Public Utility Commission.

30 Years Ago - February 1, 1973

BLUE LAWS HALT SALES AT TRUCKSVILLE STORE

The Kingston Township Board of Supervisors notified Unclaimed Freight, Carverton Road, Trucksville by registered letter that it could no longer remain open for sales on Sundays according to Pennsylvania Blue laws.

A two-story wooden cottage at Harveys Lake, was destroyed by

fire. The cottage owned by Eli Fleisher of Kingston, was termed a "total loss" by one of the firemen.

A retired Senior Citizens Volunteer Program (RSVP) has been approved for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties. It offers retired people over 60 new and varied opportunities to serve their community in a meaningful way.

20 Years Ago - February 2, 1983

RESIDENTS RESPOND TO MYERS APPOINTMENT

Richard Myers was named to the position by the Luzerne county court en banc at the end of the 45-day time period specified by law to fill a vacancy, resulting from the death of Joseph Ruotolo. A survey of at least half-dozen residents indicates that Harveys Lake Borough taxpayers believe Myers is well-qualified, but some thought Ruotolo's widow should have been appointed for the position.

Following an intensive study of the relative advantages and disadvantages of a seven period academic day, administration of the Lake-Lehman Junior-Senior High School had concluded that continuing with the present eight period day will best serve needs of the total school program.

Some of the items you could get at Daring's Market were: strip loins lb., \$2.49; tenderloins, lb., \$1.49; ground chuck lb., \$1.39; oranges 15/\$1; lettuce 2/\$89¢; bananas 3 lbs., 89¢; yams 5 lbs., 89¢.

Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news each week? A: Only in The Dallas Post.