

EDITORIAL

# 'Greening up' will be more than worth the effort

Wow! Anyone who subscribed to the notion that there's no practical way to pull the Back Mountain back from the unwelcome prospect of becoming just another garish commercial strip should have been in the audience at the last meeting of the "Our Dallas — Today and Tomorrow" visioning project. There, Vincent Cotrone, who holds the unlikely title of urban forester with the Penn State Extension Service, presented a visual display of just how attractive bland and bleak parking lots and commercial districts can become.

Cotrone used the magic of computer technology to demonstrate how the simple addition of greenery and the application of regulations governing the size and placement of signs could transform the appearance of otherwise ordinary and unappealing streetscapes. You had to be there to experience the effect these changes have on mood and perception — the sense of relief and relaxation that swept over the audience when a few trees were added to a bare expanse of asphalt, or towering signs were replaced with ones on a more human scale.

It's easier, of course, to make these changes on a computer image than on actual structures and properties in which owners have invested their hard-earned money. But we shouldn't think it will be impossible, as Cotrone's real-life examples proved. It will take time and concerted effort, but the result will be worth it when our communities present an image that is not only attractive to potential customers but reflective of the quality of life we treasure in this region.

## Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



The second public tragedy in the United States space shuttle program has renewed debate over whether manned space flight is advisable, or even necessary. On the face of it, naysayers seem to make sense. Much of the scientific work now being conducted could be done by robots, or simply by setting up experiments on earth, firing them upwards in a rocket and bringing them back home. And really, how vital to our lives is all this stuff anyway? Civilization advanced nicely for thousands of years without space exploration, and maybe all the billions in tax money being spent on it could be put to better uses, such as finding cures for devastating diseases or shoring up Social Security.

Many of us feel those arguments miss the point and underestimate the value of this most adventurous enterprise. But the way the space program has been handled in recent years has led to its present precarious status as an entertaining sideshow to the grinding presence of tragedy and conflict among the inhabitants of this planet. Instead of providing meaningful breakthroughs in science or exploration, the shuttle program has the image of a drab freight train, carrying supplies and crew back and forth to a space station that has no apparent goal other than to prove it can hang in the void. This is no doubt an unduly harsh assessment, but it reflects the image of the space program in many minds today.

It wasn't always this way. Spurred by the Soviet Union's success in launching the first object ever to escape the grasp of earth's gravity and the friction of its atmosphere, the U.S. made a commitment to be the leader in space exploration, making good on President Kennedy's pledge — considered outrageous by many — to land a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s. Anyone who was old enough to understand what was occurring is still moved by the image of the lunar module setting down on the barren surface, and Neil Armstrong's words as he set foot on the formerly mysterious sphere: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." If you or your children haven't seen the dramatic footage, pay a visit to the Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. for a truly magical experience.

But Apollo and other programs did more than make entertaining television, they inspired a generation of Americans to study science and engineering, and in the process create products and make discoveries that improved everyday life. Even more important, we dared to dream of a brilliant future filled with challenge and discovery, not about building bigger bombs or driving bigger cars, but about stretching the limits of human existence, "pushing the envelope," to use a phrase that was coined in the aviation industry of the time. And we were successful, but at a cost measured not only in dollars but in the now 24 human lives lost among the United States astronaut corps.

President Bush paid great tribute to the last seven of that group when he said, "Mankind is led into the darkness beyond our world by the inspiration of discovery and the longing to understand. Our journey into space will go on."

Humans have been transfixed by the mysteries that lie in the heavens since time immemorial. Only in the last few decades have we been able to do more than speculate on what is really there and how it affects our lives. We cannot let unpleasant, but not unexpected, accidents stop us now. But we can refocus our efforts so the dividends better reflect the risks. "Aim high," has always been a valuable piece of advice. "Aim higher" might be a better slogan for the space program right now.



Out of season. Machell Avenue, Dallas. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

## LETTERS

### Dallas swimmers express thanks for pool facility, support

*Editor's note: The following letter was read at the February 3 meeting of the Dallas School Board. The writers asked that it be shared with the community.*

Superintendent Griffiths, President Ashbridge, and Members of the Dallas School Board:

On behalf of the Dallas Swimming and Diving Teams, comprised of forty-three swimmers and divers, we would like to thank you for providing us with a facility that we are so very proud of and let you know how appreciative we are that our whole team is able to practice at the same place and time, which was never before an option.

After years of travel with only our families for fan support, it has been so exciting to see

teachers, friends and neighbors attending our meets. We look back on years past and realize now how difficult it was for the swimmers, divers, parents and coaches to sustain a team.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Mrs. Mary Baker and the other parents and students who went before the Dallas School Board nine years ago requesting the creation of a swimming and diving program in this district. We also would like to thank past and present board members who supported their requests, hired great coaches, paid other facilities for us to have practices and meets, and envisioned providing the Back Mountain residents and the students of Dallas a facility that can be utilized by everyone.

Most importantly we'd like to

thank Dr. Griffiths, our Superintendent. We know that you have always been one of the staunchest supporters of building this pool. We are grateful for all your hard work and foresight in making the dream a reality.

We would also like to publicly thank Coach Matt Stretanski, Coach Jill McGinley and the numerous diving coaches for steadfastly supporting a program that, at times, was difficult to maintain. Through their commitment, hard work, and caring, they have given us valuable tools as athletes and individuals that will be with us for the rest of our lives.

In conclusion, I would like to share with you a story from my freshman year. Five years ago, a beautiful wooden record board was built by Mr. Robert Duris

and is now located in the high school near the cafeteria. After a basketball game a few years ago, the opposing team's cheerleaders were looking at the record board and commenting on how neat it was and how they wished that they also had a pool. I smiled to myself and secretly wished that someday their thoughts would become a reality. As talk of a pool at Dallas began circulating, never did my teammates, nor I, which includes fifteen seniors from the Class of 2003, think that they would have a chance to have a pool to call their "home." We thank you for making that dream come true.

Captains and members of the Dallas Swimming teams

### Dallas School District thanks donors for family assistance

Dear Editor,

The Dallas School District would like to thank The Sons of the American Legion for their generous donation to the Dallas Community Help Fund. The fund assists families in the district over the holiday season with

food and other items. The Sons of the American Legion, along with church groups, Dallas families, school staff members and students, and individual donations, enabled the district fund to help Back Mountain families have a joyous holiday.

Thank you, once again, to all the members

of the American Legion and everyone who helped make the holidays special for our Dallas Families.

Norm Swithers  
Dallas



70 Years Ago - February 10, 1933

#### TOWNSHIP TAXPAYERS MOVE TO FORM MOVEMENT FOR REDUCTION OF TAXES

Ways and means of forming an organization to work for the reduction of taxes began when sixty citizens gathered in the Dallas Township High School to hear A. J. Barber, president of greater realstate board discuss the rising costs of government and constantly increasing tax burden.

The first of the new Ford V-8 cylinder, 112 inch wheelbase motor cars will be displayed in the showrooms of J. F. Besecker Company, Ford dealer at Lake street.

Kingston Township forced Dallas basketball team into an extra period in the game but lost 12-19. By winning, Dallas took undisputed position of first place in the Bi-County high school league.

Only Yesterday is compiled from the back issue files of The Dallas Post.

60 Years Ago - February 5, 1943

#### LEHMAN BOARD HARD PUT TO FILL VACANCIES

Hounded by a shortage of teachers since the opening of the school term, Lehman Township School Board was able to fill only one of three vacancies at its meeting.

Residents of the Borough heard for the first time the new siren which will be installed at the Observation Post on Parrish Heights. The siren was tested by Paul Shaver and James Besecker.

A new casualty station in the Borough High School building was set up with a trained staff of physicians and nurses and plenty of supplies and equipment.

50 Years Ago - February 6, 1953

#### RESPONSE TO DR. SCHOOLEY BLOOD DONOR DAY BREAKS RECORD WITH 141

Dr. Schooley Blood Donor Day at Dallas Borough School gymnasium broke the record for Back Mountain donations with 141 registered and at least forty prospective donors.

Dallas Borough Council approved payment of \$1,500 legal fees to Atty. Arthur James for work involved in Natona Mills annexation proceedings.

A boiler blew up in the cellar of Guyette's television headquarters in Trucksville, releasing clouds of steam and torrents of

boiling water. The safety valve had clogged.

40 Years Ago - February 7, 1963

#### SPEARHEAD PLAN FOR AREA COMMUNITY CENTER

Dallas Women's Club, senior and junior divisions, spearheaded a proposal for a community billing to serve all organizations in the Back Mountain, meeting with representatives from service club groups at Irem Temple Country Club.

Bids will be resolicited for the construction of the new Dallas-Luzerne Highway. Factors acting as a deterrent to bidding, will be maintenance of traffic flow, proximity of railroad tracks to roadbed, proximity of a thirty-six inch water main, and problem of disposing of excavated soil and rock.

John T. Callahan was promoted from salesman to sales manager of Whitesell Brothers Building Supplies, Dallas.

30 Years Ago - February 8, 1973

#### TOWNSHIP STUDY COMMISSION VOTES TO DRAFT NEW CHARTER

Five members of the seven-man Study Commission of Kingston Township met and voted unanimously to study and draft a charter for Kingston township. The action now extends the study period to 12 months instead of nine.

James G. Dick, Dallas, had

been named chairman of the board of trustees at College Misericordia. Mr. Dick succeeds Sister Mary Honora Kroger, RSM, who served as chairman of the board since 1970.

A 34-minute black-out in the Back Mountain area was the indirect result of an automobile accident. The auto, struck a pole carrying a 66,000-volt line on Conyngham Avenue, was sheared off at the base.

20 Years Ago - February 9, 1983

#### LOCAL TRUCK DRIVERS SUPPORT SHUTDOWN-BUT NOT VIOLENCE

A few of the local independent truck drivers opted to continue driving, explaining that they have no choice, that they need the income to pay off their rigs and to support their families. Others, however, say they are in sympathy with the strike, in which independent truckers are striking in protest of the new federal tax law will cost the typical tractor-trailer owner an estimated \$5,277 a year.

Northeastern Pennsylvania Region IUX Symphonic Band presented a public concert at Dallas Senior High School. Personnel included 160 senior high musicians from 40 area schools.

Some of the items you could get at Daring's Market were: hams, 1 lb. \$1.99; chicken legs, 1 lb. 59¢; chuck steaks, 1 lb. \$1.89; ground beef, 1 lb. \$1.09; broccoli, 69¢; swiss cheese, 1 lb. \$2.59.

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