

EDITORIAL

## Dallas has classroom planning backwards

Parents are wise to demand more participation as Dallas School District officials ponder "realignment" of the Dallas and Wycallis elementary schools. The fact that a task force has been looking into the issue since October was news to most people when it was addressed at the last meeting of the school board.

The 25-person task force, composed of parents, teachers and others, has been examining both the space requirements in the district and the possible expansion of kindergarten to full-day from half-day. Those sound like noble and necessary topics, but wary outsiders may wonder why only a select few have been asked to express their opinions about the schools' direction. It would seem far more inclusive to solicit comment from the widest possible spectrum of people before narrowing down the options that will affect thousands of children over the next few years.

It doesn't take a particularly sharp memory to recall the way the district handled the placement of Wycallis Elementary before it was built. Several options were considered, including maintaining the old Westmoreland Elementary School before a 5-4 vote settled on a building at the main school campus. That vote was taken even though the topic was not listed on the meeting agenda in March of 1997, and it occurred at 10:30 p.m., when most of the audience had left.

The current setup may be the most efficient from a management standpoint, but many people remain convinced that retention of the Trucksville neighborhood school would have been a better choice. It's too late to revisit that question, but it's not too soon for the administration to open the current questions to a wider audience of concerned and affected parents.

## Major lapse, minor punishment

After embarrassing Harveys Lake Borough over the past several weeks, Jeffrey Butler has stepped down from his position as police chief. Given that five borough officers have now been identified as lacking state-required certification, one might think he would be asked to leave the force. Instead, he's simply been demoted, accepting a patrolman's job at just \$1,000 a year less than the chief position.

This hardly seems sufficient punishment for jeopardizing police work in the borough for several years. Harveys Lake will likely have to refile charges resulting from some arrests made by the officers, which will at the least be an unplanned expense. But think what position the borough could have been in if one of them was involved in an incident that caused serious harm to life or property. The borough — and Butler — would have been liable for untold damages.

Harveys Lake residents should expect that such a serious breach of conduct would elicit more than this slap on the wrist.

### Publisher's Notebook

Ron Bartizek



State Representative Steve Barrar has provided yet another reason why Pennsylvania should get out of the business of selling liquor. The distinguished gentleman, a Republican from Delaware County, has suggested that state stores stop selling French wine and liquors, because the French government hasn't shown an acceptable level of support for President Bush's plan to invade Iraq and rid the world of Saddam Hussein. In his own tactful manner, which he must have learned at the feet of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Barrar rails against France's lack of gratitude for our saving it during World War II, and the subsequent 60 years of protection afforded by America's strength. It never seems to occur to the good representative that perhaps people who have seen their cities, villages and homes evaporate in the cloud left by huge bombs might have a different perspective on war than we, who have been protected by hundreds of miles of ocean off each coast.

Pennsylvania is the largest purchaser of wine and spirits in the nation, spending \$625 million on booze in 2002, then reselling it for \$1.2 billion. That 92 percent markup surely leaves private liquor store owners in other states drooling as if they've had a few too many sips of Bordeaux, but it's all in the name of protecting us from ourselves, as the virtuous government sees to it that 10-year-olds aren't able to buy hooch from every immoral store proprietor. Still, in their infinite wisdom — as well as their desire to make a buck — state officials have decided to open certain stores on Sundays to serve citizens who can't seem to make it to the packy during the week.

If Pennsylvanians are so upset by the French position on Iraq, I'm sure they are perfectly capable of carrying out their own boycott of products from that nation. It would seem Rep. Barrar and his colleagues have enough to do trying to guide the state through perilous economic and security conditions without wasting time on silly crusades that seem more likely to call attention to their Don Quixote-like leanings than to any meaningful result.



Snowy tree-o. West Cener Hill Road, Dallas. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

## Let's get 'serious' about use of former watershed land

Editor,  
About a week ago, Phil the Groundhog emerged and predicted six more weeks of winter. About the same time, Theta Land Corporation emerged from its hole preceded by full-page color ads offering land for sale. For those who may have been hibernating with Phil, Theta is the corporate entity that holds the former PG Energy watershed lands, sold by our dear friends at Southern Union to a secret buyer(s).

Since Theta wants serious inquiries only, then let's be serious. Even a casual glance at the map indicates that many of these parcels surround bodies of water — and for good reason. They were purchased and protected by our former water utilities to ensure that Lackawanna

and Luzerne County residents would always have a plentiful and safe water supply. In many cases, the water bodies on this map are reservoirs that supply your water. What may not be evident is that the land also contains natural drainage basins that empty into the many streams, part of an elaborate system of aquifers in Northeast Pennsylvania.

So the serious should inquire, "Why would Theta want to do something so potentially harmful and detrimental to so many people?" Maybe Theta thinks this is just good business or maybe this is just pure greed on the part of the secret owners. With so much at stake, they should come forward and explain themselves.

We don't need Colin Powell or

a United Nations resolution for this one. Of the 40,000 acres originally held by Theta, approximately 28,000 acres are designated as watershed. This acreage has been clearly defined. Any purchase or sale of land from this designated watershed area without the benefit of permanent protection should be condemned. Given the vast range of this land, it is likely that a part of your back yard is now for sale.

Recently it was announced that the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and Suburban Water Company of Columbia and Northumberland counties set aside 9,000 acres of woodland and watershed as "a proud legacy" for future generations. We should now be inquiring why we

are not doing the same. If Northeastern Pennsylvania ever hopes to attract the high-end, high tech companies that will secure our future and allow our children to remain in the area, then we must start with the basics. We must not sell off our heritage like some many spec lots in another tract development with cute name.

The serious inquiries must begin now. Let's ask our county, state and federal officials to prevent this wholesale destruction of our heritage. There is far too much at stake. Remember, serious inquiries only!

Paul Niezgodza  
Jackson Township  
President,  
Defend Our Watershed!

## Girl Scout 'Cookie Shops' open through March 15

The Girl Scouts of Penn's Woods Council will open troop "Cookie Shops" now through March 15 in communities throughout the Council area.

Net proceeds earned by Cookie Shops and the general Girl Scout Cookie sale remain within the

Council area to support local Girl Scout activities like camping, outdoor education, science workshops, travel, community service, sports clinics and more.

All eight types of Girl Scout Cookies are available at Cookie Shops. Cookies are \$3 per box.

For more Cookie Shop information, log onto the Girl Scouts of Penn's Woods Council website at [www.pennswoodsgirlscouts.org](http://www.pennswoodsgirlscouts.org) and click on "COOKIES," or call the toll free Cookie Hotline at 1-888-6KOOKIE.

Cookie Shop locations in the

Back Mountain:  
March 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. — Back Mt Feed & Seed, Dallas.  
March 1, 8, 15: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. — CVS, Dallas.  
March 1, 10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; March 23, 9 a.m.-? — Mountain Fresh Market, Pikes Creek.



70 Years Ago - February 24, 1933

### NO SOLUTION FOR MYSTERY EXPLOSIONS

Investigation throughout the area failed to uncover any explanation for the three deep concussions which startled Dallas and vicinity. Though the detonation was heard in Shavertown and Dallas, reports were received that resident in Wyoming valley had heard the mysterious noises.

Some of the items you could get at the American Stores Co. were: macaroni or spaghetti pkg. 5¢; Maxwell House coffee 1 lb. 33¢; dozen eggs 27¢; hot cross buns doz. 10¢; honey, jar 10¢.

Movies that played at the Himmler Theatre: Call Her Savage with Clara Bow; Two Against The World with Constance Bennett; Wild Horse Mesa with Randolph Scott; The Devil Is Driving with Edmund Lowe and Dickie Moore.

60 Years Ago - February 19, 1943

### STRIKE CLOSES ARMOUR LEATHER PLANT AT NOXEN

Demanding restoration of a guaranteed 40-hour minimum work week recently curtailed

because of a shortage of hides, 255 employees, members of the Fur & Leather Workers' Union, went on strike at the Armour Leather Company Plant in Noxen.

Sgt. William Glen Knecht, has been appointed a Fight Officer in the Army Air Forces. He joins the armed forces' newest air arm, glider transport, as a pilot.

Dallas Borough parents whose children are absent from school for more than three days without a legal excuse and who have been notified in accordance with Section 1428 of the School Code of such absences will be arrested on the next day those pupils are absent. This action was approved hen absences among the pupils were seriously interfering with school program and undermining the morale of other students.

50 Years Ago - February 20, 1953

### BEEF SALES ZOOM AS HOUSEWIVES FILL FREEZERS AT LOWERED PRICES

Housewives of the Back Mountain area took full advantage of lowered beef prices with sales zooming to double their usual volume. It all started when steaks took a nose dive, from a record 99¢ and \$1.09 a pound to 89¢.

Edith Adams, Trucksville, opened in the new musical comedy, "Wonderful Town" at the Winter Garden Theatre on Broadway. She was also named Miss Television of 1951 and played for a year with Ernie Kovacs on his television show.

Bids which were to have been

opened for the construction of a new six-room \$200,000 Elementary School at Sweet Valley were returned to contractors for rebidding on altered specifications.

40 Years Ago - February 21, 1963

### CAPACITY CROWD ATTENDS DINNER FOR FATHER KANE

Among a large gathering of friends, parishioners, business and civic leaders, Rev. Francis A. Kane, rector of Gate of Heaven R. C. Church, and Dean of Gate of Heaven School, received the Community service Award for 1963.

Back Mountain police and firemen, along with a few borough and township officials, watched collisions of cars doing twenty, thirty and forty miles an hour. The cars involved were all test cars, electronically controlled and subject of a film entitled "Broken Glass." This was one of two films on safety.

Howard Whitesell, President of Whitesell Brothers Building Supplies Inc., Dallas was elected to the Board of Directors of Middle Atlantic Lumbermen Association, Philadelphia.

30 Years Ago - February 22, 1973

### SCHALM BLAMES FLOOD FOR BRANDYWINE DELAYS

Blaming "flood-related expenses we didn't expect" for a host of delays at his Brandywine housing complex in Dallas Township, Paul J. Schalm III told the Post that a much-touted hook-up to the Dallas Area Municipal Authority's sewer

lines is imminent. Mr. Schalm insists that rumor mills "have been working overtime to discredit him.

A group of Luzerne County citizens who have been waiting to have connections made to Pennsylvania Gas & Water Co. gas lines met again in Dallas to formalize plans to initiate court action against the utility. The group represented about 50 households.

Kingston Township Board of Supervisors were disappointed by the lack of replies from Back Mountain municipalities on a letter recommending that an overnight lock-up be established in this area.

20 Years Ago - February 23, 1983

### DALLAS SCHOOL BUILDINGS TOO EXPENSIVE

Back Mountain Elementary Wrestling Club, had to move their tournaments to West Side Vo-Tech because the custodial fees were too expensive. According to John Gabriel, supervisor of maintenance and grounds, the custodians received overtime wages for weekends and were paid \$7.90 per hour for every hour they were on duty.

Officials of Kingston Township reminded area candidates for elected office that Kingston Township has a political sign ordinance which prohibits the erection of signs before April 17.

George Sieltz, Lake-Lehman junior, successfully completed auditions for the Region IV Music festival. Sieltz auditioned the tenor voice spot during District IX festival.

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