

Left-turn ban onto 309 under consideration

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — Drivers entering Route 309 could be turning in the right direction — and only the right — if the supervisors follow through on a vote taken Wednesday night that would prohibit left turns "on all non-signal roadways" entering the highway in the township.

Chief James Balavage said last week that more than 40 accidents had occurred in the last eight years along a .35 mile span of the highway near the intersection with South Main Street. In the latest accident, two men were killed December 4 when the minivan they were riding in was stuck by a tractor-trailer.

"We've had several people killed in that area," said Paul Sabol, chairman of the supervisors. In addition to the latest fatalities, two women died as the result of an accident near Rave's Nursery just a year ago.

During the December 8 supervisors work session, Balavage at first recommended that South Main be made one-way coming off the highway, so that no vehicles could enter Route 309 there. When no con-

sensus could be reached on exactly how far up South Main the restriction would extend, the discussion turned to banning left turns, at first at the South Main and Holcomb Road intersections.

"A no left turn would be the only compromise to make," Balavage said.

While the township has the authority to outlaw left turns from its streets, PENNDOT would have to apply the restriction to businesses, as a condition of holding a highway occupancy permit.

At one time, PENNDOT officials had suggested a medial barrier be installed from the area of Harris Hill Road to Center Street. Balavage urged the supervisors not to wait for that to happen. "Five fatalities in less than 12 months is really bad."

Balavage said in the long run, banning left turns and installing "jug handles" would be the best way to stop the run of serious accidents. He pointed to three locations that are suitable: northbound at Center Street, incorporating the present North Main Street; northbound at South Main Street; and southbound where South



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Flowers marked the intersection of Route 309 and S. Main Street in Shavertown, where two men were killed in a collision last week. The supervisors have voted to investigate whether left turns can be banned from streets entering 309.

Main loops in front of the former Yesterday's restaurant.

The supervisors also voted Wednesday to request a traffic study to determine if the present 45 mph zone between Cen-

ter Street and Hillside Road can be qualified as an urban district. If it could, the speed limit could be reduced to 35 mph, as it is through Dallas.

Tax

(continued from page 1)

the fairness of a uniform charge, regardless of the size of the business, and warned that it would drive small operations out of the township.

"You're going to have empty storefronts," Pocono said.

Several speakers noted fairness, and raising sufficient revenue to address the township's budget crunch. "Everybody should be taxed equally," said Susan Collini, who operates Age of Innocence and owns three buildings in the township.

The final touches were put on a revised plan that includes a 10-mill property tax but no tax on businesses, at nearly 11 p.m. Wednesday night.

The property tax came as a surprise to outgoing supervisor John Versari. "I thought we voted that down last night," he said when Carl Goodwin

moved to amend the just-passed budget by adding the tax.

But Goodwin explained that at Tuesday night's special meeting, a specific tax of 12 mills had been defeated. After brief discussion, only Versari voted against considering a property levy.

It was after 10 p.m., and half the earlier audience of about 40 people had left when Goodwin moved to adopt a specific millage rate. Solicitor Ben Jones III explained that the second-class township code sets a maximum of 14 mills. Jones said during an earlier break that he had drawn up a "plain vanilla" ordinance for the tax based on those existing in other municipalities.

Township manager Eddie O'Neill said the maximum rate would result in a tax bill of \$78.50 for the average property. A mill is \$1 for each \$1000 of assessed valuation. Older homes are generally assigned

much lower values than newer ones.

It took three attempts to reach agreement on a rate. Goodwin first proposed 5 mills, which was the rate in 1993, the last year before the township dropped a property tax. When no second was offered, Paul Sabol, chairman, proposed the maximum 14 mills, which he said would raise \$266,539, enough to more than wipe out a projected deficit.

"We've got a big hole to get out of," he said. "We're going to have to pay it like anyone else." Again no second was forthcoming.

Finally, Chris Yankovich moved for a 10-mill tax rate. "I know the township will need this tax," he said, even though he said he doesn't like paying taxes any more than anyone else. At that rate, the township would gain a projected \$192,500.

The motion passed by a 3-2 margin, with Neil Allen and

Versari voting against. Allen said he preferred a lower rate combined with using some savings to attack the deficit over more than one year.

Incoming supervisor Jeffrey Box, who has in the past pledged to reopen the budget once he and Dave Jenkins are seated in January, said Thursday that he was unsure whether the property tax was appropriate.

"At every meeting there are new numbers provided," he said. "It is one confusing mess."

"The township does need additional revenue," Box said, and he will not support cuts in personnel, services or programs. At this point, he wants to see actual year-end figures for 2003 before charting a course of action.

The new budget will now be advertised and will be available for public inspection at least 10 days prior to the December 30 meeting.

At 11 p.m., board restricts burning

At nearly 11 p.m., after the budget and property tax had been passed and the crowd had thinned out, supervisor Carl Goodwin offered a surprise motion to open the Kingston Township Supervisors meeting for new business. After a second by Neil Allen, the motion passed 4-1, with Chris Yankovich opposed. "I know what's coming," he said.

That was a subsequent motion to modify a 1999 ordinance on fire control so as to restrict open burning, with only three exceptions: cooking food, for training, and burning

cleared land, but only in agricultural zones.

The motion drew an immediate rebuke from Don Wright. "You're doing something very underhanded," he said, noting the late hour and small audience.

At the start of the meeting, Paul Shaver suggested that restrictions on burning garbage and recyclables were appropriate, but burning should not be banned. "It's handy for a lot of people," he said.

Once the motion was made, supervisor Chris Yankovich spoke out. "I sure hope the two

new supervisors coming in will take a serious look at this and change it back to what it should be."

Jeffrey Box, one of the supervisors who will be seated in January, said Thursday that bringing up the issue so late was improper. "What occurred last night was an insult to democracy," he said.

Box said he favors severe restrictions, but there should be provision for homeowners to burn yard waste, perhaps at specified times of the year and with a permit.

—Ronald Bartizek



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Rosario Shaver spoke out at last week's meeting of the Kingston Township supervisors against a ban on open burning. Earlier this year she presented the board with a petition signed by 350 people opposed to a ban.

Minivan, rig wreck claims two lives

KINGSTON TWP. — Two men were killed in a crash December 4 on Route 309 at the intersection with South Main Street.

Richard Romanosky, 49, of Larksville, and Charles Noon, 49, of Plymouth, died after the silver Chevy minivan they were traveling in collided with a tractor-trailer at about 8:30 p.m., according to Sgt. Michael Moravec.

"The van pulled out of South Main Street in order to proceed south on route 309," said Police Chief James Balavage. The tractor-trailer was northbound and the crash occurred in the northbound passing lane of state Route 309, Balavage said.

According to the Luzerne County Coroner's Office, both men died of multiple traumatic injuries.

"(South Main Street) is a road I suggested more than a year ago that it should be made a one way street," Balavage said.

Individuals coming off of South Main Street often have difficulty judging the speed limit of highway traffic, he said.

Other serious and fatal wrecks have occurred regularly along a stretch of Route 309 from the South Main intersection to the area near Rave's Nursery.

Moravec said the driver of the tractor-trailer, Serge Thibodeau, of Quebec, was traveling to Procter & Gamble Co. in Mehoopany to make a pickup. He was not injured in the crash.

No charges will be filed.

OBITUARIES

ELOISE MONTROSS

Organist at Noxen UMC

Eloise C. Montross, 81, of Noxen, died December 8, 2003 at Lakeside Nursing Center, Harveys Lake.

Born Dec. 31, 1921, in Noxen, she was a daughter of the late Albert J. and Ada S. (Young) Casterline. She graduated from Noxen High School. She worked for Ann-Will Garment Co., Kingston; Ronox Manufacturing, Noxen; Nancy Fashions, Noxen; and the Rural Health Center, Noxen. She was a member of the Noxen United Methodist Church, where she was organist, choir director, Sunday School teacher, youth leader and a member of the Methodist Women.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Warren B.; brothers, James and Osmond Casterline; sisters, Ruth Patton, Emily Lyons and Susie Benner.

Surviving are her daughter, Sharyn R. Coole, New Albany; son, Gregory L., Noxen; five grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

Interment, Orcutt's Grove Cemetery, Noxen.

Memorial donations may be made to the Noxen United Methodist Church, RR 1 Box 196A, Noxen, PA 18636.

HELEN STRYJEWSKI

Active with Lake-Lehman Booster Club

Helen F. Stryjewski, 49, of Sweet Valley, died December 1, 2003 at home.

Born Jan. 15, 1954, in Plainsville, Plains Township, she was the daughter of the late Frank and Helen (Shepko) Pergalski. She graduated from Plains Memorial High School and Wilkes-Barre Business College. She worked for RCN Corp., Plains Township. She was a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Lake Silkworth, and was active in the Lake-Lehman Booster Club.

Surviving are her son, Jacob, Lake Silkworth.

Interment, Maple Grove Cemetery, Pikes Creek.

SHEILA TROWBRIDGE

Volunteer at Interfaith Friends

Sheila D. Trowbridge of Jenks Road, Tunkhannock, died December 4, 2003 in the Hospice Unit of Mercy Hospital, Wilkes-Barre.

Born Nov. 16, 1943, in Wilkes-Barre, she was a daughter of the late Paul and Norma (Dennis) Meeker. She was a graduate of Tunkhannock High School. She was a member of Noxen United Methodist Church, the Tunkhannock Eastern Star, and served as a volunteer at Interfaith Friends, Tunkhannock.

She was preceded in death by her brother, Paul Meeker.

Surviving are her husband of 44 years, Kenneth; sons, Kemp, Penrose, Calif.; Barry, Sacramento, Calif.; Adam and Thor, Tunkhannock; and several grandchildren.

Interment, Vaughn Cemetery, Mehoopany.

NOLAN SMITH

Navy veteran of WWII

Nolan K. Smith, 76, of Loy- alville, died December 7, 2003 at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

Born May 1, 1927, in Noxen, he was a son of the late Henry and Edith (Beahm) Smith. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was a member of the Tunkhannock Senior Citizens.

He was preceded in death by his brothers, Edward, Richard, Leo and Alton; sisters, Evelyn and Dawn Joann Smith, Jean Hoyt, Geraldine Baer and Mildred Boice.

Surviving are his sons, Daniel, Tunkhannock; Randal, Ross Township; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and brother, Doyle, Noxen.

Interment, Orcutt's Grove Cemetery, Noxen.

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