

OUR OPINION

Spending restraint, not just tax hikes, needed to balance budget

Property owners in the Dallas School District may be shocked at the proposed budget for the 2004-05 school year, which includes a 7.5 percent increase in the tax rate. Even at that, the plan draws down the district's reserve funds by a half-million dollars, which in itself is not a bad thing. For years, the district carried an excessively large fund balance, sometimes over \$5 million, even while raising taxes. New state regulations don't allow that level of unused funds, and if projections hold, Dallas will meet the new guideline of no more than 8 percent of the budget held in reserve by the July 1, 2005 deadline to do so.

So, what is forcing a tax increase in this budget? Mostly items the district can do little about, such as contracted raises and increased benefit costs. There is also the extraordinary expense of early retirement incentives for about 30 staffers over the next two years (there were 13 this year), which in the long run will be offset by lower salaries paid to their replacements.

Business manager Grant Palfey says there is another reason this budget is as tough as it is. He wants the district on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, aligning income and outgo so that future spending doesn't get out of hand. The budget that ends June 30, for example, is \$1 million in the red, which is not a problem since the starting reserve stood at \$4.7 million. In contrast, the new budget is nearly balanced on an operating basis, with the exception of seldom-used reserve accounts and the retirement payouts.

Taxpayers may want to hold their fire against this year's millage increase, but they should be paying close attention as the next budget season approaches. Several years of major capital improvements have yet to address the aging high school, and all-day kindergarten if adopted will carry its own costs. Paying as we go may become more difficult with each coming year, and will require restraint on spending as well as expanded taxes.

Resources, support at hand for families in need

Few of us escape the ravages of disease, particularly as we age. Aside from making our own lives miserable, many forms of illness place a heavy burden on families, both in the form of expensive care and in emotions worn thin while watching loved ones deteriorate. The damage is multiplied by feelings of helplessness, particularly in the face of afflictions that relentlessly diminish the capacity to interact with others, as is the case with Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's Support Group
Thursday, June 3, 11 a.m.
Meadows Nursing Center
W. Center Hill Rd., Dallas
Call 822-9915 or 675-8600,
ext. 195 for information

Back Mountain Free Medical and Legal Clinic
Fr. Sammons Hall, St. Therese's Church
Pioneer Ave., Shavertown
Fridays, starting at 6:30 p.m.

Maryann Daily, of Dallas, knows those feelings well. She has watched as her husband, once a vigorous professional, has slipped into the grasp of this pernicious destroyer of humanity. After years caring for her husband largely on her own, she understands the support caregivers need, and is determined to help herself and others meet the challenge posed by the arrival of Alzheimer's in their homes. Working with the Alzheimer's Association and the Meadows Nursing Center, she has helped organize a support group that will meet at the Meadows for the first time this Thursday, at 11 a.m. The meeting is open to anyone with the need or desire to learn more about how to cope with this devastating disorder. Unfortunately, as the population ages, the number of people affected can only grow until a cure is found.

This is not the only local resource available to people facing health-related issues but lacking either the means or the support system to address them. Every Friday night, the Back Mountain Free Medical and Legal Clinic welcomes the public in Father Sammons Hall at St. Therese's Church, Pioneer Ave., Shavertown, starting at 6:30 p.m. Volunteer doctors, nurses and legal practitioners are there to offer assistance, advice and direction to those facing disruptive situations or just needing some expert help while working through a problem. Other groups and organizations can be found through local churches, as neighbors and expert advisors give of their time and talent to assist others in need.

Letters are welcome

Letters to the editor are welcome and will be published, subject to the following guidelines:

- Letters should not exceed 500 words.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer's home town and a telephone number for verification.
- Names will be withheld only if there exists a clear and verifiable threat to the writer.
- No writer may have more than one letter addressing the same topic published during a 30-day period, except as a reply to another letter.
- The Post retains the right to accept or reject any letter, and to edit letters for grammar and spelling, as well as to eliminate any libel, slander or objectionable wording.



It's good to be green, at least in this neighborhood. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LIBRARY NEWS

Kick-off dinner, other auction news

The annual Kick-Off Dinner for the Back Mountain Memorial Library auction will be held on Monday, June 7, at Apple Tree Terrace, Newberry Estate, Dallas, with cocktails at 6 and dinner at 7, followed by a mini-auction. Tickets are \$25 each, and proceeds provide seed money for the auction. It's very informal and a lot of fun. Call the library (675-1182) to let them know you're coming. Everyone is welcome!

Have you seen the gleaming grill in the library entrance? It will be raffled off at the auction. Tickets are \$2 each, or \$10 for six.

Carol Sweeney, auction publicity contact, has told me of a number of innovative programs which will be added to the auction fare this year. They include a display of artwork by local artists in the Community Room at the library. So far, 13 artists are planning to participate. Their work will be for sale, with a part of the proceeds going to the library. For further information contact the library.

Other new items include a mini-farmers market, and special activities for teenagers: manicures for the girls, temporary tattoos for the boys. The WKRZ Boom Box will be at the auction on Friday evening, and on Saturday evening a group of celebrity auctioneers, led by Vince Sweeney of Channel 28, will participate in the festivities.



Paul Nicholson, chairman of the 2004 auction being held by the Back Mountain Memorial Library on July 8-11, led the discussion at a recent meeting of the auction committee. Shown are, from left, seated: Gloria Bilder, Bennie Matchett, Jim Snyder, Sybil Pelton, Connie Scott, Bonnie Brakefield, Nadine Young, and Kim Stager.

Standing: Ernie Ashbridge, Karen Boback, Karen Shuster, Michael Klug, Joe Dwinchick, Paul Nicholson, Pauline Kutz, Peggy Harvey, Barbara Kohler, Natasha Hennings, Martha Butler, and Fred Krohle.

More volunteers are always welcome. For further information, call 675-1182.

Posters and t-shirts featuring Chloe Kalma's winning design in the contest held in the local schools this spring will be available at the library after the Memorial Day weekend. In the spirit of keeping things local, Payne Printery and Precision Lithographics in Dallas, and Digital Graphics in Wilkes-Barre, run by Rick and Gary Ide of the Back Mountain area, have been involved in getting the posters and shirts ready. Businesses and individuals are invited to pick up both items at the library to

help promote the 58th annual auction, July 8-11.

Don't forget that the Children's Auction, chaired for a number of years by Dave and Bev Neiman, needs goods to put on the block at the special auction on Saturday morning. Items such as toys and games, complete and in good working order, and clean stuffed animals, may be placed in a special box at the library. Larger items, such as bikes or trikes, are also welcome.

70 Years Ago
June 1, 1934

ST.THERESE'S HAS LARGE FIRST COMMUNION CLASS

One of the largest classes in the history of St. Therese's Church, Shavertown, received First Communion last Sunday. Class members included Margaret Farrell, Betty Jane Pittinger, Raymond Jones, Alice Dobinick, and Catherine Morris.



ONLY YESTERDAY

Lehman High School baseball team became champion of the Back Mountain Scholastic League, having won all of its five scheduled games.

The Women's Home Missionary Society met with Mrs. C. R. Prutzman for election of officers. Mrs. Harvey Danks led devotions.

60 Years Ago
June 2, 1944

SGT. LEWIS RAVE WITH FAMOUS LIBERATOR UNIT

Sgt. Lewis Rave, formerly of Shavertown, is now a member of Kentsmen, a B24 Liberator unit serving in New Guinea. The unit has the record for enemy vessels sunk.

Over 80 mothers and daughters gathered at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Shavertown for their annual banquet. Mrs. Arthur Noss received a prize for having the largest number of daughters present and Mrs. Alice Louise Thomas was awarded for being the youngest daughter present.

Miss Estella Goldsmith was guest of honor at a party given by members of 8A

Class of Dallas Township. Those in attendance included Mildred Borton, Daisy Belles, Phyllis Kunkle, and Eula Dymond.

50 Years Ago
May 28, 1954

DALLAS ROTARY WOMEN SEE INTERESTING EXHIBIT

Dallas Women of the Rotary enjoyed an exhibit of colored slides, Mexican jewelry and leatherwork at their meeting. Present were Mesdames Harry Edwards, Hanford Eckman, David Jenkins, L.L. Richardson, George Metz, James Besecker and B.W. Yocum.

Raymond Goeringer, owner of Lake Louise Farm, recently leased his Guernsey herd sire, Lake Louise Coronation King, to NEPA Breeding Cooperative, Tunkhannock.

More and more out-of-town artists are planning to exhibit their painting at the Back Mountain Library Art Fair. Mrs. Fred Howell is chairman of exhibitors.

40 Years Ago
May 28, 1964

MOZART CLUB DINNER

Back Mountain residents who attended the Mozart Club Banquet at Westmoreland Club included Mrs. Alan Sanford, Mrs. Raymond Wall, Ruth Turn Reynolds, Mrs. Alva Eggleston, and Mrs. W.F. Newberry.

Nancy Helen Drapiewski, Sweet Valley, a senior at Pennsylvania State University, has been initiated into Phi Kappa Phi, National Scholarship Society.

Frank Huttman, general chairman for the Library Auction committee, announced that Ed Brominski has accepted responsibility for the auction grounds and Mrs. Bruce Moen for general solicitation.

30 Years Ago
May 29, 1974

KINGSTON TOWNSHIP TO WRITE HOME RULE CODE

A home rule charter which will put Kingston Township under its own administrative code, was passed by voters. The charter increased the number of township supervisors from three to five. Terms of office have been reduced from six years to four.

Wyoming Seminary recognized the following Back Mountain students at Awards Day: Yvonne M. Pearsall, Jeffery S. Klein, James F. Hora, and Margaret S. Hall.

Patty Weggel and Carol Sosik won a prize in the annual Gate of Heaven Science Fair for their detailed display on solar and nuclear energy.

20 Years Ago
May 30, 1984

RAYMONG JONES NAMED NATIONAL AWARD WINNER

The United States Achievement Academy announced that Raymond E. Jones has been named a 1984 United States National Award winner in Band and Drill team. Jones, a student at Lake-Lehman High School, was nominated by John Milauskas, band director.

Paulette Niznik, Dallas, received the 1984 Dallas Lioness Scholarship Award. She is a student at Dallas High School.

Sue Hand's Imagery presented its eighth annual Spring Art Show with exhibitors ranging in age from kindergarten to senior citizen. Recent major award winners are Devota Farrell, Martha Hall, Tom Ce Tina Kull, Scott Ballard, and Michelle son.

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