

OUR OPINION

Cell tower variances merit careful scrutiny

Modern conveniences don't come without a price. Sometimes the cost is financial, in fees and charges, at others it is in the form of time.

In the case of the cellular telephone, both costs apply, along with another, more subtle payment, the diminution of treasured scenic views as towers are erected to smooth out the transmission of signals. Right now, Cingular Wireless has requests for relief from zoning restrictions that stand in the way of adding three towers in the Back Mountain and nearby areas. There may be more that we are unaware of, and Cingular is not breaking new ground, given the several towers that already exist here. Still, it is prudent for officials who rule on these variances to consider if less objectionable options could fulfill the company's needs.

From the moment the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was passed by Congress, a wave of lawyers representing cell phone providers has approached local municipalities brandishing a volatile mixture of intimidation and arrogance. In the early years, they were able to convince outgunned officials that the Act gave virtually unimpeded access to any location a company might select for construction of a tower. Sometimes, as happened in Shavertown, a savvy local lawyer would expose the company's lack of investigation before choosing a site, and in that case saved his neighborhood from unnecessary ugliness.

We're not saying that Cingular hasn't done its homework in these cases. We're only suggesting that local officials, who owe their allegiance to the citizens who elect them, shouldn't be bashful about making the company prove that the locations it wants to use were chosen responsibly and carefully, with the needs of both its customers and the community in mind.

Cellular phones have added a useful measure of convenience and security to our lives, particular when we are traveling by car. But their benefits must be weighed against other considerations, including the impact of transmission towers on the vistas we are fortunate to enjoy.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Here at The Post, we are flattered to have been the source of some inspiration for a study of water quality in Toby's Creek and the Susquehanna River that will be conducted next year by fifth grade students at Dallas Elementary School. Teacher Angel Bestwick came up with the plan after reading an extensive special report on the creek published last October in this newspaper and columns about the river written by Dr. Brian Mangan and published in the Times Leader.

The director of environmental studies at King's College, Mangan also is director of the Susquehanna River Institute, a coalition of educational, corporate and community partners dedicated to honoring the river's historic significance and educating the public about its present value as a habitat for wildlife. The Dallas students will work with both King's and the institute as they carry out their project.

Bestwick won a \$10,000 Toyota TAPESTRY grant — one of only 50 nationwide — which will be used to conduct the research, some of which will be done with specialized handheld equipment. In supporting her grant application, The Post committed to publish students' writing during and at the conclusion of the project.

The story of these waterways is a rich chapter in the book of local history, and lessons to be learned from their use and abuse can help prevent repetition of past mistakes. Today, they hold great potential to improve our quality of life, whether as accompaniments to walking trails, as fishing spots or simply as welcome outposts of natural beauty. Neglected and forgotten over recent decades, they are being rediscovered as the unique resources they represent, and the students' project will keep a spotlight shined on their assets.

We're always eager to share stories and photos about Toby's Creek with our readers, and invite contributions by e-mail at thepost@leader.net. To learn more about the Susquehanna River Institute, go to www.susquehannariverinstitute.org.

Letters, columns and editorials

Editorials, which are the opinion of the management of The Post, appear on the editorial page and are written by the editor unless otherwise indicated. Any artwork represents the opinion of the cartoonist, and columns are the opinion of the author.

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

- 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 threat to the writer.
- 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.

Letters can be sent many ways:

- By e-mail to: thepost@leader.net
- By mail to: The Post, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18711.
- By using the drop box located in the Uni-Mart convenience store on Route 309 in Dallas, across from the Dallas Shopping Center.

Always include a daytime phone number for verification.

THE POST

TIMES•LEADER Community Newspaper Group

15 N. MAIN ST., WILKES-BARRE PA 18711 • 570-675-5211
thepost@leader.net

Patrick McHugh
PUBLISHER

Ronald Bartizek
EDITOR

Erica Calvert
ADVERTISING

Pat O'Donnell
PREPRESS MANAGER



Stepping with care. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

Families, single people may qualify for federal, state tax benefits

People with low to moderate incomes can save significant amounts of money by taking advantage of federal and state tax benefits.

The programs are not automatic; those who qualify must file the right forms with their tax returns.

Eligibility for the state TAX BACK program depends on family size and income. The guidelines start with taxpayers' income — \$6,500 for single

people, \$13,000 for married

couples — and continue with the addition of a \$9,500 allowance per dependent. For instance, a married couple with two children, with eligible income up to \$32,000, can save as much as \$982. Partial refunds are also available for taxpayers whose eligible income exceeds the full limits by no more than \$2,250.

For the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, eligibility also depends on family size and income. For example, a married

couple with two or more children and income of up to \$35,500 can qualify. The maximum credit for 2004 is \$4,300.

Free tax preparation at Volunteer Income Tax Assistance locations also can save money for filers. In Luzerne County, the number to call for VITA is 826-0510.

Children may qualify for the Children's Health Insurance Program. CHIP provides free or low-cost health insurance to children of working parents

whose employers don't offer coverage and who can't afford private insurance. For qualifying families, household income determines whether CHIP is free or low-cost. For more information on CHIP, call 1-800-986-KIDS.

CHIP covers immunizations, routine checkups, diagnostic testing, prescription drug, emergency care, dental, vision and hearing services, mental health benefits and other health-care services.

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

• On March 11, 1818, "Frankenstein," by 21-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, is published. Although frequently called the world's first science-fiction novel, "Frankenstein" explored philosophical themes and challenged Romantic ideals about the beauty and goodness of nature.

• On March 10, 1876, the first discernible speech is transmitted over a telephone system when inventor Alexander Graham Bell, working in his Boston home, summons his

assistant in another room by saying, "Mr. Watson, come here; I want you."

• On March 12, 1888, the most severe winter storm ever to hit New York City reaches blizzard proportions, costing hundreds of lives and millions of dollars in property damage. The 36-hour blizzard dumped some 40 inches of snow on the city, and for several weeks, massive snowdrifts isolated the region from the rest of the country. Messages north to Boston had to be relayed via England.

• On March 8, 1936, Daytona Beach, Fla., stages its first race strictly for stock cars on a combination beach and public road course. Bill France, who would go on to found NASCAR, finished fifth in the race.

• On March 7, 1955, "Peter Pan," starring Mary Martin, becomes the first Broadway play featuring the original cast to be televised in color.

• On March 13, 1969, the Walt Disney studio releases "The Love Bug" starring "Herbie," a lovable Volkswagen Beetle with a personality. By

becoming one of the top grossing films of 1969, "The Love Bug" allayed fears that the Disney Studio would collapse without the presence of the recently deceased Walt Disney.

• On March 9, 1997, the Notorious B.I.G., born Christopher Wallace, is shot to death at a stoplight in Los Angeles. The murder was apparently the culmination of an ongoing feud between rap music artists from the East and West coasts.

(c) 2005 King Features Synd., Inc.

70 Years Ago
Mar. 8, 1935

8 USE LADDER TO ESCAPE FROM FIRE WHICH LEVELS HOME

Eight minors, their ages ranging from 1 to 18 years, escaped down a ladder on Tuesday night about 10:30 when flames destroyed the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Shilenski, Outlet.

Robert K. Hislop, 67, of 6 Oak Street, Forty Fort, the father of Robert B. Hislop of Dallas, died on Sunday afternoon at 5 in Nesbitt Memorial hospital.

An emergency appropriation of \$3,500 will be given to Kingston Township School District by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Instruction it was announced this week at the meeting of the school directors.

60 Years Ago
Mar. 9, 1945

SEVENTY-EIGHT FARMERS CALLED

Eighty nine men, all but eleven of them young men in the 19-26 year old group of young farmers previously deferred for farm work, have been called for pre-induction

tests by Selective Service Board No. 5 at Shickshinny.

From an army hospital at Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea came word this week that Pfc. Roy Schultz, a member of the Eleventh Airborne Division famous for its work on Luzon, had died of infantile paralysis on February 19.

Pfc. Lester Culver, 33, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Culver, Carverton, had been missing in action in Germany since February 8, according to the message received by his wife at their home on Bunker Hill Saturday night. Pfc. Culver was a father of three.

50 Years Ago
Mar. 4, 1955

DALLAS BLOOD DRIVE SET RECORD FOR WYOMING VALLEY

The largest blood donation in the history of the Wyoming Valley area was received at Dallas Borough School on Friday, with 240 applicants tested and 186 pints of blood taken.

Dennis Bonning, Jr., Jackson Township, lost the first joint of his thumb while at work for Ruggles Lumber Company, catching his hand under the belt of a compressor.

A brand new two-bedroom house, including lot, is advertised for \$11,083

Playing at the Himmler Theatre; "Desiree" starring Marlon Brando, Jean Simmons; "Julius Caesar" starring Marlon

Brando, James Mason; "Reap The Wild Wind" starring John Wayne, Susan Hayward

40 Years ago
Mar. 4, 1965

HOUSE DESTROYED IN SWEET VALLEY

Fire, thought to be set deliberately, consumed the unoccupied but furnished home of Mrs. Jean Hunter, on the Nevel Hollow Road, just below the Village of Sweet Valley at about 4 a.m. yesterday morning.

E.R. Kerlin, of Kunkle, Dallas, was elected president of the Craftsmen of the Endless Mountains in the year 1965, at a meeting February 24. Mr. Kerlin is a well known weaver.

A group of Explorer Scouts on a 25-mile hike Saturday found a cache of about 30 live dynamite caps in the vicinity of Huntsville Dam.

30 Years Ago
Mar. 6, 1975

JACKSON TWP. SUPERVISORS ADOPT YOUTH CURFEW

A 10 p.m. curfew for all children under 18 years of age was adopted at the regular meeting of the Jackson Township Supervisors held Tuesday night at the Jackson Fire Hall.

The overwhelming threat of danger to our school children in

the Back Mountain Area through exposure and participation in "The Drug Culture" was vividly described by Sgt. William Pugh of the Kingston Township Police when he spoke to Dallas Kivwanis Women's Club recently at the Irem Temple Country Club.

Dr. Richard C. Scott announces the opening of his office in the Dallas Shopping Center for the practice of general dentistry. He is married to the former Lorraine Hosey of Plymouth and Harveys Lake.

20 Years Ago
Mar. 6, 1985

LAMOREAUX HONORED ON RETIREMENT FROM POST OFFICE

After 20 years of service, Charles Lamoreaux of Huntsville Road, Dallas, retired from his maintenance and custodial position with the Dallas Post Office. His fellow workers honored him at a dinner this past Saturday at The Castle Inn in Dallas and presented him with numerous gifts.

A letter campaign protesting the merger of Back Mountain Magisterial Districts 11-3-08 and 11-3-09 administered by Justices Leonard Harvey and Earl Gregory may have been effective when the decision was in the making, but it is too late now that the decision has been finalized.

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