

Dear Publisher:

I was angered and saddened to witness the destruction of two fine oak trees on a Forest Street property opposite Schuyler School. The cutting down of such healthy trees robs the community at large of one of its finest assets.

This should be evident to any one has viewed our area from an airplane. We live at the bottom of a cesspool of petrochemical exhaust and industrial fumes and airborne, carcinogenic particulates. The sobriquet 'Cancer Alley' aptly describes the grim cancer statistics that go with our area, cancers which stem in large part from the toxic atmosphere in which we exist. In a nationwide survey our immediate vicinity earned the dubious distinction of being rated as one of the very worst places in America for air quality. Trees are our natural allies in cleaning and oxygenating our air. The chore of raking leaves in autumn may be made less onerous if we consider each leaf as a miraculous detox factory that worked long and hard for our welfare.

Some time ago members of the community prevailed upon the builder of the pair of prefab houses across from Schuyler School to spare these very trees. Children from the school even petitioned the builder through letters and artwork. The driveway at the south end of the property was angled to accommodate the trees and in recognition of the community effort the builder titled the property Red Oak Estates. No one imagined that anyone would wish these trees destroyed. But at 7:30 in the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 22, the rasp of power saws filled the air.

In three and one-half hours these majestic trees that could have lifted the human spirit for a century and benefited the lungs of the unborn were transformed into sawdust and splinters and splinters. Now only stumps mark their places.

Does it seem reasonable that a homeowner would spend money to 'improve' the property by destroying such well-established, healthy trees, especially oaks situated as ideally on the property as were these? Removal of such trees subtracts from the overall appeal and market value of a property. As a practical health issue and as a matter of aesthetics. I and I know others in the neighborhood will sorely miss this pair of trees.

Joseph Ramsaur,

Kearny