

## THE DALLAS POST

## EDITORIALS

## School budget plans should be more open

The Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts have only eight more days in which to produce their tentative budgets for the 1991-92 school year, and not a word about their plans has been made public. And what chance will the public have to comment on the spending and tax plans? Probably one meeting, at which the budget will be adopted over any objections taxpayers may make.

It's not that this conduct is illegal; it's not. Pennsylvania statutes require that the tentative budget be open for review for 30 days before June 30, by which date a final budget must be adopted. During that time, comments from the public will be accepted at one meeting, but the school boards have absolutely no obligation to respond to taxpayers' concerns.

This absurd system is unlike that in many states, where school budgets must be passed in referendum. If the voters don't like the budget, they vote it down as happened in 44 percent of the school districts in New Jersey this year. The board and administration must then come back with a new plan that meets with voter approval.

Putting budgets (and major expenditures, like building plans) to a vote does more than simply give the public its voice, the process forces more open discussion about school spending and the quality of education in a community. An administration that must satisfy thousands of voters and not just four or five school directors will produce better budgets and will clearly explain the district's needs to those who support the schools and send their children there.

Does such a system slow down the budget process? Certainly, and it assures that administrators seriously review their district's operations in order to assemble a spending plan that can stand intense public scrutiny. And why not? From both an economic and human standpoint, the school budget is an important priority in most households.

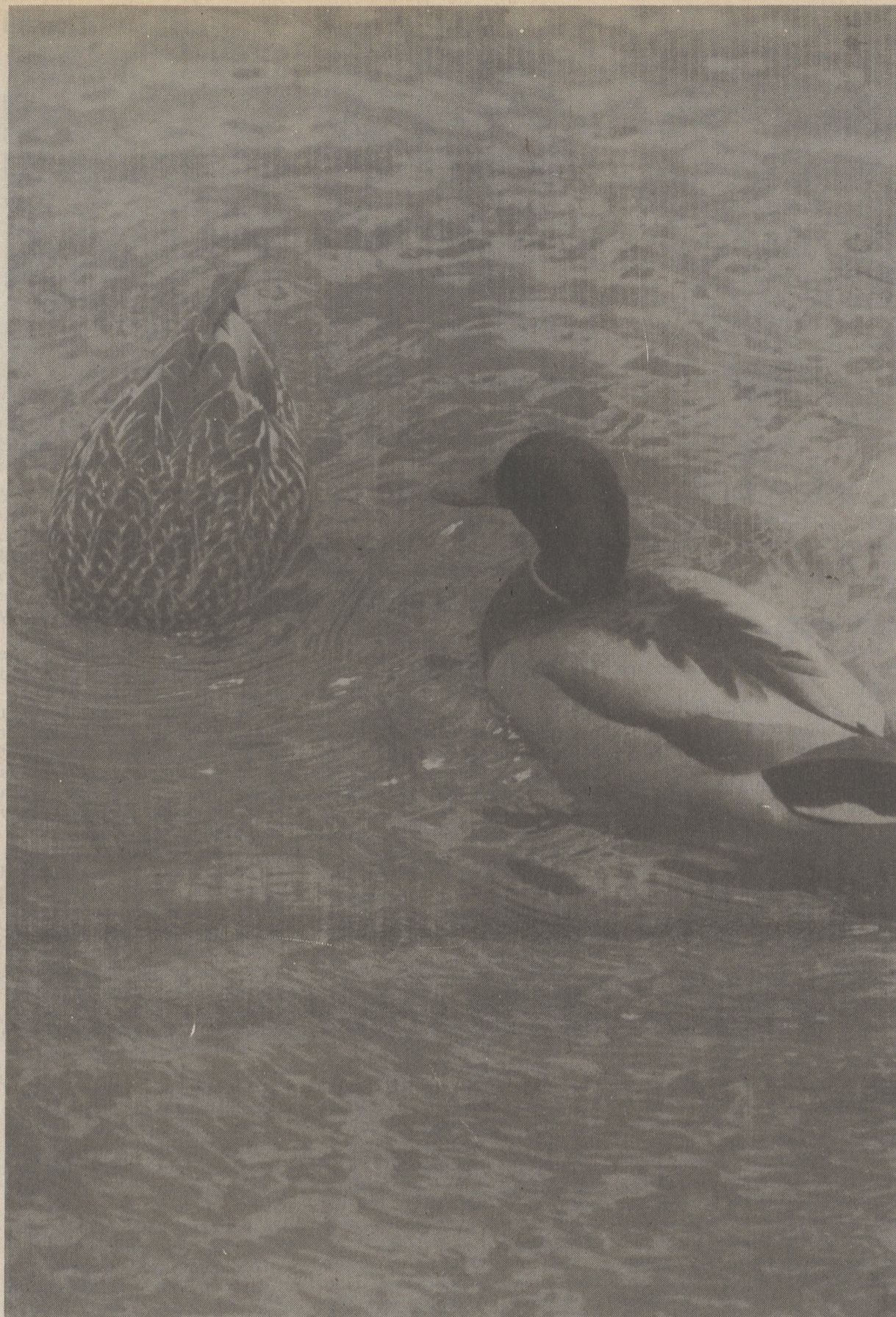
It would be a breath of fresh air if Dallas and Lake-Lehman opened their budget planning process and alert the public to what is coming. Let's hope that at least when they announce their plans they offer residents the utmost opportunity to comment, and respond to what they hear.

## Spirit of caring shows in the Back Mountain

The Wyoming Valley has prided itself on being the "Valley with a Heart." Judging by recent stories that have appeared in The Post, the Back Mountain adds to that reputation.

Last week's paper carried reports about a scholarship fund established in memory of Carol Pierson, a church steeple dedicated to Amber Nicely and a fund to help the victims of a fire in Lake Township. While it's unusual to have three of these type items at one time, they are not at all out of the ordinary.

The Back Mountain is rapidly changing from a self-contained rural area to a complex mix of farms, housing developments and shopping centers. In the transition, it will be difficult to retain this spirit of caring about good friends and unknown neighbors. But the character of the area will be lessened if it is lost.



The water's just ducky

(Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

## Library news

## Library completes scrapbook of Gulf War

By NANCY KOZEMCHAK

The staff members of the Back Mountain Memorial Library have been preparing a complete scrapbook filled with clippings about the Gulf War. We have most of the pertinent clippings from the local newspapers, plus the USA Today. We have filled two scrapbooks on Operation Desert Storm and the books are very informative. They may be used for information here in the library. The title of our scrapbooks is "The War in the Gulf".

Our 1991 Friends of the Library campaign has reached a total of \$9,086, which is very close to our budgeted goal for the year. The figure in our budget is \$10,000 and we hope for additional support for this campaign.

We are very happy with the fact that three new volunteers began working for us this month. They include Claire Griffith of Shavertown; Jean Grimes of Dallas; and Carolyn Johnson of Dallas. These ladies offer the hours they can afford to help with many tasks in

the library such as shelving, checking book numbers, alphabetizing, slipping books at the desk and typing. These volunteers are very important to the library staff as they are able to handle many of our on-going every day tasks. Welcome aboard, ladies!

The Sparrowgrass Poetry Forum, Inc. of Sisterville, West Virginia is sponsoring a new poetry contest and they have sent us fliers with information included for our patrons. The contest is free to enter. Prizes include the \$500 Award of Poetic Excellence or one of 34 other cash prizes. Poems are also considered for publication in the new book, Poetic Voices of America. The deadline for this contest is July 31, 1991. Further information may be obtained from the Poetry Forum.

The Back Mountain Memorial Library will be closed on Monday, May 27 to celebrate Memorial Day. Regular hours will resume on Tuesday, May 28.

New books at the library: "Master Class" by Morris West is a

modern morality tale, an art-world thriller, and a superb murder mystery in one of the author's finest novels to date. The story evolves around a noble Italian family. Nax Nather, a young American art historian, uncovers a cache of priceless works of art. An intriguing international art world mystery.

Two new Science Fiction novels include: "The Druid of Shannara" by Terry Brooks is a fast-paced fantasy and the duty of restoring the lost Druid's Keep, Paranor, is given to Walker Boh. For that, Walker needs the black Elfstone, but his search leads him to a trap.

"The Seeress of Kell" by David Eddings is the conclusion to the best-selling "The Malloreon", the culmination of an unparalleled quest across strange lands and among strange peoples; caught up in the seven-thousand-year war between two ancient, opposing Destinies battling to determine the fate of all creation. Garion knows the world is depending on his successful completion of the quest laid out for him at the beginning of time.

## Only yesterday

60 Years Ago - May 29, 1931  
AMERICAN STORE OPENS AT LAKE

The American Store Co. opened a new store at Harveys Lake on the Dallas-Harveys Lake Road at the Inlet.

College Misericordia juniors preparing for their Junior Prom to be held at Hotel Mallow-Sterling, Wilkes-Barre.

Kingston Township School Board adopts the 1931-32 budget of 25 mills and \$5.00 per capita tax.

Engaged - Ruth Calista Tompkins and Dr. William Clifton Lott. Trucksville Volunteer Fire Company and Improvement Association elected Ralph Hazeltine as president.

50 Years Ago - May 29, 1941  
POST OFFICE GETS NEW CLASS RATING

Professor A.P. Cope will head Luzerne County schools.

Two pair of Great Northern loons nesting on Harveys Lake intrigue Fred Swanson, ornithologist and member of the Harveys Lake police force.

William A. Austin is completing his 10th year as supervising principal of Monroe Township Schools.

Dallas Post Office gets new rating as second class effective July 1.

Dallas Borough graduates 23 at Commencement June 5 and Dallas Township graduates 34 at Commencement the same date.

James A. Martin is supervising principal of Kingston Township schools.

Lehman Township graduates 21 at Commencement June 9.

40 Years Ago - May 25, 1951  
SWEET VALLEY READIES FOR PARADE

Sweet Valley advises parade patrons come early and avoid the rush for Memorial Day.

Housewives and butchers are baffled by the recent government regulations on meat prices.

Back Mountain Little League played their opening games Monday night at the Shavertown Little League field.

Engaged - Mary Louise Repp and Harry Leslie Covert; Noreen Janice Lamb and William Arthur Major.

Wed - Gloria Sickler and Pvt. George Parrish.

"Glass Menagerie", starring Jan Wyman is playing Monday at Tuesday at Himmeler Theatre.

Beaumont team is in the PIAA playoffs tomorrow at Factoryville.

30 Years Ago - May 25, 1961  
HALL TO BE NAMED EAGLE SCOUT

Roy Hall of Shavertown to be an Eagle Scout.

Celia Monka was chosen as May Queen of the Senior Class at the Westmoreland Schol May Day Pageant.

Dallas American Legion Memorial Day Parade to be held Tuesday.

Back Mountain Memorial Library chairpersons meet to lay auction plans.

Westmoreland team defeats Newport and Wilkes-Barre Township.

Formal opening of Daring's Market on Memorial Highway will take place today and continue for the rest of the week.

Engaged - Marian Theresa Elenchik and John Edward Kern; Donna Weeded and Robert L. Natole.

Wed - Martha Jane Newber and John J. Gill.

20 Years Ago - May 27, 1971  
COUPLE TOURS STATE WITH STUDENTS

Election procedures at Harveys Lake poll challenged by poll watcher.

Assessment costs burden sewer authority as board members are bombarded with questions.

Budget for the 1971-72 year of the Dallas School District was tentatively proposed at \$3,237,726 without a tax increase.

Mr. and Mrs. John G. Konsavage accompanied a busload of exchange students throughout the state of Pennsylvania.

Wed - Mary Helen Kulakowski and Robert D. Natorelli; Concetta Hreha and Ronald Szela; Marleen Hampel and John E. Fielding.

Raymond Caucci is named new Lake-Lehman football coach.

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## Opinion

## Local governments can benefit from finance association

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

A satellite chapter of the Government Finance Officers Association has been established in Northeastern Pennsylvania. While local governmental financing is not widely discussed by most citizens, its future in Pennsylvania is clouded by the need to solve budgetary problems at the state governmental level as well as deal with the continuing decrease in federal governmental support for programs which can benefit local governments.

Therefore, the organization of a chapter of the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) is a step in the right direction to help promote an effective and sound approach to the issue of local governmental financing.

The national organization is based in Washington, D.C. and various state chapters exist to help improve opportunities to share and network information of importance to local governmental finance officers as well as increase the profes-

sionalism of the financing discipline.

The 266 general purpose local governments, the 48 school districts, and the special authorities existing in Northeastern Pennsylvania could all benefit by participation in the newly formed satellite chapter.

Recently, the first program meeting of the satellite chapter was held in the East Mountain Inn in Wilkes-Barre and featured an outstanding presentation by Al Ferguson and Bob Bittenbender of the House Majority Appropriations Committee and Senate Majority Appropriations Committee respectively. Their subject was the state of the Commonwealth budget for fiscal '92 and the issues surrounding the need for new revenues to close the budget deficit gap.

The Pennsylvania Government Finance Officers Association through its chapter and satellite systems helps to identify issues in government finance, encourages use of uniform financial standards

and promotes professional development of practitioners.

With the increasing pressure being placed upon local governments in the 1990s and some already difficult problems with respect to local governmental financing in major cities such as Philadelphia, Scranton and others as well, as the pressures facing small municipalities who have experienced close to bankrupt financial conditions in some parts of the Commonwealth, the role which the Government Finance Officers Association can play becomes even more meaningful.

One of the leading advocates in the formation of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Group is the little known Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust (PLGIT). The Trust administers a series of professionally managed investment portfolios designed exclusively for Pennsylvania boroughs, cities, counties, municipal authorities, school districts, townships of the first class, townships of the

second class, and other governmental legal entities.

Marking its 10th anniversary in 1991, the Trust serves over 1,600 local governments which represents at least 44% of all government entities in Pennsylvania. Over the last 10 years, 16.5 billion dollars have been sent to the PLGIT portfolio by participants.

Over the years PLGIT has created new investment instruments, designed to serve the local governmental community. In 1990, the Bond Pool, sponsored by the Trust loaned out all of its available funds.

The Trust is a non-taxable investment fund established for local governments in Pennsylvania under provisions of the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Act. One of its current trustees is Ray L. Crisci who is a Borough Councilman from West Pittston, Luzerne County. Address of PLGIT is Morris Drive, PO Box 1472, Valley Forge, PA 19496.

Any local governmental official desiring to explore the benefits of the Government Finance Officers Association or the advantages of participation in PLGIT can contact the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP), 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, PA 18640.

Howard Grossman is Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

## Letters invited

The Dallas Post encourages readers to share their opinions with the community by writing a letter to the editor. All letters for publication must be signed and include a telephone number so that we may verify their authenticity. We will not publish anonymous letters. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Letters received by Noon on Monday may be included in that week's issue.