

Mixed signals on Lake cable TV plan

By ERIC FOSTER
Post Staff

In the second installment of Harveys Lake Borough Council's investigation into starting its own television system, the council heard two tales about the cost of constructing a system.

A special meeting on August 28, Conrad Hislop, an independent cable television contractor, told the council that the borough could install a cable television system for \$364,000.

At a meeting on July 31, Hislop had estimated that it would cost the borough \$400,000 to construct a system.

But Charles Hilderbrand, vice president and general manager for Tele-Media, which currently provides cable service to the borough, said more green should be added to the picture, lots more green. Hilderbrand estimated that it would cost over a million dollars to install a system identical to Tele-Media's in the borough.

Tele-Media has 1,233 borough customers. About 20 residents attended the meeting.

Hislop's proposal called for the construction of a system which would carry 36 channels. He projected a gross revenue of \$300,000 in the first year, with programming costs of \$133,000, and a first year profit of \$166,000. If the borough had 1,000 customers, each customer would have to pay \$25 a month to meet Hislop's projection.

Hislop's plan also would carry cable TV to homes not currently served by Tele-Media.

Robert LaBrugzo, a summer resident of the borough who said he worked on cable systems in New Jersey for 30 years, thought that Hislop's costs were too low, and Tele-Media's too high.

"I'd go with the high side," said LaBrugzo.

Ron DeBalko, a borough resident who works for a Wilkes-Barre cable company, said that the borough would have to attract all of Tele-Media's customers in order to make the project cost effective.

"If you were to build a company you would need all their subscribers just to survive," said DeBalko. "You can't throw out the old company and you'll never get all of their customers. If you were a large metropolitan area and you have a lot of subscribers, competition is healthy. But they can only give you what they get back."

"My suggestion to the borough to work with this company and get the best deal you can," said DeBalko.

DeBalko also said that reliable cable technicians would have to be paid more than the \$16,640 a year each Hislop budgeted to pay three

A consultant projects a \$25 monthly charge for 36 channels

people.

"You just don't take a person off the street and make them a cable TV technician," said DeBalko, who added that he was sending a technician to a four-day training seminar in North Carolina at a cost of \$5,000.

DeBalko also mentioned that a bucket truck which would be needed for repairs would cost about \$50,000. Hislop budgeted \$7,500 for two used trucks, ladders and test equipment.

Donald Zagorski, manager of the local Tele-Media office, suggested that the council meet with company officials from Blue Ridge Cable Company, which purchased the Sweet Valley Cable Company that Hislop constructed.

While council members and Tele-Media representatives spent a lot of time discussing whether the company's cable lines leak signals which interfere with radio frequencies, councilman Joseph Sgarlat admitted that service is not the main issue.

"To be honest, I haven't gotten many complaints in the past four years, and when there have been complaints, they've been taken care of," said Sgarlat, the borough's liaison to Tele-Media. "Our motivation is not that the company gives us such lousy service we want to start our own company."

Instead, Sgarlat said that the council is interested in constructing the system to raise revenues to lower sewer fees or garbage fees.

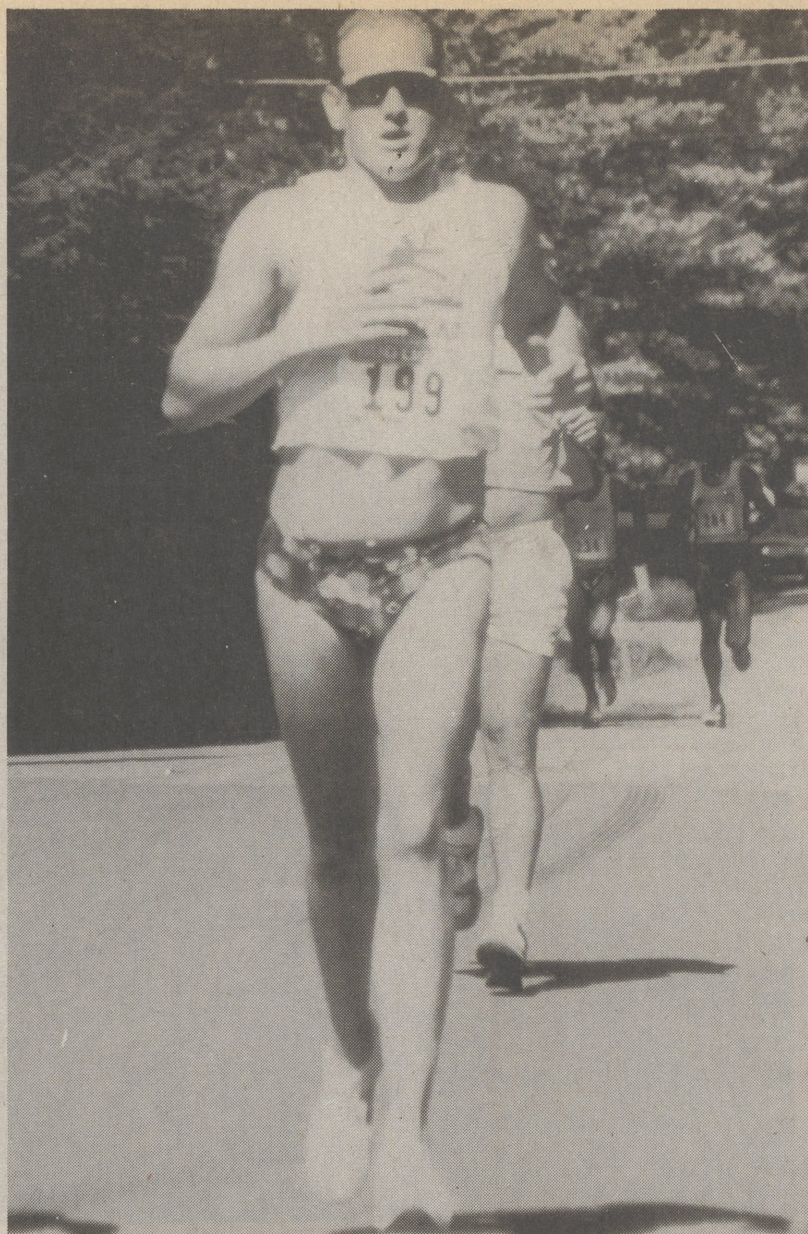
After the hearing, Sgarlat was optimistic about constructing a system.

"I see no reason why we couldn't put it in," said Sgarlat. "I have talked with other people who operate cable companies and they give a very biased opinion. Naturally, they're going to give us negative input."

"Basically, we're going to look at it to see if we can go with this cable company and at the same time negotiate with Tele-Media and see if we can get a little more for our money," said Sgarlat. "We're not interested in throwing these people out."

The story is likely to be continued with more meetings to take public input would be needed.

"It might be better if something like this was on the ballot," said Sgarlat. "Everybody I've talked to, this looks favorable, but it's probably going to take a good two years to put this together."



OFF AND RUNNING - Kevin Augustine of Wyoming was one of many Back Mountain contestants in the Greater Wilkes-Barre Triathlon September 1. He was the fifth local finisher overall. (Post Photo/Eric Foster)



Dallas Kiwanis welcomes members
The Dallas Kiwanis Club welcomes Fred Sweinberg a new member in their continued community service program. From left, George McCutcheon, installation member; Bruce Renard, sponsor; Fred Sweinberg, Charlie Kishbaugh, president.

Triathlon

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The first team to finish the race was the Rayco team based from Harveys Lake, with Mike Peucar swimming, Mike Budjnoski biking and Bill Hurst running.

Other Back Mountain teams which finished included:

STRIKE FAST, Sweet Valley, with Gina Gluchowski, Charlie Jacoby, and Gina Gluchowski
GINOCHETTI TEAM, Dallas, with Wayne Dombrowski, Dale Shoemaker, Patricia Gin

PENN STATE PROUD, Dallas, with Kelly Kavanagh, John Sobocinski, Kelly Kavanagh

COONEY, Dallas, with Jamie Ragukonis, Art Spears, Tara Cooney

NABISCO BRANDS, Bunker Hill, with Frank Peterson, Anthony Tomcyk, Cathy Sheridan

W-B GENERAL HOSPITAL, Dallas, with Tara Rinaldi, Kevin Santry, Clay O'Connor

DALLAS DOCS, Dallas, with John DeCaprio, Bill Burak, Mark Polin

POT LUCK, Dallas, with Jane Artmont, Mark Belenski, Edith Hennebaul

MICHAELS, with Aliza Michaels, Andrea Issac, Suzanne Gaynor

WILLS, Dallas, with Brad Eckert, Brad Eckert, Mike Wills

FIRST TIMERS, Harveys Lake, David Gutkowski, Jens Kidt, Daniel Austin

THREE STARS, Dallas, with John Menio, William Rusin, Juan De Rojas

MOBILE HOLMES, Shavertown, with Anne Holmes, David Holmes, Thomas Holmes

SMULOWITZ, Harveys Lake,

with Kenneth Schineller, Quinton Stenler, John Smulowitz

RITTENHOUSE, Shavertown, with Patrice Persico, Maureen Van Bloem, Daniel Rittenhouse

TRIFECTA, Dallas, with Joan Byron, Liz Fronheiser, Michelle Cefalo

CAVANAUGH, Harveys Lake, with Sharon Britt, James Dunleavy, Chris Cavanaugh

NICK OF TIME, Dallas, with Andrea Harris, Debbie Tarvin, Kim Koehl

PRO TEAM 91, Dallas, with Bryan Rodeghiero, Frank Olshemski, John Prater

MCGRATH, Shavertown, with Janine Flora, Sean McGrath, Thomas McGrath

MEDICINE SHOP, Harveys Lake, with Butch Freeman, Rob Kuschke, Frank Butcofski

GOLDWEIN, Dallas, with Pat Wingert, Lisa Burak, Sherry Goldwein

RUSTY, Wyoming, with Rusty Flack, Scott Burnside, Chip Siegel

GLAD 2 B ALIVE, Dallas, with Tom Williams, Barry Taylor, John Manka

KENNY DOIT, Shavertown, with Steven Rothstein, Dave Daris, Chip Koehl

DOMBROSKI, Harveys Lake, with Maureen Devine, Lynn Ryan, Bonnie Dombroski

THREE OF US, Dallas, with Maura Kratz, Jane Cummings, An Marie Fowler

TEAM TRI-ING, Dallas, with Brian Jackson, Paul Yeager, Francis Houston

FAT, FAST AND OVER 40, Dallas, with Duane Kerstein, Jack Wartella, David Roberts

Beach

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as a last resort to open the beach.

"We're like a family, and like all large families, we sometimes have arguments," said Ed Bilder on taking office.

Other officers chosen were Jim Drury, vice president, and Catherine Kearney, secretary. Board members elected were, for three year terms, Becky Casterline, Vincent Simonds, Mary Fisher; for two years, Bill Kearney, Tom Mulavage, Norris McGowan; for one year, Sharon Britt, William Vollrath, and Norm Timko.

Timko was the only board member who was re-elected.

Bilder said that they have found people who would donate most of

the labor and materials needed to construct restrooms at the beach, the lack of which is one of the reasons that it was closed. Gloria Bilder said that the state's Department of Community Affairs would pay for a lifeguard if the lifeguard came from a low-income home.

Gloria Bilder also said that they have found an insurance carrier for liability insurance which would cover the beach for \$2,500 to \$5,000 a year, for liability ranging from \$300,000 to \$1 million.

The association will meet again later this month, with the members being notified of the time and place by mail.

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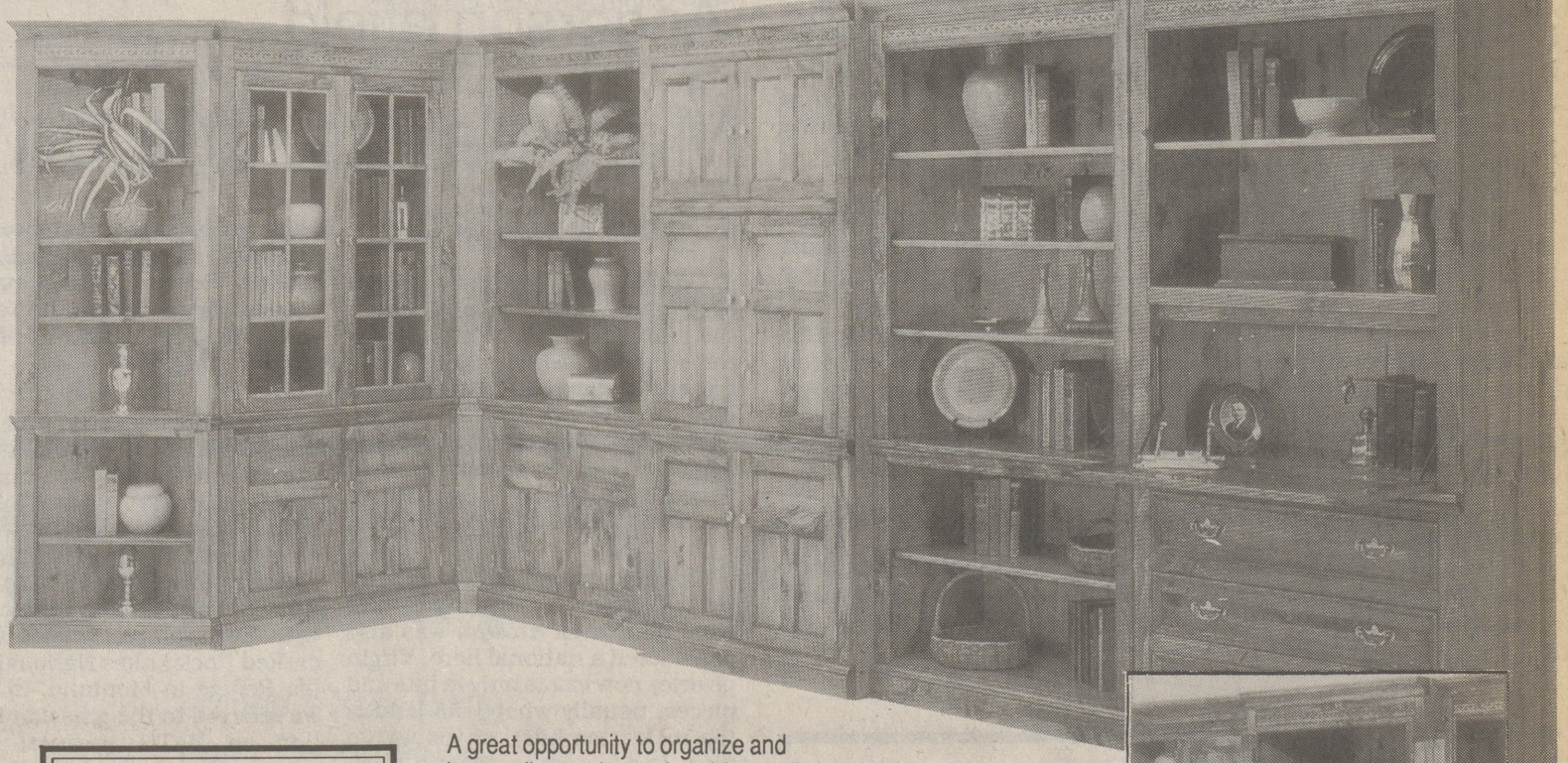
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