

Back Mountain Citizens' Council begins 5th year

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Communities like to see growth; it helps businesses and adds to the tax base.

But uncontrolled, rapid growth can catch municipalities by surprise, straining such vital services as police, fire protection and schools.

Faced with improved highways bringing many new residents and businesses to the Back Mountain and seeing the result of a similar situation in the Poconos, Jim Ryan and other concerned residents formed the Back Mountain Citizens' Council in 1988.

The citizens' council's successes - formation of a Transportation Management Association,

the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association and sponsorship of public forums on such diverse topics as police regionalization, conservation of open spaces through land trusts, recycling and the emergency 911 system - reflect its original goal of being a catalyst to encourage educated citizen input into regional matters.

Representing the Back Mountain's nine municipalities, committees on water, solid waste, planning and zoning, recreation, communications, transportation and municipal services regularly share information with the citizens' council and the public.

"We set the stage; we bring in the speakers and provide a meet-

ing place," said president Will Conyngham. "If enough people are interested, we'll help them in whatever ways we can."

The nine municipalities represented are Dallas and Harveys Lake boroughs, and Dallas, Franklin, Jackson, Kingston, Lake, Lehman and Ross townships.

In a recent speech before the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association, formed in early 1992 as a sister organization to the citizens' council, Conyngham outlined the council's accomplishments and future plans.

The council recently completed a zoning map of the entire Back Mountain, which it will share with area municipalities to encourage

officials to think regionally instead of simply within the borders of their respective municipalities.

The council's second annual home beautification contest brought in double the number of entries from last year, Conyngham said.

Advice from the citizens' council helped the Back Mountain Transportation Management Association, convince the state to allocate funding for installation of traffic lights and other major improvements at eight intersections on the Route 309-415 highway corridor.

Plans for 1993 include a community quality of life assessment, pinpointing problem areas and attempts to coordinate solutions

by the member municipalities working together, Conyngham said.

The council also plans more discussions on preservation of open space and important historic or scenic features through the formation of a land trust, which would be formed as a sister organization, advised by the council.

"The Huntsville Reservoir, which I consider to be one of the jewels of the Back Mountain, is a good example of an important scenic and natural area to be preserved," Conyngham said.

Regional planning and a consolidated police force are two other hot topics on the citizens' council's 1993 public forum list.

Council Facts

The Back Mountain Citizens' Council was formed in 1988 and encompasses Dallas and Harveys Lake boroughs and Dallas, Franklin, Jackson, Kingston, Lake, Lehman and Ross townships.

- There are approximately 60 active members; individual dues are \$10 per year, with business memberships available.

- Its main objectives are public education, assisting local municipal officials and encouragement of citizen input and participation in regional planning and development.

- The citizen's council's officers are Will Conyngham, president; Ray Boyle, vice-president; Ben Phillips, secretary and Tom Winter, PhD, treasurer.

Council spawned business group

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

A sister organization to the Back Mountain Citizens' Council, the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association was founded in the spring of 1992 by ten members citizens' council members to promote business in the Back Mountain.

Currently the association has 86 professional and non-professional members from many local businesses and all phases of the work force: retail, food service, manufacturing and the media.

Dues are \$75 per year for each company.

The group meets every month, with a guest speaker.

Last year's main activity was a holiday open house the second weekend of December, sponsored by 22 businesses. Prize drawings, tours and refreshments were featured at each business, as well as a map showing their locations.

President Bart Slocum listed several upcoming activities:

- The publication of a directory of all members in the spring.
- A July open house planned to coincide with the Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction.
- Publication of an information packet detailing the area's activities, facilities, shops and restaur-

rants for all 1700 students registering in the fall at Misericordia.

- A special fall program to help children of low-income families in the Dallas schools purchase school clothes and supplies.

The association's officers are: Bart Slocum of Slocum Insurance, president; Joe Mooney of the Pine Brook Inn, vice-president; Mary Ann Williams of the Quilt Racque, treasurer; Fran Ochman of Tom Ochman Coins, secretary and Stephanie Reisch, an antiques dealer, assistant secretary.

Anyone seeking information about the group may call Slocum at 675-1167.

Lehman gives tax collectors incentive

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Lake-Lehman superintendent of schools Mrs. Nancy Davis described a proposed state school aid plan which may bring more money to the district at the school board's regular meeting February 9.

Additional money may come to the district in the form of an equity supplement, part of a proposed plan to aid poorer school districts, Mrs. Davis said. She expects to receive specific figures from Harrisburg within the next few weeks.

In other business, the district enacted an incentive plan for local tax collectors who also collect school district real estate taxes. Currently, unpaid real estate tax bills are sent to the Luzerne County Tax Office for collection, which costs the district five percent of the total tax bill (face value, penalty fees and interest), according to business manager Ray Bowersox.

Under the incentive plan, a tax collector who collects more real estate taxes than in 1992 will receive \$50 for each .01 percent of the difference between the two years.

Bowersox figured that if each of the district's six tax collectors reduced the number of delinquent tax bills turned over to Luzerne County for collection by .02 percent, the district would gain approximately \$27,000, while the tax collectors would each earn \$100.

Compensation for local tax collectors will remain the same for the next four years: \$1,500 for office space in their homes, \$2.50 for each tax bill collected, \$4 for each adjusted real estate tax bill prepared after addition or abatement and \$3 for each per capita tax bill collected.

The board passed a resolution commending athletes Richard Davis, who recently scored his 1,000th career point in basket-

ball and Brian Kelly, recently named Soccer Player of the Year by Parade magazine. Kelly has accepted a full scholarship to Duke University.

Bus route 22.2 was extended two miles to a new turn-around point for the rest of the year, due to a property transfer, which will cost the district \$1.97 per mile or a total of \$376.36 for the rest of the school year.

The board approved the following personnel matters:

- The resignations of high school soccer coach William Tooley and girls' varsity volleyball coach Robert Rogers.

- The retirement of junior high school secretary Emily R. Jenkins at the end of the school year.

Property transfers

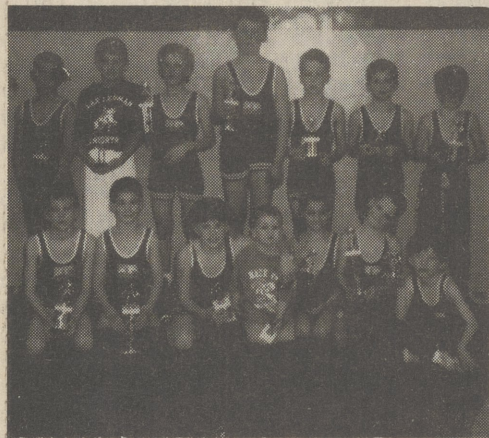
Property transfers recorded at the Luzerne County Court House from January 29, 1993 to February 5, 1993. Prices are extrapolated from transfer taxes paid.

Louis C. Harris to Housing Authority of County Luzerne, 250 First Ave., Kingston, property, 2

parcels Jackson Twp., \$72,000.

Thomas Shorts to Gloria A. Coolbaugh, RR 470 Ruggles Rd., Lake Twp., property 1 ac., Lake Twp., \$25,000.

Federal Natl. Mbg. Assn. to James D. Block, 3785 Chase Rd., Shavertown, property 1.02 acres, Twp. of Jackson, \$77,000.



Wrestling club places in meets

The Back Mountain Wrestling Club recently participated in three meets. Left photo, placing at the Towanda tournament were, kneeling from left, Louis Spurlin, 2nd place; David Spurlin, 3rd place; Matthew Shaw, 1st place; Brad Thompson, 4th place. Standing, from left, Nick Raczkowski, 1st place; Matt Marchakitus, 4th place; Rich Harris, 2nd place; Lloyd Droppers, 2nd place; Tim Shaw, 3rd place; Mike Yenason, 4th place, B.J. Lewis, 3rd place. Montoursville tournament, center photo, front row from left, Aaron Kubasik, 3rd place; Mark Shaw, 3rd place; Andrew Shaw, 3rd place. Back row, Louis Spurlin, 2nd place; Rich Harris, 3rd place; Brett Larson, 3rd place; Zack Ragukas, 4th place. Not shown, Nick Raczkowski, 3rd place. Danville tournament, right photo, front row from left, Louis spurlin, 1st place; Brad Thompson, 4th place. Rear, Jeremy Naugle, 2nd place; Brett Larson, 1st place.

Small Wonders Nursery School "The Right Start"

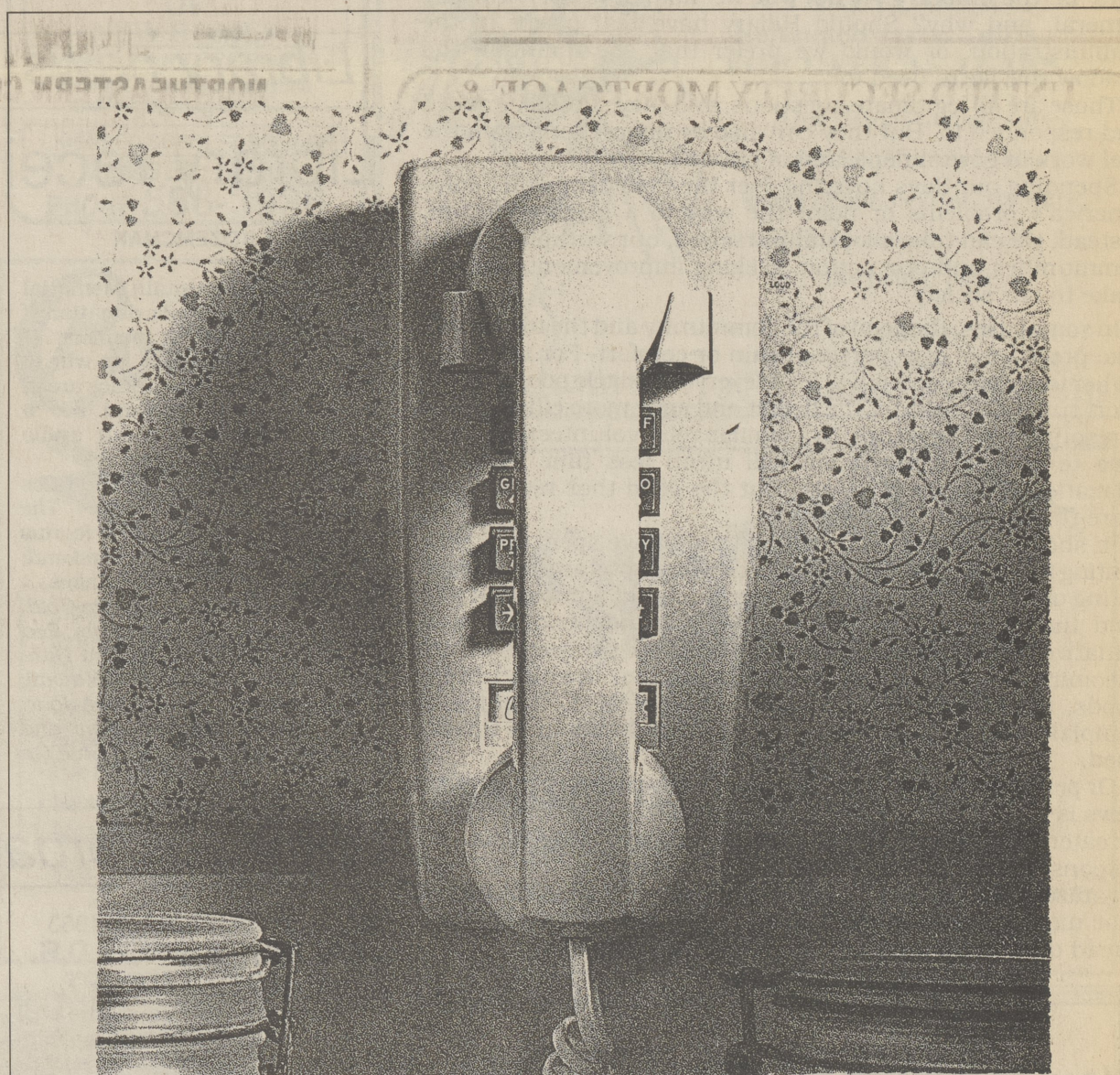
Small Wonders, located near Carverton Road in Shavertown will begin serving families from the Back Mountain Area.

The Center will offer A.M. & P.M. Nursery School Sessions beginning September '93.

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