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Most towns don't regulate cable TV rates

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Instead of regulating basic cable television prices, the federal Cable Television Act of 1992 may have created a loophole that could mean a windfall for cable television companies and higher prices for viewers.

Under the Cable Act, local municipalities are allowed to regulate cable television prices for basic service within their boundaries, and have until February 15 to let the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) know that they intend to do so.

The act also sets "benchmark rates" or fair prices for basic cable service, which cable companies

can't exceed.

Locally, basic service is the cheapest available 12-channel package, hastily put together in March, 1993, before the Cable Act went into effect, by the two cable companies serving the Back Mountain.

Of the seven area municipalities receiving cable service, only Jackson Township has decided to consider setting up a cable television commission.

Jackson Township is served by Cable TV of Hazleton, which charges \$6.88 per month for 12-channel basic service. The next level of service, a total of 38 channels, costs \$19.49 a month.

The other six municipalities - Dallas and Harveys Lake boroughs

"The Cable Act was sold to the public as a way to protect customers from more rate increases. This will not happen."

Jeff Box
Kingston Township manager

and Kingston, Dallas, Lehman and Franklin townships - are served by Tele-Media. Officials in these communities see no reason to form a cable commission.

"This has happened across the country," said Kingston Township manager Jeff Box. "It's a loophole in the law, made so that the cable television systems can tie their pricing systems and charge whatever they want to."

Tele-Media's "Lifeline Basic," the cheapest plan, costs \$8.50 per month, while "Basic Plus," with 30 channels, runs \$21.84 per month.

Both Tele-Media and Cable TV offer special channels - Disney, PRISM, HBO, CINEMAX and others - at an additional cost.

"We can regulate only the bottom 12 channels and the customers who have the Lifeline Basic

package," Box said. "Tele-Media has told us that only five percent of their customers in Kingston Township have it. We can't regulate channels if they're part of the Basic Plus or any other packages."

Box said that the Kingston Township supervisors decided not to set up a cable commission because they believe that the cost of implementing cable regulation would outweigh its benefits.

Congressman Paul Kanjorski has also seen the Cable Act's legal loopholes.

In a letter dated November 6, 1993, he wrote to FCC chairman James Quello that he believes that a number of cable companies have

"exploited loopholes in the regulations to raise, rather than lower, their cable rates."

He has asked the FCC to review the situation and prevent cable companies from circumventing the law or trying to blame rate increases on the Cable Act.

But municipalities which decide not to regulate their own cable rates may leave customers at the cable companies' mercy. The FCC doesn't automatically become their franchising authority by default.

"If a municipality doesn't set up its own cable franchising authority and no one complains to

See CABLE TV, pg 3

Winter weather wears out welcome

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

When Connie Brewer drove to the Back Mountain from her home in Harrisburg, she was surprised to see how much snow had fallen on the region in the past week.

"We have enough, but you have lots more," she said as she helped her mother, Pearl Conrad of the Meadows Apartments, load groceries into her car. "Still, we shouldn't complain. This is the first bad winter in a long time."

"There's so much that they don't know what to do with it already," Mrs. Conrad said.

After a week of weather forecasts filled with two four-letter words - snow and cold - area residents seem to be making the best of it.

Preparing for a storm January 3, residents had cleaned local supermarket shelves of bread, milk, pet foods and other necessities.

Four days later a second storm coated the Back Mountain with ice and several more inches of snow, which an area hunter reported was knee-deep by January 8.

See WINTER, pg 3

"The cold and wet are hard to take. You can only wear gloves so much."

Andy Scholes
While collecting carts at Mr. Z's Market



A COLD JOB - Bundled up against the cold weather, Andy Scholes collects shopping carts in Mr. Z's parking lot.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Admission fee for girls' sports urged

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Marianne Baseski says that allowing free admission to girls' sports events while charging admission to three boys' sports - varsity football, wrestling and basketball - is unequal treatment.

In a letter to the Dallas school board read at the January 10 committee-of-the-whole meeting, she wrote, "It's time that Dallas entered the 21st century and treated female athletes equally. Dallas is the only district that doesn't charge admission to girls' sports. If you think that the girls don't notice, you're wrong."

"Just because we don't charge admission doesn't mean that there's inequality," said board member Dr. Richard Coslett. "We do everything for the girls that we do for the boys. What motivates the players is the number of people in the stands, not how many of

"Just because we don't charge admission doesn't mean that there's inequality."

Dr. Richard Coslett
Board member

them paid admission."

Superintendent Gerald Wycallis said that if the district charged admission, it would have to pay \$22 for a ticket seller and \$20 for a ticket taker, positions filled by the teachers. Using volunteer ticket sellers and takers could result in the teachers filing a labor grievance, he said.

"No sport pays for itself," he said. "Football brings in the most revenue, but it isn't self-support-

See GIRLS' SPORTS, pg 3

Pioneer Ave. parents fear speeding cars

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Drivers find Pioneer Avenue an easy shortcut from Route 309 to Dallas Corners. No stop signs, traffic lights or speed traps.

Residents compare it to Daytona, with traffic regularly zipping along at speeds well above the posted 35 mph limit.

The center of the controversy is the stretch of Pioneer between Overbrook Road and Main Road.

During the 13 years that Roy Moen has lived on Pioneer Ave., the traffic and the speeders have become worse - so dangerous that he doesn't let his daughter walk alone three houses down the road to play with friends.

Dwight Davis, who has lived

his entire life in the same house on Pioneer Ave. near Moen, has also seen traffic conditions deteriorate.

"People zip up and down here like it's Daytona," Moen said. "I'm a hard guy to miss, but I've had lots of close calls just going out to get my newspaper and mail."

"You're taking your life in your hands just going out to your mailbox," Davis said. "It gets a little scary in the winter, when it's dark in the evenings and you have to stop."

Moen estimated some passing cars' speeds at 60 mph., even when going over slippery spots.

"When it snows like crazy, it doesn't make a difference," he said.

See PIONEER AVE., pg 12

They give part of themselves to strangers

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Six employees of The Meadows complex in Dallas have given a dozen gallons of the most precious substance on Earth to perfect strangers. They have donated at least a gallon of blood each, making them members of the Gallon Club, an elite group of people who have donated at least that quantity.

Administrator Tom Sweeney has donated two gallons, while maintenance supervisor Andy Novak has donated a record six gallons.

Considering that donors can give only one unit (a pint) of blood every eight weeks, that's a lot of blood - eight units to the gallon.

January has been designated National Blood Donor Month, a time for the American Red Cross Northeast Regional Blood Bank to make sure there's an adequate supply of blood to start the new year.

The Back Mountain's first blood drive is January 17 at The Meadows Nursing Center, from 1-6 p.m..

Novak, the top donor, said that he began giving blood about seven or eight years ago when a friend needed it. Now he donates often.

See THEY GIVE, pg 12



THE REGULARS - Staff members of The Meadows complex recently receiving their Gallon-Plus blood donor pins were, standing from left: dietary assistant Eric Traver, Meadows Nursing Home administrator Tom Sweeney and Hi-Meadows maintenance supervisor Andrew Novak; seated: nursing assistant Barbara Charucci, Mary Ann Fosko, R.N. and activities assistant Nancy Space.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Stamp collecting offers worlds of fun for all ages. Page 5

Dallas girls' basketball team, coach work for the future. It's paying off. Page 9.

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