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## Small water companies seek big rates

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Customers of four small Back Mountain water companies owned by National Utilities, Inc. may want to save water and shower with a friend if the Public Utility Commission approves a substantial rate increase for them.

The move has already aroused the ire of the Kingston Township supervisors, who passed a resolution protesting the Scranton-based utility's proposed 68 percent increase for the Midway Manor Water Company at their January 12 meeting.

The resolution urges residents affected by the rate increase to write to National Utilities and protest them.

Midway Manor's 166 customers pay a flat quarterly rate of \$33.50, which would jump to \$56.28, regardless of how many gallons they use, according to National Utilities' president Joe Bontrager.

Customers using an outside garden hose must also pay an additional \$34 yearly fee for a hose permit, while swimming pools aren't regulated, Bontrager said.

"This is our first rate increase in a decade," he said. "We had to increase the rates because our operating expenses,

### Some customers could see their water bills rise above \$400 a year

especially our mandatory water tests, have increased drastically."

The water company is required to test twice a month for fecal coliform bacteria and once a year for 88 different chemical substances, including lead, copper and radioactive materials, Bontrager said.

He added that the rate increase was necessary because National Utilities had

consolidated 19 small water companies into three divisions, each with its own rate structure.

Other proposed quarterly flat rate increases are:

- Oak Hill Water Company, serving 140 customers in Lehman Township: 46.7 percent, from \$72.90 to \$106.95.
- Worden Place Water Company, serv-

ing 98 customers at Harveys Lake: 13 percent, from \$99.60 to \$112.50.

• Rhodes Terrace Water Company, serving 23 customers at Harveys Lake: 49.3 percent, from \$49.14 to \$73.88.

A large percentage of the Harveys Lake customers are seasonal residents, Bontrager said.

National Utilities asked the Public Utility Commission (PUC) for the rate increase November 8, 1993; a public meeting was held January 6, 1994, Bontrager said.

He anticipates that the PUC will hold public hearings on the rate increases before it approves them.

## Shawanese Post Office reaches century mark

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

The Shawanese Post Office at Harveys Lake, a familiar landmark to several generations, celebrated its 100th birthday January 12, with a cake, soda in champagne glasses and recollections about it and the town's past.

Postmaster Nancy Smith may not have to contend with Indian raids, as the first Shawanese postmaster did, but she still must take care of mail for 108 post office boxes and 35 general delivery customers.

"The mail comes in at 7:35 a.m. and must be ready at 8 a.m.," she said. "I also sell money orders, stamps and packaging products, fill out reports by hand and am the receptionist and bookkeeper."

Tucked into a 10 by 15-foot section of Nick DiVeronica's store, the post office is easy to miss if you don't know what you're looking for.

The sign over the door is almost as wide - 15 feet - as the entire office.

Inside, brass post office boxes and an ornate wood counter, complete with brass

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POST PHOTOS/GRACE R. DOVE

**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION** - On hand to celebrate the Shawanese Post Office's first 100 years were, above photo from left, Harveys Lake mayor Richard Boice, former postmaster Mable Puterbaugh, postmaster Nancy L. Smith and Wilkes-Barre postmaster Bill Brady. In the photo at right, Nancy L. Smith shows off the birthday cake, which customers shared January 12 to celebrate the tiny offices first century of operation.



## Gold wants fellow board member out

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Better late than never wasn't good enough for new Lake-Lehman school board director Pat Gold. Told that Karen Whipple—who had been appointed to the board in December—hadn't filed a financial statement on time, Gold called for her resignation at the January 11 school board meeting.

Lake-Lehman solicitor Peter Savage said that Whipple didn't do anything wrong by filing a financial statement late. She turned it in just before the meeting.

Gold called the late filing an ethics violation and called for Whipple to resign. The financial statement asks the member to list their place of employment, main source of income, any major loans, large gifts which they might have received from members of the community and whether or not they work for any companies which the district does business with. It should be completed by every board member within 10 days of taking office.

Whipple said that she hadn't known about the form until Gold called to ask her about it January 11.

She completed the form and turned it in to district financial manager Ray Bowersox before the work session.

When Gold called for Whipple's resignation, the work session erupted with shouts, as board members defended Whipple while members of the audience shouted "Send her to jail!" and "Bread and water!"

An irate James Nelligan shook his finger at the board and chal-



PAT GOLD



KAREN WHIPPLE

lenged them for not taking any action on the matter.

When board president Joseph "Red" Jones called the situation

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## Record snow hits, towns, people cope

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

With the memory of last year's "Storm of the Century" still fresh in their minds, people in the Back Mountain tussled with a record January snowfall Monday.

Joe Smith was out on his uncle Burt's snowshoes at 8:30 Tuesday morning, taking his coonhound, Josh, for a romp in the snow.

The 13-year-old Franklin Township resident had spent several hours Monday evening helping neighbors dig out just for fun, first the next-door neighbor whose husband wasn't feeling well, then the guy two houses down who had hurt his back in a truck accident.

"Do you think we'll have school Tuesday?" he asked, making short

*"This winter wasn't that unusual. We've lucked out the past few years and had very easy winters."*

Ron Yankes  
National Weather Service meteorologist

work of a powdery drift blocking the driveway.

Harveys Lake mayor Rick Boice had just lifted a snow emergency January 10, only to declare it again Monday afternoon.

"I never thought that I'd see so many problems so close together my first month in office," he joked.

During a snow emergency, Boice is in charge of the borough, manning his office, staying in touch with road crews and emergency services and even taking

his turn on the plow truck when needed.

The Municipal Authority, which Boice also heads, often sends its equipment out to assist the borough road crew, Boice said.

"We'll do whatever is necessary to keep the roads open, even hiring independent contractors if we have to," he said. "In storms like this we also try to help out on the private roads."

Franklin township secretary Sandy Race reported that road

workers had been out for 17 hours Monday and were back on the road at 5 a.m. Tuesday.

Tuesday morning was pay day, but the men hadn't come to her house for their checks yet, she said.

According to National Weather Service meteorologist Ron Yankes, this is the snowiest January on record - and we still have 11 more days to go.

Monday's storm dumped 16.4 inches of new snow on top of the 20 inches already on the ground at the weather station in Avoca.

The Back Mountain got more. At least it felt like it.

"We'll break more records this month," Yankes said. "We expect flurries for the next three days

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## Teacher sues Lehman over position change

### Pat Peiffer has four active suits against district

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

A Lake-Lehman teacher sent back to the classroom after her central office job was cut is suing the district to get her old job back, even though she is currently making more money as a teacher than she did as an administrator.

Reading teacher Patricia Peiffer had served as the district's coordinator of federal programs, a full-time central office position, until June, 1992, when that job was reduced to half-time and given to curriculum director Dr. Stephen Boston, whose job as curriculum supervisor had also been cut to half-time. Boston left the district several months later for another job.

Peiffer was reassigned to a classroom position teaching reading at the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School, and now teaches reading at the Ross Township

Elementary School.

She is appealing the reassignment, which she terms a demotion, to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas and the Secretary of Education.

The district hasn't filled Boston's position, although it recently hired an education secretary to help complete federal grant forms and other paperwork.

Peiffer is represented by attorney Mary Catherine Frye, chief counsel to the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals (PAESSP), who contends that

Peiffer's "bumping rights" were violated when she was told to return to the classroom.

"Bumping rights means that if you have seniority and the proper credentials and your job is eliminated, you can bump someone with less seniority from another job that you're qualified for," said Terri Houck, PAESSP director of government relations.

This part of Peiffer's suit is a protective appeal of her recent demotion hearing before the school board, which upheld the

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■ Len Annetta finds the fire, sets records at Salisbury State. Now he'd like to coach. Page 9.

■ Cheerleaders are raising funds to take trip to national meet in Orlando. Page 3.

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