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The Dallas Post

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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Loophole lets towns tax above allowed limits

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Facing financial needs that exceed allowable tax levels, two area second-class townships have taken advantage of a provision in the law which allows them to impose additional taxes while keeping the basic property tax millage the same.

Lehman Township expects to enact a two-mill tax for road equipment in 1995, which will generate approximately \$13,000.

Jackson Township has voted to tax

residents an additional three mills for debt service and one mill for road repairs.

According to Lehman Township treasurer Al Cragle, the township is already charging the maximum property tax (14 mills) allowed by law for second-class townships.

"We can't go over 14 mills without a court order showing that we have already used up all other possible sources of money," he said.

Special purpose taxes for road machinery, debt service and road repairs are legal ways to raise additional revenues, Cragle

said.

"We may use the monies generated by these special taxes only for their specific purposes," he said. "We can't use our road machinery tax money to pave roads or buy office equipment, for example."

Jackson Township's three-mill debt service tax, enacted to pay off the \$197,118 balance of a loan incurred when the township had to clean up contaminated soil at the municipal building, will last only until April, 1999, when the loan is satisfied, according to supervisor Walter Glogowski.

"We legally can't use this money for any

other purpose," he said.

Glogowski expects Jackson Township's one-mill road repair tax to bring in an additional \$40,000.

"Our predecessors didn't maintain the roads the way they were supposed to," he said. "Now we're paying for it. Many township roads need lots of attention to make them safe for the people to travel."

Townships may impose several other special purpose taxes: for recreation, permanent improvements to municipal property, fire companies, ambulance service, street lights or police protection for a

specific section of the township, construction of a municipal building or libraries, Cragle said.

In some cases, either the length of time the tax may be collected or the maximum millage are limited.

"As municipalities grow, they need more money for more services," Cragle said. "Collecting a road machinery tax, for example, will save money in the long run because it is deposited into an interest-bearing account until it's used. We'll also avoid paying interest on a loan."



Deck the halls with..
..fishing lures??

FISHERMAN'S FRIEND - Harveys Lake resident Andrew West puts the finishing touches on his seven-foot Christmas tree

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE
trimmed with more than 400 trout, bass and walleye lures. West got the idea from a photo in a magazine.

Arnold West brings a new look to tree

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

A Harveys Lake man has added a new twist to an old holiday custom.

Arnold West's Christmas tree is decorated with more than 400 colorful ornaments, which may not seem unusual until you notice the decorations all are fishing lures.

"I saw a small one in a picture in a magazine several years ago," West said. "I decided that when I retired, I'd make one. I've been retired for two years, so this was the year."

Colored mini-lights complement the lures' bright colors and are reflected in the

large metal spoons and flashers strung on the large artificial tree's branches.

Even the garland is made of lures - long strings of silver metallic lures and small red beads on spider wire known as "Christmas trees."

"It isn't hard to accumulate lures," he said. "I've been fishing for 40 years and probably have enough lures to do another tree."

West's love of the outdoors extends to the walls of his home, where a monster seven-lb. catfish he caught at the lake, five huge largemouth bass from Lake Wallenpaupack and the head of a large four-point jackalope are proudly displayed.

"That jackalope gave me a tough time," West wisecracked. "They're fast."

Like all fishermen, West has his share of fish stories.

"I missed a state record rainbow trout two years ago," he said. "I was fishing off Hanson's at the time. He was actually in the net three times, but the third time he bumped against the net, unhooked himself and got away."

His family didn't believe him when he first told them about his planned design for the Christmas tree, he said.

"They didn't think I had the patience to do it," he said. "Now they rave about it."

DALLAS TOWNSHIP 1995 PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	1994	1995	% Chg.
Total budget	\$1,447,500	\$1,396,000	-3.5%
Property tax income	\$115,000	\$120,000	4.0%
Number of taxables	4,100	4,101	
Millage rate	6	6	
Average cost per property	\$28	\$29	3.6%

Dallas Twp. taxes will stay at 6 mills

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

When the Dallas Township supervisors approve the final 1995 budget, property taxes will again be held at six mills.

Continued growth and sound financial management have helped the six-mill tax continue, said township secretary-treasurer Glenn Howell.

Although total income has decreased, largely due to decreases in intergovernmental revenues, tax revenues have basically held the line over the past several years, Howell said.

According to the preliminary budget, total income has decreased by \$46,500 or four percent, to \$1,081,000, while inter-

governmental revenue has decreased by \$52,000 or 19 percent to \$218,000.

Total tax revenues have increased only \$5,000 or .06 percent, to \$804,000.

Total income and expenditures have decreased by \$51,500 or 3.5 percent to \$1,396,000.

Cuts in health and welfare and highways will be offset by more money spent for public safety.

The police budget will increase by \$66,600 or 19 percent to \$416,600, mostly due to police officers' raises.

"As the younger officers advance in rank, their salaries increase accordingly," Howell said.

See DALLAS, pg 2

Financial aid available to pay heating bills

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Families living on low or fixed incomes may now apply for assistance with their winter heating bills through a government program administered by the Luzerne County Public Assistance Office.

The office is now accepting applications for the federal program Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP.

Coordinated through the Commission on Economic Opportunity, the program makes direct payments to vendors for a maximum of \$250 for heating fuel, kerosene, coal, wood or wood pellets for qualifying families.

Customers using electric heat may contact UGI at 1-800-844-9276 or their rural electric cooperative for an application. Pennsylvania Gas & Water customers may call 829-3461.

"Customers should apply as soon as possible," said Mike Petruska, UGI residential customer account supervisor. "Money is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis."

A crisis assistance program also helps people whose furnaces or pipes have broken or who owe more than \$200 on their heating bill and have a current payment

See HEAT ASSISTANCE, pg 10

Mossback's search for Santa

A lesson from a lizard

By T.T. CRATCHIT
Special to The Post

Mossback hopped until he couldn't hop anymore. Then he walked, mile after mile after mile, until he felt his little webbed feet would fall off. And still he hadn't reached the North Pole.

Now, to top off Mossback's problems, it was getting dark.

"I'd better stop for the night," Mossback said, exhausted but pleased by the prospect of bedding down for the night and having a bite to eat. He set up his sleeping bag shaped like a lily pad and reached into his green bag, bringing out a big, fat, juicy freeze-dried fly.

Mossback, chewing thoughtfully, considered his next step.

"By tomorrow, I'll probably reach the North Pole," he decided. With that, he ate another freeze-dried fly. "Then I'll let Mr. Santa Claus have a nice piece of my mind! I'll find out just why he hates frogs so much!"

His stomach full, Mossback climbed into his sleeping bag and

closed his eyes. He fell asleep almost immediately.

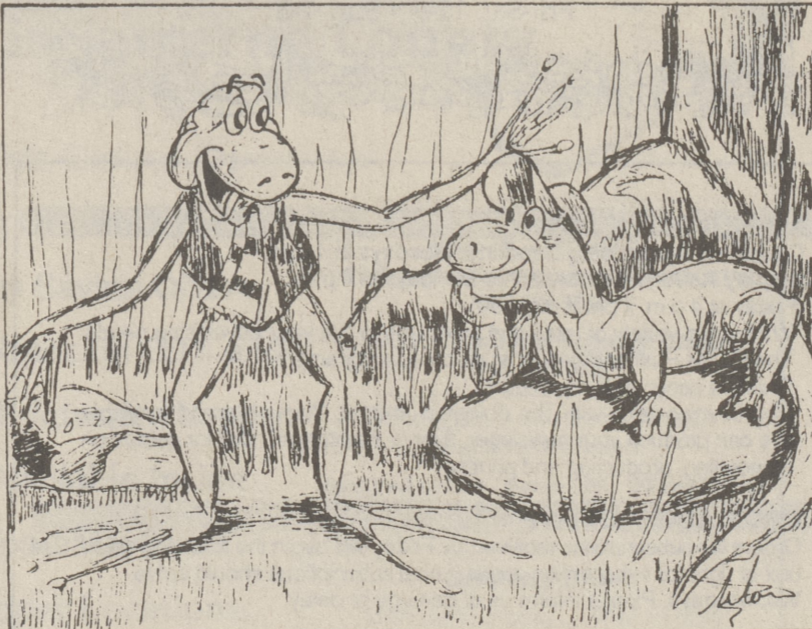
When he opened his eyes again, the sun was high in the sky. Mossback felt like a new frog, well-rested and ready to travel. He packed his gear and was just setting out when he heard a tiny muffled sob.

Mossback looked behind a tree and saw a tiny lizard, crying his eyes out.

"What's wrong?" Mossback asked, cradling the baby lizard in his arms and patting him. "You act as if you've lost your best friend."

"Worse," sobbed the little lizard. "I haven't had anything to eat in days. I don't know how to hunt and I'm just a baby lizard. But lizards don't teach their children anything, so I don't know anything."

Mossback thought back to the difficult days when he was first on his own, learning how to fend for himself. Frogs don't teach their children anything, either.



He reached into his green bag and pulled out three huge freeze-dried flies. "Here, have these," he said, patting the little lizard on the head. The baby ate the first one with gusto, then slowed down and savored the remaining pair.

"And now, you must learn to hunt," Mossback said. He spent two days teaching the little lizard

to hunt flies on his own. Then he showed him how to float on a lily pad and how to make a little home for himself. By the end of the second day, the little lizard was a mighty hunter and a skilled builder.

See MOSSBACK, pg 10

■ **Forney on banking.** Glenn Forney reflects on 40 years in the business. Page 3.

■ **Tough puffs.** Lake-Lehman held its first Powder Puff football game, but the cheerleaders didn't bare their legs, and it's a good thing. Page 11.

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