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Pending bills would shift school tax to income

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Taxes and death may be the only two sure things in life, but Pennsylvania legislators are trying to help out at least on the tax end of the deal.

Designed to give districts the option to shift the tax base from property to income, the School District Property Tax Reduction Act proposes to tax residents with higher incomes instead.

If passed by the assembly, the legislation will allow school dis-

tricts to cut real estate taxes and enact a two percent earned income tax, which the member municipalities would not receive a share of. Taxable income will not include pensions or interest on savings accounts.

All Act 511 "nuisance taxes," such as the per capita, occupational privilege and real estate taxes, and in Lake-Lehman a mechanical device tax, would also be eliminated.

Before it could be implemented, the tax would have to be approved by voters in each school district in

"If this is not the finished product, at least it's a start."

State Sen. Charles Lemmond

a referendum.

The bill was approved by the state Senate December 13 and the House Finance Committee May 2.

Before Governor Ridge can sign it into law, the act must be approved by the assembly during its

fall session. Because the assembly amended it twice, it must then be sent back to the Senate for another vote - and possibly more amendments - before Ridge can approve it.

Another bill, Senate Bill 284, passed May 22, is a constitutional amendment designed to accompany Senate Bill 2. Also known as the Homestead Exemption, the joint resolution allows local governments and school districts to deduct a portion of the real estate tax from a property's assessed value.

For example a property assessed at \$10,000 with a \$2,000 homestead exemption would be taxed on the remaining \$8,000 of assessed value.

The Homestead Exemption could be used to reduce the tax basis for home owners, since it can be applied only to owner-occupied property.

According to figures provided by Representative George Hasay, if Senate Bill 2 is passed, residents of the Dallas school district could save an average of 78 percent of their school property taxes,

while Lake-Lehman residents could save 71 percent.

"Savings for individual homeowners may be higher or lower than the average, depending on their income and how much they presently pay in real estate taxes," Hasay said.

The average real estate tax bill in the Dallas school district, with a millage rate of 158, is \$811. In Lake-Lehman's Luzerne County municipalities the average bill is \$791, based on 213 mills, while in

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Light fee late payers face liens

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

LEHMAN - Lake Silkworth residents who haven't paid their 1995 light fund assessments should settle up with the township as soon as possible.

At their regular July 15 meeting the supervisors unanimously voted to file liens against the properties of anyone whose light fund bills, which average between \$10 and \$22 per year, are in arrears. "Some of these bills have been past due for six or seven years," said supervisor David Sutton.

Residents living within 200 feet of a street light pay 22¢ per foot of road frontage for lots containing buildings and 12¢ per front foot for empty lots, according to treasurer Al Cragle. The lake's 40 street lights cost the township \$4,500 per year, he added.

The supervisors told zoning officer Charles Bartlett to revoke the permit for Lutheran Welfare Foundation's July 28 Hospice Hundred bicycle tour if its organizers paint arrows and other markings on the surface of township roads. "For several years we haven't allowed anyone to paint on our roads," said Doug Ide. "We

See LIGHT BILLS, pg. 8



IN THE BIDDING

PHOTO BY DAVE KOZEMCHAK

Sue Jordan consulted on her portable phone during last weekend's 50th Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction. She must have gotten the go-ahead, since she was one of the more spirited bidders at the event. Mary Chappell looked on. Full page of photos, page 6.

New rules hike fees on temporary merchants

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

KINGSTON TOWNSHIP - It will cost transient merchants more to do business in the township next year.

With William Tippet casting the lone dissenting vote, the supervisors approved the first reading of two ordinances which raise merchants' fees from \$10 per year to \$300 per month and allows them to set up in the township for a maximum of 30 days.

Merchants set up in temporary structures and tents must either tie into the public sewage disposal system or provide a portable lavatory, obtain a state highway occupancy permit if they're located along a state road and comply with all zoning regulations for setbacks and parking for the zone where they are set up.

Farmers selling their own produce are exempt from the \$300 fee.

"I voted against the ordinance requiring them to have a Job

Johnny because I'm opposed to that requirement," Tippet said. "I don't object to the fee increase."

The supervisors also unanimously voted to refuse to allow Luzerne County to use its municipal radio frequency when the new 911 emergency system is implemented next year.

"We hold the federal permit for the frequency," said township manager Jeff Box after the meeting. "The supervisors feel our public works departments will need it."

The county had asked both Kingston and Dallas townships for permission to add their work frequencies to its radio frequency inventory, he added.

The "For Sale" sign will remain on the 1992 Chevrolet Caprice unmarked police cruiser for the near future. The township received only one bid of \$2,555, with no bid bond, from Winners Motors in Long Island City, NY, and unanimously rejected it.

"We're asking for a minimum bid of \$4,000," Box said.

Kids learn about, perform Shakespeare at Misericordia

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

DALLAS - "This green plot shall be a stage" and other lines from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* echoed across the lawn of College Misericordia last weekend during the Theatre-on-the-Green's annual workshops and performances.

Children from Mercy Services and Project REMAIN in Wilkes-Barre attended a special "Shakespeare for Kids" session Friday, where they learned about The Bard, his life and works and saw a scene performed.

Later they also learned the same scene, rewritten by workshop students of Mrs. Jean Lipski in lan-

guage they could understand, and performed it for their friends.

"In Shakespeare's time they didn't have TV, cars or hair dryers," Dr. Agnes Cordoni told the kids, who reacted with astonishment and disbelief. "The theater didn't have a roof, so if you wanted to see the play and it rained, you got wet."

They were fascinated by models of the Globe Theatre, built several centuries ago on the shore of the Thames River in London, where Shakespeare's plays were first performed.

One of the materials they took home was a Shakespeare coloring book containing a connect-the-

See SHAKESPEARE, pg 8

William Penn's legacy lives in Back Mountain

By JACK HILSHER
Post Correspondent

BACK MOUNTAIN - Quakers? Here, in the Back Mountain? Can't be. But it's true, and although they dress and talk like everyone (they don't say "thee" or "thou"

any more) these are Quakers nonetheless.

Perhaps the most misunderstood sect in all Christendom has a local administrator (they call them "Clerks") in Susan Merrill of Shavertown. Susan says, "Someone has to handle paperwork. I don't really administer, but I do keep some records. We also have a treasurer, an assistant clerk in Beverly Williams, and one of us keeps a scrapbook. That's about it."

No minister is mentioned because there isn't one. Quakers like unprogrammed and unstructured worship, which are appealing features to those tired of rigid regulations and beliefs. They do not believe a minister is necessary to stand between one and one's God.

Susan and her husband Sam, a math instructor at Wilkes, have been Quakers for 23 years. She says, "One popular misconception of us is that you are 'born' into Quakerism, like, say the Amish. That is wrong... we have chosen to accept this way of life and Quaker beliefs, and so did at least two-thirds of our members. It isn't something we are because our parents were."

Another Back Mountain Quaker is Herb Quick of Kunkle. Quick, a retired professor of French and History at Wyoming Seminary, and his wife Gwen became Quakers 20 years ago. Herb says, "I was a Presbyterian and Gwen was a Methodist, but we thought long and hard about what we wanted to do. We respected the Quaker commitment to peace and justice, we liked their firm belief



The Quick family of Kunkle, Quakers for 20 years. Kathy and Jennifer, front, Gwen and Herb in rear.

"It isn't something we are because our parents were."

Susan Merrill
Local Quaker Clerk

in God being within us, and we have never been sorry. Our two children also joined with us, which was gratifying."

Quaker was originally a nickname because people said they "quaked" with religious zeal. Another name is also used just as often, although it is not as well-known and that is "Friends," which originated with the Biblical verse John 15:14-15: "You are my friends if you do what I command you..." Thus the local chapter is

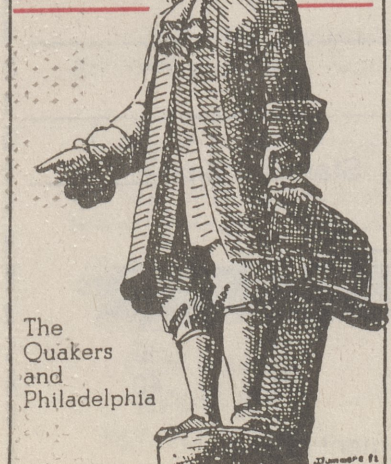
called "Religious Society of Friends," and so are national chapters.

An Englishman, George Fox, founded the society in 1652 and although there are members worldwide the heaviest concentration is in the U.S. In colonial America Quakers were found in Rhode Island, North Carolina, Western New Jersey and especially in Pennsylvania, where William Penn developed a Quaker colony which became a permanent part of Philadelphia and left many rich traditions to this day.

One reason Penn's colony prospered was because he practiced a Quaker principle and instead of warring with Indians like other colonies in the New World, he

See QUAKERS, pg 3

"LET US THEN TRY WHAT LOVE CAN DO"



This art from the cover of a piece of Quaker literature carries a 300-year-old quote from William Penn.

Happy campers

GMC motor coach owners gather in Dallas to trade tales from the road. Pg 3.

Two winners

Back Mountain teams win Junior Baseball and Senior Softball championships. Pg 9

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