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Dershimer's journey takes him to honors in Florida

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

WINTER HAVEN, FL - His life story would probably make a good movie script. A young man growing up in the 1960's who, with his knapsack on his shoulder, a dream in his heart and his thumb pointed skyward, hitchhikes from Harveys Lake to the Sunshine

state to become a professional water skier and begin his life's journey.

Dave Dershimer, now 50, and a Winter Haven, Florida city commissioner, has accomplished his ini-



DAVE DERSHIMER

"I don't see myself as anything outstanding and unusual."

Dave Dershimer
Harveys Lake native

tial dream and has since fulfilled many others he wasn't aware of at age 18, one of which was graduating from college. After graduating

from Lake-Lehman High School in 1964, Dershimer didn't set off for college like many of his friends. The first man to ski barefoot at

Harveys Lake went to work in the ski show at Cypress Gardens in Florida.

"Friends like Tom Shelbourne and Ed Edwards thought I was better than I thought I was and told me to go pro," said Dershimer of how he got the idea. "So, I sent an application in to Cypress Gardens, but didn't hear anything. The next fall I graduated and didn't

know what I was going to do, so I hitchhiked to Cypress Gardens and got a job as a helper on the shows. Eventually I got to be in the shows."

Dershimer, who has been skiing since he was six years old, loved his job. "It was a wonderful experience. To do a job all day

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Council has final say on new cop

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS BOROUGH - The Dallas Borough Police Department is anxiously awaiting the green light from the council to start the hiring process for a new full-time officer.

Jack Fowler, police chief, said he was recently informed the state approved a \$67,419 grant to cover costs of a full-time officer for three years.

"Everybody else knew about it before we did," said Fowler, obviously pleased with the decision. "Now the borough manager, Milton Lutsey, will present it before the council for final approval. We're still waiting for the actual paperwork," he said.

See NEW COP, pg. 8

Firefighter arraigned on arson charges

WILKES-BARRE - Joseph Strazdus, the Franklin Township assistant fire chief who was charged with arson last year, pled "not guilty" at his arraignment August 22. Strazdus was charged in connection with a string of arson fires set in May, 1996. The three fires included a vacant home on Village Rd. in Orange, a home on Green Castle Rd. in Centermoreland and at Emanuel Bus Lines on Village Rd.

Richard Phillips told police he was getting ready to go fishing at 2 a.m. when he saw a man, who he identified as Strazdus, running from the house on Village Rd.

Strazdus was charged with felony arson, felony criminal trespass, criminal mischief and burglary. After his arraignment, Strazdus said all he can do now is wait and see what happens.

The arrest left fellow firefighters shocked. Strazdus was a member of the Luzerne County Emergency Management Team, a rescuer at Procter and Gamble and drove an ambulance.



POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTZEK

A re-tiring artist

Brooklyn artist Alvaro Garcia has installed "Requiem: Good Goth(ic) Almighty" in the MacDonald Art Gallery at College Misericordia. Garcia cuts and combines old tires into fanciful shapes, several of which will be on display through Oct. 5. Photo story on page 7.

With growth, zoning issues gain importance

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Increasing concerns about growth in population, housing development and commercial activity have made zoning perhaps the most talked-about local issue in the Back Mountain. But in a region made up of seven distinct municipalities, the responses to zoning issues vary according to each town's codes and its officials' perception of what is important to the community.

In Dallas and Kingston townships, residential and commercial pressures tend to be the main zoning issues, while residential, conservation and agriculture zones attract more attention in the more rural parts of the area.

Both Leonard Kozick, Dallas Twp. zoning officer and Ben Gorey, Kingston Twp. zoning officer, agree that people are becoming more aware of zoning in the area. But, they concede, most people are not concerned with the issue unless it affects them directly.

Kozick said the most common complaints come from the people who have lived in the area for many years and do not appreciate new developments. "They live next

"In the past six years it has really started growing here."

Art Owen
Franklin Twp. zoning officer

to a field for 25 years and then someone builds a development next to them. They ask why their field was destroyed," he said. "The only thing I can tell them is, 'If you don't like what might be built next to you, buy the land,'" he said.

Kozick, who became zoning officer in 1978, said the tax base has doubled since then. "It was approximately \$10 million. Now it is at \$21 million." That has allowed the township to hold property tax rates at 6 mills for more than 10 years.

If the township seems a little cramped to some, it may be because developments are built where the sanitary sewer lines run.

"People don't like septic tanks. Any place there is a public sewer, that's the area that's growing," said Kozick. "The Department of Environmental Protection looks

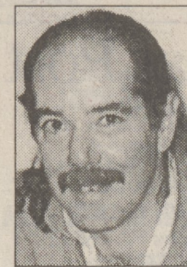
See ZONING, pg. 5

Feuding neighbors ordered to stay apart

District Justice James Tupper told Harveys Lake residents David Abod and James Pugh to stay away from each other, and if they do, no one will be charged with a crime. The two have been at odds over alleged trespassing and harassment for more than a year, with Abod claiming the right to keep a dock in front of property owned by Pugh.

Abod had gone so far as to claim he owned the land under the dock by "adverse possession," better known as squatter's rights.

Abod was charged with harassment and trespassing after a March 22 incident in which Abod allegedly tried to block Pugh and his helpers from tearing down part of Abod's dock. If there are no more problems between the two in the next six months, the charge will be dropped, Tupper said.



DAVID ABOD



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER

The Wertmans, Jim, left, Jan, John and Janice posed in front of the new beer case at J&J Deli, the family business. Jan and her children have carried on since the unexpected death of her husband Jim three years ago. The 14-year-old business has just expanded the seating area for eat-in customers.

Family overcomes tragedy to build a thriving business

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS - With \$150 and a line of credit from Keyco Distributors, Jan and Jim Wertman opened the J & J Deli on Memorial Highway 14 years ago. With long hours, hard work and help from their three children, the Wertmans were turning their once tiny deli into a successful family-run business. Then tragedy struck.

Almost three years ago Jim died suddenly of a heart attack at the age of 50. But the family pitched in, healed together and

managed to keep going through adversity no one could prepare for. Today, J&J Deli is thriving, and has expanded its operations to accommodate its growing customer base.

In the beginning, the Wertmans rented the spot where they are still located from Jan's brother-in-law, Wayne Schmol. Jan said it was frightening at first. "I was scared. I would pray for customers to come in," she said with a laugh. The business has recently doubled its space to make room for a

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