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Tax collectors lose suit on change in payment plan

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER
Post Staff

DALLAS - After a four-year court battle, a Luzerne County judge has decided in favor of the Dallas School District regarding a change in the method of paying three local tax collectors. The tax collec-

tors have 30 days to appeal the judgment.

Judge Corrale F. Stevens handed down his decision Thursday to maintain the district's \$4 flat rate per bill plan that went into effect in Feb. 1993. Previously the tax collectors were paid on commission calculated on the dollar amount of

taxes actually collected. Tax collector is an elected office.

Thomas Reese, Dallas Borough collector, Leonard Kozick, Dallas Twp. collector and Joy Daubert, Franklin Twp., filed suit against the district in 1993, asking the court to set aside the school board members' decision and reinstate the com-

mission method of payment.

The local Tax Collection Law Act of May 25, 1945 states: "...In the case of school district taxes, the commission or compensation of the tax collector shall be determined by the board of school directors... For the collection of county, institution district, school district, Borough,

and township taxes, the collector shall be allowed by the respective taxing authorities, actual and needful expenditures for printing postage, books and forms."

Judge Stevens's decision states, "...The law is clear that this court may not

See TAX COLLECTORS, pg 7

Clinic gives no charge legal advice

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Attorney Bernard Walter wants people to know that just because his advice is free doesn't mean it's cheap. He has established a free legal clinic that runs simultaneously with the free medical clinic in the basement of St. Therese's Church at the corner of Pioneer Ave. and Davis St. in Shavertown every Friday night from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The medical clinic is in its third year of providing free medical attention and referrals to anyone who is in need. Walter got his idea for a legal clinic after hearing of this and has been available most Friday evenings since early this year.

His mission is to provide legal services to people who cannot afford legal advice and those who just need some guidance concerning a problem. "Who wants to spend a day at the lawyer's office, pay for parking and have a big bill at the end?" he asked. Walter's advice is free, without obligation or strings attached. He will refer people to a lawyer who specializes in a particular field if someone is in need of representation or more extensive legal services, and try to get a lower fee for them.

"Some people are hostile to the idea of opening the Yellow Pages to find some lawyer to discuss the personal details of their life," said Walter, who aims to create an environment of trust, understanding and encouragement. "(The legal clinic) is a place where mistakes can be examined and options can be developed to deal with them. The goal is to find a win-win solution for problems," he said.

Walter discusses a number of issues with people. Common questions include: Do I need a will? What should I know before signing a contract? What should I know before I rent or buy a house? What should I know about divorce?

Walter said many people do not realize how simple it is to make a will. He can draw one up right on the spot.

See FREE ADVICE, pg 12



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

HAPPY SAXES

Dallas Elementary School students enjoyed a warmup before last weekend's band and chorus concert. From left, Adam Snider, Jared Weinstock, Megan Vodzak and Jason Jolley. More photos on page 11.

Non-district students will get a free ride

2 of 5 are director Lois Kopcha's grandchildren. She voted for the policy.

By JESSICA MORGAN
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN - In a move that may prove controversial, the Lake-Lehman School Board voted 7-2 to amend its current transportation policy to allow children of teachers residing outside the district to ride school buses. The change in policy will affect five children two of them the grandchildren of board member Lois Kopcha.

Business manager Kathleen Williams explained that the district will have to reroute one or two buses and move "an undetermined number of children" from the bus they now take to different buses in order to accommodate the five students.

Karen Whipple was the lone board member to question the reason the board would rewrite a

policy clearly benefiting a board member's relative. "Why now?" she asked. Kopcha said it makes no difference that she is a board member. "I would have pursued this issue whether I sit on the board or not," she said. "Children of teachers living outside the district were allowed to ride the buses between 1982 and 1995. This precedent was already set years ago and then changed because of a political and personal vendetta against m

In other business, the board has followed the lead of several other districts by approving a sexual harassment policy to protect students from district employees as well as from other students. The vote was unanimous.

The board split their decision

See LAKE-LEHMAN, pg 2

Hillside Farms Dairy Store notes 20th anniversary

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER
Post Staff

TRUCKSVILLE - Hillside Farms, Inc. Dairy Store is celebrating 20 years in business. Will Conyngham said he can't believe it's already been two decades since he opened the store with his brother Frank.

Joan Colatosti of Jackson Township has worked in the store since day one. "It's hard to believe 20 years have gone by," she said. "They are very nice people to work for."

Colatosti said she has seen her customers' families grow over time. "I see kids now who were babies when the store opened. Now they are through college." Conyngham added, "Mrs. Fostock had a baby one month after we opened and now he drives his pick-up truck in here."

The dairy store opened on Dec. 7, 1977. The ice cream parlor was

See HILLSIDE, pg 12



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER

Will Conyngham and Joan Colatosti pose in front of the Hillside Farms sign. The dairy store is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and Colatosti has worked there since opening day.

Cast of hundreds behind the scene of annual holiday event

By JESSICA MORGAN
Post Correspondent

TRUCKSVILLE - Dozens of volunteers at The Back Mountain Harvest Assembly church on Carverton Road in Trucksville have been busily putting final touches on the outdoor stage and bleachers while others are stitching the final costumes for the fifth annual presentation recreating the birth of Jesus. Others are in their kitchens, turning out cookies by the dozen to share with the people of Wyoming Valley.

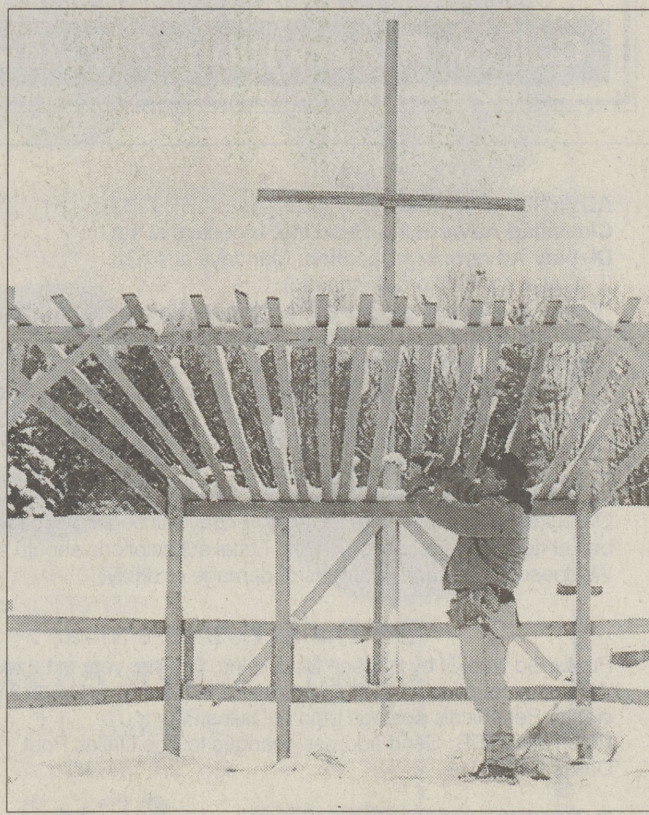
All this work is a gift. The preparation going on this week started in early October when an announcement was made before church services that volunteers were needed to cut patterns, baste hemlines, or sew costumes by hand or by machine. Volunteers came in dozens to help put together the more than

100 costumes needed by the actors and actresses in the 50-minute play depicting The Nativity.

With so many people taking part in the play, sewing and staging have become central to the lives of many of the families this holiday season who regularly attend the Trucksville church.

"We start in October with many of the women working on costumes until 11 or 12 at night," explained Pastor Dan Miller. "There are lots of costumes to be sewn and each one is done beautifully. The women here are really professional and the final product will be terrific."

While some are working their magic with needles and thread, others are making miracles happen with a few boards and a lot of wiring. "Every Saturday from the first of November



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Chuck Lahr helped build the set for "The Gift," which will be presented this weekend.

See 'THE GIFT', pg 12

■ Toys for Tots

gets a big gift from Joe Paglianite, founder of Grotto Pizza. Pg 2.

■ Deer Santa

Trucksville Nursery School parents put on a show for their kids, and they'll never look at them the same way again. Pg 7.

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