

Tax assessment challenges eating into school district's revenue

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

DALLAS - Several members of the Dallas School Board warned Monday that the district may have to raise the property tax millage rate.

The school board is concerned by a trend in which local businesses are asking the Luzerne Court of Common Pleas to approve property reassessments allowing the companies to collect tax refunds from the district and reduce future payments. "Every major company and

big development in the district is fighting assessment and they're all winning," said Maureen Banks, school board member.

"PNC Bank, Offset Paperback and Commonwealth Telephone all did it (appealed)," said Banks. "And the sad thing is it's really hurting the people of this district, especially old people and young people who can't afford to pay any more in taxes."

The board voted to refund PNC \$8,284 for overpayments of 1997 and 1998 taxes. The reassessment will mean a yearly loss of \$4,142 in tax collections from the

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Karen Kyle
School board member

bank. Offset and Commonwealth have both appealed, but their cases haven't yet been settled.

Karen Kyle, school board member, said a millage increase is the most likely remedy. "If the number we multiply the millage rate by doesn't change, the tax rate has to increase," she said.

How much taxes will be raised, if at all, has not been decided. "It will have to be determined when the budget is developed," said Dr. Gilbert Griffiths, superintendent. "If there's a continuation of this trend where abatements cost the district needed revenue something will have to be done to make up for that. Of course, any time you talk about a tax increase it

becomes a whole issue in itself and there are a number of voices to be heard on that subject. Right now we just want people to be aware of the problem."

In years past, residential and commercial development has added to the district's revenue but money generated by new taxpayers is being offset. "It used to be we didn't have any abatements and we had many additions, but now it's about even," said Griffiths.

The district has collected \$100,725 in See SCHOOL TAX, pg 9

Report due next week on gas spill

Solicitor says Sun will have to pay if public water supply needed

By ELAINE SLABINSKI
Post Correspondent

JACKSON TWP. - Sun Oil Co. will report next week on tests for gasoline in the area of a spill earlier this year.

Department of Environmental Protection hydrogeologist Gerry Olenick and Jackson Township's Independent Environmental Consultant Christopher Zwiebel came to the April 3 supervisors' meeting to give updates on the gasoline spill and answer questions. Zwiebel reported that they are continuing to monitor well water data, with no further information available at present. Olenick reported that Sun Oil has sunk 38 shallow wells and three bedrock wells to monitor water quality as well as contamination levels. "Sun has agreed to send us an interim report by April 18. They continue to treat the (spill) site and monitor the residential homes."

See JACKSON TWP., pg 8



Ready for the bunny

Students at Little People Day Care School in Dallas prepared for the arrival of the big bunny by making seasonal crafts Monday. Harry Parkurst didn't let a broken wrist keep him from making a fancy basket to place chocolates and other goodies. More photos on page 3.

POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Letter to editor draws angry response from Authority

HLMA manager says rate increase not in the works

By ELAINE SLABINSKI
Post Correspondent

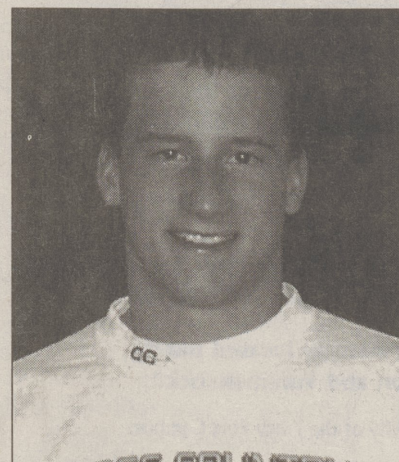
HARVEYS LAKE - The April meeting of the Harveys Lake Municipal Authority began in its usual fashion with several pieces of business being completed. Attorney Tom O'Connor completed his investigation of the William Davis properties in order to proceed with a lien and the possibility of a Sheriff's sale to collect accumulating debt which remains unpaid. Manager Richard Boice detailed the damage to three or four manholes from traffic and environmental changes and his proposed remedy. He also reported no major breakdowns in the system during the past month.

But the main topic of concern was a letter to the editor of *The Dallas Post* on April 5, signed by Sandra Serhan of Harveys Lake. Borough Council members George Andrews, Francis Kopko and

See HL SEWERS, pg 8

Schweitzer appointed to West Point

Matt Schweitzer, a senior at Dallas High School, was notified he has been accepted to the United States Military Academy at West Point. "We think it is a great accomplishment and we'd like to congratulate Matt," said Dr. Gilbert Griffiths, superintendent. "His tireless efforts in our academic and athletic programs have set a high standard."



Joe Bednash, left, and Chris Belles played the role of prosecuting attorneys in the mock trial held by Boy Scout Troops 693 and 281. Here they prepared for their closing arguments.

Area Boy Scouts learn 'trying' lessons

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

TRUCKSVILLE - Members of Boy Scouts Troops 693 and 281 learned potentially life-saving lessons last Friday as they participated in a mock trial at District Justice James Tupper's court-

room.

The staged event is designed to provide a real-life look at the justice system at work. This year's trial, based on a case in which a young man was accused of vehicular homicide and other charges leading to the death of a 6-year-old child, hit close to home

for many of the teenagers present. "Most kids don't realize how quickly life can change," said Tupper. "Some of you guys are 16 and others will be 16 before you know it and these are things you have to think about when you get

See MOCK TRIAL, pg 18



POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

Men of summer (and spring)

Bruce Goerninger, left, and Craig Williams spent part of their Saturday morning putting up signs at the Back Mountain Little League field. The pair and many other volunteers cleaned up the fields in anticipation of opening day.

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