

History

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ine Mystique." The girls used a Macintosh computer software program called i-Movie to prepare their slideshow style video. "The judges asked them a lot of questions about the issues of women's rights and the civil rights movement and they knew how one carried over into the other," said Comitz. "I was really proud of how they defended their work to these judges, who are college professors and museum curators."

Jared Salla, a sophomore who wasn't required to work on History Day for any of his classes, won second place for an individual exhibit about Child Labor Reform. "I went to the state competition last year and enjoyed it," said Jared. "I just wanted to do something worthwhile during the winter so I did lots and lots of research for this."

Senior Sarah Davis won second place for her individual performance about Elizabeth Blackwell's pioneering efforts in the medical field for women. "I'm so busy during the school year that I started working on my presentation during the summer. I dressed in a 'Little house on the Prairie' style dress as I explained the trouble she had getting into medical school. My setting had a hospital bed and a screen which I stepped behind to quickly remove my dress, which was held together with Velcro, and I came back out wearing hospital scrubs and talked about women in medicine today," Sarah explained.

The Lake-Lehman students will travel to the University of Maryland on June 10. They won't be the only Back Mountain students traveling for the History Day competition. Two students from Dallas High School will need to make similar travel arrangements.

Seniors Ellen Kim and Raegan Guelich won first place in the state for their group exhibit entitled Yankees in the Land of the



John Comitz stands behind Lake-Lehman History Day winners. Seated from left; Sarah Davis, Stef Bendik and Jared Salla. Absent; Leigh Dodson.

Gods. "It was about Commodore Perry, an American, who opened up the economic frontier of Japan for trade," explained Raegan.

The girls were among the nine members of the History Day Club at Dallas who qualified at regionals to compete at the state level. The club brainstorms for ideas early in September. "This topic

turned out to be more involved than we thought at first," said Ellen. "There was a big impact on America but the impact on Japan was also very important."

The students have both competed in History Day before and were determined to make it to the national competition this year. Their display is so well done that they will make only minor

changes before their trip to Maryland.

"Students of this age are capable of perfecting the details of the work in addition to doing all of the research," said Maryann Storz, Dallas history teacher and club moderator. "These two girls have shown that they have mastered those skills."

Tax changes

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As a first step, school boards are permitted, but not required, to appoint a local tax study commission to recommend changes to the district's tax structure. The panel consists of five members, which may include one school board member. The Lake-Lehman School Board appointed Joetta Hartman, James Baloga, William Reinert, Edwin Kern and Moderno Rossi, school board member, as commission members.

The commission is charged with evaluating the district's current taxing policies and the alternatives permitted under Act 50. The commission then makes a non-binding recommendation to the school board within 90 days of its appointment. Lake-Lehman appointed its commission on April 17.

"We can only make a decision on whether or not we feel it will benefit the community," said Hartman.

Act 50 also allows Lake-Lehman School District voters the opportunity to determine whether the new system is ap-

propriate. Before implementing any new taxing system, voters must first give their approval in the form of a front-end referendum. The law requires the ballot question be presented during the general election before the fiscal year of when the new system will be initiated.

As of now, the commission said, it will not meet the June 10 deadline for the November general election ballot. Not meeting this deadline means that the earliest the Act 50 referendum can be placed on the ballot will be 2002. If accepted by voters it would not take effect until 2003.

"We are starting from scratch knowing absolutely nothing," said Hartman when she explained why she felt taking advantage of the full 90 days allowed would be beneficial.

Another component to Act 50 is the homestead exclusion. A homestead is defined as an owner-occupied residential property including the land, residence and other structures on the land.

This has been a sticking point for the commission. At the May 7

commission meeting Baloga read from a report he received from the Luzerne County Assessor's Office, "Lake-Lehman School District as of November 30, 1999, has the following number of properties qualifying as homesteads - 230. The median assessment for the district is \$6,800 and the eligible one half assessment of \$3,400."

The problem stems from property owners having to submit an application to the county assessor to be eligible for the homestead exclusion. The exclusion is a reduction in the assessed value of each homestead. Every homestead would receive the same exclusion and would receive the same reduction in property taxes.

The commission feels the current number of 230 homesteads is not an accurate depiction of the school district. This may affect data gathered for the study.

Thirty days into the study the Act 50 commission has hit a

stumbling block. The commission has decided it needs help from a professional consultant with compiling and interpreting the data. "No question, we have to get somebody in here," said Baloga.

Rossi agreed and said he was in favor of hiring a full-time consultant, someone familiar with the program.

The commission has received estimates from a number of different sources regarding consultation fees ranging from \$2,005 to \$16,500. As a next plan of action the commission is planning to approach the school board about bringing a consultant on board. Rossi said he will abstain if it comes to a vote regarding hiring a consultant.

The next Act 50 commission meeting is Tuesday, May 29, at 6:30 p.m. at the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School. The public is encouraged to attend.

Library Auction Corner

This beautiful, hand-painted "chimney cupboard" will be one of the many new items that will go over the block. It was donated by The Cottage.



Volunteers are hard at work collecting items for the 55th annual The Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction.

The life of the library is a year-to-year proposition, and the auction is crucial to its operation. Twenty percent of the annual budget comes from the auction. Any and all donations of cash or saleable items can help assure the continued fine service of the library to our communities. For more information, call the library at 675-1182.

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PSU summer camps for kids

Penn State Wilkes-Barre Summer Youth Program will continue its unique focus on science and technology with a variety of camps for children this summer.

The camps provide challenging and enriching activities for students in kindergarten thru eighth grades and are created to spark an interest in science and/or technology. Younger children (grades 1-3) can enjoy workshops such as Creature Feature where they learn about leopard geckos, visit a butterfly petting zoo, and see a sheep shearer in action.

Children in grades 4-6 can learn the trade secrets of science fair projects or learn about watersheds. These are just a few of the many camps available. Special camps, coordinated with Scienational Workshop, a New Jersey based science education organization, offer high quality, hands-on activities for fun and learning. Children can learn what makes robots tick, experiment in an electronics lab or learn to make batteries from lemons and oranges. In addition, sports camps will be available including soccer, basketball and volleyball. These co-ed camps provide basic and tactical skill training by qualified coaches and assistants.

Round-trip bus service will make one early morning trip to the campus before camps begin and one afternoon trip from the campus. Seating is limited and will be on a first come/first served basis. Campers may bring their own lunch or purchase a lunch at \$3.25 a day. Pre-registration is advised. Camps fill quickly and many have limited enrollment.

For a brochure or more info call Jennifer Youngman, camp coordinator, 675-9220 or e-mail: wbce@cde.psu.edu.

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