

# THE DALLAS POST

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50¢

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



### WINNERS!

Library Photo Contest winners. Pg 4.

### SPORTS

Wilkes-Barre Triathlon held in heat and humidity. Dallas woman is top local finisher. Pg 9.



### SCHOOL

Students model the earth. Pg 11.

## Heavy rains reveal big runoff problem

❑ Township declines request for help, says development not yet ready for takeover

By CAMILLE FIOTI  
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — Ondish Hills homeowner Robert Belles pleaded for help to the Dallas Township Board of Supervisors during Tuesday's meeting, describing costly damage to his prop-

erty and landscaping caused by excessive water runoff after the recent storms.

Belles said he and his wife Michelle have spent thousands of dollars on new landscaping and grass that were ruined by the runoff. In only the past month he says he spent \$6,000 in an

effort to repair drainage problems.

Among other steps, Belles said he installed an 18-inch drainage pipe that he was told would provide more than enough capacity for the runoff, but it is inadequate.

John Halbing, developer of Ondish Hills, said that when Belles informed him of the problem a month ago, Halbing didn't realize the severity of it until last week. Belles expressed his frustration and the urgency of his situation by adding "It looks like the Susquehanna is running through my yard!"

Tom Doughton, representing the township engineer's office, explained to Belles that since the township hasn't taken over the development and completed a final inspection there isn't much they can do. He said the issue is between Halbing and Belles.

What is delaying the final inspection and dedication of the streets is the completion of a top coat on the streets and the correction of drainage problems. Halbing assured Belles that he will work with the township to try to find a solution and said the final top

coat should be completed this fall.

Another Ondish Hills situation that has Belles and his neighbors upset is the construction of two rental townhouses at the entrance to the development on Lincoln Street. The two lots were owned by Halbing and presented to potential Ondish Hills homeowners as part of the development, Belles said. Halbing recently sold those lots to another developer who is building the townhouses.

See RUNOFF, pg 3

## Clearcutting upsets Sago Street neighbors

❑ Land that was like a park for decades is now barren

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — Continued development of one Back Mountain community is at too high a price say some of its residents. Homeowners off Sago Street in Dallas Township say they can't believe what has happened to their neighborhood in a matter of days.

"You wake up in the morning after so many years and take the dog for a walk — it doesn't seem like we live in the same place anymore," said Bob Tupper, a long-time resident of the area.

"You can't expect people to hold onto land for the birds and the bees."

Thomas Dombroski  
Property owner

"First it was the big trees and then the small ones," said local resident Reese Pelton. "If he (the property owner) would have left the small trees in wouldn't have been that bad."

Residents of the neighborhood said about three weeks ago trees started coming down on a nine-acre tract situated between Route 309 and Sago Street. The residents say the property, a popular park-like area situated directly behind the Dallas Township park, was an integral part of the community's experience. They don't understand how so much change could happen in their neighborhood without any warning.

"How did this all get done behind the scenes without anybody knowing

See CLEARCUT, pg 8



Bob Tupper and Kristy Taylor look down on a hillside littered with fallen trees. A new owner has cleared the property along Sago Street in anticipation of developing housing lots.

POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Wildlife are affected too. Page 8.

## Conservation district looks into logging

DALLAS — Logging on Sago Street is under scrutiny by the Luzerne County Conservation District.

David Moss of the District office said he is conducting an investigation of clearcutting along the road situated off of Route 309. He said his office has received calls from nearby residents concerned about the cutting.

In response to the calls, Moss said he went to the site on Wednesday. He said he could not provide specific information until the report was complete, but he did say cutting was going on "very close to where the (Dallas

Township park) ball field is."

The steep property, estimated to be six to nine acres by the owner, is situated above a stream. Neighbors have voiced concern about the possibility of erosion from the hill affecting the stream.

Moss said at this point he couldn't be specific about whether or not the owner had done anything illegal, but he did say, "There are things you may and may not do, and there is a stream there."

— Erin Youngman



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Flo Harris of Harveys Lake, an employee at Dymond's Farm Market, stood behind a counter with the anti-burning ban petition on display.

## Petition seeks defeat of proposed ban on burning

By KASIA KOPEC  
For The Dallas Post

KINGSTON TWP. — Rosario Shaver is fuming over a proposed burn ban that would prevent her and everyone else in the township from burning brush, yard waste and trash.

Under the ban, residents would be allowed to use fire only to cook or camp.

An ordinance prohibiting open burning within the township is being drafted and is expected to be adopted at next Wednesday's supervisors meeting. The issue will be discussed prior to the vote at the supervisors work session scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday.

Shaver is circulating a petition asking supervisors to not enact a burn ban,

which she says is unreasonably restrictive given the community's rural character.

"I could see if I lived in Wilkes-Barre and my house butted up against my neighbor's," Shaver said. "But that's not the situation here."

But the township is growing in population and officials are simply trying to stay ahead of the curve in enacting an ordinance aimed at protecting the health and safety of residents, said Township Manager Eddie O'Neill.

"We know this is somewhat of a progressive move in our region back here, but someone needs to take the first step," O'Neill said. "I liken this situation to the ban on smoking in public buildings.

See BURNING, pg 2

## Hope is new technique will remove gas quicker

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

JACKSON TOWNSHIP — More than three weeks after a report of an underground gas leak at American Asphalt on Chase Road, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) said the source and the amount of gas leaked are still undetermined.

With containment still the primary objective, a new "faster" recovery technique is being used.

Mark Carmon, DEP spokesperson, said despite the excavation and cleaning of the two 10,000 gallon tanks involved in the leak, a source of the leak has not been identified. Carmon said both the tanks and the piping have yielded no obvious holes.

Carmon said even holes the size of pinholes can cause a problem over time.

"They'll have to go back and look at the stress points, seams and welds," said Carmon, who added that a second, more thorough round of examinations is going on now.

"Regardless of the cause, all we know is we have gasoline in the

See GASOLINE, pg 3

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