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THE POST

50¢

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

DeRojas saw bravery, death in Iraq

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

JACKSON TWP. — As a Forward Surgical Team (F.S.T.) member, local doctor Colonel Juan DeRojas helped save lives on Iraqi front lines. He returned in October from his second deployment this year.

The Back Mountain father of five documented his recent tour with photos of every day realities in post-war Iraq. He will present his experiences at local venues throughout the area for Veterans Day.

"You know people think the war is over, but it's definitely not over. It's worse now than it was five months ago," said DeRojas as he began to explain his experiences there.

"That is the point I want to make — it is a very dangerous place."

A U.S. Army Reservist, DeRojas worked in Iraq as part of an F.S.T.

"It's worse now than it was five months ago."

Colonel Juan DeRojas
Jackson Township

team, a new type of front-line medical care aimed at reaching the injured within the first hour of injury.

He and a group of 20 other soldiers braved the 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week threat of mortar attacks and ambushes to bring surgical care to soldiers who were in the most dangerous situations. Especially dangerous during his last tour, he said, because of the recent escalation of violence in the area.

"There are American soldiers being shot at, ambushed daily," he said.

"Basically it was pure luck whether you were caught up in an ambush, just

pure luck."

The F.S.T. team was stationed at Camp War Horse outside of Baquba, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad. Their time was split between the camp and accompanying troops on missions in search of Saddam Hussein and those actively loyal to him.

The team was composed of three surgeons, two nurses, O.R. technicians and medics and was "100 percent mobile."

"We could go anywhere and within 15 minutes, set up an O.R. table and start operating," DeRojas said.

Some days they would see several casualties, other times they would go for days without any. But always constant was the threat of mortar attacks coming from nearby villages.

DeRojas said he learned that human beings can experience tremendous

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Poisonous snakes are on the list of dangers soldiers in the Iraqi desert have to contend with. Colonel Juan DeRojas kneels near one found in a neighboring tent.

Kingston Twp. budget

Cuts in services, layoffs likely

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — The budget outlook for 2004 has residents angry, supervisors feeling under siege and township employees worried they might be out of a job.

Concluding last week's public budget hearings, Township Manager Edmund O'Neill offered a bleak outlook. "The bottom line is a total deficit of \$400,000, and that is with some of the cuts we talked about," he said.

He believes that whatever the preliminary budget looks like, it will have to be trimmed before final adoption in order to close the gap between revenue and expenditures, and gave three possible approaches.

One is increasing revenues by levying a property tax.

At Monday's hearing, Paul Sabol, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, suggested it might be helpful to reinstate the local property tax that was abolished 10 years ago. It had been 5 mills in 1993, and would have brought in about \$74,000 in 1994 had it not been eliminated.

As a home-rule community, Kingston Township is not restricted in establishing a millage rate.

Another option is to cut expenditures, which O'Neill said has been done all along. "This is not a last-minute reaction," he said. One way to save is by eliminating township jobs, which Sabol acknowledged has been discussed.

"If we could cut three people, we could save a couple hundred thousand dollars," Sabol said after Tuesday's hearing.

O'Neill said later in the week that he felt certain staff reductions would be considered.

A third contributor to balancing the budget would be to dip into savings, which O'Neill estimated at about \$500,000. So far this year the accounts haven't been touched, but he said that is usually the case until year's end when books are balanced.

"None of these options are favorable," O'Neill said, "but there are decisions that have to be made."

On Wednesday, O'Neill reiterated

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Speed limit on the lake?

Group proposing 45 mph limit for busy weekends

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

HARVEYS LAKE — The Harveys Lake Protective Association is looking into creating the first ever daytime speed limit on the lake.

Richard Squitieri, a member of the association, is visiting other organizations around the lake to gather letters of support for the proposal.

He said so far, everyone he's talked to thinks a limit is a good idea.

"Of course there's always some minority that doesn't like regulations at all," said Squitieri.

The idea for a 45 mile per hour speed limit from Memorial Day to Labor Day, during peak times, was one of two questions on a survey that went to all 140 protective association member families.

Squitieri said the idea was well received. "It came back overwhelming

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POST PHOTO/IRON BARTIZEK

A case of 'clown foot?'

Samantha Feist, Dallas, expressed frustration with her costume's footwear to friends Amanda Mikolaitis and Erika McCabe. She had been marching down Church Street in Dallas Borough, on her way to the awards ceremony for the annual Dallas Kiwanis Halloween parade. More photos on page 4.

Regional plan scaled back

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS — Budget changes and uncertainties have forced the Back Mountain Council of Governments (COG) to undertake its regional plan with \$50,000 rather than the originally budgeted \$130,000.

The change means the Back Mountain-wide plan to evaluate pressing regional issues will be scaled back and cut into two separate parts.

The first phase will begin immediately and take approximately 12 months, said representatives from the appointed planning firm Kise, Straw and Kolodner. The second part will be contingent on the COG obtaining a Land Use Planning and Technical Assistance Program (LUPTAP) grant.

The regional plan is being undertaken by COG members Dallas Borough and Dallas, Kingston, and Lehman townships to assess three key regional issues: traffic, water supply, and land use.

The planners and COG members dealt with two main monetary issues Tuesday, as well as how to plan around Jackson and Franklin town-

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Dallas High School puts the classroom online

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — Dallas High School has found a unique way to integrate what has become standard college technological fare, with an age-appropriate twist.

The school now offers several online courses, but unlike similar college level classes, Dallas's require in-class time.

Kathy Kupstas, who teaches Western Civilization at Dallas, said even though the initial transition to using the technology was trying, she believes this is just one more necessary step in preparing her students for what they will encounter in college.

"I see at the college level my daughter

does a lot of work online. I want the kids to be ready," she said.

Kupstas is one of four teachers in the district who have elected to use Web CT course building technology to supplement their in-class work.

With their user identification and password, students can log on from any computer to find cyber-versions of their classes.

At first glance the program may look just like a web page, but Assistant Superintendent Michael Speziale said Web CT has capabilities beyond that of a run of the mill internet site.

Some teachers have posted calendars of when exams and papers are due, syllabi and other housekeeping

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Sentences handed down in murder of teen, Trucksville man charged with indecent assault. Page 2.



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Ross Elementary kids collect for UNICEF. Page 13.

How To Reach Us

News: 675-5211
thepost@leader.net
15 N. Main St.
Wilkes-Barre PA 18711
Advertising: 970-7102
Subscriptions and Delivery: 829-5000