

Last-minute recovery and willing volunteers save Southwest District

BY RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

"Maybe we were more careful than we should have been."

Diane Bath
Judge of Elections

KINGSTON TWP. — With lots of help, the brand-new Judge of Elections for Kingston Township's Southwest Voting District met and overcame several obstacles that could have impeded a fair and firm election Tuesday.

Diane Bath learned only Sunday that she was taking over for Judy Price, who had resigned. A bigger shock came when she arrived Tuesday morning at the Trucksville Fire Department and found no one there to help out as the first of more than 1,200 voters showed up.

When Bath called Luzerne County Voter Services to alert them to the situation, the response was quick. AVoter Services official was dispatched to help open the machines and let voters in, albeit 20 minutes late.

But this was not a one-woman job, and the task then became to find four more people to log in voters and eventually count ballots, as well as someone to assist voters with the machines.

There was a ready source of bodies right before Bath's eyes. "We pulled them out of the voting line," she said, and supplemented those volunteers with others rousted out of bed by phone.

Supervisor Paul Sabol, who was not on the ballot this cycle, made many of the calls, and one of the recruits was his wife, Ferne. On Sunday, Sabol had contacted Bath about the Judge position after receiving a call at home from Kevin Jordan, director of the county office.

Nancy Crane, Constance Orchard and Marlyne Lipfert filled out the roster and worked through until the end as Joseph Laver helped out with the machines.

Bath, who had a brief training session Monday, said the delay in getting results to the

courthouse was due mostly to a desire for accuracy. "Maybe we were more careful than we should have been," she said.

She said counting absentee ballots slowed things down. Absentee ballots cannot be opened until the polls close and Bath's team went through them twice to be sure they had a precise count.

But by 11 p.m., when an official from Voter Services was sent from the courthouse to find out why the tally was late, Bath was already on her way in with them.

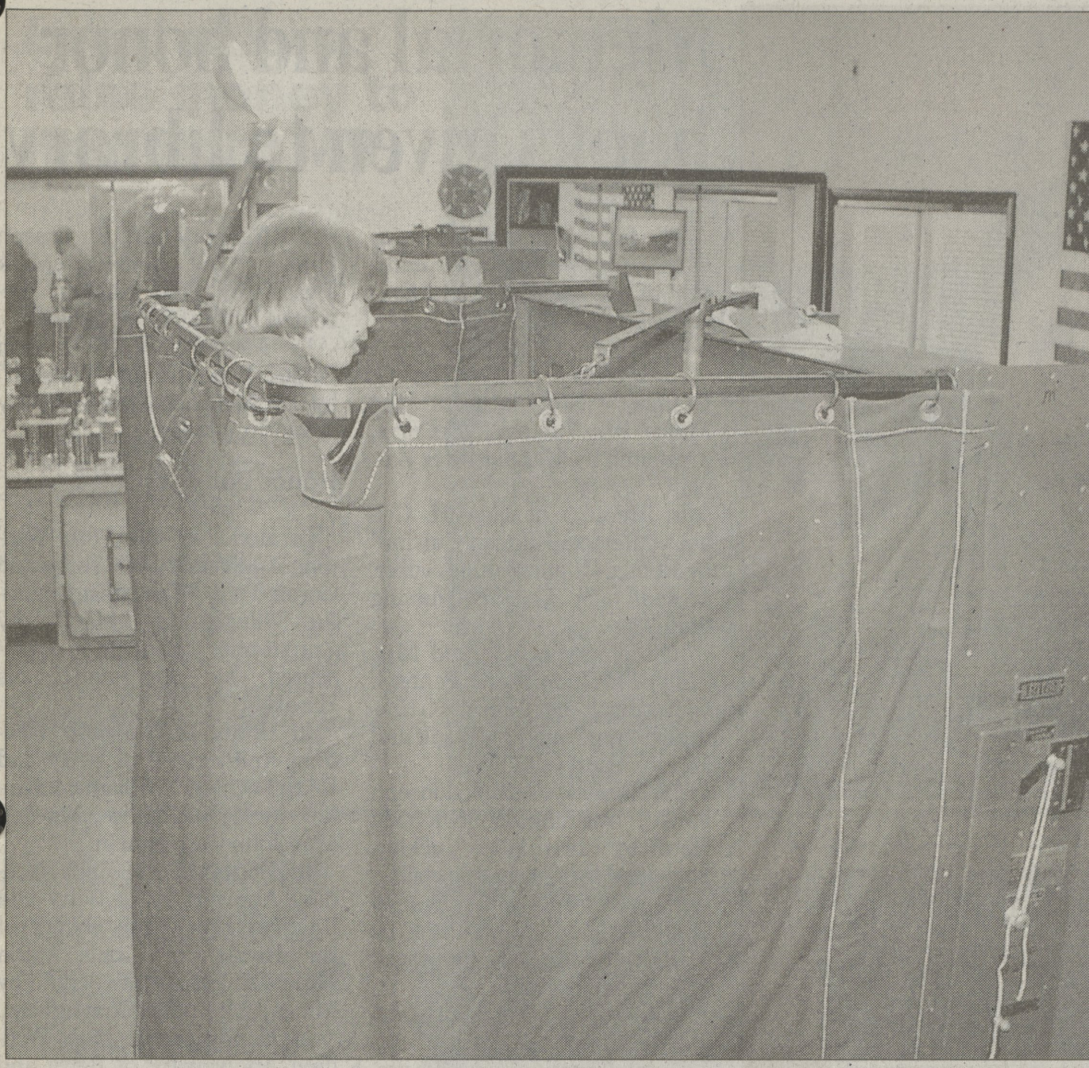
Besides the early morning confusion, one of three voting machines was in and out of service all day, said Carl Goodwin, Vice Chairman of the Supervisors.

"Considering that, we're doing pretty well," Bath said as election day drew to a close.

"She's doing a fabulous job," said Goodwin.

Bath was equally complimentary about her staff. "They were awesome to work with," she said.

Asked if she would return next year, Bath was enthusiastic. "You bet I'll do it again."



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Olivia King watched from a perch on her dad, Aaron's shoulders as he voted at the Shavertown fire hall Tuesday night. Long lines were evident in the evening hours at both Shavertown and Trucksville polling places.

Election highlights

Here is a roundup of contested races in the area.

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Political newcomer Edward Kraynak won a six-year position on the board.

The unofficial tally in Tuesday's voting was 272 votes for Kraynak, a Republican, and 214 for Democrat Robert Wineman, a 48-year-old truck driver and a newcomer.

Kraynak, 65, who is retired after running his own gas station, said he hopes to encourage Franklin Township to work with other municipalities through the Back Mountain Council of Governments. He also said he wants to be fiscally responsible.

"If your shovel is broken," he quipped before the election, "don't throw it out. Just get a new handle."

Kraynak has said that the township has missed out "on a lot of state and federal money" by neglecting to send representatives to state seminars.

HARVEYS LAKE COUNCIL

For the first time in nearly 20 years, Danny Blaine will be back on Borough Council.

The former council member and jury commissioner was the second-leading vote-getter as Democrats captured all four vacant seats.

Incumbent Clarence Hogan received 479 votes, followed by fellow Democrats Blaine, 466; Diane Dwyer, 444; and Bernie Ozovek, 406. On the Republican side, Francis Kopko received 350 votes, and former two-term council member George Andrews received 313. Fellow Republicans Maryellen Prescott and Sandra Serhan received 270 and 269 votes, respectively.

"I'm ecstatic about being able to serve the people of Harveys Lake again," Blaine said. "I can't wait to get back into it. The residents gave us a resounding victory. All four of us are looking forward to a great future in Harveys Lake."

Hogan says the Democratic sweep didn't come by accident. "We worked very hard. We went door to door and sent out a lot of letters. This is a very dedicated group of people. We're going to do our job and go to work for the people of the borough."

JACKSON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS

Republican J. David Roskos defeated incumbent Democrat Andrew Kasko Jr. 516 to 362 votes.

Roskos, owner of the Woodruff Corp., a lumber products business in the township, points to his business experience and his experience as a former public accountant as a benefit to the township. "I want to thank all the voters who voted for me. It was good weather and a good turnout."

With Roskos' win, the Jackson Township board will consist of himself, John Wilkes Jr. and Allen Fox, all Republicans. Roskos does not see this as an issue, and looks to "preserve the rural character of the township, support the Police Department and to maintain the condition of the local roads."

Roskos has served for 25 years on the Jackson Township Zoning Board.

LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL BOARD

The Lake-Lehman School Board will take on a new look as two incumbents were defeated in Tuesday's election.

In Region 1 (Harveys Lake, Lake Township and Noxen) incumbent Democrat Lois Kopcha retained her seat with 645 votes, and newcomer Mark Kornoski, a Democrat, won the other open seat with 612. Republican Jeff Pauley had 425 votes and write-in candidate Michelle Mayer-Coombs garnered 288.

Results do not include those from Noxen, in Wyoming County. Officials said about 200 voters turned out there and it should not affect the overall election results.

In Region 2 (Ross Township and Lehman Township), Democrat Harold Cornell Jr. was top vote getter with 915. Republican James Welby won the other seat, defeating incumbent Chuck Boytin 649 to 497.

In Region 3 (Jackson Township and Huntsville), one seat was up for grabs and newcomer Robert Peron, a Republican, defeated incumbent, Democrat Joseph Kapitula, 601 to 331.

2 incumbents ousted in KT

KINGSTON TWP. — The ballot totals are unofficial, but the message is clear — township voters want a change in direction for the board of supervisors.

Chris Yankovich led all candidates with 1,219 votes Tuesday, followed by David Jenkins and Jeffrey Box with 1,159 and 1,146 respectively. Incumbents John Versari and Neil Allen trailed far behind with 609 and 437 votes each. They were appointed to office in March 2002 to fill vacancies left by the death of two supervisors and resignation of a third, Christopher Concert, the

only Democrat in the race, won 409 votes. While Republicans, Versari and Allen appeared on the Democratic side of the ballot, having lost the Republican spots in the May primary.

Jenkins, a newcomer to office, said the first challenge would be "getting our hands around the budget situation." The township's preliminary figures for 2004 show a \$400,000 deficit.

Box saw the results as a repudiation of recent events in the township, which included attacks on his performance as township Manager from 1988 to 2001.

"I'm very pleased and thankful that the citizens of Kingston Township did not buy the New York style smear campaign," he said. "I pledge to serve with integrity and pride."

Yankovich, who was appointed to office in April, 2002, had clashed with the other supervisors at recent budget hearings, warning that the township was living beyond its means.

The new board will be composed of Yankovich, Box, Jenkins and incumbents Paul Sabol and Carl Goodwin, who were not up for election.

Dallas

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art" environment is important to learning. "The kids deserve that," she said.

Bigus, principal at Regis Elementary, said the first order of business should be to sit down with the board and prioritize pressing issues.

Beyond that, making sure the district is complying with the Federal No Child Left Behind legislation, should be a priority. "Not only that we're complying with the law, but we have a moral obligation to make sure that no child is left behind," he said.

Goeringer and Richardson could not be reached for comment.

Supervisors authorize bond for equipment

By VICKI KEIPER
Post Correspondent

JACKSON TWP. — Jackson Township supervisors agreed at the November 3 board meeting to seek final state approval on a \$125,000 general obligation note.

Township Solicitor Jeffrey Malak said that the note would be used to buy two trucks: a 2004 Ford 550 and a 2004 Freightliner. A new plow will also be designed for the Freightliner.

Supervisor Chairman John J. Wilkes, Jr. explained that the custom-made plow would be "the only one like it in Pennsylvania." Manufactured by Flink Co. of Illinois, the plow will have what is called a "Mickey Mouse Ear" attached to its right side.

"Instead of just pushing the snow to the side, the plow could move snow an extra three to five inches," Wilkes

said, noting that the attachment is widely used in Montana. He said that he learned of it during an Association of Township Supervisors training meeting.

But before making any purchases, paperwork for the loan from First National Community Bank in Shavertown needs final approval from the Office of Chief Counsel of the Department of Community and Economic Development in Harrisburg, Malak said.

Malak said the note could be approved by the middle of December. The township's last equipment loan was paid off in October.

Wilkes took an opportunity to clarify an item that recently came to his attention. During his supervisor's report, Wilkes explained that the township did not have any outstanding zoning fines except for the ones belonging to American Asphalt. Also, the

collection of that money had to go through the solicitor's office first, then to the zoning board, he said.

In his supervisor's report, Allan Fox stated that the increase in recycling tonnage might lead to more frequent recycling drop-offs, but no changes have been established yet. He also said that residents could pick up recycling containers on Nov. 8, at the municipal building, between noon and 3 p.m.

Fox also reminded residents that the zip code for Jackson Township is still 18708 but folks can list either Shavertown or Jackson Township as their address.

Crime Watch President Ed Chesnovitch asked residents to set aside aluminum cans so the program could use the proceeds to fund events such as the one held at the municipal building on Halloween.

In other business, board

members agreed to meet on December 17 at 9 a.m. to discuss the 2004 budget and also decided to table the appointment of an assistant zoning officer until after they had a chance to review the applications.

Also, Board members accepted the resignation of Auditor Barbara Bazil. In a letter addressed to the board, Bazil explained that time constraints rising from an out-of-town job prevent her from serving the township.

The board approved a \$250 donation to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, a \$700 donation to Back Mountain Memorial Library and \$1,500 to Jackson Township Volunteer Fire Company.

The board awarded a 1997 Crown Victoria to Police Cars Unlimited in New York at the winning bid of \$1,150.

Kingston Twp. public right-of-way rules

Kingston Township residents and property owners are reminded not to place encroachments, such as retaining walls, fences, landscaping timbers, trees, shrubs, or any other items within the Township street right-of-way.

Property owners need to be aware that they do not own up to the edge of the roadway Street right-of-ways vary from thirty-three feet to fifty feet. Residents that are unsure of the width of their street may call the Township Office for further information.

It is very important that the right-of-way remain free of encroachments for snow removal, utility construction, and street maintenance.

Residents are also reminded that this area is not their property and that the Township has the authority to order removal or to remove, the encroachments from the street or road right-of-way.

Residents with questions can call 696-3809.

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