



FOR THE POST/SANDY PEOPLES

A family reunion. The Snyders celebrated last Sunday at Pickett's Charge in Dallas as friends and family gathered to welcome their boys home. From left: Charles Snyder, Jessica Snyder Fountain, Holly Morris, (fiancé of Phillip) Phillip Snyder, Shirley Snyder, Don Snyder.

Twins

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proud of our boys and thankful for their safe return."

On July 18 many family members and friends joined to celebrate their safe return with an open house at Pickett's Charge restaurant in Dallas. Charles came home a few months ago, but he wanted to wait for his brother to return home before having a party. Phillip arrived on July 12.

Charles, a corporal in the Marine Reserves, was activated shortly after September 11. He went through extensive training and served for several months in southern Iraq with Echo Company, First Marine Division. He was recognized for his outstanding actions and awarded the Marines' Meritorious Service Award.

Charles answers directly when asked why he chose to serve his country as a Marine. "I'm patriotic, and I believe that what we are doing the right thing. At first the people there were afraid of us because they didn't know what to expect.

Through our humanitarian aid, the schools and the hospitals, they quickly learned that we are there to help them, not to hurt them."

The mood changed once his unit got to work, Charles said. "Then we were treated like rock stars. The children would give us a 'thumbs up' and a smile when they saw us coming. Even if we never find the weapons of mass destruction, I don't regret my time there. I saw the mass graves of women and children, I saw mosques and schools full of ammunition, and I saw the fear, then the smiles, on the faces of people just trying to live their lives."

Phillip, a 2000 graduate of the University of Scranton, is a captain in the First Armored Division, U.S. Army. He served in Iraq for more than a year as a rifle platoon leader, then an Executive Officer in an infantry unit with four Bradley tanks. He was awarded a Bronze Star for his meritorious service and valor. He will soon rejoin his

unit in Germany, but will return home in December for his marriage to Lancaster area resident Holly Morris in January 2005.

"It's been a family tradition and my lifelong ambition to serve my country," Phillip said. "I like to travel and I like challenges."

He found plenty during his tour. "Iraq is a country of extremes, of palaces and poverty, like you would never see in this country. It was a repressive regime with a total lack of freedom. Entire families were killed because of others who hated their religion."

Philip says the American public is not getting the complete story of the war.

"The thing that bothers me still is how the media sensationalizes what's going on over there. They don't want to talk about the good stuff we're doing. They constantly mess up the facts in their stories, make off-base assumptions, and exaggerate the fighting. Sometimes

I would get a newspaper or magazine and read a story, and because I was right in the middle of it all, I would get upset because I knew that what was being reported wasn't exactly what actually happened."

"Their father and I are relieved beyond words that our boys are home safe and sound," said Shirley Snyder. "They and their older sister, Jessica, are our joy and pleasure. We spent many an evening watching the news and praying for them. We're proud of our boys who didn't just sit back and do nothing."

Phillip Snyder looked across the room at his mother and said, "Mom, now you can take down the flag in the window." (The flag's origin goes back to 1942 when Shirley Snyder's mother displayed it when her sons were overseas.)

"Yes, I can," she said as she flashed a relieved smile at her two boys seated across from her in the living room. "Yes, I can."

Business

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ness. The 1950s through the 1970s saw the business prosper, with contracts from the Wilkes-Barre Veterans Hospital coming in, as well as many residential homes being built.

Through events like the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean Conflict, Vietnam and the Agnes Flood of 1972, Huntsville Nursery has served the residents of the Back Mountain and surrounding areas, and, although they will no longer deal in retail sales, Edwards says the landscaping branch of the company is going strong.

"Business is good. Last year and this year has been really good," he said. "We've had

"You have to find your niche, which, for us, is residential landscaping, and to some extent, commercial landscaping."

Ralph Edwards
Huntsville Nursery

great weather and a good economy going for us."

There has been no shortage of work for the company, either. A recent project entailed working on the initial landscaping at the Huntsville Golf Club in Lehman.

When it comes to running the business, according to Edwards, the common thread has been that all three owners share a passion and love for what they do, learning new things, and getting better each

time. With the addition of chain stores to the area such as Home Depot, Lowe's and Wal-Mart, however, came big-time competition, on a scale that the garden center couldn't keep up with.

The arrival of super stores, with their large parking lots, ultra-modern stores and huge selection of items, was one of, if not the, main reason for closing the Huntsville Nursery retail store. The landscaping busi-

ness will now operate out of 12-acre site off Jackson Road.

"I'm really amazed by those places," Edwards said. "I'm really wowed by what they do, although I love to shop at Luzerne Lumber and Dallas Hardware. I like the personal feeling you receive in the smaller places."

Even with the "big-boxes," as he calls competition like Home Depot, Edwards feels that smaller, family-run businesses can compete, as long as they provide knowledgeable, exceptional service.

"That's what I get at smaller stores like Dallas Hardware or Luzerne Lumber," he said. "You know everyone, they say hello, and it's just nice."

Old township building showing signs of age

KINGSTON TWP. — Slowly, but steadily, the old township building is settling into the soft eastern bank of Toby's Creek.

At a July 15 meeting, the supervisors voted to investigate the feasibility of both repairing and selling the building, which now contains offices that are lease to District Justice James Tupper and the North Branch Land Trust, as well as the Trucksville Volunteer Fire Company.

The building, at 11 Carverton Road, is set on a number of pilings driven into the ground. Through the years, settling has occurred, to the point that devices were installed earlier this year to measure the growth of cracks that have developed in walls.

"It's becoming a liability for the township," said supervisor Carl Goodwin in introducing a motion to study the feasibility of selling the building.

Township Manager Eddie O'Neill said he has been working with a realtor for nearly a year to establish a market value on the property, and expects an appraisal soon.

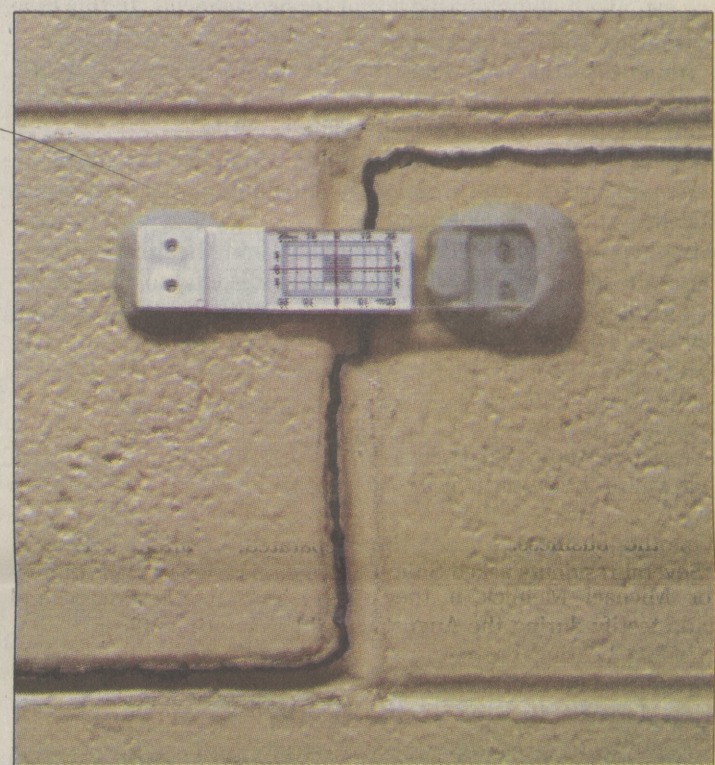
Supervisor Paul Sabol said the land was donated to the township by the fire company, along with \$7,500, in return

for a 99-year lease at a negligible cost. That arrangement could complicate the prospects for a sale, and so could the presence of a monument that was donated by a local family, said solicitor Ben Jones III.

The supervisors also authorized spending up to \$6,260 for an engineering study of the pilings and soil. Goodwin said in addition the township is looking at an expenditure of \$6,500 for installation of proper railings.

A few months ago, considering such unforeseen expenses would have been unthinkable. But the township's finances are in better shape since the introduction of a property tax, which Chairman Chris Yankovich said before the meeting had brought in about \$140,000 so far this year.

Another \$42,000 will be added to the bank account once the township sells 1,197 shares of Principal Financial Group stock. "The township is not allowed to own stock, so they must be liquidated," said supervisor Dave Jenkins. He said the stock fell into the township's hands when an insurer changed its structure, resulting in the distribution of shares to policy holders.



Devices have been installed on the walls of the old Kingston Township building, to measure the growth of cracks caused by settling.

Free legal services for Reservists

As National Guard and Reserve units are called up to serve the Armed Forces of the United States, the Military Affairs Committee of the Wilkes-Barre Law and Library Association/Luzerne County Bar is available to provide legal services where needed.

The pro bono service includes preparation of wills for soldiers, sailors and airmen. The service is also available to assist these individuals and their families with problems related to their call to active duty, and legal affairs which may require their attention during their physical absence from home.

The committee is also available to assist lawyers in the management of their legal cases during their call to active duty.

For information call the Wilkes-Barre Law and Library Association at 822-6712.

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