

Black Knights come oh so close against GAR.

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THE POST

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

For decades, Toby's Creek has been hidden, abused and nearly forgotten. But this distinctive waterway may hold the potential to spark interest in the region as a historic, natural and recreational destination. In this second part of our series, Post writers describe how other communities are protecting and enjoying their streams and rivers, and discover there is a wealth of support to help us do the same.



Toby's Creek

Our hidden resource

Needed: A shared vision of the creek's potential

A watershed association can unlock funding sources, coordinate viable projects.

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

Two centuries ago, Toby's Creek was prized for nothing more than its rushing water. Early entrepreneurs constructed mills along the creek and its tributaries, buying wood, grain and other raw materials from local farmers and turning them into foodstuffs and useful products.

But only a few decades after the first mill was built, exploitation of the creek and surrounding land sowed the seeds of its downfall as a power source. After trees were cut and fields cleared, the ground could no longer soak up rainfall and release it gradually. Instead, a pattern developed

"Getting people involved and aware is more than half the battle."

Mark Carmon
Department of Environmental Protection

of low flow interrupted by brief high water; a sequence that continues to this day.

Now the creek may be suited to a new role, one that emphasizes enjoyment over utility. Around the nation, communities are rediscovering the streams and rivers that have been neglected — even abused — for generations. Surrounded by home and store development, people are finding that cool glades beside clear water offer a refuge from the indignities of daily life.

Paired with walking and biking tracks, such as the Back Mountain Trail, these hidden resources

may become important contributors to their communities' quality of life, and even economic health.

Joe Moskovitz, Dallas Borough Manager, believes Toby's Creek can be an "economic development engine," a most important part of the downtown revitalization initiative now going on. "The creek is a community treasure, and could be the linchpin" for educational and recreational activities, he says.

Six months ago the borough applied for a \$30,000 state "Growing Greener" grant that would look into development of the creek between Irem Temple Country Club and Offset Paperback.

"We look at the creek winding through the borough as largely a nuisance," says Moskovitz. But better use of the watershed area could bring bene-

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Reinventing the family farm

The owner of Whistle Pig Pumpkin Patch has a plan, but for now it's just plain fun.

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Post Correspondent

NOXEN — Joel Field has a plan. The owner of The Whistle Pig Pumpkin Patch is also a computer engineer, and owner of Fielded Systems, a small computer service business in Dallas.

He has a 10-year plan to turn the old dairy farm that he and his wife Stacy bought a few years ago into a "pick-your-own" operation.

But right now, it's a place where families can have fun finding their way through a 3-acre corn maze, taking tractor-drawn hayrides or battling it out in a hay fort. While meandering through the corn maze, you also can read some interesting facts about pumpkins.

The Whistle Pig Pumpkin Patch is a 3-acre farm just outside of Noxen. It is nestled at the base of Schooley's Peak, the highest in the area according to Field. "The view is glorious, just beautiful," he said. Bowman's Creek runs adjacent to the farm.

Strawberries, pumpkins and gourds are The Whistle Pig's main crops. "Our goal is to also include blueberries, raspberries and grapes," he said last week. Another idea is to divide the farm into sections for co-op farming. That way, city dwellers, or schools and community groups could have their own little farm within a farm.

"We think most of our revenue in the future will be from group tours and outings," he said.

Field says he wants to be on the farm full-time in 10 years. "This is the first time in my entire career that I've ever known where I'm going."

Whistling pigs are a real problem in the patch according to Field.

"A whistle pig is another name for a woodchuck. They're terrible, because they get into the patch in the spring and early summer when the patch is a solid blanket of green leaves and you can't see them. Then they eat the pumpkins."

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Jonathan King, Noxen, lifts a heavy pumpkin up into a wagon at the Whistle Pig Pumpkin Patch.

Project will spruce up lake approach

Protective Association, water utility team up to beautify three traffic islands.

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

HARVEYS LAKE — Mark Sobeck noticed something on trips to the Finger Lakes in upstate New York. It seemed roadways into lake communities all were graced by attractive landscaping. But it had been a struggle to provide the same type of positive welcome for visitors to Harveys Lake.

Now, the Harveys Lake Protective Association, with Sobeck as president, has committed itself to brightening the surroundings in the area where Route 415 comes to the lake.

Sobeck says the approach has been considerably spruced up in recent years, except for one thing. "When you come to the lake it's beautiful, except for the (traffic) islands," he said Monday.

It's especially untidy right now, because United Water has ripped up the main island to service a well that lies beneath it. But Sobeck and other

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Griffiths will step down

By MARK GUYDISH
For The Post

DALLAS TWP. — Dallas School District Superintendent Gilbert Griffiths submitted an early and unexpected retirement at the Oct. 11 board meeting, saying he will leave office Dec. 1 — seven months before his contract expires.

The board unanimously accepted his retirement.

Griffiths said he choose the early retirement because "I was looking at some options that might not be there by the end of the year."

Griffiths, 57, would not comment on rumors that he has a job offer at nearby College Misericordia, saying that "until I have a contract in hand, I can't say at some options."

However, as a stream of people offered thanks and good-byes, he told several "I won't be going too far," and "I'll be just around the corner."

Superintendent says thanks in letter, page 4.

After nearly 36 years in education — 18 at Dallas — Griffiths will be eligible for a pension worth about 87 percent of his current salary of nearly \$100,000, Business Manager Grant Palfev said.

He is also eligible for a one-time early retirement bonus of about 67 percent of his final year's salary, Palfev said.

After a new board majority took shape in December, Griffith's job security became constant grist for the Dallas rumor mill. Board members repeatedly denied any specific plans, but board president Dave Usavage once conceded that he and Griffiths "don't see eye to eye."

The majority increasingly disregarded Griffiths' recommendations in recent months and took moves that

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Gilbert Griffiths, who announced he will resign his post as superintendent Dec. 1, listened in the background as Dallas School Board President David Usavage addressed the audience at the Oct. 11 board meeting.

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Check out our listing of all the Halloween haunts.

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