

SPACE

(continued from page 1)

Lackawanna counties.

"Now we can have a full-blown open space component," he said, which will integrate the county proposals with some developed specifically for the Back Mountain.

The additional grant comes with no matching funds requirement from local municipalities, and the study will cover communities that do not belong to the COG, such as Harveys Lake.

The project will include an inventory of land uses and recreational assets, and a study of environmental characteristics, such as water resources and areas that support endangered species.

"Other than traffic, we think it's (open space) the most important part of the plan."

Joe Moskovitz
COG administrator

Julie McMonigle, the current director of the environmental council, said the study will supplement the recently completed bi-county plan. "Since land use is in the hands of local municipalities, it makes sense."

Places for both organized and casual recreation are one focus. "Recreation is key to quality of life issues," McMonigle said. "We need more."

She worked on planning for the Back Mountain Recreation Center, being developed in Lehman Township, and saw the demand for playing fields, walking trails and other facilities.

Moskovitz also wants the consultants to assess the potential for "ecotourism" in the Back Mountain, which he feels could provide economic stability in a much cleaner fashion than factories.

"We're going to look at our greenways specifically," he said, such as the Back Mountain Trail.

Planning without execution has no value, Moskovitz said, so an important aspect of the study will be an implementation strategy that will include examples of regulations already on the books in other places that can be adapted for use here.

Anyone who is interested will be able to get a look at the study results "There will be a number of public meetings," Moskovitz said.

The goal is to have both the open space and regional master plan finished by June 2005. While there were some delays since the process started, "as of this week, we're back on track," Moskovitz said.

FIRE SAFETY FOR KIDS



Mercedes Whitaker goes backward down the stairs in the "Smoke House." Fire chief Jim Rooney guides her way.

'Smoke House' gives life-saving lessons

Second graders from Wycallis and Dallas elementary schools worried and squirmed at the idea of going into the "Smoke House."

"I think it's going to be hot and smoky in there," said Syndy Emershaw, a second grader at Wycallis.

The "Smoke House" is the creation of the Pittston City Fire Department, which has taken a small travel trailer and reconstructed the inside to resemble a two-story house with a staircase. The children scramble upstairs and wait behind a heated bedroom door until the house is filled with artificial smoke and alarms go off.

"The idea is not to really frighten the heck out of them, but to teach," explained Pittston City fire chief Jim Rooney.

The big points for the children to remember are for parents to check the fire and smoke detector batteries, to practice fire drills at home, to learn safe ways of exiting burning buildings and to not be afraid of the firefighters. The all-volunteer staff delights in helping kids learn good fire safety habits.

Cassie Cocco and Michael Davis were impressed. "He doesn't look scary now," they said, but when

Pittston firefighter Jeff Williams put his oxygen mask on they weren't so sure.

"We always try to reassure them, we use less smoke for the younger kids," says Rooney.

Together in the top bedroom the class and Rooney wait until the smoke detectors go off then crawl backwards down the stairs. In single file and still on their hands and knees they crawl out of the smoke-

filled trailer.

The program was brought to the Dallas School District in late October by Norm Swithers, advisor to a group of Dallas High School students who are volunteer firefighters or EMTs. "They wanted to do something for their district," said Swithers.

— Text and photos
by Charlotte Bartizek



Michael Davis wonders if fireman Jeff Williams is really all right under his mask. Syndy Emershaw seems less concerned.

Veteran posts quiet protest of Iraq war

Ed Day, a 21-year Army veteran, recently set out a poignant display of empty combat boots at his property in Dallas Township, where his flag flies at half-staff.

"I wanted to honor the many servicemen who have died in this war," he said. The boots belonged to a soldier who died in the Vietnam Conflict. "My friend gave them to me a long time ago. They belonged to his son."

The boots sit on a platform, draped in red cloth, and are spotlighted at night. When asked if he was afraid someone would steal them, he said he almost wished someone would. "Emotionally it would probably do me good. I've had them a long time," he said.

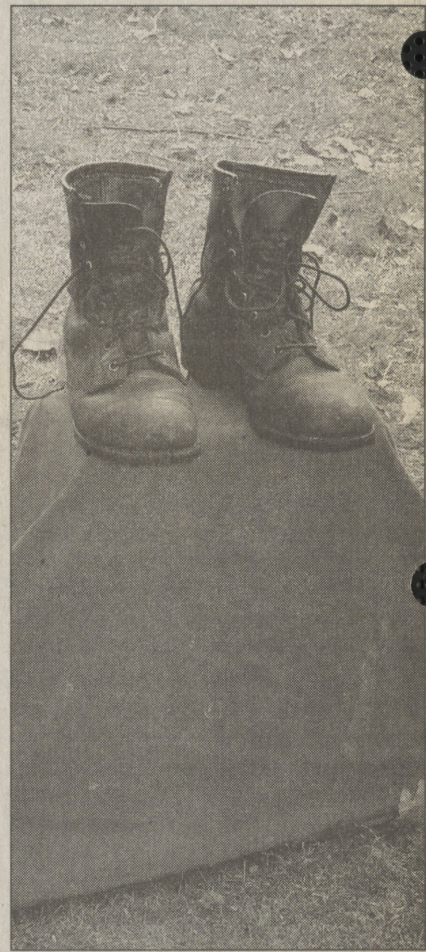
A long-time registered Republican, Day switched his party affiliation to Democrat prior to the most recent county commissioner election, but considers himself an Independent.

"This war was not begun responsibly. There were about 500 weapons inspectors running around Iraq," said Day. "My personal feeling is that, if we had waited and he (Saddam Hussein) kicked those inspectors out, the United Nations would have been with us."

Day has visited the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the Wall, the new World War II Veterans Memorial, and the Naval Memorial for the Pacific Theater in Hawaii.

"Those Swift Boat ads upset me because the Department of Defense would not hand out medals that were not deserved," said Day. "Some of these gung-ho people haven't been around the families to see how it is when the soldiers come home. I just wanted to honor those soldiers."

— by M.B. Gilligan



FOR THE POST/M.B. GILLIGAN

Ed Day, a 21-year Army veteran, placed these empty boots outside his home as a silent protest of the war in Iraq. They once were worn by a soldier who died in Vietnam.

Deadline for submitted news is
Wednesday at noon.

E-mail is the best method -
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Objections raised to women's halfway house

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — The discovery that a halfway house for women is operating next to the Mountainside Manor assisted-living facility brought Karen Esposito and many other angry residents to the Nov. 1 board of supervisors meeting.

The Clem-mar House for women, which opened in early June, is a transitional living program for females, said Sonya Mowry, Clem-mar's assistant project director. Clem-mar is a contractor of Luzerne County Drug and Alcohol. The nonprofit program is licensed by the Department of Health.

Mowry says their main clientele will be Luzerne County residents. Women 18 and older, and pregnant women up

to their sixth month of pregnancy, will learn parenting skills, budgeting and job training.

Five women are living in the facility; however, the house has room for 24. Mowry could not say when additional women will arrive.

Esposito disputed Mowry's claim that only Luzerne County residents will reside at the facility. "It's a lie, they're bringing in inner-city people."

The Clem-mar House for men is located on Main Street in Edwardsville. Mowry assured residents that about 88 percent of the residents at the men's facility have not committed a crime.

"Our clients clean all their parks, so the borough does not have to pay. We have been licensed in Edwardsville for 10 years and we haven't had any prob-

lems. Currently, this is a dead issue. Nothing new has happened to (the Dallas Township) building since June 3."

She added that the only difference is change in ownership.

"This is not a drug unit," Mowry said. "We are not going to detox, we are not going to take any medications like methadone. We are not going to do any of that. All of the women have already been through treatment."

She said clients will transition from Choices, Clear Brook, and other drug rehabilitation facilities, then on to a 28-day treatment program, then to Clem-mar. "Our goal is to get them working, get them bank accounts, make them productive members of this society and have them give back to the community."

Al Cilaberto, program director and clinical supervisor, said the average time to rehabilitate a resident is three to six months. "I want to assure you that no one from the prison will be living in our home. This is a voluntary program. They just completed a rehab program and need a little support in their lives."

"You're sugar-coating it," Esposito said. "Go take a ride down Main Street in Edwardsville. The property values have diminished."

In other business:

- The decision to rezone the proposed tract of land owned by Halbing-Amato Development LLC was deferred until the next meeting on Nov. 16.

- Leaf pickup will be Nov. 15 through Nov. 19, weather permitting.

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PER INTEREST

NEWS

Coverage Area: The Post covers the "Back Mountain" area of Luzerne County, including the Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts, and southern Wyoming County. We try to get to as many events as possible, but staff and space limitations make it impossible to cover everything. If you have news about your family, town or organization, please send it to us and we'll try to get it in. Photographs are welcome. You may send items to the address above, or drop them off at the Uni-Mart in Dallas near the intersection of Routes 309 and 415. E-mail is the best and most timely method for submissions. Send items (digital photos, too) to: thepost@leader.net
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The Post (ISSN - 1551-1650)

Published weekly by Cypress Media, LLC. \$26 per year, in Luzerne and Wyoming counties (PA). Call 829-7141 for rates to other areas. Periodicals postage paid at Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-9998
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Post, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18711
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