

BUDGET

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"As one supervisor, I wouldn't anticipate any revenue increases for the coming year," Box said last week.

Box said that after a meeting with county officials earlier this year, he felt the commissioners would not make any change in tax collection methods until 2006.

Kingston Township represents small change compared to what the county pays the City of Pittston, where the rate is \$15.91 per bill and the cost tops \$50,000.

DePolo said he have given the commissioners three options for a county takeover:

1. Take over collection for 2005 in the cities of Pittston, Hazleton and Nanticoke, and the home-rule municipalities of Kingston Township, Wilkes-Barre Township and Kingston. DePolo said doing so would save \$160,000 per year. The county already collects its takes in the City of Wilkes-Barre.

2. Take over only the cities in 2005, for a projected savings of about \$126,000.

3. Wait until 2006, when the

"I wouldn't anticipate any revenue increases for the coming year."

Jeffrey Box
Township Supervisor

county can take over collection of county taxes in all municipalities, as long as it announces the plan before the 2005 elections.

"They have not indicated to me which way they're thinking," DePolo said last week.

Box said he has suggested that the county consider reducing the rate it pays for tax collection, rather than taking over the function, which he believes will not produce the projected savings.

DePolo is planning a public meeting to discuss the issue with tax collectors, the commissioners and a representative from the Pennsylvania Economy League. Part of the discussion would be whether or not the county would continue to allow municipalities to piggy-back on its statement.

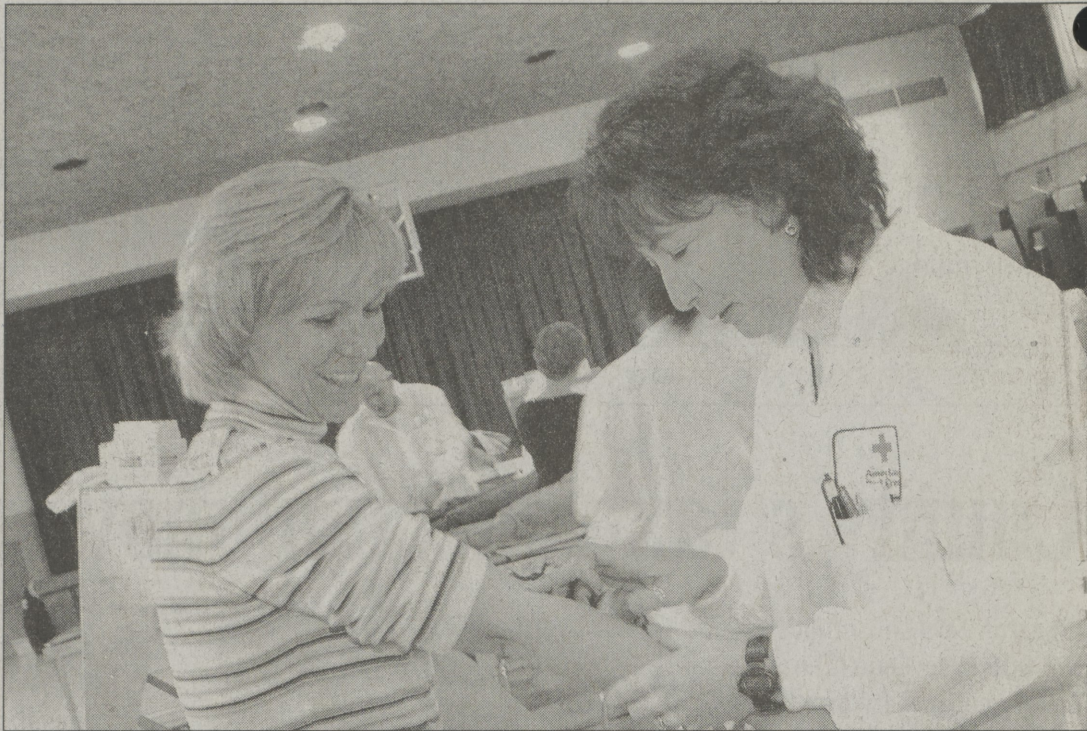
Blood drive at GOH tops goal

The American Red Cross blood drive held Nov. 26 at Gate of Heaven Church was very successful.

"Gate of Heaven Church always does a wonderful job," said Regina Allen, the blood service coordinator at the American Red Cross. Since July the agency has struggled to get people out for the blood drives, but the drive at Gate of Heaven exceeded the agency's target.

"We hoped for 45 donors and 59 showed up; from this, we got 52 productive units of blood that helped over 150 people," Allen said. "We were so excited to see those results."

The next Back Mountain drive will be at Irem Temple Country Club on Monday, Dec. 6, from 1 to 6 p.m. Another drive will be held at a new location on Friday, Dec. 10, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Management Recruiters on the second floor



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Linda Kiddrich, Red Cross nurse technician, checks the veins of Renee Bolard, Dallas at the Red Cross blood drive, held Nov. 26 at Gate of Heaven Church.

of the Pendragon Building in Trucksville.

A special "O" blood drive will be held at the Meadows Center on Dec. 21, from 1 to 6. Blood typed O negative is the univer-

sal donor, therefore in more demand according to Allen, but anyone can donate blood, regardless of their blood type, at any of the blood drives or locations.

For more information on donating, call the Red Cross office at 823-7161.

—Text and photos by Charlotte Bartizek

Township, employee settle discrimination claim

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — Settling clerk Kathleen Sebastian's suit against the township and four supervisors has cost the township \$195,000, plus its legal expenses and insurance deductible. All but \$5,000 of the settlement will be paid by the township's insurance carrier, National Casualty Company.

All the present supervisors signed the agreement at their Oct. 13 meeting. Paul Sabol and J. Carl Goodwin, who were named in the suit and still sit on the board, signed as individuals at that time.

Former supervisors John Versari and Cornelius Allen, who lost their positions in the November 2003 election, signed separately. Allen signed on Oct. 20 and Versari on Nov. 4.

While terms were confidential until the settlement was finalized, it is now available for

review because it involves a taxpayer-supported public entity, the township.

The agreement, reached with the help of a federal mediator, awards \$66,250 to Koff, Mangan, Vullo & Gartley P.C., Sebastian's legal counsel, and \$128,750 to Sebastian. It specifically states that \$3,500 constitutes damages paid for "medical care attributable to emotional distress."

The township also must bear its own legal costs, which were not immediately available, and the deductible on its insurance policy.

The agreement, "made in compromise of disputed claims," also states that there is no "admission of liability by any party."

Sebastian said last week that she did not pursue the action for money.

"I did not want to cost the township any money," she said. "I'm not walking around here a rich woman."

"It was just to protect myself and make people be responsible for their actions."

In the suit, filed Oct. 21, 2003, Sebastian stated she was appointed acting township manager in Oct. 2001 after the previous manager, Jeffrey Box, resigned. Prior to the appointment she served as assistant township manager, a post she said she was given two weeks after first being hired in 1999.

While working as acting township manager, she applied for the township manager position and was interviewed for the post. She said that after her interview supervisors changed the qualifications so she would not be able to apply, according to her suit.

During the application and selection process, Sebastian claims, Sabol made discriminatory comments about her, including remarks about her marital status, whether there would be a problem between her and single men if she were

appointed to the position and about the way she dressed.

The supervisors appointed Edmund O'Neill as township manager in May 2002 and Sebastian returned to the post of assistant manager.

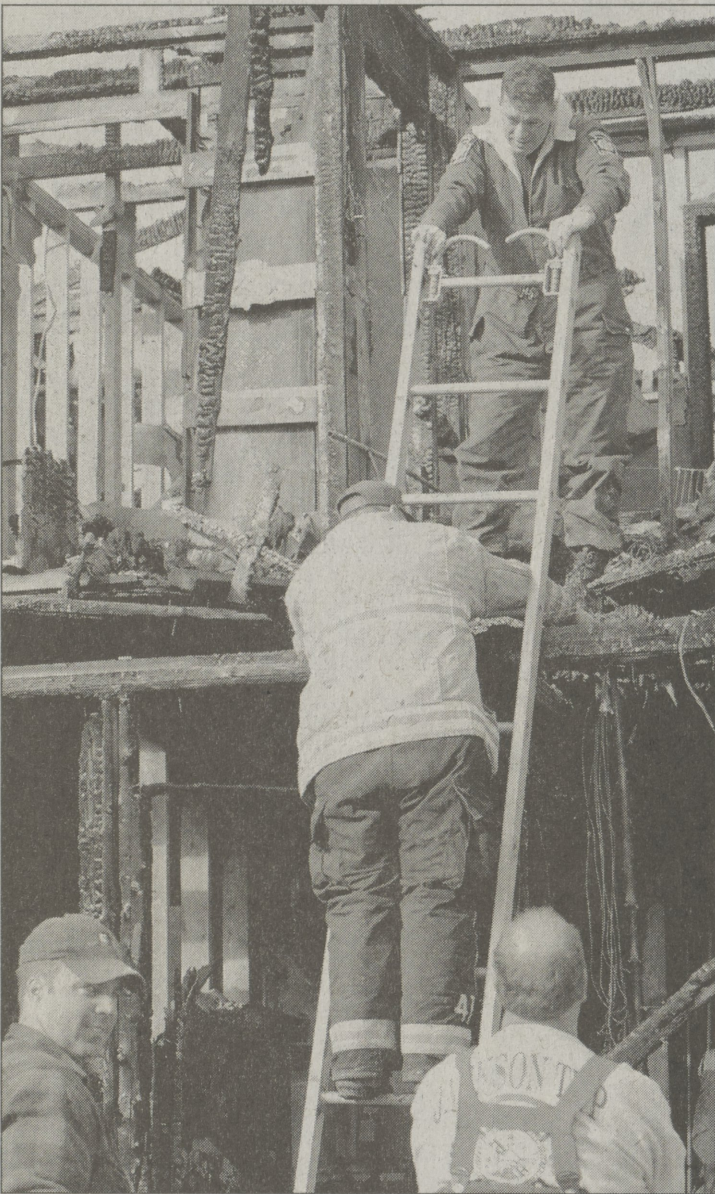
She was later demoted to township clerk.

In the suit, Sebastian sought lost wages and benefits, plus interest. She also sought damages resulting from humiliation, embarrassment and emotional distress.

She had earlier filed two complaints with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

The settlement is based on the claim of lost wages between Sebastian's present salary of \$35,979 and what she would have been paid as manager. O'Neill's salary this year is \$54,209.

The township's insurance contract requires the township to pay the first \$5,000 of such a claim.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Firefighters and investigators pored through the remains of the Michak home in Sutton Hills. The house went up in flames early last Tuesday morning.

FIRE

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neighbors in Sutton Hills have been great," she said.

She was unsure what their permanent living arrangements would be. "We really haven't gotten that far."

Gary Michak said inspectors told him the cause of the fire, which started on the first floor, may have been electrical. The home, which Courtney Michak

said was about 25 years old, was insured.

Their lives were spared, Gary Michak said, because the security system in the house went off, and because, "God was watching over us."

—Correspondent Charlotte Bartizek contributed to this article.

More trolley memories

An article in last week's Post about the trolley line that ran through the Back Mountain area stirred up fond memories for Kathleen Richards, 81, who lives on Harris Hill Road in Trucksville.

When she was growing up, she and her friends rode the trolley to "the big town of Luzerne" for fun and shopping on Friday nights. Her earliest years were spent in Dallas, which had few stores at the time.

She recalled when the trolley car barn, which was in the area of the present Uni-Mart, caught fire. "We all just walked down

the track and watched it burn," she said.

Later, she lived in a house, now gone, that was near the location of the Sheetz store in Trucksville. The two-lane road of the time separated her house from Toby's Creek, and a building that had been a mill still stood just below Harris Hill Road.

If you have any recollections of the trolley or railroad line, or the creek, don't hesitate to send them to us at: The Post, 15 N. Main St., Wilkes-Barre PA 18711, or by e-mail to: thepost@leader.net

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Corrections, clarifications: The Post will correct errors of fact or clarify any misunderstandings created by a story. Call 675-5211.

Have a story idea? Please call, we'd like to hear about it.

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