

## CREEK

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The assurance a correction can be made.

"Certainly, if there is a mistake, the signs should be replaced or taken down," he says, but that may be easier said than done.

"What it would take, is to change all the maps," but the U.S. Board of Geographic Names does not like to change names even for historical cor-

"Certainly, if there is a mistake, the signs should be replaced or taken down."

**Josh Sizemore**

Luzerne County Conservation District

rectness.

Sizemore quotes from the board's website on the issue of renaming places: "Changing a name merely to correct or reestablish historical usage is

not, in and of itself, a reason to change a name."

The board would have to be petitioned to change all the maps before the sign on the creek could say Bidlack Creek,

even though it may be wrong now.

It seems to be too much trouble to get things right. Or maybe not.

Murray is troubled that history will be lost by labeling creeks incorrectly. If the persistence he has shown at township meetings is any indication, this may be a mistake that will be corrected.

## MURRAY

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the bomb bay.

"Do you know who that is?" someone said, pointing out a man standing nearby. "That's Chuck Yeager." Fred and the other men put the X-1 on a dolly and pushed it to a roped-off area. It was on its way to the Smithsonian Museum.

Murray, a Jackson Township native who returned to his boyhood home after retirement, first took flying lessons at the Forty-Fort airport. As a kid, flying was "the only thing" he was interested in. His interest became a profession that ended in 1992 after 34 years and 22,000 hours of time in the air as a flight engineer for American Airlines.

Today one of Murray's most prized possessions is his autographed copy of "Yeager," an autobiography of the daredevil pilot.

Murray has seen some changes in the airline industry, most concerning security and wages. "In 1957 the pilots negotiated a new contract to get \$25,000 a year. Some went off and bought large suburban farms after that," he says.

During much of Murray's career, the greatest security threat was the lone hijacker. Some pilots thought it would be pretty nifty if they were hijacked to Havana, where Fidel Castro would put them up in then-posh hotels for a few days before they had to go back home.

Murray, an avid sportsman, hunter and naturalist, is proud to say he spent his 72nd birthday horseback on Mt. Wrangle in eastern Alaska hunting for bighorn sheep. He didn't bag one, but saw some pretty amazing wildlife scenes. "You have to get at them from above on foot," he says Murray. "The vacation was awesome, tough, one of the toughest you can go on."

Murray's home was built in 1866, is filled with hunting trophies, moose horn and elk heads.

The house — where Murray was born — was built by two Civil War Union soldiers and then sold to his great grandfather, Wayman Cease, in 1895. Murray thinks the "Ceases" were Hessians from Philadelphia, who came to the area after the American Revolution.

Dr. Carl Martin, head of surgery at Nesbitt Hospital, bought the house in 1950 when Murray's mother died. Murray, then living on Long island, would come back to



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Fred Murray sits in the living room of his Jackson Township home. He was born there 75 years ago, and it has been in his family for all but 20 of the last 110 years.

hunt grouse and owned a small cabin nearby. He got tired of Long Island and in 1970 bought the homestead back from Martin, who retired to New Mexico.

But Murray claims to be a Scotsman, because his mother was from Douglas Castle, Scotland, and because he wanted to be one. "I always claim to be a Scotsman because I think they are such good people."

Walking through the backyard, Murray remembers his grandfather and father having a blacksmith shop and wishes it was still there. The stone-walled fields where corn, pigs or raspberries were raised and the century barn are still intact. The creek that runs

through his property once was alive with crayfish, flies and chubs but he thinks it has been somewhat sterilized since the state prison was built upstream.

The bears come to scratch and bite the slow growing cypress trees in his yard and the mallards come to nest in the pond in the spring.

Murray went to school in the one-room Oakdale schoolhouse that was torn down to make room for the prison and graduated from Lehman High

School. "There's only 18 of us left (from his graduating class) so I think it has something to do with the genes I have."

And Fred Murray's eyesight is still pretty good after all that flying time. "I only need glasses to read."

## SCHOOL

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at the former Henry W. Palmer Elementary school in the Rolling Mill Hill section of Wilkes-Barre. The organization acquired the vacant property in 2001 and with funding from HUD, the state, city and county housing authorities as well as the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, invested \$3.3 million to create 28 housing units in what is now known as the Palmer House.

Because VOA depends on grants for funding, it was not able to make a firm commitment to buy the dilapidated structure along Outlet Road.

Back Mountain Recreation, which is constructing a regional recreation complex across the road, had offered to buy the property for \$85,000, but asked for 60 days to evaluate the state of the building.

Last fall, school board

Solicitor Charles Coslett suggested that Sutton, who also is president of Back Mountain Recreation, might be intentionally stalling the sale.

Sutton claims the rec group felt they had an agreement in principle with the district, but the next meeting the school board voted to sell to the church. He still doesn't understand why.

The church was given permission to enter the building in December, even though a formal closing has not taken place.

"They have started to use it," said Superintendent Michael Healey. The district will retain the right to use the gymnasium, even after the closing, he said.

Coslett said the final paperwork is in the hands of the church's lawyer, and he expects a closing later this month.

## TRANSPORT

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to an average of \$3,384 paid in the Dallas School District, according to figures supplied by Dallas Business Manager Grant Palffy.

Last year, Lake-Lehman paid 13 contractors a total of \$574,880 for car and van costs. Costs are expected to total \$715,000 this school year to transport 71 students. The two contractors paid the most last year for car and van service received \$192,144 and \$117,483.

Mahon alleges some contractors were given the jobs as "political candy."

Dallas uses three contractors. Russ Bus has 20 vans and the district projects payment of \$307,676 for the year. Keller Wheelchair uses two vans, and will be paid \$30,744; Charlotte Redmond will be paid \$16,871 for the use of one van.

Together, they transport 105 students. Compensation is by contracted amount and 50¢ per mile is added for each extra student during the year.

Longtime contractor Sandy Dobrowolski said the reimbursement to Lake-Lehman drivers has been \$1.25 per mile the past five years. She started her business 19 years ago with one van and now has five. Lake-Lehman paid her \$192,144 last year and the district estimates

it will pay her \$190,000 this school year.

Dobrowolski said that might appear to be a large amount of money, but she has payroll, liability and other insurance costs, worker's compensation and other expenses. She said she transported 26 children last year compared to 14 this year.

According to school district figures:

- Contractor Al Scovish was paid \$117,483 last year and is estimated to receive \$230,000 this school year. He has seven vans and transports 29 children.

- The other 11 contractors and amounts paid include: Jack McManus, \$44,913; Brian Suder, \$40,089; Terry Jones, \$37,994; Ray Iwanowski, \$28,213; Rick Ide, \$24,498; Kent Jones, \$24,388; Brenda Suder, \$21,504; Arthur Spencer, \$20,386; Nancy Kerns, \$18,416; Corry Traver, \$3,335; and Sheri Patla, \$1,517.

In the Crestwood School District, Superintendent Richard Duffy said his district pays \$477,309 to transport 52 special-needs children in vans. The district hires independent contractors and pays an average of \$9,179 per student.

This article includes material from a Jan. 5 Times Leader story written by Bonnie Adams.

## Fire department web addresses

Five local fire departments now have web pages where anyone who is interested may find out more about the departments and how to become a volunteer. They are:

Shavertown: <http://go.to/shavertownfire>

Trucksville: <http://www.trucksvillefire.com>

Kunkle Fire & EMS: <http://home.usnetway.com/~kunkle>

Harveys Lake Fire & EMS: <http://www.geocities.com/harveyslakefire>

Northmoreland Fire: <http://www.geocities.com/station140>

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