

Age group swimmers make a splash at state meet.

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Adoption across borders

Russian orphans, chances slim in their native country, get a chance here.

By JENNIFER JUDGE YONKOSKI
Post Correspondent

Life is hard for orphaned children in Russia. But through adoption, some local families have rescued them from an uncertain fate.

"By the time children get to be 6 years old, they are considered older orphans and have virtually no chance of being adopted in their country," explains Bill Jones, vice president and chief operating officer of Volunteers of America (VOA), an organization that brings

Russian orphans to the United States for five weeks during the summer.

"By 16 they have to leave the orphanage because there is no room. They may be homeless; they may turn to prostitution. One in 10 never see their 17th birthday because life is so hard they commit suicide. Our adoptive families could quite possibly be saving the life of a child."

The program, dubbed "Summer Dreams," gives orphaned Russian children the chance to visit the United States and be part of an American family, with the hope that they will be adopted.

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Elina with Jennifer Vieczorek. The Tunkhannock family adopted Elina after she came for a visit in 2003

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Study finds us growing ... older

Back Mountain Council of Governments takes first step toward a regional master plan.

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

DALLAS — As the Back Mountain is growing more populated, it also is growing older. That is one of the preliminary findings in research for a "multi-municipal master plan" currently under development by a Philadelphia-based professional planning contractor.

An aging populace has implications for the future of the region's communities, and meeting their needs should influence zoning and planning decisions, said Marian Hull, project manager for Kise Straw & Kolodner, the lead firm for the study.

The study, funded by a \$100,000 grant, is sponsored by Dallas Borough and Dallas, Lehman and Kingston townships, members of the Back Mountain Council of Governments.

Another \$50,000 grant is paying for a study aimed specifically at identifying and protecting open space in the region.

From 1990 to 2000, the median age in the council member communities

See GROWING, Page 2

Overbrook falls prey to faster food

Diners' move to smaller meals and lighter fare left fewer customers for traditional fine dining.

By SANDY PEOPLES
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — Many people in the Back Mountain have fond memories of special events in their lives, some of which included a special meal at the Overbrook Restaurant. Reservations were made, Sunday-best clothes donned, and stories were shared over a plate of veal Oscar or baked snapper.

"But times have changed and people's wants and needs have changed," said Tony Macri, the Overbrook's owner for 20 years. "With both parents working and their children in all kinds of activities and sporting events, there is little time left to make dining the focus of an evening. People have moved to faster, more casual eating versus taking two hours to dine in a leisurely atmosphere."

Macri made several menu changes over the years to diversify the offerings and three remodeling efforts to accommodate more seating, but people still perceived the Overbrook as a fine dining restaurant and began to go elsewhere.

See OVERBROOK, Page 2

20 years ago, a very different dining scene

When Tony and Lois Macri opened the Overbrook restaurant in the middle of 1985, they entered a crowded local dining market. Among the fine dining choices at the time were the Brittany House, which was in the building now occupied by Smith-Hourigan Real Estate, and the Pinebrook, on Lower Demunds Road.

"Family dining" was available at The Town House on Lake Street, Jededia's (now Dough Company) or Franklin's, now Friendly's.

There were some fast-food choices as well, at the Hoagie Bar and Kentucky Fried Chicken, both along Route 309 in Dallas.

Before the Macris opened the Overbrook, the building at 151 Overbrook Road had been the Overbrook Inn, The Dry Dock, and then briefly the Cartoon Pizzeria Saloon.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Goblin' for good

Richard Smith shows off his pie-eating style at Dallas High School. The contest was a senior project and fundraiser for the Make-a-Wish Foundation. While stylish, Smith was not the winner. More photos on page 3.

O'Reilly star Crossin named best in state

Another honor added to two state championships, two-time all-star status.

Staff report

Bishop O'Reilly senior guard Tim Crossin was a runaway winner for the Associated Press Pennsylvania Class A Player of the Year award. The winner, announced March 29, is selected from a statewide voting of sports writers and broadcasters. It marks the second award for the Bishop O'Reilly senior since the Queensmen won their second consecutive state title. Last weekend, Crossin, of Trucksville, was chosen as a first-team all-state selection, also for the second time.

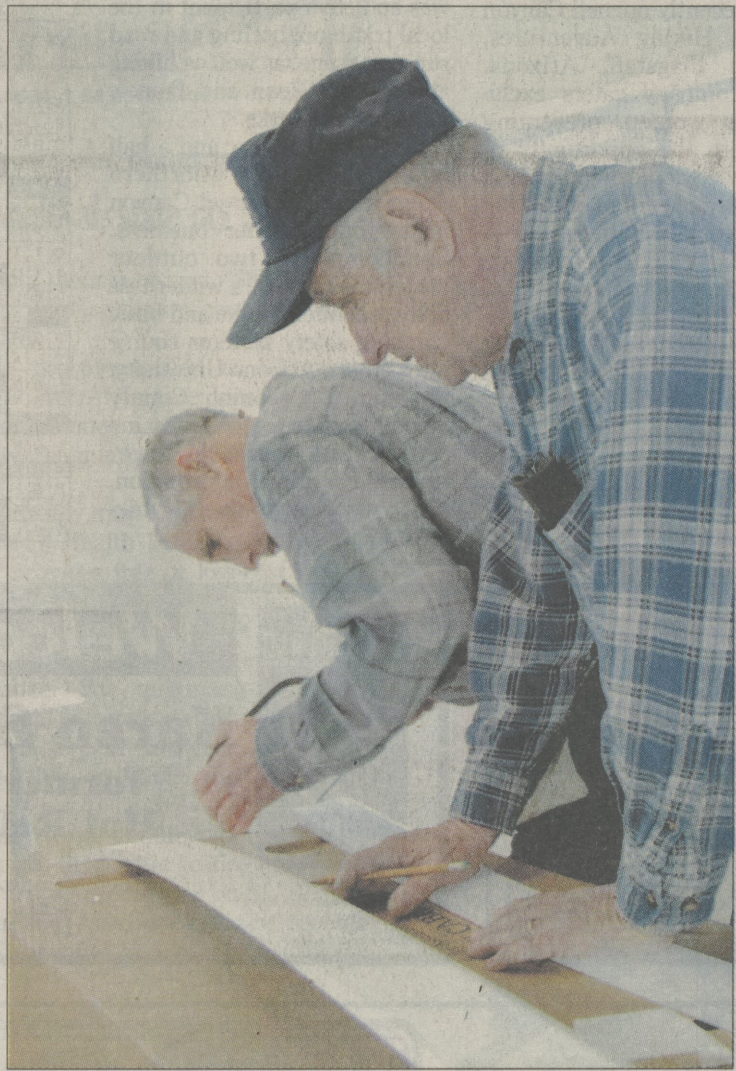
"Timmy really deserves the honor," said his coach, Mark Belenski. "He's the best player I've seen in single-A. He does things on a court that, unless you have a basketball mind, you don't see. He's a great player and a great kid."

Crossin wasn't the only member of the team to be recognized by the statewide media. Belenski was named Class A Coach of the Year for the second consecutive season. Like Crossin, the four-year head coach was a runaway winner for the award.

"I'm elated," said Belenski, referring to the Coach of the Year Award. "This is an honor for the entire team. I had great kids and two assistant coaches (Joe Darling and Paul Guido) who worked very hard for me."

Crossin becomes the first Wyoming Valley Conference player to receive the award since former GAR star Bob Sura was named the AP Small School

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Habitat helpers

Windsor Davis, Harveys Lake, left, and Bart Balcomb, Luzerne use coping saw to finish moulding trim on a new Habitat for Humanity home in Nanticoke during a recent work day.

Some early goals, and more research

Last week's presentation by Kise Straw & Kolodner and its subcontractors included tentative goals in the areas of population and housing, economic development, historic resources, community facilities, land use, recreational facilities, open space, waste water, drinking water, the environment and transportation.

Land use overrides all the other considerations, said Marian Hull, project manager. "We need to get agreement on how people want to grow before we can say where the growth will be."

The preliminary findings rested largely on Census data, on-site surveys and discussions with local officials. A few preliminary goals are:

- Open space and water quality are exceptional, but must be protected. "What speaks to me is the amount of green," said Courtney Marm, a planner with Cahill Associates, which is conducting the open space study. One way to protect open space is allowing municipalities to transfer development rights between one another.

- New commercial activity should be directed to clustered areas, not spread around the region. "That has some appeal to me," said Dave Jenkins, a Kingston Township supervi-

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TOBY'S CREEK FLOODING STUDY PRESENTATION RESCHEDULED

A representative of Gannett Fleming Inc., the firm that conducted a study of flooding along Toby's Creek and its tributaries, will explain the findings and answer questions at a public meeting Tuesday, April 12, at the Kingston Township Municipal Bldg., 180 E. Center St., Shavertown, starting at 7 p.m. Representatives of DEP and the state Department of General Services are also expected to attend. The presentation was originally scheduled for March 23, but was cancelled due to snow.

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Boy Scouts travel across the Back Mountain to collect food.

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George M. Dallas Lodge No. 531 installs officers for 2005.

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