

CREEK

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tion," she says. "It's also the first time I got to see the arch and it was quite beautiful." She is referring to the original section of the Harris Hill Road bridge, constructed of stone and later widened with concrete.

Bestwick, who has received a grant and will be studying the creek with her class next year, says her own interest in the creek goes back to childhood. "When I was a child, the Susquehanna River was orange," she says. "It's been improved, but it's not in the condition it could be."

Bestwick knows forming organizations and getting students involved at an early age is important to the future of the creek. "If I can get them interested at this age, maybe they'll work on it into adulthood."

The walkers also spotted a potentially serious problem along Heller Drive. The street runs along a high bank above the creek that is being undercut and eroded. If the erosion continues, the street could tumble into the water.

Many remnants of the Back Mountain's history still exist along this stretch of the creek. Longmore mentioned parts of old stone structures and an arched bridge that once carried trains and trolleys over Snake Creek, a tributary. Bestwick was amazed to find a large broken stone left near the creek, a reminder of mills that once were powered by the creek's flow. "This is something that could be preserved and displayed," she says.

Smallwood learned something new about the creek's position in the landscape: "The



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Joseph Ceklosky, Phil Walter and Dr. Dale Bruns looked over a map of the Toby Creek watershed during a meeting hosted by Pizza Perfect. They were part of a group of people working to form a watershed protection association. Ceklosky is on the citizens advisory committee in the Borough of Kingston, Walter is a Dallas Township supervisor and Bruns is a professor of environmental science at Wilkes University, who has studied the creek's water quality.

area where Toby Creek runs now was once a trolley bed. The creek was moved when the highway was built," she explains.

Frank Wagner, Dallas Township Supervisor, says his township's biggest issue is cleaning debris from the stream bed and banks. Wagner says the township will need to address fallen dead trees and litter, such as old tires, that are in the

creek. Their presence increases the risk of flooding. Wagner looks forward to the changes a group like a Toby Creek watershed association might bring. "Maybe some day they can put fish in there for the kids," he says.

The next step, now that there is an interested group of core members, is to formally organize. They will work to develop a mission statement and name,

set up the form of the organization, and write by-laws. Longmore, who has advised many other watershed organizations, will help. He thinks this group is off to good start.

"There's a lot of potential here, and I'm encouraged by this group," he says. "At very early stages they're establishing a mission statement. This will make them a good, sustainable organization."

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apply, the students need a grade point average of 3.0 or better and a resume of extracurricular activities.

The initial application goes to the local congressman, in this case, Representative Don Sherwood, and the final approval is done in the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives Dennis Hastert.

Rachel is on both the tennis and soccer teams at Dallas High School. She also is on the Student Council and is a member of the Sophomore Steering Committee and Student Government.

"I've been taking flute lessons since I was 7," said Rachel, who also enjoys art and likes to ski.

This summer's Congressional Page Program will run from June 12 to July 2. "We do have some free time and my family will probably come to visit," said Rachel, who has already seen many of the historic Washington, D.C. sites.

"I'm really excited about going there and meeting new people," she said. She will be living in a special dormitory while in Washington. "We'll be very well supervised but we are also just expected to behave properly." There is a merit system in place where infractions earn demerits but good behavior is rewarded. Pages who earn extra merit points can be excused from work early on some days.

"I'm really looking forward to the whole experience," said Rachel.



FOR THE POST/M.B. GILLIGAN

Rachel Schaub will spend three weeks this summer as a Congressional page, one of only 60 from the entire nation.

Dallas budget adds taxes, slims reserves

DALLAS TWP. — During a May 24 special meeting, the Dallas School District opted into Act 72 by agreeing to a November referendum, and approved a preliminary budget for next year that increases taxes 9 mills and drains reserves from \$2.1 million to \$1.2 million.

The board voted 8-2 to opt into Act 72, the state law that promises to use money from legalized gambling to reduce property taxes, but unlike other local districts, the board decided to hold a referendum on the issue in the November election.

After the Act 72 vote, Business manager Grant Palfrey

proposed a preliminary budget that would spend \$24.7 million while collecting about \$1 million less. Under his proposal, the shortfall would be made up by pushing taxes from the current 213 mills to 222 mills — an increase that, under Act 72, would require voter approval.

In other business, the board voted to purchase a 13-month certificate of deposit for a bit more than \$1 million dollars at an interest rate of 3.85 percent from Landmark Community Bank. Palfrey said that the interest rate was higher than he had expected and would actually add about \$15,000 more to district coffers than he had budgeted.

Lake-Lehman okays Act 72

LEHMAN TWP. — By a 7-2 vote on May 22, the district opted into Act 72, the property tax relief program tied to slot machine gambling receipts. Under the act, revenue from legalized slot machine gambling and the funds generated by a 0.10 percent increase in the earned income tax will be used to offset property taxes. Board members Jim Welby and Harold Cornell voted against the motion.

Homeowners might have to wait until 2008 or later to see tax relief from Act 72, but they will not face a tax increase under the tentative budget passed by the board. Superintendent Michael Healey said the balanced budget indicates expenditures of \$21,281,003 and revenue of \$21,370,000. "That includes paying off a \$729,000 debt, buying new textbooks and a number of other things we needed.

There is no projected tax increase," he said.

The board will finalize the budget in June. If nothing changes, taxes will hold at 221 mills in Harveys Lake Borough and Jackson, Lehman, Lake and Ross townships and 42 mills in Noxen, according to Healey.

Before taking action on Act 72 or the tentative budget, the board swore in a new director. Angelo DeCesaris of Shavertown will serve until December 2005, to complete the term vacated by Moderno Rossi.

The board also:

- Approved repairs and conditioning to the baseball and/or softball fields at a cost not to exceed \$12,000.

- Changed the appointment of Courtney Giuliani from volunteer assistant cheerleading coach to varsity assistant cheerleading coach at a salary of \$965.

GALICKI

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After former superintendent Gil Griffiths resigned unexpectedly last October, Galicki was initially given the title of "interim assistant superintendent," picking up the responsibilities of both Griffiths and assistant superintendent Michael Speziale, who was on a one-year unpaid leave of absence. The vacancies set off a series of personnel moves designed to fill various administrative posts until permanent job holders were found.

Galicki's title was subsequently changed to "acting superintendent," and assistant high school principal James McGovern stepped into

Galicki's old job as principal.

Last week, the board created a new vacancy by accepting Speziale's resignation. Speziale's contract ran until July 2006. He is working at Wilkes University as director of graduate teacher education.

Galicki came to the district in 1982. He is a two-time president of the Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals, and was named the state's 2004 Principal of the Year. He also has received the Joseph Mamana Meritorious Service Award in 2003 and the Dedicated Service Award for Drug & Alcohol Programs in 1993.

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