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Noxen residents fight for post office

By REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

After the flood of June 2006 destroyed the Victorian building that housed the Noxen Post Office, the office moved to a temporary mobile facility on Route 29.

Two years later, the office remains in the mobile unit and many residents fear the Noxen Post Office will be eliminated.

"As I understand it, the district is still evaluating this particular situation and no decision has been made at this time," said Ray Daiutolo Sr., a public affairs and communications representative for the United States Postal Service. "I understand that the lease for the property where the trailer is located is good to October. I am sure that this will be reviewed and a decision made before that lease expires."

Russ Newell, Sr. wrote a letter in July 2006 to the district postmaster, offering to build an expansion onto Noxen Food Mart, which he owns, for the use of the Postal Service. In his offer, Newell said he would charge the Postal Service only monthly rent, but not for the cost of the expansion.

Newell said the Postal Service never responded to his offer. He said he was forwarded a letter written by the Postal Service to then-Congressman Don Sherwood, indicating that his offer to build a space for the Postal Service had been sent to the facilities service office for future reference.

"I grew up in Noxen; I went to a one-room schoolhouse in Noxen," Newell said. "And if they take that post office out of here, that's the heart of the town. Anything I feel I could do to enhance Noxen or further the stability or future of it, I would try to do it."

Daiutolo says he spoke to the post office operations manager who said there may have been an offer made, but couldn't recall the details of the offer. According to Daiutolo, the postal service is required by law to publicly seek bids before a move can take place.

"From time to time, we will receive offers from people regarding buildings and facilities," Daiutolo said. "This happens whether or not we are actually actively looking to move a facility or not. As an organization, we are prohibited from sole soliciting and are required to follow certain guidelines. These guidelines stipulate that when we are moving forward on a potential facility project, we are required to advertise and solicit bids. Therefore, when we receive an offer or interest from a landowner, we will forward that to the facilities department for file."

Noxen resident Cathie Pauley has been leading a campaign to keep the post office in her town, having sent numerous letters to legislators and even one to the Postmaster General with a petition containing over 200 signatures of Noxen residents.

"They figure because we're from Noxen, we're just a bunch of uneducated locals," Pauley said.

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Etiquette class brings manners to table

By REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

When Christina Schuler learned it was impolite to eat the last cookie on the plate, she laughed and said her father always does that.

Schuler, 7, of Shavertown, was one of 10 children (nine girls and one boy), who attended "Catch the Etiquette Bug" on July 15 at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The program taught social etiquette, table manners and communication skills to children ages 8 to 12, although some 7-year-olds attended. Jill Kryston, of Shavertown, instructed the hour-long class.

"This is a first (for the library) and we're really excited about it," said Janet Bauman, the children's librarian at the library.

Angelena Allen, 7, of Dallas, liked learning manners and she also got to see many children she knows from other activities.

"If I go over someone's house, now I know how to set the table and stuff," Allen said.

Mary Lou Grant, of Dallas, took her daughter, Madeline, 10, to the program.

"I thought it would be a good idea for her to learn some basics in good man-

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Christopher and Olivia Mennig, Nicole Cavanaugh, Annabelle Van Hemert and Jace Garnick watch during Jill Kryston's etiquette class at the Back Mountain Memorial Library.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Wheelchair bound, one Tunkhannock man tries to beat the odds



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Emerging from his handicapped access van with help from his mother Yvonne, Kevin Kitchnefsky gets ready to attend his high school reunion.

A new foundation

By REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

Kevin Kitchnefsky remembers his senior year of high school like it was yesterday. He was a member of the baseball and football teams. He even walked across the stage to receive his diploma, along with his classmates from the Tunkhannock High School Class of 1988.

That might not sound like a big deal to most people. But Kitchnefsky, now a quadriplegic, would do anything to walk again. Although he has been given only a one percent chance of ever again putting one foot in front of the other, Kitchnefsky is determined to beat those odds.

The Tunkhannock man founded a non-profit organization to benefit spinal cord research. In honor of his achievements, he was the guest of honor at his 20th anniversary high school reunion on July 12 at Shadowbrook Inn and Resort.

"I asked him to be our guest of honor and that's all



Kevin Kitchnefsky arrives for his high school graduation reunion. The 38-year-old paraplegic is adorned by Julie Clancy, his stand-in Tuesday night date in earlier days.

I expected, but he's been an active member of helping plan our class reunion," said Christine Slacktish, class president. "He's been at every meeting willing to help in any way he can, willing to help locate as

many classmates...I can't say enough about what a great person he is."

Kitchnefsky became a quadriplegic in 1996 when 27 units of chain link fence, each weighing 100 pounds, pinned him against a flat bed truck at a construction site.

"It (life) changed a lot," he said. "I was married at the time when the accident happened and I had a 3-year-old son. At the time, he was very afraid of me."

The accident left Kitchnefsky in a wheelchair. Instead of working in construction and playing baseball, the young man couldn't do many things for himself. His current daily routine involves waking up at 6 a.m., showering, exercising with special equipment and machines, going into town for coffee and returning home for more therapy.

In 1999, Kitchnefsky organized a golf tournament, raising \$7,500 for the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. (Christopher Reeve, an actor best known for his role as "Superman," had suffered a spi-

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Through research foundation, Kitchnefsky's glass remains half full

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the text of a speech delivered by Kevin Kitchnefsky at his 20th anniversary high school reunion:

Hello. My name is Kevin Kitchnefsky.

At the time of our graduation, no one could look ahead to where we would find ourselves in 2008. Up to, and including the summer of 1996,

my life was much the same as any other young man with a wife and family, working full time, involved with a community baseball team and, in general, just enjoying everything life had to offer.

All this came to an end on August 7, 1996. While at work for an environmental construction company, 27 pieces of chain link fencing fell off a

forklift and pinned me against the wall. I never lost consciousness and felt no pain. This was not a good sign. I sustained a C-6 injury, resulting in paralysis from the chest down. I spent approximately three months in the hospital and in Kessler Rehabilitation. By Thanksgiving, I was at home, but life would never be the same.

The next couple of years were hard and long. I won't bore you with the tedious details of the painful journey of the destruction of my marriage, the quest to find good quality aides, the need to find the correct medical personnel who were knowledgeable about my condition, the endless

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