

HARVEYS LAKE BOROUGH

# Residents point fingers over deficit in boro budget

By EILEEN GODIN  
Dallas Post Correspondent

Dollars and cents are not making sense in the borough. A comment from a council member about a letter to the editor that appeared in The Times Leader has revealed an \$118,000 deficit in Harveys Lake's budget.

On Tuesday night, Resident Michelle Boice questioned the borough council about comment-smade by council member Larry Radel on The Times Leader's website in response to her letter

UP NEXT ...

The next municipal meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 15, in the municipal building.

to the editor published on January 10 regarding new recycling fees.

Boice's letter stated, "The residents of Harveys Lake received an early Christmas present from the borough council at the December meeting, by way of an increase in property taxes and an

added \$50 recycling/garbage fee. In their first year in office, this new council squandered a surplus left to it by the former council and broke a 25 year record of a surplus to begin the New Year. This occurred in spite of the added revenue from the county-wide reassessment!"

In response, Council member Larry Radel posted comments on the newspaper's website, stating "the current council did not manage the 2010 budget. We were unaware of the \$118,000 deficit that the previous council left on the books. Our budget will still be

trying to recoup 75K in the next year. It is my opinion that the previous government body had the same mentality as our county government. There intent was to cover up deficits until a MAJOR tax hike would be required such as our real estate taxes in 2008. That is unacceptable in my opinion."

This left Boice feeling more confused.

"If the new council did not manage the 2010 budget, then who did?" she asked.

Referring to two monthly financial minutes from 2009, Boice

showed the borough had a surplus. According to the minutes, total available cash was listed at \$476,459.94 in August 2009 and as \$393,000 in December 2009.

"No one ever contested these numbers," Boice said.

Boice looked to council member Carol Samson, who has served the borough for about 17 years as secretary and on council.

Samson confirmed the borough has not had to cut services, lay off staff, or apply for a tax anticipation loan in about 16 years. A tax anticipation loan is a short-term loan often used by munici-

palities to fund beginning of the year expenses until tax revenue flows in.

Radel was not in attendance but, by phone, said the deficit was growing since 2008 and can be seen on a yearly basis, not monthly.

He said the \$118,000 deficit was reduced to \$75,000 after adjustments were made through items such as the mill tax rate. He said, according to the borough accountant, John Brokenshire, a slowly growing deficit started in

See DEFICIT, Page 11

LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Board votes to sell real estate tax claims

By SARAH HITE  
shite@mydallaspost.com

At a meeting Monday night, the Lake-Lehman School Board voted to renew its contract with the Redevelopment Authority of Luzerne County to sell its real estate tax claims.

Business Manager Thomas Melone said the district with work with Municipal Revenue Services, which works with the authority and other government agencies, for the 2011, 2012 and 2013 fiscal years for delinquent tax collection.

Melone told the board the estimated collection for 2011 will be \$850,000 and \$900,000 for 2012. He said this will be the fifth and sixth years the district will participate in this more efficient program for tax collection.

"Instead of collecting a monthly check, we'll get an advanced sum (of money)," he said.

UP NEXT

The board will hold a special meeting at 6 p.m. Feb. 16 to discuss the proposed preliminary budget. There will be a combined committee-of-the-whole meeting and regular meeting at 7 p.m. Feb. 21 in the junior-senior high school library.

Boys lacrosse coach Mark Yaple also addressed the board concerning raising funds for both the boys' and girls' teams.

The lacrosse program at Lake-Lehman is not funded by the district, but the board voted in 2008 to allow the Back Mountain Bandits teams to play in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) on behalf of the district.

Yaple said fundraising has been difficult in the past. He asked the board for help with funding for much-needed helmets, goals and jerseys, which

See CLAIMS, Page 11

DALLAS TOWNSHIP

## Compressor questioned

By SARAH HITE  
shite@mydallaspost.com

Residents questioned the board at its meeting Tuesday about a proposed natural gas compressor station to be built near the Dallas School District campus on Hildebrandt Road.

Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition member and township resident Liz Martin questioned the board about whether the board had met with a natural gas company about the plans.

Supervisors confirmed her notions. Zoning Officer Leonard Kozick said representatives from Chief Gathering LLC met with board members last Thursday about the possibility of building a compressor station

UP NEXT

The next meeting of the Dallas Township Board of Supervisors will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 1 in the municipal building.

within 1,000 feet of the Dallas schools. He also said the company had met with officials from the Dallas School District prior to meeting with township officials.

"It's all hearsay," said Supervisor Philip Walter, as no formal plans have been submitted to the township's zoning board or planning commission for review.

Kozick also said the company

See COMPRESSOR,, Page 11

# Betsy Gaffney provides what may seem like old-time health care to her patients

She's the sole medical provider of a family clinic in Laceyville.

The nursing career of Betsy Gaffney M.S.N., C.R.N.P., has taken her from medical research to critical care to graduate education where she earned her master's degree as a family nurse practitioner so she can care for patients who range in age from newborn to octogenarian.

As the sole medical provider of a family clinic operated by PhysicianCare, P.C. in Laceyville, Pa., this Misericordia graduate and adjunct faculty member finally feels like she is doing what she was meant to do — get involved with her patients and take care of them and their families in what may seem to many as old-time health care.

"This is a rural clinic, and my practice includes babies, their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles," Gaffney says, an approving smile overcoming her face. "It is family health care in the truest form."

Gaffney sees between 400 and 500 patients a month, many from the region's large Hispanic population. A large percentage of her patients are uninsured and underserved so a lot of her work also involves education — treating people not only for their physical maladies but teaching about wellness and helping them traverse the maze of social and medical services available to them.

"The key is listening," Gaffney says. "Often what they come in for is not the real problem and I need to look past the physical issues to the family and social dynamics. I need to earn their trust and let them know that I really care about them."

Her success is evident in the fact that the practice has grown mostly by word of mouth. As a primary care nurse practitioner, Gaffney can prescribe medication and or-



Betsy Gaffney, M.S.N., C.R.N.P., poses for a picture in one of the patient areas in her health care clinic on Main Street, Laceyville.

der ancillary services, such as occupational therapy and physical therapy. She handles most of the diagnoses and treatments at the clinic herself. By state law, she has a collaborating physician, John McIntyre, M.D. of the PhysicianCare office in nearby Meshoppen, whom she can call on when needed.

"For the most part, the buck stops with me, whether it is a cold, the flu, a chainsaw injury or someone with their ear cut off," says Gaffney, whose staff includes a receptionist, licensed practical nurse and a medical assistant. "We are trained to handle it all."

Gaffney earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Marywood University, followed by

an associate's degree in applied science in nursing. She then received a second bachelor's degree in 2001 from Misericordia University in nursing. She completed her master's degree in nursing with a clinical specialization of Family Nurse Practitioner in 2003.

She also has plenty of experience to rely upon. She spent more than 20 years as a critical care nurse at both Wyoming Valley and Geisinger Wyoming Valley hospitals in Wilkes-Barre working in both the coronary care and intensive care units and as a nurse supervisor.

She joined the adjunct faculty at Misericordia and began teaching lab courses in 1999. Since finishing her nurse prac-

itioner specialization, she began teaching a graduate nursing course in pathophysiology — the study of how abnormal cellular structure leads to disease.

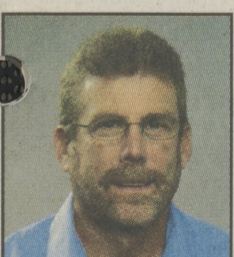
Gaffney is board certified by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, the world's largest and most prestigious nurse credentialing organization, as a Family Nurse Practitioner. She recently lectured at a statewide Pennsylvania Coalition of Nurse Practitioners conference on the topic of ordering correct radiology testing.

She and her husband, Paul, live in Shavertown, yet she stays three days a week in an apartment in Laceyville, to be closer to her practice.

HARPIN' ON THINGS

# Wrestling has taken me places and taught me a lot about life itself

I have been involved in the sport of wrestling since fifth grade and it has played a very important role in my life. Besides keeping me in great shape (some people will argue that other athletes



Heffernan

train harder but I beg to differ), it teaches confidence, determination and perseverance that can be used in the real world.

While guiding in the Florida Keys, I had the opportunity to take many CEOs and business owners fishing. We would talk

about many things on those trips and wrestling would always pop up at some point during the trip. It was amazing to find out how many of these men had been wrestlers, either in high school or college, and how their years on the mat helped them to become successful in business. They would all say that wrestling taught them never to give up, to keep pushing their limits and to succeed because failure was not an option.

I have been fortunate enough to not only compete but to coach in Pennsylvania, Florida and South Carolina over the years. My coach at Seminary was Don Flick, formerly of Kunkle and now residing in Titusville, Florida. I also had the pleasure of coaching with Larry Schuler at Dallas, Gerry Ogurkis with the

Back Mountain Wrestling Club and at Bishop Hoban along with Jimmy Manganello and Dean McDavitt, who wrestled heavyweight at King's College.

With the exception of several broken noses, two broken wrists and a torn shoulder, I enjoyed almost every minute of coaching. I wasn't getting older, the kids were getting stronger I used to say to the Mrs. as I would limp in the door after practice wearing a sweatshirt in 80-degree weather to hide the bruises. The scolding really didn't matter because it's a great feeling you get as a coach when you watch someone you're teaching improve and win. Parents should give more credit to the coaches of all sports for their time and dedication to the kids.

Two Saturdays ago, I completed the Honey Do list early and

went to the district wrestling tournament at Lake-Lehman to watch our Wyoming Valley wrestlers in action without looking through the viewfinder of a camera. The afternoon off was a treat but the best part was running into people I had not seen in years.

Walking in the door to the gym, I saw former Lehman coach Phil Lipski and current coaches Tom Williams and Keith Harry. Tom Rokita was talking to Yogi Michael while Dwight Barbacci was refereeing a match. Sitting in the coach's chair on another mat, Mike Richards and Bob Jesse of Dallas were urging on their wrestler while Mark Popple (Wilkes) and Steve Stahl from Coughlin were on the other side.

I ran into Dave Kuhl and Larry Danko, who both wrestled at King's, Jim Martin from Crest-

wood, Matt Giampetro from Pittston and Syracuse wrestler Gary Siegel from Tunkhannock. And we cannot forget the men in black and white who have logged countless hours keeping order on the mats. Tim McGinley, Joe Bartell and Bob Kuhl were working matches while Charlie Burns was at the scoring table.

The wrestling fraternity is a strong one since we have all shared blood, sweat and tears over the years. We have a great mixture of coaches here in the Valley and their influence and experience will definitely keep our athletes very competitive when it comes time for regionals and states.

ATTA GIRLS

The "Atta Girls of the Week" go to Donna and Deanna of Snips

and Tips in Dallas. They run a first-class salon and have very talented stylists on hand for regular haircuts for both men (thank you, Sarah) and women or preparing a wedding party for the big day.

Remember ladies, when the Mrs. comes this month, take extra care with her hair. I came home from work the other night to find her very depressed. It seems she was shopping that day and, upon checking out, was asked if she would like her senior citizens discount. Needless to say, I stayed on my best behavior that night.

Harp Heffernan was the associate publisher, outdoor editor and chief photographer of the Sunday Independent, a newspaper that was in his family for 87 years in Wilkes-Barre. You can e-mail him at news@mydallaspost.com.