

# The DALLAS POST

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## Repairs to dam may take another year

By SARAH HITE  
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Residents of Hillside Road in Jackson Township looking to be relieved of flooding fears may have to wait until late this year or spring of next year before they can relax.

The Hillside Bridge near the Farmer's Inn has been damaged since June 2006 - heavy flooding caused the Huntsville Dam to overflow and a pipe underneath the bridge was too narrow to hold the gushing water, leading to severe damage to the bridge and flooding of nearby homes.

Repairing the bridge, which is owned by the county, has been a slow process.

Luzerne County Engineer Jo-

seph Gibbons said procuring funds and filing paperwork contributed to the process. Funding for the project was received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

"It took about two years to get funding and have a job program that we could start work on it," said Gibbons.

He added that hiring designers, contractors and consultants is also

part of the rebuilding process, which takes time.

Work will begin this summer on another damaged bridge on Chase Road, pending right-of-way procurements. Gibbons said traffic will be directed to Hillside Road until work is completed. Once that project is finished, the plan is to immediately begin on the Hillside Bridge.

There is another setback - a sewer line underneath the bridge

needs to be relocated before work can commence. Jackson Township Supervisor John Wilkes Jr. said the work was put out for bid earlier this month, but at a special meeting on July 11, supervisors revealed no bids were received for the project.

Wilkes said the relocation project would need to begin 15 days after a bid is awarded, and some construction companies have too much on their plates to begin a project that soon.

The project will be advertised for bidding again and another special meeting will be held at 9 a.m. July 25.

Novella Huey of Hillside Road knows what it's like to wait for the work to be completed - she's been



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Water around the Huntsville Dam flows under the main intersection in Huntsville and into Hillside Creek, at times causing flooding further down on Hillside Road.

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## TUMC bids one pastor farewell, welcomes another

By SARAH HITE  
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Another chapter is being written in the history of Trucksville United Methodist Church as the congregation says goodbye to its first female pastor and welcomes its second.

The Rev. Lori Steffenson recently left the church to take a position as the United Methodist Church Susquehanna Conference district superintendent of the State College area.

The termed position includes overseeing clergy in a district of 107 churches, which includes close to 10,000 worshippers - a few more than the Trucksville church's approximately 600 members.

"I'm responsible for working with clergy, I consult with the bishop which pastors are appointed, I meet with yearly business, I consult with each church to make sure they are in order, as issues come up, churches or clergy, I offer assistance," Steffenson said of her new position. "I give (churches) resources to grow and give them leadership to become who God has called them to be."

A native of New Hampshire, Steffenson announced her departure to the church congregation in winter and immediately worked to ensure a smooth transition.

She's been working as a minister since 1998 and received her appointment in Trucksville from the bishop in 2008. When she got there, she felt like she was home, in a way.

Steffenson said there is a family named Kresge in her history who actually settled in Trucks-

ville, and she found their tombstones in the Trucksville United Methodist Church Cemetery.

"I found them back eight generations in the cemetery at Trucksville," she said.

Leaving the church was difficult for Steffenson because of Trucksville's unique youth congregation.

"It's hard, especially because Trucksville is blessed to have a wonderful span of ages in it," she said. "Many churches do not have young people, and now I will not have the ability to work often with children and youth."

She would have loved to see the children grow up during her tenure at the church, but is now able to help other churches develop similar programs.

"I'm looking forward to having the ability to, hopefully, encourage the churches here to use their gifts and talents God has given them," she said.

As Steffenson steps down from the pulpit, a minister originally from the Gettysburg area joins the Trucksville United Methodist Church community.

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Artist Sue Hand paints her annual painting on site at the 65th Annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction.

## Hand's painting fetches a bundle

Artist paints on site at auction, puts painting up for bid and donates prize.

By SARAH HITE  
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A sea of bidders at the 65th Annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction sat in the middle of a quiet chaos Sunday night as auctioneers spoke feverishly over a loudspeaker to sell antique curtain rods and old friends chatted in low tones behind the bleachers, as to not disturb the patient bidders.

The final hours of the four-day auction, the library's largest fundraiser, were met with relief by volunteers, who finished their work in various booths with exhausted, aching bodies and smiles on their faces.

"It's been really busy the past two days," said 17-year-old Kirby Smith. "We pretty much cleared out most of the toys, and records went really fast because they were three for \$1."

The Dallas resident was sitting near the Odds and Ends cash register as the tent's head honcho, Wayne Williams of Trucksville, told enthusiastic bargain seekers to stand in line for \$2 bag time.

"You can fill a paper bag with anything for \$2," said Smith.

As the curve of the line filled with eager shoppers began to hug the edge of the gyro stand, the \$2 deal became more appealing. Stragglers walking aimless-

ly on the library grounds found themselves looking ahead and imagining what they would put in their bags.

Smith already had the upper hand. She'd done her shopping the day before.

"I got a few videos ... and a purse," she said, smiling.

A walk toward the kids' area as the sun began to set revealed a group of auction-goers who never get tired - dozens of children tossed bean bags, filled jars with sand and climbed the wrong way up a sliding board, never getting enough of the auction action.

"I must have gone through 2,000 jars," said Kingston resident Joyce Dembroski-Gebhardt, who manned the sand art tent.

Children gathered around Dembroski-Gebhardt and her helpers throughout the night, asking for prices on the jars and how much yellow sand was left.

"It's been pretty constant, pretty steady," she said.

Nearer to the auction block, Sue Hand and her family anxiously awaited the moment every attendee was waiting for - the original auction painting Hand had worked on for the past few days was about to be placed up for bid.

She and two student artists, Madison Ziemba and Amanda Martin, both 15, painted throughout the auction to place their prized auction portrayals up on the block to benefit the library.

Martin's painting, depicting the auction in days of yore, sold

"Going, going, going for \$63,000."

Andrew Santora

Volunteer auctioneer slipped up on the amount bidder was willing to pay

quickly for a cool \$500. Auctioneer Steve Traver started a bid for Ziemba's work that characterized the current auction at \$1,500, and with a little cajoling of his close friend, Randy Mark of Dallas, was able to grab \$1,600 for the piece.

"He's a hell of a guy," Traver shouted over the loudspeaker about his friend, who, after the ordeal, sheepishly laid the bid number 61 across his lap.

Andrew Santora, 17, of Dallas, was the next auctioneer to chant and sell. A member of Boy Scout Troop 281, he's only worked the microphone as a children's auctioneer, and even then, never sold anything over \$75.

Last year local artist Sue Hand's painting garnered almost \$5,000 for the library's general fund.

The beginning of bidding was like a shotgun releasing race horses. Viewers couldn't blink without missing another bidder's hand as the price rose in \$100 increments from \$1,000 to \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Santora's voice grew hoarse and weary as he strained to increase the price from \$5,400 to \$6,000.

Bidders were a little more hesitant in those final moments,

and Traver worked the crowd to coax the bidders into raising their hands - even the slightest movement would cause Traver to yelp over the murmuring crowd and the price would raise another \$100.

At \$6,300, there was a standstill.

"Going, going, going for \$63,000," said Santora, slipping up on the price the bidder was willing to pay.

"No!" yelled the crowd, which immediately erupted into laughter soon after.

When Santora finally let the crowd know that bidder number 73, Deb Cooper of Dallas, won the prized piece, applause took over the sounds seeping through the event, and a standing ovation was in order.

"I always wanted to buy one," said Cooper as she posed for photographs afterwards. "I live for the auction, and I love the library."



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Pastor Lori Steffenson and her husband Ted Gabriel walk down the aisle at Trucksville United Methodist Church for the last time. Steffenson has taken a new assignment near Sate College.



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