

Next page >

The Herald

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HERMITAGE

Cemetery, crematory for pets proposed

Burial sites would be next to Hillcrest

"There's a real need for a pet cemetery in the community."

Thomas Flynn

By Monica Puhak
Herald Staff Writer

Fido and Fluffy may one day find a permanent resting place in Hermitage.

Thomas Flynn, president of Hillcrest Memorial Park, and his son John Flynn, director of John Flynn Funeral Home, both in Hermitage, Monday presented the idea of a pet cemetery to the Hermitage Zoning Hearing Board.

"There's a real need for a pet cemetery in the community," Thomas Flynn said.

The Flynns asked the board for an interpretation of the

city's cemetery ordinance. The board said the ordinance defines a cemetery as a burial ground for people. Since it says nothing about animals, board members rejected the Flynns' request to move forward with the pet cemetery.

Thomas Flynn said he and his son hope to ask city commissioners in January for an amendment to the city law to include animals in the definition of cemetery.

The Flynns are interested in turning a vacant lot between 195 and 239 Dutch Lane into a

See **PETS**, page A-8

A blanket statement



Tom Davidson/Herald

Shirley Snyder of Sandy Lake shows off the latest Comfort Quilt she's crafted for the program that offers handmade messages of support for the relatives of servicemen killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

SANDY LAKE

'Comfort Quilts' honor soldiers killed in war

Local woman helps to console grieving families

By Tom Davidson
Herald Staff Writer

Shirley Snyder wasn't a quilter until this summer.

The Sandy Lake resident took a Virginia Beach vacation in June and was so busy quilting that she didn't get to see the ocean.

Her daughter Sharlene Nemitz needed her help to finish three patchwork quilts that carried a special message to the families of America's war dead. Comfort Quilts are made by school children, church groups and families of the men and women serving in Iraq. Quilts are given to the families of those who've been killed in action.

"It gives you a good feeling to know you're doing something. They're fighting for me. The least I can do is make a quilt for them."

Shirley Snyder

Mrs. Nemitz's son Nathan is a Marine and daughter Amy Laforce is married to one. The family knows firsthand the fears of the relatives of the men and women now serving in the military.

"They're fighting for my freedom," Mrs. Snyder said. "I support the men and women. Our whole family supports them."

As a member of Marine Moms, a support group for relatives of Marines, Mrs. Nemitz became involved in Comfort Quilts, a group of quilters or-

ganized by St. Louis-area Marine Mom Jan Lang.

The group provides volunteers with squares to be assembled into a quilt for delivery to the next-of-kin of America's heroes from all branches of the military.

"It gives you a good feeling to know you're doing something," Mrs. Snyder said. "They're fighting for me. The least I can do is make a quilt for them."

The quilts are made with 30 12½-inch, hand-decorated squares. Volunteers like Mrs. Snyder attach them to blue backing.

"It kind of gives it a personal touch," Mrs. Snyder said of the squares, which are unique to each quilt.

"If you start in the morning, you could have it done by supper time," she said. "If you worked on it steady."

See **QUILTS**, page A-2

MERCER COUNTY

Election probe panelists grill commissioners

By Jeff Greenburg
Herald Political Writer

It's uncertain if the panel created to look into Election Day problems in Mercer County came to any conclusions after a 2½-hour hearing Monday.

What's certain is at least one panelist said after the lengthy questioning of the county commissioners he had a much better understanding of what transpired before and on Nov. 2.

"This learning is going to help us make proposals to the board of commissioners so voters will have confidence the

elections will work in the future," said panel Chairman Dr. Michael L. Coulter, an associate professor of political science at Grove City College.

Commissioners Brian Beader, Olivia M. Lazor and Michele Brooks, who double as the county's board of elections, established the panel last month to investigate the laundry list of problems that occurred, most significantly machine malfunctions in a dozen Shenango Valley precincts and a higher-than-expected percentage of undervotes throughout the

See **GRILL**, page A-2

Rendell wants task force to study elections process

HARRISBURG (AP) — Gov. Ed Rendell is forming a task force to study whether to move up Pennsylvania's primaries so that voters have an earlier say in choosing presidential candidates and whether to allow early voting to avoid long lines at the polls.

Rendell spoke to reporters Monday before Democrats gathered in the House of Representatives to officially cast the

state's 21 electoral ballots for John Kerry, the Democratic candidate for president who won Pennsylvania but lost the national election to President Bush.

"It's been awhile since any nomination process lasted into April, so I think we should look long and hard (into) moving up our presidential primary to make Pennsylvania relevant in

See **ELECTIONS**, page A-2

SHARON

Cutting wage tax clerk unwise, Ryan says

By Kristen Garrett
Herald Staff Writer

Losing a clerk in the wage tax office could be "detrimental" to the city, Sharon Mayor David O. Ryan said.

During a budget hearing Dec. 6, council proposed eliminating the mayor's secretary and a wage tax clerk in order to hire two code officers. Ryan said he had no input in

"The wage tax positions do not create revenue, but they do collect revenue that, without proper staffing, will fall through the cracks."

Sharon Mayor David O. Ryan

council's decision and wasn't aware council was planning to cut the two positions until the public hearing.

Though he doesn't want to lose his secretary, Ryan said

that position is "not critical to the operation of the city ... If they (council) want to remove my secretary and add one more code position I will accept that."

However, the wage tax posi-

tion is critical, Ryan said. The office includes a supervisor and two clerks who handle walk-in customers, answers phones, input information from more than 11,000 W-2 income tax forms and update all 11,000 accounts quarterly, Ryan said.

The supervisor is also responsible for completing monthly reports, assisting with annual audits and going after delinquent taxpayers — and

that's where Ryan said the city is going to lose.

"The wage tax positions do not create revenue but they do collect revenue that, without proper staffing, will fall through the cracks," he said.

The city operated for a time with only two wage tax employees, Ryan said. When a third person was hired in 2002, the supervisor had more time to go

See **UNWISE**, page A-2

INSIDE

COMMUNITY: It's the holidays, you will be surrounded by sweets and you are bound to indulge. The first story in a series on holiday dieting tells how to navigate the dessert table.

page A-11

BUSINESS: Oracle to pay \$10.3 billion for business software maker.

page B-6

OPINION: Legislators' career schemes play taxpayers for suckers.

page A-6

MORE MEMORIES COMING

By popular demand, The Herald has ordered a second printing of "Mercer County Memories," a history book produced in cooperation with the Mercer County Historical Society.

The Herald sold out its original order. An order form for the second printing will be published in The Herald soon. Books are scheduled to arrive after the first week in January. The price per book if picked up at The Herald is \$42.35 (\$39.95 plus \$2.40). If you would like the book shipped, add \$4.95 for a total of \$47.30.

If you would like to give the 128-page pictorial history as a Christmas present, The Herald has gift certificates available, which can be given in lieu of the book until it arrives.

Info: Kelley Dorus, newsroom assistant, at 724-981-6100, ext. 242, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

DEATHS

David J. Jackson, 83, of 485 Lincoln St., Sharon.

Paula M. Marshall, 51, Library, Pa.

Pauline E. Moyer, 70, of 7266 W. Market St., Lackawanna Township.

Edward M. Schenker, 84, of 1010 Woodview Place, Hermitage.

INDEX

Annie's mailbox.....	A-12
Business.....	B-6
Classified.....	B-8
Comics.....	B-7
Community.....	A-11
Corrections.....	A-2
Crossword.....	B-13
Dr. Gott.....	A-12
Horoscopes.....	B-7
Jumble.....	B-13
Lotteries.....	A-2
Obituaries.....	A-13
Opinion.....	A-6
Police, fire.....	A-13
Public notices.....	B-8
Sports.....	B-1
Theaters.....	B-5
TV grid.....	B-5
Weather.....	B-14



SNOW: 26/18
Megan McKinney

Mercer Elementary School

