

The Meadville Tribune

50 cents.

www.meadvilletribune.com

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2010

Good Morning

SERVING CRAWFORD
COUNTY FOR
125 YEARS



New-look Gators open season tonight

Allegany starts its quest
tonight on the road and then is
home for four straight games.

SPORTSTODAY, Inside

Weather

Today: Cloudy 51
This evening: Rain 49
Tomorrow: Showers 46

Deaths

- Gary M. Chapin, 49,
Conneaut Lake
- Loretta A. (NaNa)
Disko, 69, Hermitage
- Rex LeVerne Lantz,
94, Meadville
- A. Ronald Miller, 76,
Meadville
- Marc Bryan Young,
33, Meadville

Details, Page A8

Index

Dose of reality

INSIDE: Realistic baby helps combat teen pregnancy, Page A2



RICHARD SAYER/Meadville Tribune
Toneasia Cunningham picks up a 'RealCare Baby,' a computerized, simulated infant meant to educate young adults about what it's like to take care of an infant on a daily basis. Cunningham and Teionna Sheard both had to care for the 'baby' recently at Bethesda Children's Home. The computer chip reports all the things that the the caregivers do wrong.

INSIDE TODAY

Guard dies; inmate faces new charges

A Crawford County jail corrections officer died Monday from injuries he sustained in what authorities say was a mid-October attack by an inmate in the wake of Gary Chapin's death. The county district attorney plans to file new charges against his alleged attacker.

Page A2

West Mead plans property tax increase

For the first time in 16 years, West Mead Township supervisors are planning a tax increase. If approved, the 5 mil increase would boost the tax on a home with an assessed value of \$37,500 by \$18.75 a year.

Page A2

Passengers upset about scanners, pat-downs

Nearly a week before the Thanksgiving travel crush, federal security officials were struggling to reassure rising numbers of fliers and airline workers outraged by new anti-terrorism screening procedures they consider invasive and harmful.

Page A7

ay forecast

2NEWS
WICU-12
WILSON

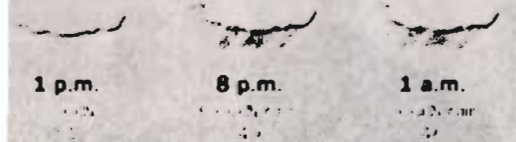


WICU-12
Meteorologist
Wilson

the weather on the Internet
 at www.wicu12.com



Today's Forecast



Realistic baby helps fight teen pregnancy

By Ryan Smith
 MEADVILLE TRIBUNE

WEST MEAD TOWNSHIP — Teionna Sheard said she never knew what 24/7 newborn baby care was like — but she found out in a hurry over a week this past summer.

So, how'd it go? "Bad," the 14-year-old said bluntly, sounding a little tired, a little aggravated just thinking about it.

"Bad," the 14-year-old said bluntly, sounding a little tired, a little aggravated just thinking about it. The baby "would cry — a lot," she said. "One minute it was hungry, the next it needed its Pampers changed, then again, and again and again," morning, afternoon and night.

"You miss out on a lot of stuff," said Sheard.

Toneasia Cunningham, 17, dove in to some newborn parenting around the same time. "I always wanted to know" what it was like, she said.

Now, she said, she knows: "It's very hard. Having that baby is hard. It's complicated — very complicated."



RICHARD SAYER/Meadville Tribune
Toneasia Cunningham checks to see if her 'baby' is on and if it is recording how she handles it as Teionna Sheard looks on.

"It was so annoying," she said.

But for Sheard and Cunningham — and other teens at Bethesda Children's Home Lutheran Social Services in Meadville — that was only a test.

They're two of the teens there who said they've gained some true-to-life experience using the RealCare

Baby, a high-tech infant simulator doll that looks, sounds and acts like, well, a real baby. It's programmed to cry when it needs to be "fed" (or "changed," or "burped," or "rocked," or anything else an infant needs), to recognize its "mother" — and to show (actually, report through a computer) the effects of all

RANKINGS

- Teen pregnancy rate rankings among Pennsylvania's 67 counties.
- 1 - Philadelphia
 - 2 - McKean County
 - 4 - Erie County
 - 11 - Venango County
 - 18 - Mercer County
 - 21 - Warren County
 - 38 - Crawford County

improper care or neglect. Bethesda helps at-risk kids — many are in trouble with the law or have been removed from potentially dangerous homes. It offers a number of special programs and has launched a new educational offering using the simulator (created and commercially marketed by a firm called Realityworks) with funding assistance from the Crawford Heritage Foundation.

"The real goal — the very simple goal — is to prevent teens from having babies," said David Johnson,

SEE **BABY**, PAGE A8

West Mead residents may see rare tax hike

By Keith Gushard
 MEADVILLE TRIBUNE

WEST MEAD TOWNSHIP — For the first time since the mid-1990s, township residents may see an increase in the township's real

which includes a projected \$153,499 carryover from this year's budget

Supervisors said Monday they didn't want to raise taxes, but said it was necessary to maintain the current level

said Jill Dunlap, the township's secretary

That \$50,000 in additional money will be divided equally between the police and road departments for use toward new equipment. The



A. Ronald Miller

A Ronald Miller died Sunday, Nov. 1, following a stroke following a fall.

He was born in Erie, Pa., on Nov. 17, 1934, a son of A. Miller. He married on Nov. 15, 1961.

Ron was a U.S. Army sergeant from 1954 to 1956. He was a graduate of Meadville University with a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant management. He worked in food service for 25 years and was owner of J & J Food Service for 15 years. He was formerly employed in various food service positions.

Ron was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, Meadville, and a member of the Meadville Country Club. He enjoyed golfing and fishing.

Survivors, in addition to his wife, include a son, Andrew, of Meadville, a daughter, John, of Cranberry Township, and Mike Miller and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his son, Andrew S. and

Calling hours will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Robert W. Waid Funeral Home, Meadville.

The funeral will be held at the Presbyterian Church, Meadville, Pa., at 11 a.m. on Nov. 3. Rev. Dr. Brian Jensen and Rev. David Fugate will officiate.

Interment will be in the Meadville Cemetery. Military honors provided by the Meadville Post 2006.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Presbyterian Church or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Loretta A. Hermitage

Loretta A. Hermitage, 67, of Meadville, died following a stroke on Monday, Oct. 26, 2010. She was born on Nov. 21, 1941, to Frank and Loretta Hermitage. She had also lived in Meadville and Corneat Lake Park.

Loretta was born on Nov. 21, 1941, to Frank and Loretta Hermitage. She had also lived in Meadville and Corneat Lake Park. She was preceded in death by her husband on Nov. 21, 1984, in the town

Rex LeVerne Lantz

Rex LeVerne Lantz, 94, formerly of Hobbs Road and Liberty Street Extension, Meadville, and a current resident of Wesbury United Methodist Retirement Community, died there Monday, Nov. 15, 2010.

He was born in Cochran, Feb. 27, 1916, a son of John Charles and Gloria Cochran Lantz.

Rex was a 1932 graduate of Cochran High School and was a veteran of World War II with the U.S. Army serving in the South Pacific Theater of Operations for three and a half years with an Engineer's Construction Unit on New Guinea and in the Philippines.

He was employed as a chain machine operator at Talon for 40 years, retiring in 1980. He was a member of First Christian Church, where he was a former deacon and Sunday school superintendent. He enjoyed gardening and selling produce at the Meadville Market House and in local neighborhoods.

Survivors include twin daughters, Maxine Bershlem and her husband, Richard, of Butler, and Pauline Hartick and her husband, Alfred, of Meadville, a son, Reuben Lantz and his wife, Barbara, of North Olmsted, Ohio, six grandchildren, Richard Bershlem Jr. and his wife, Stacy, of Smyrna, Ga., Jeffrey Bershlem and his wife, Stephanie, of Eighty Four, Alfred Hartick IV and his wife, Jenny, of Meadville, Jacqueline Clark and her husband, James, of Zanesville, Ohio, Shannon Lantz of Terre Haute, Ind., and Sally Lantz of King of Prussia, seven great grandchildren, Jacob and Sarah Bershlem, Caitlin and Alexander Hartick, Justin Lantz Harris, Anna Moore and Moses Haman, a brother, Doyle Lantz and his wife, Inez, of Meadville, and nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Fayne Lantz, and an infant sister.

Calling hours will be Wednesday from 4 to 7 p.m. and Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m. at Robert W. Waid Funeral Home, 581 Chestnut St., Meadville. The funeral and committal service will follow at 2 p.m. at the funeral home, with James Clark, youth pastor of North Terrace Church of Christ, Zanesville, Ohio, officiating, and military honors provided by Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2006, Meadville.

Interment will be in Cochran Cemetery. Memorials may be made to the Wesbury Foundation, 31 N. Park Ave., Meadville, Pa. 16335, or First Christian Church, 503 N. Main St. Ext., Meadville, Pa. 16335.

Firm hired to map out trail extension options

OIL CREEK TOWNSHIP
Another meeting for the

YOU CAN GO
A third meeting on an ex-



VETERAN

Baby

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A2

Bethesda's director of development. The simulator doll is "the closest thing to having a real baby without having a real baby," he added.

"And it's a reality check." Sheard and Cunningham are both from Philadelphia, the state's largest urban area and, by county, the one with the highest reported teen birth rates. According to 2008 statistics from the Pennsylvania Coalition for the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy, a federally-supported nonprofit, Philadelphia County teens gave birth to nearly 15 percent (3,525) of the 23,689 infants born in that county that year.

But according to the same statistics, teen pregnancy is not only an urban-area issue in Pennsylvania's 67 counties. The second-highest teen birth rate listed in the PCPTP report, was for McKean County, one of the most rural areas in the state; there, a total of 63 teen births accounted for 13.4 percent of all births in the county in 2008.

Crawford County ranked lower on that statistical report, listed 38th with a total of 85 teen births accounting for 8.9 percent of all births in 2008. Erie County's teen birth rate was ranked fourth at 12.1 percent; Mercer, 18th (10.2); Warren, 21st (10.1); and Venango, 11th (11.1).

"Locally, we do have issues of teen pregnancy," said Christian Maher, the Heritage Foundation's executive director, so when approached about the program by Bethesda, the foundation "immediately thought (the RealCare Baby program) was really good" to get involved in.

Maher said the foundation provided Bethesda \$700 of the total cost (approximately

\$2,400) for the baby simulator, which has been used by both teen girls and boys there.

One of those boys is a 16-year-old who recently completed his stay at Bethesda and returned to his hometown with a girlfriend who has a baby due soon, said James Holding, a Bethesda therapist/case manager. Holding said that teen's initial air of confidence about being able to care for the simulator doll gave way to a "ragged" demeanor pretty quickly, but that's part of the point of the education: "He understood then what a big commitment he had to his family when he got back home. (Now) he really wants to do good for his child."

A 2009 study published by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy indicated the national rate of teen births — and their related societal costs — showed a rise after what had been a decline over the course of 14 years. Teen childbearing cost taxpayers across the country at least \$9.1 billion annually as of last year, according to the study, and in Pennsylvania, nearly \$400 million in tax dollars is spent each year on services including public health care and child welfare for teen mothers.

"A lot of kids ... (seem to) have this predisposed notion that having a baby is a badge of honor," said Johnson. "We're here to try to change their thinking," he said, and to "try to prevent them from having babies at the wrong time, which is now."

Johnson said Bethesda's goal is to further develop the program in Meadville and at its community-based center in Erie.

Ryan Smith can be reached at 724-6370 or by e-mail at rsmith@meadvilletribune.com.