

THE DALLAS POST

Covering The Back Mountain and The West Side
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AND THE ROAD CAME TUMBLING DOWN: Literally speaking, it's what happened as heavy spring rainstorms washed out an entire section of Huntsville Road, rendering it impassable. (Dan Walsh Photo)

Huntsville Road

Repairs Underway

The road to Huntsville was one of the spots that bore the heaviest damage when Mother Nature descended on this area two weeks ago with the first of several freak storms.

Repair work on the embankment was begun by the Luzerne County Road Department last week in the area past the Farmers Inn, where the road was washed out.

There is presently a detour in this area from Chase Road to Huntsville Dam, but work on the road is

scheduled to be completed by the end of this week, according to County Engineer James Brozema.

There is only one "if" in the scheduled reopening of the road; it is "if the weather cooperates," something that hasn't been happening lately.

Next on the county's agenda will be repairs to the road between the former Unclaimed Freight Store and Hillside Farms. This road has been closed to all but local traffic since the storm.

Teacher's Contract Raises Questions

The new three-year contract between Dallas School Board and professional employees of the district approved at a special meeting of the board last Tuesday has raised some concern among some of the directors and also among some of the candidates running for seats on the board in the May primary.

The contract, passed by a 5-2-1 vote, gives professional employees an average increase of eight percent annually for the three years by revising the present pay schedule rather than granting an across the board raise.

Other provisions of the contract allow for early retirement for those age 55 with 10 years or more service. Those who retire will also receive an incentive payment amounting to approximately 70 percent of their last working year salary with the lump sum decreasing as the teachers' age at retirement increases. The same medical benefits as in the past will continue as will the continuance of announcing assignments and posting of positions. The new contract also includes a sick leave "bank" and the formation of a committee comprised of members of the board and the Dallas Education Association to study a more equitable method for compensating co-curricular positions and to develop an acceptable teacher evaluation.

Voting in favor of the contract were Russell Havey, chairman of the board negotiating committee; Harry Lefko, Shawn Murphy, Pat Gregory and Ernest Ashbridge; Albert Pisaneschi and Dr. William Camp abstained and Joseph O'Donnell voted no.

Dr. Camp explained that he abstained due to the fact that his wife is employed as a librarian within the school district. "I thought that was the best thing to do," said the board president. "I believe it is good that we are done with this issue so we can deal with the budget.

"As most persons should realize this was not a sudden move. The committee has been meeting and negotiating with the representatives of the Dallas Education Association for many months. Now the district will have to tighten its belt and turn our concern to finances.

"We will probably have to cut some programs, cutback some positions and maybe close a school. Quality education and the tax situation are our chief concerns."

Ernest Ashbridge, who replaced Harry Lefko on the committee, stated that the programs to be cut will be those not mandated by the state. "I was not in on all of the negotiations," said Ashbridge, "Only near the end after Lefko resigned from the committee. Both groups met for several months and the teachers were asking for much more.

"I believe our district deserves better than the Naticoke situation where the students are the losers. The settlement, I thought, was one everyone (board and DEA) could live with, although not everyone was satisfied with every bit of the contract. We knew there was just so much money to deal with. We've been working on the budget since mid-March. I would like to have no millage increase but if an increase is necessary keep it as low as possible."

Director Joseph O'Donnell was not the least satisfied and voted against the contract. "I asked several questions and got negative answers. No. One, I asked if the committee considered possible reduction in staff, how many and who. The answer was "no". I asked if consideration was given to notifying students, parents and the community what programs would be eliminated. Again, the answer was no. When I asked if the total budget picture was discussed, the answer was negative. The increase in the cost of Blue Cross-Blue Shield was not considered. The increase in

dollars this year compounded will amount to 10 mills annually.

"It was very poorly planned and very poorly handled in light of total budgetary concerns in this district. As a result of this action, I have little confidence in those who voted for this measure."

Director Albert Pisaneschi, who is an incumbent in the May primary, explained that he abstained because he didn't have the entire package. "We were never given a copy of the new contract. All we had were bits and pieces. I believe the entire matter was cut and dried. The majority had their five votes, what the rest of us did didn't matter.

"The taxpayers and the students are the ones who will be hurt. Teachers in certain programs will be hurt because some programs will be cut. I raised the question about the decline in enrollment over the past five years but no cut in administrators or administrative office employees. There were 3,500 students in the district five years ago and eight administrators, approximately one administrator for 438 students.

"Today, there are 2,600 students in the district but eight administrators, one for every 325 students. The number of non-professional employees in the administration office has not decreased but increased, despite the superintendent's claim they are needed. I have been there when they are tripping over one another."

John George, candidate for school director, attended the meeting and was dissatisfied with the answers he received to questions.

"Taxpayers should ask themselves, 'Is there a surplus of conflict of interest on the Dallas School Board relative to educators?' People should look into just how many directors have or are related to professionals within the district or LIU 18.

"The new contract is a 27 percent increase in teachers salaries over three years. It's ridiculous. There should be a thorough investigation. Some of those directors are using the board for their own benefit not considering the taxpayers interest or private sector of industry. The increase in fringe benefits is phenomenal and heads of departments get another \$100-\$150 just for that title.

"Who is going to foot this expense? Do they have an Aladdin's Lamp? If they were in private business they would have been bankrupt 10 years ago."

Harry Sickler, a past school director and a candidate in the May primary, said he was interested whether or not the committee considered cutting the administrators.

"I don't believe they ever discussed cutting some of the high wage bracket personnel. There has been an enrollment decline and fewer teachers through attrition but I don't recall the laying off of any administrators.

"The new contract represents a 27 percent increase over the next three years, and the seven percent decrease in inflation announced recently plus the eight percent increase gives the teachers 15 percent more purchasing power.

"What does this mean to the approximately 65 percent of the population in the Back Mountain where annual family income is \$20,000 or less? The millage increase will hurt those persons on fixed income. My concern is with the taxpayers. How much do these directors believe they can stand? Anyone can run a district if they keep pouring in the taxpayers' money. What will happen when the well runs dry? Many residents of the Back Mountain are fighting now to keep their homes—what will happen with a millage increase?



"THE ROCKETTES": One of the featured acts at this week's Spring Concert at Dallas High School. The show will provide a variety of entertainment styles from classical to rock. It is a "Must See" performance. Shown practicing their high kicking are chorus members, Lynn Todd, Judy Fitch, Kim Lamoreaux, Paulette Niznik and Sue Niskey. (Dan Walsh Photo)

Lullaby of Broadway in Dallas

The Dallas Senior High School Mixed Chorus, directed by Mrs. Florence Hughes Sherwood, will present its annual Spring Concert entitled "Lullaby of Broadway" on Thursday and Friday evening May 5 and 6, 8 p.m. in the Dallas Senior High Auditorium.

The concert is divided into three segments. Another special feature will be Ferdinand Liva, Jr., selected as the Number One High School violinist in the state while at the PMEA All-State Orchestral Festival in Hershey earlier this year.

Part two will be presented by Chansonaires, a small ensemble

selected from the chorus who perform throughout the valley for churches, social organizations, hospitals, nursing homes and other schools.

Part three will feature one exciting act after another—performing music from Broadway shows. There will be solos, duets, trios, ensembles—songs that are happy, sad, crazy and even "Cool" from West Side Story sung by "The Gang." A Broadway show would not be complete without the Rockettes so Dallas Senior High includes them dancing to the theme "Lullaby of Broadway".

The Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA)

Golden Anniversary will be saluted with their theme song "Sound of Music" as the grand finale. All grades 1 through 12 will be included in this salute to the organization which has helped to bring and improve better music to students of Pennsylvania.

Accompanists for the concert will be: seniors, Amy Faut, Kimberly Barber, Jane Hudak; juniors, Charlene Baker, Pamela Lundberg, Paulette Niznik; sophomore, Tracy Davis. The public is urged to purchase advance tickets from any senior high chorus members or contact any of the schools in the district as the door cost will be 50 cents more.

Plates Disappoint Firemen

BY MARIA PALLANTE
The Pennsylvania Transportation Department has begun issuing new "fire-fighter" license plates. The distinct plates, which bear the words "fire-fighter" across the bottom and display the symbolic maltese cross, will be available to all volunteer and professional firemen.

Although members of the various departments are encouraged to support the new idea by purchasing the plates, they are not required to do so, as each will cost a fee of \$20. According to Jack Dodson, President of the Back Mountain

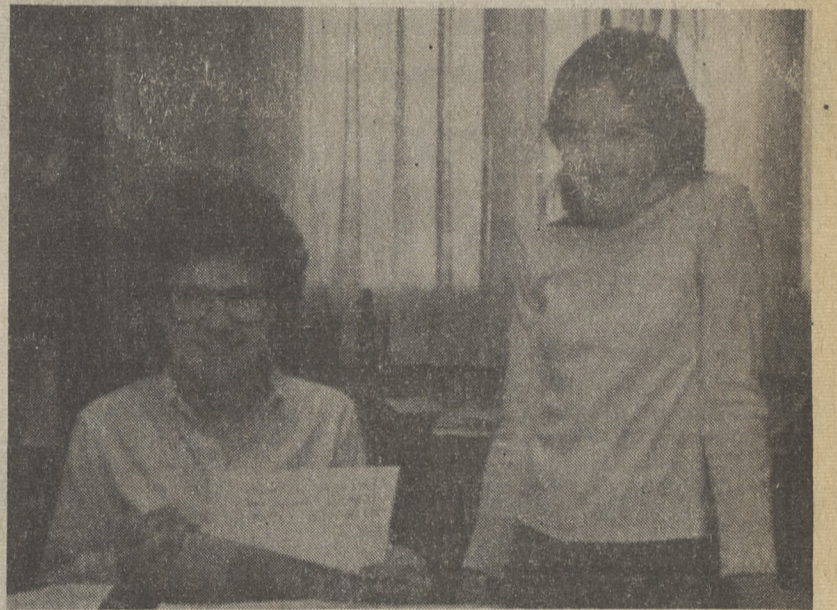
Fireman's Association, many of the local fire-fighters will buy them. Others, however, will not be interested, as many members already have front plates which distinguish their departments.

"It will depend on the individual," Dodson explained. "It's nice to be recognized, especially when traveling out of state, but that's the only benefit I can see."

He also feels that the plates were largely pushed for on the state level, without much local awareness.

Senator Frank J. O'Connell originally proposed the license plates but opposes the final form of legislation. His bill stated the plates would be available at a one-time fee of \$10, rather than \$20. Further, he proposed that they would have been red and white. Those presently available have five blue numbers on a gold background.

In order to obtain a "fire-fighter" license plate, a special form must be completed and mailed to the Transportation Department along with the \$20 fee. Plate numbers will be issued sequentially with the lowest numbers assigned to the earliest applicants.



MOVING UP: Dallas Intermediate students proved it is not so mysterious a job to be "in control" when they took over the school last Friday. Pictured above are Julianne Orłowski, who served as principal for the day; and Karen Shiber, who worked as secretary. (Dan Walsh Photo)

Students Take Over


BY JOAN KINGSBURY

On Friday, students at Dallas Intermediate School took over teaching and administrative duties at the school. A student rebellion? No, just a Student Educator Day instituted by principal Ruth Husband to give the 5th and 6th grade students the opportunity to assume roles of teachers, school principal, school secretary, custodian and central supply clerk for the day.

Students worked with teachers to plan instructional activities and responsibilities. Fifty percent of the students were able to participate in these reverse roles. In each class, for each subject a pair of students

worked together to plan and present a lesson or monitor a school activity. Their duties included teaching, homeroom duties, cafeteria, playground and hall duties.

Numerous students from the 5th and 6th grade acted as teachers for their classes. Students assigned to serve as principal were Jim Newell, Cindy O'Brien, Julianne Orłowski, Renae Dymond. Those taking over the job of school secretary for Mrs. June George were Stacey Fitch, Tanya Dobranski, Karen Shiber and Christine Coscia. Filling in for custodian Bob Bowen were Jim Lister, Matt Jones, Scott Starbuck and Donald Williams.



I Give a Hoot

Kickoff Dinner

May 6th

Support the Back Mountain Library