



The Back Mountain's Newspaper Since 1889

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## 1998 in review

### Big news or small, more good than bad

Following are week-by-week excerpts from issues of The Dallas Post in 1998. This is not meant to be a list of the "top stories," but rather a selection that touches all aspects of life in the Back Mountain. You'll find some interesting items, and we hope also get a sampling of the individuals and organizations that make the Back Mountain such a good place to live, work and raise families.

**Jan. 7:** Neighbors of the Dallas School District property appealed a decision by the Dallas Township Zoning Board granting a variance of setbacks for proposed new playing fields. Bruce Phillips, an attorney who lives adjacent to the fields, is leading the effort to enforce a 100 ft. setback, instead of the 15 ft. granted.

An administrative law judge rebuffed a claim by Dallas Borough Tax Collector Tom Reese that he is entitled to a pension from the school district. Reese claimed his status meant he should be considered an employee, but the hearing examiner disagreed.

Dr. George Cimochoowski of Dallas recently returned from Warsaw, where he attended a special holiday



fundraising concert for the Litewska Children's Hospital. He serves on the hospital's board of directors.

**Jan. 14:** Some members of the Lake-Lehman school board opposed a plan to provide special bus runs for "disruptive" students, at extra cost. The board also planned to hire an aide to ride the buses and help keep order.

Traveling south on Rt. 309, Scott Sanfilippo of Dallas swerved to the right to avoid hitting an oncoming car, and ended up driving his '98 Pontiac over the curb and into the landscaping in front of the McDonald's in Shavertown. Land-

Continued on page 6



Some photos from 1998. Above left, Kevin Augustine got a welcome drenching at the hands of his daughter, Kristin after the Greater Wilkes-Barre Triathlon. He was the top local finisher.

Brian Blase, above right photo, celebrated his graduation from Dallas High School with John Turner, his history teacher.

Scott Sanfilippo of Dallas escaped injury when his car jumped the landscaping in front of the McDonald's in Shavertown after he swerved to avoid an oncoming car, above.



## Taxpayers oppose plan for Lehman middle school

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER  
Post Staff

**LEHMAN** - The fate of Lake-Lehman's middle level building has proven to be a source of dissension in the community. Some people, including the school's principal, believe building an addition onto the high school and moving the middle grades to that location is the best option. Others firmly maintain that the 57-year-old blond brick building could and should be renovated.

Bob Roberts, middle level principal, says the building simply no longer suits the educational needs of the students. "At one time the middle school was a very functioning building and served the community very well," he said.

But Roberts said the general condition of the building has deteriorated. He cited poor ventilation, contaminated drinking water and the lack of essentials, such as science labs, as reasons to leave the building. "The rooms designated as science rooms are done so because they have sinks. The rooms are woefully inadequate for experiments," said Roberts.

Substandard room size and a "septic

See MIDDLE SCHOOL, pg 3

## Insurance costs will be stable for three years

**LEHMAN** - It looks as if the Lake-Lehman School District's participation in a health insurance consortium with Plan 3 Inc. has proven beneficial. The district, which was averaging an eight to 14 percent increase per year with Blue Cross/Blue Shield, will be guaranteed no increase for three years, said Dr. William Price, superintendent.

"This is a positive move to unify efforts and to bring about a realistic Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan. The rate will be more equitable," Price said, during the December school board meeting.

Lois Kopcha, Ron Payne and Rose Howard voted down a recommendation to approve 75¢ per hour pay raises for three confidential support secretaries. Payne said he is not against giving the employees a raise, but thinks 75¢ is too much. The motion passed 5-4 and was retroactive to July 1.

The board appointed five coaches Joseph DeCesaris was reassigned to junior high varsity assistant boys' basketball coach at a salary of \$3,517; Theodore Sadowski is the junior high assistant boys' basketball coach at a salary of \$2,350; William Dunn is the junior high volunteer assistant boys' basketball coach; Michael Wilkins is the assistant baseball coach at a salary of \$2,018; and Nafy Hage is a volunteer boys' basketball coach.

By Kylie Shafferkoetter

## New gym will open in January

**DALLAS** - The Dallas School Board toured the nearly completed Dallas Elementary gymnasium during its December meeting. The new gym is set to open Jan. 25. High school volleyball, wrestling and basketball teams will use it for practice. Basketball games cannot be held in the facility because it is not PIAA regulated. It will seat 250 people.

In a move to entice substitute teachers to stay with the district, the board unanimously voted to increase their daily rate from \$55 to \$60. After 30 days of service per year as a substitute, the rate will increase again to \$65 per day. Each year the \$65 rate will be in effect Jan. 4 through the end of the school year, then the process cycles.

Kylie Shafferkoetter

## Thumbs down for water co. rate hike request

By RONALD BARTIZEK  
Post Staff

**SHAVERTOWN** - In part because of its history of poor service and customer complaints, a rate increase request from National Utilities Inc. has been suspended by the state Public Utilities Commission, and action that could hold up any rate change until July.

National Utilities serves Midway Manor, in Shavertown, Oak Hill in Lehman and Warden Place and Rhodes Terrace at Harveys Lake.

Nearly a year ago, Charles Gemberling was waiting for National Utilities to find a leak in its lines that was flooding his yard. The company claimed at the time that water flowing into basements on Woodbine Rd. came from a spring, not its lines. Gemberling knew better. "It's been broken three times in 25 years," he said. "It took almost three weeks to find it."

Gemberling said. His property is the first the line runs through after leaving the well.

After the leak was fixed, the yard was still a mess. The company finally came back in May to grade, but didn't do a very good job, Gemberling said. "I figure it will take me another year to get the yard in shape, but who knows, there might be another break by then."

Gemberling said customers had to install meters during summer at their own expense. Cost him about \$200. Water bill went up about \$5 every two months to \$38. "My water bill went up about \$5, which is not big deal."

Now the company wants to increase the annual average bill in Midway Manor and Warden Place from \$185 to \$291. In Oak Hill the rate would go to \$562 from the present \$357, and in Rhodes Terrace the increase would be from \$266 to \$419.

Sharon Wilmarth, a spokesperson for

the state Public Utilities Commission (PUC), said the majority of rate requests are suspended. "Complaints have a lot to do with it," she said. Sometimes the PUC offers a compromise that is accepted.

National Utilities had asked for a total increase of \$447,026 from its 3,046 customers. A request filed in 1996 for a \$448,200 increase was denied. The latest one was filed Oct. 30, 1998.

"Some people don't know how to file a formal complaint," Wilmarth said. Customers may call a toll-free number, 1-800-782-1110, for a complaint form.

Wilmarth said the case will be assigned to a PUC administrative law judge. After a conference with the parties, public hearings will be scheduled.

Gemberling said a rumor had installing meters as first step to another company taking NUI over, which is sometimes the result when the PUC will not grant a rate increase.



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER

Some members of the American Literature Field Studies Association at a recent meeting about their May trip to New England. Standing, from left, Ben Uzdilla, Jen Noon, Jen Dombroski, Sarah Ruckno, Mrs. Buda, Abbie Pisacano and Kelly Bevilacqua; sitting, Chrissy Duris, Kerry Neiman, Tara Holly, Angela Augustinski, Jennifer Buzunis and Kate Weiss.

## Students plan trip through history

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER  
Post Staff

**DALLAS** - For the past 15 years, Dallas High School students have had the opportunity to get a firsthand look at some of the historical sites they previously only read about in books.

This year, students of the American Literature Field Studies Association, are already in the midst of planning their annual pilgrimage, in May 1999.

The four-day field trip will take approximately 35 juniors and seniors to New England sites featured in their American Literature textbook. The jam-packed itinerary includes a tour of Provincetown, Massachusetts, where the first Pilgrims landed their boats. Students will tour dune sites with ecologists, climb to the peak of the Pilgrim Monument, and tour the Pilgrim Museum.

They will spend a day with curators of the museums in Plymouth, see the famous Plymouth Rock and explore the Mayflower II.

See HISTORY, pg 2

### ■ Fine fare

Lake-Lehman sophomores offer international treats. Pg 2.

### ■ Feathered food

Pheasant season opens, birds are stocked, hunters asked to return bands. Pg 10.

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