



The Dallas Post

50 Cents

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Vol. 110 No. 10

Dallas, Pennsylvania

March 10 thru March 16, 1999

Supervisors grumble about group home

By JESSICA APPOLO
Post Staff

JACKSON TWP. - Jackson Township is host to a new group home for mentally disabled persons. At the March 1 meeting of the supervisors, zoning officer John Krupa said, "Federal requirements were met, but they never made application with township's zoning hearing board. They just bypassed the application process."

Township officials said they were not sure when the group home would be open. But Linda Leighton, chief operating officer for Human Services Consultants, said the home has been in use for a couple of months. Human Service Consultants, a non-profit agency that provides residential programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities, purchased the home on Smith Pond Rd. last year.

Leighton said one person lives there now, under constant supervision. Residents go to workshop programs or other activities during the day, and live in the group home at night, with a counselor. There will "probably be three at the very most," she said.

Solicitor Blythe Evans questioned how the federal government could approve such a project when the local application for permission to operate the program was never made with Jackson Township. But he also pointed out that other communities that have challenged group homes have lost in court after paying out thousands of dollars in legal fees and fines.

Leighton said the agency had not approached the township because no zoning changes were necessary.

Since the home has received federal approval, the supervisors decided not to challenge it.

Jackson Township supervisors are taking into consideration a proposal to combine the many zip codes in the township into a single zip code. Supervisors are researching the appropriate channels to submit the proposal.

Police Chief Jones has requested a new addition to the department. One of the police cars has turned over 120,000 plus miles and Chief Jones has requested a four-wheel drive replacement. Supervisors must review current contracts and authorized dealers to the police department before making a decision.



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Cookies for a cause

Girl Scouts from Brownie Troop 658 sold Girl Scout Cookies at Hillside Dairy Sunday. Staffing the booth around noon, from left, foreground; Mira Chamberlain, Tiffany Hooker, Rachel Symons. Background; Catherine Sullivan and Nicole Mitkus. More photos on page 3.

On recess plan, no break from controversy

By PETER GAGLIARDI
Post Staff

DALLAS - A packed room of more than 50 people waited over an hour for the Dallas School Board to convene their meeting on Monday night. Most were there to question a planned reduction in elementary school recess time.

The issue was clouded by confusion about the present recess periods. Responding to concerns from parents that too much time was spent in recess, Dr. Gil Griffiths, Superintendent of Schools, had been told that students in grades 1-5 were taking two 30-minute recess periods each day, "which meant we were losing 60 hours of instructional time."

That turned out to be incorrect, however. Students in grades 1-3 have one 30-minute recess and one 15-minute recess. Students in grades 4 and 5 have just one 30-minute recess. Griffiths said "miscommunications between the teachers, staff, and the administration" caused the problem.

Griffiths said Tuesday he originally planned to change to a single 15-minute recess, but the school board suggested two 15-minute periods. Teachers prefer a 30-minute recess, because it provides more time to prepare for classes.

Susan Butcher, an elementary school teacher, said the plan did not make sense since the schools are already limited to 30 minutes a day.

Mary Ann Yurko, another elementary education teacher, said that 15 minute recesses are too short. She said "In winter by the time they get their coats on and off and go outside eight minutes are already gone."

Now, Griffiths will review each teacher's schedule, and try to come up with a reasonable plan. "We are going to re-evaluate the time and see if we can get more instructional time out of it," he said. A reduction of 15 minutes in grades 1-3 will provide the equivalent of six additional days instruction each school year, he said.

See RECESS, pg 8

Fond memories as Westmoreland School approaches end of its usefulness

By MEIRA ZUCKER
Post Correspondent

TRUCKSVILLE - "If these walls could talk."

So comments a long-time teacher at Westmoreland Elementary School. The building, first occupied in 1932, has been the home for thousands of students, teachers, and employees since, and has created a lasting impact on residents of the Back Mountain. Through the eyes of its alumni - both teachers and students - the distinctiveness of this building is revealed.

But does a building create the educational atmosphere, or do the inhabitants?

"It's kind of a hard thing to put your finger on," says Ann Tripp, when trying to describe the differences between

"I liked the oldness; the charm. I felt more comfortable there."

Ann Tripp
Westmoreland teacher
1986-1997

Westmoreland and other schools. "I liked the oldness; the charm. I felt more comfortable there."

Tripp began teaching fifth grade in 1973, and joined the Westmoreland faculty in 1986. She found the students at Westmoreland always willing to help faculty and fellow students. "The people cared a lot about the kids," she says, "and I liked the range of children."

"I will remember the kids,"

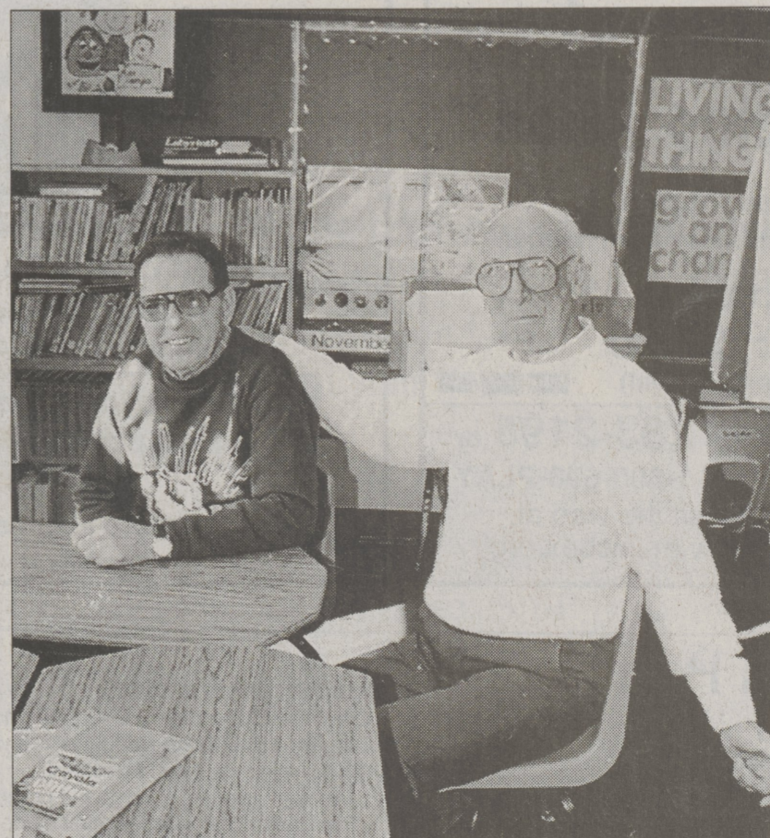
says Tripp, who retired in 1997.

Ruth Tetschner served as principal at Westmoreland for one year before her retirement, and noticed the special environment of the school. "Teachers were very wrapped up in the children," notes Tetschner, as she recollects the "caring, family feeling" there. "It was easier to learn the names of the students," she adds, because of the small size.

The intimate atmosphere of Westmoreland contributed to many activities. The school organized an ecology walk from Center Street to the school, and planted trees and flowers on nearby land. "Every school adjusts to its physical situation," says Tetschner.

Walter Prokopchak has seen the school from both sides. In

See MEMORIES, pg 8



Bob Anderson, left, and Loren Dymond reminisced about the old days when the Class of 1936 gathered at the school in 1996.

State threat to send students out of town led to school

By PETER GAGLIARDI
Post Staff

DALLAS - The building that is now Westmoreland Elementary School was originally the Kingston Township High School. The drive to build the school began in August, 1931, when J. Earl Newhart ran successfully for school director of

Kingston Township. Newhart argued that the future of the township was at stake, and that taxes would rise dramatically if a new school was not built. He said many people would move back to Wilkes-Barre if the overcrowding in the schools was not solved.

Earlier in 1931, the state Department of Education warned

Kingston Township about the problem. The department said if plans for a new school were not immediately drawn up, Kingston Township would be reduced to a two year school and would be required to send its high school students to a different school district.

In an article in the August 21, 1931 issue of The Dallas Post,

Newhart is reported to have said, "... scores of person have told him they would move back to Wilkes-Barre next year if something is not done immediately by the school board."

Newhart was elected to the school board in that November's election.

See BUILDING, pg 8

Community invited to Carnival

A Winter Carnival will commemorate the closing of the Westmoreland School. There will be games for all ages, a raffle of prizes donated by local businesses, food and much more. The carnival will be held Saturday, March 13, from noon to 6 p.m. in the school gymnasium.

INDEX

- 14 Pages, 2 Sections
- Calendar.....14
- Classified.....12-13
- Crossword.....14
- Editorials.....4
- Obituaries.....2
- School.....11
- Sports.....9-10

CALL 675-5211
FOR HOME DELIVERY,
NEWS OR ADVERTISING
E-mail: dalpost@aol.com

The Dallas Post
MAILING LABEL: Please enclose this label with any address changes, and mail to The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612-0366