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Are we there yet?



A road sign lying by the mural painted on the side of the former Dallas Bike Shop seems to point motorists into the

desert. The sign was displaced as work progresses on rebuilding the intersection at the center of Dallas.

POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Lake-Lehman gains on insurance costs

Double coverage to end, new hires must take lower-cost plan

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

Newly hired employees of the Lake-Lehman School District will not be offered the premium health insurance plan currently provided to teachers and staff.

In place of that program, those hired after July 1, 1999 can choose between a First Priority HMO plan or a First Priority Point of Service plan. Teachers and staff members who are currently employed by Lake-Lehman will have the option of keeping the Blue Cross/Blue Shield indemnity plan.

"The traditional Blue Cross/Blue Shield plan with major medical costs the district \$307.90 for a single person and \$812.86 for family coverage each month," said Kathleen Williams, district business manager. "The First Priority plans offered to new employees will cost \$155.96 per month for

single coverage and \$449.93 per month for families."

Bruce Campbell, district negotiator, explained that this change is a major victory for the school district. "The Education Association did not initially accept the recommendation that new hires receive the First Priority plan," said Campbell. "The provisions set forth in this contract are better than the alternative recommended by the fact finder's report."

Other changes to health care coverage include a clause requiring an employee to drop health care coverage if a spouse is also an employee of the school district. The employee who drops the duplicate benefits will receive a monthly payment of \$100 from the district. Previously, premiums were paid to provide health insur-

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Both sides get, give a little in new contract

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

LAKE-LEHMAN - Teachers and school district officials agreed to a new contract that leaves both sides hungry for more.

The new deal was the topic of heated discussion at last week's school board meeting. Amid protests from several members of the Lake-Lehman Taxpayers' Association, the board ratified the collective bargaining agreement upon the recommendation of its chief negotiator, Bruce Campbell.

"We tried to negotiate a settlement that can be realized and I think we have done that," said

Campbell. The term of the contract is four years beginning September 1, 1997 and ending August 31, 2001.

The agreement includes a one year wage freeze, retroactive to the first year of the deal. The freeze results in no new money spent for the academic year 1997-1998.

The second year of the contract calls for an average wage increase of 3.2 percent, which translates into a cost of \$220,000 for 1998-1999. The teachers will receive a salary boost of 3.3 percent for the third year, which is equivalent to

See CONTRACT, pg 8

Y2K fears showing up at area businesses

By MEIRA ZUCKER
Post Correspondent

BACK MOUNTAIN - Although the arrival of the millennium is nine months away, residents of the Back Mountain are already preparing for potential problems. Several businesses report that customers have been purchasing products in preparation for the end of the century.

Ochman Coins and Jewelry on Church Street in Dallas has already witnessed the increased demand for coins and metals. "We do have people that come in in preparation for Y2K," reports Fran Ochman. Area residents are purchasing gold coins, particularly 1/10 and 1 ounce American Eagles, both of which are minted

and backed by the U.S. government. The 1/10 ounce coins sell for approximately \$38 to \$40, depending on the price of gold. American Eagles fluctuate daily, and are currently approximately \$310.

"They're buying them as an insurance policy," comments Ochman. Buyers know that they can get their investment back, she adds, because of the worldwide intrinsic value of gold. Customers are also choosing to accumulate one-ounce silver ingots and coins.

Nationwide, the demand for silver and gold is up, reports Ochman. The March 29 issue of Coin World, a trade publication, notes that "sales of bullion coins are also way up." The magazine

features several advertisements for Y2K products, including a one-ounce silver coin called the "Official Barter Unit," sold by the "Y2K Silver Company."

Two to three people a week visit Ochman's looking for precious metals. "These are people preparing in other ways," believes Ochman.

At House of Nutrition, customers have requested dehydrated vegetables and cases of foods. One person ordered 250 pounds of bulk foods, according to employees, and another has purchased cases of soy milk. The employees believe that the rush has not yet begun. "I don't think it's really hit yet," mentions one employee, who asked not to be named.

Hilbert's Equipment reports

sales of several generators and a waiting list for more. "The price has doubled on generators from our suppliers," says an employee, "and one supplier has them on back order until 2002." Hilbert's is preparing for more demand as the end of the year approaches.

Kathy O'Donnoghue, Nursery Manager at Dallas Agway, anticipates a future Y2K push for products. She points out that Agway sells canning supplies, seeds, tools and work clothing, and will order generators. "We'll get in," O'Donnoghue adds, along with other edible plants. "I'm surprised we haven't had that push yet."

Not every business has experienced this early upsurge. Rich

See Y2K, pg 8

Numbers conquered, Dukas tackles words

Now a junior at King's, he edits paper, majors in English, business

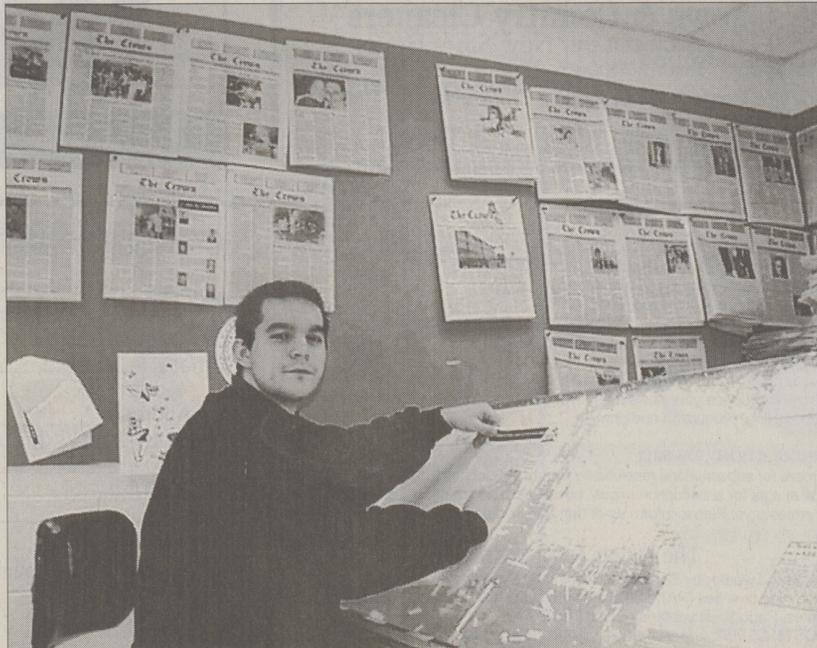
By MEIRA ZUCKER
Post Correspondent

DALLAS - In high school, Jared Dukas discovered he had a flair for numbers. At King's College, a talent for writing found its way to the surface. Now, he is combining the two interests as he looks forward to wrapping up a pair of undergraduate degrees.

Dukas, who lives in Dallas, has just been honored with a McGowan Scholarship for business students. King's College awards full scholarships each year to two students, who after completing requirements must endure a lengthy personal interview.

Dukas earned the honor while carrying out the many responsibilities of his young life. He carries a double major in English and accounting. He works 20 hours a week at Red Lobster. In his spare time, he has worked his way up to become managing editor of the

See JARED DUKAS, pg 3



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Jared Dukas prepared to lay out a page of The Crown, the student newspaper at King's College. Dukas is carrying a double major while serving as managing editor of the publication.

Child bitten by possibly rabid fox

A fox that exhibited symptoms of rabies attacked and bit a boy in Sunrise Estates, Trucksville, Monday night.

Cathy Bailey, who lives in the development, said her son and other children were playing in their yard after dark when the animal bit the boy. She said the fox was seen climbing on decks and cars, chasing people and running in circles. "We saw the fox, and it was acting in a bizarre manner," she said.

Bailey called the Game Commission, and officers captured the fox about 10 p.m. Tissue samples were sent for evaluation, with results due back in 24 hours. Her son is undergoing rabies treatment, and her daughter was to start them today. One game commission officer told Bailey the fox exhibited all the symptoms of rabies. At the least, he said, it had

See FOX, pg 8

■ Cleaning up

Encon wins award for environmental improvements around its plant. Pg 3.

■ Even-steven

Dallas and Lehman girls soccer teams end two overtimes in scoreless tie. Sports page.

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