

Insurance

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ance for both employees, which resulted in the district spending double the amount required to adequately cover the employees' family. The new policy will affect 12 couples working in the district.

Also, teachers with spouses who receive health insurance from another employer may choose to opt out of the district's plan. An incentive of \$100 per month will be offered to employees who qualify for this program. Employees can resume district coverage at any time by providing written documentation of the loss of a spouse's benefits.

Retirees, under the new contract, will now be required to pay the first \$660 of the annual cost of

health insurance coverage provided to them by the district. This adjustment of benefits is projected to save of \$128,830 over the term of the contract.

While these changes were initiated to save the district money, taxpayers expressed doubt that the adjustments would result in a significant overall reduction in the cost of health care coverage. "People will not opt out of the indemnity plan for \$100 per month. It is the best of the best," said Ed Chesnovitch of the Lehman Taxpayers Association.

"At least we're achieving something," said school board member, Ron Payne before casting his vote of approval for the collective bargaining agreement.

Contract

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approximately \$245,000. A raise of 3.4 percent is included in the final year of the contract. This pay hike will cost the district approximately \$280,000 more for the 2000-2001 term.

Ed Chesnovitch, of the taxpayers' association, argued that these increases are higher than they should be. "The cost of living went up 1.3 percent last year and that is the rate of increase most people around here received from their employers," he said.

Significant changes will be made to health care benefits also, under new regulations outlined in the collective bargaining agreement. (See separate story.)

The contract calls for a base salary of \$29,070 for first year teachers who possess a bachelor's degree but have not earned post-graduate credits in their field of expertise. The maximum salary posted on the Lake-Lehman pay scale is given to a teacher with 17 years of experience and who has earned a masters degree plus 54 additional credits. In 1997-98, 39 teachers of the 141 employed by the district had those credentials; each received an annual salary of \$56,970. The pay increments stipulated in the final year of the contract increase salaries to \$29,853 at the low end of the pay scale and \$61,355 at the highest.

Other changes under the new agreement include the elimination of a one-time early retirement cash incentive, which equalled a maximum of 75 percent of a teacher's annual salary. This results in a savings of \$328,620 over the term of the contract.

Reimbursements paid to teachers for courses completed will be adjusted under the terms set forth in the collective bargaining agreement. Teachers will receive 100 percent of the cost of the class taken if it is in their area of specialization up to the master's level. General education credits earned will be paid for at a rate of 75 percent of the cost of the course. Classes which do not fall into the categories of education or the field of expertise of the teacher will not be covered by the school district. Credits earned beyond the master's level will be paid at a rate of 70 percent if they meet the above criteria.

Credits earned affect horizontal movement along the salary schedule. Under the new contract teachers can include a maximum of three in-service credits toward professional development for each

Y2K

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Hann, owner of Shavertown Shooting Supplies, has not witnessed any increased demand for firearms or ammunition. "I don't expect to see it in guns so much," reports Hann. Some wholesalers are advertising ready-to-eat meals, similar to military and rations, and other paramilitary products.

At PCS Computers, interest in Y2K has been slow so far. "I really think it's going to start when more people write stories about it," says George Blower, store manager. PCS computers will upgrade or replace hardware to ensure Y2K compliance, and will recommend software solutions where applicable.

Blower notes that, at this point, more businesses than individuals have addressed their Year 2000 needs.

Hoof-n-Paw-n-Jeans does not plan to stock huge amounts of extra pet food and feed before this fall. "I don't think they're reacting at this point," says manager Paul Walsh. "We haven't heard anything."

For local news readers, no need to worry. The Dallas Post utilizes Macintosh computers, which are not susceptible to the Year 2000 computing problem. See you in January!

Barbershop singing April 10

"Whistlestop Barbershop" is the theme for the 47th annual concert of the Wilkes-Barre Chapter, Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America (SPEBSQSA)n.

The concert is scheduled for April 10 at John S. Fine High School in Naticoke starting at 8 p.m. Shown above are

"barbershoppers" from the Back Mountain area who will be part of the production numbers by the

"Wyoming Valley Barbershop Harmony Chorus". In the foreground, from left, are Joseph Fry, Trucksville; Assistant Director Phil Brown, Shavertown; and Harry Howell, Dallas. In the background, left is Marty Wise, Wyoming and Charlie Davenport, Shavertown. Chapter member not shown, Ted Rebennack, Shavertown. Concert headliners are "Platinum" from Orlando, FL, making their debut performance in Northeast USA. The group has appeared with "Voices of Liberty" at EPCOT, Disney World. Chorus will be directed by Ray Patsko, Wilkes-Barre; and assistants, Ray Ramage, West Pittston; Jack Muchler, Wilkes-Barre; and Brown, Shavertown. Also appearing will be chapter registered quartets "Chordial Connection", "Genuine Sound" and "Four After Midnight", the latter also having representatives from Lewisburg and Wyalusing. Tickets are reserved seating and available from members of the Chapter and/or by calling ticket chairman George Finnan, 654-0871.



Puppet show at Emmanuel Assembly

Emmanuel Assembly of God Church, Harveys Lake will host a puppet seminar on Saturday, April 10 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. It is free and open to the public. The seminar will include instruction on making and using puppets. For more information call 639-5858.

Dallas Borough accepting applicants for mayor's post

The Dallas Borough Council has until April 27 to appoint a replacement for Mayor Paul LaBar, who died March 28. Under state law, if a replacement is not found by that time, the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas will appoint someone to serve until the first Monday of January 2000, when borough government will reorganize.

The council has asked that anyone interested in filling the vacancy call the borough office any weekday morning between 9 a.m. and noon. The phone number is 675-1389. Applicants may also send a letter of interest to: Dallas Borough Office, 25 Main St., Dallas PA 18612. The appointee must be a registered voter in Dallas Borough. There is no requirement for length of residence.

Milton Lutsey, borough manager, said the council would likely take up the matter at its regular meeting Tuesday, April 20.

The Mayor's duties are "to preserve order in the Borough and to exact a faithful performance of the duties of the officers appointed, and to perform other duties as shall be vested in the office by law or ordinance." Among the most important duties is oversight of the police department.

Mayor LaBar's term was to run through 2001. Since May primary election ballots were completed before his death, it was too late to get candidate's names on that ballot. Kevin Jordan, director of the Luzerne County Department of Voter Services, said because the primary was missed, it is likely the appointee will serve out the balance of LaBar's term. Another possibility would be for the borough council to declare the post vacant, allowing the Democratic and Republican parties to nominate candidates to appear on the general election ballot in November.

Fox

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distemper, which also has serious consequences for humans.

Bailey said health department officials told her any animal that has recently come into contact with the fox is probably infected. They recommend that pet owners keep their animals indoors for the next few days, and watch them carefully, since it takes about three days for symptoms to surface.

Also, animals that come in

contact with the saliva from a rabid animal can become infected.

The fox had been seen around the neighborhood, which abuts Frances Slocum Park, for years. It was not uncommon for it to venture into people's yards, Bailey said.

Questions may be directed to the Game Commission office, 675-1143, or the department of health, 826-2062.

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