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Rec center land identified, plans laid for funding drive

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

DALLAS - It's been a topsy-turvy path for the non-profit corporation working to develop a regional recreation area for the Back Mountain. But the wandering route may end in a better place.

Normally, the first task in such an effort is to line up the several million dollars in funding needed; then start looking for a suitable piece of land. But

Dr. Gil Griffiths, the Dallas Superintendent of Schools who is leading the group, was leafing through a real estate publication a few months ago when an ad caught his eye. He called the agent, who contacted the owners, who seemed delighted at the prospect their land might be of use to the whole community. "We'd love to help," they said. As an added bonus, the approximately 80-acre parcel was more than double the size Griffiths and the committee had in mind.

Concept drawing of rec facilities, pg 8

"I thought we would have difficulty finding land," Griffiths said last week. Instead, the group is now scrambling to arrange funding. Not only that, an adjacent property of 50 acres may also be available from a patient owner. "The land-

owners are being very accommodating; they're very interested in the project," Griffiths said. The land is between Outlet and Firehouse roads in Lehman Twp.

The immediate task is to solicit \$20,000 that can be put down as a binder on the properties. After that is taken care of, the committee is planning a capital campaign to raise funds to complete the land purchase, which Griffiths estimates at \$750,000, plus the cost of surveys, permits and other required items.

Once the land is acquired, Griffiths said it would cost another \$6 million or more to develop outdoor and indoor facilities. Dr. Wallace Stettler, who chaired the successful fund drive to build a children's wing on the Back Mountain Memorial Library, will be on board for that phase of the project. "We're going to be out pounding on doors" to raise funds, Griffiths said.

See REC CENTER, pg 8

Ross school expansion held up by roof

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

LAKE-LEHMAN - The planned expansion of Ross Elementary School is the subject of controversy in a district facing the expense of renovating or rebuilding at least two of its schools.

Ross Elementary students are desperate for room to learn. Class size at Ross has continued to increase at a time when other schools in the district are receiving money to reduce teacher to student ratios. "There is a great and immediate need for expansion," said Wendy Hauze, of the PTO.

The 50-year-old structure serves 136 children in grades K-4. There are six classrooms in the main building and a modular kindergarten room that was added approximately 20 years ago. Because of space constraints at Ross, fifth and sixth grade students now attend schools outside the township.

"Our library is virtually inaccessible due to the addition of another group of first graders, remedial reading courses are now held in a second floor room that used to serve as a closet and

See ROSS SCHOOL, pg 8



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Scary science

Michael Peeler, a seventh grade student at Gate of Heaven School, used his father's tarantula for a science project at the school's

annual science fair, held last week. All classes take part in the annual event. More photos on page

See RATE HIKE, pg 2

No support evident for 57% NUI rate hike

State trying to have company taken over by better operator

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

DALLAS - No customers showed up for an afternoon hearing about a 57 percent rate increase request by National Utilities Inc. But the evening session was packed by customers with complaints about the company's service and quality.

An attorney for the utility thought the low turnout at the 2 p.m. session was a positive sign.

"Our record of customer service and water quality has steadily improved over the years, as evidenced by the reduction of complaints we have received," said Anthony Lomma, attorney for National Utilities Inc. (NUI). Utility representatives expressed their continuing commitment to improving standards and said the annual increase of \$477,026 is necessary to meet the cost of future upgrades.

Working together on outdoor beauty

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

DALLAS - Students big and small gathered at the Dallas Elementary School on April 14 to begin work on a school yard habitat.

Juniors and seniors enrolled in Ecology II at the high school provided the muscle needed to shovel, hoe, rake and weed a hilly section of the property. A patch of land enclosed by a log border will be planted with perennials and sunflowers. The plants, donated by Agway and the Wilkes-Barre Walmart, are being nurtured by elementary school children in their class-

Robert Stevens, a senior, helped dig a new outdoor area at Dallas Elementary.

See PLANTING, pg 3

Bloomers have the Armory all dressed up for spring

By MEIRA ZUCKER
Post Correspondent

KINGSTON - After a cold and dreary week, wouldn't you like to visit a fairytale land of lush plants, scented flowers, and exotic landscapes? Then fly down to the Kingston Armory this Friday through Sunday to visit "The Land of Fairy Tales," this year's Northeast Pennsylvania Flower Show.

The Back Mountain Bloomers Garden Club presents the annual show, which serves as a major fundraiser for the educational programs of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic.

Lora Friefeld, Flower Show chairperson, emphasizes the community aspects of the show. "It's educating the public," she says. "The money goes back into the community."

"We depend on the fundraising to bring things to the community," points out Friefeld. Money raised from the Flower Show funds education projects of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic. The Philharmonic provides free children's concerts, outreach to area schools, and other educational opportunities. Friefeld reminds people that the price of a concert ticket only covers half of the cost of an event.

Louise Mattas, Back Mountain Bloomers President, tells show goers that "I think they are going to see some fantastic landscapes." The unique designs, the fantasy theme, and the tremendous work of the volunteers and exhibitors combine for an exceptional experience.



POST PHOTO/KASIA McDONOUGH

The Back Mountain Bloomers are working this week to prepare the Kingston Armory for the annual Northeast Pennsylvania Flower Show. From left: Lynn Kelly, Ann Stine, Louise Mattas, Mike burchie, Cora Hurt and Janet Flack. They are members of the Bloomers and of the Orchid Society.

rience.

Mattas was still preparing by painting pedestals in the days before the show. "I do it out of a general love for seeing beautiful things," she says. "I enjoy flowers and working in my landscapes."

Linda Thoma, a previous co-chair of the show and previous president of the club, says, "We're just proud and determined to put on a top-rated show."

She cites the hard work of volunteers as key to creating the

perfect environment.

As co-chair of the vendors and garden market, Dallas resident Nancy Brown aimed to bring in new booths this year. Featured will be clothing, garden sculptures, plants, and hanging baskets from Garden-n-More, Naturals by Renata, Wearable Art, and others. Floral designers will have arrangements for sale. "This year, we had people calling us," says Brown.

"This is one of the ways I serve

the Philharmonic," says Brown. "There's a great feeling when it all comes together." The love that people have for the earth, mentions Brown, helps make the event enjoyable to work on and attend.

Visitors to the show will be able to view the many competitive floral contests, which all are following the fairy tale theme. Ann Stine is the consultant for Class 101, The Semi-Formal Table. "The subject is 'The Wedding Feast' from Snow White," says Stine. The judges will award ribbons to the best individual interpretation of the topic. Other classes include "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall," "Oh Beauty," and "Oh Beast."

The Back Mountain Bloomers anticipate this year's theme will be especially entertaining to children. Louise Mattas mentions that there will be a section where costumed volunteers dressed as Mother Goose and a Fairy Godmother will read children's stories. "This year is going to appeal to a larger audience," she adds. Educational exhibits aimed at ages 1-7, 8-12, and 13-17 will also be of interest to younger visitors.

The show succeeds due to the efforts of many volunteers and several businesses that donate their time and money. KW Carpets and More has lent carpets to cushion areas of the Armory. Jim Harkins, of Penn State Feed, has provided supplies, trucks, and even recruited carpenters to create the right atmosphere in Kingston.

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