

Ross school

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students often have as little as 10 minutes to eat lunch because the cafeteria is too small," said Hauze. "To not expand Ross is to deprive our children an equal opportunity for an education."

The principal at Ross Elementary understands the concerns raised by parents. "I think the facilities present many challenges to our teachers who have been forced to be traveling specialists. The library and computer rooms have been consolidated to a single shared space and art classes are held in the cafeteria," said David McLaughlin Smith. "The teachers continue to do a tremendous job instructing our students despite the difficulties they face daily. I feel Ross students are receiving an education comparable to other students in the district."

School board officials agree that something must be done, but are divided about what is the best solution. "We're all concerned about the Ross school, but I am also worried about the feasibility of this expansion. The roof and septic system need to be addressed before any construction begins," said Lois Kopcha.

Current estimates are that the existing roof will last three to five years, but that it will need to be patched in the near future. Installation of a new roof is still being considered by the district. "We can look at the cost of putting in a new roof and include that in the construction plans," said Dr. William Price, Superintendent of Schools.

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) regulations for reimbursement of expansion expenditures require the facility to meet federal and state guidelines. The school must comply with the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act and all PDE regulations. "The current plans for the renovation of Ross Elementary fall short of what is necessary and might compromise state funding for this project," said Lois Kopcha.

Kopcha feels the district would benefit from hiring a construction management firm which can identify deficiencies in the current plan and help reduce building costs. The architectural firm of Douglas Trumbower and Associates has been authorized to proceed with development of design plans, despite opposition from Kopcha and other members of the school board. The firm will receive a compensation equal to 8 percent of the total construction cost for basic architectural services.

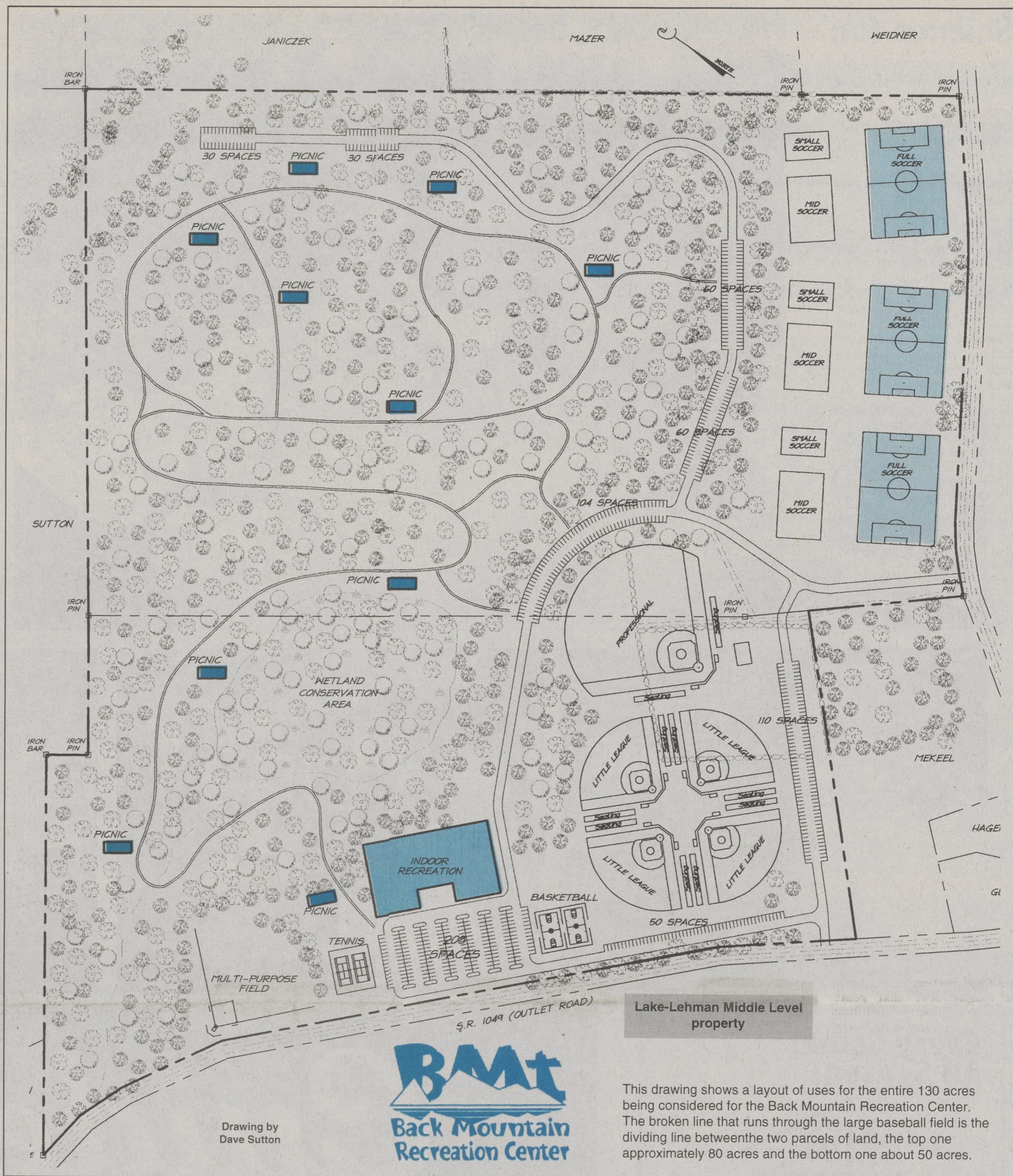
The district's architect expressed frustration about the slow pace of the project. "It is a painful experience to report that construction will not begin for at least another year," said Trumbower.

The plan, which is currently in developmental stages, includes the addition of approximately 16,000 square feet of space. "I am not aware of a decision to proceed with a specific design for the expansion, but the talk is to basically double the size of the existing structure," said David McLaughlin Smith. "This growth would allow our fifth and sixth graders to return to Ross and provide room for future increases to the enrollment."

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Lake-Lehman Middle Level property

This drawing shows a layout of uses for the entire 130 acres being considered for the Back Mountain Recreation Center. The broken line that runs through the large baseball field is the dividing line between the two parcels of land, the top one approximately 80 acres and the bottom one about 50 acres.

Drawing by Dave Sutton

Rec center

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Grant money may be available, in the form of matching funds, once there is a commitment in place for the property. Eight of the 10 municipalities the facility would serve have provided letters of support, and the group is working on the others.

A sketch of possible land use shows four Little League baseball fields, a professional size baseball

field, three each of full-size, mid-size and small soccer fields, a multi-purpose field, two tennis courts, two basketball courts, hiking paths, picnic areas and an indoor recreation building. Griffiths said the initial plan calls for an eight-lane pool, walking track, gym, workout rooms and meeting space inside. There has been some specula-

"The landowners are being very accommodating; they're very interested in the project."

Dr. Gil Griffiths
President, Back Mountain Recreation Inc.

tion that the present Lake-Lehman middle school building, which is right across Outlet Rd.

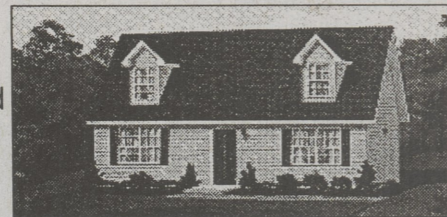
from the land, could become the indoor facility. "If Lake-Lehman would offer it, we'd definitely take

a look," Griffiths said, although no such discussions have taken place. "We won't say no to anyone." But he noted it could cost more to refit an old building than to build a new one, especially if it was in poor condition to begin with.

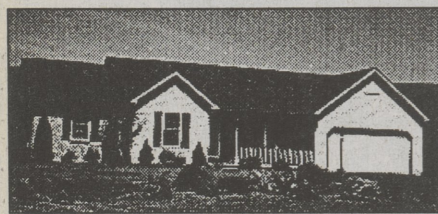
Anyone who is interested in helping build the recreation center can call Griffiths at 674-7221.

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As a landscape designer, Mr. Gregory is considered by many to be one of the best in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Having earned his degree in Landscape Nursery Management from Penn Tech (branch of Penn State) Tom has experience in designing and supervising the construction of: lawn and shrubbery plantings, all types of walls, patios, walkways and driveways, using concrete pavers or flagstone; beautiful waterfalls and ponds; state-of-the-art lighting; all forms of drainage systems. He was born and raised in Wyoming Valley and has 10 years experience in residential and commercial landscaping. He specializes in rare and unique concepts that separate Tom from all other designers. Recognized as an expert, his passion for the field and excellent reputation, in terms of customer satisfaction, is unmatched. Tom and all of our staff are challenged with the responsibility of actively promoting our services. Our professional and thorough proposals will enlighten you in the field of horticulture. You will find the process to be tasteful and customized to complement your needs.

SUPERVISOR: ROBERT ROCKY MRAK

Mr. Mrak has 18 years of experience in the field of landscaping and grounds maintenance. He is certified for lawn care by the PA Dept. of Agric. and has attended at least 15 seminars sponsored by that department. He has an excellent customer satisfaction rating and specializes in maintaining beautiful healthy lawns, distinctive flower arrangements, and expert pruning of trees and shrubs.

FOREMAN: DAVID PIESTRAK

Mr. Piestrak is a 1986 graduate of Penn Tech, a branch of Penn State University, with a degree in Nursery Management. He has a total of 13 years experience in the fields of landscaping and grounds maintenance. He has been certified in tree and shrub care since 1988 and has attended over 14 seminars sponsored by the PA Dept. of Agriculture.

FOREMAN: MATTHEW TERRITO

Mr. Territo has a total of 17 years of experience in the landscaping and grounds maintenance fields. He is responsible for supervising two crews and giving a manicured look to over 100 lawns which are mowed and trimmed.

OWNER: JOSEPH CZARNECKI

Mr. Czarnecki has 18 years of experience in the design, installation and repairs of automatic underground lawn sprinkler systems, residential and commercial.

CREW CHIEF: STEVE OLSON

Mr. Olson has 13 years of experience in the grounds maintenance fields. Tree removal and the proper pruning of trees and shrubs being his specialty. Mr. Olson, under the supervision of Mr. Mrak, does work on chimneys, i.e., cleaning, capping, inspecting and the installation of new liners.

Birchwood Landscaping was established in 1965 by Joe Czarnecki, sole proprietor, References supplied on request. All work is covered by Worker's Compensation and liability insurance.

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