



Day of honor and flag waving

The annual Memorial Day parade and ceremony in Dallas brought out a big crowd on a perfect day to honor those who have died in service to the nation. It's also a day to show off the community's

best institutions, with a parade. In photos above, from left: Ed Rish lowered the flag at the veterans' memorial to half staff; Al Shaffer drove the Dallas Fire and Ambulance Company's 1927 Mack fire

truck; Vanessa Parsons, left, and Jackie Buckman showed off their enthusiasm with flags waving. The crowd for this year's parade was the largest in recent years.

POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Suit

(continued from page 1)

Negotiator and his wife Marilyn Glogowski, a Lake-Lehman teacher. The lawsuit originally named the school district among the defendants but Judge Hugh Mundy recently dismissed the charges against Lake-Lehman School District citing a precedent which protects government entities from lawsuits except in limited circumstances.

The remaining defendants are: Robert Allardyce, Rosemary Howard, Edwin Kern, Lois Kopcha, Gary Miller, Ronald Payne, Moderno Rossi, Karen Whipple, Thomas Williams, and Kathleen Williams. Kathleen Williams is the district's business manager and acts as board secretary. She is not a member of the school board.

The suit alleges the "defendants' published letter, which contained false statements, assertions and inferences that plaintiff was unfit to serve as a PSEA contract negotiator, constitute libel made with a malicious intent to harm the plaintiff's professional career." The complaint also includes an allegation that the "defendants, through their widely published letter, thrust the plaintiffs into the public eye and placed them in a false light which was highly offensive and known to be highly offensive."

"We would like to put this matter behind us."

Moderno Rossi
School board president

In the letter, the school district's representatives addressed proposals for sharing the cost of increasing health care coverage including a recommendation by Dr. William Caldwell, independent fact finder, that the teachers and administrators share the expense of increases above 5 percent. The letter reports, "Last year, the Administrators agreed to accept the fact finder's recommendation and that recommendation is currently in effect for Administrators of the district."

The letter implied that Glogowski was reluctant to press changes in the health care plan on teachers because of the effect a change would have on his wife's insurance costs.

The final draft of the collective bargaining agreement did not include a cost sharing program, but instead enacted a policy which requires new hires to accept a point of service plan the district expects to be less expensive than the existing plan. Administrators, bound to accept the same coverage as teachers, have not participated in the cost sharing plan as the letter indicated they had agreed to do.

This point has been the source of several verbal confrontations between members of the Lake-Lehman Taxpayers Association and school board members since the collective bargaining agreement was announced. Rossi informed the audience at last month's school board meeting that the board will not address questions about the matter in the future. "As I'm sure you're aware, this letter is the subject of a lawsuit in which each member of the school board has been named personally and I don't feel it would be appropriate to comment further at this time," he said. "We would like to put this matter behind us."

Rebates

(continued from page 1)

lation, a retired couple earning \$16,000 in Social Security benefits annually would be required to claim only half that income and would therefore qualify for the rebate program.

If passed, Bill 773, would allow an additional 181,000 people statewide to participate in the program, which is funded by the Pennsylvania State Lottery. The

most recent statistics available on local participation are from 1997 and show that 13,522 people filed claims for rebates. Approximately 64,000 senior citizens resided in Luzerne County in that year. The number of participants who owned homes and received property tax rebates that year was 7,039 while 6,483 received rent rebates. "Those numbers would

certainly increase if this legislation passes in the Senate," said Hasay.

State Representative Phyllis Mundy, 120th District, is also hopeful that increasing the maximum income eligibility requirements will eliminate some of the misconceptions which hinder participation. "I think, unfortunately, some people are reluctant to sign

up for these rebates because they view them as a form of welfare when, in fact, the program should be considered a benefit," she said.

As the population ages, the state government is investigating new methods of easing the tax burden for seniors. "Just the other day, I ran into a woman who told me that she uses her property tax rebate to buy Christmas gifts for

her family every year," said Hasay. "That is just an example of how important this program is to how many people locally."

Eligible residents interested in learning more about the program should contact the Luzerne County Property Tax/Rent Rebate Bureau at 826-2466. Forms are also available from Senator Charles Lemmond's Office.

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