



The Dallas Post

50 Cents

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Vol. 110 No. 37

Dallas, Pennsylvania

September 15 thru September 21, 1999

Drought takes toll on fire companies' time and money

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - The summer has featured few fires, but many challenges, for local fire companies as they battle drought conditions and scorching temperatures.

A persistent shortage of rainfall has forced local fire departments to seek alternative water supplies as streams,

creeks, ponds and lakes are below normal levels. "The drought hasn't only affected us, it has affected a lot of people," said Jack Dodson, Kunkle Fire Chief. "Creeks where we usually go to get water have dried up so we're having to run a few more miles every time we fill a tanker."

Recent rainfall has done little to improve the situation. "Our biggest problem is that we depend on water from Toby's Creek and it has been too low all summer," said Gary Beisel, Shavertown Fire Chief. "The creek was up about three quarters full after we had those rain showers but it's already back to where it was."

Modifying water routes means additional work for firefighters. "Our hauling times are definitely longer because we can't draw from the places we normally do," said Brian Johnson, Trucksville Fire Chief. "Frances Slocum is still good, but

even drawing from there is sometimes a problem because the water is so much lower than normal, we can't back up the truck to the edge of the lake the way we'd like to. We have to throw another pumper line on there which is a lot harder on the guys and the equipment."

Drought restrictions also have required training regimens to be altered, a change that concerns local firefighters. "Companies all over the state are running dry

simulations because we're not allowed to use water unless we're able to put it back," said Chuck Benson, a firefighter and EMT in Dallas. "In this job you have to keep up your skills through training; it's the only way to learn about new apparatus that's been introduced and it's the best way to keep sharp. You finish one class and start another - just keep

See FIRE COMPANIES, pg 8



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Isn't this fun!

Caitlyn Metz, Dallas, center, shared a laugh with other contestants for the Fair Princess title at last weekend's Luzerne County Fair. She turned toward Dana Kintner, Lehman, at left, and Mary

Theresa Condoستا, Exeter, who was later named the winner. The fair enjoyed marvelous weather for its four-day run. For more fair photos, turn to page 13.

Gardeners wind down season, plan for next year

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - The sun sets a little sooner, the nights are a little cooler and the first frost is just around the corner.

Annual rituals, like canning the last batch of home-grown tomatoes, signal the end of another growing season. But autumn is also the season to plan next year's garden. "This is a good time to go out into the yard with a notebook and think about any changes you'd like to make next spring," said Florence Halstead, a Penn State master gardener who lives in Shavertown.

Jotting down ideas while plants are still blooming is important. "Right now you can look at perennials and decide whether or not they need to be divided," said Halstead. "You can say, 'I think I'd like to add more of that or maybe I'll plant a flower bed here.' Come spring you don't have those markers and you'll forget."

Gardeners pondering major changes can spend the fall and winter months researching possibilities. "When I first moved here, I didn't realize how much clay was in the soil," said Louise Mattas, Dallas, a master gardener and president of the Back Mountain Bloomers garden club. "I put a lot of plants in and found they didn't live."

It is also important to consider time constraints before planting. "I have emphasized ornamental grasses in my garden for several reasons," said Mattas. "They are pretty self sufficient; they don't require much fertilizer and they don't need a lot of water once they have been established."

"When I first moved here, I didn't realize how much clay was in the soil. I put a lot of plants in and found they didn't live."

Louise Mattas
Master gardener, Dallas

See GARDENERS, pg 7



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Louise Mattas of Dallas posed by her garden gate. She likes to use grasses in her garden, which is accented by rock outcroppings.

Crowded, late buses top agenda at Dallas

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

DALLAS - Members of the Dallas School Board discussed problems with the newly revised transportation schedule at their meeting Monday night.

Alterations made to bus routes following the opening of Wycallis Elementary School have created difficulties ranging from tardiness to overcrowding. "We're working through some growing pains," said Dr. Gil Griffiths, Superintendent of Schools.

The old transportation system included a bus traveling to Westmoreland Elementary and Dallas Elementary from the same street. The district, in an effort to simplify routes, is now sending one bus to each stop to pick up students for both schools. The change has resulted in overcrowding on several buses.

Dr. Griffiths said he has been discussing the problem with the district's transportation supervisor. "According to Mrs. Farr, we don't have more than 65 students on each bus," said Griffiths. "The state guidelines limit the number of students on a bus (carrying elementary or middle school children) to 72; that is based on three students per seat."

Several school board members voiced concerns that those numbers may be unrealistic. "When

"Believe me when they get on the bus with saxophones there won't be any room."

Karen Kyle
School director

you start having band students on those buses you're going to have a problem," said Karen Kyle, school board director. "Believe me when they get on the bus with saxophones there won't be any room."

A suggestion was made to consider hiring a transportation consultant to review bus routes. "Our number one concern is the safety of the kids," said Frank Natitus, school board member. "If we have to bring someone in to help Susan (Farr) I think we should go ahead and do that."

Kyle, whose daughter rides a crowded bus, compared the situation to a trip to an amusement park. "Anyone who has been to Disney World knows that lines and crowd control is a science," she said. "I don't think we need to re-invent the wheel. There may be ideas out there that have not been brought to the table."

See BUSES, pg 8

Trees vital, says urban forester

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. - Anyone who has ever passed a sunny afternoon lying on the grass in the cool shade of a favorite maple knows the value of a tree.

Trees' role in our environment is now recognized around the world. From the rainforests of South America to wooded areas of the Appalachian Mountains, groups are working to preserve old growth trees and to plant new seedlings. "I think there is a new awareness of the importance of trees," said Vinnie Cotrone, an urban forester from Penn State University. "Hospitals have figured out that patients recover from surgery more quickly in rooms that offer a view of a tree than they do in rooms that look out over parking lots."

In Japan, where open space is at a premium, trees are revered. "The Japanese people refer to a trek through the woods as 'a walk in the green rain,'" said Cotrone.

The Back Mountain Trail, as it winds beneath a lush canopy of leaves, is ideal for those seeking a slow stroll closer to home and Saturday it provided a perfect setting for an informative session about the importance of main-

See TREES, pg 7

INDEX

16 Pages, 2 Sections
Calendar.....16
Classified.....14-15
Crossword.....16
Editorials.....4
Obituaries.....14
School.....12
Sports.....9-10

CALL 675-5211
FOR HOME DELIVERY,
NEWS OR ADVERTISING
E-mail: dalpost@aol.com

The Dallas Post

MAILING LABEL - Please enclose this label with any address changes, and mail to The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612-0366