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## Most Dallas test scores are higher

By KASIA McDONOUGH  
Post Staff

**DALLAS** - Dallas scores on the 1998-1999 Pennsylvania State Schools Assessment (PSSA) were higher than last year's results in nearly every subject area and grade level.

The largest increases were in reading exams as Dallas High School juniors notched a score of 1350, 50 points higher than last year. Westmoreland 5th graders scored 1410, which is 60 points higher than the 1997-1998.

Westmoreland's improved reading scores were attributed to a number of factors including a special focus on developing critical thinking skills. "We don't have a program set up to improve test scores but what we do have are very high goals for our students," said Kathleen McCarthy, principal of Wycallis Elementary. "We expect students to be able to do more than read the words on the page and so we're teaching reading as a thinking activity."

Creative strategies are used to foster reading comprehension at the elementary level and beyond. "Our teachers have started asking students to think about what they're reading," said McCarthy. "The children may have to come up with a new ending for the story they're reading or to relate it to a real life experience of their own. These activities make reading more enjoyable and the students get more out of it."

McCarthy said writing is another tool being used effectively to enhance the literary experience. "Our new reading series includes many prompts for writing and reflection which makes it easy for my teachers to incorporate writing assignments in their lesson plans," she said. "As a faculty we have spent a lot of time talking about the importance of writing, both creatively and informatively."

Writing is even required on the mathematics portion of the PSSA and in math classes throughout the district. "New state standards make teaching math very different than it was just 20 years ago," said McCarthy. "It used to be that elementary school students were taught to add, subtract, multiply and divide but now fifth grade students are asked and expected to use geometry. They need to have a grasp of measurements and they must be able to solve word problems relating these skills to everyday situations."

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POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

## Making the season bright

Alexis Arnold added her custom-made decoration to a tree in front of the Dallas Borough building. Brownie Troop 624, with help from Junior Troop 624, made decorations and then hung them on the tree, which was dedicated to Paul LaBar, the late Dallas mayor who passed away earlier this year. More photos on page 8.

## Students' downtown Dallas project to be dedicated

By KASIA McDONOUGH  
Post Staff

**DALLAS** - Dallas Middle School students worked hard to improve their community and made some new friends in the process.

Two years ago, Tara Puchalsky noticed that Main Street could use some sprucing up, so she recruited several classmates to join a fund raising campaign to support a beautification project. "We had approximately 40 students involved," said Puchalsky. "Some of us sought cash donations, others organized a volleyball game between the teachers and KRZ and we all worked on the peanut tin sale."

Selling peanuts turned out to be more work than these youngsters had anticipated, but no one minded. "Everybody just stayed after school and volunteered their own time to fill the tins," said Puchalsky. "It was actually fun."

A special bond formed in that classroom filled to capacity with teenagers

*"I feel really happy because I was surprised how many people cared enough to get involved."*

Tara Puchalsky  
Project leader

and peanuts. "There were these huge bags of peanuts everywhere," said Puchalsky. "But it was cool because we all got along so well and not everyone gets along all the time."

Puchalsky was surprised to learn that a common goal can often unite a diverse group. "We all worked together to make this a success but so many kids were saying, 'What will we do when the Main Street Project is done?' we didn't want it to end."

The hardest part of the project has

See DOWNTOWN, pg 8



POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

## Happy fans, at the time

A big crowd of Dallas fans made the trek to the state quarterfinal football game between Dallas and perennial power Strath Haven. The result wasn't a win, but the Mountaineers put up a good fight against the state's #1 Class AAA team. More photos on page 9.

## Farmers struggle to hang on

*Proposed change in pricing, which would have made things worse, is off for now*

By M.B. GILLIGAN  
Post Correspondent

**BACK MOUNTAIN** - Local dairy farmers feared the worst when Congress considered changes in the way they are paid for milk. Pennsylvania milk prices are currently set by the Milk Marketing Board, a three-member panel appointed by the governor and approved by the Senate, but legislation in the last session of Congress would have lessened or eliminated the premium local farmers now receive over the minimum federal price.

"The board sets a premium that is added to the Basic Formula Price set by the U.S.D.A.," said Tracy Jackson, the Milk Marketing Board. The price is determined by a very elaborate scheme that includes transportation costs, overall supply and demand, federal policies, and prices set by dairy cooperatives. It is also based on the price of cheese sold in the Midwest three months earlier.

"The price set has nothing to do with the actual production costs to dairy farmers," said Arden Tewksbury, Manager of the Progressive Agriculture Organization (Pro Ag). "It has nothing to do with transporting the milk. It is based on the price of cheese and if they glut the market with cheese causing the price to go down, the base milk price goes down."

Rates are usually set by the middle of the month. When dairy farmers sell their milk they don't know how much they will be paid for it until the check arrives. Tewksbury said, "The price announced on November 5, \$11.55 per hundred weight (cwt.), shows a \$4.77 cwt. decline over October prices." These prices will be seen in a decrease in the cost of milk to

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## Teen still in intensive care

Andrew George, 15, who was severely injured in an automobile accident Friday, was still in the Intensive Care Unit at Community Medical Center Tuesday. A hospital spokesperson would not give a condition report.

Story, photo on page 2.