

Administrators feel adult activities not worthwhile

By KASIA McDONOUGH
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - Continuing education courses, offering nightly lessons in everything from ballroom dance to tax preparation, were once commonly available at public schools throughout the Back Mountain, but administrators say changing lifestyles have prompted the end of most programs in both the Dallas and Lake-Lehman districts.

"Most of the activities we have at the schools now involve community athletics," said Dr. Gilbert Griffiths, Superintendent of the Dallas School District. "Groups like Back Mountain Youth Soccer and the adult volleyball league frequently make use of our facilities."

Administrators at the Abington Heights School District, which serves suburban Clarks Summit and is similar, demographically, to the Back Mountain, have noticed an increasing demand for fitness and athletic programs as well. Recreational volleyball and basketball leagues offer residents a chance to utilize the district's gymnasium after school hours.

Abington's fitness center and pool also are open to members of the community for a fee of \$2 dollars per visit. The weight room is staffed by an instructor who offers guidance in proper use of equipment and training tips. "The fees we collect are used to pay for instructors and cover our costs, the district is not making a lot of money from these programs, in fact I lose money on the fitness center, but its something we feel should be offered," said Jim Warner, director of Abington Heights' continuing education programs.

The increasing popularity of sporting activities has not spelled the end of more traditional continuing education programs at Abington Heights as it has in both the Lake-Lehman and Dallas School Districts. "This spring we are holding a computer class, one in financial planning and a couple of Red Cross First Aid and CPR courses," said Warner. "It's really a unique program, I don't know of anyone else in the Abingtons who is offering classes like this on a regular basis. The colleges in

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Superintendent, Lake-Lehman

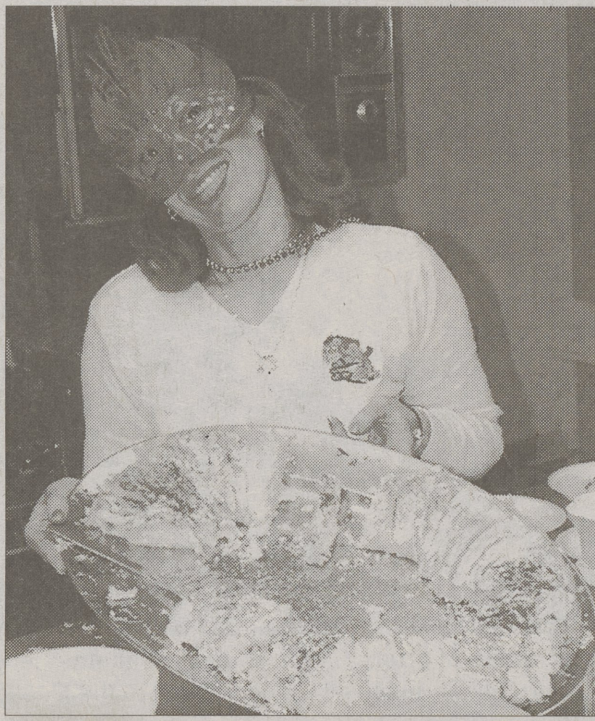
Scranton have non-credit courses available, but the cost is much higher and there's more commuting involved."

Dr. William Price, superintendent of the Lake-Lehman School District, said hectic schedules make it difficult for people to participate in continuing education programs. "People today are so busy that when they finally have a night free they are happy to stay at home," he said. "The thought of getting in the car and driving to the high school for a dance class or anything else is just not something most people would embrace."

Fun classes like wreath design or fly-tying, which were staples of traditional adult education programs, aren't the only ones which have been cut; for-credit courses aren't offered either. "Well, we used to sponsor the community college courses but they've sort of gone by the wayside," said Griffiths. "In some ways, it was lack of interest and in some ways, it was just that the offerings didn't really meet the needs of our community."

The Back Mountain's districts have adapted in recent years in order to provide opportunities more in line with the community's demands. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops now use school auditoriums for regular meetings and special ceremonies. Middle school parents gather in classrooms to discuss ways to save for their child's college education.

Their uses have changed but school buildings still serve an important role in their communities. "I think schools are still seen as a gathering place," said Griffiths. "It definitely depends on the district. At Dallas, most of our events revolve around athletics but the school is still a place where a large group of people can get together for activities they enjoy."



They rule

The Mardi Gras celebration held Sunday at St. Therese's Church drew over 100 people for good fun and food prior to the Lenten season. The event included a pot luck supper, a performance of "Jesters for Jesus," a parade of costumes and the election of a King and Queen. In photos, clockwise from top left: Joey DeGraba was the King and Melissa Sabor the Queen of Mardi Gras 2000; Rory Moran peered through her mask; Dawn Moran joked about a tray of food that must have been good, since it was half eaten.

POST PHOTOS/
CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Gasoline

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comparing test results."

John Wilkes Jr., the chairman of the supervisors, said he received a certified letter from Sun Pipeline Company which verifies its intention to reimburse the township for spill-related expenses as a followup to verbal agreements. "The Township has received a check from Sun Oil for total reimbursement of all bills submitted to date," Wilkes said.

Supervisors presented a review of the status of the American Asphalt zoning dispute. Michael Lando made it clear that "We are addressing the permit, zoning issue."

Before drawing any conclusions, Wilkes said they would be going over information with Solicitor Blythe Evans. "We are aggressively reviewing the case," he said. Ed Chesnovitch supported this plan of action, since "You have to take their (American Asphalt's) testimony with a grain of salt. We have a judge who won't make a decision, and you people are on the hot seat," he said.

A proposal to advertise for bids for Township towing services was presented by Lando. "The insurance company felt it was needed and was surprised this was not in place," he said. The details of the ad will be approved by the solicitor, since the supervisors want the towing firm to be certified for handling hazardous materials or able to subcontract that work.

Chesnovitch questioned the appointment of Joe Stager as an alternate to the planning commission, fearing a conflict of interest, since Stager works for Ruckno Construction. Because Stager's candidacy was not presented to the planning commission first, his appointment was tabled pending the outcome of the next planning commission meeting later this month.

Solicitor Evans announced that one building will be razed at township expense of \$15,000-\$20,000

as soon as it is certified to be free from asbestos. He also said "The Freedom of Information Act will make available all information from the DEP and the EPA reports from the Sun Oil Spill" in the near future.

Paul Dugan asked why the township's bills aren't open to citizens for inspection. Wilkes responded that "They are available for inspection with the secretary on the Friday and Monday before the township meeting."

In other business:

- Andrew Kasko explained Agility with PennDOT, Luzerne County and the Township trading-off services rendered, such as Township mowing of county roads. In exchange, the county is laying down pipe to catch storm water in Meadowcrest.

- Hardisky Road will be closed indefinitely due to a portion of the bridge collapsing. The township is working with the county to expedite repairs as soon as working conditions permit.

- Wilkes presented a long list of road repair and maintenance materials which will be put out for open bid. Sealed proposals will be opened at 1 p.m. on April 3 and presented at the supervisors meeting the same evening.

- Wilkes informed the group that he just received a letter from D.A.M.A. telling him that they will not allow any more hookups. "This will have an impact on new development and construction," he noted.

- The secretary was authorized to advertise for an engineering firm for the Community Development Grant.

- The ad for one police officer position is producing many applicants.

- John Krupa was authorized to attend a seminar on Statewide Building Codes, while Chief Jones and J. Leedock will attend a Law Enforcement program.



Tony VanScoy
Black Knights Soccer Forward
Lake Lehman High School

People are amazed—
not that I'm scoring goals—
that I'm walking at all.

Tony

"Last year, I was trying out for the state soccer team when I got a pins-and-needles feeling in my right foot. I saw a few doctors, but Mom had a feeling we should get another opinion.

She asked our next-door neighbor Dr. David Mariner—who's a vascular surgeon for Penn State Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center—to take a look at me. He said I had a rare condition that causes severe blood clotting—popliteal entrapment—which could have led to the amputation of both my legs. Tests at the hospital confirmed it. A team of specialists operated on both my legs and gave me radiology treatments to reduce the blood clots. People think scoring goals in soccer is something. But, in my opinion, the doctors at Penn State Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center are the real heroes."

Penn State Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center

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