

Long-time Dallas girls sports coach Moran steps down

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

DALLAS - Coaching girls soccer at Dallas High School convinced Ron Moran that he needed to get back into the classroom after 16 years as an administrator. But now the well-liked coach feels it's time to move on.



RON MORAN

"I've always felt as a coach you need to know when to get out of the way," Moran said last week. He is stepping down after 11 years at the helm of the soccer squad, and eight as varsity field hockey coach.

Moran had been a teacher for 10 years before he became director of special education in the Wyoming Valley West School district, a post he held for 16 years. Toward the end of his tenure in that post, he took the job as soccer coach. Working with the players led him to return to teaching special ed, which has done for the past 10 years.

His fondest memories don't involve wins and losses, although his teams achieved great success and made several appearances in the post-season. The job, he says, was its own reward.

"The biggest benefit is just being able to work with the young

people. It's good to see them come back and say I was helpful" he says.

Moran had little direct experience prior to taking the soccer coaching post. He did "a little" football coaching in Wellsboro, where he spent the first two years after graduating from Mansfield University, and coached youth soccer when his children were playing. But his timing at Dallas was excellent. "Girls soccer was starting to grow," he said of the late 1980's.

Three years after taking the soccer job, Robyn Jones left as coach of field hockey, and Moran was talked into guiding the team for a year until another coach could be found. But he enjoyed the fall sport and one year led to another until now.

Summer programs in preparation for the new season were all set up, and Moran's two assistants from last year, Nancy Shaw and Janelle Pall, have been working with the girls, so the teams shouldn't miss a beat.

While he may teach only another year or so, Moran isn't going to slow his frantic pace. "I'm not a retiring man," he says, "and my wife would tell you I'm not handy around the house."

Something new will be in the offing, although he's not sure just what. He's sure that it will involve people, and, "It won't be behind a desk."

Math

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Even though she doesn't spend much time in the classroom, Lockavich does live with the students in the dormitories. Dealing with the students is helping reinforce talents she'll use in her career. "It builds my skills in developing relationships," she said. She is excited to interact with the students, and one of her most difficult tasks in dealing with students is finding the balance between being an authority figure and a friend.

Patricia Kim, a pre-med student at Misericordia, and a graduate of Dallas High School, works as a teaching assistant and counselor. Kim uses her knowledge of psychology to understand the students and better relate to them. "Some kids were homesick at first. The ones from farther away felt out of place," she said. Like Lockavich, Kim enjoys her time with the students.

"I like working with younger people and sharing what I've learned," she said. Last year, Kim taught elementary school students.

Both Lockavich and Kim agree that the program will help the ninth and tenth grade students get a taste of college life. Some of the students, Kim said, are choosing between math and science as a career. "Kids are optimistic overall. They see how math and science work together. This is a good experience for them. It'll help prepare them," she said. "A program like this would have given me insight into what my future experiences would be."

"It probably would have moved me in the direction of the sciences," said Lockavich.

The program has a mix of activities in both math and science, including brief lectures, laboratory experiments, guest speakers, and a field trip to Cornell



Patricia Kim, far right, looks over the work of two students, Michele Karas, New York, left, and Margaret Smitka, Falls.

POST PHOTO/BILL GOODMAN

University. One of the most important parts of the program has students working in small groups on original research. "Industry blames us (in academe) for not preparing students for real life situations," said Shahin. "Working in groups teaches cooperation rather than competition." The students work in groups each night and present their results to parents and faculty members on the last day of the program. The students have also planned a talent show for the final day.

Shahin said the program is a remarkable experience for the participants. He has kept in touch with former students, and he tries to bring back several students for a reunion during the event each year. He said that parents have

responded favorably to the program as well.

Margaret Smitka, of Falls, was one of the local residents in the program. Her favorite part was the time she spent in the lab. "Once you find the right procedure, you can get an exact answer," she explained.

She became interested in attending after one of her math teachers showed her the brochure for the program. Smitka had to write an essay as well as get two letters of recommendation, one from a math teacher. Smitka also values the social aspects of the program. "It's a great experience to meet people and get their opinion of what the area is like." Students in the program this year came from surrounding states as

well as from Pennsylvania.

Despite cutbacks, and the intensive course work covered in a short time, Shahin, Lockavich and Kim are pleased with the program. "I'm happy to be able to draw national speakers to talk to the students," said Shahin. "People in the area should be proud that a national program is run in the Back Mountain."

"I think it's good to have the program at Misericordia," Kim said. "It's a great opportunity to have the funding for kids to get the college experience for a week."

"We've been getting lower and lower responses," said Lockavich. "That's sad because it's a great program. Everybody is here until 10 o'clock at night. There's a lot of dedication."

Bus costs

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The Lake-Lehman school board recently solicited bids for software to help the district collect and report this data more efficiently.

At Lake-Lehman, budgeted amounts have been rising over the past several years. The district spent \$1,275,492 in the 1998-1999, school year on transportation, and as of June 30 of this year has spent \$1,305,676. Lake-Lehman has budgeted \$1,609,278 for the upcoming school year.

Dallas, spent \$913,298 during the 1998-1999 school year, more than the \$875,000 budgeted. In 1999-2000, Dallas spent \$901,665 of the budgeted \$906,000. The district budgeted \$928,500 for the upcoming year. Costs for Dallas are in line with

"We need a little help."
Leon Emanuel
Dallas bus contractor

the budget, said Griffiths, but the higher gas prices have cost the district an additional \$6,000 this year. Dallas's contract with providers include provisions for increased fuel costs.

By state law, the school districts are responsible for transportation to public schools and private schools such as Wyoming Seminary, Bishop Hoban and Bishop O'Reilly.

Transportation providers for both school districts would not comment on how high prices have affected their business.



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