



United We Stand

Vol. 112, No. 50



# THE DALLAS POST

50 Cents

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



**SPORTS**

TL Wrestling Tournament this weekend at Miseri. Pg 11.



**SCHOOL**

Dallas High School French Club hosts cafe experience. Pg 15.



**COMMUNITY**

Rev. Reed celebrates 20 years at Emmanuel AOG. Pg 7.

## Lake-Lehman struggles with effect of tax challenges

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON  
Post Correspondent

**LEHMAN** - A large refund of property taxes announced at the latest Lake-Lehman school board meeting brought to the forefront a growing issue.

The district has been ordered to refund a tax overpayment of \$12,195 to Richard Maslow, who recently won an appeal for reduced assessment on a property in Lehman Township. Reduced tax assessments such as this are taking a big bite out of the school district's

pocket.

The district's main income — approximately two-thirds of it — comes from real estate taxes. "Our basic subsidy from the state is about \$5.8 million out of an \$18 million budget," said Robert Roberts, Lake-Lehman Superintendent of Schools. "The majority of school district funding comes through the property tax."

When large reductions in tax assessment are granted, it hurts the school district. "When people go and have their assessment reduced it automatically re-

*"The majority of school district funding comes through the property tax."*

**Robert Roberts**  
Superintendent of Schools

duces the amount of tax dollars the district receives," said Roberts. He went on to say the board solicitor is looking into

the Maslow reassessment.

Two other tax appeals were on the agenda for the last school board meeting. Peter Savage, solicitor for the Lake-Lehman board described the usual pattern these assessment reductions follow. "As these things wind through, the first avenue is the exception board. They make a determination and they have been, in my experience, fairly strict as far as reductions are concerned," he said. "But then the next step is abatement and that decision gets appealed. Then it ends up in front

of a judge."

This alarming increase in assessment reductions is affecting school districts throughout the county.

"Wilkes-Barre Area School District has been getting clobbered lately. I do mean clobbered, by some of the businesses," said Roberts, citing the Woodlands' reduced assessment. "Wilkes-Barre is in the toughest shape because they are in that KOZ (Keystone Opportunity Zone) zone," he added. "This

See LAKE-LEHMAN TAX, pg 10



POST PHOTO/JIM PHILLIPS

## Here comes Santa Claus

Gate of Heaven School students performed in the school's annual Christmas performances last Sunday. The kindergarten and first grade plays are a highlight of the season for faculty, parents and

friends. Playing elves above, from left, were Julian Maffei, Ryan Marshall, Matt Schaeufele and Christian Maculloch. More photos on page 3.

## Terror warnings bring changes for local police

By HEATHER B. JONES  
Post Correspondent

**BACK MOUNTAIN** - Terrorism in the Back Mountain? Many believe it just won't happen. But for local law enforcement, being alert to anything that may pass through the region is a top priority.

With an average of nearly 40,000 vehicles passing through Kingston Township each day, Police Chief James Balavage's officers are on alert for anything out of the ordinary.

At a time when the FBI regularly puts 18,000 law enforcement agencies on the highest

alert, Balavage believes it is even more important now for his officers to be a visual presence in the community. "We don't need to decrease traffic stops or person-to-person contacts, actually increase them," he said.

In the third alert issued by the government since September 11 Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge said that now is not the time to back off.

Since the attacks the Dallas Borough Police Department has made some changes in the way it does business.

Police Chief John Fowler said  
See POLICE RESPOND, pg 10

## Schools will be rewarded for high test performance

By HEATHER B. JONES  
Post Correspondent

**DALLAS** - Two schools in the Dallas School District are reaping the financial rewards of increased test scores on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment Tests.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the governor's office will award Dallas Elementary with a \$24,016 grant for an average increase of

95 points and Dallas High School with a \$58,968 grant for a 195 point increase in a base line year. Dr Gilbert Griffiths, superintendent, said this was the first time Dallas schools qualified for the incentive funds.

"What the Department of Education and the governor are going to do is they're going to set a baseline year. If you maintain those scores at or above, then

See DALLAS TESTS, pg 3

## Jackson Township picks planner, promises public hearings

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON  
Post Correspondent

**JACKSON TWP.** - G. and Albert Consultants of Pittston were awarded the contract for the new comprehensive plan for Jackson Township at the board of supervisors Dec. 3 meeting. The new plan will cost \$19,250 and is expected to take 12 months to complete.

The state requires that city comprehensive plans be updated every seven to 10 years, but this will be the first update in 22 years for Jackson Township.

The Jackson Township Planning Commission received proposals from three planners and met with each of them separately over the last few months to review their plan outlines. Each gave the planning commission a comprehensive plan

outline, according to community redevelopment requirements, said Al Fox, Jackson Township supervisor. The proposals outlined the number of persons each company employs, their qualifications, the cost of the proposed plan and the time frame in which they could have the plan completed.

G. and Albert Consultants' proposal was accepted by unanimous vote after re-

view at the Nov. 19 planning commission meeting, said Charles Repotski, chairman of the planning commission.

The recommendation was then passed to the board of supervisors, who voted to accept the planning commission's recommendation with specific amendments, including a survey form and a work ele-

See JACKSON PLAN, pg 15

## Dallas Rotarians play Santa Claus

By SANDY PEOPLES  
Post Correspondent

**BACK MOUNTAIN** - Last Saturday 25 children from the Back Mountain area were treated to food, fun, clothing and toys as the Dallas Rotary Club hosted their annual Shopping Spree for Children. For more than two decades, the Rotarians have raised funds each year to host a special day for children who are selected to participate in the event.

The day began at 8:30 a.m. at Wycallis Elementary School. The excited children and their parents or guardians met with members from the Rotary to discuss the needs and wants of the children. The children and the Rotarians proceeded to McDonald's in Shavertown for a complimentary breakfast for the little ones.

The next stop was The Bon Ton store in the Wyoming Valley Mall. The children and their chaperones combed the aisles for just the right colors and sizes of clothing. Each child was given a certain amount to spend and a generous discount from the store. They shopped for more

See ROTARY SANTAS, pg 15



POST PHOTO/ELIZABETH ANDERSON

Candie Watkins applies the last touches to Chelsea Andrews' makeup before the show begins.

## Quality of performance is no mystery

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON  
Post Correspondent

**LEHMAN** - Was it the butler in the parlor with a monkey wrench? Not this time.

The fun in last Friday evening's Lake-Lehman Theater Ensemble's production of "Murder's In The Heir" was the audience's ability to choose the murderer via ballot at intermission.

Based on the game Clue, this comedic whodunit by Billy St. John, has a few new twists. Rich Simon Starkweather has called all his heirs together at his isolated mansion to announce he is changing his will. The tyrannical billionaire is leaving his vast fortune to himself! His

See MURDER IN THE HEIR, pg 4

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