



THE DALLAS POST

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SPORTS

Dallas High soccer holds annual (cold) alumni game. Pg 9.



SCHOOL

Oktoberfest celebrated at Dallas Middle School. Pg 11.



COMMUNITY

Meadows Nursing Center honors volunteers. Pg 5.

Castle Inn sets holiday table for homeless

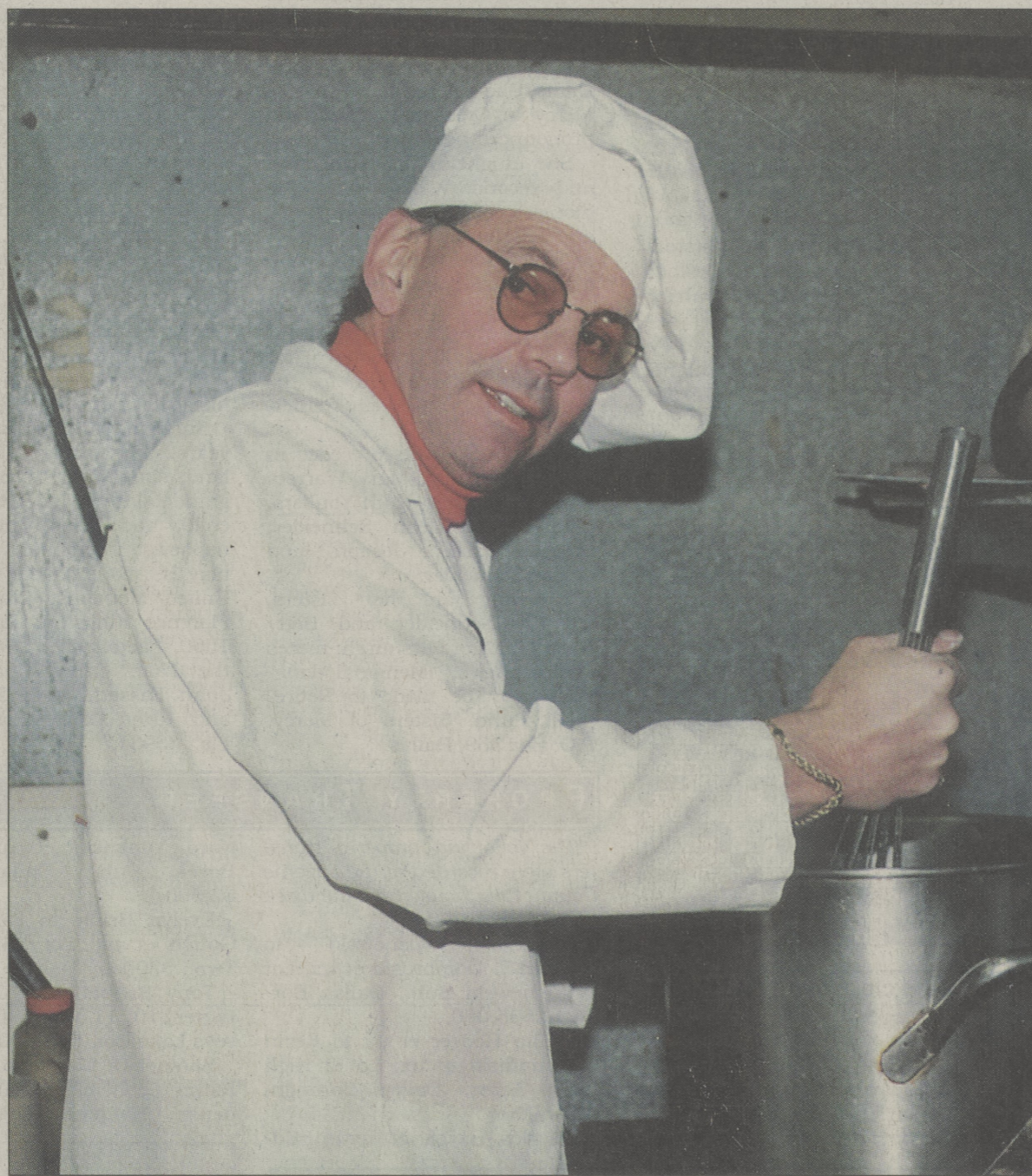
☐ Chef/owner responds to situation not seen in his native Iceland

By SANDY PEOPLES
Post Correspondent

DALLAS - "To me, it's like opening my house and welcoming my guests," said Valgardur "Omar" Hallsson, owner of the Castle Inn in Dallas. This was the 10th year he has provided dinner on Christmas Eve for more than 250 area people who are homeless. Hallsson served an elegant buffet meal consisting of ham, chicken, beef, salad, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, bread, beverages and dessert. Preparing a meal of this magnitude is no easy task.

"I have many helpers now," he said. In the beginning, Hallsson paid his staff to help with the dinner. "Now I have a lot of help from a lot of people. Pastor Stan Hamilton from Hands of Hope in Wilkes-Barre helps with the guest list. The Emanuel Bus Company provides the buses and drivers to bring the people out here from Wilkes-Barre. I do all of the cooking, and some wonderful people from the Harveys Lake and Dallas Lions Clubs, the Dallas Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club and others come together to help me serve and clean up."

Hallsson has a very special reason for opening his inn to the homeless on Christmas Eve. "Most of my guests are children," he said. "When I came to this area 10 years ago, I was crossing one of the bridges over the Susquehanna and saw people living under the bridge. There are no homeless in my native Iceland. I was shocked and couldn't believe what I was seeing. I have a roof over my head, and I'm lucky enough to be able to give something to people who need it. It's Christmas, and it's nice to see the



"I have a roof over my head, and I'm lucky enough to be able to give something to people who need it."

Omar Hallsson
Castle Inn

children smile."
"Year after year, Omar hosts this great function," said Pastor Hamilton. "He

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Omar Hallsson, owner and chef of the Castle Inn, was busy preparing the fare for the day, above. At left, Devin was so excited he could hardly eat. The children had just been told Santa was on his way.

POST PHOTOS/
SANDY PEOPLES

County targets school district, says solicitor

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN - Peter Savage, Lake-Lehman school board solicitor, said several municipalities had not been contacted by the Luzerne County Assessors Office, regarding the county's recent suggestion that the board and local municipalities bear the cost of hiring appraisers to handle property assessment appeals. The county has always taken that responsibility in the past.

Savage called the whole scheme "jaded" if it did not include all district municipalities. Reduced property tax assessments are becoming a troublesome predicament affecting school districts in the entire county.

Savage reported at last month's board meeting that the county had proposed, for the first time, the school district carry the majority of the cost burden of hiring a certified appraiser for testimony and appraisal purposes in future reassessment appeals, with local municipalities sharing a smaller portion. Deciding to further investigate the issue, Savage found several municipalities also received the letter from the county, but many had never been contacted.

See COUNTY TARGETS, pg 7

Band supporters ask school board for help

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN - Lake-Lehman High School Concert Band members and sponsors packed the room at the December 18 school board meeting, requesting the board help them find a way to continue to hold practices for important spring competitions.

Edward Richards, music director, informed the band the previous Tuesday that the Indoor Guard and Percussion would not be taking place in the 2001-2002 school year as he was stepping down from the responsibility because of personal concerns. Without a director, the students will be unable to practice and prepare for competitions in which they have done quite well in the past. Volunteer coaches cannot hold practices without the supervision of an employee of the school district due to liability issues.

The band and sponsors asked the board to create positions for a Director of Indoor Guard and a Director of Indoor Percussion and make two current volunteer coaches

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Land Trust notes progress, plans future

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

DALLAS - The North Branch Land Trust (NBLT) organization named Marlyne Lipfert the Volunteer of the Year at its annual potluck holiday dinner.

Nearly 70 members enjoyed dinner, speakers, and a presentation about the group's Noxen Railroad Station rehabilitation project when they met at Merrick Hall on the campus of College Misericordia.

"Selecting our group to volunteer with was a big decision for her," said executive director Linda Thoma of Lipfert, a retired Environmental Protection Agency employee. "Once she made the commitment she jumped right in and now I rely heavily on her. She has unending patience, spends countless hours in the office, and is wonderful at number crunching and creating and following protocol."

The Back Mountain Land Trust was started about eight years ago by five local residents who were concerned about the effect of urban sprawl

"One of our goals is to foster an understanding of how to develop property for sustainable growth."

Doug Ayers
President, North Branch Land Trust

and constant development without planning for the future. "Currently, 2 percent of Pennsylvania is being developed every five years," explained Doug Ayers, VMD, one of the original members and the president of the organization. "One of our goals is to foster an understanding of how to develop property for sustainable growth. We are working with individuals and municipalities to teach them how to develop in order to retain the beauty of Pa."

He shared an additional observation: In 30 years, at the current rate of development, the

See LAND TRUST, pg 8



POST PHOTO/M.B. GILLIGAN

Ginny Rivers and her husband Dick Rivers, a long-time member of the NBLT Board of Directors, visited with Doug Ayers, VMD, president of the organization.

Freshman class advisor Gail Meeker tells Santa what she wants for Christmas after Saturday's best-ever toy bingo fundraiser.



POST PHOTO/ELIZABETH ANDERSON

'Toy Bingo' is clever fundraiser for freshman class

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN - More than 100 children and their parents turned out to play bingo and win toys at the Lake-Lehman High School cafeteria on Saturday, a record-breaking number compared to years past.

The fifth annual fundraiser has become a Christmas tradition for the freshman class at Lake-Lehman High School. "This is one of my favorite fund raisers," said Gail Meeker, class advisor. "The freshman kids loved

it as much as the younger kids did."

The creative students magically transformed the cafeteria into a Christmas fairyland, complete with decorated tree and giant vendor-machine sized wrapped packages with bows. One group spent the night before the party baking up a storm for the accompanying bake sale. "They had a ton of fun last night," Meeker said. "In fact, I think that's why they were so dreary-eyed this morning. They were up too late baking, eating, and en-

joying each other's company."

Matt Morris stood in for Ole Saint Nick, while Kristen Summa, Savannah Coombs, Anne Sorchik and Kristen Noler played the jolly old fellow's elves. The kids sat on Santa's lap for pictures and whispered their heart's desire in his ear. Dancing diva dolls and dinosaurs topped Santa's request list from the girls and boys. Santa even called a bingo game or two.

The freshmen donated the toys won as prizes by the under-

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