

## Autism

(continued from page 1)

change was okay because it was in the Back Mountain, but to Wyoming Area is too far," said his mother. "I want him in Dallas or Lehman. They had the room last year (at Dallas), why don't they have it this year?"

"It's like they're taking turns with our kids, wherever they have space, they send them," said Walsh. "It would be hard on any kid to move to a different district every year, but especially those with special needs."

The Walshes rejected the recommendation to send their son every day from their home in Lake Township on an hour bus ride to the Wyoming Area School District. They say, however, other students that were part of Cody's class at Wycallis did go to Wyoming Area, and others went to Tunkhannock.

Art Pupa, the supervisor of the Luzerne Intermediate Unit (LIU) Autistic Support Classes disagreed. "Very rarely, if at all do we move children every year," said Pupa. "It would happen in very rare circumstances, or if a parent was dissatisfied." Pupa refused to comment on the Walshes' specific situation.

According to Pupa, six children from the Back Mountain are currently going to other districts. Lorraine Kotsull, Director of Special Education at Dallas, said her district alone has five



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Cody Walsh does work at his kitchen table. The Walshes kitchen table doubles as a classroom work station.

students going to other districts outside of the Back Mountain, while JoAnn Bierzewski, Supervisor of Special Education at Lake-Lehman, said her district has two plus Cody, who is at home.

The Walshes want one or both of the districts to provide a permanent location for the autistic kids in the Back Mountain and they believe there are enough students to fill a program. According to Pupa, Cody's recommended classroom at Wyoming Area is full this year with eight children. Cody's classroom last year at Dallas had seven. The Walshes think having educational stability closer to home would allow their son as well as others with autism in the area, to pursue the same opportunities other children do, such as the consistency of friendships.

However, both districts say that without a larger population of autistic children, they can't afford to operate a classroom, nor do they have the space. The children, therefore, are sent out to what Bob Roberts, Superintendent of Lake-Lehman School District, called satellite schools or classrooms in different districts operated by the LIU. The home district of the student then reimburses the LIU, which runs the programs.

Deanna Walsh thinks that's a misuse of resources.

"Lehman can spend \$2 million on a football field and lights, but not a classroom for our kids?" she asked rhetorically.

*"It's like they're taking turns with our kids, wherever they have space, they send them."*

Deanna Walsh  
Lake Township

Gil Griffiths, Superintendent at Dallas, said both Lake-Lehman and Dallas predominantly send their elementary age students to Tunkhannock. When the Dallas Middle School is complete next year, a classroom for autistic children is planned. Roberts said when construction at Lehman is done, there are two rooms set aside for special education that could be utilized for autistic classes.

The classroom at Dallas will function the same as those the students from the Back Mountain attend now — students from neighboring districts will make up the balance of available space.

The addition of the middle school room is not a permanent solution, however. Kotsull said classes are assessed on a year-to-year basis, therefore, next year the population might dictate the need for middle school space in this part of the county, but the following year the population could call for high school space, which Dallas may not have available.

## Cider Painters

(continued from page 1)

about 25 local members. The majority, however, live around the country.

Judging for the show took place November 2, when three local judges looked over nearly 350 submissions in nearly every medium imaginable including watercolor, oils, acrylic, gouche, and handcolored print-making. They presented 30 awards in categories that ranged from Best of Show, to the more specific such as architecture and watercolor.

"There are more and better works (this year); the quality

has improved. The international work is excellent," said Rogowski.

This year Peru, Australia and England are represented in the show.

The opening is Sunday, November 10 from 2 to 5 p.m. Many of the artists will be on hand to discuss their work. The exhibit will run from November 10 to December 29. The Waterlily Gallery is located at 103 East Overbrook Road in Shavertown. For more information call the gallery at 675-7778.



These entries came to Shavertown from Peru.



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Judge Judy Panek looks over miniature submissions with a magnifying glass.

## CHRISTMASLAND

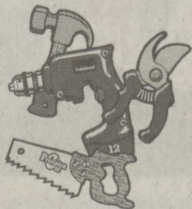
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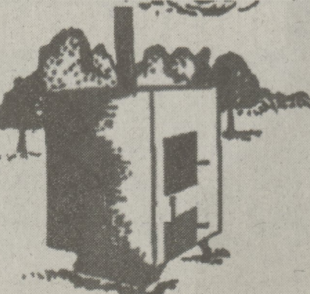


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