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SPORTS

Dallas, Lehman girls look for strong seasons. Pg 11.



SCHOOL

Dozens of local students win Penn State scholarships. Pg 15.



COMMUNITY

Legion picks costume winners. Pg 5.

Woman expected to testify against co-defendant

□ Tina Young gets outside lawyer to avoid conflict

By DAVID WEISS
Special to The Dallas Post

WILKES-BARRE — Tina Young will apparently testify against her boyfriend who, police say, shot and killed a Dallas High School student.

Young is charged with second-degree murder and Larry Tooley is charged with first- and second-degree murder in the Nov. 8 shooting death of Casey Zalenski inside his Demunds Road home in Franklin Township. Police said the two broke into Zalenski's home looking for money for drugs.

A preliminary hearing for the two is scheduled for Dec. 19 before District Justice James Tupper of Kingston Township.

Both suspects applied for and are eligible to be represented by public defenders. On Tuesday, public defenders William Ruzzo and Jonathan Blum asked that an attorney from outside the office represent Young because she made a statement to police and "is expected to testify against" Tooley.

If Young, 33, and Tooley, 46, were both represented by the Public Defender's Office, there is a possibility of a conflict, the attorneys wrote in court papers seeking the appointment.

Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas Judge Joseph Augello appointed attorney Michael Senape to represent Young. Senape could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

Police said Young, who had been friends with the Zalenskis and knew the family kept money at the home, gave police a detailed account of the burglary at the Zalenski home.

When she and Tooley arrived at the home, she checked to make sure no one was inside. Tooley, carrying a .38-caliber revolver and wearing gloves, went into the home to steal money for heroin, police said.

Young thought no one was home, but Zalenski and his younger brother missed

See TESTIFY, pg 3



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Tree topper

Alexe Rice, with a boost from her dad, Gary, topped off the tree entered in the Parade of Trees at Grotto Pizza by Gary's business, Rice's Food Equipment and Consulting. The annual event raises funds for charities from donations used as votes for the favorite out of 23 trees on display. More photos on page 4.

Districts satisfied with latest test scores

□ Federal requirements, though distant, will require perfection

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

Leaders of both Back Mountain school districts say they are content with this year's Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) scores. Even so, the challenges of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation passed last year leave no room for complacency.

In 2014, schools across the country will have to have 100 percent of their children up to proficient or above performance levels in math and reading. Districts in the Back Mountain are ahead of most districts in that regard, but still have a long way to go.

In 2001, the PSSA test introduced four performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic and below basic. Districts will have to bring all of their children to the top two tiers or face consequences that could include allowing their students to leave for other districts.

"Overall, I'm satisfied with our scores. I think we're making adequate progress," said Bob Roberts, Lake-Lehman Superintendent.

Although math and reading test scores are down this year at Lake-Lehman elementary and middle school levels, Roberts said over a five-year period his district's test scores have stayed about the same or increased a bit. This year Lehman-Jackson saw a -70 drop in their math score and a -60 drop in the reading score at Lake-Noxen. (PSSA guidelines direct administrators to disregard differences from year to year that are below 50 points as statistically insignificant.)

Lehman's proficiency scores in math at the elementary level place 51.7 percent of stu-

See TEST SCORES, pg 16

Visioning to hold public meeting

The Dallas Community Visioning exercise, Our Dallas: Today and Tomorrow will hold a public meeting Wednesday, December 11 at 7 p.m. in the Kennedy Lounge of the Banks Center on the campus of College Misericordia.

The purpose of the meeting is the announcement of the Vision Statement. The Vision Statement is the result of a series of public meetings and workshops that have been held over the past 12 months involving a SWOT Analysis-Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats analysis conducted by the steering committee and the work of four task forces formed from the results of a community survey that was completed in May of 2002.

The four Task Forces, have been gathering information on specific issues affecting the community and identifying possible solutions. They have held regular meetings during the last several months in an effort to crystallize the visioning mission statement. The four Task Force areas designed to improve the quality of life for Dallas area residents and businesses are Downtown Revitalization, Community Services, Traffic Issues and Master Planning.

All Back Mountain residents are urged to attend this public meeting to participate in envisioning the future of their community. It will provide citizens that have been unable to attend previous meetings an opportunity to get involved and for those individuals who have not yet joined a task force to join. There will be the opportunity to volunteer for any of the four Task Forces.

The meeting will include presentations by regional program facilitators and refreshments will be served. Any questions pertaining to the community visioning or the public meeting can be forwarded to the Dallas Borough administrative office 25 Main Street, Dallas, 18612, 675-1389.

Hillside Farms adapts to new business climate

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

TRUCKSVILLE — As local dairy farms dwindle in numbers, Will Conyngham, co-owner of Hillside Farms Dairy says dipped ice cream and the addition of wholesale milk distribution have been key to the longevity of his small, family owned business.

According to Conyngham, when Hillside Farms Dairy Store opened in the late 1970s, there were about 300 dairy farms in the state processing their own milk and selling it on site. He believes today there are about three dozen.

"There are a lot of dairy farmers that are just discontinuing because milk is selling at very low prices, both in the stores and at the farm level. Farmers are basically saying 'I'm not getting enough to cover my cost of production,'" said Conyngham.

About a year ago, while driving Route 118 in Lycoming County, Conyngham saw an opportunity. In the 45 minutes he was on the highway that leads to Valley Farms Dairy, he saw five milk-carrying tractor trailers coming from the general area of Luzerne County heading toward the large milk processing plant. "And I

thought, 'there is an example of how much market share that company is getting out of here (Luzerne County),' " he said.

According to Conyngham, most of the milk in the area either comes from out of the county, or out of the state. "There is so much milk coming into the county from out

of the area, there's two of us little guys (The other is Precora Brothers in Drums) that are even operating and I'm saying, is there room for me to have a larger chunk of that market? I've got to believe there is," said Conyngham.

Consequently, Conyngham said Hillside decided to enter into a marketing relationship with Northeast Dairy Distributors, for the wholesale distribution of fluid milk products. He said when they did, the demand for the product was so great, it quickly exceeded the amount Hillside Farms Dairy could produce.

Constrained by cost and space issues, Conyngham said, rather than expand their own dairy farm to satisfy demand, they decided to "go off farm" to buy milk from other local farmers. Subsequently, Hillside has



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Will Conyngham held a Hillside Dairy milk bottle from 1921 in his right hand, and a modern one in his left.

See HILLSIDE, pg 7

INDEX

20 Pages, 2 Sections
 Calendar.....20
 Classified.....17-19
 Crossword.....12
 Editorials.....6
 Obituaries.....2
 School.....14-15
 Sports.....11-13

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