

2002 - A review in words and photos

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Estates Water Company and use it to supply his proposed Windsor Farms subdivision.

June 20 — The Lake-Lehman School Board rejected a state fact-finder's recommendation for a contract settlement, sending the board and teachers' union back to the bargaining table. The teachers accepted the plan.

Lehman Township residents pleaded with the supervisors for relief from the traffic, dust and noise generated by activity at Pikes Creek Asphalt and Crushed Stone.

Ann Lynn Mizenko, Dallas, was presented with The Pinnacle Award at commencement exercises for Fairleigh Dickinson University.

June 27 — Rev. Rudolph Libeck "retired" after 11 years as pastor at Huntsville United Methodist Church. But the 87-year-old wasn't done yet; he accepted an assignment at the Askam United Methodist Church, near Nanticoke.

The North Branch Land Trust added a Land Protection Specialist, Josh Longmore, funded by a grant from the William Penn Foundation. He will help the organization create protection plans for land of natural or historic value, primarily in Luzerne, Wyoming and Susquehanna counties.

July 4 — Dallas School District taxes will rise 4 mills, half the amount first estimated, with the new budget. Lake-Lehman will not have a tax increase this year, despite a 26 percent increase in health insurance premiums.

The Jackson Township Police Department and other local organizations held the first Safe Kids Day, where children and their parents learned how to stay safe at home and in the car. McGruff the Crime Dog and the crash dummies Vince and Larry were special guests.

Mary Erwine was named the 2002 Athena Award recipient by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry.

July 11 — Three youths were taken by helicopter to area hospitals after a two-car collision at the intersection of Route 118 and Market Street in Lehman Township. Police Chief Howard Kocher said the accident was yet another reason to install a traffic light at the busy intersection.

What a difference! After trying for weeks to get National Utilities to fix the water leak in her yard, Cathy Burgess was delighted when a new company took over and promptly found a crack in a water line. NUI was forced out of business due to poor service.

Jackson Township supervisors were irate that public funds would be used to clean up a 20,000 waste tire pile in the township. While it was state money that was involved, the principle raised their ire.

July 18 — Local government officials worried that they might not receive payment of franchise fees from the Adelphia cable television company, which had declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The Harveys Lake Borough Council vowed to take action against property owners who pipe storm water runoff into the sanitary sewer system. A member of the Harveys Lake Protective Association said he could show council members film of human waste spilled onto Lakeside Drive in storms.

"City kids" were enjoying a stay in the country with their Fresh Air Fund families. Six Back Mountain families are acting as hosts.

July 25 — The president of Haines and Kibblehouse, parent company of Pikes Creek Asphalt and Crushed Stone, flew into Lehman Township to host a walking tour of the facilities and to insure worried residents that his company would work hard to minimize dust, noise and blasting. But neighbors of the plant remained skeptical.

The concession stand at the Back Mountain Baseball Little League field was broken into for the fourth time in a year. A security system was not activated at the time of the thefts.

August 1 — The Lake-Lehman School Board decided to stick with a busing and transfer plan that would send about 70 elementary students to new schools in the fall. The changes came about with the expansion of Ross Elementary and a dual busing plan that separates elementary students from older children.

The Dallas School District will



August 15 - Last dance, anyone? Eddie Day invited Becky Aben onstage at what was billed as the last dance at Hanson's Ballroom at Harveys Lake.

use an extra \$52,000 of state support to purchase textbooks and instructional support. The increased funding was announced after the new budget was completed, and will have no impact on the \$22.6 million budget.

August 8 — A week after voting to solicit bids for construction of a new press box at the football field, the Lake-Lehman School Board reversed course and decided to treat the \$49,000 project as a change order to the construction project.

Sean Robbins was the top local finisher in the 21st Wilkes-Barre Triathlon, which attracted 500 competitors in amateur and professional categories. Robbins is aiming to compete in the Hawaii Ironman Triathlon this year.

Could it be? After 22 years, the zoning dispute between Jackson Township and American Asphalt appeared to be headed for a conclusion. It won't happen soon enough for Jim Canon, who lives along Chase Road and says blasting activity at the quarry has been keeping him up nights for weeks.

August 15 — It was billed as the Last Dance at Hanson's Ballroom, and about 600 people made sure to be there. The venerable entertainment venue may have hosted its last event, as veterans of Eddie Day and the Starfires joined Which Doctor? for a rocking good time.

The Dallas School Board voted to withhold payment to managers and contractors on the middle school project, saying delays had become unbearable. The swimming pool, which was to be completed and filled this month, is now slated for completion in late September.

August 22 — Perhaps it didn't look like it, but Lake-Lehman High School would open on schedule and the athletic fields will be ready, too. There's still work to be done, though, and students and faculty will have to work around it.

It wasn't a lot of money, but on principle the Lehman Township supervisors decided to refuse to pay two bills of \$8 each sent by the Luzerne County Board of Assessors, which wants to split the cost of property reassessments with the township.

August 29 — Dallas Fire and Ambulance Association celebrated its 75th anniversary with a parade and an open house at the fire hall. It is an all-volunteer organization.

County officials said they had received several reports of dead crows and other birds found in the Back Mountain. So far, no

evidence of the West Nile Virus has been indicated here, though.

Michael Gokay stepped into the job as principal at Lake-Lehman High School, replacing John Oliver, who retired. His background in the construction industry could prove handy.

September 5 — A local wood-working firm restored the wooden portions of a reproduction Liberty Bell that stands in front of the Treasury Department building in Washington D.C. It was to the site of a speech by President Bush on the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks.

With more than \$500,000 in grant money lined up, supporters of the Back Mountain Trail were ready to begin work on two new sections that would extend from Carverton Road to the New Mart on Route 309. All that's needed are easements from property owners along the way.

September 12 — One year later, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 cast shadows that reached the Back Mountain. Local police and school officials described new security measures prompted by

the attacks, and Dave Townsend, who works at the American Stock Exchange in New York, said he now travels back to Dallas to visit his family more often.

It's over! The Lake-Lehman teachers were expected to sign off on a new contract that passed by a 5-4 vote of the school board. The agreement, recommended by a fact-finder, is the same one the board rejected in June.

Dallas Borough officials look at the center of town and envision a "downtown village," and help to make it a reality could come from state grants — if other towns in the Back Mountain agree that Dallas is a hub of activity.

September 19 — Lehman Township supervisors fended off rumors the township's police department was being eliminated. The township had asked Police Chief Howard Kocher to look at scheduling changes that would help close an anticipated budget gap.

Bears were more common this year, Dallas Township Police

Chief Bob Jolley told the supervisors. He suggested that residents bring bird feeders in at night and add a cup of ammonia to trash cans that contain food.

Art Thompson of Harveys Lake was presented with the Herm Shiplett Volunteer Award by Wyoming Valley Habitat for Humanity.

September 26 — First it wasn't, then it was. Test results on a crow found dead in Lehman in August showed that it was infected with West Nile Virus.

The party was for Jacob and Joelle Serafin, but the gifts went to an organization that fights autism. Those attending were asked to make donations in lieu of gifts.

The Kingston Township Police Department began a program to give out gun locks to families who want to prevent tragic accidents. Denise Swida was one of the first recipients.

October 3 — Members of the Friends of the Back Mountain Memorial Library gathered to honor Shirley Forney, who was stepping down after 15 years as chairperson.

Yes, he was coming back. Dallas School District officials said James McGovern, who was first hired as assistant high school principal for the 2000-2001 school year, would return. He had left Dallas to take the post of high school principal at Crestwood, but was leaving there due to an unstable administration.

Youths continue to ride skateboards in Dallas Borough despite a ban on the activity, but would really like to have a legal skate park. Josh Reese and his friends were collecting petitions to present to the borough.

October 10 — The Lehigh Haunted Barn was ready to open for its 20th season of frights. The annual destination has raised thousands of dollars for charity.

After being postponed again, a hearing on the 20-year zoning dispute between American Asphalt and Jackson Township was scheduled for December.

Critters of all descriptions arrived at St. Therese's Church in Shavertown for the annual blessing of the animals. Sasha and Cuddles, cats in the Belskis household, waited patiently for their turn.

October 17 — Peeved at delays in the middle school construction project, the Dallas School Board rescinded the appointment of Foreman Burkavage as architects and engineers for the upcoming high school renovations. Board members also voted to withhold \$28,000 in fee payments.

Jered Weinstock's project for History Day reached far beyond the Back Mountain. The Dallas High School sophomore investigated the life of the "Pedro Pans," Cuban children who had been sent by their parents to the U.S. in the early 1960s to escape Fidel Castro's communist regime.

Members of the Lake-Noxen Elementary PTO were deep into plans to replace the school's aging playground. They estimated it would cost \$60,000 to install a new, safe play area.

October 24 — Lake-Lehman teams christened the brand-new athletic field lights with two victories. The soccer team beat Dallas Friday night in the first official game held at night, and the football team walloped GAR 46-0 on Saturday.

Fed up with uncontrolled runoff from lots in The Pines development, Lehman Township supervisors threatened to seize the land and sell it if Lifestyle Builders didn't fix the problem.

The "Our Dallas - Today a



October 3 - Amy Lynn Hartman was named Homecoming Queen at Dallas High School, and her mom, Donna, was quick with a hug.