

# THE DALLAS POST

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



### SPORTS

Youth basketball champions settled. Pg 9.



### SCHOOL

Eric Danko knows his way around. Pg 11.



### CALENDAR

Back Mountain dancers in 'Cinderella.' Pg 16.

## School board postpones realignment of elementary schools

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

**DALLAS TWP.** — Citing the need to gather more information before making a decision, school directors Monday said there will be no realignment of the district's elementary schools next year. "There is so much to be considered in regards to this and we feel the parents and the teachers must be heard," said Ernest Ashbridge Jr., school board

president. The change of heart came on the heels of the recent elementary task force recommendation in favor of a realignment that, if approved, would place Kindergarten through third grade at Dallas Elementary and grades four and five at Wycal-

*"We want to get all the information we can, so we can make a proper decision."*

**Frank Natitus**  
Dallas school director

lis. Criticism about how the investigation of the question was handled surfaced at the last few meetings. Among other

things, parents said they wanted to be involved in the process.

Demetrius Fannick, parent of a Wycallis student, asked the board how it intended to gather the in-

formation. "Hopefully over the next month we're going to propose a new policy where a new task force can be established," said Frank Natitus, board member. "We want to get all the information we can, so we can make a proper decision."

Natitus questioned the accuracy of information provided by Dr. Michael Speziale, the assistant superintendent, and published in The Dallas Post March 6. The information stated classroom

See SCHOOLS, pg 7



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

### 'Pippin' at Lake-Lehman

The Lake-Lehman Theater will produce the popular musical this weekend. Performances are scheduled for Friday, March 14 and Saturday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, March 16 at 3 p.m. in the high school auditorium. Reserved seat tickets are available at the door or in advance at a cost of \$6 for adults and \$4 for students. More details on page 3. Playing principal roles are Phillip Pineno, left, as Pippin, and Austin Williams as the Leading Player.

## ENCON employees face uncertain future

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

**DALLAS TWP.** — One employee of Energy Converters Inc. (ENCON) says when the plant closes at the end of the month, he and many others will lose much more than their jobs.

Michael Kurtinitis, who has worked as a maintenance mechanic at ENCON for the past three years, said he's worked at other places, but none have compared to his experience at the Back Mountain plant.

"After you punch in it's like a community in there, the majority have been there for 15 years or more. It's like a second family," said Kurtinitis.

Kurtinitis is like many ENCON

*"Being there 19 years, I've seen people give up their vacation time for those who are sick."*

**Bernie Lambert**  
ENCON employee

employees who gathered recently to share stories of years of work and friendship inside and out of the plant that manufactures heating elements. The

See ENCON, pg 7

## Chamber officials say area must choose a direction

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

As the area endures the loss of jobs, officials at the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry say regional indecisiveness and infrastructure issues are stifling business growth in the Back Mountain.

"There are some limiting factors for future business development," said Fred Lohman, Chamber Senior Vice President. "I don't know if they (the Back Mountain) know what they want to be.

They traditionally have been a bedroom community."

Lohman said if the area wants further business development, including either a business or industrial park, significant infrastructure issues need to be addressed.

He said both water supply and transportation issues need to be looked into before the area can be considered something more than a bedroom community.

Lohman specifically cited the

See CHAMBER, pg 7

## Louis Brown still going, but 'not as strong' at 99

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK  
Post Correspondent

**LEHMAN TWP.** — The floral deliveries keep coming, beautiful roses, tulips from Cathi and Rusty Flack, Mrs. Evelyn Ide comes to visit. Louise Brown smiles and wonders how people seem to remember her 99th birthday.

"Most of my friends are dead but the children still come over. I try to encourage people to come back again. Tell everyone I'm still going in Lehman but not as strong."

She revels quietly in the attention but seems to understand that she has become an institution in the Back Mountain community she loves.

Louise Brown was born in 1904 in Muskegon, Michigan, the granddaughter of an emancipated slave from Kentucky. Her family sent her to Philadelphia, to a summer school for playground workers, and there she met Leroy "Lee" Brown from Wilkes-Barre. "We meet on the first of August and were married December 10th; I don't know how it happened because he

See BROWN, pg 3



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Louise Brown attended service Sunday at Prince of Peace Episcopal Church in Dallas, where she has been a member for 60 years. Brown, who is well-known for her craft work, turned 99 on March 8.

## School board reconsiders boycott of Sunoco station

By KALEN CHURCHER  
Special to The Dallas Post

**LEHMAN TWP.** — One month after the Lake-Lehman School Board voted to not patronize the Sunoco gas station on Route 118 near the center of town, it reversed its decision Tuesday night.

Members voted during a February meeting in favor of the boycott after Joseph Kapitula questioned why the district frequents a business that does not pay taxes. An underground storage tank leak allowed the property's assessment to drop to virtually zero, absolving the owners from a tax bill.

The official vote to change the decision is likely to come at the March 18 regular meeting. It could not be taken Tuesday because the meeting was a work session.

Ann Marie and Robert Jones, owners of the station, said it was unfair to punish them because they do not own the land; it is leased from George Maculloch. According to Times Leader records, Maculloch argued suc-

cessfully to have the property assessment dropped from \$8,900 to \$1 in 1996.

Member Charles Balavage questioned how someone can accept rent for a property yet pay no taxes. Solicitor Charles Coslett said a letter will be sent to the Luzerne County assessor stating that because the land is an "income producing property" it should not be exempt from taxes.

In other business, several high school seniors appeared before the board to express their disapproval of the district planning for an indoor graduation ceremony. The district decided to move graduation indoors because artificial turf on the new multi-purpose field would be ruined if walked on by individuals in high heels.

Superintendent Robert Roberts said if senior class officers could assure the board that only flat shoes would be worn, it would likely opt for an outdoor ceremony.

This article appeared in original form in the Times Leader.

### Visioning meeting tonight

The March meeting of the "Our Dallas - Today and Tomorrow" visioning committee will be held Thursday, March 13 at 7 p.m. in the Banks Student Center at College Misericordia. The agenda is expected to include a virtual look at downtown Dallas.

### INDEX

- 16 Pages, 2 Sections
- Calendar.....16
- Classified.....12-15
- Crossword.....10
- Editorials.....6
- Obituaries.....2
- School.....11
- Sports.....9-10

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