

# LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL BOARD Renovation add-on questioned

By KALEN CHURCHER  
For The Post

**LEHMAN TWP.** — School Board members debated October 14 how far they can dig into School District coffers to fund additional construction projects.

In a report to the board, district architect Doug Trumbower presented a sound- and light-booth plan, estimated to cost about \$15,000. The booth would provide a secure location in the auditorium to store expensive equipment and a safer area from which students could work.

The plans sat well with member Sheila Gionfriddo, who sought to get the item placed on next week's agenda. Not everyone shared her enthusiasm.

"You can't keep going to the pocket when there's nothing there," said member Charles Balavage. "We have a cost-containment committee. Are you going to talk about this in the cost-containment committee?"

Angelo DeCesaris reminded fellow board members they were never advised they could not afford to take on particular construction projects — not the junior-senior high school, elementary school renovations or the district's new athletic complex.

"I really don't think it's fair (to the students)," Gionfriddo said regarding not moving forward on the auditorium addition.

"It's not fair to hit the taxpayers either," member Lois Kopcha quipped.

Trumbower did manage to present some good news. It is likely Manville Roofing will provide some reimbursement to the School District for problems with part of the junior-senior high school roof.

Small holes found in the rubberized roof could stretch in the future, causing major roofing problems and leaks. The roof should be covered under its 20-year material warranty.

Trumbower estimated immediate roof costs associated with tightening up problems to cost more than \$37,000. Preventative costs for the future could climb to \$39,000.

The next regular Lake-Lehman School Board meeting will be 7 p.m. Tuesday in the music room of the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School.



## Business group gets updates

The October meeting of the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association featured presentations by three community groups working to add amenities to the region. Representatives from the Back Mountain Trail, Back Mountain Recreation and Dallas Visioning outlined recent activities. BMBPA supports those organizations financially, and many members volunteer time with them.

In photo, Judy Rimple, Anthracite Scenic Trail Association, described how the trail has recovered from damage caused by the summer's heavy rains, and plans to bring it into Dallas. Seated behind her were Lynn Banta, BMBPA president; Joe Moskovitz, Dallas Borough Manager; and Brian Grove, Back Mountain Recreation Inc. BMBPA meets the second Thursday of each month. For information, call 675-9380.

## Students in hazing will be charged

By KALEN CHURCHER  
For The Post

**LEHMAN TWP.** — The same day simple assault charges were filed against four Lake-Lehman football players accused of hazing a teammate, the School District finalized its own punishments for the juveniles.

Luzerne County District Attorney David Lupas petitioned the four players to juvenile court Wednesday afternoon. That evening, School Board members met for what was scheduled to be an open expulsion hearing for junior Ryan Arcangeli.

After 90 minutes of closed-door negotiations, officials announced the Arcangelis opted out of the hearing and settled with the School District.

Lake-Lehman solicitor Charles Coslett and Arcangeli's attorney Patrick Rogan, would not release punishment details, citing state and federal laws.

A group of people — including some members of Arcangeli's family — were heard after the hearing saying the punishment was basically the same as what had been offered earlier, including expulsion.

The previous punishment,

which has been accepted by the other three players, includes expulsion through the end of the second marking period (sometime in January), counseling, community service and no extracurricular activities for the school year.

Numerous sources have identified seniors Chad Derhammer, Josh Cragle and Brandon Wren as the other students involved in the alleged hazing on Sept. 24.

The players are accused of taping sophomore Adam Harris, 15, to a wheeled chair, rubbing Icy Hot balm on his head and face, and shoving the chair across a hallway and into an adjacent gymnasium. When the students let go of the chair, it hit the door threshold and Harris fell face-first to the floor. He suffered a fractured jaw and other injuries.

"Anyone who would think these kids would maliciously hurt anyone is an idiot," said Ryan's sister, Maria. "We feel he was unfairly punished and we want him back in school."

Maria Arcangeli was one of many people at the meeting toting "We love Ryan" signs and wearing "The School Board went overboard" stickers. Nearly 200 people filled

the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School for the hearing. Some taunted the School Board by shouting "I'm a registered voter" and "November's coming" as the board entered the room.

Though agreements have been signed with the other three players, Coslett said students might still petition against the punishment. However, he is hopeful the School District can move on to preventing similar incidents from happening again.

"I believe the matter has been fairly resolved," Coslett said after the hearing. He stressed no students were forced into signing the initial agreement and any or all of them could have opted for a hearing.

Juvenile hearings for the four students will be held before Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas Judge Mark Ciavarella.

"Incidents that result in injuries to students cannot be tolerated," Lupas said in a release. "All students should be able to feel safe in their schools, and parents should not have to worry about the safety of their children when those children are in school."

## DALLAS SCHOOL BOARD

# Bond refinancing saves \$\$

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

**DALLAS TWP.** — Money saved, spent and not yet arrived was the dominating theme of the October 13 Dallas School Board meeting.

The board paid out nearly \$200,000 to contractors, refinanced bonds that will help save the district over \$1 million and explained that although no funds had yet come from the state, the district was expected to make it through until a state budget is passed.

The board voted to refund 1998 bonds that will save the district \$187,962. Raymond Lowery, Managing Director of PNC Capital Markets, explained that when the amount is added to two other refundings done earlier in the year, the district has generated total savings of \$1,157,931.

"You truly have been good stewards of the taxpayers' money," said Lowery. "The three refundings have saved the taxpayers by lowering the debt service. The board, superintendent and business manager really should be recognized."

The savings is some good news at a time when the state has not yet passed a budget and the district has not received the annual \$14 million it usually gets to operate.

Board President Ernie Ash-

bridge Jr. said while some districts are looking into such drastic measures as "shutting down," Dallas has enough money in reserve to make it through the state's budget crisis.

Ashbridge said, however, that although the district can cover the temporary shortfall, the fact that Dallas has not received the \$14 million means the district won't gain as much on its investments.

"Normally we would have gotten the money in August or September and would have started investing it (immediately)," said Ashbridge.

In other business:

- The board approved a 48-month contract with Hewlett Packard Financial for server and security upgrades to the district's eight computer servers. The cost of the contract is \$64,790, a two-thirds increase, said Gil Griffiths, Superintendent. The changes were made in response to a situation last spring in which someone hacked into the district's computer system and caused \$9,000 worth of damage.

- The board paid out \$182,170 to contractors for work completed at the middle school; \$86,000 went to Krueger International, \$92,403 went to J.P. Lilley and \$89,766 went to G.R. Noto Electrical.

## New board members certain

By MARK GUYDISH  
For The Dallas Post

**DALLAS TWP.** — With five seats and six candidates, the Dallas School Board election may barely look like a race, but it signals big change.

Three incumbents — Ernest Ashbridge, Thomas Russ and John Litz — were bumped off the ballot in the May Primary. Two others — Deborah Morgantini and James Richardson — won nominations but were among the lower vote-getters.

Bruce Goeringer, a dentist, received the most votes on the Republican and Democratic tickets, and seems assured a victory in November. Goeringer wants to open School District buildings to outside groups, include the public more in decision-making and push to hire local people when they are qualified.

Russ Bigus and Gary Mathers also nabbed high vote tallies in both parties. Bigus, a Catholic school principal, stresses the need for the School Board to work as a team, to make sure the School District keeps up with rapid changes in curriculum and state standards, and to balance fair taxation with school needs.

Mathers, a lifelong Dallas-area resident and former

School District teacher, wants more options for average students. "I think the academics for the advanced students are out of this world. I would like to bring offerings for the other students to the same level."

Morgantini, a Wyoming Valley West School District principal, also won nominations in both parties. She ran with the other incumbents, including Richardson, all standing on their records of building renovations coupled with fiscal restraint that built a large cash reserve and high student achievement.

The real race may be between Richardson, running on that record, and Dennis Gochoel. Richardson nabbed a spot on the Republican ticket but failed on the Democratic side. Gochoel did the opposite. In total vote tallies for both parties from May, Richardson outdid Gochoel 1,385 to 1,220.

While Richardson can stand on his record, Bigus, a Catholic school principal, stresses the need for the School Board to work as a team, to make sure the School District keeps up with rapid changes in curriculum and state standards, and to balance fair taxation with school needs.

Mathers, a lifelong Dallas-area resident and former

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