

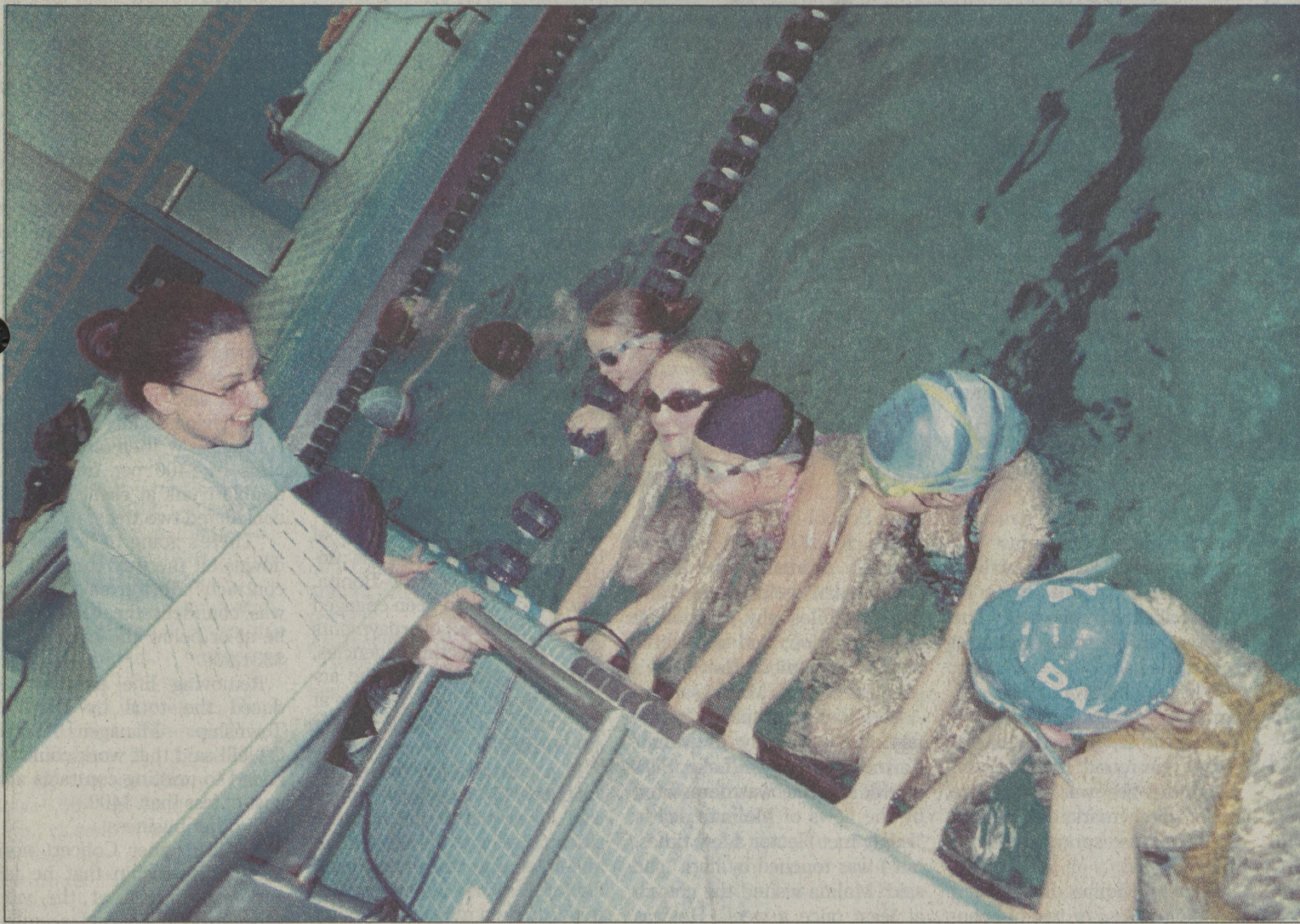
Rivalry week in Lake-Lehman and Dallas basketball. Page 7



THE POST

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



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Cara Devine, a coach with the Dallas Mini-Mounts age-group swimming team, chatted with a few swimmers during a recent practice. From left: Abby Berger, Michelle Thompson, Wendy Greenwood, Lucy Reilly and Regan Rome. The team has attracted 65 swimmers — more than double its prediction — in the first year.

Committee works to grow local business

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN — In an effort to combat a decline in local businesses, the Back Mountain Business and Professional Association (BMBPA) has created an economic development committee.

At its first meeting January 12, the group hammered out a mission statement and three-step plan for facilitating and encouraging business growth in the area.

Lynn Banta, owner of Twin Stacks Center and a founding member of the committee, said the nine-person council aims to fill the area's abundance of empty business spaces.

The council is made up of BMBPA members including College Misericordia President, Michael MacDowell, Attorney Bernard Walter, realtors Nancy Eckert and Carl Goring, Jr. Other community and business leaders, not necessarily BMBPA members, will be invited to join the effort.

"The BMBPA has recognized the need to pay attention to economic development in the Back Mountain. You see stores boarded up — our feeling is that's not where we want to be," said Banta.

According to the mission statement, the committee looks to attract and support businesses that will be consistent with the Back Mountain's character.

The group has focused on three initial goals: to catalog available business space in the region and place the infor-

See BUSINESS, pg 3

Warm pool is a hot ticket for Dallas kids

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — The opening of the Dallas School District's Natatorium (the Dallas Middle School pool) came and went quietly last year. But the splashing, healthful exuberance coming from the pool day and night now can be heard all over the Back Mountain.

Ealish Ellis, age 7, from Harveys Lake swims three times a week as part of an age-based swim team that competes with eight other teams in the NEPA Age Group Swim Conference (AGSC).

"I like the backstroke best. I could sort of swim before but I don't think I could swim in the deep end," she says.

The Dallas Mini-Mounts host-

Dallas Natatorium

at the Dallas Middle School

Public swimming Wednesdays and Fridays 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Sundays 2-5 p.m., except if meets are being held

ed its second league competition at the pool January 12.

"It was a dream to develop an age-based group swim program for young kids," said Matt Stretanski, Dallas High School swim coach and pool manager. "When Dr. Griffiths hired me as pool manager, one of the responsibilities was to develop a community based swim program — an after hours program — at this pool."

The pool is in use every day by students, and is open for public swimming 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays. Open swims on Sundays are 2 to 5 p.m. unless there is a meet.

"Selfishly, I hoped it would become a feeder program for the high school team," Stretanski said. He noted that successful high school swim programs have feeder programs. That luxury was unavailable in Dallas simply because there was no pool until this year.

From a parent's point of view, the pool and team program is just the ticket. "We would travel sometimes three or four times a week, maybe more, to pools in the Wilkes-Barre area to practice or compete," said Kathy Berger, co-president with Ken Greenwood of the newly-formed team.

Amanda Thompson, a Dallas Middle School student, remembers the long drives in the car to Wilkes-Barre as well. "I was so bored in the car."

More importantly, the parents are learning together and forming a great team. "It's a very upbeat and exciting," said Berger.

To maintain and organize a program like this requires 30 to 40 involved parents at the meets, and Stretanski is ecstatic at the parental support. "The parents are wonderful. I couldn't do this alone, I really just organized them, told them what needed to be done, and they did the rest."

The children get the benefit from all the adult activity.

"The kids don't have to worry about winning, they should en-

See POOL, pg 3

District will fast track alarm repairs

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — The Dallas School District will begin soliciting bids for repairs to the high school's fire alarm system immediately, said school board president Dave Usavage last week.

Usavage said after an executive session January 12, the board decided to repair the system, rather than replace it. The decision freed the district from having to conduct a formal bid process that could have lasted six weeks or more.

Usavage said the district's upcoming high school renovation weighed heavily in the board's decision to pursue repairs instead of replacement.

"If there's going to be a construction project at the high school, you don't want to have to take it (the new system) all out," he said.

Building and grounds supervisor Mark Kraynack will solicit the bids by phone and present the information to members of the administration and board in two weeks, said Usavage.

New plan to get last airing

Cluster housing and wetlands protection included

By VICKI KEIPER
Post Correspondent

JACKSON TWP. — The Jackson Township Planning Commission will hold a public review of its comprehensive plan on Tuesday, Jan. 20, at 7:30 p.m. at the township building.

The public is encouraged to attend, said Planning Commission Chairman Charles Repotski. Although this is the final of three hearings before the commission approves the plan, changes could be made depending upon input from residents.

"The purpose of the hearing is to receive public opinion," Repotski said. "So we can get it right."

Repotski said that the largest change to the existing plan involves possibly allowing for cluster housing — houses built close together on a piece of land surrounded by open spaces.

For example, instead of splitting a 20-acre lot into 10 two-acre homesites, a developer could build 10 houses on half the area while leaving the remaining half empty. Wetland and historical areas qualify as open spaces.

This form of development would allow more trees and grasslands to remain undisturbed instead of chopped or mowed down, Repotski said. "It's in line with what we want to do. It would help to protect the integrity of the land while allowing development."

One of the other changes in the plan See PLAN, pg 2



Gas sickens 6

Several Back Mountain departments were called out Tuesday evening to investigate a gas odor at the McDonald's Restaurant in Shavertown. Shavertown Fire Department Chief Gary Beisel said the odor was strong enough to force the restaurant's closure. Six employees complaining of headaches were treated by paramedics, none were taken to the hospital. McDonald's reopened Wednesday morning. Shavertown and Trucksville fire departments, Kingston Township Rescue and Ambulance and Jackson and Dallas ambulance companies responded. POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Regional master plan study gets a pass

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — The supervisors have decided to let stand for now a decision made by the previous board committing the township to an outlay of up to \$17,700 for participation in a regional master plan study commissioned by the Back Mountain Council of Governments (COG).

At the January 12 work session, three of the five supervisors voiced their own conflicting sentiments about the plan. "I'm really torn on this issue," said Jeffrey Box after

listing concerns about the usefulness of the proposed study, but support for regional cooperation.

Box questioned whether recommendations from the traffic portion of the three-part study would be acceptable to PennDOT. He also wondered aloud whether its zoning and planning components would actually be implemented.

Supervisors Dave Jenkins and Paul Sabol accepted the need for planning, but worried about the cost.

"I agree we need to plan, but I'm concerned with implementing the

plan once it's produced," Jenkins said, asking how much additional cost would be involved.

Atty. Bernard Walter, speaking for the newly-formed Back Mountain Economic Development Council, urged the board not to "pull the plug" on funding for the study.

Walter said he had seen the ugliness of urban sprawl destroy the natural beauty of communities in the San Francisco Bay area. "I don't want to see that happen in my new home."

The state government has made it See REGIONAL, pg 2

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