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# THE POST

50¢

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

## Schools fight absences with velvet glove

By RONALD BARTIZEK  
Post Staff

**BACK MOUNTAIN** — Go directly to jail. Those could be the words two parents hear as a result of their children's continued absence from school. But they are the exception, as local school districts work to improve student attendance rates. School officials say a five-day jail term for parents is a last resort, but despite attempts to work with families, it is sometimes a real possibility.

Administrators in the Dallas School District are stepping up efforts to reduce missed school days in part by looking more closely for patterns of attendance — or lack of it — in both individual records and the school calendar as a whole.

The Lake-Lehman district instituted an attendance policy in the late 1980s that is still in use, and can result in a student being withdrawn from a class if too many days are missed. Today, the policy is being enforced with new vigor, and parents are receiving forceful reminders by mail

when their children have been absent without notification.

The emphasis on attendance is driven in part by requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind act. Beyond test scores and graduation rates, the federal government requires states to select another indicator of academic performance. Pennsylvania chose attendance.

The act requires an attendance rate of at least 95 percent, or year-over-year improvement in the rate if it falls below that.

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## Fines, even jail, are last stop for parents of truants

Under state guidelines, every student is entitled to three unexcused absences a year. After that, districts handle matters in different ways.

Dallas School District employs a Home and School Visitor, and among his duties is dealing with students showing chronic absenteeism.

Norm Swithers has held the post for six years. Even though legal action is an option, he sees it as a last resort.

"If I have to go to the magistrate, I think I've

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

## Scouting for fun

Nick Kon, Jordan Mullen and Josh Perella compared and showed off their cars at a recent Cub Scout Pinewood Derby held by Gate of Heaven Troop 232. More photos on page 3.

## Young man has high hopes for a political future

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

**DALLAS TWP.** — Todd Buckley may be a "regular" college student, but this 19-year-old Dallas graduate aspires to a position few of his peers relate to.

On two Monday evenings a month, as many fellow King's College students retreat to the comfort of their dorm rooms, Buckley climbs into his car and heads to the Dallas School District Administration Building.

Last November, after losing a bid to replace resigned board member, Anthony Barbose, the ambitious business administration major resolved to attend as many school board meetings as possible.

"From that time on, I felt that if I wanted to be on the board, I should be informed about what's going on." He has been attending ever since, and — at times — actively participating in the process. He recently spoke up about an overcrowding situation at a district open swim.

"I am really just like every other college student," he said during an interview at his parents' home last week. "I do hang out with my friends and everything, but I do make it a point to go to the board meetings."

It's possible the aspiring board member is the youngest ever to seek such a position in the Dallas School District, or in the state. He plans to throw his hat in the ring a year from

this May, when several seats will be up for grabs.

He acknowledged last year's competition was stiff. He was up against 30-year board veteran Ernest Ashbridge, outgoing board member John Litz and voter favorite Dennis Gochoel. Gochoel ultimately ended up securing the position.

Nonetheless, he hasn't been deterred and the loss, or what he calls the "learning opportunity," has only strengthened his resolve.

He believes himself to be a strong candidate that would bring unique experience and insight. After all, he pointed

See FUTURE, pg 3



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Todd Buckley, 19, is planning to run for the Dallas School Board. After that, who knows?

## Dirt road will be paved, but not right away

By RONALD BARTIZEK  
Post Staff

**DALLAS TWP.** — Helena Kuczura has been waiting 22 years for the road that runs by her secluded home to be paved. Her family built the first house in the upscale Glendalough neighborhood off Upper Demunds Road, a development that can be glimpsed through the trees only when there are no leaves.

"This road is a mess," especially now, she said earlier this month.

Actually, about half of the road is paved, but not the portion that runs by seven homes, including Kuczura's.

Kuczura says she has implored the township to improve the road, but her pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Township Secretary Leonard Kozick said Glendalough was developed with private roads,

and property deeds stated as much. But after residents complained, the township agreed to take over the roads in the mid-1990s, once they were brought up to required specifications for width and drainage.

More than half has been paved since then. The rest will have to wait until the township has enough extra money to finish the job, said Frank Wagner, vice chairman of the supervisors. "We will do it gradually,"

he said, "but we're not going to go into debt for it."

That has been the pattern so far. Wagner said the township first paved the portion of Glendalough Road that runs across an earthen dam. "We couldn't hold the road," when it was gravel, he said.

Next, asphalt was laid down on a portion of Glendalough Road that runs to Raintree Road, past six homes. Then

See DIRT ROAD, pg 3

## Restaurant to reopen

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

**TRUCKSVILLE** — The building at 111 South Main Street that used to house Yesterday's restaurant could soon see new life.

A notice of application posted in the former restaurant's window states the company M & M Restaurants, LLC., has applied for a transfer of liquor license for the property.

Kingston Township Zoning Officer Bill Eck said he has been told the building's current owner, Paul Klug, will retain ownership of the property and lease it to M & M Restaurants.

"It's going to be a family style restaurant — basically

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## Dallas grows a big crop of future tycoons

By ERIN YOUNGMAN  
Post Staff

**DALLAS TWP.** — Members of the Future Business Leaders of America Club at Dallas High School have made it past regionals and on to the state competition for years. This is the first year, though, that 15 club members have won the right to advance.

"This is the largest region in Pennsylvania, that's why it's so great that we have so many going," said the club's advisor, Linda Shrader. The group had to compete against 12 other schools to earn spots at the competition.

Shrader, who has been advisor to the club for six years, takes no credit for the success — "I just think they are very bright people

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## Student Achievers



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Fifteen members of Dallas High School's Future Business Leaders of America Club have won the right to compete at the state competition later in the month.

Pictured from left, first row: Shannon Kotch, Gillian Libenson, Sam O'Brien, Nikki Pisacano. Second row: Jon Baker, Michael Kowalski, Jon Stevens, Adam Snider, Ryan McHale, Kevin Roman, Linda Shrader, advisor.

## Standouts in science win state berths

By M.B. GILLIGAN  
Post Correspondent

**LEHMAN TWP.** — Several area teams qualified to attend the state level of the Science Olympiad after competing in the Northeast Regional event, which took place at Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus on March 10.

"It was a lot of fun," said Jean Lipski, who along with Sandy Boyle, coaches the Lake-Lehman High School team. "The kids are really excited. It is the first time that our two teams will be going to states at the same time."

Both Lake-Lehman Junior High, with a sixth place finish, out of 28 teams, and Lake-Lehman Senior High, which placed seventh out of 36 teams, earned

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News: 675-5211  
 thepost@leader.net  
 15 N. Main St.  
 Wilkes-Barre PA 18711  
 Advertising: 970-7102  
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 and Delivery: 829-5000