

Little League

(continued from page 1)

said the change was made in part for the safety of the kids. Last year was the first time in a while Snyder got to watch many games, and he said it was obvious some of the players weren't capable of playing at the higher level. He also felt some of them were in danger of being hurt.

A reduction in the number of teams is also contributing to the change. There will be four fewer Major League teams this year; five in each division instead of seven.

Snyder said the reduction was made to raise competitiveness within the league. "The talent level wasn't there to support it (the higher number of teams)," he said.

Corey Wright, Assistant Director of the East Region of Little League Baseball, Inc., said there are other — and he feels better — ways to address competitive balance issues.

"We have a lot of options," he said, including a complete re-drafting of all players. That would mean players might not be on the same teams as last year, but the teams would be more evenly matched.

"We want as many kids to play as possible," Wright said. He said the organization's experience is that kids who drop out do not return. "That's something we'd like to not see."

At the same time 11-year-olds are losing guaranteed spots on the roster, outstanding 10-year-old players are being drafted up.

That is not a change, although Clemson thinks it is expanding.

Tim LaBar, whose son also has been passed over, said last year most of the 10-year-olds were in the American League side of the Major League division. He doesn't think many 10-year-olds are better than the older players.

"I've coached them for five years, and I know they're not," he said. He also thinks 11-year-old players use the first year to adjust to Major League play.

Back Mountain Baseball's rules require that 12-year-olds play at the highest level, a policy Wright said the parent organization hopes to adopt when it goes before Congress for renewal of its charter.

Paul Clemson is angry that no notice was given of the change. "Parents should be aware this is happening," he said.

He also fears that that kids will give up the game. "It's really wrong; kids are going to quit baseball," he said.

Snyder said the decision isn't cast in stone, and could be reversed in future years.

"It's just something we're trying," he said.

Dog license sales

Luzerne County Treasurer Michael L. Morreale has announced that 2004 dog licenses are now available at the following locations:

- Dallas Twp. — Hoof-in-Paw-n-Jeans, 675-4800.
- Kunkle — Pet Care Associates, 675-1621.

Licenses also will be sold at the Treasurer's Office in the Luzerne County Courthouse, Wilkes-Barre.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Serving it up for Scouting

Boy Scout Troop 155, Trucksville United Methodist Church, held its annual spaghetti dinner March 27 at the church's education center. Nadine Young, dinner chairperson, said scouts served 362 dinners, raising \$1974.50 that will be divided between supporting troop activities and paying down a commitment to help fund the Scout room in the new church education building.

The cost of ingredients was higher this year. "That makes it tougher," Young said, but was offset by an increase in donations. In the end, "It was a good year."

In top photo, Stephen Takacs serves Joanne Szoke and John Vetashick.

Above left, Nick Lombard tended to Dick Montgomery, who was Scoutmaster of the troop for 17 years.

Above right, Bev Hetro, left, and Karen Williams share some fun in the kitchen.

Sewer

(continued from page 1)

lives on Sunset Terrace. "I don't think anybody pays more than we do."

The municipal authority says the inspections are necessary to find homes that are improperly dumping stormwater into sanitary sewer lines and contributing to sewage overflows along Lakeside Drive.

Sunset Terrace is a quiet street with modest-sized older homes, many of which, according to Koutnik, are summer residences. The road gradually winds its way up a hill where just beyond the smaller homes, acres of land have been cleared out to make way for new ones.

Another Sunset Terrace resident who didn't want to be identified stood on her porch, which overlooks the lake. She questioned how at a time like this, new homes could be going in on her block.

"My big concern is if the sewer is so overloaded, how can those developments be going in?"

Currently there is a town-home development going in behind Grotto Pizza, and some Sunset Terrace residents understand as many as nine new

homes could be planned for their street. Another large development slated for the former Hanson's Amusement Park property was put on hold by its developer last spring, because of the sewer problems.

The authority's most recent round of letters went out to sewer residents March 23. It is the second mail appeal requesting their cooperation.

"We had asked for volunteer participation (last spring) and we didn't get the response we needed — we need to move forward," said the authority's solicitor, Thomas O'Connor. About a third of the borough responded to the first mailing.

He said it's especially important to identify the sources of groundwater inflow now, before the wet season arrives. Last year's rainy season brought overflows and resulting citations by the Department of Environmental Protection.

O'Connor said the authority is within its rights to raise the rate.

"Because these people aren't complying, they are in violation of existing regulations," he said.

To avoid the increase, residents must send back the attached consent sheet, authorizing an inspection, by April 23.

Sunset Terrace residents mentioned the bubbling over of raw sewage along Lakeside Drive and said they don't believe the authority's newest approach to solve the problem is too extreme.

"The people that don't send them (the mailings) back are probably the ones doing things wrong," commented Koutnik.

Koutnik won't be hit with a hefty bill. When he received the original appeal letter last spring, he returned it immediately. He said the mayor, who is also the authority's manager, inspected his connections and found the property clean as a whistle.

Authority secretary Denise Sult said bills will remain doubled until authorization forms are received by the office.

"We're trying to get 100 percent participation," she commented.

Sult said in less than a week, the authority received replies to 300 of the 1,100 most recent notices.

Message

(continued from page 1)

project.

Three of the cards were taken that day by Sgt. First Class Edward Dudick, of the 109th Field Artillery. He sent them to his unit mates in Iraq. The other three cards and posters will be sent over at a later date.

Dudick, who lives in Dallas, has been overwhelmed by the support provided by the Dallas Ladies Auxiliary, which has sent "literally tons and tons of stuff."

"The whole Back Mountain has been wonderful in its support."

Ceil Kozlowski, of Hunlock Creek, came by to add a message to the soldiers. Though she opposes the war in Iraq, she recently joined the auxiliary because of its active support for the troops.

"It feels like you have to do something because they're sacrificing so much," she said.

"I cried when I saw the mothers leave. We shouldn't be doing this by ourselves."

Kozlowski and her co-workers at Chestnut Ridge Communication Services donated the material to make yellow ribbons that were handed out at the Legion event. They also keep ribbons on hand at their office, collecting donations from customers that are passed on to the support effort.

So, how did this auxiliary become the best supporters in the nation?

"We had great backers," said Jacoby, from businesses to community groups to students. Even the Back Mountain Memorial Library contributed with donations of books that were sent to the Middle East.

"We had box after box after box," Jacoby said, as many as 10 a week. She would take vanloads of donated material to

Some of the messages written by Dallas elementary school children and pasted to the cards sent to soldiers in Iraq:

"We miss you. Come home soon. We're proud of you. You are very brave."

"Thank you for your hard work to make America a better place. I hope you do not get injured. May God bless you."

"Thank you for defending the USA. Remember, try your best and the USA is counting on you."

"Dear U.S. soldier. Thank you for supporting America. I hope you come back safely."

the Willow Grove Naval Air Station, where the material, everything from shampoo to drink mix, would immediately be put on a plane. The auxiliary also paid \$100 per load for fuel cost.

Because the Dallas Ladies Auxiliary was so successful, it has been asked to "adopt" the 109th Field Artillery's family support group during the unit's deployment in Iraq. That will have auxiliary members collecting more donations, lending a hand at events and coming up with cash when it's needed.

School

(continued from page 1)

good, the walls are good," he said. Everything else will be gutted.

The water supply had been contaminated several years ago by leaks from a nearby gasoline station, but Jones said numerous experts have told him it is now cleaned up.

To qualify for housing, individuals must be at least 62 years of age and have incomes at or below \$17,700. Couples can have incomes at or below \$20,250. These limits generally increase annually. Rent amounts are based on income.

Jones said a good turnout for the public forum will signal to HUD and others that the project will fill a need for housing in the region. The meeting will last about 90 minutes. Architectural drawings and other information will be available.

Volunteers of America completed a similar project at the former Henry W. Palmer Elementary school in the Rolling Mill Hill section of Wilkes-Barre. The organization acquired the vacant property in 2001 and with funding from HUD, the state, city and county housing authorities as well as the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, invested \$3.3 mil-

lion to create 28 housing units in what is now known as the Palmer House.

Jones said experience with that project will be helpful in understanding the budget and expenses for the Lehman conversion. That is important because HUD funds at a level that requires 90 percent of higher occupancy to break even.

"You don't do it for the bottom line," he said.

A purchase agreement with the Lake-Lehman School District hasn't been reached, but Jones is confident the deal will go through. "The school has been great to work with."

The meeting will be held on Wed., April 7 at the Lake Lehman Jr./Sr. High School, beginning at 7 p.m.

Volunteers of America is one of the largest and most comprehensive non-profit social services agencies in the country. The organization first came to the Wyoming Valley in 1896 and today provides services for at-risk youth, the elderly, disabled, low-income families and individuals.

Nationally, the organization is the largest provider of affordable housing in the country.

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