



Dallas drum major, tenth grader Kendra Balmer, center, was joined on the platform by G.A.R. bandleaders Sarah Rybitski, left, and Justine Ebert.



Dallas clarinet players Amber LaBar, left, and Anthony Roppa are pictured with members of G.A.R.'s band.



Dallas students Holly Pajka, right, and Nikki Rave, center, played flutes with a member of the G.A.R. band.

## Bands join in tribute to 911

The Dallas Senior High School marching band joined with the marching band from G.A.R. High School for a tribute on the third anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks during a pre-game show. The bands played "The American Anthem," "The Navy Hymn," and "God Bless America" before honoring the occasion with a moment of silence. The bands concluded the show with their combined rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner."

FOR THE POST/M.B. GILLIGAN



DHS band director Todd Hunter, right, and G.A.R. director Michael Pryor watched their bands.

## United Way

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while in high school, had taken a break from their lives in Boston to help out for the weekend.

"He comes up with ideas all the time," Erica said of her dad. "He's very excited."

"I've been doing this 30 years with the United Way, and I've never seen anybody do anything like this."

**David Lee**  
President, United Way of the Wyoming Valley

At \$125 per ticket, the pair of charity dinners raised more than \$22,000 for the United Way, with the cash being meted out to 30 social-service organizations this coming spring. "That's huge," said David Lee.

"I've been doing this 30 years with the United Way, and I've never seen anybody do anything like this," he said.

While the two men share the same last name and are dedicated to helping others, there's no relation. Eric Lee is originally from Malaysia, while David Lee hails from the Midwest.

Eric Lee was not interested in talking about his generous contribution of time, effort and energy.

"I cannot say the personal things because then we lose the purpose," he said.

He prepared for about a week and even travelled to New York City to pick up 1,500 pounds of New England lobster.

## Next year's event already in works

Eric Lee's generosity has inspired another Back Mountain restaurant owner to step up to the plate for charity next year.

Tony Macri, owner of three eateries including the Overbrook Bistro in Dallas, has invited diners and donors to Mambo Italiano in Dupont, where they can chew for charity.

A friend of Macri's called to tell him about Lee's donation, and ask him what he thought about taking on the task in 2005.

"I told him to let me think a minute, then I said, 'Yeah, I'll do it,'" Macri said. "I've been in this area 21 years, and it's time to start giving back."

Macri said Lee, whose enthusiasm for this project has been infectious, was excited that his brainchild will live on.

Also ecstatic is David Lee, the local United Way president. "It's incredible. He's committed to giving us two nights next year, and my fear is that we'll start selling out too quickly."

On Thursday, Lee said more than 20 people had already called to request tickets, and another restaurant had expressed interest in hosting dinners.

Asked if he would consider making the event even more frequent than once a year, David Lee said, "The way things are so tough for the agencies we support, I would consider anything."

## 2 wheels

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The center, which is celebrating its 10th year, has a home-visiting program for first-time mothers, called the Nurse Family Partnership, and serves close to 200 hundred families in Luzerne County. The center also serves about 50 families in Wyoming County. Those working in the center are all registered nurses, and they visit mothers from the prenatal stage up until 2 or 3 years of age.

The money from the fundraiser will benefit the center in a number of ways, according to Kathleen Krivenko, program manager. "The center will be able to provide infant clothing, diapers, all the things you need for babies," said Krivenko. "Even safety

things, like cabinet locks, door locks, gates, all those things we could use for babies and their safety."

There is no charge for the service, and first-time mothers needing assistance can refer themselves to the center for help. Their obstetrician or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) can also refer them to the center.

According to Johnson, about 15 to 20 people have signed up for the event, and all ages are welcome. There will be checkpoints placed at certain areas during the race, and anyone who cannot finish the 15-mile event can hitch a ride back.

The route, according to Johnson, is on an old railroad grade and features only two

### IF YOU GO

**What:** 15-mile charity bike ride  
**When:** Sat., Sept. 26, 1 p.m.  
**Where:** State Game Land 57, Forkston Twp., Wyoming County  
**Directions:** At the intersection of Routes 487 and 118, take Route 487 north for 7.5 miles and turn onto a dirt road near State Game Land sign on right.  
**Info:** Cody Kopcha, 477-2039 or Brandon Johnson, 256-3249  
**Requested donation, \$10**

small hills, both about 10 feet high at the most, so riders shouldn't have a hard time traversing the dirt road.

"We thought 'everyone knows how to ride a bike,'" said Kopcha. "It's something anyone could do to help out a good cause."

Both Kopcha and Johnson agree that someone planning to ride in the event should dress

appropriately according to the weather that day; maybe a pair of long pants and a light jacket, depending on the temperature.

Johnson attends the Town Hill United Methodist Church and volunteers his time with the church's youth group. He has also been a Boy Scout since age 6 and plays on the Lake-Lehman soccer team. Although he will not be attending a col-

lege or university, he plans on looking into the armed forces in the future.

Kopcha expects to attend Luzerne County Community College for a year, planning to major in business management, and then wants to finish up his education at Bloomsburg University.

Anyone interested in the bike ride can call Kopcha at 477-2039 or Johnson at 256-3249 or just show up at 1 p.m. Sept. 26 at Gamelands 57 for the event. The cost is a \$10 donation.

"We certainly thank them for recognizing our program and for choosing it," said Krivenko. "We hope that they do well and succeed in their effort. It's exciting to have that for our tenth year."

## Blood

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This motivated Blejwas, 66, to increase his occasional blood donations to four times a year or once every 59 days. Blejwas also likes to donate blood at the Back Mountain drives whenever possible.

"You see all your friends there," he notes. Both his sons

"It's the right thing to do. I don't make a big deal of it."

**David Keating**  
Dallas

are regular blood donors and

Blejwas admits that it has become a family tradition.

"Hopefully I'm a good example for everyone," says Blejwas.

Regina Allen, Blood Services Coordinator for the Wyoming Valley Chapter of the Red Cross, appreciates all donors,

and especially those as dedicated at Keating and Blejwas.

"I'm a regular donor, but I just can't imagine giving that much."

The next local drive will take place Thursday, Sept. 23, from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Dallas Baptist Church on Route 415.

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