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Honor rolls for  
Dallas Middle School  
and Dallas High School  
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# THE POST

50¢

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



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

## Sittin' pretty with Santa

Emily Crahall of Dallas shared her deepest secrets — or at least her hopes for Christmas gifts — with Santa when the jolly old elf made an appearance Dec. 4 at College Misericordia. More photos on page 2.

## Trail garners key easements

Section 2 of the trail, from Truckville to Dallas, is now in planning stages.

By M.B. GILLIGAN  
Post Correspondent

Organizers of the Back Mountain Trail have taken a giant step toward its completion with the acquisition of easements that will release a flood of funding.

The new easements secure the right-of-way from Carverton Road in Truckville to Lower Demunds Road in Dallas Township.

"We've been actively trying to complete section two of the trail for five years," said Judy Rimple, president of the nonprofit Anthracite Scenic Trails Association, parent to the Back Mountain Trail Association. "Now we can secure a grant from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) for preconstruction drawings. As soon as we get the drawings, we'll have met all of the requirements to go to construction."

At that point, the Back Mountain Trail will receive grant monies from the Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA 21) amounting to \$480,000. The association was also required to match 20 percent of the grant, which it did during the past few years. "We used lots of little grants and

See TRAIL, pg 3

## After 81 years, a new auto showroom

L.L. Richardson dealership has changed hands, and the new owner plans for expansion.

By RONALD BARTIZEK  
Post Staff

DALLAS — If all goes as planned, a new auto showroom — the first built in the borough since the 1920s — will rise along Route 415 next year.

The Tony Domiano Auto Dealerships, of Eynon, purchased the former L.L. Richardson Dodge dealership on November 1. Tony Domiano Sr. said a new showroom and service facility will be built on a lot next to Caddie LaBar's that is now used to store vehicles.

Chrysler Corporation is designing the building. "They are requiring a whole new facility," Domiano said. "Everything is going to be state-of-the-art."

The showroom has been on Lake Street since 1923, when James Besecker built a Ford garage.

See SHOWROOM, pg 2



FOR THE POST/S. JOHN WILKIN

Former Lake-Lehman administrator John Zaleskas spoke after the high school gym was dedicated to him.

## Brand-new Lake-Lehman gym has an addition

District dedicates the facility to John Zaleskas, in honor of 40 years service.

By JANINE UNGVARSKY  
For The Post

LEHMAN TWP. — After a ceremony at which the new high school gymnasium was named in his honor, John Zaleskas reminisced about his days in the Lake-Lehman School District, recount-

ing the pride students and parents had in the school, the outstanding marching band that won countless honors and even his nickname, Mad Dog.

"I never tolerated bullying, and because of that, they named me Mad Dog. I wore that name like a badge," he said, noting even his 5-year-old grandson Zach knows him by that name.

But he had trouble talking about having a gym named after

him. "I was truly awestruck, but thrilled. It came as a total surprise. I had no idea where it came from."

Others had no trouble explaining why Zaleskas should be honored.

"He was like a big brother here. He took care of us all," said Rich Gorgone, who retired as athletic director in June after 30 years as a teacher and coach in the district.

See GYM, pg 3

## Swimming meet pits coach against former pupil

Matt Stretanski, Dallas coach, once swam on a team coached by Lake-Lehman mentor.

By M.B. GILLIGAN  
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — What goes around, comes around, even in the water.

The Lake-Lehman High School swimming team had its inaugural meet Dec. 6 against Dallas, an event that pitted Dallas coach Matt Stretanski against his former mentor, Maureen Judge Devine.

"She was my first or second coach," Stretanski said. "I was on her swim team when I was 7, 8 and 9 years old."

Devine started teaching swimming lessons at the Wilkes-Barre YMCA while in high school. Throughout college, she coached a team with George Cosgrove at the YMCA. "I just dug out all my old workout books," she said. "I don't know why I saved them all these years."

Lake-Lehman started the swimming team for seventh through 12th graders this fall. The team uses the pool at College Misericordia for practice.

"The nervousness is gone now. Most of them had no idea what a meet was even like," said Devine after the competition ended. "We know we have our work cut out for us, but I saw a major improvement in the three weeks since we started practicing."

The atmosphere was no surprise to Lehman assistant coach Dwayne Poepperling, who swam on teams at the Catholic Youth Center, Meyers High School and Sheppard College in West Virginia.

"I think they are handling this adversi-  
See SWIMMING, pg 3



FOR THE POST/M.B. GILLIGAN

Lake-Lehman swimming coach Maureen Devine and Dallas coach Matt Stretanski confer before Lehman's inaugural meet, Dec. 6 at the Dallas pool

### DALLAS SCHOOL BOARD

## Usavage steps aside as president, Bigus elected unanimously

By MARK GUYDISH  
For The Post

DALLAS TWP. — The Dallas School Board unanimously replaced President David Usavage with Russell Bigus on Dec. 6.

Usavage said he had told the board that he did not want a second year in the top seat. As president he oversaw some of the most hotly debated changes in the district, including revised policies that gave more power to the board, a new business manager, new accountants and the early departure of Superintendent Gilbert Griffiths.

Usavage stressed he had not set out as president with any specific goals, but he felt satisfied with district progress and had "enjoyed" his stint on the job. He praised Bigus as "a very intelligent individual."

The board also elected Frank Natitus as vice president and Gary Mathers as assistant board secretary. Board member James Richardson was absent. The votes were unanimous, with nominees repeatedly abstaining from voting for themselves, even after Solicitor Ben Jones III pointed out they could legally do so.

The board also reappointed Usavage, Natitus and Mathers as representatives to the West Side Area Vocational Technical School Board and elected

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### Inside The Post



High school winter sports season is now in full swing.

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