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THE POST

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

Spud buds help kids gain insight

Cultural program, potatoes hold a lesson about diversity.

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

DALLAS — Even potatoes deserve to be treated with respect.

"They have their own identity," said Dana Jolley, after hearing her classmates describe their new-found potato friends. Dana's class studied potatoes as part of an exercise in the Cultural Day of Sharing program held last week at Wycallis Elementary School.

For this exercise, each student in Kim Kuzma's fifth grade class was given a potato to study and become friends with. Then, the potatoes were collected and the students had to find their own friend again.

Patty Gregg, an employee at M & T Bank, was one of several volunteer presenters in the annual program sponsored by the Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce.

"It's all about taking the time to get to know someone before you make a decision," said Gregg. "Don't prejudice people but really get to know them."

The class learned that there are many ways people can vary, from the most obvious such as appearance, gender, skin color and age, to things like movement, eye contact and use of personal space. People should be lumped together like a sack of potatoes. "Every person has

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FOR THE POST/PETE G. WILCOX

County commissioners Stephen Urban, Greg Skrepenak and Todd Vonderheid conducted their Jan. 26 meeting at the Dallas Borough Municipal Building, under the watchful eye of the late Mayor Paul LaBar's portrait.

Commissioners drop by Dallas

Fulfilling a pledge to meet at points around the county, they gather at the borough building first.

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

In what was described as taking their show on the road, the Luzerne County commissioners held a meeting January 26 at the Dallas Borough Municipal Building. The commissioners plan to hold nine of their regular meetings at locations around the county this year.

"It marks a historic date in Luzerne County," said Commissioner Greg Skrepenak, who lives about a mile from

the borough hall.

John Oliver, Dallas council president, welcomed the commissioners and offered the borough's assistance if the county ever needed it.

Nancy Eckert, who also lives in the borough, was glad to have the opportunity to attend a meeting close to home.

"Truthfully, I've never gone to a commissioners meeting before," she said.

She was mildly disappointed with the attendance. The small meeting room was full, but the audience was mostly drawn from county or local municipal officials.

George Horwatt, who lives in Dallas Township, was the lone speaker during

the public comment session. He asked to serve on a committee looking into the status of the Wyoming Valley Airport. "All my life I've been there," he said, as his family has been involved since 1945.

Skrepenak assured Horwatt that better days are ahead for the airport in Forty Fort, which has not received much attention. "It's a little underappreciated right now," Skrepenak said.

Eckert, who was reappointed to the Luzerne County Planning Commission during the meeting, suggested optimistically that the bitter cold might have kept people home. "I think it's a good idea," she said. "Maybe it just has to catch on."

Retired policeman sees area changing

Robert Parrish spent 25 years with the Kingston Township department.

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Post Correspondent

KINGSTON TWP. — When Kingston Township police officer Robert Parrish completed his last shift on January 14, he left behind a lot of memories — and good friends.

Parrish, 49, retired after serving 25 years in the department. He was first hired as a part-time patrolman in 1979, and became full-time 10 years later.

Parrish said he has seen many changes in the Back Mountain during his career, particularly a population boom. "The traffic has multiplied tremendously," he said. "Just go into Sheetz at 3:30 in the morning and you'd think they were giving the place away."

And on weekday mornings between 3:30 and 5, the convenience store is filled with Back Mountain

residents starting their daily commute to New York and Philadelphia, he said.

Crimes, in both type and frequency, also have changed.

"Situation" or domestic calls have become almost a nightly occurrence, he said. "Back then, if you were on night shift and you saw the lights on in a house at two in the morning, you used to stop and see what was going on. Those days are gone."

He also has seen a huge influx of transients moving through the area in recent years. Some are drug dealers, taking advantage of the smaller police forces. "Small towns are getting overwhelmed by this stuff. They can't handle criminal investigations because it is too costly," he said. The state police are then called in, he said, but only if they are available.

Not that things were dull throughout Parrish's career.

He was the second officer on the scene in 1986 when James Kelly shot two Dallas Township police officers.

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Kingston Township police officer Robert Parrish handed in his badge Jan. 14 to Chief James Balavage. Parrish retired after 25 years on the force.

Dallas High School students help design chem lesson

Dallas High School advanced placement chemistry students recently participated in a project with Bloomsburg University. Working alongside graduate students from Bloomsburg's Institute for Interactive Technology, Dallas students helped guide the design of an internet-based chemistry lesson. After the lesson was created, Dallas students helped test it for technical features and effectiveness. The lesson was designed by Dallas High School chemistry teacher John Fredericks and by Bloomsburg students Patricia Boyke, Andrea Daley, Jason Heiser, Brady Hess and Jeff Gritman.

From left: Brady Hess, Scott Gay, Megan Savage and Jeff Gritman.



Winter parking reminder in KT

Kingston Township winter parking ordinance is effective through March 31. Residents are prohibited from parking vehicles on streets between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. daily. Vehicles also are not permitted to be parked on streets during snowstorms, or for eight hours after the end of the storm. The ordinance is designed to keep streets open and clear so that snow removal measures can be effectively undertaken by the Public Works Department. Anyone with questions about the ordinance may call 696-1175.

Working together not always easy

Council of Governments members hash out liability for grant funds.

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

LEHMAN TWP. — Conducted before an audience composed almost entirely of public officials and the media, the Jan. 25 meeting of the Back Mountain Area Council of Governments at times resembled a fencing match, at others a debating contest.

In the end, a tenuous expression of trust won out over legal technicalities as three member municipalities appeared to convince wary representatives of Kingston Township that anticipated grant funds would be kept safe.

At their January meeting, the Kingston Township supervisors declined to participate in a \$37,500 grant until cautions raised by solicitor Ben Jones III were addressed. Jones suggested the township might be liable if the funds were misappropriated or otherwise misused, and that the individual responsible for handling them should be bonded expressly for that purpose.

Four Kingston Township supervisors attended the COG meeting, two officially and two in the audience. Cindy Campbell, a representative of the Pa. Department of Community and Economic Development, tried to offer assurances that liability is not an issue.

"Generally, you already are bonded as a municipality," she said, so insurance specific to the grant is not needed.

After a sometimes contentious half-hour discussion, Kingston Township supervisor Jeffrey Box seemed to accept assurances from Dallas Borough officials, which has established a separate bank account to handle COG funds, that its insurance was adequate to cover the grant money.

"Any of the programs we would do, we would be bonded for," said Joe

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