

# THE POST

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

## Surgery center gives Back Mountain a facelift

By DAVE KONOPKI  
Post Editor

SHAVERTOWN – Faced with a difficult decision, Dr. Francis Collini took the best available option.

He decided to follow his heart. "Since I started practicing, I've dreamed of having my own surgical facility," said the well-known plastic surgeon, who has lived in the Back Mountain for the past 15 years. "It's been a goal of mine for a very long time."

And it's a goal that has come to fruition. The Ambulatory Surgical Facility at the Renaissance Center for Plastic Surgery officially opened this week with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The 3,200-sq-ft, state-of-the-art facility is located on Route 309 in Kingston Township. The surgery center has two operating rooms and a recovery room large enough to accommodate five patients.

Collini had an operating room at the Renaissance Center since 1994. But state guidelines changed almost three years ago and Collini's

office-based surgical facility didn't meet state specifications.

"Logistically, we couldn't expand what we had," said the Dallas Township resident. "We had to decide to whether to close (the surgical facility) or build a new one. So, we got an architect and started putting plans down on paper."

The Renaissance Surgery Center is a Class C facility, the highest rating level for an ambulatory facility. The rating allows Collini – or other

See COLLINI, Page 8



Susan Collini and her husband, Dr. Francis Collini, welcome friends and fellow professionals during the opening of their new surgery center in Shavertown.

FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

## Therapy dogs help children learn to read



Brooke Stearns reads to Sadie, a dog from Therapy Dog International. The therapy dog program was recently held at the Dietrich Theatre in Tunkhannock.

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK  
Post Correspondent

TUNKHANNOCK – Teaching children to read can be a difficult task. And teaching children to enjoy reading is even trickier. Now there's a group who think they may have an answer for children who have difficulty reading – dogs.

It can be confusing looking in on one of these children-dog reading sessions. One of the sessions was recently held at the Theatre in Tunkhannock as part of a therapy dog program.

"What kind of books do dogs like to read, anyway?"

That's what one caller to the Dietrich Theatre humorously asked worker Erica Rogler when the theatre announced some therapy dogs were coming to help children learn how to read.

The program does not teach the dog to read and, of course, the dog can't teach reading. But children can find it easier to read to animals than to people, says Mary Jalongo, a professor of education in Indiana University of Pennsylvania.



Anne Keeler gives a special treat to Sammy, a pet therapy dog. Anne spent part of a recent morning reading to Sammy as part of a therapy dog program.

FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



Sammy, a therapy dog, gets some "counting" training from handler Bea Dennis.

Jody Stearn and her son Silas, of Tunkhannock, take the time to read to Puli-oosha, during a pet therapy dog program.

While doing some research, Jalongo – founder of the Reading Education Assistance Dogs program – came across a study that found children would rather read to animals than to other people. Children find reading to animals less stressful because

animals do not judge reading ability.

READ is part of Therapy Dogs International, a group that frequently provides therapy dogs to hospitals, libraries and health care facilities. The Therapy Dog International chapter in Wilkes-Barre is coordinated by Natalie Pulak, who organizes dog ther-

apy sessions.

"We have run these programs at Wyoming Valley West and Dallas Elementary School, and we see a profound change in the children," said the

See PET, Page 8

## Emotional assembly at Dallas Middle School honors veterans

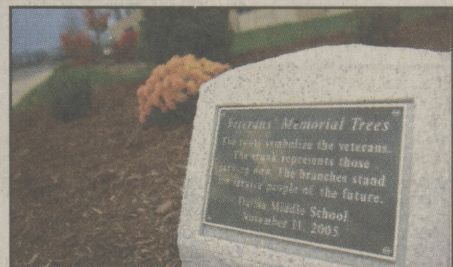
By M.B. GILLIGAN  
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. – The Dallas Middle School student body celebrated Veterans Day at a very special assembly this year.

"I've been to a lot of assemblies over the years, but this one was really a little different," said John Emil Sr. commander of Daddow-Isaac American Legion Post 672 in Dallas. "It was a very moving service. I graduated from Dallas and I felt like they were honoring me."

As part of the Nov. 11 event, the student council at Dallas Middle School provided funding for the purchase of a small monument honoring local veterans. The monument was placed in front of the school and two small trees were planted to commemorate the event.

The plaque on the monument reads Veterans' Memorial Trees. The roots symbolize the veterans. The trunk represents those serving now. The branches stand for service people of the future."



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Students at Dallas Middle School recently placed a monument in front of the school in honor of our nation's veterans. Two small trees were also planted during the special ceremony.

The school also held a poetry contest based on those words.

"(World cultures teacher) Sue Holthaus came to me in September with the idea," said principal Anthony Martinelli. "The students discussed Veterans Day in their history classes and each student wrote a poem. The poems were forwarded to the English department for judging. The top

15 poems were read at the assembly."

A poem entitled "These Trees," written by eighth grade student Kori McGee, was chosen as the winning entry. McGee's poem will be placed in a time capsule and near the two newly-planted trees.

Although his poem was not among the winners, sixth-grader Donnie Behm enjoyed the assignment.

"It really gave you time to think about what you were writing about," said the student council member, referring to his three-stanza poem. "I liked it better than just writing a paper."

Emil was impressed with the students' poetry.

"They really put their hearts and souls into those poems," said Emil, who was accompanied by other American Legion members including Kep Gottshalk, Ed Buckley and essay contest chairman Clarence Michael.

"It was outstanding to be there to see the effort they put into their poems," said Emil.

### THESE TREES

These trees that we planted are in honor of you,  
To recognize all that you do,  
You fought for our country, and risked it all,  
Just to make sure we could never fall.  
These trees that we planted are a symbol of pride,  
To show that our soldiers really do try,  
Without them today we might not be free,  
So this is a thanks to you from me.  
These trees that we planted will always be there,  
To show that our country will always care.  
From past, to present, and into tomorrow,  
In happiness and even in sorrow.  
These trees that we planted stand next to our flag,  
So hold your head high, and don't let it drag,  
You fought for our country and served us proud,  
So I'll say it forever and I'll say it out loud.  
These trees that we planted will forever represent you,  
For all that you've done and what's still left to do.

### Inside The Post

10 Pages, 1 Section	
Calendar .....	10
Church .....	2
Editorials .....	4
School .....	9
Sports .....	7



Lake-Lehman ends season on top  
Page 7

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