

The DALLAS POST

50¢

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Everybody's pleasant and we try to have a very nice game. I always say, don't forget, we're here to have fun and make money for the children.

Ellie Gerchak
Leader of the bridge group



John Bougher, of Dallas, peers intently at the hand he has been dealt during a session of a bridge club in Dallas. CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Card sharks help kids

Bridge group gives members' fees to Shriners Hospital

By REBECCA BRIA
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It was late spring of this year when Reverend Diane Sickler first learned the Shriners Hospitals for Children Marathon Bridge Group needed substitute players.

Sickler called to sign up and was told the group would not meet again until October. Disappointed, but patient, Sickler waited four months. On Friday, Oct. 17, she finally got to play.

"I just moved to Dallas a year and a half ago and I love to play bridge," said Sickler, the minister at Unity Church in Wilkes-Barre. "But being a single person, it's hard to find a bridge group. You have to expand beyond the church community and meet new people. And I don't go to bars."

Shriners Hospitals for Children Marathon Bridge Group is an all ages, co-ed group that plays at 10:30 a.m. on the third Friday of each month from October through June at the Irem Temple Country Club in Dallas. Although the group is not associated with Shriners Hospitals, it donates money raised from regular member dues to the charitable organization. There is no fee for substitute players.

The bridge group was started by the late Bill and Pauline Clewell of Trucksville. Ellie Gerchak, 76, of Dallas, was a member of the group for about four years when the Clewells, who were



Wallace Williams keeps score while Maude Anker continues the play during a bridge club session in Dallas.

aging, asked her to take over as leader of that group and of another bridge group at the Wilkes-Barre YMCA. That was about 19 years ago.

Gerchak moved the YMCA group to Irem and donated proceeds made during the games to the Back Mountain Memorial Library. After several years, however, it became too difficult for her to run two groups and she eliminated the second group.

The first group that always met at Irem continued under Gerchak who decided that money raised from that group should go to Shriners Hospitals for Children.

"The reason I'm so intent on this is because I grew up with juvenile arthritis, although I wasn't diagnosed until 19," Gerchak said. "That's the

reason it's so important to me and I kept it going. Everybody's pleasant and we try to have a very nice game. I always say, don't forget, we're here to have fun and make money for the children. They treat us very well at the country club. They have been very good to us."

On October 17, the group reconvened for a new season and three tables with four people at each enjoyed games of bridge.

"I'm hoping to get this back up to four players eventually," Gerchak told the group.

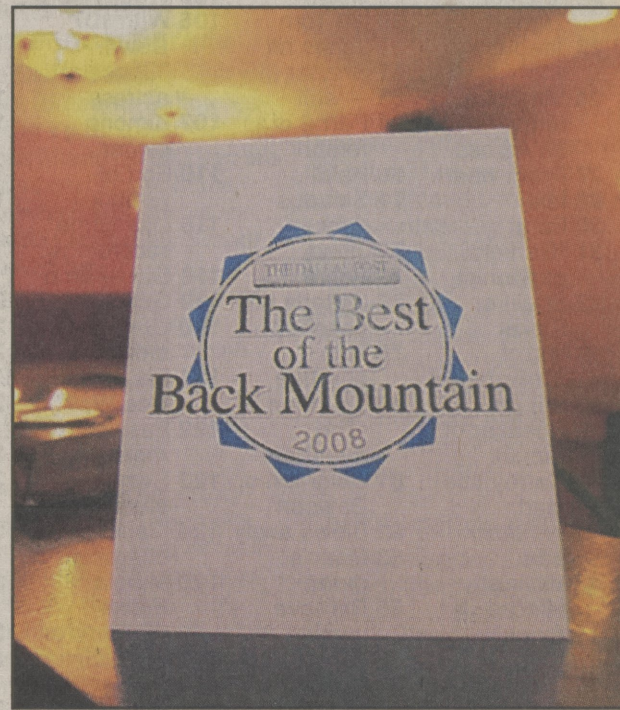
John Brougher, of Dallas, also participated in the group as a substitute player for the first time. Brougher is unable to fish due to a recent oper-

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TO JOIN THE GROUP

Those who are interested in becoming substitute players for the Shriners Hospitals for Children Marathon Bridge Group should call Ellie Gerchak at 675-8346.

SIMPLY THE BEST



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

The Dallas Post held its first-ever "Best of the Back Mountain" awards reception Tuesday evening at Fire & Ice in Trucksville. Eighty-two winners in 79 categories, determined by a readers' poll, were honored with plaques and window decals. For a complete listing of those winners, along with photos, please see our special section inside today's newspaper.

'All About Me' welcomes students

By REBECCA BRIA
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Dressed in her lime green soccer shirt and jacket, Dejah Cooper nervously awaited her turn at the microphone.

"I'm kind of shy," she said. "I've got butterflies in my stomach."

The fourth-grader who moved to the Dallas area from New Jersey over the summer introduced herself to the students and teachers of Wycallis Elementary School on Wednesday, Oct. 22, during an "All About Me" assembly. The program allowed returning students to become acquainted with new children in grades one through five as each new student announced his or her name and the school they used to attend. All students of the school were encouraged to wear clothing that reflecting their interests.

ON THE WEB

To see more photos go to www.mydallaspost.com

Due to a recent expansion of Wycallis Elementary, many students who previously attended Dallas Elementary were moved to Wycallis beginning this year, amounting to many more new students than usual. The \$3 million expansion and renovation, which began in January 2008, included eight new classrooms, a cafeteria addition and an air conditioning upgrade throughout the building. The project was completed in time for the current school year.

"Boys and girls, this is one of my favorite days," said Kathleen McCarthy, principal at Wycallis. "This is the first time we've ever had so many new children in the school. There are usually only 30 or 40. It's not likely we'll ever have so many again."

According to McCarthy, the "All About Me" program began at Wycallis in the fall of 2000, one year after the school opened. It was started in response to a suggestion by parents to hold more assemblies and celebrations for the children.

"This is a way of giving them (new students) recogni-

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ONE MORE DAY TO BE SPOOKED AT LIBRARY



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Kiera Gross is aghast at her appearance prior to the opening of the Haunted Mansion at the Back Mountain Memorial Library. The Haunted Mansion continues today from 5 to 9 p.m. with all proceeds benefiting the library. For more Haunted Mansion photos, please turn to page 5.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTO/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Megan Daily dressed as a Pampered Chef for the "All About Me" program at Wycallis Elementary School.

