

4H CLUB PLANTS TREES



Youths from Back Mountain's 4H club recently completed a service learning project with the Kingston Municipality Shade Tree Commission. The youths joined volunteers from Luzerne County Community College and Wilkes University to plant 25 trees. Shown planting a tree are Vinnie Cotrone, Penn State Cooperative Extension; Ryan Thomas, Brian Morgan, Daniel Morgan, Christopher Ehret and Corey Ehret. Absent at the time of the photo was Brenden Ehret.

JUNIOR LEAGUE HOLDS ANNUAL FUNDRAISER



The Junior League of Wilkes-Barre, an all-volunteer women's group with a mission of helping women and children throughout the Wyoming Valley, held its major annual fundraiser "Wine & Dine at the Luzerne County Courthouse" on Sunday, April 26. Among the restaurants donating food for the event were 31 Lake Street, Asaki and Fire & Ice on Toby Creek. Shown here, from left, are Catherine Mihalick, of Shavertown, Junior League president; Melissa Wassel and Stacy Boshier, event co-chairwomen.

DALLAS MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS RECOGNIZED



Nora Tidey, Dana Capitano and Amber Habib each won United States Savings Bonds for introducing a school-wide recycling program. Members of the Dallas Middle School Gifted Science classes participated in an online science fair competition through eCYBERMISSION sponsored by the U.S. Army. Each team proposed a topic that would help solve a problem in their community. As a result of the completion of their project, ReTREEving Green has been named the Seventh Grade Benefit to the Community Winner of the Northeast Region of the United States. The project was facilitated by Miss Kylie Rosengrant, teacher. From left, are Miss Kylie Rosengrant, teacher; Amber Habib, Nora Tidey, Dana Capitano and Mr. Thomas Duffy, principal.

CHURCH BRIEFS

Revival services planned at church

Revival services will be held at 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. today, May 3, at Outreach of Faith, 106 Green Castle Rd., Tunkhannock.

Evangelist Dee Cash will offer "Preaching with Sign & Wonders Following." For more information, call 237-0963 or 333-4757.

Prayer service scheduled for May 7

A National Day of Prayer service will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, at the Sweet Valley Church of Christ, 5439 Main Rd., Sweet Valley. For information, call 477-2320.

Lehman-Idetown women plan sale

The United Methodist Women of the Lehman-Idetown Church will hold their annual Spring Rummage Sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, May 8, and from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, May 9, which is Bag Day.

There will be lunch, a bake sale and a soup sale. Cost of soup is \$4.50 a quart.

Slightly-used rummage, excluding large items and computer products, may be dropped off at the church.

Chicken dinner/bake sale set for May 9

A baked chicken dinner and bake sale will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 9, at the Loyalville United Methodist Church. Cost is \$8 for adults and \$3.50 for children under 12 years of age.

Takeouts are available by calling 477-3521 and leaving a message with your name, phone number, number of dinners requested and pickup time.

Christian music trio to perform May 22

"The Martins," a Christian music trio that performs a variety of musical styles, including gospel, contemporary and worship, will perform at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 22, at the Cross Creek Community Church, 370 Carverton Rd., Trucksville.

A freewill offering will be taken. For more information, call 696-0399.

WORKERS

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the jobless rate in the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton area was 8.8% as of January 2009, up more than 2% in just a five-month period.

According to a report released by the real estate Web site First American Corelogic, more people in Luzerne County are defaulting on their mortgages. The report stated that one out of every 25 mortgages was 90 days or more delinquent in 2008, a rate twice that of the state average.

Mike Slacktish, owner of Century 21 Signature Properties in Shavertown, has more clients in foreclosure who want to "short sale" their homes. This means they are willing to sell their property for less money than they owe on it, thus allowing the home to sell faster and minimizing the damage to clients' credit score for being in foreclosure.

"Foreclosures hurt their credit more than a short sale," Slacktish explained.

Consumer Credit Counseling Services (CCCS) of NEPA makes mortgage assistance available to qualified applicants through the Homeowners Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (HEMAP) which, in some cases, helps people save their homes from foreclosure.

CCCS Director of Counseling Craig Selner has noticed an increase in foreclosure clients in recent months.

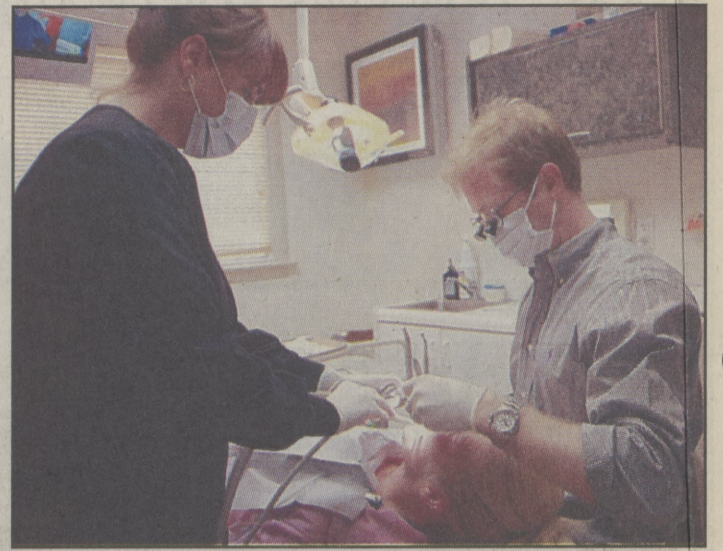
"Some of those clients are in that situation because of job layoffs," he said, adding that marital problems and medical issues are other common reasons.

Affording health care may be the most worrying issue facing local workers as many people, particularly those in service industries, do without health insurance if their employer does not offer it. Some employers who do offer health insurance compensate for the cost by cutting their employees' pay.

Helen Kotowicz is a phlebotomist at the Pennant Laboratory in Dallas where she draws blood samples for patients for laboratory testing. She would make \$3 less an hour if she got a different position that would give her health benefits.

"In my financial position, I can't afford to lose even 50 cents," she said.

The Hope Center is a free health clinic in Trucksville which treats the uninsured



Charlotte Bartzick/For the Dallas Post
Kim Mytych, CDA, and Dr. James DeFinnis practice dentistry at Back Mountain Dental in Trucksville. Dr. DeFinnis says he is performing more emergency procedures during the economic recession.

"There's more pain-driven and more emergency care. Many need more intensive work."

Dr. James DeFinnis
Back Mountain Dental

and is open from 6 to 8 p.m. every Monday. According to Director Ron Hillard, the clinic treats 20 clients a night, up from eight when it first opened four years ago. Four local physicians treat patients on a rotating basis. Medicine is provided by the Wilkes University Pharmacy and other supplies come through private donations.

The clinic has never run out of supplies, Hillard said, adding, "With the increase in the numbers of clients, we're not sure what the future will hold."

Joseph Ballo, 59, visited the clinic for an ear problem. He was self-employed as a carpenter, contracting with a company called Homeworks until the carpentry jobs dried up in December. Because he was self-employed, he cannot collect unemployment and has been living on his savings ever since.

"I've looked for a job today, everyday. That's what I do," he said, noting that his savings are almost gone.

The rising numbers of uninsured people in Pennsylvania is reflected in the growth rate of adultBasic, the state program that provides health care to low-income adults. The Health Insurance Status survey projects the wait list for adultBasic will increase to 282,000 in June 2009, up from 126,000 in 2008.

The program will begin providing health care coverage to new enrollees on July 1, 2009, provided the legislation for expanded coverage passes and the federal government agrees

to contribute matching funds. Those additional federal funds may come in the form of part of President Obama's stimulus package for Pennsylvania. According to www.recovery.pa.gov, a Web site that explains how Obama's stimulus funds will be distributed in Pennsylvania, \$4 billion will be directed to funding health care in the state, including health care for low-income workers.

Help exists for the unemployed, too. PA CareerLink provides employment and training opportunities to displaced workers, including those in the Back Mountain. The organization, which is funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, holds workshops in resume writing and job skills and often directs workers into new jobs.

Dr. Thomas Knapp, an associate professor of economics at Penn State Wilkes-Barre, expects that President Obama's stimulus package will help the average worker.

"The increase in spending at the national level that results from the public expenditures on projects will lead to higher spending in various places throughout the economy," he said. "Businesses on average will find their sales recovering and will retain or add workers as a result. In turn, households find themselves with growing incomes and spending rises."

Despite the difficulties that he currently faces, Sutton of Back Mountain Auto agreed with this assessment.

"Eventually, things will get better," he said.

BOARD

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Technical School's joint operating committee for four years and was president of that committee last year.

Like Schuler, Preece, who was a math teacher for 35 years, feels that teaching at Dallas High School has given him experience in how the educational system works.

"I've been an advocate of education all of my education career and would like to continue this advocacy in a new role," Preece said. "I believe education is the equalizer and the primary tool to enable students to thrive in a complex world."

If elected to the school board, Preece, 64, of Dallas Township, is interested in developing a partnership when developing new policies. The partnership would include the community, school board, administration, faculty and support staff.

"I think that my personal goal would be to approach each issue with an open mind and consider all ideas and possible solutions," Preece said.

Kyle, who has been a certified public accountant for 24 years, says having a retired teacher on the board can be good, but not as a strong voting block. She prefers a diverse board because it allows more background to be brought to an issue.

"I think it's hard because of personnel issues and when they were teachers in your district, they also have subjectivity and might have a bias," Kyle said. "I

"Personally, I think the issue for this particular election is they want a school board composed of five former teachers. What objectivity and connectivity issues will face the board?"

Dick Orlowski
Dallas School Board candidate

think independence and diversity on the board is a good thing and I wouldn't be happy if there were five parents of high school students without any children in the elementary schools."

Kyle, 48, was first on the school board from 1997 to 2000 and served as chairperson of the policy and finance committees. She moved to Wisconsin for two years before re-establishing residency in Trucksville.

Kyle was re-elected to her current term in 2005 and has served as chairperson of the finance and negotiating committees. She has also been president of the board for the past two years. In addition, she is the Region 7 director of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association.

Coslett, who is serving his second, non-consecutive term on the board, is running for re-election to see through the construction and completion of the high school.

"The biggest issue right now is getting all the 't's crossed and the 'i's dotted to commit the site development and construction of the new senior high school," he said.

The incumbent first held office from 1991 to 1995 and was elected again in 2005. The Back Mountain dentist says he did not run again in 1995 so he could fo-

cus on his practice. In his current term, Coslett spent his first two years on the student activities committee and his second two years on the education committee.

The 51-year-old Trucksville resident is also president of the board of directors for Back Mountain Recreation.

Thomas Stitzer was previously a member of the school board in the early 1990s and has decided to once again run for election.

Stitzer, 60, of Dallas Township, is a retired reading specialist from the Wilkes-Barre Area School District.

"I had some concerns about the scheduling for the school, especially in the senior high with the block scheduling," Stitzer said. "I felt it was time for a different view. After my four years being on the board and all my years of teaching, I know what I'm getting into."

Stitzer would also like to see kindergarteners spend a full day in school instead of half a day, which he says has become commonplace in many area school districts.

"I've seen the results being a reading specialist, full-time kindergarten is a wonderful thing," Stitzer said. "I'm experienced, educated and common sense rules with me."