

The DALLAS POST

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Thirty years later, another Prater valedictorian

Commencement ceremonies honor 211 graduates from Dallas High School.

By REBECCA BRIA
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Dallas High Senior School celebrated graduation at 6 p.m. on Friday, June 5 at Dallas Middle School. The ceremony was held at the middle school instead of at Mountaineer Stadium due to an all-day steady rain.

The school graduated 211 seniors this year. Although many of the students are exceptional, two seniors' experiences are especially noteworthy. Here are their stories.

Like father like son

Dallas High School senior John F. Prater set out to Mountaineer Stadium on Friday, June 5, to enjoy the same recognition his father had 30 years ago.

But Prater wasn't simply graduating. He was the school's class valedictorian just as his father, Dr. John M. Prater, was in 1979.

John F. Prater informed the crowd at graduation of the coincidence during his valedictorian speech and received surprise and clapping. The real surprise, however, came when John F. Prater returned home after the commencement ceremonies and learned that his grandfather, the Rev. Jack Prater, was valedictorian of Forty Fort High School in 1951.

"I just thought that was pretty

MORE PHOTOS

To view additional photos of the Dallas High School 2009 commencement ceremonies, please turn to page 7.

cool," John F. Prater said. "What a coincidence; 30 years. I thought it was really cool about my grandfather. We got a picture together of all of us lined up."

Dr. John M. Prater says not much has changed at Dallas since he graduated except that he did not have to give a valedictorian speech as his son did.

"I'm just very proud of my son and I know how hard he worked and that's it," Dr. John M. Prater said. "I never really thought about that it had been 30 years since I was in high school. We didn't really know about the valedictorian status until Wednesday

night."

John F. Prater will study biology at King's College this fall. He hopes to one day the field of medicine and practice with his father, a family doctor.

"I always had an interest in medicine and over the summer he helped me by letting me come to a free clinic in Wilkes-Barre," John F. Prater said of his father. "I watched how he handled patients and diagnosed them. I kind of knew (this is what I wanted to do) before hand but that set it in place, seeing it in action."



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John Prater, Dallas High School valedictorian, walks to the podium to address his classmates.

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Celebrating Father's Day as Jesus would

By REBECCA BRIA
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Dallas United Methodist Church members will observe Father's Day at a place Jesus might visit if he were alive today.

The congregation will hold its Father's Day service at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 21, in the parking lot of Dallas Centre Hardware on Main Street.

"We were talking about how we would celebrate Father's Day and we thought about Jesus being a carpenter and his father being a carpenter and this stereotype of men loving their tools and we thought it would be a good connection to make and to spark some interest in our congregation and our community," said the Rev. Earl W. Roberts III, pastor of Dallas United Methodist Church.

Church member Paul Donlin approached Gerard and Michele Geise, owners of Dallas Centre Hardware, about having the service in their lot. The husband and wife were open to the idea even though they belong to Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church.

"We knew Rev. Lewis very well, the retired pastor," Gerard Geise said. "Most of the parishioners from the church are good customers of ours."

A service and breakfast were held in conjunction at the Dallas United Methodist Church in May

IF YOU GO ...

Who: Dallas United Methodist Church
Rev. Earl W. Lewis III, pastor
What: Father's Day church service
When: 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 21
Where: Parking lot of Dallas Centre Hardware, Main Street

to honor women on Mother's Day.

The Rev. Lewis and his wife, Anne, are the parents to two sons: Scott, who died in 1998; and Stephen, 23. The Rev. Lewis says he is proud to be a father, which he says is not a defined role.

"There are many kinds of families," the Rev. Lewis said. "There are fathers, there are stepfathers and there are adoptive fathers. There are folks who have no fathers that are fatherly to others. It's not just mom and dad and two kids."

The Geises have worked at Dallas Centre Hardware for many years, becoming the owners this year after purchasing the business from Michele's parents, Jim and Carol Eason. The couple has three boys: Garrett, 13; Elijah, 10; and Judah, 7.

Gerard Geise said the church service is a first for Dallas Centre Hardware, which never had a parking lot large enough for such an event until the business ac-

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CELEBRATING FLAG DAY



CHARLOTTE BZRTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

A mural of the American flag painted by Son Yang on a wall at the Back Mountain Car Wash in Shavertown gets a second look from 3-year-old Joseph Sowga, of Shavertown. Flag Day, celebrated on June 14, commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened that day by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; in August 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress. Flag Day is not an official federal holiday, though on June 14, 1937, Pennsylvania became the first (and only) U.S. state to celebrate Flag Day as a state holiday.



George Stilt, of Luzerne, baits the hook for his daughter, Brianna, during a "Fish Free" event at Frances Slocum State Park.



Gerald Wazeter, of Trucksville, left, and his friend and teacher, Ralph Moharsky, prepare for a day of free fishing at Frances Slocum State Park.

Fishing for free

Novice fisherpersons enjoyed the sport of fishing at Frances Slocum State Park during a Fish for Free Day on Sunday, June 7. Fish for Free Days allow anyone (resident or non-resident) to legally fish for Pennsylvania's most popular fish without a fishing license. Each year the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's Executive Director designates two Fish for Free Days. No fishing license is required to fish on Pennsylvania's waterways on these days. All other fishing regulations still apply.



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