

LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Parents express concerns about security in schools

By REBECCA BRIA
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Tammy Evans addressed the Lake-Lehman School Board Monday evening in front of a standing-room only crowd with concerns about security at the junior/senior high school.

Evans, a parent from Lehman Township, wanted to know if the district would continue to provide an on-site police officer at the school. She also inquired about metal detectors, unlocked doors and locker accessibility after school hours.

Lake-Lehman officials cancelled classes at the junior/senior high school on Dec. 10 following the murder of Herbert Lee Sr., 80, at his Lake Township home. Herbert Lee was allegedly shot to death by his great-grandson, Cody Lee, the day before.

Cody Lee was a student at the

school and his whereabouts were unknown as of late Dec. 9.

Superintendent James McGovern said the district will continue to provide an on-site resource officer at the junior/senior high school. McGovern said the district has had Lehman Township Police Officer Charlie Musial at the school daily.

According to McGovern, the district plans to apply for funding to hire a police officer through the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools from the U.S. Dept. of Education.

McGovern said the district does have a metal detector wand which has been in use since the incident. The district does not have a walk-through metal detector, but the superintendent said he has received offers from other districts to loan their walk-through detectors.

"While we have not found weaponry or anything of that na-

ture, we have found other things such as tobacco products," he said.

McGovern said the only time a door to the school could possibly be left open is if a member of the faculty or administration props one open to quickly go outside. He said the only way to fix this issue is to address it with school personnel and enforce it.

Evans said she was also concerned about students accessing their lockers after school. The lockers are off limits via a gate; however, students can get around the gate by going through the cafeteria.

McGovern and the board made a note of the issue.

McGovern added that a recent security audit of the district's schools showed a problem only at Lehman-Jackson Elementary School. The school has some classrooms without doors and it

was recommended to the district that doors be installed.

Ross Elementary project

Sam Scarantino, of Quad3 Inc., updated the board on the status of the Ross Elementary Expansion Project. Scarantino said the roof is 90 percent complete and the masonry is 100 percent complete. The contractor hoped to have the building enclosed by Christmas, Scarantino said.

According to Scarantino, the overall completion of the project will be a little later in January because of an equipment issue.

Scarantino also notified the board that \$1,000 in copper piping and a light post was stolen from the site. Ross Elementary Principal Donald James said a basketball backboard and hoop were also stolen.

The board voted to table a vote to disburse payments in the

amount of \$305,567.85 for the project until a cost report is produced by the contractor for a pump station and moving of dirt.

Donation

Representatives from the Ross Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization presented the board with a check for \$20,000 to be used for the new playground that is part of the school's expansion project.

Personnel

Michelle Russo, of Shavertown, was hired as a professional employee with an initial assignment of elementary autism teacher at a salary of \$39,179.

Alysia Jones, of Edwardsville, and Kathryn Mullins, of Wyoming, were appointed as temporary professional employees effective Jan. 4, 2010 and Jan. 22, 2010, respectively, with an initial assign-

ment of elementary intervention specialist. Jones will have a pro-rated salary at the master's level and Mullins' salary will be one-half the bachelor's plus 24 level.

Music positions filled for the current school year include secondary spring musical director, Gina Major; elementary spring musical director, Patrick Stanley; and indoor percussion instructor, Albert DeFrancesco.

Also hired were Dawn Vitach, of Harveys Lake, as a part-time custodian at Ross Elementary School for the 3 to 8 p.m. shift at a rate of \$9.50 per hour; and Patricia Hoover, of Dallas, as a full-time custodian at the junior/senior high school for the 2:30 to 11:30 shift at a rate of \$9.50 per hour.

In addition, the board accepted the resignation of Diane Nevel as a part-time custodian at Ross Elementary School.

BACK MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Members advised of gas drilling in area

By REBECCA BRIA
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Lehman Township supervisor Doug Ide informed members of the Back Mountain Community Partnership (BMCP) on Dec. 17 at Misericordia University about the latest natural gas drilling news in the area.

The BMCP is an inter-municipal group composed of Dallas, Franklin, Jackson, Kingston and Lehman townships and Dallas Borough.

Ide attended a public information session by EnCana Oil and Gas Tuesday at Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School. He and the other Lehman Township supervisors have also met with EnCana representatives.

Ide learned WhitMar Exploration Company has leased 24,000 acres of property in the northwestern part of Luzerne County, mainly on the north side of Route 118 in Fairmount, Ross, Lake and Lehman townships.

"The gas drilling is going to be here in the Back Mountain," said Al Fox, BMCP president. "I thought it was quite alarming to hear the other day that 800 people signed up."

According to Ide, EnCana, which will do the natural gas drilling, hopes to form two exploration wells in the county - one in Fairmount Township and one in Lehman Township - if it receives the required permits. The wells will prove whether or not there is natural gas in the area.

Ide says EnCana is willing to bond any road the township requests. Road deterioration and traffic from heavy trucks and machinery has been a common concern among the BMCP.

"We're going to set some conditions on some roads we do not want traveled, specifically Old Route 115, Hillside Road," Ide said.

BMCP officials decided to in-

vite representatives from EnCana to speak at the group's January meeting.

In February, the BMCP will invite back Brian Oram, a geologist and Wilkes University professor, to discuss what the municipalities should do to safeguard their drinking water and other issues related to drilling. Oram spoke at the BMCP's September meeting and briefly touched on water's involvement in natural gas drilling.

Municipality contributions

The BMCP approved that each member municipality will contribute \$300 to the group's proposed 2010 operating budget. The budget is to cover general government administration costs.

Grant funding

Joseph Chacke, of NEPA Alliance, said he is making progress with the Department of Environmental Protection Energy Conservation Grant.

Kingston and Lehman Townships and Dallas Borough were approved in November for the full \$239,000 they applied for from the grant.

The funds will be used for energy-efficiency improvements in the municipalities' buildings, including lighting, heating and door retrofits and door replacements.

Chacke expects the projects to be ready to be bid in January or February.

BMCP representative leaving

Pat Peiffer, of Dallas Borough Council, announced that it was her last BMCP meeting. Peiffer, who served on the borough's council for 20 years, most recently as president, is leaving council after Dec. 31 when her term expires.

Peiffer was the secretary and treasurer for the BMCP. Her position will be filled when the BMCP reorganizes at its January meeting.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Spelling out the word Christmas during the Gate of Heaven holiday program are, from left, Mallory McGeehan, Hunter Wesolowski, Gabriella Randazzo, Jacob Baldrice, Michael Murray, Nicholas Finarelli, Charles Swebston, Lorelei Centrella and John Kuderka.

'The Littlest Christmas Tree' comes to Gate of Heaven School

"The Littlest Christmas Tree" came to Gate of Heaven School as kindergarten and first-grade students presented their annual holiday program for friends and family members.

Gina Kerrick played the Littlest Christmas Tree while Aidan Mateos was Santa and Jordyn Dutko played the role of Mrs. Claus.

Christmas Trees were played by Marcella Cantando, Claire Dougherty, Marigrace Huntington, Isabella Locke, Dea Middleton, Lauren Ungvarsky and Emily Williams.

Playing the roles of Elves were Jacob Baldrice, Lorelei Centrella, Santino Diana, Nicholas Finarelli, Chad Honeywell, Ricky Hynick, John Kuderka, Brooke Martin, Gordan Matusavige, Mallory McGeehan, Michael Murray, Calli Ogurkis, Bryan Osipower, Gabriella Randazzo, Brayden Rogowski, Charles Swebston, Adam Walp and Hunter Wesolowski.

Janet Ghannam is teacher and Carolyn Suhocki is the classroom aide.



Dea Middleton, left, wonders at the costume worn by Emily Williams, center, during the Gate of Heaven School annual kindergarten and first-grade holiday performance.



Brooke Martin takes time to wonder at trees, stars and candy canes during the Gate of Heaven annual kindergarten and first-grade Christmas play.



Ava Rose Fino, left, and Alex Hajowski play Mary and Joseph in the play.



Playing the part of the Three Kings are, from left, Colin Marshall, Jake Pizzollato and Daniel Drost.

CIVIC BRIEFS

Music Box slates auditions

Auditions for "American Stars of Tomorrow," an original musical revue written and directed by Debbie Zehner, will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 28, and Tuesday, Dec. 29, at the Music Box Dinner Playhouse.

All children and young adults ages 7-20 may audition and asked to bring sheet music of their choice. An accompanist will be provided.

Contra dance planned

A New England Contra dance sponsored by the Chicory House and the Folklore Society will feature the music

of "The Warrington Family Band" and caller Bob Nicholson at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 2, at the Church of Christ Uniting, Sprague Avenue, Kingston.

No partner or previous experience is necessary. Admission to the dance is \$9 for adults and \$25 for families. For more information, call 333-4007.

Alzheimer's Support Group will meet

The Dallas Alzheimer's Support Group will meet at 11 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 7, in the chapel at the Meadows Nursing Center, 55 W. Center Hill Rd., Dallas.