

# The DALLAS POST

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## Dallas HS building comes crashing down

By SARAH HITE  
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The enormous claw of an excavator leaned into the old Dallas High School athletic locker rooms on Monday as demolition began on the 50-year-old school to make way for a parking lot.

Bricks crumbled under its weight, and the jagged-toothed piece of machinery effortlessly lifted metal scraps, helpless and lying limp in its grip.

Dallas School District Superintendent Frank Galicki called the scene of the building's demolition "bittersweet."

The old Dallas High School building will be gone but not forgotten - the bricks and masonry will be crushed and used as base fill for the parking lot, which will add about 215 spaces for students and faculty.

Looking at a room where sports victories were celebrated at one time, Galicki described its décor when the football team returned from the 1993 state championships in Altoona.

"It's amazing," Galicki added while watching the claw dig into the gym walls. He served as principal at the Dallas High School from 1983 until 2005 when he

was selected for the position of superintendent by the school board.

Demolition began Monday "on schedule," according to Bob Nesbit of Crabtree Rohrbaugh & Associates, the district's architects.

Nesbit said the 230,000 square-foot new high school, which is about 35 feet away from the demolition area, is "virtually fin-

ished" with just some final minor installations and clean ups to complete.

Asbestos abatement is ongoing in the old building, but construction crews are working on the demolition piece by piece in order to prepare for sidewalks in front of the \$38 million new school.

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Demolition began Monday on the old Dallas High School building.

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Joan Keating, of Dallas, a teacher at Gate of Heaven School, is comforted during a final Mass for the school.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Members of the school choir at Gate of Heaven School sing for the last time.

## Gate of Heaven School is now just a memory

By SARAH HITE  
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A memorable Mass marked the end of an unforgettable era.

Gate of Heaven School celebrated its final day after 60 years of academics and extracurriculars embedded in friendship and family at a Mass on June 15.

Earlier this spring, the Diocese of Scranton announced the closure of four schools - two in Luzerne County and two in Lackawanna County - to be enacted at the end of the 2010-11 academic school year.

Students didn't have to wear their uniforms that day, but some

donned the iconic Gator green as they ushered into the pews.

Graduates who ascended into a high school state of mind a week and a half earlier gathered at the church on Machell Avenue for one last good-bye.

"We wanted to experience the last day and be here for the school," said Cristina McFarland, 14, of Nanticoke.

Students, family, faculty and friends, past and present, crowded the aisles at the service which was led by the Rev. John Lambert, Episcopal Vicar for the Eastern Pastoral Region and Episcopal Vicar for School Planning of the Diocese of Scranton.

During his sermon, he told the

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audience that, though this may be a "difficult time of transition, God gives us bends in the road, but never a dead end."

Former principal Mary Tigie also addressed the audience at the Mass, sharing memories and words of wisdom for the students, faculty and families.

She talked about how she had to kiss a pig as part of a fundraiser for the accelerated reading program years ago.

She reminisced about how one

precocious student insisted she and her husband had built the school.

She even talked about decorations during St. Patrick's Day, when she asked a little boy if he had ever heard of leprechauns.

"He said, 'I learned about leprechauns at Mass. Jesus cured 10 leprechauns,'" Tigie recounted as the audience laughed.

Parents and students sobbed quietly as Tigie recited her speech, acknowledging and

thanking everyone who had ever been involved in the school.

She said the students, past and present, are the "bricks and cinder blocks" of the school and thanked the many aides and staffers who "answered the call."

"What you have loved, others have loved because you taught them how," Tigie said, quoting Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, of the school's teachers.

Principal Abe Simon was also praised at the event - Tigie called him a "jack-of-all-trades and master of all." She congratulated him on his appointment as vice principal at Holy Redeemer High School, and said she's glad he can continue his "commit-

ment, dedication and gutsy hard work."

Though the Mass ended after an hour, not many attendees left the pews as many broke down in tears. The teachers embraced one another in the church foyer, burying their faces in each other's shoulders.

"I am devastated," said Anne Flasser, of Lehman, one of the first attendees of the school in 1951. "No one will forget."

Marge Dewees, of Dallas, said three of her four children attended the school, and she made sure to call them all that morning to share the day.

"This school is a part of our lives," she said.



Shawn Henninger, Jr., of Dallas, helps PA Game Commission venomous snake specialist Jim Chestney insert a readable micro chip into a snake he caught.

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## Creatures slither into Noxen

By SARAH HITE  
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Anyone holding a state-issued snake hunting license could bring rattlers and other species to the event. The snakes were tagged and marked before being returned to their original habitat unharmed by sundown on June 19.

Food, music and good old-fashioned fun slithered its way into Noxen during the 39th annual Rattlesnake Roundup at the Noxen Volunteer Fire Co. fairgrounds June 16-19.

The fundraising event's main attraction is a grassy enclosed pit filled with dangerous creatures which, according to fire company Chief Lew Hackling, are becoming endangered themselves. "The Timber rattlesnake is in danger of losing its habitat," Hackling said as a 29-inch black snake slithered across the top of his knee-high boots.

He said the purpose of the event has changed over the years to raise awareness about how growing human populations and development affect snakes' habitats.

"They were everywhere when

I grew up," said the Noxen resident. "We were always taught to respect them."

Anyone holding a state-issued snake hunting license could bring rattlers and other species to the event. The snakes were tagged and marked before being returned to their original habitat unharmed by sundown on June 19.

While Hackling said getting involved in snake hunting was "another way to get out into the woods," he has gained an extensive background on the reptiles and aims to inform the rest of the public.

"There isn't a lot known about the Timber snakes," he said. "There are currently studies being done on the effects of drilling

in the Marcellus Shale on snake habitats."

In addition to the educational aspect, others came to the event to gawk at creatures they might otherwise never get to see in person.

Thomas Zipay, 10, of Noxen said he loves everything about snakes. Though he's seen snakes

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