

# The DALLAS POST

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## Support great for BMT Trail

By SARAH HITE  
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About 40 supporters attended "An Evening for the Back Mountain Trail" at Lakeside Skillet in Harveys Lake on November 10.

The fundraiser featured a presentation from George White of White Environmental Services about the proposed expansion of the trail, which runs from Luzerne Borough to Dallas Township.

"In the near future, our master plans will be made to expand the trail south into Wilkes-Barre and north to Ricketts Glen," said White.

Julie McMonagle, executive director of the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association, said specific plans to extend the trail to Wilkes-Barre have already been made, but next year a master plan will be developed for the extension to Ricketts Glen State Park in Fairmount Township.

"The trail is a gem a lot of people don't know about," said Midge Kolojechick, of Kingston Township.

Kolojechick said he and his wife, Jean, who serves on the trail's board of directors, walk the trail often with their dog. He said physical activity is important, and the trail provides a scenic way to get in shape.

"I know a friend who lost 40 pounds walking the trail," said Kolojechick.

He said the trail also provides an important link between the past and the present.

The trail was once owned by the Lehigh Valley Railroad and goods such as lumber, ice, leather and anthracite coal were shipped from the Endless Mountains region to the Susquehanna River Basin until 1940. The trail

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Midge Kolojechick  
Kingston Township

was no longer used by the 1960s.

The Anthracite Scenic Trails Association acquired the pathway in 1996 and began transforming the former railroad into a trail accessible to the public.

"It's a great motivational tool to create better health," said Kolojechick. "It's nice to see a friendly face on the trail - you'll probably see them twice because you have to walk back to your car."

Karen Johnson, of Lehman Township, loves to take her grandchildren walking along the trail, and she believes an expansion is a great idea.

"It's good thing," she said. "People in this area need a safe place to ride their bikes or take walks in nature. It's a way of bringing family together."

Johnson said the Back Mountain Trail is also a learning experience, from investigating different tree of types to cleaning up the trail. She hopes the current trail continues to expand in its offerings.

"I would like to see horse riding on the trail," she said.

Judy Rimple, president of the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association, said the possibilities are endless, and fund- and awareness-raising events like "An Evening for the Back Mountain Trail" will only continue to bolster the group's success.

"The trail's going to just explode over the next 10 years," she said.



Dallas Elementary School Principal Thomas Traver agreed to have his head shaved by Robyn Margellina and spray-painted by Casey Whalen, left, as part of a Race for Education week at the school that collected almost \$36,000 for school trips and extra events.

## Principal is very 'blue' after students raise \$36K

By SARAH HITE  
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"It might make for some interesting conversation with Grandma over the dinner table."

Dallas Elementary School Principal Tom Traver  
On his new blue Mohawk hairdo

The buzz of barber shop clippers echoing throughout the gym was only surpassed by the delighted screams of Dallas Elementary students as they witnessed their principal, Thomas Traver, lose his hair.

First, it was a little off the right side. Then the left side. But the top? The top stayed intact.

Traver agreed to get his head shaved in the style of a Mohawk and dye it blue on November 16 in response to the students' fundraising efforts in the Race for Education, a walk-a-thon that supported the school's Parent-Teacher Organization.

The school had an initial goal of \$20,000, which would be used for covering the costs of field trips, playground equipment, classroom parties and other year-round activities. The students managed to surpass and nearly double their goal, bringing in more than \$36,000.

This is the first year Dallas Elementary utilized the fundraising program. In previous years, the PTO would have students sell candy bars or magazine subscriptions to raise funds, but Tracy Zarola, vice president of the group, said no past fundraiser have ever been as profitable.

"We've had such a great response," she said. "The community has been very supportive." Students' jobs were to solicit

individual sponsors for the walk-a-thon. With the help of their parents, students mailed donation cards to their prospective sponsors and collected the funds. The fundraising began in early September, and the walk-a-thon was held on November 16.

Parties were held throughout the fundraiser to bolster students' efforts. If all students in each class received five or more sponsors, a popcorn party awaited them. Those classes with students who received at least 10 supporters were rewarded with a pizza party.

Traver said every class received a popcorn party, and all but four classes had pizza parties for their efforts.

Students who received the most supporters received an extra special treat - a trip with Traver to Grotto Pizza at Harveys Lake in a limousine, followed by some time at the arcade.

"It was so much fun," said Traver of the arcade trip.

One student, 6-year-old Casey Whalen, was the top sponsor solicitor, raking in support from more than 240 family and community members.

He got to perform the task of

spray painting Traver's leftover hair Dallas Mountaineer blue.

When asked how he was able to garner so much support for his walk-a-thon efforts, the tyke from Shavertown just shrugged.

"I don't know," he said. Traver decided upon the Mohawk idea on a whim and found the young students really took interest in the bold move.

"People have done more for lesser causes," said Traver. "...Parents made sacrifices, teachers made sacrifices, and now I guess it's time for me to make mine."

Tanner Saracino, 9, of Shavertown, said his principal "looked cool" after the quickie haircut, and he said he might want to try the look on his own.

Nicholas Liaslewis, 9, of Trucksville, agreed.

"We should get matching Mohawks," he said to his friends.

Traver said he felt a bit cooler, physically speaking, after the partial head shave, and he plans to keep the cut until after Thanksgiving.

"It might make for some interesting conversation with Grandma over the dinner table," he said, laughing.



BEFORE



DURING



AFTER



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Judy Rimple, originator of the Back Mountain Trail, addresses the audience during a dinner meeting of supporters. The group is planning another addition to the popular outdoor area.

### BACK MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

## Group may extend use of emergency center to other towns

By SARAH HITE  
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The Back Mountain Community Partnership discussed extending the use of an emergency control center to other municipalities in the region at a meeting November 17.

The partnership is in the process of preparing a gaming funds grant application to renovate and supply a regional

emergency control center off Route 118 in Lehman Township.

The former medical building was purchased by Dallas Fire & Ambulance last year with a similar purpose in mind and the organization will lease the building to the partnership for emergency and general meeting use.

The space will be used for municipal supply storage, partnership meetings, other

organizational meetings, emergency responder training, sleeping quarters for evacuees if needed and a control center for the Back Mountain Regional Emergency Management Agency.

The idea for the center was developed after storms in late August and early September cut power to hundreds of homes in the Back Mountain.

Vice Chairman John Wilkes Jr., of Jackson Township, sug-

gested the partnership expand its request for support to other nearby municipalities and the Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts.

Chairman James Reino Jr., of Kingston Township, said in request for support letters to Harveys Lake Borough and Fairmount and Lake townships it should be noted that space would be available for those municipalities to utilize the center.

In other news, partnership members discussed the passage of state Senate Bill 1100 with Tom Yoniski, a representative from state Sen. Lisa Baker's office.

The amended bill sets further regulations on natural gas activities in the state and requires an impact fee on unconventional wells.

One amendment on the bill states an applicant can request the state attorney gen-

eral to review local zoning laws to determine whether an ordinance is reasonable, rather

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