

## Her only concern was Mike

By Ann Evans of the Tamaqua High School "Blue and White"

She didn't care about taking a flight to Seattle, Washington, or having to lose a semester at college, or having a needle inserted in her hip 400 times. "My only concern was Mike," said Romayne Postupack, sister of Mike Postupack. Mike was treated for leukemia at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and Romayne recently went there to donate her bone marrow to help Mike recover.

Mike entered the hospital in November of last year to begin chemotherapy treatments and eventually to have a bone marrow transplant. Family members were tested last summer for matches in blood type and antibodies. Romayne said because he was too young, their brother Matt could not serve as a donor but she added, "I was just about a perfect match."

Romayne did not know in advance when or what the procedure would be but she did know her bone marrow was essential, the leukemia cells in Mike's body were killed, and the doctors hoped the bone marrow could cure him completely, Romayne said.

Unfortunately, Romayne, a special education major at Penn State, missed the last two weeks of the fall term and could not return for the

winter term. However, she does not feel bad about it all and said, "What I did was more important than college."

She said, "I didn't know what to expect (in Seattle). Everything went so fast." Both Mike and Romayne were anxious to "get it over." She added, "He felt that this was going to cure him."

Romayne gave her bone marrow for Mike through a surgical procedure called aspirations. During each aspiration a long needle was inserted through the muscle and into the pelvic bone. To get the right amount of bone marrow, they went through

"What I did was more important than college."  
Romayne Postupack

approximately 400 aspirations. "I feel good about helping him," said Romayne, "but I was sore for quite a while."

Mike received the bone marrow through a Hickman line, this tube is put into the chest and goes to the opening of the heart. The patient then does not require being punctured with a needle each time intravenous or blood is given.

The bone marrow transplant was not the final step for Romayne or Mike.

Romayne's schedule depended solely on how Mike was recovering. They each had a routine to follow during the normal 100 day healing time for transplant patients. Romayne explained, "He had to build his system back up to normal. They wouldn't let him out until he could eat and hold down 1000 calories on his own."

Not every bone marrow transplant goes through the same thing," she said. Mike did get sick when his body reacted to the transplant. The sickness came from Graft versus Host recipient or GVH, a natural reaction to a transplant. "I would be considered foreign to his system," said Romayne.

However Mike's hospital stay was prolonged because of the GVH. He had it three to four weeks straight. She said, "Michael was in a lot of pain."

Mike needed buffy coat cells and throughout the GVH, Romayne would go on a pheresis machine to take these cells out of her blood. Romayne did this three and a half hours each day for ten days, and then she had four days rest.

Romayne was very confident about the doctors and the hospital. "They're very particular out there, and they keep a close watch on everything," she said. She added, "They helped a lot."

After being referred to the Seattle hospital by the



Photo by Tim Reese

Children's Hospital, Philadelphia and Sloan-Kettering, New York, the Postupacks found that families of transplant patients came from all over the world. The hospital has no set visiting hours, and the staff doesn't dress in white, providing a more relaxed atmosphere.

Mike returned home February 13. Although not confined to the house, he is not allowed to be in large crowds but can have one or two visitors at home. In nine months, he will return to Seattle for three days and, hopefully, be pronounced cured.

## On the job

By Tony Leshinskie

Being a lifeguard is much more difficult than it appears, as Tom Berge (6th-Agricultural Mechanization) explains. "At the start of the school year, there were many certified lifeguards applying for the few positions open at the Hazleton Campus Pool."

"As a lifeguard you learn discipline and responsibility. The job can be very boring at times, but you must be constantly alert and aware of any potential dangers which the swimmers may unknowingly promote."

"I like the job because it gives me a sense of responsibility, knowing that people depend on me to keep the pool safe for their enjoyment."

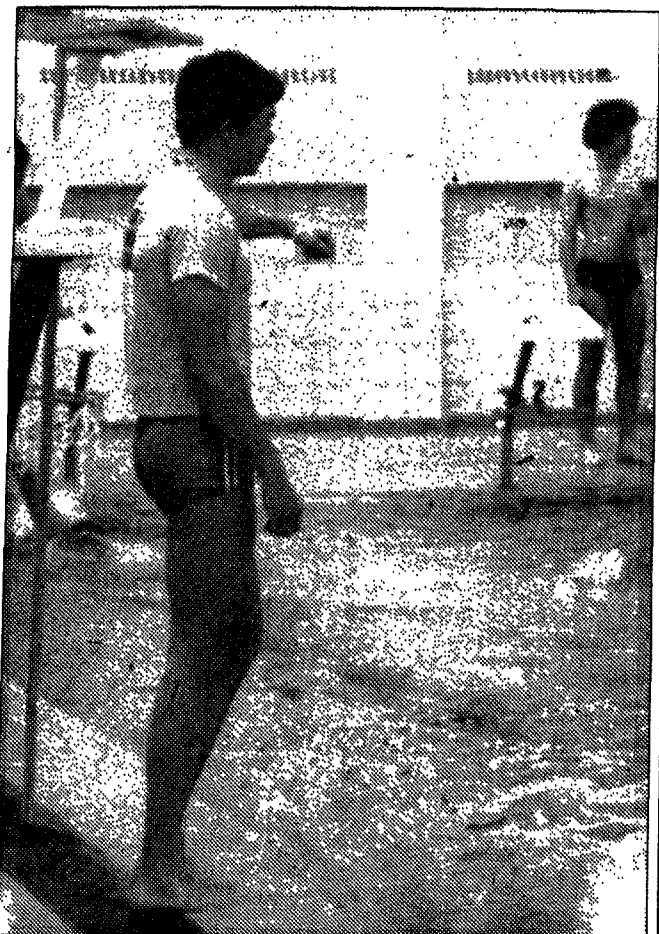


Photo by Tom Topoleski

## Campus bell had long ride

The campus bell has an interesting history associated with it. The present bell was not the first bell on campus. Originally, a smaller bell was situated on a wooden frame near the Commons, and the frame can still be seen. That bell was brought here by former Campus Director Frank Costos. "I saw it at a demolition site on my way back from University Park once and I asked the contractor if I could buy it. He sold it to me for ten dollars and I brought it back," explains Kostos. That bell was eventually stolen.

The current bell was brought by Physical Education Instructor Tom Caccese. "A friend and I brought it up from Bambridge, Maryland on the back of a pickup truck. I'll never forget it, boy was it heavy! When we first put it on



Former bell foundation.

the truck, I thought we blew out all four tires," tells Caccese. That was back around 1969 or 70 and the bell is still in the tower today.

The bell has developed problems in a mechanical ringing device that is currently being repaired.



Bell as it is today.