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For craftsman, work on cars more rewarding than minds

By MEIRA ZUCKER
Post Correspondent

SHAVERTOWN - Drive down Pioneer Avenue, look carefully at the ranch home just a little past Shavertown United Methodist Church, and you'll see a unique ornament in the front picture window: a red miniature rocket ship. But behind this toy is a larger story, one of a man chasing his dream.

"I found it years ago at a car show," says Ross Piazza. The rocket ship is a children's ride from the early 50s. Piazza restored and repainted it as a present for his two daughters many years ago. "It has a headlight and a taillight from a '50 Ford," he noted. Although he worked as a psychologist, he found time to restore the toy, which floats up and down and rocks back and forth.

"I rode on it a lot when I was younger," says his daughter, April. "All of my friends really liked it."

"When I turned 40, I had that crisis."

Ross Piazza
Shavertown

Piazza also restored another show ride, a mechanical carousel horse. For Piazza, repairing cars and machines has been a lifelong hobby. "He was always good at working on things around the house," says April. As a child,

Piazza and his father had put together a car, a Singer Roadster, and since then his interest in repairing and maintaining automobiles has continued.

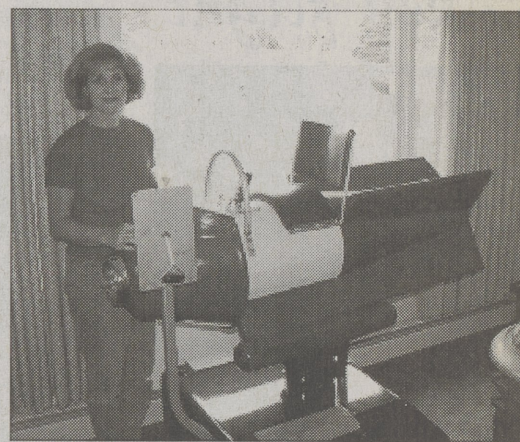
Over time, Piazza realized that he found more pleasure in the garage than the office.

"I was a psychologist at Scranton Counseling Center," recounts Piazza. He was assistant director of a day program, and stressed patients often came for emergency care. "It takes a toll on

you," he remembers. "In mental health you either rust out or burn out."

"When I turned 40, I had that crisis," he says with a laugh. Piazza, who has a Master's degree from Marywood University, quit his safe salaried job and started up his

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Susan Piazza stood by the restored children's ride that sits in the front window of the Piazza home on Pioneer Ave.

Student athlete drug tests nab first violator

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

DALLAS - The first two rounds of random drug testing of Dallas High School student athletes came up dry, but in the third round, one fall sports team member tested positive.

Dr. Gil Griffiths, Superintendent of Schools, confirmed that one student had tested positive for illicit drugs a few weeks ago. The student, who Griffiths would not name, and his family were referred for counseling. "It's a situation where confidentiality overrides everything else," Griffiths said when asked to name the student.

Students who test positive for drugs are not expelled or suspended, Griffiths said, but are immediately removed from the team. They must submit to testing the next season before they can participate in a sport.

In addition to random drug testing of student athletes, Dallas conducts searches of school property, including parking lots by drug-sniffing dogs. The first search at the high school conducted early this school year did not turn up any drugs. Griffiths said the searches will be expanded to the middle school the next time one is

"What happens is you want to get them help as soon as possible."

Dr. Gil Griffiths
Superintendent of Schools

conducted.

When a search is conducted, students are confined to their classrooms while hallways, lockers and empty rooms are searched. It is not legal to search the students directly, Griffiths said.

"I think there are still kids out there making deals and using drugs," Griffiths said, but the activity isn't taking place on school property. He credited the stricter policy, and fines for possession and sale that are doubled for infractions near a school with keeping drugs out of the schools. Also helpful, he said, are the Peer Helpers program, in which students counsel each other, and better training of teachers and other staff to recognize students who might be in trouble.

Students who test positive for drugs but don't have illicit materials in their possession cannot be suspended. "What happens is you want to get them help as soon as possible," Griffiths said.



POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Hey Santa, we're here to help

Third grade classmates at Westmoreland Elementary goofed around with Eric Hildebrand as he tried to put on his Santa costume for the school's annual Christmas and Hanukah music program.

From left, foreground; Nick Barbose, Hildebrand, Seth Brakefield, Kyle Williams. Background; Matt Alfano, Mallory Kern. More photos on page 11.

Grants, discounts help schools add technology

By KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER
Post Staff

LEHMAN - Lake-Lehman school administrators know that keeping up with technology is not cheap. They also realize it's a never-ending process taxpayers alone simply cannot afford. Therefore, the district actively seeks out grants and monies to upgrade the equipment and materials it already has, and to buy new items it needs.

One way school districts are improving their odds of getting funds is by joining consortiums with other districts.

Lake-Lehman recently received a 49 percent discount (which is worth \$22,842) on telecommunications services, Internet access and internal connections, in the first wave of a three-wave program.

The discount, called The E-rate

and Pennsylvania, was sponsored by the Universal Service Fund under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which provides discounts between 20 to 90 percent to help schools and public libraries. The program is administered by the Schools and Libraries Corporation, a non-profit organization under the direction of the Federal Communications Commission.

More than 30,000 districts and libraries across the nation applied for a discount, with only 211 entities receiving any in the first round. Dallas School District received a 43 percent discount, worth \$38,483, in the program's second round.

Rose Ragnacci, Lake-Lehman's technology coordinator, said the discount will lower costs for video conferencing, wiring between the

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POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOEETTER

In the Media Center at Lake-Lehman High School, Mary Beth Shields, information specialist; Jennifer Dunn, senior; and Rose Ragnacci, technology coordinator, look over a

We're looking for holiday traditions to feature, and would like to hear from you. Call us at 675-5211 if you'd like to share yours.

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Lex Lamoreaux, John Korbell and Chris Crawford cheered on their team.

Football of a different sort

On a warm Friday afternoon, Rachel Kasper was racing down the field, but she wasn't playing field hockey. Instead, she was scoring a touchdown for the Lake-Lehman Knights. After a two-point conversion by Janelle Perlis, the Lake-Lehman Knights were set to beat the Lake-Lehman Knights, 8-6.

What? Since when have two teams from the same school played against each other? Since the junior and sophomore girls began playing the senior and freshmen girls in a Lake-Lehman tradition called "Powder Puff Football." Of course, the favored team was the senior/freshmen, as they were cheered on by male cheerleaders Chris Crawford, Jon Korbell, and Lex Lamoreaux. Through the excellent coaching of senior football players Jarrod Dalley, Matt Morris, Carl Sgarlat, and Brent Stransky, senior Jenn McCall was able to score a touchdown late in the fourth quarter, setting the final score.

When asked about the game, coach Jarrod Dalley simply stated, "It was a good time had by all."

By Michelle Lawler



Jen Sutton, Kim Boyle and Bonnie Culver showing what they're made of.

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