

# 10th annual presentation of 'The Gift' opens December 13

This year marks a decade that hundreds of volunteer actors, stage personnel, lighting, sound technicians and animal handlers will deliver the message of the joyous gift of the birth of the Christ Child. As over the past decade, this year's program will be staged completely outdoors on a hillside behind Back Mountain Harvest Assembly, Carverton Road,

Trucksville.

People come from more than 100 miles distant to see the nativity story re-enacted with live animals, shepherds and angels on a hillside and the procession of three kings to the manger in Bethlehem as they come to offer their adoration.

A cast and crew of more than 200 members of Back Mountain Harvest Assembly annually

stage "The Gift". Additional seating this year will allow for nearly 2,000 persons per performance. As always, there is never an admission charge.

A few tips if you're planning to attend: This year's performances will be: Friday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 14 and Sunday, Dec. 15 performances at 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Dress warmly. (This is an en-

tirely outdoors presentation.) Follow the parking directions as you approach Back Mountain Harvest Assembly near the crest of Carverton Road and Manor Drive.

"The Gift" is under the direction of LuAnn Letoski, Kingston resident and member of Back Mountain Harvest Assembly. For details, call: 696-1128.

## Hillside

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discontinued milking their own cows and now exclusively processes milk from other local farmers.

The decision to stop milking broke a long family tradition of selling Hillside milk. Conyngham said his family had been selling raw milk for more than 100 years, since his grandfather bought the farm property from another dairy farming family, the Harters in 1881. He said in the early years, the family used to package it and carry it by horse to Wilkes-Barre.

"The decision has been very hard on the family, but we still have livestock on the farm, we're just not milking," said Conyngham.

Conyngham likened the new business model to one that would have been more common in the 1950s.

"We didn't break new ground here. We're sort of following an old model which is a small local processing plant serving the local community," he said.

Conyngham now buys raw milk from seven area farmers, processes it into skim, 1 percent, 2 percent and whole milk and distributes it through North East Dairy Distributors to doughnut shops, schools and other institutions.

"Our intent is to buy from the pool of milk that is produced only within Luzerne County. We hope to be able to give these guys a marketing outlet," said Conyngham.

Since Hillside started wholesale distribution, business has grown to include distribution to prisons and schools in Schuylkill and Wayne counties.

"We're really in a growth



POST PHOTO/ERIN YOUNGMAN

Will Conyngham explained a step in processing all milk that comes into the dairy goes through.

mode; we took on all this new business. We're trying to figure out how do we get it done and not work 70 hours a week?" said Conyngham.

Hillside has gone through other business changes in its lifetime. At one point it had two other retail locations, one in Dallas, which closed earlier in the year and one in Hanover, which closed several years ago.

"One of the reasons we survived was the addition of the dipped ice cream," said Conyngham. He said Hillside will continue to make and sell ice cream through its retail location on Hillside Road. "We absolutely need to be in the retail business, but our experience has been we could only do so much retail." Asked about plans for the fu-

ture, Conyngham said he expects to see his plant "go through significant expansion."

"I've always felt that when a company has an asset, the more you work that asset, the more it pays you back. So if we can run milk through for a wholesale account and do so profitably, it is more contributory and worth doing," said Conyngham.



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