

She works hard, then gets a nice reward



THE POST

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

All American Heroes

Notes from home kept spirits up

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

HARVEYS LAKE — There were times, Eric Pimm admits, when he would think about the mission in Iraq and wonder why he was there and whether the pain, discomfort and death would produce anything of value.

Then a letter would arrive, and in it an elementary school child he had never met would express gratitude for the sacrifice Pimm and thousands of other soldiers were making. That message would lift his spirits and inspire him to keep his focus on the mission, and the day he would return to the States.

That day came Saturday, Feb. 21, when on a typical mid-winter afternoon a small parade wound its way around Harveys Lake, saluting Pimm and Ricky Blaine, two local veterans of the war in Iraq who have returned home safely.

"The people are genuinely interested in what we did and what it was like."

Spc. Eric Pimm
Harveys Lake

For most of the past year, Specialist Pimm was in Iraq, entering from Kuwait on the first day of the war as his unit began a journey that took it almost to the border with Turkey. An early objective was to protect a dam that held back a large reservoir west of Baghdad.

"Our battalion was one of the groups that made the Race for the Carbala Gap," Pimm said. Along the way, they had to fight the Iraqi army's elite Medina tank division.

By May, 2003, Pimm's 2nd Battalion of the 101st Airborne had made its way to the Quyah West Airfield, near Mosul, where he was based until he left on Feb. 2. "We basically covered the whole northwestern part of Iraq," he said.

A crew chief for an attack helicopter, Pimm kept an Apache Longbow flying in very difficult conditions.

Only three aircraft were lost, none to enemy fire. More dangerous was the sand, which he said would be blown up when a helicopter landed, completely blocking the pilot's view of the ground. That led to hard landings, or setting down on a slope, and the

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Eric Pimm and Ricky Blaine relaxed under their division colors before a parade in their honor Feb. 21. Brandon Prichard, in hat, and Brian Wright along with members of Cub Scout Pack 693 of Harveys Lake helped them celebrate the day.

Ricky Blaine saw worst of Iraq

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

HARVEYS LAKE — When he heard Eric Pimm was coming home, Corporal Richard "Ricky" Blaine wangled a four-day pass so he could join the celebration for his best friend.

Blaine returned from Iraq in mid-January after a tour that started in September, 2003. He won't divulge exactly where he was based, other than to say that it was west of Baghdad in a bombed-out palace complex.

His experience with the local people was

less friendly than Pimm's. "It really depended on the day," Blaine said about that relationship. Some people seemed to appreciate the soldiers' help, such as when they repaired an elementary school.

"But there were quite a few Saddam loyalists" in the region, he said. The compound was attacked several times, and once a suicide bomber got inside the walls, killing one soldier and wounding 16 others.

His other contact came when he accompa-

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Another step forward for roundabout plan

□ PennDOT official says funds will be added for study

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS — The construction of a roundabout in the center of Dallas Borough is soon to pass its first hurdle.

Bob Doble, Acting District Engineer for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation said last week a \$400,000 study to evaluate the traffic pattern's feasibility there will be added to its four-year, \$236 million dollar Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

The project — aimed at alleviating traffic congestion at the intersection of state Route 415, Lake, Church and Main streets — was one of two in the Back Mountain to be added to the plan. PennDOT will also set aside about \$400,000 to study a stretch of Route 309 in Kingston Township where several fatal accidents have

occurred. Several other projects that vied for monies will go without any funding, said Doble.

"The projects added (to the TIP) primarily deal with safety issues. Plus, there's a lot of interest in the (roundabout) project," he said.

The roundabout has been championed by several local leaders including College Misericordia President Michael MacDowell and members of borough council. It is viewed by many in the community as a key component of Dallas Borough's ongoing revitalization efforts.

Most of the projects selected for state and federal funding have already been placed on the plan. Doble said the Back Mountain projects are two of a handful that will be put on by May in time for

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Developer says no plan yet for former farmland

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS TWP. — A necessary permit for the development of land at the intersection of Routes 415 and 118 may soon be granted, but the developer says he will not start work any time soon.

The state Department of Transportation (PennDOT) said last week it is reviewing developer J. Naparolo's updated permit application for a development on the former Yalick farm property. The developer cannot break ground on the 48-acre property until he is granted a highway occupancy permit.

PennDOT Permit Engineer Bob Hassel said his office received the application February 17 and that it will be re-

viewed and returned to the developer with an approval decision by February 26.

"If he meets all the requirements, we'll issue the permit in about a week," said Hassel.

Naparolo said he is reviewing a contract to purchase the closed Sunoco gas station in the center of Dallas Borough. The purchase is one condition of the permit, and would make possible the construction of a roundabout there.

Naparolo said Feb. 25 he does not yet have a plan for what he will put on the Dallas Township property, let alone a timetable. His initial proposal to the township supervisors projected a "big box" retail store along with smaller outlying shops.

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No action on tax note, but supervisors seek spending cuts

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — There was lots of talk but not much action at the Feb. 25 special meeting of supervisors.

What was expected to be the main topic of discussion — consideration of taking out the township's first-ever tax anticipation loan — received little attention. Instead, the number of police cars became a hot issue as supervisors sought spending reductions.

Supervisors chairman Chris Yankovich was visibly annoyed that township Manager Eddie O'Neill had not prepared material describing the options for a loan against expected tax revenues. The supervisors called for the special session two weeks earlier, when it appeared the township might come up short of the funds

"Unfortunately, I think tonight's meeting was a waste of time for everyone."

Chris Yankovich
Supervisors chairman

needed to cover expenses as it awaited tax receipts.

O'Neill said he had requested information on a loan from several organizations, but none had arrived. He did explain the terms offered by one bank, which carry an interest rate of 1.3 percent for a six-month loan or 1.6 percent for 12 months.

Supervisor David Jenkins asked how long it would take to actually

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Hiding behind Mardi Gras

Melissa Rukstalis is the girl behind the mask in Ms. Abrams' Mardi Gras celebration at Gate of Heaven School, Dallas, last week. More photos on page 3.

Grant sought to save on master plan cost

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN — In November, the Back Mountain Area Council of Governments nearly lost Kingston Township's participation in the creation of a region-wide master plan. The municipality was facing an unbalanced 2004 budget and contemplated pulling out of the plan to save its projected \$17,000 share of the cost.

Sparked by the situation, other council members began searching for additional funding avenues. In January, the group applied for a \$37,500 Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) grant. If awarded, the grant would cover more than one-third of the \$100,000 master plan and significantly reduce the cost to

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