

Lake-Lehman elementary students put on band and chorus concert.

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# THE POST

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

Alma DeRojas is donating proceeds from sale of her compact disc, "I Lift My Soul / Levanto mi alma," to efforts that aid her family's native country, Cuba.

FOR THE POST/ CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



## A voice for God and country

Alma DeRojas takes up the cause of Cuba, her family's ancestral home.

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK For The Post

Inspired by stories of her grandparents' exile from Cuba and their relocation in this country, Alma DeRojas has turned her talent and passion into a ministry for the poor of that island nation.

"In my eyes Cuba is the most

beautiful island," said DeRojas, 24, sitting in the rectory of St. Therese's Church in Shavertown, where as a young girl she first sang and cantored. But after three research trips to Cuba, she says the island economy depresses her.

"The government does give people food every month and if they have a relative in the U.S. they are lucky," she said. Otherwise, the elderly especially, have no money for medicine or clothes.

The well-publicized and once promising socialized health care system set up by Fidel Castro is bankrupt. "There are many pharmacies but there is nothing on the shelves," said DeRojas

There also are many doctors because education in Cuba is free, but they receive a low wage and most of them must work second jobs such as taxi drivers to support their families.

For DeRojas, the irresistible

call to Cuba grew after she graduated from Susquehanna University. She moved to Miami, lived with a cousin, and worked on her master's degree in Cuban Studies at Florida International University. Her master's thesis about Cuba's patron saint, the Virgin of Charity, and the saint's role in the history and destiny of Cuba, is, she says, an exploration of her own faith.

The worship of Mary was

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## Fix or sell? That is the question

Former township building needs many repairs. Another option may be to sell it.

By RONALD BARTIZEK Post Staff

KINGSTON TWP. — Should the township hang on to the former township building at the intersection of Route 309 and Carverton Road? Or should the supervisors sell the property, which is gradually being eaten away by the waters of Toby Creek?

After waiting several months for it, the township finally received an appraisal of \$236,000 on the building and its approximately 2 3/4 acre lot. Township Manager Eddie O'Neill said the appraisal was provided by Rosen Real Estate. It's uncertain what happens next; whether the supervisors will choose to maintain the property or sell it.

"It hasn't been really brought up" by the supervisors, O'Neill said last week.

The building has been settling, and Toby Creek has slowly eroded the bank on its western side. Devices were installed earlier this year to measure the growth of cracks that have developed in walls, and test borings were recently made into the bank.

"We got the test results," O'Neill said, but he is awaiting a geotechnical analysis of them before making any comments.

"It's an attractive location, but how do we shore up that bank?" asked Supervisor David Jenkins. Now that the 2005 budget has been adopted, he expects the topic to come up early in the year.

During several meetings last year, the supervisors discussed what to do with the building, which needs immediately to have a railing replaced and other work. O'Neill said repairs on the soffits and fascia are planned for next year.

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## Hooray! No limit on trash this week

Because Christmas day and New Year's Day both fall on Saturdays, collection of trash and recyclables by the Dallas Area Municipal Authority will be as usual, on the regularly scheduled day.

There will be a no bag limit on trash beginning Monday, Dec. 27 and ending Friday, Dec. 31. The regular two bag limit will resume on Monday, January 3, 2005.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

### Sittin' with Santa

Melyssa Goode, Dallas, was happy to get to tell Santa wishes during the jolly elf's visit to the Dallas American Legion hall. Santa visited several locations in the Back Mountain on the weekend before Christmas. More photos on page 2.



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

### Seasonal sillies

Kindergarteners Bray Vanderhoff, Chester Brennan and Justin Lansberry couldn't disguise their joy during the annual Christmas performance at Gate of Heaven School in Dallas. The school's youngest students put on a show each year. More photos appear on page 3.

## On the trail to help abandoned pets

Lehman-Jackson teacher uses the Alaska Iditarod as a teaching, helping tool.

By M.B. GILLIGAN Post Staff

The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race may take place in distant Alaska but a local teacher's fascination with it has greatly benefited the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Jud Holdredge, a reading specialist at Lehman Jackson Elementary School, sponsored a school-wide drive for the SPCA to initiate a series of programs about the historic race.

"Several years ago I went to Alaska and saw a dog team," said Holdredge. "I was so impressed with how well the dogs are treated. The whole race is just fascinating."

The Iditarod is an annual race between the cities of Anchorage and Nome, which takes place in March. Anywhere from 55 to 75 teams, each comprised of a musher (the dogsled driver), and 16 dogs take on the grueling rigors of the 1150-mile race, which generally takes nine to 12 days with teams stopping to rest throughout the journey.

"There are 26 checkpoints on the trail and we collected packages of toys from the McDonald's in Shavertown for the mushers to drop off to the children at those checkpoints," said Holdredge. "Most of them have never seen a McDonald's."

Toys are not the only things the school collected. Students from kindergarten through sixth grade brought in 4,646 pounds of food, litter and cleaning supplies in the drive that started on December 1. Students also requested donations of samples from dog and cat food companies to put together care packages that are handed out by the SPCA to fam-



FOR THE POST/M.B. GILLIGAN

Pictured with an authentic dog sled and some of the 4,646 pounds of supplies they collected are, in front, Melissa Gruver and T.J. LaBar. In rear, from left are Jud Holdredge, reading specialist, Pauline Rose, Alexa Decker and Brandon Roberts.

ilies adopting pets.

"I was shocked by how much we collected," said Melissa Wright, one of the sixth graders in charge

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### SPCA visits to inform and seek volunteers

Lehman-Jackson sixth grade students were treated to a presentation by Beth Maffei, Humane Educator for the Wilkes-Barre SPCA. In addition to pet safety tips, she explained to them the importance of having dogs and cats spayed or neutered. "It helps keep down the population and it helps to prevent many prevalent forms of animal cancer," said Maffei. "One unsprayed female cat and her kittens can produce over 420,000 cats in seven years, and that's a conservative figure."

Maffei explained that all cats and dogs are spayed or neutered before they are adopted from the SPCA. They also have a microchip inserted under their skin that helps to return them to their owner if they become lost.

"The whole idea for microchips came from the Iditarod," Holdredge said. "The dogs are flown back to Anchorage and owners wanted to be sure to get their own dogs back. The dogs are worth so

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