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

Dog trainer's passion taking her overseas

By DAVE KONOPKI Post Editor

has a passion. A passion to teach. A passion to train. A passion to love.

A passion for animals. the Caribbean. The longtime dog trainer left for the school earlier this week.

"I've always had the passion," said Banfield, as she packed her bags. "I uate. But it has nothing to do with money. Some people are motivated by it and See PASSION, Page 8

there's nothing wrong with it. I'm just passionate about animals."

Banfield certainly hasn't taken the KINGSTON TWP. - Nikki Banfield traditional road to veterinary school.

She will be 52 years old when she completes her studies - almost 55 if she wants to work in the field of animal be-The Trucksville woman's passion will havior. The 48-year-old single woman – take her out of the country for most of she says her children are her four Gerthe next four years as she attends the man shepherds Terisla, Hertha, Ka-Ross University School of Veterinary mots and Bitsy - has been training Ger-Medicine on the Island of St. Kitt's in man shepherds for decades and has worked as the naturalist at Moon Lake County Park in Plymouth Township.

"Veterinary school is going to be a lot of hard work and studying," said Banthink it started in the womb. I'm sure I'll field, who earned an undergraduate debe able to make a nice living after I grad- gree in biology and master's degree in



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Charlie Ma-

bites into an

ear of roast-

the commu-

nity-wide pig

ed corn at

karewicz

Veterinary school student Nikki Banfield poses with her four "children" -Terisla, Hertha, Kamots and Bitsy.

Fine swine & good spirits

By GENELLE HOBAN Post Correspondent

KINGSTON TWP. - It might have been the main course, but pork was just one of the countless varieties of nosh available during the 13th annual pig roast at the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church in Trucksville.

"We had 300 trays of food donated by members of the church," said Paul Saneholtz, cochairman of the event. "We had macaroni salad, pasta salad and every kind of dessert you could think of."

The event had so much food left over they planned to donate it to a shelter, according to Saneholtz who hoped the intention was car-

Approximately 800 people attended the event on the church grounds on Carverton Road. There was no admission charge.

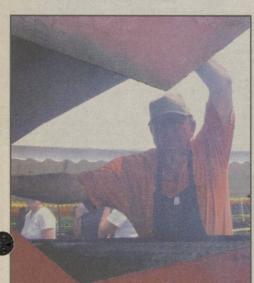
"It's our gift back to the community," Sane-

The event began when the Rev. Dan Miller first came to the church. During his first year as pastor he said there were only about 30 members in the church.

"It was my idea, I jut thought we needed to reach out to the community and we did, and now we have about 600 people attending services on a Sunday morning," he said.

Miller also said the purpose of the event is

See PIG ROAST, Page 8



John Elenchik watches over the cooking of the pork.



PHOTOS FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK



Jerry Brown roasts the corn at the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly pig roast.



Aw shucks, getting the corn ready is no sweat for Glenn Miller.



Billy Robbins looks for approval before he has dessert.

"It's kind of like a funeral for summer, where the community comes together."

The Rev. Dan Miller

Contracts expire at

By DAVE KONOPKI Post Editor

All of the back-to-school shopping has been completed. The buses are gassed up and ready to go. And the classrooms are squeaky clean.

The Dallas and Lake-Lehman school districts are ready to begin the 2006-07 school year. But they'll do so without a new teach-

The current contracts for both districts end Aug. 31. The respective contract negotiations began in February, but it doesn't appear as though new contracts are going to be approved in the near future. At Dallas, a state mediator has gotten involved in the

But that doesn't mean optimism is run-

"No, not at all," said Dallas school board member Maureen Matiska, when asked if she was optimistic a new contract could be worked out soon. "We've been meeting since February and we haven't made progress. I'm hoping that before the end of this school year, we'll have a contract. I'd like to see one before the end of the (calendar) year, but I'm not sure if that will be done."

Attempts by The Post to contact teachers union representatives at both school districts were not successful.

At Dallas, the three biggest contract issues are health care premiums, salary increases and early retirement incentives, said Matiska. The teachers currently do not pay any part of their health care premiums. The costs of the most popular plans are \$17,841 for an HMO family plan and \$16,994 for a traditional plan, according to business manager Grant Palfey.

"Right now, (the teachers) pay nothing," said Matiska, one of four school board directors who are members of a negotiating

That's also the situation at Lake-Lehman, said school board member Mark Kor-

"They have the Rolls Royce of health care plans," he said. "They don't want to hear anything about a co-pay. In other jobs, I don't know anyone that doesn't contribute to their health care. Let's just say if my heath care was costing \$18,000 a year, I'd be thrilled if I only had to pay \$2,000 a year."

Kornoski says he's been a little frustrated by the status of the talks.

"We're at a stalemate right now," he said. "The school board committee is willing to sit down and meet at anytime. We haven't gotten one tangible offer and we've met three or four times since February."

The school board member is also concerned about the rising salary increases.

"They're asking for seven-year contract and at the end, some teachers will be making more than \$100,000," he said. "That's not going to fly with the taxpayers. We don't have the tax base they have in larger school districts."

But despite the frustration and concerns, Kornoski believes a fair contract can be ne-

"I'm optimistic," he said. "We have a bunch of great teachers. I think we can sit down and hammer out a contract that can benefit both sides."

And that's the goal at Dallas, as well, says Matiska.

"Obviously, I want to see a contract that's acceptable to both sides," she said. "We have some longstanding faculty members who are very happy in the district. One of my roles has been to listen to them and come to some kind of agreement. I still think that's possible."

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