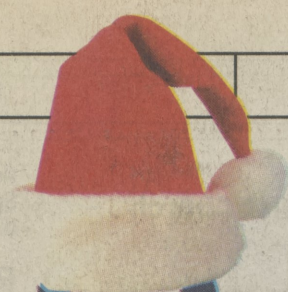


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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS AND LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



PHOTOS FOR THE DALLAS POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Cole Dewees, Emily Driscoll and Casey Dale perform during Gate of Heaven School's annual Christmas holiday musical.



Dallas High School graduate Mike Cleary was killed Dec. 20, 2005 during the War in Iraq. A foundation in his memory is doing great things for the Back Mountain community.

Cleary Foundation gives to community

By DAVE KONOPKI
Dallas Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. – Mike Cleary gave so much to the Back Mountain during his all-too-short time as a member of the community. And even a year after his tragic and sudden death, the son of Jack and Marianne Cleary of Dallas Township continues to have a positive effect on the community he loved so dearly.

The 1999 Dallas High School graduate was killed Dec. 20, 2005 when insurgent forces detonated an improvised explosive device on a road near Samarra, Iraq. First Lt. Cleary and his men were returning to their unit after successfully destroying a large cache of weapons in a bomb factory when a roadside bomb exploded near their convoy. The mission saved the lives of many U.S. and U.S.-friendly troops and innocent civilians.

The intelligent, popular, athletic, 24-year-old was 10 days away from ending his tour of duty in Iraq and returning to the United States. Cleary was also two months away from marrying his longtime sweetheart Erin Kavanagh.

"Losing a child leaves a whole in your heart," said Jack Cleary, who joined his wife at a memorial Mass last Wednesday, a year to the day after their son was killed in the line of duty. "It's a day-by-day thing. You just put one foot in front of the other. You can't come up with a reason why it happened. There is no answer. But we've met a lot of wonderful people in the past year. This is a great community."

The Clearys have been able to give back to the community through the 1st Lt. Michael J. Cleary Foundation, which has raised thousands of dollars – and helped dozens of people – since its inception less than 12 months ago.

Money already endowed through the foundation will be able to give \$7,000 to \$10,000 a year in grants and scholarships and still never touch the principal, said Jack Cleary. Fundraisers included a golf tournament and money raised by brother-in-law Jim Flanagan while participating in the Boston Marathon.

"From the very start, so many wonderful people have done so many wonderful things," he said. "They've raised so much money, from small donations to bigger fundraisers."

Here are just a few examples of what the Cleary Foundation has been able to accomplish in a short period of time:

- Money was given to eight children of military members who were severely wounded or killed in action.

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Spreading holiday cheer

GENELLE HOBAN
Dallas Post Correspondent

DALLAS – With their sweet voices, captivating smiles and performance skills, students at Gate of Heaven School spread some Christmas spirit last weekend during the annual holiday musical.

The 32-member cast of "Stranger in the Straw, a Christmas Musical for Children," which ranged in age from pre-school to first graders, included the usual nativity characters like Mary, Joseph and of course, baby Jesus.

Matthew Stratz, 6, said he wasn't sure how he got the part of a narrator.

"I didn't have a hard time with it," he said. "I had to memorize my lines, and I had to learn a lot of new words. I repeated them over and over. I memorized them all in a couple of days."

Cole Dewees of Shickshinny Lake, on the other hand, had two spoken parts to worry about because

See GOH, Page 3



First grade student Jake Adonizio plays one of the barnyard denizens in the annual Gate of Heaven Christmas musical.

Noxen sportsmen's club finds new location

By TOM VENESKY
Special to The Dallas Post

NOXEN – It's just a simple structure. White siding covers the rectangular single-story building along Main Street. It doesn't really stand out, but it has a sentimental value that goes far deeper than its appearance.

That's why Dorne White hates to tear it down even though there is no other choice.

Last June, a raging Bowman's Creek swept the Noxen-Monroe Sportsmen's Hall off its foundation. The water buckled the floors and cracked floor joists, sealing the 100-year-old building's unexpected demise.

After the water had receded into the creek, the hall, which was home to several clubs and community events, sat cock-eyed and in disarray. The Noxen-Monroe Sportsmen's Club and four other conservation groups were left without a home, and a community had to say good-bye to a landmark. "It's very sad to see it go," said White, who is secretary of the club. "A lot of people relied on the building for decades. The sportsmen's club, one of the oldest in the state according to White, had met in the hall since 1928. Prior to that, it was used as a township building and may have been the birthplace of the rural community's name.

Cathie Pauley, a member of the Noxen Historical Community Association, said according to local legend, the town was named in 1894 when a little girl looked out a window of the building and said "Mommy, look the Noxen!" She meant to say oxen, Pauley said, and the mispronunciation stuck with the town. "It breaks my heart that we have to tear it



TIMES LEADER FILE PHOTO/CLARK VAN ORDEN

down. We used to vote there, hold baby and wedding showers there... it was a landmark," Pauley said. "I wish we could push it back onto its foundation."

White said the club is seeking prices to have the building torn down and hauled away. The 30-member club doesn't have much money, he said, and they are still paying to have the building insured. The club's belongings have been removed and stored in a trailer, and their monthly meetings are now held in the old Noxen School down the road.

"We could try to put the building back on its foundation, but it would be costly and we don't have enough money," White said. "We're lucky to have the old school and we're thankful to Cathie Pauley and the township officials for letting us use it." The June flood also wiped out a handicap

fishing platform that the club built next to Bowman's Creek. The platform providing fishing opportunities for those who had difficulty navigating the rocky banks to get to the stream. Today, the access ramp to the platform lies next to the sportsmen's hall.

White said he is writing a grant application seeking funding to repair the platform. He hopes to get it done before the club's annual children's trout derby next spring.

While the club will call the old school home for the near future, they are exploring the possibility of building a small pavilion next to the creek. The club would use the pavilion to cook and host outdoor functions in the spring and summer.

"We might try to do a fundraiser to do the pavilion," White said. "I know in a community like this we won't have a problem getting volunteers help to put it up."

The Noxen-Monroe Sportsmen's Hall was moved off its foundation during last June's flooding. The 100-year-old building will have to be destroyed and the club has moved to the former Noxen School.

DEADLINE NEARS TO WIN \$100!

So, you think you know a lot about college football. Well, if you know more about the sport than Dallas Post editor Dave Konopki, you could win one of four cash prizes – including a grand prize of \$100. This week, Dave is making his annual college bowl predictions. If you choose more correct winners than Dave, you'll be one step closer to a little cash. **Hurry, the deadline is noon, Dec. 28. Entries may be e-mailed to dkonopki@mydallaspost.com.** For contest details, see Page 9.

