

# The DALLAS POST

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Dallas High School Science Olympiad team going to states for first time ever



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dallas High School students Mary Ketchner, a junior, left, and her partner, sophomore Monica Esopi, right, received third-place medals in the "Rocks and Minerals" group at the regional Science Olympiad competition on March 12 at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. The girls also participated collectively in the "Wright Stuff" category, which required them to build a rubber band-propelled model airplane.

## Doing their science best

By REBECCA BRIA  
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The Dallas High School Science Olympiad team is participating in the Science Olympiad Pennsylvania state competition for the first time ever.

The team of 15 students and one alternate student placed seventh overall at the annual regional competition on March 12 at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. The top seven teams out of 35 teams advance to the state competition on April 25 at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pa. Dallas High School placed ninth overall in last year's regional competition.

At this year's regional competition, juniors Preston Balavage and Nicole Clemson won second-place medals in the "Write It Do It" category. Junior Mary Ketchner and sophomore Monica Esopi received third-place medals in the "Rocks and Minerals" group.

Science Olympiad is a national organization that works to gain student interest and improve education in science. Students compete in over 20 science categories such as astronomy, food science, chemistry lab and health science.

JoAnn McAllister has been the Dallas High School Science Olympiad adviser for five years and meets with the club members every Wednesday. The competition limits each school to 15 students, which is just about how many McAllister says were interested in participating. Many of the students have been involved with the club since they attended Dallas Middle School.

"I had some friends in it and one of my science teachers (Christie Potera at the middle school) was one of the coaches and she suggested it to me," Esopi said.

In the "Rocks and Minerals" category, Ketchner and Esopi visited 20 stations containing rocks and minerals. Together, they were given two minutes at each station to identify the rocks and minerals and write about their uses. Ketchner and Esopi were allowed to use a binder of printouts and one book to assist them. If they disagree on a rock or mineral, Ketchner says she listens to Esopi because she is better at identification.

The girls also participated collectively in the "Wright Stuff" category which required them to build a rubber band-propelled model airplane.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Dallas High School Science Olympiad team are, from left, first row, Drew Clouse, Dan Persing, Nicole Clemson, Mary Ketchner, Rui Han, Monica Esopi, Elise Fields, Dana Mangellano and Kaitlyn Reinert. Second row, Mike McHutchinson, Brandon Harding, Brad Johnson, AJ Thomas, Preston Balavage, Katherine O'Brien, Tim Reinert and Coach JoAnn McAllister.

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Ketchner and Esopi created the plane from a kit they bought online and made it fly at the event. The plane did not fly as much as they had hoped, but the pair is adding a new propeller before the state competition.

Balavage and Clemson worked individually in "Write It Do It," but their efforts were dependent on each other. Clemson was given an apparatus made from Lincoln Logs, which are toy logs. She had 25 minutes to examine the contraption and prepare directions of how to recreate it. Clemson's directions were given to Balavage and he had to rebuild the contrivance to its original design.

"It's challenging for the doer to have never seen it and not know what direction it's going in," Clem-

son said. "One wrong step in the beginning leads to the whole thing being wrong."

Balavage was chosen as the builder because Clemson can't read her partner's handwriting. Although the two came in first place in "Write It Do It" category at the 2007 regional competition, the Dallas team did not finish in the top seven last year. Thus, Balavage and Clemson will be participating in state competition for the first time this year.

Clemson says prior to the regional event, Balavage joked with her that they should place second in an attempt to secure a full collection of medals. But Clemson promises she and Balavage will do their best next year and not purposefully aim for third place.

Dallas High School Science Olympiad members will leave for Huntingdon on Thursday, April 24 and stay in a hotel the night before the state competition. They will return late evening on April 25.

## Let's bring the 'Brass Ring' back to the area

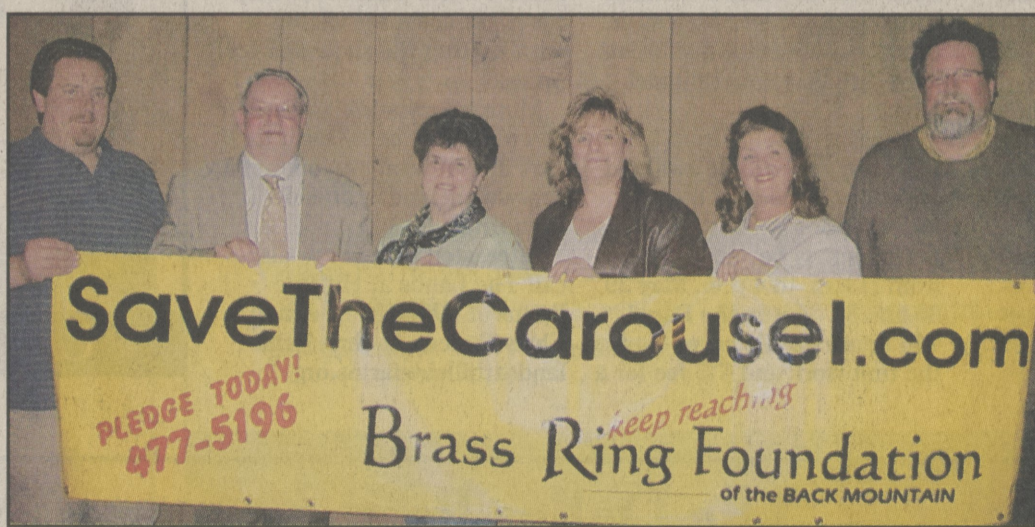
Through the auspices of the Luzerne Foundation and Director Charles Barber, a non-profit entity has been formed with a sole purpose in mind - to raise enough money to bring a priceless heirloom back to Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The "Brass Ring Fund" is much more than just a fundraising committee, however. The group is passionate about the Hanson's Amusement Park carousel, a treasured piece of regional history that dates back to 1909.

It was purchased by one-time park owner Alfred Wintersteen in 1914 and taken to the Lehigh Valley Railroad Picnic Grounds where it remained in operation until the park closed (as Hanson's) in 1984. Afterward, the Wintersteen family, which has notably retained ownership for 93 years, leased the carousel to Old Town in Kissimmee, Florida, in 1987.

In 1996, present owners Mary Ann Wintersteen (widow of Robert D. Wintersteen) and her son, Rob Jr., leased the machine to International Market World in Auburndale, Florida where it remains today. Due to the inability to continue as "absentee landlords" and unaware of mounting local interest in the carousel, the Wintersteens signed a contract with Norton Auctioneering agreeing to an on-site auction in Florida on April 23.

Meanwhile, Sweet Valley resident Duane Up-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Representing the Brass Ring Foundation, a group dedicated to bringing the Hanson Amusement Park carousel back to the area are, from left, Rob Wintersteen, Rev. Roger E. Griffith, Mary Ann Wintersteen, Elizabeth Martin, Annette and Duane Updyke.

dyke, an amusement park ride enthusiast, read about the impending auction and took immediate action. Ironically, as publisher of the Suburban News, he immediately commissioned a series of stories to be written about the carousel and its significance to the history of Harveys Lake and the countless memories of those touched by its magic. Hence, the formation of the Brass Ring Fund.

Joining Updyke and his wife, Annette, in the crusade to win back the carousel are free-lance writer Elizabeth Martin, of Dallas, and The Reverend Roger E. Griffith, of Trinity Presbyterian Church, in Dallas. Coincidentally, Griffith is also a member of "Eddie Day and the Original Starfires," a local band that drew large crowds to Hanson's Park dances in the 1960's and 1970's.

At this juncture through grants and corporate and private donations, it is critical that the Brass Ring Fund raise approximately \$1.4 million. If the group is successful in winning the carousel at auction, additional monies will be necessary to provide shelter and security, in addition to finding a suitable location that will provide public access and enjoyment of the carousel.

Should the group be unsuccessful, donors will have the option of having their money returned or applied to The Lands at Hillside Farms or the historical restoration project of their choice.

Questions may be directed to a dedicated line at the Suburban News at 477-5196. Donations should be made payable to The Brass Ring Fund, c/o The Luzerne Foundation, 140 Main St. (2nd floor), Luzerne, PA 18709.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Meghan Davis, 22, of Dallas, plays the harp during her senior recital on December 7, 2007 at Griswold Hall at the Peabody Conservatory at the John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md. Davis is a dual major in voice and harp at Peabody. A mezzo-soprano, she also sings opera.

## This girl is living the dream of her youth

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Meghan Davis is not the average college student. While on a trip to Ireland with her mother, Molly, and her sister, Lauren, then 3-year-old Davis encountered harpists performing and singing on the streets. It was at that moment Davis knew she was meant to play the harp.

Now 22, the Dallas resident is a senior dual voice and harp major at Peabody Institute at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md.

Davis' musical instruction began at age 5 when she began studying piano with Tsukasa Waltich of Hanover Township. She started taking harp lessons at age 9 from harpist Gulnara Mashurova at "Encore," a former summer music program at Wilkes University.

When Davis showed so much enthusiasm for her summer lessons, her parents made a trip to New York City every other week so she could continue lessons with Mashurova, a Juilliard School alumnus.

Davis has always loved singing and has sung at her church, St. Therese's Roman Catholic Church in Shavertown under the direction of Gary Kneill. She tarted college as a vocal major.

"He really got me to love music," she said of Kneill. Davis started voice training at age 14 with Tom Hrynkiw of Hanover Township. She pursued voice as her major at Peabody, but missed the harp so much she picked it up as a second major. At Peabody, she studies voice with Marianna Busching and harp with Ruth Inglefield.

"My teachers have been role models for me, not only in music, but in my life," she said.

The 2004 Wyoming Seminary graduate was a member of a select vocal ensemble called the Madrigal Singers at the school. She attended the Music Horizons Program at the Eastman School of Music in the summer of 2003 and played the role of Cinderella in Wyoming Seminary's December 2003 production of "Into the Woods."

In the summer of 2005, Davis attended the Amalfi Coast Music Festival in Italy and returned to the festival in the summer of 2007 where she played the role of the Third Spirit in "The Magic Flute."

"It's very neat because you get to perform these operas in very public locations," she said. "People could just walk by and stop and listen. It's in an absolutely beautiful location on the coast of Italy. And it's a small town, so you really have to know your Italian."

At Peabody, Davis was in the opera department's production of Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" and in the chorus of Offenbach's "Les Contes d'Hoffman." She was also in the American Opera Scenes Program and played the role of Barbara in "Roman Fever" in April of 2007.

She was selected for a role in the American Opera and also premiered an opera work called "Yellow Wallpaper" at a Baltimore area theater.

Voice and harp may not be traditional majors, but the daughter of Dwight and Mary "Molly" Davis says her family, including her 24-year-old sister, Lauren, and friends have been encouraging of her areas of study.

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