



Shavertown's Jonathan Ferris, 11, performs a gymnastics floor routine. A typical gymnastics practice for Ferris begins with stretching and conditioning. Then he gets into routines and his six events: pommel horse, still rings, vault, floor, high bars and p-bars. After three hours of practice, Ferris spends half an hour stretching or playing a physical game such as dodge ball.



Jonathan Ferris, 11, of Shavertown, performs on the still rings at the Eighth Annual Salt City Invitational in Syracuse, N.Y. Because he had an overall score of 51.8 at the state event, Ferris will participate in a 12-state regional gymnastics competition on April 26 at Temple University in Philadelphia.

## Swinging his way to fame

### Shavertown youth to compete at regional event in Philadelphia

By REBECCA BRIA  
rbria@timesleader.com

**T**he Ferris home in Shavertown has wooden bars on the floor. Get to know Jonathan Ferris and you'll know why.

The 11-year-old boy is an award-winning, competitive gymnast and uses the wooden bars, or mini high bars, to practice at home.

The fifth grader at Dallas Elementary School recently placed first on pommel horse and floor, second on parallel bars and rings and third on vault and high bar at the Eighth Annual Salt City Invitational in Syracuse, N.Y.

Because he had an overall score of 51.8 at the state event, Ferris will participate in a 12-state regional competition on April 26 at Temple University in Philadelphia, competing against about 300 other 10 and 11-year-old boys.

"I'm excited because I think I'm going to do good," Ferris said, confidently. The boy has already earned 105 medals and 20 trophies in gymnastics.

Ferris was first introduced to gymnastics at 2 years old when his mother enrolled herself and him in a "Mommy and Me" gymnastics class at Northeast Gymnastics in Wilkes-Barre. He enjoyed the class and has been taking gymnastics classes ever since.

Because there are no competitive gymnastics gyms for boys in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Ferris' parents, Frank and Melanie Ferris, drive him to Chenango Gymnastics in Binghamton, N.Y., making the trip three or four times a week.

A typical gymnastics practice for Ferris begins with stretching and conditioning. Then he gets into routines and his six events: pommel horse, still rings, vault, floor, high bars and p-bars. After three hours of practice, he spends half an hour stretching or playing a physical game such as dodge ball. He practices year-round and rarely gets a break.

Ferris claims to hold the record at his gym for do-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

ing the most circles - 53 - on the pommel horse.

"It's fun to do," he said. "I'm good at it."

Currently, Ferris is at level six in gymnastics. Once he makes level eight, he will be allowed to create his own routines. He also recently learned the "giant" skill, a gymnastics skill that involves a 360 degree rotation around a single bar and is the basis of many other skills.

Ferris' younger brother, Josh, 8, whose specialty is diving, takes two gymnastics classes a week at Chenango. His specialty is diving. The boys' older brother, 17-year-old Michael, is not a gymnast.

Melanie Ferris admits that having her sons in gymnastics can be very expensive and feels the cost factor is why many children drop out. There are fees for classes, competitions and travel expenses. But Ferris - and his parents - are determined to stick with the sport. Frank and Melanie have even considered moving their family to Scottsdale, Ariz., the location of an Olympic training site.

Next year, Ferris is looking to make the Future Star of America Program, hoping to later qualify for the Junior Olympics and Olympics.

In his limited free time, he likes to play video games and is a member of the Peer Council at school. He aspires to be a professional gymnast and a construction worker.

Eleven-year-old Jonathan Ferris hangs from the still rings during a gymnastics routine. The fifth grader at Dallas Elementary School recently placed first on pommel horse and floor, second on parallel bars and rings and third on vault and high bar at the Eighth Annual Salt City Invitational in Syracuse, N.Y.

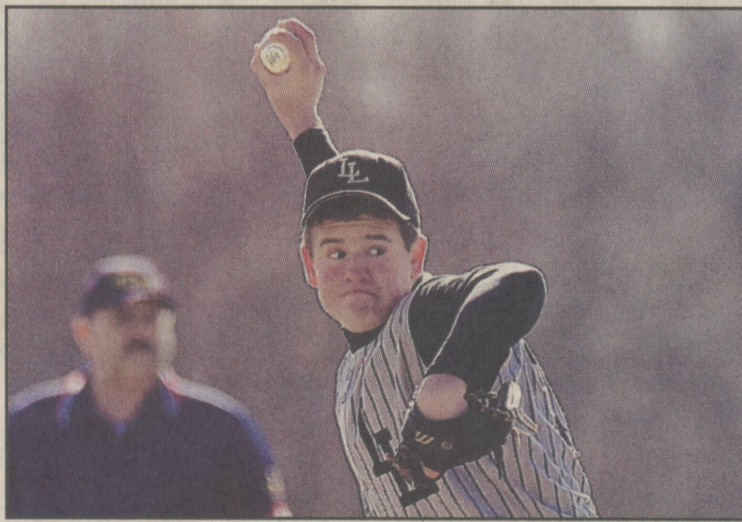
Ferris was first introduced to gymnastics at 2 years old when his mother enrolled herself and him in a "Mommy and Me" gymnastics class at Northeast Gymnastics in Wilkes-Barre. He enjoyed the class and has been taking gymnastics classes ever since.

## Spring is here - PLAY BALL!

Bats were cracking and balls were flying recently as the Lake-Lehman Junior High baseball and softball teams played host to the Bear Creek Charter School. The girls softball game was played on the softball field at the Lake-Lehman Junior-Senior High School campus while the baseball game was played at a baseball field on Main Road in Sweet Valley.



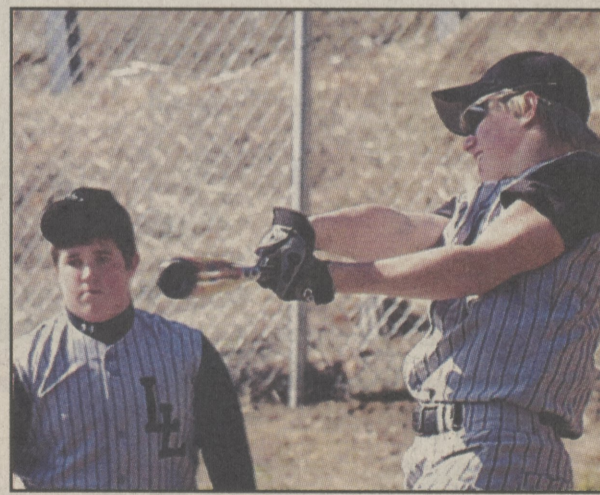
CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST  
Brie Headman gives it her all when pitching for the Lake-Lehman Junior High softball team.



Justin Cornell is as serious as he can be while pitching for Lake-Lehman.



Justin Cornell hits a ball foul during a junior high baseball game between Lake-Lehman and the Bear Creek Charter School. Lake-Lehman won the game, 15-0.



Zack Yursha of the Lake-Lehman Junior High baseball team takes a practice swing to warm up before a game against the Bear Creek Charter School.



Batting left-handed is a challenge for Lake-Lehman's Paige Pyskoty.

**ON THE WEB**  
For more photos visit [mydallaspost.com](http://mydallaspost.com)