

# CALL

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tails." Although he listens to May's guidance, Kocher is not afraid to go to war.

"It doesn't really bother me," he said. "You go through so much training it doesn't bother you. I was worried at first, but I don't care anymore."

(At this point, a reporter heard gunshots from a nearby gun club, but neither man noticed, having become accustomed to such sounds.)

Kocher may not think much about going into battle, but his family and friends are worried. His close friend, Coral Stredny, wants him to shoot himself in the foot so he won't have to go to Iraq. Harris wouldn't allow her son to join the military when he asked to as a senior in high school. And, while she realizes the Army was his decision, she's still nervous.

"I'm scared for him, but it was his choice," she said. "He's a big history buff and he likes that stuff. I just have to believe he's coming back."

Kocher's grandmother, Nancy Grimes, who lost a 22-year-old son



REBECCA BRIA/THE DALLAS POST

Buddy Kocher, of Dallas, left, and Ryan May, of Lehman, former rivals, became friends when Kocher arrived at Fort Hood Military Reservation in Fort Hood, Texas and saw May. Kocher asked a mutual friend for May's phone number, called him and the two have been friends since.

in an accident when he was in the military, is also uneasy about watching her young grandson go off to war.

Harris says she feels better when she talks to her son's recruiter, Sergeant 1st Class Christopher Mullings, a father of seven children, who has answered all of her questions.

Kocher and May feel good about having people support them. They

have had people salute them and pay for their meals and drinks. Older veterans often approach the men and thank them.

"You get a sense of pride," Kocher said.

In November, Harris is planning to rent a hall for a going-away party for her son. She will decorate for Christmas and have a Christmas dinner, complete with a ham and all the trimmings.



JONATHAN J. JUHA/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Susan Brandt, left, and her granddaughter, Kristen Cirilo, sell items to make money for Change for the Troops on Saturday, July 5 at Thomas' Family Market in Shavertown. Change for the Troops raises money to purchase phone cards so American soldiers overseas can call home.

# CHANGE

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liam, District Deputy for the 12th Masonic District, a position which requires him to oversee nine lodges, including the one in Dallas.

Gardner gave Brandt a letter of induction so she could collect money for the program. From there, the Kingston woman sprung into action, placing canisters in local businesses, including Pizza Perfect in Trucksville and Mark II Family Restaurant in Dallas.

"The first thing I did was call Sherwin-Williams, the paint store in Kingston," Brandt said. "I asked them if I could buy paint cans and they donated them to me. I went to different stores, anywhere there was a register and I asked permission to put the cans in. We would rotate them every once in a while. Then I got the idea of approaching grocery stores."

Brandt, 64, and her granddaughter, Kristen Cirilo, 14, also of Kingston, have been selling patriotic items at local grocery stores for the charity. The two sell ink pens, flashlights with batteries, refrigerator magnets

and pins with yellow ribbons. They also just acquired car magnets and rubber ducks dressed in military uniforms.

Brandt and Cirilo had embroidered USA hats that went over well at Thomas' Family Market in Shavertown on July 5. On that day alone, the duo raised nearly \$250 at the Shavertown store.

"People want to do something and if they get something for their money, it makes it even better," Brandt said.

Cirilo jumped on board of her grandmother's project from the moment she began. Although selling items at supermarkets may not be the most exciting thing a teenager can do, Cirilo enjoys helping the cause.

"Just being able to do something for the troops is well worth it," the youngster said. "Even though it takes up every weekend, I just think they deserve it because they're fighting for our freedom. Hearing the stories of people dying in the war and everything makes it worth it."

While at grocery stores, Cirilo has heard many stories and seen those affected by war. She vividly remembers meeting a Vietnam veteran who became deaf from the noise of a bomb and a woman who had a picture of her son tattooed on her back after

he died while serving his country.

"I don't think I'll ever forget these stories," Cirilo said.

Cirilo, who will enter the ninth-grade this fall at Wyoming Valley West High School, also volunteers at the Al Beech Food Pantry at the Church of Christ Uniting in Kingston and was a member of the Junior Red Cross Club at the Wyoming Valley West Middle School.

Brandt received \$2,500 for the organization on June 25 after placing second in an essay contest that required her to write about her cause in 500 words or less. She is spending the money to purchase more items to sell for Change for the Troops, something she spent her own money on before winning the money. She also plans to make the donation canisters look more attractive.

Brandt will remove the canisters from stores in December and stop her personal fundraising efforts because she wants other charitable organizations to benefit from the generosity of people in the area.

Anyone wishing to make donations may send them to: Change for the Troops, 115 N. Gates St., Kingston, PA 18704. Checks should be made payable to Change for the Troops.

# PASTOR

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Lewis' wedding ceremony, spoke at the retirement program. As departing gifts, Lewis received a commissioned painting of the Dallas United Methodist Church and a painting of his two white Bichon Frise dogs done by local artist Laura Slocum.

When asked what he plans to do now, Lewis gave off a warm laugh.

"I'm a history buff and a storyteller and I love to tell religious stories related to American history," he said.

The reverend is known for his storytelling and has spoken at events for many area groups. He will also continue to work part-time as a representative of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains, a non-profit organization in Philadelphia that advocates cultural



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Sharon and Rev. Dr. William Lewis enjoy a retirement party in their honor at the Dallas Methodist Church.

harmony and religious tolerance. Sharon Lewis recently retired from her job as a nurse at Community Medical Center in Scranton and the couple hopes to spend more time together.

"I probably won't be sitting here," Lewis said. "Actually, I'm

sitting here today on my first day of retirement writing thank you notes."

Reverend Earl Roberts has replaced Lewis as pastor of the Dallas United Methodist Church. Roberts comes from upstate New York.

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