

# What is that thing on the lake?

### Houseboat turning heads, getting attention

#### By REBECCA BRIA rbria@timesleader.com

It's not a small barge or an RV on water. But the new houseboat on Harveys Lake has been getting lake," Johnson said. "The real plenty of attention from passersby, many of whom wonder exactly what it is.

formed into a houseboat by 47-gy." year-old Jim Johnson of Harveys

build a vessel that could sustain itself for seven days, whether in a parking lot on a trailer or in a goal is in three years, I've got to retire. This is not going to be on Harveys Lake next year. It's basi-The 8,000 pound Canadian cally a divorce boat. After a dimilitary pontoon boat was trans- vorce, you've got so much ener-

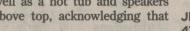
Since his divorce four years sustainable sewer system allows See HOUSEBOAT, Page 5

ago, Johnson has put over 10,000 "The charge of the boat was to hours of labor into creating the houseboat which he calls, "Against the Wind" because, he says, his entire life has been against the wind.

"Against the Wind" is about 75 percent complete with only aesthetic additions remaining. The boat is fully insulated, featuring thermal pane windows and propane heat and hot water. A self-

for a full shower and toilet. Two queen size beds - one drop down and one pull-out - are on board, along with a pull-out table inside and lounge chairs on the back deck. The boat also boasts a fullsize refrigerator, closets, an LCD TV, full audio and visual surround sound, a global positioning system and sonar.

Johnson plans to add flooring and shelves on the main level as well as a hot tub and speakers





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above top, acknowledging that Jim Johnson has all the comforts of home on his houseboat. The 47-year-old Harveys Lake resident re-engineered an RV and converted it into an all-season water home.



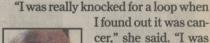
### Her writing helps deal with anxiety

Kimberly Kirk's book details her personal relationship with God.

> **By REBECCA BRIA** rbria@timesleader.com

Her suspicious mammogram four years ago turned out to be nothing. So Kimberly Kirk wasn't overly worried when, in January of this year, her annual mammogram showed a tumor that proves to be benign 90 percent of

But Kirk didn't fall in the usual 90 percent. This time, at age 43, she had stage one breast cancer.



I found out it was cancer," she said. "I was

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Gabrielle Dragon is crowned Lake-Lehman's Homecoming Queen. Cody Lamoreaux, a member of the Black Knights football team, was named Homecoming King. For more photos of Lake-Lehman's Homecoming festivities, please see page 8.

## Working hard to be good neighbor

#### **By REBECCA BRIA** rbria@timesleader.com

**Employees of Solid Cactus** head outside their workplace on South Lehigh Street in Shavertown with garbage bags and gloves in hand four times a year.

The e-commerce store developer adopted a section of the street to clean up and give back to the Back Mountain community where 135 employees of the company work every day.

"We just want to be a very valuable and good neighbor to the folks out here," said Scott Sanfilipo, co-founder, president and chief operating officer of Solid Cactus.

Perhaps that's one reason why Solid Cactus is an Inc. 500 company and was named one of the "Best Places to Work in PA" for the third consecutive year in 2008.

In 1994, Sanfilipo and his friend, Joe Palko, were both working full-time jobs and started ferretstore.com to make extra money. The two received many requests from other small business owners for help in developing a commercial Web site.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Inc. 500 company Solid Cactus, founded by Scott Sanfilipo, has refurbished much of the former Westmoreland School building in Shavertown to contemporary specifications.

Sanfilipo and Palko started a Barre to the former Westmoresecond business doing just that land School in Shavertown in some life into it. It was a chaland, in 2002, the Web design April of this year, citing parkand printing departments for ing, which is limited in the city, ferretstore.com broke off into a as the main reason for the property rather than put up a second business named Solid move. Parking space in the city new building." Cactus. Solid Cactus became costs money and Sanfilipo so successful that, in May does not expect his employees 2007, the partners sold ferretstore.com.

headquarters from Wilkes- Back Mountain include less supported by employees who Solid Cactus.'

crime, a quiet, rural area and donate money on a weekly baplenty of fresh air.

many Back Mountain residents once attended school. Although the building was gutted, the gymnasium was kept intact and new basketball hoops and ping pong tables were added. A fitness center with locker rooms and showers and a company subsidized inhouse restaurant were also constructed.

Yet, Sanfilipo says old classroom areas are still distinguishable.

"We did have a lot of people come through the building during the grand opening who said, 'I went to school here; this is really neat," he said. "We took an old building that basically was deteriorating in a residential area and reinvigorated lenge for us. It was a lot of fun. I think it's a great way to reuse

Solid Cactus also supports the local community through to have pay to park their car its Solid Cactus Cares fund. while they're at work. Other Administered through the Lu-Solid Cactus relocated its reasons for the move to the zerne Foundation, the fund is

sis. Solid Cactus matches all Complete renovations were employee donations and those

done on the building where who participate in Solid Cactus Cares choose a charity for the company to donate to each quarter.

> Through Solid Cactus Cares, the company has donated a new Web site for Kingston Township and is working on the Back Mountain Recreation, Inc. Web site.

> "We've given away quite a bit of money so far to quite a bit of charities in the area," Sanfilipo said. "We're not only working here and paying taxes here, but we feel we should give back to the community."

And, of course, Solid Cactus employees benefit the Back Mountain economy by frequenting restaurants, supermarkets and convenience stores

Solid Cactus executives have been meeting with officials from the Back Mountain Trail so employees can utilize the trail.

"We try to maintain a very unique work environment." Sanfilipo said. " Our inventory is our people and, without those people, we don't have a

just in a fog. I wanted to be told what to do...and it wasn't that way at all."

The Dallas resident's cancer is now in remission and she has written a book called, "The Journey: A Testimony of God's **Faithfulness Through** wrote the My Battle With Breast Cancer," dee-mails." tailing a personal remoment." lationship with God.

Writing is not new **Kimberly Kirk** to Kirk, an author, Bi-Author and ble teacher and breast cancer speaker. survivor

In addition to her new book, she has al-

so authored two Bible study workbooks, a book of dramas and a 12-week devotional. She self-publishes with a digital printing service through Offset Paperback.

Kirk's book on her fight with breast cancer is comprised of e-mails she sent to her prayer team, which started out with 20 people and soon grew to 100 members.

"It was very cathartic to me as I wrote the e-mails because it forced me to deal with what I was facing at that moment," she said. "I wept and I remember one time I was shaking in fear. God was with me and carried me through."

The main decision Kirk had to face during her cancer was how to fight it. After much prayer and consideration, she opted to have a bilateral mastectomy and reconstructive surgery at the same time. Her cancer did not require any chemotherapy or radiation.

On the Sunday before her surgery,

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