

# The DALLAS POST

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## Couples honored for efforts

By REBECCA BRIA  
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When Judy Rimple moved to the Back Mountain from Colorado in the early 1990s, she was disappointed there weren't more areas to ride her bicycle. She especially longed to ride from her home in Dallas to Wilkes-Barre.

Already involved with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Rimple pulled together her husband, David, and several friends in 1993 to form the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association. From there, the Back Mountain Trail was born.

David and Judy Rimple, of Dallas, and Don and Wendy Sweppenheiser, of Tunkhannock, are several of the recipients chosen to receive the 2008 Environmental Partnership Awards.

**IF YOU GO** will be honored at the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's and the Northeast Pennsylvania Environmental Partners' 18th Annual Evening for Northeast Pennsylvania's Environment from 5 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 29, at the Woodlands Inn and Resort in Plains Township. Other winners of the 2008 Environmental Partnership Awards are Countryside Conservancy, Tim Ference, Monroe County Conservation District and Susquehanna Warrior Trail. David J. Lameaux is the recipient of the 2008 Thomas P. Shelburne Environmental Leadership Award.

The Rimples received the award for their part in creating the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association which developed the Back Mountain Trail and the Black Diamond Trail from Mountain Top to White Haven.

The first two miles of the Back Mountain Trail, from Luzerne to Trucksville, were converted from an old railroad bed and opened in 1999. On November 1, an additional three miles of the Back Mountain Trail will open, allowing the trail to span a total of five miles from Luzerne to Lower Demunds Road in Dallas Township and costing over \$1.5 million to construct.

"It looks so simple but it's so complex," David Rimple said. "For the most part, the railroad was sold off in pieces. It is like trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together again."

Plans exist for the trail to connect west to Rickett's Glen State Park and south to Wilkes-Barre, Laurel Run and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor from White Haven to Jim Thorpe.

"The concept is a lot of people don't like to go out and back," Judy Rimple said of walking and bicycling enthusiasts. "They want to do circles. The goal is how many circles can we build?"

Another major goal in place is to connect the trail with the Dallas schools to promote walking and biking to school and for the use of sports teams such as the cross-country team. The Rimples say several people already use the trail

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Tom Baseski, one of the owners of Thomas' Market, is excited about the opening of the company's second store in the Back Mountain. The first Thomas' Family Market Super Food Town, which will be 43,000 square feet and offer many goods and services that are not available at other Thomas' locations, is set to open in Dallas within the upcoming months.

## Thomas' is expanding

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Thomas Baseski, Pam Evans and Chris Evans never thought they would one day own the supermarket where they worked.

The three, who were all once employees of the former Insalaco's Supermarket in the County Club Shopping Center in Dallas, are opening a Thomas' Family Market Super Food Town at the location. They are also owners of the four other Thomas' Family Market locations in Shavertown, Tunkhannock, Kingston and Hazleton.

"That's the American dream," Baseski said. "You start at the bottom and work your way up."

Carverton natives Baseski, 39, and Pam Evans, 37, are brother and sister. Pam met Chris Evans, 41, at Insalaco's in 1988. He grew up about 100 yards behind the current Thomas' Family Market in Shavertown.

While at Insalaco's, Baseski and Chris Evans were store managers and



Pam Evans, Tom Baseski and Chris Evans will open a Thomas' Family Market Super Food Town in Dallas within the upcoming months. The store will employ about 100 people and a job fair to fill full and part-time positions is planned.

Pam Evans was a front-end manager. Chris Evans later became a district manager for Insalaco's.

In 1997, the trio took over Thomas' Market and kept the name of the

store. Over the past 11 years, they have had six stores, selling two smaller ones, and are now adding another. Because of their ties to Dallas and their presence in the stores, the own-

ers interact with their customers on a daily basis.

"Whether it's dropping my children off at Dallas Elementary School, at CCD, at Gate of Heaven or the Back Mountain Little League, we see our customers all the time," Baseski said.

Working in sync is important to Thomas' owners in order to run their business smoothly. Baseski is responsible for administrative matters, Chris Evans for operations and Pam Evans for customer service.

Many other family members contribute to the success of the stores. Baseski and Pam Evans' parents, Barry and Theresa Baseski, work for Thomas'. Baseski's wife, Hayley, works at the office with him. Debbie Gaylord, Baseski and Pam Evans' sister, is deli manager at the Kingston store. Chris Evans and Pam Evans' son, Chris, 15, is a cashier at the Kingston store.

The owners also say their supervisor, Elmer Blackwell, who has worked with Chris Evans in the grocery business for 19 years, and five store man-

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## After rough start, she's home in NYC

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Ahmad

On only the third day of serving an internship in New York City, Amanda Ahmad was getting ready to leave her apartment when she heard the news - a plane had hit the World Trade Center.

After September 11, 2001, Ahmad questioned if city life was for her. Seven years later, not only is she a New York City resident, she is director of talent development for Spike TV and TV Land.

On September 11 of this year, Ahmad, a Dallas native, returned to Penn State Wilkes-Barre, which she once attended, to speak to students there as part of the Alumni Career Speaker Series. The new program at the university provides monthly career sessions to students.

"I've always wanted to do something in media," she said. "Even from when I was really

little, I've had a keen understanding of who was doing what in entertainment."

Ahmad, who turns 30 on October 31, is a 1997 graduate of Dallas High School. She attended Ithaca College during her freshman year of college, transferring to Penn State Wilkes-Barre as a sophomore. She completed her junior and senior years at Penn State University Park and graduated in December 2001 with a bachelor's degree in telecommunications.

During her senior year in college, Ahmad wanted to do an internship. Using a catalog of contacts at Penn State, she went to New York City and interviewed for several internships and, when she was selected for a position in talent devel-

opment at VH1, she relocated to the city.

The last thing she expected was a terrorist attack.

"I was really homesick and nervous and it was my last semester and all of my friends were still at University Park," Ahmad said. "It was really intimidating. The building I worked in was the building where they shoot TRL in Times Square. When the first plane hit, I had the TV on and I saw what was happening. I was able to walk from where I lived to Times Square. I was going through the emotions. I called my mom to tell her, 'I'm fine.' I think from that perspective I didn't feel alone because nobody ever experienced anything like that before."

Ahmad made it safely to work that day, only to be evacuated from the building and sent home not long after she ar-

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

## Dallas High School Homecoming activities set for next weekend

The Dallas High School Student Council will host 2008 Homecoming activities on October 25. There will be a breakfast at 11 a.m. for the Homecoming Court followed by the football game against Berwick at 1 p.m. The 2008 Homecoming King and Queen will be announced during the halftime show of the football game. The queen will represent Dallas in the America's Homecoming Queen Con-

test and the runner up will be the Miss Unico Pageant. There will be a semi-formal dance from 7 to 10:30 p.m. that evening at the high school. Members of the 2008 Homecoming Court at Dallas High School are, from left, Christian Szot, Alex Slocum, Scott Daube, Mark Gilbert, Preston Balavage, Shauna Phillips, Jill Jackson, Brittany Kneal, Candice Bittner and Morgan Kunkle.

