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"We have noticed a drop in volume and people mailing. I believe that has a lot to do with the economy."

Kristin Krashnak
Postmaster of the Dallas Post Office



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Mail carrier David Coates looks pretty jolly as he makes the rounds in Dallas Borough with holiday mail.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Louise Hazeltine, left, of Trucksville, recently left the coordinator position at the Back Mountain Food Pantry. Mark Stull, of Dallas, has taken on the challenge of running the pantry.

Food pantry now has a new leader

By REBECCA BRIA
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Before she stepped down as coordinator of the Back Mountain Food Pantry in July, Louise Hazeltine was determined her replacement would be carefully selected and have an orderly transition into the post.

Hazeltine was part of a small search committee, with representation from the food pantry board members and the Back Mountain Ministerium, to find her successor.

The committee selected Mark Stull, of Dallas, from about eight applicants for the non-paying job.

Born in Trucksville, Hazeltine, 83, moved to New York City as a young woman. She completed classes at Bucknell Junior College, now known as Wilkes University, and The University at Lewisburg before relocating to the city to attend Cornell Nursing School.

After graduation, Hazeltine obtained a job in nursing administration at Cornell Medical Center in New York City. In that position, she was required to do some grant writing to secure state and federal education funding. She became a member of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, which was involved in assisting low-income families in the city. From 1975 to 1985, she was active in Project FIND and helped feed the poor one Sunday a month and at Christmastime.

Hazeltine returned to Trucksville upon her retirement in 1988. She rejoined Trucksville United Methodist Church, her home church where she was baptized.

"Because I had the property and all, I always felt I'd like to come back because it's so expensive there (New York City) and I had kept quite a few friends here," Hazeltine said.

Hazeltine volunteered to help house and feed clients of VISION, a homeless shelter for men, at the church from 1991 to 1997 and was active with the local annual Crop Walk from 1998 to 2003.

When Trucksville United Methodist Church was building an administration building in 2003, the pantry's then coordinator, Walter Meade, was working to move the pantry from the Kingston Township Municipal Building into the basement of the new building. Hazeltine was in charge of writing grants to gain money to build the pantry within the addition.

"Doing that, I got to know a lot about the food pantry," she said. "Walter became ill in 2003 and I knew what had to be done to bring food in. I just kind of, I guess, drifted into taking care of the pantry."

Meade died and Hazeltine became coordinator of the Back Mountain Food Pantry in February 2004. After four years serving as coordinator of the pantry, she left the position last summer due to health concerns.

"The one thing that I've learned is that many of these people who need the support and help of the pantry are really people who have been hard-working people and are retired or the families are the working poor," she said. "We've got a lot of families who are trying very hard to make ends meet but just can't. We've really had about a 66 percent increase in our population over the five-year period of which 20 percent is a new population since January 1."

When Hazeltine announced she was leaving the position of coordinator, Back Mountain Food Pantry volunteer Bernard Luksic, of Shavertown, knew the perfect person for the job - Lisa Stull, a woman with whom he had worked for 18 years at State Farm Insurance.

Lisa Stull was encouraged to apply for coor-

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Week of hustle and bustle

Holiday mail keeps Back Mountain postal employees very busy

By REBECCA BRIA
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Back Mountain post offices were full of activity last week during the busiest mailing and delivery days of the year.

According to the United States Postal Service, the organization delivers 19 billion letters, packages and cards between Thanksgiving and Christmas. The busiest mailing day was Monday, Dec. 15, when 960 million cards and letters were processed, nearly double the daily volume. The busiest delivery day of the year was Wednesday, Dec. 17.

Kristin Krashnak, who has been postmaster of the Dallas Post Office for six years, says the office does not hire extra staff during the holiday season. The employees must instead pull together and rely on each other to get the job done.

The same is true at the Lehman Post Office, according to Postmaster Bob Trzeskowski.

"Well, you've just got to dig in and work harder," Trzeskowski said. "That's all you can do."

Although the Dallas Post Office was much busier last week than it usually is, Krashnak says the vol-



Substitute carrier Melissa Hines of the Dallas Post Office has a walking route around the center of town about a week before Christmas.

ume of mail is down this December compared to previous years.

"We have noticed a drop in volume and people mailing," Krashnak said. "I believe that has a lot to do with the economy. With the drop, we haven't seen that much of an increase in overtime. I have a really good hard-working staff as most post offices do."

Trzeskowski, on the other hand, says the volume at the Lehman Post Office is about the same as it was last holiday season.

Krashnak feels Monday, Dec. 22, will also be extremely heavy for last-minute local mailings. She was



Mark Garinger prepares a bin of packages to ship out of the Dallas Post Office.

anticipating many people to send out mail on Friday, Dec. 19.

"It gets heavy, but we do get small periods of slow time," Krashnak said.

The U.S. Postal Service provides a money-back guarantee that all Express Mail sent by Tuesday, Dec. 23, will be delivered by Christmas Day.

An independent federal agency,

the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that visits every address in the nation, 146 million homes and businesses, six days a week. It has 37,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to pay for operating expenses. The U.S. Postal Service has annual revenues of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail.

DEAR SANTA



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Kaitlyn Hodakowski has control of the letter-writing process in Mrs. Lori Kucewicz's kindergarten class at Lake-Noxen Elementary School. Kindergarten students at the school have shared their letters to Santa with readers of The Dallas Post. To read the letters, please turn to **Page 3**.

Dallas band off to Citrus Bowl

The Dallas Marching Band is currently practicing to perform in the nationally-televised Florida Citrus Parade and Universal Studios Macy's New Year's Eve Holiday Parade this month in Orlando.

Band members participating in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity are Andrew Arnoldi, Kevin Barry, Bryan Bieseker, Bernie Bronsberg, Grace Carolan, Jodi Hilstolsky, Hilary Hoover, Kevin Hunter, Michael Mazula, Jennifer Merithew, Amanda Mikolaitis, Sal Polit-Moran, James Schwemmer, David Sebolka, Ashlyn Van Deutsch, Brian Wise and Jamie Wise.

The Dallas Band Parents Booster Club is funding a large portion of this trip by having worked at foot-



JONATHAN J. JUKA/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Michael Mazula, left, and James Schwemmer are members of the percussion section.

ball games and other fundraising activities. Eye Care Specialists is the corporate sponsor of the trip.

This year the band has performed at all the home and away football games, at a girls volleyball game, at a concert for 1,000 people, at the high school pep rally during homecoming week and at the bonfire prior to the last football game.

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