

# The DALLAS POST

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Serving the communities of the Dallas and Lake-Lehman School Districts

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## HONOR ROLLS INSIDE

Administrators from both Dallas and Lake-Lehman High Schools have released the names of students who have achieved Honor Roll status for the second marking period of the 2009-2010 academic year. Please turn to pages 7 and 9 inside today's paper to see if the name of your favorite student appears on these lists.

## Food pantry director quits

Disagrees with board over public notification of theft of pantry deposit.

By REBECCA BRIA  
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The director of the Back Mountain Food Pantry has resigned from his position following a letter to the editor he sent to two area newspapers.

Mark Stull, who had been director of the pantry since July 2008, quit Tuesday after he alleges members of the pantry's board became angry that he sent a letter to the editors of The Dallas Post and The Times Leader. The letter acknowledged and addressed a recent theft that occurred at the pantry.

The newspapers, both owned by the Wilkes-Barre Publishing Co., have agreed not to publish the letter at Stull's request because he is no longer the pantry's director; however, the letter may be viewed on the newspapers' Web sites.

Stull was a volunteer and was not paid for his position at the food pantry.

"That's how I think," Stull said of the letter in which he mentioned the theft but promised the pantry would continue to serve those in need. "I believe those words. I felt the Back Mountain Food Pantry and any volunteer organization like that needs to be an organization of honesty, integrity and openness."

Founded in 1977, the Back Mountain Food Pantry serves residents of the Dallas and Lake-Lehman School Districts. It is operated by the Back Mountain Ministerium, which is comprised of 24 interdenominational churches.

According to Kingston Township Police Sergeant Michael Moravec, Trucksville United Methodist Church and the Back Mountain Food Pantry were both the victims of theft earlier this month. The pantry leases storage and office space in the basement of the church on Knob Hill Road in Trucksville.

A police report regarding the theft stated the Rev. Lori Steffenson, who is pastor of the church, informed an officer that two thefts occurred between Feb. 2 and Feb. 9 from the church learning center offices. The report states that Steffenson said \$477 was taken from the business office and that another \$1,153 in checks to be deposited were stolen.

In a separate incident, a theft occurred sometime between Feb. 3 and Feb. 4 when a vestibule money box was broken into and approximately \$40 stolen at St.



Mark Stull has resigned as director of the Back Mountain Food Pantry.

### READ STULL'S LETTER

To read a letter to the editor written by former Back Mountain Food Pantry Director Mark Stull, please log on to www.mydallaspost.com.

Therese's Roman Catholic Church on Pioneer Avenue in Shavertown, Moravec said.

Moravec said it is not believed the incidents are related and that neither church wishes to prosecute anyone. Both cases are closed.

Joe Hardisky, president of the food pantry's board of directors, said Stull was appointed manager of the pantry and was not a director. Hardisky said Stull had no authority to speak to the media and needed the board's permission before doing so.

"We really love Mark dearly and we're really concerned with some of his personal issues too, but it's just the fact that he just didn't seem to fit into our organization as perhaps we had hoped to," Hardisky said.

Hardisky said he will be the interim manager of the pantry and the board will meet to reorganize and eventually select a new manager.

When asked by a reporter if it was a problem when Stull spoke to the media in the past about positive issues regarding the pantry, Hardisky said it was not. When asked if it was a problem this time because the theft was negative, Hardisky told the reporter he wanted to end the conversation.

Stull said he was under the impression that he was the director of the pantry. He said the "personal problems" he has been experiencing involve having to put his mother into a nursing home recently. In addition, one of his daughters likely needs to have thyroid surgery.

Those issues did not factor into his decision to leave the pantry in any way, Stull said.

"It was time for me to move on," Stull said of his decision to leave the pantry. "I did my work there. There's no shortage of need of volunteer activities out there. Hopefully, the food pantry's is in equal or better shape today than it was when I started."

## HEY, THAT LOOKS LIKE FUN!



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Cary Vailes makes bouncing a balloon on his nose look easy during a Kids Carnival at Dallas High School. The carnival raised funds for Candy's Place, a resource center in Forty Fort for cancer patients and their caregivers. The event was the senior completion project of Dallas High School seniors Gary Anderson, Arielle Belski, Chelsi Hunter and Ali Snider. Children attending the carnival enjoyed games, prizes, raffles and food. For more photos, please turn to page 3.

## 'Aron' is newest member of police force

By REBECCA BRIA  
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The newest member of the Dallas Township Police Department is a little different than his fellow officers.

Aron comes from Slovakia and, although he understands some English commands, German is his first language. He has specialized training in narcotics and can detect drugs in a way that no other officer in the department can.

Aron's extraordinary sense of smell surpasses that of any human's.

Officer Brian Feeney and Chief of Police Robert Jolley introduced Aron, the department's new K-9 dog, at the Dec. 15, 2009 supervisors meeting. The 2-year-old black German Shepherd was certified as a K-9 dog on Jan. 25 after undergoing training since early October.

"It's a great asset to the community," Jolley said of Aron's involvement with the police department.

Feeney has been a police officer with Dallas Township for 19 years. He has had pet dogs his entire life and volunteered to be the K-9 officer when the opportunity arose.

"It was an interest I've always had for years and we had the opportunity when Macko was purchased with a grant," Feeney said of his former partner.

The Dallas Township Police Department purchased its first K-9 dog, Macko, in 2005 with a grant from the U.S. Office of Homeland Security. Macko was diagnosed with lymphoma at age 4 last year and was put down in September.

"The people know that the other one was gone and we didn't have it for a while," Feeney said of the dogs. "It deters crime as far as I have seen it the past four years."

Aron was born at an unknown dog breeding facility in Slovakia. The township purchased him from Ideal Po-



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dallas Township Police Officer Brian Feeney shows off his new K-9 partner, Aron.

lice Canine of Muncy, Pa. on Oct. 1, 2009. The dog cost \$11,000 which included his training.

Roger Stipcak, who owns Ideal Police Canine, is Aron's trainer. Both Feeney and Aron visit Stipcak twice a month to further their training in addition to the ongoing training they do on their own.

The new dog is trained in general patrol and narcotics detection and has his own bulletproof vest. Macko was also trained in general patrol but his specialization was in explosives detection.

Jolley said the department chose to train its new dog in drug detection because there are now more dogs with explosives training. Also, drug arrests are increasing and the township is seeing larger quantities of drugs, he said.

Although Macko had no training in drugs, Jolley said Macko contributed to four drug arrests simply because the perpetrators voluntarily gave up their drugs when they saw the dog.

Feeney said Aron completed four weeks of drug detection training. The training started by introducing various drug odors one at a time on a scented towel. The trainer and Aron would play fetch with the towel.

The trainer would then hide the towel so Aron would have to use his nose to find it. The dog performed close to 600 repetitions with the towel and, eventually, the trainer hid drugs that Aron had to find.

When he is off duty, Aron lives with Feeney and his family where he gets to "just be a dog" and plays with Feeney's three

other dogs.

"They know the difference between when they're at work and when they're at home," Feeney said of the K-9 dogs.

According to Feeney, it's important never to approach a police dog without permission.

"They're not a pet and people get upset because they're not allowed to pet him," Feeney said. "He's very protective and, if you just walk up to him, that's a good way you'll get bit out of the blue."

Jolley said the department is willing to share some of its K-9 resources, such as its bite suit, to other departments interested in developing a K-9 unit.

"I'd like to see one of our neighbors get one," Jolley said. "No one else in the Back Mountain has a K-9 unit."



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