

# The DALLAS POST

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WILKES-BARRE, PA.

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AN EDITION OF THE TIMES LEADER



BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Alaina Raspen, 5, of Sweet Valley, smiles as Santa talks to her after making an appearance at the end of the Ross Elementary School holiday program.

## DEAR SANTA

letters to Santa Claus. The youngsters agreed to share their letters with readers of The Dallas Post.

### FROM ADVENTURES IN LEARNING

Back Mountain children pen letters to the jolly old man himself, hoping he will fulfill their Christmas wishes.

Children at I'm Big Now and Back Mountain practiced their Adventures in Learning in the penmanship last week by writing

Dear Santa, I know about giving. The more you give, the more you get. **Jacob**

Dear Santa, Would you come to play with us? We can play cars, petshop and

puzzles.

Dear Santa, What do you do during summer? **Mason**

Dear Santa, Do your reindeer eat carrots? **Scott**

Dear Santa, How do your reindeer fly? **Vera**

Dear Santa, Does Rudolph live on the North Pole? **Bruce**

Dear Santa, Can you make a snowman? **Melina**

Dear Santa, Could you please play puzzles with me? **McKenna**

Dear Santa,

Could you please play with me and my brother? **Ryan**

Dear Santa, What do you eat for dinner? **Leah**

Dear Santa, I hope you have a good Christmas. Could you come play puzzles with me? **Chastity**

See SANTA, Page 7

## Scouts from Troop 281 pack toys for tots, remember soldiers

Boys collect for Toys for Tots, pack Christmas stockings for military personnel stationed in Kuwait.

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK  
Dallas Post Correspondent

Scouts love to help and members of Dallas Boy Scout Troop 281 spend part of their Christmas party each year collecting and packing carloads of wrapped toys for less fortunate children. The toys are then distributed by the Marine reserve unit at the Wyoming barracks.

Playing the Santa role is easy for Jared Casaldi, of Sweet Valley, and Matthew Reynolds, who said that packing toys in the Marine vans

was loads of fun, especially knowing that the "toys would go to people who had little money or whose parents had been laid off from work this year."

This year, besides the annual Toys for Tots collection, there was an extra project for the Scouts to handle.

About 100 Christmas stockings packed by Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts from Dallas Troop and Pack 281 will find their way to Kuwait for Christmas. They will be sent directly to 1st lieutenant Paul Luksa, a 2003 Dallas High School graduate and former Eagle Scout from the troop, who is stationed there.

Rebecca Oley, a mother whose two sons, David and Matthew, were given empty socks with a list of suggestions for their contents. Things like candy, drink mixes, chips, dried meats, snacks, toothpaste and toothbrushes

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come in handy in the desert. The Scouts had no trouble coming up with meaningful and fun items for the stockings, she said.

Brothers Ryan and Jake Nita, of Shavertown, were very proud, knowing their hand-stuffed stockings would go to soldiers serving in the Iraq desert.

According to Ed Luksa, Paul's father, it's surprising that so many men serving overseas get few packages from home. Luksa is in touch almost daily by phone with his son who says he feels privileged to



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Matthew Reynolds and Jared Casaldi, of Boy Scout Troop 281, Dallas, help load toys collected at the annual Toys for Tots collection held by the U.S Marine reserve unit from the Wyoming barracks.

have received so many packages from the Back Mountain community.

This is the second 14-month tour of duty for Paul, who serves

with the PA National Guard 109th Army Infantry Reserve Unit guarding a base on the Iraq border with Kuwait. Ed Luksa says this shipment of Christmas stockings will

endear his son to the troops and local people, with whom American troops share their presents.

"They're really going to love him over there," he said.

