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Rock Recreation Center tackles expansion

By DOTTY MARTIN
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When Pastor Dan Miller arrived in the Back Mountain in 1993 to resurrect the then-fledgling Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church, he predicted the area behind the church building would become known as a "city on a hill."

What Miller didn't know at the time was what kind of "city" that would be.

Today, the area known as the Rock Recreation Center, or Rock Rec, brings people of all ages together through sports. The building behind the church on Carver-

ton Road in Trucksville offers a full-size gymnasium, a stage area, a cardio room, a multi-purpose room, a lounge with a pool table, an air hockey table, a TV and a kitchen area.

Rock Rec also includes the Valley Tennis and Swim Club, a 15-acre property behind the recreation center that was built in 1960 and purchased by the recreation organization in February 2010. That purchase added to the rec center's repertoire eight clay tennis courts, an Olympic-size inground pool, an outdoor pavilion and a clubhouse that accommodates 140 people for

graduation parties, weddings and family reunions.

Now, the faces behind Rock Rec's success are looking ahead.

Elijah Miller, development director and Pastor Dan's son, and Doug Miller, center director and no relation to Elijah and Pastor Dan, are spearheading a \$4 million capital campaign to transform the recreation center into a sports complex. Included in the plan are a multi-purpose field, major renovations to the swimming pool to add mushroom sprinklers and collapsible rock climbing walls, as well as an addition to the current recreation

building, adding a second full-size basketball court with drop-down nets.

Trees have already begun to be cleared for the field which will be the size of a regulation football field with artificial turf and markings for soccer, field hockey and lacrosse.

"The 10-year mark means a lot," Elijah, 26, said of the Rock Rec Center which started in 2003 with a simple vision. "We had no idea of the impact on the community this place would have. But in the

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
The Rock Recreation Center on Carverton Road in Trucksville plans to almost double the existing facility plus add an artificial turf field for football and soccer, say directors Elijah Miller, left, and Doug Miller.

FINDING A GOLDEN EGG



FOR THE DALLAS POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

River Morgan found a golden egg at the Dallas Borough Annual Easter Egg Hunt. For more photos of the egg hunt, please turn to page 3.

Dallas Post photographer wins Keystone Press Award

By SHEENA DELAZIO
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Dallas Post photographer Charlotte Bartizek has won a first-place Keystone Press Award for a feature photo of a kids' annual fishing day in the Back Mountain.

In addition to Bartizek's award, The Times Leader and associated community publications won 27 Keystone Press Awards this year in a number of categories, including investigative reporting, page design and sports event coverage.

Bartizek has won three awards from PA Keystone competitions over the years for photos but is most proud of a first-place award she received in 1995 for a sports photo from the National Newspaper Association.

The Times Leader garnered 11 awards, The Sunday Dispatch received three awards and The Abington Journal won 12 awards. The Abington Journal also was named the "sweepstakes winner" for its division.

"Once again the staff at all of our publications showed why they are considered the best in Northeastern Pennsylvania," said Joe Butkiewicz, vice president and executive editor. "The Times Leader won first-place awards for investigative and 'spot news,' areas of news gathering crucial to our readers but not a high priority for other papers. The sportswriters and news and feature page designers at The Times Leader do terrific work every day, and it's great that has been recognized."

"The Abington Journal continues to prove that our attention to community news is worth the effort," Butkiewicz said. "For the fourth consecutive year the staff at the Journal won the sweepstakes award for the best paper of its circulation size in all of Pennsylvania. I'm proud to work with such talented and hardworking journalists."

Winners of the contest will be honored at the Pennsylvania Press Conference May 18 in Harrisburg.

Times Leader reporter Terrie Morgan-Besecker won first place in investigative reporting for a series of articles revealing attorney Angela Stevens had double-billed the county for delivering fee petitions related to her representation of parents whose children are in the custody of Children and Youth Services.

Morgan-Besecker and staff writer Ed Lewis also won a first place "spot news" award for their coverage of an October 2012 shootout involving a Wilkes-Barre city police officer who was shot and injured and an attempted-homicide fugitive who was shot and killed during a gunfight in the city.

Staff writer Bill O'Boyle won a second-place award for a personality profile of a woman and her battle with cancer.

Sports writer Paul Sokoloski won a second-place award for a column regarding the late Penn State coach Joe Paterno and the

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Will Dallas High School senior play finally play?

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Dallas Post Correspondent

Amanda Foote, a backstage hand/actress in the upcoming Dallas Senior High School production of Rick Abbot's play "Play On!" wonders, on stage and off, if the high school group "will ever get it right" or if the play will finally be presented next week.

"Really, for the first two scenes everybody is freaking out," Foote said. "There are huge technical problems and we go home every night and re-do everything."

But that's the idea of this production and the veteran senior, who will major in musical theater at Muhlenberg University next year, is up to the challenge.

The murder mystery - a play within a play - tackles the complications, problems and perils of producing a play. In her role as a protagonist stage hand, Foote is up against the strong-willed writer of the play, played by Catherine Blankensop, who changes sets, cues, lighting and script randomly, angering and upsetting the rest of the cast.

Blankensop, a shy freshman before auditioning for this play, took on the challenge as the

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antagonist playwright, and is enjoying the role. "I just love it and guess I just took to it and it had really transformed me," she says of herself. "Everything in the play goes wrong because of me and I love to go all the way with it."

Could there be a theatre career in her future? "It's too early for me to say, right now. I'm taking it all in, let's say."

Play advisor Harry McKeown wants Blankensop to explode, be bubbly and almost obnoxious. He says the students have worked exceptionally hard on this complicated story within a story.

On the other hand, there is a stark reality to the drama. This is the first time Nate Kalo has been on stage as an actor. "It is very stressful," he said. "I'm whipped, but it's very rewarding and I am sure stretching my abilities pretending to be other people."

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Aissa Horvath, left, and Steven Nave rehearse their roles in Dallas High School's rendition of Rick Abbot's comedy 'Play On!'



IF YOU GO

To see if the Dallas High School theater students get their acts/play together, the public is invited to the Dallas Senior High School at 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, April 5 and 6. There is a \$5 admission.

Nate Kalo, left, and Anastasia Beney are characters in Rick Abbot's comedy 'Play On!' at Dallas High School.