

# The DALLAS POST

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## Passion, preparation, irony and talent land Jaime Verazin in national dance limelight

**CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK**  
Dallas Post Correspondent

Whoever thought Jaime Verazin, just Jaime from Shavertown, who went to Gate of Heaven and Bishop O'Reilly High School, played the piano and was a cantor at Gate of Heaven Church, would end up hanging unharnessed from a chandelier by her feet at the Metropolitan Opera and competing on national television for 1 million dollars on "America's Got Talent"?

Verazin was the Catapult figure who fell off the mountain peak in the final dance performance of the popular television show.

"It is ironic that my first job at 16 was working for a Kingston dance store called 'Broadway Dreams' and that here I am launching my own theatre show," Verazin chatted on her car phone

on the way to the Fulton Theatre in Lancaster.

"It's been a very exciting year and a half, Verazin thinks; but circumstance have put her in the fast lane from the start.

Born in Allentown to Dr. Gary and Betsy Verazin, Jaime and her family spent time in upstate New York and landed in the Back Mountain when she was in fifth grade.

Her parents never insisted on a particular career for her but urged her to find something she was passionate about.

The forensic competitions, cantoring and lecturing at Gate of Heaven were "like a mini-theatre experience," Verazin recalls respectfully.

"They all played a part in my preparation." But the true drive to go places started in the playground when she was just a child. She



Hanging from a chandelier at the Metropolitan Opera House unharnessed during a production of the "Tempest" does not seem to bother the unflappable Jaime Verazin, of Shavertown.

would climb on top of the monkey bars and pretend to be Ariel then shimmy down on the trapeze and jump off the swings.

Trinette Singleton from Bravo Dance - a legend of the Joffrey Ballet - was her mentor, guide and dance mom who took

Verazin under wing and taught her how to be disciplined and build that snake-skin necessary to make it through the

toughest parts of being a dancer.

But nothing changed her life as much a working for MOMIX, a dance troupe touring in Europe for five years where she studied aerial dance.

"It is a very prop-based company of illusion and dance. I learned how to dance on ropes and ladders, bungees and on dollies and poles. It was a throw yourself into an experiment type of experience which became very valuable to me for future risk taking endeavors," Verazin said.

"It was an amazing first time job," she said. "It was a difficult decision though" (leaving DeSales University after only one year) but the experience launched her into her present roles.

"I've been fortunate - the dance world is still small enough so that if you audition your face off

you get to know everyone. In my career, it has all come together," she said.

Only a few weeks after finishing in the semi-finals on AGT, Verazin, still a member of Catapult (a pantomime dance group) and an "extra dancer" at the Metropolitan Opera who specializes in extreme and aerial performances, finds herself launching her own theatre show with her partner Mark Stuart, also a dancer.

The pair have produced a socially-aware, dance/theatre touring production called "Standard Time" that they can take to Broadway and present at the Kirby Center in Wilkes-Barre.

"Standard Time" follows three separate, period-specific love stories. These stories are

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## RELEASING HOPE



Deidre Kaminski, of Edwardsville, releases a sky lantern during the 'Lanterns of Hope' event benefitting the Hope Center in Trucksville. For more photos, please turn to page 4.

BILL TARUTIS|FOR THE DALLAS POST

## Lake-Lehman 2013 Homecoming Court



Members of the Lake-Lehman Homecoming Court for 2013-2014 school year are, from left, Alex Hoyt, Brittany Faux, Adam Dizbon, Brittany Acevedo, Robert Wright III, Kahli Kotulski, Kaylee Hillard, Dustin Jones, Brinley Williams, Josh Winters, Anna James and Brady Butler. The Homecoming Queen will be announced at the Oct. 11 football game against Northwest and the Homecoming King will be announced at the Homecoming Dance on Oct. 12 at the high school.

## Wycallis named county's first Blue Ribbon School

Wycallis Elementary School was recently honored by the U.S. Department of Education when it was announced that it was among 235 public schools and 50 private schools nationwide to be named a Blue Ribbon School, making it the first in Luzerne County to earn the distinction in the 31 years the program has existed.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recognized the schools in one of two categories: high academic achievement or big improvements in academic achievement. Wycallis was honored as a high achiever.

Dallas School District Superintendent Frank



FRED ADAMS|FOR THE DALLAS POST

Students in Mrs. Monahan's third-grade class do class work at the Wycallis Elementary School in Dallas which has been named a Blue Ribbon School.

Galicki said getting a school on the list "has been a goal of ours for about 10 years" and that it was a group effort.

The school uses a "Response to Instruction and Intervention" model that keeps close tabs on

each student's progress and modifies lessons or interventions until the student is up to par. Galicki said the staff comes up with a wide range of strategies to help students learn.

Winners will be honored during a program Nov. 18-19. School Principal Paul Reinert said one of the perks for students will be a day off as some staff - and maybe all, Galicki hinted - travel to Washington, D.C. for the ceremony.



FRED ADAMS|FOR THE DALLAS POST

Wycallis Elementary School in Dallas was recently named a Blue Ribbon School.

