

CHRISTMAS GIFT BAGS FOR PATIENTS



LUCY SCHALY/THE TIMES

Alexa Clark, 14, left, and Makenna Cercone, 13, take their turn by depositing books into each bag. Both are from Center Township.

A cancer survivor pays it forward

ROBIN REDFERN BEAT BREAST CANCER SIX YEARS AGO. She gathered friends and family to her New Brighton home on Wednesday to fill Christmas gift bags for cancer patients at Magee Womens Hospital of UPMC. Robin started gathering items for the bags in September. Twenty-six family members and friends came to help fill 54 bags for patients.



LUCY SCHALY/THE TIMES

Robin Redfern, left, takes a full gift bag from Debbie Raymer at Redfern's home on Wednesday. More photos at timesonline.com.

Animals enliven nativity

LIVE NATIVITY, HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES PART OF BRIGHTON TOWNSHIP CHURCH'S GIFT TO COMMUNITY

By Marsha Keefer
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Jack was a popular guy at Christmastime. Churches hosting live Nativities always sought his help. After all, a donkey's an integral part of the biblical tableau. But Jack, owned by Mike and Andrea Rakosnik of New Galilee, died last year at age 30. And that left Pat Torok scrambling. Torok, also of New Galilee, is tasked with rounding up animals for this weekend's outdoor Nativity at Beaver Assembly of God.



SUBMITTED

Jackson, a miniature donkey, will be among animals cast in a live Nativity presented Sunday and Monday at Beaver Assembly of God, in Brighton Township. Silver-colored, he has a dark stripe down his back that intersects with another dark stripe across his withers creating the shape of a cross — a common feature on some breeds.

The church on Dutch Ridge Road in Brighton Township has hosted live Nativities in the past, but this year none of the beasts was available, she said, and “you have to have a donkey.”

She's right. Problem was, she said, “I didn't know anybody with a donkey.”

So Torok visited a farm a couple of miles up the road. Farmers, of course, are in the know as to who owns what stock. One contact led to another — “reverse domino effect,” she called it — and soon her cast was assembled.

Her sister, for instance, boards horses. She has a friend who owns a miniature donkey. And wouldn't you know, their friends own a donkey.

In the end, Torok also located a calf, sheep and lamb, plus two ponies for children's pony rides.

But the next issue: How to get the animals to the church?

“Finding the animals is one thing,” Torok said. “Finding transportation to

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MIKE BARCASKEY
OUTDOORS

Of bird sighting, good fishing

A few days ago, as I was doing some early morning maintenance on one of my trucks, a raven flew overhead. I never did get a glimpse of the large, black bird, but for at least 30 seconds his raspy, deep, resonant prruk-prruk call was clear as a bell.

No other bird sounds like a raven. I remember the first time I saw and heard a raven. We were doe hunting in McKean County back in the late '70s. Since then they have seen to become more common. While the northern tier counties are where I have always seen the numbers, I have spotted more than a dozen in recent years south of Interstate 80.

Whatever the reason, numerous species of “wilderness” birds, once absent from our area, are now quite common. It doesn't take much effort to find bald eagles, wild turkeys, osprey, common loons or ravens in Beaver County. Those birds are no longer visitors to this corner of Pennsylvania, but yearlong residents.

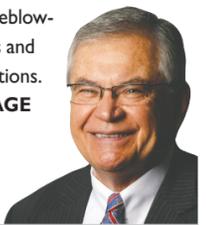
Speaking of visitors, no matter how brief, two flocks of 40 or more tundra swans made their way southward through Lawrence, Butler, Beaver and Washington counties on Wednesday. They caused quite a stir with alerts and reports popping up on internet bird list all day long. The westerly flock flew over Lawrence and Beaver before stopping in Washington County. The other flock hung out on Lake Arthur in Butler County.

I talked about my bird feeders a couple weeks ago, giving my readers a heads up to get their feeders ready. Well now is the time with temperatures forecasted to drop

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ASK BERNIE:

Whistleblower laws and protections. See **PAGE C2**



Generous donor challenges businesses to match his contribution to Give a Christmas

By Terri Bogolea Gallagher
 For The Times

The claim is lightning doesn't strike the same place twice. Nature has discounted the adage as myth. Staff members at Give a Christmas headquarters agree and are thankful that “lightening” revisits — as in lightening the burden of those in need. Last year during the holiday season, a good Samaritan appeared at the Salvation Army with a check for \$5,500,

one-tenth of Give a Christmas' annual goal, and challenged area businesses to match the donation. This week, he returned. He brought a check of the same amount and the same mission: Kindle the fire of generosity in others to help the campaign. For 45 years, Give a Christmas has provided a Christmas meal, warm clothes and gifts to those who have next to nothing here in Beaver County.

The generous visitor said he represents a local foundation that aids those in need in New Brighton and Beaver Falls, especially at Christmas. He wants to challenge the hearts of area businesses to match the contribution and donate to such “a good cause.” Because of the donations, many Christmas mornings will be lit with smiles; struggling parents' worries will be lightened. Give a Christmas is support-

ed by Times' readers and administered by the Salvation Army. Every cent remains in Beaver County and helps local families and individuals in need. Every penny counts and is appreciated so give what you can afford. Thanks to all who have helped this week, especially the anonymous messenger. Local businesses, the challenge has been issued. Answering will lighten your hearts.



GRAND TOTAL: \$20,293
GOAL: \$55,000
TO REACH GOAL: \$34,707

TO DONATE: Make checks payable to Salvation Army Give a Christmas and mail to:

Salvation Army
 P.O. Box 600
 Beaver Falls, PA 15010

DONOR LIST: The Times will run the names of contributors each Sunday in the Community section.