

THE POST

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS AND LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Trucksville resident Betty Friar knits lap robes and shawls for hospitals and nursing homes.

PHOTOS FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Helping others never gets old

By GENELLE HOBAN
Post Correspondent

TRUCKSVILLE – One Back Mountain octogenarian works her fingers to the bone knitting for the needy.

Each morning, 89-year-old Betty Friar wakes up, reads the morning paper, and begins to knit lap robes for charity. Each lap robe takes roughly 76 hours to complete, according to Friar.

"When I make a mistake, I rip it out even if it's six inches deep," she said. "One mistake can ruin the entire thing. I am constantly measuring to make sure I have the stitch gauge right."

The left-handed Friar said she has a bit of a different style of knitting than most, but can't remember exactly when or where she learned.

"I've been knitting since before the United States entered World War II," the native New Yorker said. "I was involved in Knitting for Britain. I knitted kaki vests for the soldiers."

Over the years she made numerous types of clothing including scarves, coats, sweaters and socks for her two children and two grandchildren, especially as they were growing up.

"I knitted for my two children since the day they were born," she said. "The most difficult thing I ever knitted though was a coat for myself years ago that I had to use double yarn to make. It wasn't easy to work with, but I got a lot of compliments on the coat."

Friar's daughter, Rachel Loefflad of Shaver-

See KNITTER, Page 8



Betty Friar has been knitting all types of items for charity for decades.



Macko is the only canine police officer in the Back Mountain.

Police canine hardly lives a dog's life

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Post Correspondent

DALLAS – Dallas Township Police Chief Robert Jolley can't complain about his newest police recruit even though he's young and enjoys goofing off. In fact, he's just a real dog.

Jolley and patrolman Brian Feeney were serious when they explained to a room full of giggling children at the Back Mountain Memorial Library that even though 20-month-old "Macko" is a dog, he is considered a police officer by the department. He is expected to work just like any other police officer and is required to earn his yearly certifications. He even has his own special canine patrol vehicle, but has not yet shown an interest in driving it.

The German shepherd is part of the township's commitment to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which provides funding, trains and places dogs in communities around the country. The dogs have different specialties and can be called up in case of a national emergency to serve anywhere they are needed. Macko is a bomb and explosive sniffing specialist. He can also sniff out a human in a building, says Feeney.

When not at work, Macko lives with 16-year police veteran Feeney and his family in Dallas. Feeney's commitment to dogs is ongoing, says Jolley. "Brian has always loved dogs, ever since he was a kid," he said.

Any officer paired with a canine must be a willing participant, says Feeney.

"You couldn't force this on anyone. You have to have a real interest in it," he said. Feeney and Macko train on weekends with other area policemen who have dogs.

Feeney is proud of Macko and points out that he is the first – and so far – only canine police officer in the Back Mountain. The partners went through a three-week training camp together in Oxford.

The results are arresting.

Macko neatly finds a box that contains dynamite compound and dutifully sits next to it. Feeney ex-

See POLICE DOG, Page 8



Commonwealth Telephone Enterprises employees raised more than \$20,000 for the Back Mountain Relay for Life. From left are CTEC employees Sally McHale, Jennifer Souder and Vicky Serhan, along with Christine DeMelfi of the American Cancer Society.



Susan Halbasch of InterMetro Industries was the top individual fundraiser for the Back Mountain Relay for Life, raising more than \$5,000. From left are Halbasch and Christine DeMelfi of the American Cancer Society.

Back Mountain Relay for Life event raises more than \$120,000

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. – During her duties as a fund-raiser for the American Cancer Society, Susan Halbasch sometimes feels as though she's the spouse to a large group of co-workers at InterMetro Industries.

"When they see me coming, they start taking out their wallets," said the publicity director for the Back Mountain Relay for Life. "They tell me I remind them of their wives, always asking for money."

And year after year, the employees respond.

Halbasch was the top individual fund-raiser at this year's Relay for Life, bringing in a total of \$5,398. The event raised more than \$120,000. Relay For Life is the signature event of the American Cancer

Society. At the event, individuals and teams walk around a track for a 24-hour period. The event is designed to celebrate survivorship and raise money to help the American Cancer Society.

"About 95 percent of the money I raised came from InterMetro associates," said Halbasch, who has been raising money through Relay for Life events for the past nine years, including the last four years in the Back Mountain. "It's all about people coming together in the fight against cancer."

The Back Mountain Relay For Life recently held its annual Survivor Dinner and wrap-up party at College Misericordia. The event was scheduled to take place during the annual Relay for Life in June, but was postponed because of flooding in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Commonwealth Telephone Enterprises raised approximately \$70,000 for the event. The team "Three Ring Circus" – consisting of employees Sally McHale, Jennifer Souder and Vicky Serhan – raised \$20,389.80, the highest of any team participating.

"The employees at Commonwealth Telephone have been great," said Halbasch. "They're a very big part of the Back Mountain Relay for Life. When you get local businesses and residents involved, it makes it all the better."

All of the money raised during the local Relay for Life will benefit cancer patients and their families in Luzerne County, said Halbasch. Last year, there were 1,970 new cancer cases diagnosed in the county. The American Cancer Society was able to serve 769 of those cases which

resulted in 39 percent receiving aid.

The American Cancer Society raises money through events such as The Pink Ribbon Ball, Duck Derby and the Relay For Life to fund its various services. For more information, call 1-888-227-5445 or visit the Web site www.cancer.org.

Halbasch hopes all of the hard work being done by people at events such as the Relay for Life will pay dividends in the near future. And that includes a cure for the deadly disease.

"I would hope so," said Halbasch, when asked if she is optimistic a cure for cancer will be found during her lifetime. "There are a lot of people working very hard and in this day and age, you hope they will be able to find a cure. In the meantime, I'm going to keep working hard to raise money to help them."



PHOTOS FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Zachery Garnett and his brother Jacob, Lehman Township, check out a book about police dogs after meeting police dog Macko during a program at the Back Mountain Memorial Library.

Inside The Post

8 Pages, 1 Section

Puzzles	2
Church briefs.....	6
School briefs	5
Sports	7

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