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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Drust presents this duck as an example of his carving technique.

A world of wooden wildlife

By REBECCA BRIA
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Joe Drust's award-winning bird carvings look almost real.

At first glance, it's possible to mistake one of the wooden birds perched on Joseph Drust's back porch for a real one.

It was the carving work of the late Richard Disque Sr. that inspired Drust to give the art form a shot. At Disque's suggestion, Drust took a carving class about 18 years ago from Ron Ushing of Plains Township.

"I was so anxious to learn how to do it, my hands sweat and the wood got wet," Drust said.

Drust, 87, of Dallas, has carved and painted up to 100 wooden carvings of ducks, birds, owls and fish. Prior to his class, he had never done either woodwork or painting.

Yet, his second piece of work, a Greenwing Teal, won first place in the decoy competition of the 1990 Garden State Carving Competition and Art Exhibition, an event Drust learned about from an advertisement in a carving magazine.

In 2000, Drust entered the World Art Competition held in Baltimore, Md. where he received an honorable mention in the apprentice non-floating duck category.

All wood work is done in Drust's basement and it takes him about 40 hours to create a small duck and about 60 to 70 hours to produce a large one.

To make one of his works, he first carves out the shape of the animal he wants to make from a wooden block. If making a floating duck, he must cut out the bottom of the duck. If applicable, he burns wooden feathers in.

Next, he takes the piece to his enclosed back porch where he applies a coat of gesso, a paint priming agent made from gypsum. After it dries, he paints the carving by hand and vermiculates, or decorates with wavy lines, for detail.

"I'll never time myself," Drust said. "She'll (his wife, Lillian) say it's time for supper some-

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DALLAS HS GRADUATES 226 AT ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT



AIMEE DILGER/THE TIMES LEADER

Two hundred twenty-six students received diplomas during Dallas High School commencement ceremonies held Friday, June 13, at the Dallas High School football stadium. Here, soon-to-be graduates make their way to Mountaineer Stadium carrying sunflowers, the official flower of the Class of 2008. For story and additional photos, please turn to page 5.

Check out Theophilus Bartholomule at the library

Home for history

By REBECCA BRIA
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He doesn't "hee-haw" or have the barnyard odor of a mule and he won't kick his legs when he's mad.

But Theophilus Bartholomule will soon be greeting visitors of the Back Mountain Memorial Library.

One of two fiberglass mules donated to the Annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction last summer, Theophilus is being decorated by Dallas artist Sue Hand, about one dozen of her students and artist Laura Adams. The other mule was purchased by an individual at last summer's auction.

The mules are from the Miles of Mules project created to document anthracite heritage and represent the live mules that once drew cargo up canals.

"We're so excited about the fact that we're getting this mule and the fact that Sue Hand's students are making him a token of the community and that he's finding a home at the library," Butler said.

Theophilus arrived all sanded down, so the artists collaged old newspaper clippings of the library auction and places and events in the Back Mountain, many of which are from The Dallas Post. The students are painting over the photos in the articles because Hand fears the original ink will fade in the sun.

One newspaper clipping from a 1994 Dallas Post contains a painting Hand completed of the library auction that year. Another clipping tells the story of how the former College Misericordia was used as a shelter during the flood of 1972.

Misericordia University, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Dallas High School, Lake-Lehman Junior/Senior High School and Gate of Heaven School will be painted on the mule. Hand will paint the final layers and create paintings of Harveys Lake, the Noxen Rattlesnake Roundup, the clock from downtown Dallas and The Lands at Hillside Farms.

"We're going to cover him in



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Laura Adams, an art student of Sue Hand's, repaints the face of "Theophilus Bartholomule" who is being refitted as a Back Mountain mule and will be placed at the entrance of the Back Mountain Memorial Library.



Caroline Banas paints the rear leg of an Anthracite heritage mule which is being refitted as a Back Mountain mule.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS

See more photos at www.mydallaspost.com.

the helicopter.

"When you think of a library, some younger children may find it boring," he said. "This gives them something to do, to look at the mule and see the work put into this. It feels very privileged to be part of this because I don't do much in acrylic that often and I think this is a lot of fun to be able to contribute to what is in the Back Mountain."

Sixteen-year-old Nicole Hilstolsky, a sophomore at Dallas High School who has studied with Hand for three-and-a-half years, is also working on the mule.

"I think it's amazing to take something like this and paint it for everyone else to see," she said.

Each artist who works on the project will sign his or her name on the mule which is expected to be finished in mid-June and will be on display outside the entrance to the library.

"We'd like everybody to enjoy him and come and see him," Hand said.

images that honor the Back Mountain community," Hand said. "A lot of it is library. But beyond that, we're trying to include all of the Back Mountain into it."

One of Hand's art students painting the mule is Garrett Geise, 12, a sixth-grader at Dal-

las Middle School, who was painting black and brown into a white spot on the mule's tail the day The Dallas Post visited the project. Geise, who has been studying with Hand for seven years, went over a lamp because the black lines were not dark enough and finished

The Dallas Post launches Web site

For the area's technologically-savvy population, The Dallas Post has launched its own Web site at www.mydallaspost.com.

The site has been up and running for a few weeks now and includes all of the content in every Sunday edition of The Dallas Post. News stories (complete with photos), feature stories, columns, sports and social items now appear on the newspaper's Web site as well as in the pages of the newspaper.

In addition, the Dallas Post staff will add new content almost daily as events happen in Back Mountain communities. The site will be kept as fresh as possible, allowing Internet users the ability to learn about

Back Mountain happenings as they occur.

Dallas Post Staff Writer Rebecca Bria writes a blog on the Web site, giving viewers an inside look as to how she goes about gathering news for the weekly newspaper.

"The Dallas Post has been delivering community news to residents of the Back Mountain for nearly 119 years and no one does it better," said Doty Martin, editor. "With our Web site, we can now report live news events daily. And the relationship The Dallas Post has with its parent company, The Times Leader, allows our Web site viewers the opportunity to read all kinds of news with a Back Mountain interest."



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