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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Having recently celebrated his 80th birthday, Norm Darling can still be found most days in the greenhouse on his Dallas farm.

## He's been a farmer all his life

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Most 10-year-olds don't know how to drive a truck and not many sixth-graders can say they've milked a cow.

But for Norman Darling Sr., those accomplishments were expected at a young age so he could contribute to the family farm. The Dallas resident and co-owner of Norman Darling & Sons Farms & Greenhouses turned 80 on Jan. 14 and looked back with *The Dallas Post* on his life as a farmer.

Darling grew up on a farm owned by his father, Samuel, in the Plainsville section of Plains Township. His father, an English immigrant with only a fourth-grade education, purchased a second farm in Dallas in 1930, but the family continued to reside in Plains.

Beginning at about 12 years of age, Darling was expected to wake up very early to milk and clean up after the farm's two cows and tend to the horses, mules, chickens and two hogs. He then walked over a mile to the former Maffett Street School for classes and came home only to perform the same chores again.

There were no tractors and very little machinery on the farm when Darling was young so he was forced to use horses and mules to do his work. Unfortunately, the animals didn't always cooperate.

Darling remembers a time when he was cultivating a carrot field with an old mule named May. The mule didn't want to move, so he took an old tomato basket and built a fire in it underneath her. May quickly moved away from the fire.

A 1946 graduate of the former Plains High School, Darling spent his mornings before high school selling crops at a wholesale market at the present site of Holy Redeemer High School on South Pennsylvania Avenue in Wilkes-Barre. After school he helped work on the farm and there was no time for the after-school activities that many students took part in, including basketball.

"Ever since I can remember, I had to work," Darling said. "I love basketball, but I couldn't play basketball in high school because I had to work."

Standing 6 feet 8 inches tall, Darling likely could have made a contribution to his high school basketball team. Instead, he played in a church basketball league at night when his daily duties on the farm had been completed.

Darling decided to stay on the family farm after graduation because he was the only sibling who could help. His brother, Walter, had purchased his own farm in

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Back Mountain Men's Ecumenical Breakfast Group meets weekly at Pickett's Charge Restaurant in Dallas



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Over 80 men gather at Pickett's Charge Restaurant in Dallas for a weekly ecumenical men's breakfast group.

## Breakfast unites men

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Dallas resident Dave Golias first learned of the Back Mountain Men's Ecumenical Breakfast Group from his neighbor, the Reverend Chuck Gommer. A retired United Methodist minister, Gommer invited Golias to attend one of the weekly 8 a.m. breakfasts on Tuesday mornings at Pickett's Charge.

"I didn't know anybody when I first came," Golias said. "Now I have a lot of new friends."

Founded by Gene Kelleher and Robert Deeble, the group was created because the two felt there were few social opportunities exclusively for men available in the Back Mountain.

There were just seven men, all members of Shavertown United Methodist Church, at the group's first breakfast in September 2005. In December 2008, they hit an all-time high of 84.

"Gene said, 'You know, there's nothing in the Back Mountain for men,'" Deeble said. "We thought it would be nice if we started this breakfast and invited men from other churches and other men have invited other men from their churches. Just by word of mouth, it has grown."

Numbers are slightly down in the winter months due to a few members who head south during the cold weather, but the group still averages 70 to 80 men each week.

"I think a common denominator is we all believe in Christ," Kelleher said. "We're all different flavors and we respect each other's faith."

Every week the men begin their meeting at 8 a.m. and Kelleher makes announcements on birthdays, anniversaries and church news. On Jan. 20, Wayne Long revealed that the following day, Jan. 21, was his brother Bill's birthday and the group sang, "Happy Birthday."

"It's something to look forward to," Wayne Long said of the breakfast group.

After announcements, grace is said and breakfast is served. On Jan. 20, The Reverend Bill Lewis, retired pastor of Dallas United Methodist Church, offered grace. For \$5 per person, the men are treated to a hot buffet of eggs, bacon, oatmeal, potatoes, French toast and toast, along with coffee and orange juice.

During breakfast, a charitable collection is tak-

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"We thought it would be nice if we started this breakfast and invited men from other churches and other men have invited other men from their churches. Just by word of mouth, it has grown."

Robert Deeble

Co-founder of the Back Mountain Men's Ecumenical Breakfast Group

## Sumansky teaches in Macedonia; students join him

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Students in John Sumansky's classes at Misericordia University don't think twice about asking a question or sharing a thought.

But when Sumansky, a Ph.D., taught at the State University of Tetova in the Republic of Macedonia last fall, students remained quiet.

"Most of the professors would take offense at a student challenging an idea in front of the class," Sumansky said.

Sumansky, of Dallas, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach economics and entrepreneurship at the State University of Tetova during the fall 2008 semester.

At the same time, Sumansky led a Misericordia senior undergraduate and graduate class on the economy of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Four of Sumansky's Misericordia students, including Dallas resident Eric Williams, joined Sumansky in Macedonia from Oct. 4-11.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Misericordia University business students, from left, Eric Williams, Emille Pearson, Frank Yamrick, Maki McCann, Center for Adult and Continuing Education at Misericordia; and Bill Desrosiers, pose on Mt. Vodno, which overlooks Macedonia's capital city of Skopje.

"If we're going to graduate students from here, it's not enough that they hang out in Dallas, Wilkes-Barre or the beach in the summer," Sumansky said. "All universities have to do

more of this."

The Misericordia students also met with Sumansky three times before he left, completed reading assignments, met with local leaders who have critical roles in entrepreneurship and wrote a public police paper. While in Macedonia, the students studied Macedonian economic policies, took tours of economics programs in Macedonian universities and, along with Sumansky's Macedonian students, listened to business leaders speak on economics.

Williams, 35, who is working toward his MBA at Misericordia, values studying business overseas because he is a pharmaceutical sales professional for Sanofi-Aventis.

One stark difference Williams noticed between the American and Macedonian economies was that the Macedonian unemployment rate is about 33 percent, versus a seven percent rate in the United States. The Mace-

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Do you share your name with a famous person?

If so, *The Dallas Post* staff would like to talk to you.

We think it would be fun to find out why people choose personalized license plates and how those plates reflect their personality. We also think it would be fun to talk to people who share their names with famous people and find out what kinds of problems, or advantages, they have because of their name.

If you fit into either of these categories, call us at *The Dallas Post* at 675-5211 and share your story with us.