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Your neighbors are 'Healthcare Heroes'

Back Mountain residents among 24 Healthcare Heroes honored by Times Leader.

By REBECCA BRIA
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Three Back Mountain residents were recently named Health Care Heroes for 2009 by The Times Leader.

William P.H. Charlton, M.D., and Brian Scott Saracino, D.O., both of Shavertown, and Carlo M. de Luna, M.D., of Dallas, were among 24 health care professionals acknowledged as Health Care Heroes.

Health Care Heroes recognizes extraordinary men and women within the health care profession who are helping to shape the future through their work and community involvement in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Honorees were nominated by friends, colleagues and anonymous people. A Times Leader panel reviewed the nominations to determine who would receive the distinction of Health Care Hero.

The Health Care Heroes were honored at an awards ceremony on Thursday, Nov. 5, at Mohegan Sun at Pocono Downs in Plains Township.

William P.H. Charlton, M.D.

In a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, William P.H. Charlton, M.D. was selected in 2001 to participate in a sports medicine fellowship at the Kerlan Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic in Los Angeles, Calif.

The fellowship allowed Charlton to travel with the Los Angeles Lakers of the National Basketball Association as their team physician during the 2001 season and to provide team physician coverage for the Los Angeles Dodgers major league baseball team.

Charlton, 40, of Shavertown, is an orthopaedic surgeon and partner at Orthopedic Consultants of Wyoming Valley in Kingston.

He graduated from Penn State University, University Park, with a bachelor's degree in biology in 1991, received his medical degree from Jefferson

University Medical Center in 1995 and completed his orthopaedic surgery residency in the Jefferson University Orthopaedic Program in 2000.

According to Charlton, he was inspired to become a doctor by Dr. Richard Stevenson at Christiana Hospital.

"I had a personal injury when I was a child and I had a fantastic doctor and role model," he said.

While in medical school, Charlton met his wife, Lynne Coslett-Charlton, M.D., a gynecologist at OB-Gyn Associates in Wilkes-Barre. The couple has four children.

As an orthopaedic surgeon, Charlton says his schedule varies between seeing patients and performing surgeries. Charlton's surgical specialties include advanced arthroscopic techniques and joint replacement and he is especially known for his surgery on shoulders.

In addition, he is the King's College team physician and evaluates athletes at the college.

Charlton finds returning his patients to their pre-injury abilities to be the most rewarding part of his career while finding the most challenging aspect about being an orthopaedic surgeon to be bureaucracy.

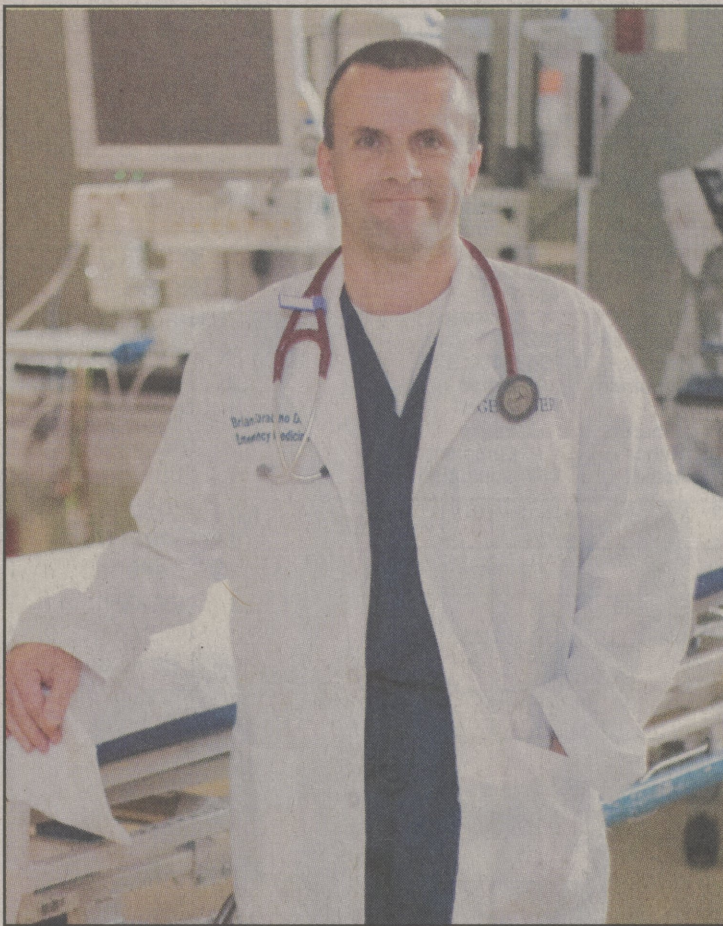
"It's the health care crisis as we face it with the lack of insurance and the inequality in insurance programs and the strict criteria certain people come with," Charlton said. "Day to day, the main problem is dealing with the non-medical issues of the health care environment."

Charlton expects orthopaedic surgery to become even more popular in the coming years as people live longer.

"As we do more surgery and people live longer, I have many active patients who are like, bionic," he said. "There's going to be a huge demand over the next 10 to 20 years as the baby boomer generation develops arthritis."

Carlo M. de Luna, M.D.

At 6 years old, Carlo M. de Luna, M.D. came to America with his mother and brother



Brian Scott Saracino, D.O.

from the Philippines. His father had died and his mother brought her two young sons, along with two suitcases, to the United States in search of a better life.

Now 45 years old, de Luna, of Dallas, is a neurosurgeon and the Chief of the Department of Neurosurgery at Wyoming Valley Health Care System. He is also an associate professor of neurosurgery at Penn State College of Medicine.

In 1986, de Luna received a bachelor's degree in biology from Cornell University, then graduated from the State University of New York at Buffalo with his medical degree in 1990.

Before coming to the Wyoming Valley, de Luna was the interim director of neurosurgery at the JFK Neuroscience Institute in central New Jersey and was assistant professor at the Department of Neurosurgery of Seton Hall University, JFK Medical Center.

As a neurosurgeon, de Luna commonly performs spine oper-

ations in the neck and lower back areas of the body, as well as the removal of brain tumors. He is also busy presenting research on intraoperative Magnetic Resonance Imaging (iMRI), a new device that allows surgeons to take a photo of the brain while performing surgery.

De Luna and his wife, Doreen, have three children: Bobby, 8; and 5-year-old twins, Richie and Gabe.

One patient's experience on the operating table will be hard for de Luna to ever forget. The patient, a young man, suffered from a ruptured aneurysm and was brought in cold and essentially dead. The doctors were able to bring the man out of a coma, revive his vital signs and operate on him.

After a few months had passed, the man told de Luna and others that he had gone through a tunnel during the incident.

"He said he felt like he was

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Carlo M. de Luna, M.D.



William P.H. Charlton, M.D.

Christmas tree adds spirit to holiday season

By REBECCA BRIA
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People entering the Back Mountain from the Cross Valley Expressway may have noticed something looks different recently.

It's always been there, blending in with the landscape behind Toby Creek. At a certain angle, it is even visible from Memorial Highway.

The 50-foot real pine tree that stands on the old train trestle above Back Mountain Creamery on Carverton Road in Trucksville has been transformed into a Christmas tree.

Tammy Lemelin, co-owner of Pizza Perfect, says decorating the tree was a joint effort between the owners of the restaurant and Carl Peterlin, owner of Back Moun-

tain Creamery.

"I've always wanted to decorate it and I asked my husband (Ed) if it is do-able and he said anything is do-able and anything is possible, so he did it," Lemelin said. "And Carl always wanted to decorate it, too."

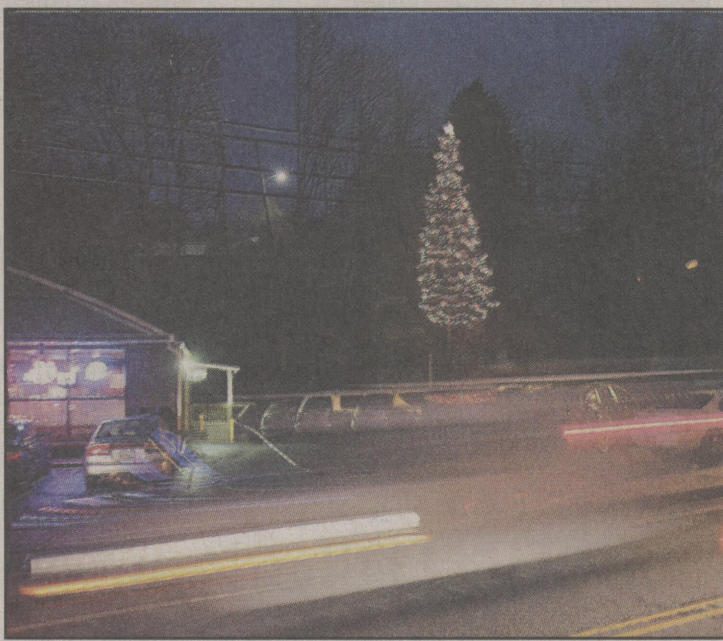
A 60-foot boom lift was rented and the entire process took about 10 hours.

The tree dons 800 feet of wire with a total of 800 lights and a four-foot star sits atop. The lights are on a timer and are lit nightly from 5 p.m. to midnight.

"Everybody's stopping by and saying they love it," Peterlin said. "It's amazing how many people didn't know the tree was there."

Santa Claus will visit Back Mountain Creamery from 5 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19, to take photos in front of the Christmas tree. Cost of the photos will be a donation to Stephanie Jallen Paralympic Fund.

Jallen, an eighth-grader at Wyoming Area Secondary Center, was born with rare disease called Congenital Hemidysplasia with Ichthyosis and Limb Defects (CHILD) syndrome, caus-



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Between Pizza Perfect and Back Mountain Creamery on Carverton Road in Trucksville, a native fir tree has been lighted and draws attention each evening. The project is the combined effort of the two businesses.

ing her to have an underdeveloped left side. Although her left leg was amputated when she was a baby and her left arm is very short, she hopes to participate in the 2014 Paralympics in Russia as a member of the U.S. Adaptive Ski Team.

Lemelin feels it is appropriate that the tree is on the trestle because Pizza Perfect gives away a train to one child each year. This is the fourth year for the give-

away and the restaurant will raffle off a Lionel Hogwarts Express train from the Harry Potter book series.

Lemelin plans to decorate the tree again next year because it brightens the day and puts people in the holiday spirit.

"Everybody says how beautiful it is," Lemelin said. "You can start to see it as you come up the highway. It just lights up the Trucksville area very nicely."

Scrooge is coming but he won't ruin holiday spirit

By REBECCA BRIA
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Ebenezer Scrooge is coming to Cross Creek Community Church in Trucksville, but he won't ruin the Christmas spirit.

The church is putting on Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" for its annual Christmas play at 6 p.m. today, Dec. 13. The public is invited to attend the free play.

In the story of "A Christmas Carol," Ebenezer Scrooge, who does not like Christmas, is visited by the ghost of his former business partner and warned that his soul will be troubled for eternity if he does not change his way of life.

Scrooge is then visited by three other ghosts - the Ghost of Christmas Past, the Ghost of Christmas Present and the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. The final ghost shows Scrooge a terrible future for himself if he does not transform into a nicer person.

According to Cross Creek Community Church play director Bonnie Evans, of Sweet Valley, the church's version of the

play is slightly different than the classic. In this play, Scrooge not only changes his ways to lead a better life, but also finds "transcending love by accepting Christ."

"We want (the audience) to get the message that Jesus is the answer for changing our lives," Evans said. "We don't want to get too technical with people because maybe no one ever even opened a Bible that may come."

According to Pastor Dave Martin, Cross Creek Community Church opened at the site of the former Trucksville Methodist Church in 1999. The non-denominational Bible church is growing and recently underwent a 14,000 square foot building expansion for a new sanctuary which opened on Easter Sunday of this year.

Thirty-two church members from children to adults will participate in the play. There are also many other volunteers behind the scenes building props, creating costumes and adjusting sound and lighting.

The play will last approximately one and a half hours.



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