

The DALLAS POST

50¢

Serving the communities of the Dallas and Lake-Lehman School Districts

www.mydallaspost.com



Bette and John Gillespie first met as widowers on a group trip to Ireland.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Church expands by purchasing club

By REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

Back Mountain Harvest Assembly Church has purchased Valley Tennis and Swim Club.

Pastor Dan Miller, senior pastor of Back Mountain Harvest Assembly, said the club on Harris Hill Road in Trucksville will supplement the church's Rock Recreation Center. The club is located about 400 yards down a hill behind the Rock Recreation Center.

Elijah Miller, Pastor Dan Miller's son, and Doug Miller, no relation to the pastor, will manage the tennis and swim club as well as the Rock Recreation Center.

Founded in 1961, Valley Tennis and Swim Club features a clubhouse and snack bar, a 25-yard in-ground swimming pool, a kiddie pool and 14 Har-Tru tennis courts. The courts, made of green stone, require daily rolling, raking and irrigation when in use.

"What we're doing is we're trying to add value to the community," Miller said. "We want to make this a better place to live."

Miller said the purchase took place on Feb. 1. Although he would not disclose how much the church paid for the club, the Luzerne County Recorder of Deeds Office lists the sale price at \$325,000.

The acquisition of the club now brings the church's property to 42 acres of land. The church also owns the land on the hill in between the Rock Recreation Center and the club. Miller said the church hopes to install two synthetic all-purpose athletic fields at the crest of the hill by the spring of 2011.

Although the club is now owned by a church, Miller insists membership will be open to non-church members.

According to Miller, Back Mountain Lacrosse has inquired about using the fields as their home fields.

An outside amphitheater and an access road are also planned and one mile of walking trails already exist on the land. In the future, the church may also add climbing walls and a BMX bike track at the club.

"We're in the process of raising money," Miller said. "We're looking for grants."



Pastor Dan Miller talks about new possibilities for his church, the Back Mountain Harvest Assembly, which has just purchased the Valley Swim and Tennis Club in Trucksville. The property borders the church's present location and the congregation hopes to build a road over the mountain for easy access to both properties.

Back Mountain Harvest Assembly was formed in 1969; however, when Miller arrived at the church in 1993, the church had no money and its congregation had dropped to 15.

Miller helped the church to grow and, in 2004, the Rock Recreation Center opened. The congregation is now at about 1,100 with approximately 600 people attending services each Sunday.

Miller said the church intends to teach values, morals and life skills while people recreate.

"I've always liked sports but I've always seen how you can add church in a lighter setting," he said.

A separate project planned for the near future at the church is the creation of a private school with Christian values. Miller said the church hopes to initially open a school for kindergarten through eighth-grade for the fall of 2011. The school may later accommodate preschool and grades nine through.

"We want to go back to what our schools taught 70 years ago where you can open a Bible," Miller said.

Valley Tennis and Swim Club will open for tennis on April 30 and the pools will be open around Memorial Day. Anyone interested in becoming a member of the club may call the Rock Recreation Center at 696-2769 or e-mail therockreccenter@bmha.org.

Back Mountain couple finds love SECOND TIME AROUND

By REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

The two married and moved to Havertown, Pa. where they had 11 children.

The Segrave-Dalys moved to Shavertown in 1974. Arthur died in 1991.

"I was working," Bette said of the year she lost her husband. "I'm a nurse. I was busy. I had children. My youngest was still in college."

John Gillespie, 82, nicknamed "Whitey" for the blonde hair he had as a child, was born and raised in the East End section of Wilkes-Barre. He continued to live there with his first wife, Joan, where he worked as a baker and a janitor at the former Mackin School.

The couple had no children and

"I got to thinking she's a very attractive woman and a very thoughtful person and all these nice things about her."

John Gillespie

Speaking about his wife

John "Whitey" and Bette Gillespie never thought they'd find love again.

The Dallas husband and wife couldn't be happier today, but both were married before and lost their first spouses to death.

Neither John nor Bette was looking to date, let alone fall in love, after the deaths of their spouses. But they did.

Bette, 78, grew up in Mandan, N.D. She went to college in Minnesota and eventually met a Navy man named Arthur Segrave-Daly.

Joan died in 1995.

"I didn't think anybody could take her place, to be truthful," John said.

John McKeown, John's friend, was going on an organized trip to Ireland in June 1996 and invited him to come along. John agreed.

Bette was going on the same trip having been invited by her

friend, Lucille Luksic, who would be traveling with her brother.

Although John and Bette were introduced to each other on a bus on the way to the airport, Bette's first vivid memory of John was when they were in Ireland. He was coming down from kissing the

See SECOND, Page 9

Surprised to be 90 years old, Dallas woman plans party for herself

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Dallas Post correspondent

Mary Ellen Whitby Mohr, born Feb. 21, 1920 in Edwardsville, is planning a party for her 90th birthday.

"My body is better and my daughter is doing the invitations," Mohr said, smiling with satisfaction.

A zesty retired Dallas School District teacher of Welsh background, Mohr wants to have a "surprise" birthday party for herself.

"It's a surprise, really, to me that I've lived so long," she laughs.

It's not surprising, though, that

she's alive, according to the U.S. Census Bureau which notes that the 90 year-old demographic is one of the fastest growing outside of the 45 to 59-year-old group.

The nonagenarians group grew by 44.6% from 1990 to 2000, its numbers swelling to 1,112,531 million nationally. It is estimated there will be 4.55 million of them by 2030, thus there may be many birthday parties for 90-year-old guests of honor.

Mohr has invited 50 of her very special friends to her gala at the Westmoreland Club on Feb. 20 where they'll eat fabulous food, listen to "surprise entertainment" among the glass pillars and hanging bouquets and partake of peanut butter sundaes (Mohr's favorite) for dessert.

Mohr has plenty of friends to invite. She is still an avid bridge player at Fox Hill Country Club and at Gateway and competes yearly as a senior citizen in the Welsh "Eisteddfod" at St. John's Church in Edwardsville, where she won "my first silk purse with a

quarter in it" as a 5-year-old elocutionist in 1925, reciting "You Can Do It"

With her husband, Walter, who had the habit before his death in 2007 of "always rising to the top," Mohr imagines she has sat at more speakers' tables than anyone. Mohr is past-president of Irem Temple, Dallas, a Rotarian and, just like Walter, a 50-year member of the Westmoreland Club.

The Mohrs raised two children, Miriam Marge Mohr and Meri Lee Mohr, and lived on Lehman and then Machell Avenues in Dallas.

Besides her strong community connection and involvement, Mohr taught for 17 years at the old Dallas Township School, then for 26 years at the Dallas Borough School when it was located in what is now the Back Mountain Memorial Library Building. She earned a Master's Degree in Education from College Misericordia.

"The door to my fourth-grade class was where the check-out

counter is today," she remembers.

Many of Mohr's former students, including Marshall Rumbaugh and John Mulhern, recall her "educated ears." She would cover them when she heard offensive language and they now ask how her "educated ears" are doing, she says.

Mohr came from humble beginnings and struggled during her early years.

A child of the depression, her father, Evan Whitby, was a foreman with the Paine Coal Co. During the Depression, Mohr remembers her father working for 17 months without pay.

"How my mother (Miriam Jones Whitby) fed four children, I have no idea," she said.

A neighborhood shoe store gave the family free shoes but Mohr distinctly remembers thinking about what she would do "when Paine paid." The company did finally pay her father for

See SURPRISED, Page 9



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Mary Mohr shows off a satin gown she plans to wear for her 90th birthday party Feb. 21 at the Westmoreland Club.



6 09815 20079 9