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A MOTHER'S DAY PAINTING



Artem Smagin gives his mother, Natalie, a Mother's Day painting he has created in the 4-year old class of Brenda Strutko at Trucksville Early Childhood Education Center. Artem's sister, Anna, admires the gift. The modern Mother's Day is celebrated on various days in many parts of the world, most commonly in May, though also in March, as a day to honor mothers and motherhood. Mother's Day in the United States is being celebrated today, May 9.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Club seeks all readers to unite

By REBECCA BRIA
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A new resident to the Back Mountain is hoping to recruit members to her recently-founded book club.

Debra Lozano, 51, established the Back Mountain Readers book club in April.

Lozano moved to Shaver-town from the Philadelphia area last October when she married Albert



Lozano

Lozano, Ph.D., a professor at Penn State Wilkes-Barre. She had been active in a book club near her home before she relocated to the Back Mountain and found there were not many like clubs here.

"It's something that I always wanted to get into and once I did it I really liked it," Lozano said of book clubs.

The Back Mountain Readers meet from 7 to 8:30 p.m. on the last Thursday of each month in the Herb Hill Meeting Room in the lower level of the Kingston Township municipal building. The next meeting will be May 27. There is no cost to participate.

"I would like to have eventually about 15 to 20 members," Lozano said. "That makes it where you have about 10 to 12 at a meeting where everyone has a chance to talk because the hour and a half goes pretty quick."

Lozano invites all members of the public to the club in hopes of bringing together people of different backgrounds and men and women of varied ages.

"I think it adds something to the discussion," she said of diversity.

The books the club has read so far are appropriate for adults age 18 and up, she said.

At their initial meeting, club members discussed "Making Toast" by Roger Rosenblatt, a memoir from a father to his daughter, who passed away at a young age from a heart attack.

Members of the Back Mountain Readers are rating the books they read from one to five with five being the best. "Making Toast" received two stars

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Despite challenges, Mother's Day is always special

By REBECCA BRIA
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Ginny Major was ready for her daughter Judy's wedding.

The Dallas woman had purchased a pink satin gown and pink high heels to wear to the June 1988 wedding.

In March of that year, however, Ginny had a brain aneurism. Surgery to repair the aneurism caused a stroke that affected the entire left side of her body, forcing her to undergo a year of rehabilitation to learn how to walk again. The surgery also resulted in a shaved head.

But that didn't stop Ginny from walking down the aisle at Judy's wedding. Wearing her dress and hot pink high-top sneakers to accommodate her leg brace, she was assisted down the aisle by her son, Mark, and an usher. Now 74 years old, Ginny has undergone a series of

health challenges and is thankful for the support of her three children - Gina Major Ackerman, Judy Harvey and Mark Major.

Despite her health issues, Ginny continues to work as an independent sales consultant for Mary Kay Cosmetics and has been instrumental in helping to raise her seven grandchildren: Irina, Masha, Yuri and Aloysha Ackerman; and Bryn, Zac and Tyler Harvey.

Ginny will celebrate Mother's Day by going out to eat with her family as they always do and is looking forward to the homemade cards her grandchildren always make her.

"It (Mother's Day) means having three most incredible children any woman can ever have," Major said. "Those children have always been there for me and are always making sure I get what I need. It means looking at my own mom and knowing how

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Ginny Major

much she has done for me. I look at my two daughters and my daughter-in-law; they have always been there for me. My own girls as mothers, what they have done to instill in their children to make sure they have that good solid foundation in faith...and what these kids have accomplished."

In her mid-30s, Ginny divorced and raised three children on her own. She was working full-time as a buyer's assistant in the Acme Markets office, but found it difficult to make ends meet.

She decided to move her fam-

ily into the Jackson Township home of her parents, the late Robert and Erma Culp.

"It afforded me an opportunity to give to my children more than I ever could have if I had been on relief," she said.

That decision allowed Ginny to enroll her children in piano lessons, voice lessons, dance and baton lessons and church activities. She coached their teams in the Back Mountain Little League and took them on a summer vacation to the beach every year.

In return, her children have been there for her during a se-

ries of health problems since that aneurism in 1988.

"During the really critical time, they never left the hospital," she remembered. "They slept right there...they kept a journal. They drew me in the bed hooked up all to the machines and things. They were there for me 100 percent."

Life soon proved once again that it would continue to be a challenge. Ginny fell off her porch in 2000, fracturing her back and forcing physical therapy again.

Her health was compromised again in 2004 when her car was hit by another on Route 309 in Dallas, leaving her with a broken wrist and cuts on her face and head.

Shortly after that, a cyst developed under her right

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Four Back Mountain students are 2010 Best & Brightest finalists

Four Back Mountain students were among finalists for 2010 Times Leader Best & Brightest Awards.

Dallas High School students Tara Connors, Kaitlyn Reinert and Jacob Hebda, along with Masha Raspen of Lake-Lehman High School were all honored guests during the 16th Annual Best & Brightest Awards Ceremony held May 3 at Bentley's in Ashley.

The ceremony recognizes the

academic and community accomplishments of area high school seniors with top-ranking students competing for a Best & Brightest trophy as well as a \$1,000 scholarship from The Times Leader within 14 different categories.

In January, The Times Leader invited area high schools to nominate up to 10 percent of their graduating classes. In March, a panel of judges for each category, comprised of Times Leader employees, reviewed applications, grouping them into finalists and semi-finalists.

Three to five finalists were then invited for individual interviews with another panel of judges comprised of community members and Times Leader employees. The judges for each category selected one winner and two to four final-

ists, depending on the number of applicants in each category.

Richard L. Connor, editor and publisher of Wilkes-Barre Publishing Company, parent company of The Dallas Post, presented awards to the winners.

Tara Connors, of Dallas, daughter of Thomas and Kim Connors, is a finalist in the Athletics category.

Connors has participated in soccer in the Eastern Development Program, the Wyoming

Valley Coaches All-Star soccer team and has been named to The Times Leader All-Star team and Citizens' Voice All-Star team. She has served as captain of the Dallas High School soccer team and is a four-time letter winner as well as a PIAA District II AA champion.

She has earned honors with distinction and is a member of the Dallas High School Steering Committee, Mini-THON and is a community volunteer.

Connors plans to attend the College of William and Mary to become a speech therapist and play Division I soccer.

Trucksville resident Katelyn Reinert is a finalist in the Civics category.

The daughter of Philip and Tania Reinert, she is a member of Junior Leadership Wilkes-Barre,

has attended National Young Leaders Conference and the Pennsylvania Governor's School for the Arts, won first place at the state level in Science Olympiad and is a member of the National Honor Society and National Honor Roll.

She is a member of Student Leadership in Civics Club, the Life-smarts Consumer competition her church

young group the Dallas High School Steering Committee, a senior Girl Scout and a History Day

participant.

Reinert is considering George Washington University, Boston University, American University and Fordham University to pursue a degree in international affairs.

Jacob Hebda, of Trucksville, is a finalist in the English category.

The son of Joseph and Mary Ann Hebda, he has attained the All A's Cumulative Award and the Most

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