

The DALLAS POST 50¢

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Local couple in step with Back Mountain

Pyles credit music for happy marriage

By SARAH HITE
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Like an orchestra conductor, George Pyle gently swung his arms in front of him as he watched home movies he edited to music change pace and fade in and out to the beats of big band tracks.

Watching his fondest memories move with the music, he saw photos from an Alaskan trip that seemed to two-step across the TV screen like he once did years ago at town halls in the Back Mountain.

As the owner and operator of a video pro-

duction company and, according to him, the eldest player in the 380-member Alumni Blue Band Association of Penn State, music and movement have crossed paths in more than one area of the trombone player's life.

"You can point me out on the field (during the Penn State Homecoming game) because I'm the only one in step," the 84-year-old joked.

Pyle's passion for music also led to meeting his wife, Carole, 79, a former music teacher. They have been married for nearly 57 years. They met in February, were engaged in April and wed in August of the

same year. Now they are parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

"I met her on a Tuesday, and I didn't give her my fraternity pin until Thursday," George laughed.

The video he lovingly edited to the tunes of legends like Glen Miller was in celebration of the couple's 50th wedding anniversary seven years ago. Carole, who taught vocals and played the flute and saxophone, also lent her voice to the production, singing the introduction song,

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Pyle



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
George and Carole Pyle relax in their Dallas home.

Volunteers lauded at Meadows celebration

Staff say holiday help is nice, but volunteers are needed year round

By SARAH HITE
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Harveys Lake resident Diana Ide didn't expect her family dog to become such an integral part of the nursing home community.

Kozmo, a 6-year-old Great Dane, is a gentle giant. (She was calm and collected when food was served at The Meadows' annual volunteer Christmas party on Dec. 8, even though her snout was just inches away from a plate of fancy salad greens.)

Ide volunteers with South Paws Dog Therapy, for which Kozmo was trained and tested to become a certified therapy dog. The pair aims to make 11 visits a month to nursing homes, schools and other organizations.

Ide was surprised to learn just how much a difference an animal can make in the lives of others. She recalled a patient at another nursing home who had suffered a stroke who hadn't physically or verbally responded to nurses or family members in weeks.

On the woman's 50th wedding anniversary, Kozmo and Ide came to visit as she was looking at old photographs in her room. Kozmo snuck up behind the woman and nuzzled her shoulder as she flipped through a photo album, and for a moment, the woman.

"Every time we came after that she made more progress," said Ide. "She was eventually able to go home."

Therapy dogs are just some of the many volunteers that help out The Meadows Nursing Home in Dallas throughout the year. About 100 guests were thanked at the Christmas party, from day-to-day activities volunteers to singers who carol from room to room during the holiday season.

While some may say the season of giving can spur a spirit of volunteering, Dianne Corby, of Beaumont, said volunteers are needed all year long.

Corby and her mother, Irene Transue, have donated their time to the Meadows for more than 25 years. It all started with a notice in the newspaper and some free time on their hands.

"I really do believe that this is the Valley with a Heart," said Marilyn Gregorski, volunteer coordinator at The Meadows.

She said the center always needs volunteers, despite their current number of helping hands.

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FOR THE DALLAS POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Shannon Hunt, Dallas, has seen a 15-lb. weight loss working out with a combination of aerobic exercises and free weights.

Tragedy sparks a life change

By SARAH HITE
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Shannon Hunt of Dallas had exercised regularly even before having two children. Her weight stayed steady and her diet remained fairly healthy.

It wasn't until two years ago, when a few unexpected events changed her life, that she had trouble staying in shape.

"My niece passed away when she was only 20 years old," she said. "I think I was emotionally eating to release that anxious energy."

A few months later, her mother had open heart surgery.

"It scared me," said the 40-year-old mother. "I wanted to be here for my kids."

Hunt noticed her clothes getting tighter and her eating habits transforming from seasonal salads to salty snacks. It wasn't long before she realized she needed a change.

"I didn't like what I was becoming," she said. "I had a number in my head, and once I hit it, I knew I had to lose the weight."

Jumping back into an active lifestyle wasn't easy. After a few attempts to exercise at home fell flat, she decided to join Shapes Total Fitness in Dallas, in 2009.

"I would take my daughter to preschool and Shapes is just up the road," she said. "They had everything I needed there."

Hunt started to build endurance by walking on a treadmill three times a week. After a few weeks, she started jogging a bit.

"When I started I watched Ellen DeGeneres and I would jog during the commercials," she said. "As I started getting stronger, I could jog for 15 minutes at a time."

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2010: YEAR IN REVIEW



BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
Changing Habits performs at the Dallas Harvest Festival.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
John Fleschat serves up the perfect square pizza.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
Chris Ellis celebrates with Silly String at the Dallas High School graduation.

A LOOK BACK



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
Katarina Banks, Dallas, emerges cooled-off from her swim in the pool at Newberry Estate.

2010 a busy year for Back Mountain, residents

The year 2010 proved to be one Back Mountain residents won't soon forget.

Gas drilling issues were paramount to municipalities and residents as oil companies' drove and drilled into the area.

Students pushed themselves to achieve great things, while

school officials were marred with scandal.

Businesses and events reached milestones, while organization leaders left posts they've held for years.

Here's a peek into the events that defined 2010 in the Back Mountain:

January

Retired United Methodist pastor the Rev. Charles Gommer and others raise money to plan a trip to Haiti after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit the country's capital, Port-au-Prince, on Jan. 12.

Dallas School District Superintendent Frank Galicki was retained for another five-year term by a 6-1 vote from the school board. Board member Karen Kyle was absent from the meeting due to illness, but she insisted contractual agreements in-

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A re-energizing lesson

By SARAH HITE
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Fourth-graders at Lake-Noxen Elementary School are learning they have the power to be more responsible about energy consumption.

Jenell Brimhall and Kim Waits from the National Energy Foundation recently showed two fourth-grade classes an interactive presentation and played games with students to explain why energy efficiency is so important.

"We teach about behaviors and energy sources to get the kids thinking about energy," said Brimhall.

Teacher Jackie Krogulski said the presentation tied directly into the school's curriculum. Lake-Noxen was one of only five schools in the area to benefit from the program.

"Our PSSA tests have science in them," she said. "We have to start them young, because their children's children could be affected by this."

Brimhall and Waits talked to

"I learned that I have to not keep things on if I'm not using them."

— Mackayia Sims, 10

the children about different sources of energy in Pennsylvania, reporting that coal is the

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST
Matthew Kurtz fills out a game card at a lecture by UGI at the Lake-Noxen Elementary School.



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