

# The DALLAS POST

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## 'Face of America' chronicles people and nature of country

By SARAH HITE  
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A funeral sparked the projects that have shaped the lives of Tony and Kitch Mussari for the past nine years.

Following the September 11 attacks in 2001, the Dallas couple attended the funeral of a friend's son who had died in one of the World Trade Towers.

Kitch said Tony was so moved by the ceremony, it spurred action in remembrance of others who died on that day.

The pair produced dozens of documentaries based on the Shanksville, Pa. site where Flight 93 crashed on Sept. 11, and will screen their final doc-

umentary this year, the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

"Every year, our visit becomes the basis of the next documentary," said Kitch.

This year, the duo expanded their search for ordinary people who commit extraordinary things with their "Face of America" project, which will include a documentary and book recounting their travels. They've driven throughout the 48 continental United States, racking up more than 30,000 miles, recording more than 110 hours of footage, snapping more than 57,000 digital images and interviewing more than 400 people - all in the span of about 100 days.

"This is about finding people who are representative of America on its best days," said

### LEARN MORE

To read more about Tony and Kitch Mussari's Face of America project, visit their website at <http://faceofamericawps.com>.

Tony.

The Mussaris said the cross-country trip was a natural progression from their Shanksville documentaries, which started in 2002 on a whim after seeing an article in an Ohio newspaper that chronicled a woman who was creating a picture book about the Flight 93 memorial site.

"We knew we'd like to do something," Kitch said about honoring those who died during 9/11.

The couple met with Leigh

Snyder, the woman from the news article, at Shanksville and ended their trip with enough footage for a new documentary series called "What is America?" which is screened at Shanksville every fall to commemorate Sept. 11.

The "Face of America" project has a more national scope, but the meaning of the project still resonates with family, friends and even strangers.

Tony recalled a frightening auto accident in Minnesota in the midst of the Mussaris'

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Kitch and Tony Mussari, of Dallas, have traveled the continental United States and produced a video entitled "The Face of America" about the people and nature of America.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST



Ricky Wentzel, of Harveys Lake, plays a ring toss game at the Idetown Firehall's New Year's Eve party.



Chugging down beers at the Idetown Vol Fire Company New Year's Eve party.

## Redneck New Year celebration

The Idetown Fire Hall in Dallas hosted a Redneck New Year's Eve party on Friday, Dec. 31 where attendees dressed in their best redneck get-up to ring in the New Year. Fun fare included bobbing for pickled pigs' feet and playing homemade instruments and redneck horseshoes.

## Learning first hand

By SARAH HITE  
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Nicole Rivero didn't know what to expect after landing in Kampala, Uganda in early September. Part of the study abroad program she'd signed up for included information about the African countries she was set to visit, but nothing could prepare her for the day-to-day life she was about to live for four months.

*Muzungu! Muzungu! Hey muzungu!*

The common phrase followed the 20-year-old Shavertown native throughout her stay in East Africa, where she encountered pleasant people who often referred to her as "white person."

"Because you're white, you draw attention to yourself," said the Lafayette College junior. "We're used to a multicultural society."

Rivero studied in Kigali, Rwanda and Gulu, Uganda, learning about the Ugandan civil war and the Rwandan genocides. The group she traveled with was comprised of 28 students from all over the United States, and the topic at hand was post-conflict transition.

The group split its time between the two cities for four months, studying in schools, living with families and visiting museums and memorials. Rivero also blogged about her experiences while she was away to stay in touch with friends and family.

"I could get out what I was experiencing without sending mass e-mails," she said. "It was also therapeutic - especially when we visited the genocide memorials."

Rivero can't even remember the first time she'd heard about the war



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Nicole Rivero, of Shavertown, shows off some jewelry and artifacts from her trip to Africa.

in northern Uganda, but her passion for the subject runs deep. "Most people aren't aware of the situation," she said. "There are kids my age there who only know war."

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## Proving Pit Bulls are friendly, family-oriented

By SARAH HITE  
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An argument with a friend changed Jen O'Donnell's life.

In 2001, 31-year-old O'Donnell got into a heated exchange with a friend about whether Pit Bulls are friendly, family-oriented pets. To prove her case, she and her now-husband, Brian, adopted one of the bully breed dogs, named Dozer, the very next day from the SPCA of Luzerne County.

### WANT MORE INFO ...

For more information about Sweet Bark Pit Bull Rescue, including how to become a foster or donate items, visit the group's website at [www.sweetbarkpitbullrescue.com](http://www.sweetbarkpitbullrescue.com), or e-mail O'Donnell at [sweetbarkpitbullrescue@gmail.com](mailto:sweetbarkpitbullrescue@gmail.com).

Dozer succumbed to cancer in January 2009, and now O'Donnell and her family are in the throes of making sure Pit Bulls and other dogs find loving homes, too.

"Dozer is the reason we love these dogs," said O'Donnell.

She started Sweet Bark Pit Bull Rescue, a nonprofit foster-based dog rescue, in May 2010. The organization focuses on finding homes for bully breed dogs, a category comprised of several different breeds, including American Pit Bull Terriers, American Staf-

fordshire Terriers, Bull Terriers, American Bulldogs and others.

O'Donnell said Sweet Bark aims to rescue dogs that have typical characteristics of these breeds.

"You know, the big head and the muscular build," she said.

The Dallas native said there are a lot of misconceptions about Pit Bulls, as the breed is often plagued with stereotypes about its aggression and bad temperament.

"They're being victimized,"

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Jen O'Donnell, founder of Sweet Bark Pit Bull Rescue, and Matilda, a Pit Bull who needs a home.



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