

# This dance troupe has literally gone to the dogs

Tail-wagging performances combine music, costumes, props and lots of love.

By SARAH HITE  
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A familiar dance pattern has never looked so frisky.

Instead of the usual heel-toe footsteps, Helen Gilbertson and her Siberian Husky, Indy, regularly practice heel-paw moves at the Wilkes-Barre Dog Training Club in Hanover Township.

Gilbertson, of Sweet Valley, kicks out her right foot as 8-year-old Indy taps it with his left paw, and the pair continue the pattern while walking backwards to the beat of "Do You Believe In Magic?" by The Lovin' Spoonful.

Gilbertson and Indy are part of the Doghouse Dancers Freestyle Club in which pups and their handlers combine music, costumes, props and choreography to create "tail-wagging" performances.

The group, based in the Back Mountain, performs for nursing homes and civic club meetings and competes in dog dancing competitions all over the country.

Founding member Eileen Hoyson, of Shavertown, said she'll never forget the first time she saw a freestyle performance at a dog show years ago, remembering a tightly group of dog show performers who brought tears to her eyes.

"I was completely mesmerized," she said. "You could just see the great bond between the owners and their dogs."

Hoyson said most of the club members have experience in dog training, and the dancing allows handlers and dogs to express their creative sides.



Doghouse Dancers leader Eileen Hoyson, of Shavertown, practices her routine with her dog Munch at the Wilkes-Barre Dog Training Club in Hanover Township.

BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

"Obedience is a lot more rigid," said Hoyson. "There's no room for creativity. Freestyle opens up the creative parts of your brain."

As Hoyson and her 6-year-old Golden Retriever, Munch, take the floor, a dizzying array of fancy foot and paw work commence

once the first beats of "Pencil-Thin Mustache" by Jimmy Buffet belt through the training center. With a few quiet commands

from Hoyson, who always has a tempting treat in her hand, Munch is weaving in and out of Hoyson's legs, circling his owner

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Doghouse Dancers Freestyle Club, including information about joining the club or scheduling a performance, contact Eileen Hoyson at 696-4925. The group meets without their furry partners at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month at the Kingston Township Municipal Building. Anyone interested in the club is welcome to attend meetings.

as she lifts her arms and walking backwards in step with Hoyson and the beat.

Munch is relentless in his energy, swooping and stepping and dancing right on cue.

"They call it the tail-wagging sport, because those dogs who have tails are constantly wagging and having a wonderful time," said Hoyson.

Betty Gower's Beagle-Weimaraner mix, Jingles, is new to freestyle, and needs to be leashed during her performance. Despite the extra restraint, Jingles seems just as excited to have that extra interaction with her owner.

"I think she's smarter than I am," laughed Gower, of Forty Fort.

Una Valanski, of Dallas, said she can't walk a straight line, so the freedom that freestyle offers to those usually involved in strict dog shows can be liberating.

She danced to "Redneck Woman" by Gretchen Wilson with her two dancing dogs - 8-year-old Spencer, a Papillon, and 6-year-old Chadwick, a Pomeranian-Chihuahua mix.

The toy dogs rolled on their backs between Valanski's legs,

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## HOLIDAY CONCERT AT NEW LIFE COMMUNITY CHURCH



A holiday concert will be presented at 7 p.m. today, Dec. 4 at the New Life Community Church, Twin Stacks Center, 1100 N. Memorial Hwy., Dallas. Pastor Gideon Gaitano, tenor, will be joined by singers and readers spanning a wide range of ages to present songs that will touch the heart. Call 333-4567 for more information. From left, first row, are Avaree Gaitano, Jonathan Allen, Rachel Madeira, Lee Lauver, Lucille Madeira, Dennis Madeira. Second row, Diane Czajkowski, April Roskos. Third row, Pastor Gaitano, Mike Czajkowski and Ed Kowalski.

## Memorial books remember loved ones

The following memorial/honor books have been added to the shelves of the Back Mountain Memorial Library, 96 Huntsville Rd., Dallas, for the month of November 2011:

**In memory of James Durkin,** "Ultimate Food Journeys," presented by Jack and Alice Sallada

**In memory of Charles D. "Rusty" Flack,** "Sail: A Photographic Celebration of Sail Power," presented by Alice and Jack Sallada

**In memory of Robert L. Fleming,** "Statistical Abstract of the United States 2012" (reference), presented by Bladwen H. Otto and Otto Family

**In memory of Clara Miller Brown,** "Beginnings" by Anne Geddes, presented by her daughter, Barbara

**In memory of Aileen Dymond,** "Death at Christy Burke's" by Anne Emery, presented by Barbara J. Eyet

**In memory of Elin Northrup and J. Bawden Northrup,** "Talking about Detective Fiction" by P.D. James, presented by Sara Londa

**In memory of Lucy Sabatura,** "Inferno: The World at War, 1939-

1945" by Max Hastings, presented by Karen Adams and Family

**In memory of William Cragle,** "Black Bear Hunting" by Gary Lewis, presented by David and Joan Roskos

**In memory of Donald Frank King,** "Getting Smart" by Tom Vander Ark, presented by Mrs. Dorothy King Wadas

**In memory of Elizabeth R. Moran,** "Eyewitness Travel Spain," presented by The Meadows Social Club

**In memory of my aunt, Elizabeth "Betty" Moran,** "Auroras" by Dan Bortolotti, presented by Judy and Dave Petro

**In memory of Wanda Baseski,** "Making Spirits Bright" by Fern Michaels (large print), presented by Linda and John

The following books are in **memory of William Poepperling** and are presented by Pat Zikor and children: "Goodnight, Goodnight, Construction Site" by Sherri Duskey and Tom Litchfield, "Drawing from Memory" by Allen Say

The following books are in **memory of Mabel Meehan** and are presented by Pat Zikor and

children: "Treasury of Greek Mythology" by Donna Jo Napoli, "If You Give a Dog a Donut" by Laura Numeroff, "Toys Come Home" by Emily Jenkins

The following books are in **memory of Robert Fleming** and are presented by John, Beth and Henry Puchalsky: "The Gilded Stage" by Daniel Snowman, "The National Audubon Society Field Guide to African Wildlife"

The following books are in **memory of Frank E. Wadas** and are presented by Mrs. Dorothy K. Wadas: "Basic Fishing: A Beginner's Guide" by Wade Bourne, "The Complete Fishing Manual" by Henry Gilbey

The following books are in **memory of Elizabeth R. Moran** and are presented by The Renaissance Center Age of Innocence and co-workers: "Country Cooking of Ireland" by Colman Andrews, "Martha Stewart's Encyclopedia of Crafts," "Decorating with Evergreens" by Robert Waite

The following books are in **memory of Harold Fritzes** and

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Members of the Praise Ringers of the Shavertown United Methodist Church are, from left, first row, Michele Butts, Courtney McCarthy, Taylor Hodge. Second row, Beckie Kimpel, Cara Farina, Bethany Dennis, Kate Jenkins, Barbara Mark. Third row, John Bunney, Thomas Ketchner, Chris Biesecker, Cindy Biesecker, Bryan Biesecker.

## SUMC bell ringers plan concert

The Shavertown United Methodist Church Fine Arts Concert Series will present "Carols by Candlelight" at 7 p.m. today, Dec. 4 at the church, 163 N. Pioneer Ave., Shavertown.

The annual Christmas con-

cert will be an evening of carol singing accompanied by The Anthracite Brass, hand bells, piano and organ. The chancel choir, guest singers and three of the other choirs from the church will also sing and play spe-

cial arrangements of favorite Christmas and Advent carols.

A reception will follow the concert and a free will offering will be received. For more information, call 675-3616.

## CHURCH BRIEFS

### Church members sell coupon books

Members of the Shavertown United Methodist Church are selling Save Around Coupon Books for \$30. Each book has over \$3,000 worth of coupons to be used locally.

To place your order, call the church office at 675-3616.

### Mark Pall offers concert today

Mark Pall will offer an organ Advent/Christmas concert at 3 p.m. today, Dec. 4 at the Dallas United Methodist Church, 4 Parsonage St., Dallas.

This will be Pall's fifth Advent/Christmas organ concert. At 14, he is the youngest member of the local chapter of the

American Guild of Organists.

A free will offering will be received to benefit the American Red Cross Flood Relief. Refreshments will be served

### Chi Rho Singers will appear at TUMC

The Chi Rho Singers will present an evening of music at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 8 at the Trucksville United Methodist Church, 40 Knob Hill Rd.

This choir of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church includes approximately 40 pastors under the direction of the Reverend John Dromazos, retired and living in Lewisburg.

Various styles of music will be presented, which may include classical, traditional, contemporary, folk and folk

rock selections. Several instruments are used to accompany the choir. At times, the audience is invited to join the choir in a few selections.

A free will offering will be received.

### 'The Gift' returns for 18th year

Back Mountain Harvest Assembly, Carverton Road, Trucksville presents its 18th annual presentation of the "The Gift" at 6 and 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 9 and Saturday, Dec. 10 and at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 11.

"The Gift" is a musical drama recreating the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem where over 100 actors and live animals perform in an outdoor setting.

For more information, call 696-1128.