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Sandy pays a visit to the Back Mountain

Historic superstorm downs trees, knocks out power to thousands of area residents.

By MEGAN SCHNEIDER
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Thousands of Back Mountain residents were left without power in the wake of Hurricane Sandy Monday night and Tuesday morning. Downed trees and power lines made clean up and repair a non-stop job for utility crews and families throughout the area.

The most devastating storm in decades left millions of people across the country without power as thousands fled their water-damaged homes.

Sandy, the hurricane turned superstorm, killed at least 50 people in the United States, many hit by falling trees. After inching its way inland across Pennsylvania Monday evening, it banked toward western New York to dump more of its water and cause more havoc.

Luzerne County 911 dispatched fire departments and road crews for fallen trees and kept a log of power outages for PPL Utilities and UGI Electric. But that was it in the way of storm damage in the county, except for garbage and recycling cans blown onto roadways.

While downed trees caused property damage for some, they also damaged power lines, causing many in the Back Mountain to be without heat.

According to UGI representative Joseph Swope, 59 UGI customers in the Back Mountain were without power after 8 p.m. on Wednesday and crews worked through the night to bring that number down to 13 by 11 a.m. Thursday. Swope said all power was expected to be restored by Thursday evening.

Craig Allen was out at sun rise Tuesday removing a large pine tree from his mother-in-law's house on West Center Hill Road. Anne Smith, 87, was awakened at about 1 a.m. when a 50-year-old tree crashed down on her roof. The back bedrooms of her home suffered structural damage.

"She's okay and it's only material things and they can be replaced," said Allen. Smith was shaken up by the incident and didn't want to comment.

Marie Belasco watched crews repair lines in front of her home



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Fred Ebbecke, a tree removal specialist, begins the process of cleaning up this large pine tree that fell on the house of Anne Smith on West Center Hill, Dallas.

on Machell Avenue in Dallas after a tree fell from her front yard across the road. She said the tree must have gone down sometime after midnight.

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Residents of Hi-Meadows Apartments in Dallas were without power Monday and were ad-

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LEFT PHOTO: Bob Anstett, of Reservoir Road, describes how a transformer on his road exploded and wires came down.



RIGHT PHOTO: Marie Belasco watches as a tree from her yard is cut up and power restored to her home on Machell Avenue.

Special needs artists' work is chosen for display

Billy Sucus, Patrick Cleary to display work at Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital.

By MEGAN SCHNEIDER
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Two Dallas artists have had their work chosen for display during the nation's largest juried exhibition and sale of works created by artists with cognitive, physical, hearing and visual disabilities.

The Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital's Annual Art Ability Exhibit selected 33-year-old Billy Sucus for his piece entitled "26 Fe Iron" and 35-year-old Patrick Cleary for his piece entitled "Beadweaver."

Both artists attend the Verve Vertu Art Studio, Deutsch Institute for individuals with disabilities in downtown Wilkes-Barre. They were two of six students from Verve Vertu whose

"It helps him to be able to put what's in his mind down on paper and gives him a way to communicate that he couldn't do verbally."

Lisa Sucus
Artist's sister

work was chosen for display in the Bryn Mawr show this year.

Cleary, who has been at Verve Vertu for almost two years, combines his love of collecting shoelaces with his abilities to create colorful art. His mother, Marianne Cleary, said that Patrick has been collecting shoelaces since he was a little boy. When a family friend sold her business, she brought "a lifetime supply" of shoelaces to do with them.

Cleary lives with Downs Syndrome, but his mother said that being at Verve Vertu has helped her son to socialize, express himself, build his confidence and help him to deal with the loss of his brother Michael, who died in 2010 while serving in Iraq.



Billy Sucus, of Dallas, shows off his artwork at Verve Vertu at Downtown Arts in Wilkes-Barre.

With the help of the staff at Verve Vertu, Cleary has found a creative outlet. His mother says he has taken an interest in photography also and is partial to photographing sunsets. Cleary has been working on landscape pieces using shoelaces since his completion of the piece for the art exhibit. This is the second year Cleary's work was chosen for the Bryn Mawr exhibit.

Sucus has been an artist with Verve Vertu for almost six

years. His family is thankful to Verve Vertu for providing him with a way to overcome the communications challenges that often come with a diagnosis of autism.

"It helps him to be able to put what's in his mind down on paper and gives him a way to communicate that he couldn't do verbally," said Lisa Sucus, Billy's sister.

This is the third year Sucus' work has been chosen for the exhibit in Bryn Mawr. His fa-



BILL TARUTIS PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Patrick Cleary, of Dallas, is proud of his artwork made of shoelaces.

ther, Bill Sucus, is very proud of his son and says Billy's artistic ability helps form an identity and helps people to focus on his ability rather than his disability.

Sucus works with many mediums, including acrylic paints and block printing and his work often features geometric designs. His mother, Debra Meyers, is grateful that her son has found "an outlet that allows him to show us what's on the in-

side." The piece Sucus prepared for the exhibit was made using iron oxide provided by The Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. It combined the history of the area with a creative eye to make a truly unique work of art.

Cleary's and Sucus' work will be on display starting today through Jan. 20, 2013 at the Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital in Malvern.

