### THE DALLAS POST

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# BACK MOUNTAIN BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: WILD BIRDS UNLIMITED Couple makes hobby of bird watching their new business

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A small sparrow flies across the parking lot of the Dallas to browse the shelves and dis-Shopping Center, landing on a birdfeeder by the sidewalk. Above, more birds perch on a Unlimited. sign which reads, "Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop," identifying the source of the birdseed.

chats about the feathered friends stories. and other creatures in his own peanuts "to keep the blue jays happy.'

tells a story about the blue jays ment around it." and squirrels fighting for the peanuts he puts out each morning, together," added Gary. "That's ac-

peanuts as well, but prefer them shelled and crushed into smaller pieces.

As Fuhrer completes his transaction and heads out the door, more customers enter and begin plays

So begins a day at Wild Birds

Gary and Joann Kostrobala, new owners of the local franchise, said their favorite part of Inside the small shop, custom- running the store is talking with er Rick Fuhrer, of Blakeslee, the customers and hearing their

"Everybody comes in and backyard while stocking up on they're excited about who was in their backyard this week and what birds they've seen," Joann While his bill is totaled, Fuhrer said. "And there's a lot of excite-

"We bring people and nature adding that woodpeckers enjoy tually our motto. It's a place



A male house sparrow perches on a "d" in the Wild Birds Unlimited sign at the Dallas Shopping Center storefront.

tually talk about what they've seen and be excited about it. We the customers."

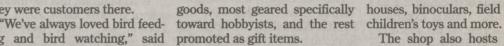
chased the shop on Oct. 15, 2012,



ELIZABETH BAUMEISTER PHOTOS/ THE DALLAS POST

Rick Fuhrer, of Blakeslee, right, purchases a bag of peanuts to "keep the blue jays happy" At left, Wild Birds Unlimited co-owner Joann Kostrobala rings up the order.

Joann. So, after recently losing their



made to attract certain species. Other merchandise includes hobby.

birdfeeders, birdbaths, bird-

goods, most geared specifically houses, binoculars, field guides,

The shop also hosts various The Kostrobalas said their top birding related workshops and seller is the birdseed, which activities throughout the year comes in large and small bags and the owners offer free pamand a selection of different blends phlets and advice to those who come in with questions about the

INVESTOR

MEET THE OWNERS: GARY AND JOANN KOSTROBALA

Favorite backyard birds: Cardinals and woodpeckers

Best birding locations: The Everglades in Florida and Ricketts Glen State Park

Most notable birding memories: Seeing condors at the Grand Canyon and a bald eagle at Frances Slocum State Park

Most unusual bird you've checked off your life list: Pelicans in Mexico Other hobbies and interests: Hiking in state and national parks, sports and the outdoors

#### Free upcoming events

Birds of prey program, 1 p.m., March 9 at Wild Birds Unlimited. Bird walk, 8:30 a.m., March 16 at Frances Slocum State Park

#### **Fledgling tips**

Gary Kostrobala, owner, Wild Birds Unlimited, offers the following tips to new birdwatchers:

"Start off slow and economical." You don't need to spend a lot of money to start out. You can buy a basic feeder and small bag of birdseed to try it out

Be patient. "You're not necessarily going to see a bird at your feeders on day one. Sometime, it takes up to a week or two but once they know the food is there, they're going to be coming back.'

"Get a bird book." As you begin to see more bird species at your feeder, the next step is to purchase a field guide to help identify them.

Joann and Gary Kostrobala, owners of Wild Birds Unlimited in

Dallas, are shown in their shop in this photo taken on Ash Wednesday.



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they were customers there.

where people can come in and ac- ing and bird watching," said

not combine the hobby with a

The shop offers a variety of



some help from Wilkes University students in March. Students involved in the university's Relay for Life event benefiting the American Cancer Society are collecting gently-used prom dresses from now until March 16.

The dresses will be sold from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on March 16 at an event on the first floor of the Henry Student Center, 84 W. South St., Wilkes-Barre. The minimum donation for a dress will be \$20. All money raised will be contributed to Relay for Life.

Individuals wishing to donate dresses for the sale can take them to a collection table in the Henry Student Center from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Feb. 19, 26, March 12 and March 14.

Dresses also will be accepted on the day of the event.

For more information, contact event organizer Katherine Cikatherine.cirone at rone@wilkes.edu.

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