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Elmcrest development a happy home



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/FOR THE DALLAS POST
Long-time Elmcrest friends and neighbors Susan Dauksis and Debbie Rowland meet to walk their dogs Sadie and Bandit.

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Dallas Post Correspondent

Elmcrest is the kind of neighborhood where neighbors like Susan Dauksis and Debbie Rowland, who have been friends for over 10 years, walk their dogs, Sadie and Bandit, every day and talk about how their children, who have long since left the Back Mountain, are doing.

Walking around the peaceful streets today is easy. There are sidewalks and no visible utility poles, except in the back of the lots along the old stone walls and underground.

The development was very thoughtfully planned in the early 1950s by the

late Bernie (Ben) C. Banks and today's construction respects that tradition on Birch, White Birch, Brittany and Jacquelyn Lanes.

Banks son, Bernie Banks Jr. recalls his first job - raking grass and planting grass seed at the development - as his father worked with the late Buddy Rothstein, a builder, to provide another housing option after World War II.

It was all done on a gentleman's handshake in those days. According to Banks Jr., the senior Banks said to Rothstein, "You build the houses and we'll find the buyers."

The street was originally thought to have been built to accommodate executives who worked at Natona Mills

(now Twin Stacks on Route 415) according to Tom Myers, whose parents built a house in 1949. The Banks' development added one house to every two lots, leaving a vacant lot in between for investment or resale. Houses cost around \$10,000 in the 1950s.

It's where Jan Miller settled in 1970 to raise her three children, Marilyn, Phillip and Mark. They'd lived many places in Pennsylvania but found Elmcrest to be a great place to raise a family and to settle.

"There are bridge and golf groups, it's close to Wilkes-Barre yet in the country," Miller said. "Everyone looks

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BILL TARUTIS/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Dallas High School sophomore Lauren Gallagher practices her Irish step dancing with the rest of Scoil Rince Na Connemara dancers at Downtown Arts in Wilkes-Barre.

Gallagher dances way to Ireland

By SARAH HITE
Dallas Post Correspondent

Lauren Gallagher, 16, of Dallas, is a dancing machine, but it took her a few years and a few different styles of dance before she found her calling.

"I started with ballet when I was 3 (years old) and I hated it," said the Dallas High School sophomore. "I've been doing Irish dancing for seven years and I love it."

And that dedication has paid off.

The Scoil Rince Na Connemara dancer recently took third place in the Mid-Atlantic Championship held in Ridge-wood, N.J., which qualifies her to compete at the All Ireland competition in Killarney, Ireland.

Gallagher said she's always wanted to learn Irish dancing because of her heritage and now she'll perform in the land from where her ancestors came.

"My cousins used to make fun of me for it," said Gallagher. "They just said, 'Oh Irish step dancing, you just make it up.' But it's different from any other type of dancing I've done. It's kind of hard."

Gallagher's mother, Michelle, has recently started fundraising to help pay for Lauren's expenses to attend the trip as dancers must pay for each dance at each feis (pronounced "fesh") or competition in which they participate.

"It's going to be expensive," said Michelle, who, along with her husband, Patrick, and 19-year-old son, David, plans to accompany Lauren.

The competition will be held this summer for four days, June 28 through July 1. Other than the days and the place, the Gallaghers haven't been told much more about the details of the event.

"I know it's the CRDM (Cumann Rince Dea Mheasa) and we belong to the NAIDF (North American Irish Dance Federation)," said Lauren.

All mysterious acronyms and lack of details aside, Lauren cannot wait for the chance to dance in Ireland.

"It's nerve-wracking," she said. "I'm always practicing. When I'm at school I'm constantly tapping my toes under

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Ross students dress up as favorite story characters



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/FOR THE DALLAS POST

Aidan Kukosky dresses as Pinocchio at Ross Elementary School during Read Across America Week.

BOOKS COME TO LIFE

By SUSAN DENNEY - Dallas Post Correspondent

Students dressed as their favorite book characters paraded around Ross Elementary at the start of a special reading day on Feb. 28.

The parade started with the youngest students from kindergarten and first grade and progressed through sixth grade.

Some book characters were easy to pick out. Waldo may be hard to find in his famous books, but it was a snap to spot the student wearing Waldo's red-and-white striped shirt, hat and round black glasses.

Many students wore robes and school scarves from Hogwarts as they pretended to be characters from the Harry Potter book series by J. K. Rowling.

Other memorable costumes included Cindy Lou Who from "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" by Dr. Seuss and Pippi Longstocking from the famous series by Astrid Lindgren.

Older children were sometimes harder to identify as they were drawn to characters from young adult titles like "The Hunger Games," "Matched" and "Hatchet."

Students carried their favorite book with them as they marched down the hall.

Jennifer Ferkel, Title 1 reading teacher at Ross Elementary, said the reading day activities were planned by the reading committee which consists of herself, Jeanne Williams, Katie Mullins, Janna Kabosky, Corin Frey, Ray Poskoch and Lee Ann Bauer.

"We wanted them to be involved in reading," Ferkel said of the students. "Coming to school dressed as a character made it a personal experience."

Students told why they had chosen a certain character.

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Alex Kane dresses as Sponge Bob and marches through the halls at Ross Elementary School during Read Across America Week.

