Never mind if the shoe fits.

According to jae Brown, it’s sometimes better to cherish the shoes than to wear them.

Although Brown herself sports a sensible pair of square-toed pumps, a metal utility cabinet in her Emlenton home contains 39 pairs of colorful classics made by Greek shoemaker Vasilis Stamatakis.

The shoes represent a modest sampling of 36 collections made by Stamatakis between 1941 and 1969. And much like Brown uses the cabinet doors to shield the shoes from harm, for much of his life Stamatakis hid his creations in a private workspace adjoining his shoe store in Heraklion, Crete.

The obscure artist is being honored posthumously, as photos of his vibrant platforms are displayed in the Virtual Shoe Museum, curated by Liza Snook of The Netherlands.

“They don’t get your shoes into her museum out of pity. She is very, very, very particular,” said Brown, a writer and founding member of the Allegheny RiverStone Center for the Arts.

Brown’s many visits to the island of Crete began in 1966 through her second husband, but she did not meet Stamatakis until 1995, when jet lag prompted her to window-shop in the wee hours of the morning.

A lifelong shoe fanatic, Brown was breathless when a few pairs of the unique platforms caught her attention from a storefront otherwise filled with trinkets.

“I knew they weren’t like any shoes I had ever seen,” said Brown, describing a pair of grass green sandals, the top layer of leather carefully cut to reveal white polka-dots beneath.

Brown returned there at 9 a.m. when the shop opened, and the worker summoned Stamatakis.

Through conversations with the shoe-maker that day and over the next two years, Brown learned the souvenir shop had once been his shoe store, where he catered to conservative local tastes for sensible, nondescript footwear.

“Many artists have this incredible creative ability but they do not have shrewd business sense,” Brown said of the store that kept him in business.

“He realized early on as much as he loved his shoes, nobody was going to buy them.”

So Stamatakis created the avant-garde shoes in secret, allowing them to accumulate by the hundreds in the expansive space behind his shop, Brown said.

The designs, according to Brown, refer to the aura of Rembetika, music of the Greek Underground that likely originated in hashish dens around the turn of the 20th century.

“I’m so sorry now,” laments Brown, at turning down an invitation to tour the Rembetika night spots with Stamatakis.

“I was still living in Manhattan when I bought the first batch of them,” Brown said.

“A famous dominatrix did beg for these at the Chelsea Hotel,” she added, holding up some tall red platforms piped in white.

“You could whip these out in Milan right now and stop traffic,” she said of another pair.

Despite the whimsy Stamatakis expressed in shoes, Brown also holds dear his more stately designs.

Of those, she presented some black suede pumps, embellished with embossed black star bursts and patent heels.

“I think those are the most beautiful shoes I ever saw in my whole life,” she said.

Brown is not the only one captivated by Stamatakis shoes.

She bought the first few pairs in her own size — a 9 — but soon decided to save them as artwork, especially since commonly worn sizes quickly were lost to eager shoppers.

Brown also was not alone in thinking the shoes should be displayed.

Tammy Beacham, the mother of triplets, is among an eclectic group of models photographed in Stamatakis shoes, none of whom would accept payment for their work.

Joe Brown of Emlenton shows one of the shoes made by Greek designer Vasilis Stamatakis in her collection. Brown has 39 pairs of the shoes.

Dave Philip/BUTLER EAGLE

infused with sophisticated tourists.

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See Shoes, Page B2
Victory Lodge makes donation

Victory Lodge 454 F&AM, a Lawrenceville lodge, presented a $1,000 check to Good Samaritan Hospice in memory of Concordia Lutheran Ministries GSH Unit at the Lund Care Center, 218 East Main Street, Zelienople.

The donation was made in memory of Jane Schaffner, lodge treasurer, who joins re-elected president, Sharon Wilson Shanks; Jim Schaffner, lodge member; and executive director, Good Samaritan Hospice. The lodge donated $1,000 to the hospice in memory of Jane Schaffner.

The donation was presented by Michael Corry, lodge member.

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield awarded a $5,000 grant to the YWCA of Cranberry. The grant will be used for the 2011 Women Making a Difference luncheon.

The event is a fundraiser for the YWCA and the Paul Sill Girls Leadership Community Center, 238 Creek Court, Muskego, WI 53150, at 724-453-1004 or visiting www.wbpaheartball.org.

For information, contact Bonnie Stokhaug, YWCA, 120 W. Cunningham St., 724-859-5385, Brandy Conners at 724-767-7400 or visiting www.heart.org/beaverbutler.

To see more, visit www.dennisskyphotography.com.

GIVING TO HOSPICE

DEAN'S LIST

The following students have been named to the dean’s lists at their respective colleges and universities:

Brandon Konieczny of Butler University; Lauriann Elwell and Sharon Wilson Shanks both of Bethel University; and Rachel Glick and Andy Humes of University of Chicago. Brown agrees.

“It’s as if the shoes were made for me,” said Brown.

That’s shoes? Keyes said.

“The shoes seem to inspire the wearer to be daring and to take a risk,” he added, noting some photos were set upon themselves at musical events in Europe.

Along with Brown’s granddaughter Madga Jobh, the assurance of model includes Japanese victornia Akiko Kobayashi, Hewlett Packard executive Elizabeth Knight and former Lutheran librarian Michelle Miller.

A selection of those portraits along with more technical images of the shoes were featured at the Good Samaritan Clinic.

Despite their exposure through photos, the shoes remained on display.

“The core of our Virtual Shoe Museum is the shoes,” Keyes said.

As for that, both and the shoe models and locations for what is prov- ing to be a series of exciting shoots, Keyes said a number of photos were set up spontaneously at musical events in Europe.

The shoes were featured by Good Samaritan’s Fundraising division in the newsletter.

“We at Good Samaritan Hospice; Jim Schaffner, lodge member; and executive director, Good Samaritan Hospice. The lodge donated $1,000 to the hospice in memory of Jane Schaffner.

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Babies

Babies born at the Butler Health System are featured in this section. Babies born in December and registered in the Babies Alumni Program by hospital auxiliary volunteers are listed here.

VICTORY LODGE 454 F&AM

The 16th annual Martin Luther King Jr. breakfast will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Jan. 17 in the Preston Room of the Marriott Conference Center, 238 East Main Street.

The program is sponsored by the Butler YWCA and the Paul Schaffer Lutheran Community Center.

There are no registra-

tions at the Wyckoff Homes, Hoopa- wayi and the message to Native Americans and single Parent organizations.

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