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TWENTY CENTS

Bomb threats ebb, tracing improves

by Tom Mooney

If you're thinking of phoning in a bomb threat to a Back Mountain school district, DON'T!

That's the message from school officials, police, and other agencies involved in trying to cope with the problem of anonymous callers about bombs.

Through the installation of sophisticated monitoring and tracing equipment, a district can now cope much better than in the past with the bomb threat problem.

The Dallas Area School District, which has for some years had a bomb call problem called by District Superintendent Dr. Richard Shipe "a recurring thing," has enjoyed some success this year in dealing with such phoned-in threats.

Of course the system isn't perfect. But Dr. Shipe and Dallas Township Chief of Police Carl Miers can point to two of three calls successfully traced this year, with one youth eventually convicted.

The Lake-Lehman School District has not experienced such problems, according to its spokesmen. High School Principal James Nicholas, whose time in the district exceeds that of District Superintendent Dr. David Preston, said that he's received no bomb threats "since I've been here," having been in Lake-Lehman four years.

Installation of the Dallas equipment took place late last year, following what Dr. Shipe called an "increase" in bomb call incidents. The equipment was retained this fall when school opened, proving useful when the callers rang in.

The Westmoreland School in Trucksville, a part of the Dallas District, had reportedly been particularly hard-hit by bomb callers, with as many as a half-dozen threats phoned in over the past two years.

While school officials, as well as Commonwealth personnel, tend to be reluctant to describe specific procedures followed, they agree that districts are better prepared now to deal with bomb threats than they were in past years, Lehman's experience offering some hope.

Who makes the calls? There is further agreement that it's largely a matter of out-of-school-for-the-day students, trouble-seeking former students, and "outsiders" who commit the acts.

District officials say that, in districts that have the problem, the peak periods are early in the fall and once again in the spring when the weather warms up, seeming to suggest that it's a matter of resentment over the start of a new school year or desire to get out and enjoy the nice spring days (or desire to help someone else get out).

Handling of bomb calls, incidentally, is pretty much a local affair, with local police departments doing the bulk of the investigating and searching work.

The Pennsylvania State Police-Wyoming Barracks say that only on receipt of a request for assistance from a local police chief will Fire Marshal Trooper Ronald Ramage or one of his aides move into action, aiding with searching of buildings or investigating the incident.

A spokesman for the Wilkes-Barre FBI office says that it investigates only on request from the Department of Justice if some sort of continuing pattern or organized threat seems to be developing. The spokesman says also that the local FBI office has not done any investigation of school bomb threats, and that there "does not seem to have been any pattern" here.

Although bombs have not actually been going off in the Dallas District or in any other area district, there is still an element of danger.

"This is not a frivolous thing," says Dr. Shipe. "Someone is going to get hurt seriously." A bomb threat means that buildings may have to be evacuated, perhaps hurriedly, with youngsters sometimes having to be exposed for long periods to bad weather.

Then too, there is the matter of tying up police, fire and ambulance per-

sonnel in what has so far been a fruitless set of preparations when they could very well be needed elsewhere.

Chief Miers adds that, since a caller does not usually specify a building where his "bomb" is placed, all the buildings of the district may have to be emptied and searched, a procedure that can take many hours.

The decision to evacuate or not to evacuate, of course, is a major and an agonizing one. Playing it safe means a day of school shot. And what if the threat is a real one, and there is no evacuation?

"If the threat is specific," says Dr. Preston, "We have only one choice—evacuate everybody." He adds that there has been one recent incident

that was clearly a "prank call" and did not qualify as a genuine bomb threat.

However, the success of the Lehman District offers hope for all districts facing the problem of the anonymous and hurried voice informing the listener about "a bomb."

Chief Miers says that, though bomb calls had been on the increase for some time, they have declined since the recent conviction of a local youth, suggesting that threat of being successfully traced is probably the best defense a district has against what has to be one of the most annoying—to say nothing of its being one of the most frightening—developments any district can face.



WASSAIL CUP--Nancy Harrison invites guests at the College Misericordia Madrigal Dinner to partake of the Wassail bowl. (Photo by Chukinas Studio)

'Concerned citizens' urge Jackson Supervisors to heed zoning vote

More than 100 Jackson Township residents expressed their disapproval of the proposed zoning ordinance at Monday's supervisors meeting.

Atty. Charles Gelso, representing a group calling themselves "Concerned Citizens of Jackson Township" addressed the board. Gelso pointed out that the supervisors must be well aware that these residents are vehemently opposed to the proposed ordinance.

Gelso stated that residents confirmed this when they voted three to one against the new zoning proposals on the referendum in the May primary. Gelso reminded the supervisors that they were voted into office to represent the people and that they should seriously consider the will of the people.

Blythe Evans, solicitor for the Jackson Township supervisors, asked Gelso if he agreed that either the township had to provide a zoning ordinance on the township would fall under the county zoning ordinance. Gelso answered that the township has an ordinance and he did not see where the township would come under Luzerne County zoning.

He added that the position of Concerned Citizens is "that they are happy with the 1965 ordinance as is,

without change."

Evans explained that the idea of amending the 1965 ordinance came about as a result of a court case. Although the court did not order the Township to make changes in its zoning, the court did recommend this in a course of informal discussion.

The court indicated that under the 1965 ordinance Jackson Township residents are not properly protected. Evans also noted that after careful review of the 1965 ordinance, planning consultant Marlene Pawlowski recommended amending the ordinance.

Gelso disagreed with Evans that the ordinance should be amended. Gelso said he felt that the court should definitely stipulate this before any change would have to be made. He also expressed the opinion that the opinion of the majority should be considered before that of the township planner.

The R-3, multi-family dwelling district was the source of numerous questions. R-3 district provides for low-rise buildings of not more than two stories. This district does not provide for low-income, federally funded buildings, which are provided for under the county plan.

Evans explained that by restricting

multi-family dwellings to certain designated areas, residents are protected from multi-family buildings being constructed all over Jackson Township. Under the 1965 ordinance, there is no multi-family dwelling provision of any kind.

Lowering the water table as a result of multi-family dwellings in the township also caused some concern. Several residents expressed fears that multi-family buildings near their property may, in time, drain their wells.

Ed Chesnovich, planning commission member, explained that under the proposed ordinance the one-acre minimum required for building would help protect the water supply by eliminating smaller lots and therefore, overcrowded building conditions.

When the question again arose concerning retaining the 1965 ordinance, Evans added, "The township has developed to a great degree since that ordinance was enacted. It is the obligation of the supervisors to have an enforceable ordinance."

Evans recommended to the board that they either reject or accept the proposed ordinance by Feb. 20, 1979, 90 days from the date of the public hearing held on Nov. 20.

'Moonies' visit Back Mt.

"Would you like to buy some candy mints?" asks the clean-cut young man at the front door.

"Who's selling them?" replies the prospective customer.

"Our youth group," says the young man.

If the conversation ends there, you may have become a customer of the so-called 'Unification Church' or the 'Moonies' of the Rev. Sun Yung Moon, a Korean cult leader now residing in the New York City area.

'Moonies' were in the Back Mountain area last week and also visited some West Side communities. Only the most persevering questioner will determine that the solicitor is indeed the representative of the Unification Church.

The representatives in Dallas carried papers alleged to be borough permits.

Dallas Borough Mayor James Davies later confirmed that one permit was issued to Unification Church members by borough police. However, it was learned that two Unification Church people had been reported using the permit intended for one.

The local canvassing took place during the same week articles in Newsweek and The Dallas Post covered the Unification Church as one of the active cults in operation.

Newsweek noted that the Rev. Moon presents his followers with a blend of 'Christian theology, Puritan morality and Oriental mysticism.' The group appears to have its greatest appeal to young adults in their late teens or early twenties.

The news magazine indicated that Moon has established considerable financial holdings based on his youthful solicitors. The holdings range from a delicatessen in Wyoming to a Tokyo trading center and have a total value of an estimated \$75 million, according to Newsweek.

The magazine also noted that Moon himself now resides in a \$625,000 estate in New York. His youthful solicitors may put in as many as 18 hours a day in their money-raising efforts and are frequently at work in major airline terminals and shopping centers.

Although permits are required for much of their solicitation, municipal officials are pretty much mandated to issue the documents due to religious

freedom decisions of the courts.

Unification Church canvas in Dallas last Wednesday included business places as well as homes. One solicitor for the Moonies even entered

Wyoming Seminary's Payne-Pettebone Kindergarten Center in Wyoming, according to a staff member there.

Book errs on police no.

Due to a printing error, an incorrect telephone number for the Dallas Township Police Department appeared in the November 1978 edition of the Dallas telephone directory issued recently by Commonwealth Telephone Company.

The correct telephone number for

the Dallas Township Police is 675-5251. Telephone customers are being issued a pressure sensitive label with the correct number to avoid future confusion.

They are asked to place it on the inside cover of the telephone directory over the incorrect section.

New Lake school, beach purchase challenged

by Joan Kingsbury

The proposed Lake-Noxen School and the purchase of Sandy Beach by Harveys Lake Borough were two main points discussed at the Nov. 28 meeting of the Harveys Lake Taxpayers meeting held in conjunction with the Harveys Lake Borough Council.

The proposed Lake-Noxen School is a source of controversy. The proposed 15-mill tax increase is a deterrent in many people's minds concerning construction of the new school. The majority of those in attendance expressed the opinion that the Lake building could be repaired for considerably less than the estimated \$4,270,000 costs of new school construction.

Ben Orfaly, president of the Harveys Lake Taxpayers Association, stated that a tour of the Lake building was made, and the building appeared to be pretty sound. He felt that corrections such as a new sprinkling system, and changing doors from one to one and one-half hour doors for fire safety, and also the addition of a new wing could be done for about \$500,000.

Orfaly urged everyone to take a petition available at the meeting and circulate it. This petition requests the school board to immediately "cease and desist from incurring further expenditures on the new school."

Borough resident Pete Austin asked if Orfaly had received his estimate for renovating the Lake building from an architect. Orfaly answered that this

was just a non-professional cost estimate.

Stan Magalski, representing the Lehman Taxpayers Association, reported that he and a delegation from that organization also toured the Lake building. The general consensus from this group which included a contractor, was that the building could be repaired and the termite problem could be eliminated.

When questioned as to what reasons the Lake-Lehman School Board had given for building a new school as opposed to repairing the Lake building, Orfaly replied that no one seemed to be able to answer that question. Orfaly informed the group that he had attended the Lehman Township Taxpayers meeting where a school board representative was present but that he found the answers given were evasive.

Austin asked if the school board member was invited to attend the Harveys Lake Taxpayers meeting. He said he felt that a meeting should be set up where people concerned can discuss the situation. Austin stated that he thought a school board representative would have been present if invited.

He also stated that the school board should have the opportunity to defend themselves.

Several others agreed with Austin. One stated, "It seems you are having a discussion without all of the facts and figures." Orfaly stated, "They refuse to give us figures." Another

resident pointed out, "The safety of our children is utmost in our minds." This resident felt more information was needed before any action to stop construction was presented.

A motion was made to "have Harveys Lake Taxpayers Association go on record as opposing complete demolition of the Lake School, and that they are in favor of renovating and refurbishing the old school."

A second motion proposed, "hiring an attorney to investigate what legal recourse is possible if construction is proceeded with." Both motions were passed.

When contacted following the meeting, Gilbert Tough, president of the Lake-Lehman School Board explained, "There were considerations made (concerning renovation) however it did not seem prudent to add on to a school that has already been condemned." The Lake and Noxen buildings were condemned by the Department of Labor and Industry last summer.

A public hearing was held by the Lake-Lehman School Board on Oct. 31 to hear public opinion concerning construction of the school.

Harveys Lake Council President Robert DeRemer gave a report on assessments in Harveys Lake Borough. Orfaly had requested this report. DeRemer reported that 1,077 parcels of land in the borough are assessed at \$1,000, and that the minority of the people are paying the majority of the taxes. DeRemer

pointed out that this is why many people are not interested in fighting rising taxes.

The question of Harveys Lake Borough purchasing Sandy Beach was also discussed in length.

According to council member Bob Wintersteen, the idea of purchasing Sandy Beach is looking towards the future, assuring an area for non-lake front landowners to go swimming. He feels that the initial cost of the project would be self-sustaining within three to four years.

Improvements needed to use this property as a public beach are toilet facilities, beautifying the two entrances, bringing in sand, and providing parking facilities.

Wintersteen pointed out that 10 years ago there were three public beaches functioning well. He noted that as more businessmen move out of the borough, it places an added financial burden on those who stay behind.

Wintersteen asked, "What more natural business can there be than using the water. Harveys Lake doesn't use its natural facilities to any great advantage."

Wintersteen explained that the borough would run the business from July through September. He added that if the area turns out to be a disappointment, in business terms, the land could be sold in several years at a considerable profit.

Edgar May, who says he has resided at Harveys Lake for 50 years,

remembers when the area was first developed. May pointed out that no matter who owned it or developed it, they never made a profit and ended up selling it. Since it was always a private enterprise previously, he didn't see how the borough could put it on a paying basis.

May estimated that the cost of making Sandy Beach public would cost in the neighborhood of \$300,000. May feels that the borough already has too many debts and cannot take on any more.

Council member Guy Giordano agreed with May. Giordano cited a comprehensive plan done about five years ago that called for six neighborhood recreation areas around the lake. He stated that he liked the idea of providing a swimming area for off-lake residents but not necessarily for outsiders.

Giordano pointed out, "We don't have all the facts. A lot of money would have to be spent. We would have to compete with Moon Lake and Frances Slocum Park."

Council member Jack McManus reminded everyone that the borough cannot always be run on a tax of 10½ mills per person. McManus said he feels that the beach would be a good way to bring in additional revenue.

Of those at the meeting 75 were in favor with 65 opposed. A suggestion to send out this question with tax duplicates is being considered.