

## Former HL resident hostage in coup

by Charlot Denmon

Tom Watson, a former Harveys Lake resident, has deep empathy for the U.S. hostages in Iran for just a month ago he and his wife, Jeannette, were taken hostage during a military coup in LaPaz, Bolivia, in a terrifying experience.

Watson was shot by the military and he and his wife taken hostage and kept overnight during the July 17 coup in Bolivia.

Watson is a field service representative for Beech Aerospace Inc., a subsidiary company of Beechcraft Company, which makes planes for use by the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines, as well as for civilian use.

The company supplies and maintains planes in 23 countries. Much of the time Watson is attached to the defense attache's office or with a military advisory group.

In LaPaz, Watson was an advisor working with the U.S. Military Advisor Group. Normally, in most countries, a plane is available to the ambassador.

Prior to going to Bolivia, Watson was in Italy. He was offered the one year assignment in Bolivia and since he and his wife had no children, Watson accepted the year contract.

At the end of the year, he stayed on since the plane was scheduled to be taken out of Bolivia the end of this month due to low usage.

The Watsons lived in a suburb of LaPaz in a three-story apartment building, basically a compound surrounded by a high wall.

It was on July 17th that the third military coup during Watson's stay in LaPaz took place.

He was working at the airport when one of the members of the Bolivian Air Force said trouble was expected that afternoon. The Bolivian Air Force member suggested that Watson go back to the city because the toll highway was going to be blocked off.

Watson took the advice and returned to the city. He was no sooner in LaPaz when the toll road was closed. About this time he saw many armed soldiers and it was obvious to Watson that it was a coup.

Normally, the Americans were not affected in the coups so Watson was not worried. He thought he and his wife would be in their apartment for two or three days until the coup was over.

Everything was quiet until that evening.

About 9:45 p.m., Watson said that he heard the large sheet metal gate bell ring. He thought it was one of the military people returning his car to the parking lot.

Watson went out the 10 foot high metal gate to answer the bell. There were two cutouts near the top of the gate. When Watson got to the gate he saw gun barrels sticking through the cutouts.

The military revolutionists shouted something but Watson, although he speaks Spanish, could not understand what they said. As soon as he saw their guns, M-14's and machine guns, Watson turned and ran as fast as he could toward the house.

The rebels opened fire and one of the bullets struck Watson in the right side of the face, entering at the back of his right cheek and coming through to the front.

At the time Watson did not know that he was hit. He ran into the house and locked the door. It was then that his wife told him that he was hit.

Jeanette tried phoning one of the U.S. Embassy or military people. She turned on the light in the bedroom to make the call and the revolutionists outside shot through the window.

Watson turned out the light and pulled his wife down to the floor. Then they both got under the bed.

A few minutes later, the revolutionists blew open the front gate with a hand grenade and when they came to the house machine-gunned the door lock. They came into the bedroom, turned on the light and told Watson and Jeanette to get up.

Watson said the Bolivians are a very courteous people and even though these were revolutionaries, they sat Jeanette down and attempted to calm her. They took Watson to the back of the building.

Watson explained that half of the first floor was a commissary for the American Embassy and the other half was the Watsons' apartment.

The revolutionists asked Watson where the storerooms were. When he told them they shot off the locks. (Hearing the shots, Jeanette thought the revolutionists had shot her husband.)

After going through the storerooms, the revolutionists questioned the Watsons, then took them to the Military College of Bolivia. Cadets from the college led by commissioned officers were the revolutionaries who entered the compound.

At the college, military personnel

sutured the gunshot wound in Watson's face.

The Watsons were locked in a storeroom and held hostage overnight. About 1 p.m., July 18, they were released into the custody of a Bolivian doctor. He admitted Watson to a hospital where the gunshot wound was treated and resutured.

The revolutionaries took everything of value from the Watsons apartment—all of their clothing and other personal effects including all valuables. The revolutionaries evidently stayed in the apartment and used all of the food. They also removed a large quantity of provisions from the commissary and its storerooms.

After Watson was released from the hospital, they did not return to the apartment. They remained in La Paz for about two weeks taking care of necessary details so they could leave Bolivia.

Then they returned to the United States, visiting relatives in Florida, and also going to the Beech Aerospace main office in Jacksonville. Watson then traveled to Chicago before coming to Harveys Lake for a vacation.

The Watsons will now report to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland where he is assigned temporarily until his next overseas assignment.

"It was a frightening experience," said Watson. "And even more terrifying for Jeanette. On two different occasions she thought the revolutionists had killed me. But she was terrific—she remained calm despite being terrified. She was tremendous."

Watson said he didn't believe most people in the United States realized how many tens of thousands of Americans are working overseas in most countries.

He also believes that government officials are the most qualified to know how to handle incidents in each country.

"Situations are so different in all parts of the world," said Watson. "Each has to have special treatment and it is the government representatives who are most familiar with each incident. The state department is most qualified."

Watson also said that during the two weeks before he and his wife left Bolivia, the United States had pulled out the military and cut their embassy staff in half.

He said the incident was unusual—that no one understands it. The Americans had not any trouble with the Bolivian military and, according to Watson, always got along with the Bolivian military.



**FINAL TOUCHES**—Young and old alike have pitched in to help get the Luzerne County Fair grounds final touches done. The development of the new Luzerne County Fair grounds has been underway since the beginning of April. The new grounds were purchased by the Dallas Area Fall Fair Association for future recreational facilities and the permanent location for the Fair. Every Tuesday night since April has been a work night. The land had to be surveyed, brush cleared, snow-fencing erected, fields mowed, cleared of rocks, graded, leveled and seeded. Equipment had to be moved, the barn cleaned, roads bulldozed, poles erected for power and the list goes on. Cooperative effort of the local public officials and service departments has helped the Fair committee move nearer its goal. This year the Fair must realize \$25,000 excluding the costs of the fair. Support from the community is needed. Come to the fair and enjoy five days of live entertainment, commercial and craft exhibitors, delicious foods, games, fireworks, and amusement rides, Sept. 3rd through the 7th.

## Kingston Twp. disputes census report, plans appeal

Kingston Township Manager Mark Kunkle announced he will file an appeal with the Census Bureau as a result of the population figures reached by that agency for Kingston Township.

According to the count, the township has only increased by 70 persons from 1980 to 1980, a figure easily disputed when taking into account the new buildings in the township particularly since the flood of 1972. There are now 6,266 people residing in the township, according to the census which in 1970 reported a population figure of 6,196.

The printout also showed a five percent vacancy rate and a decrease in the number of persons per unit, down to 3.03 from the 1970's 3.36. Kunkle believes some of the miscalculation may be due to the Meadowcrest Housing Project.

At the township's meeting last week, Solicitor Ben Jones, 3rd, said he will draw up an amendment to the present ordinance on swimming pools as it pertains to fencing, drainage of pools, and penalties. It was explained at the meeting individuals that are installing the pools before the fencing. Also, some pools overflow onto resident's lawns and the chemicals burn neighbors' grass, a complaint which will be alleviated by the amendment.

Bud Dover of Smith-Miller Associates presented the Franklin Street bridge update. He said the south lane will be completed this week, but the contractors are "a little behind" and have asked for an extension which Dover denied. Actually, Dover noted the company is "a few weeks behind" schedule

and he said he is not convinced they are putting forth the extra effort, such as working on weekends, to catch up.

The finish date is Sept. 5 for the project but due to the possibility it will not be finished by the opening of school, Dover and the supervisors agreed to notify school officials of the situation.

In a related note highway-wise, Kunkle was authorized to advertise specifications for bids on an advanced left turn signal for Center Street and Rotue 309.

This bid-letting may be an indication of what's in store for Rte. 309 in Shavertown. A special public meeting to discuss the traffic study with area residents will be held Sept. 17 at 8 p.m. in the municipal building.

Mrs. Patricia Konopki, township secretary, resigned that position at the Wednesday session, effective when a replacement is found. Mrs. Konopki said in her letter that her husband is ill and she is needed at home. Konopki suffered injuries in a automobile accident and later underwent brain surgery at Geisinger Medical Center.

Kingston Township Bobcats Mini-Football team was given permission to use the Center Street playground for practice sessions this season. Letter requesting the use of the field was signed by Bob Shotwell and others. There is the stipulation that no metal cleats can be worn, only rubber ones.

Herb Hill noted the township is going to try to fix up the baseball diamond, which will not interfere

with the Bobcats.

The secretary was authorized to open a no-passbook savings account on federal revenue sharing accounts with the Wyoming National Bank.

The request of Barbara A. Condon for exoneration from the per capita tax was denied. Mrs. Condon stated in her request she is in ill health.

Al Tamanini, Jr., a developer of Sunrise Estates, told zoning officer John Dana he is getting bids on paving the development streets. The lack of paved roads in the development brought residents to last month's meeting in force. Chairman Ed Price summed up this month's round of complaints by promising "We (the supervisors) will proceed with pulling his bond if no commitment is made."

## PIAA to rule soon on Jobson

Official PIAA action is pending a meeting next week but unofficial reports indicate that former Dallas basketball star Paul Jobson's opportunity to play for archrival Lake-Lehman may be on the line.

According to Jim Davis, athletic director at Nanticoke High School and secretary-treasurer of the District 2 PIAA Committee, no decision has been made by the 14-member committee to date.

However, Davis said that the committee will meet again this week.

"Facts are collected," said Davis, "and all of the data is just about in. The committee will meet and evaluate the Jobson situation as well as those of the athletes from several Wyoming Valley Schools, then arrive at a decision."

"There are 14 members on the committee and each member will have one vote. Once a decision is made, a notice of that decision will be sent to the principal of each school involved, namely, Dallas, Lake-Lehman, Wyoming Area, and Meyers."

The Paul Jobson situation has been a matter of much attention in the Back Mountain ever since it was discovered there was an attempt by parents of some of the players to have Dallas Senior High School Basketball Coach Clint Brobst removed from his position as head coach.

The Dallas senior student's father's name was mentioned as among those attempting to have Brobst ousted. When the Dallas School Board backed Brobst and hired him for another season, Jobson's parents reportedly sought another school to send their son.

Although the Jobsons reportedly continued to reside in Dallas, they enrolled their son at Lake-Lehman in early June and the young Jobson has been playing in the Knights summer recreation program.

A report that the Jobsons made arrangements for their son to reside with an Oak Hill family was confirmed in a conversation with the family involved.

James Nicholas, Lake-Lehman High School principal, said that he had received no official notice from the District 2 committee. Until he did, Nicholas said that the only comments he had to make about the investigation were that the committee be consistent and put the welfare of the student first. He said that he takes issue with the PIAA rulings on students transferring to private schools.

Rodger Bearde, Lake-Lehman's assistant athletic director and head basketball coach, said he knew nothing about Jobson, outside of the fact that the student had been participating in Lake-Lehman's summer program. He said he would be the last to hear the official decision.

Bearde said that he was not upset about published reports that his son could not play basketball this year.

"I was pleased with the P.I.A.A. allowing my son to play at Lake-Lehman last year," said Bearde. "His transfer was not to play basketball but for personal reasons I prefer not to discuss."

"I knew he had eight semesters of participation completed. There was no question about it. He will complete school this year but will not participate in basketball."

Bearde indicated that he felt sorry for the Jobson boy, that he was the one who was suffering from the entire situation.

Will Jobson play basketball or will he be ineligible? Whether he makes his legal residence within the Lake-Lehman District or whether he doesn't—it appears it will be the District 2 P.I.A.A. committee, which will come up with the answer following their meeting this week.

## Looking at the candidates for attorney-general

by David M. Cleary  
Harrisburg Bureau

As LeRoy Zimmerman and Michael O'Pake campaign, each wishing to convince voters that he's better qualified than the other to be Pennsylvania's first elected Attorney General, they face a major handicap.

They aren't sure just what they can promise to accomplish, because the specific duties of the job will not be the same as they are now. That's one of the tasks the lawmakers face when they return from summer vacation on September 15th.

One issue is clear. As an elected official, the Attorney General will no longer be subject to dismissal by the Governor, and will be able to prosecute other state officials who misbehave without any fear of losing his own job.

At the same time, the Attorney General will need the cooperation of the Governor and cabinet officers if he is to do his job effectively. His ability to prosecute a lawbreaker successfully, and even the decision whether to prosecute or not, often depends on information provided by one or more departments in the executive branch of state government.

Several bills have been introduced with the intent of spelling out just where the Attorney General will stand in relation to the Governor and his cabinet officers. From them, after considerable debate and no doubt some amendments, the lawmakers hope to settle on the new duties, and have them established prior to the November 4 election.

One of the proposals, House Bill 2822, would take away from the Attorney General the task of overseeing the state's prisons, by creating a new cabinet-level "Department of Corrections."

That bill is supported by both the Governor and his current Acting Attorney General, Harvey Bartle III. As Bartle testified before the Subcommittee on Crime and Correction of the House Judiciary Committee on July 30th, such a move would insure that matters affecting prisoners are of "high priority and not relegated to an

Attorney General who may have other interests or priorities."

That aspect of House Bill 2822 has the support of those who favor prison reform, but other parts do not. The degree of effort to be put into training of prisoners for gainful employment when they have completed their terms, for example, is likely to be debated at length.

With only a few weeks in which to make a decision, since there may or may not be "lame duck" sessions of Senate and House between Election Day and the planned end of the session on November 30th, some compromises may have to be made.

One possibility, as veteran observers see it, is that the prisons may be put under the direct jurisdiction of the Governor's office until an acceptable blueprint for the new Department of Correction is drawn up.

Pennsylvania's legislators will find full calendars awaiting them when they return from summer vacation on September 15th.

With almost all House members and nearly half the Senators run-

ning for re-election, they're almost certain to give priority to issues aimed at earning the favor of voters in their constituencies.

For some House members, that will demand action on a limitation on spending by state government and its political subdivisions, which they promised to support during their campaigns two years ago.

Senators will have other priorities. Having last faced the voters in 1976, before the spending limitation became a campaign issue, they have no promises to keep on that score.

And even in the House, the proposal to limit spending runs head on into several proposals to raise and spend more money—also designed, ironically, to gain the favor of voters.

House Democratic Leader K. Leroy Irvis of Pittsburgh leads a group intent on restoring the cuts in aid to universities and other institutions made by Gov. Thornburgh as he approved, only in part, a long list of "non-preferred" appropriations last month.

There's also a deficit in funds needed by PennDOT to repair and

maintain roads. The Administration proposal for meeting that need is to "swap" six cents of the per gallon tax on gasoline for a six percent sales tax on the fuel.

That amounts to eight cents per gallon at the \$1.25 price, and will go higher as gasoline costs continue to rise. This proposal has already been rejected once, but the lawmakers must find some way of paying for work needed on the roads.

The bills, which would do away with State Stores in favor of privately-owned liquor stores, advanced by Sen. James R. Kelley (D-Greensburg) is also on the agenda, with no firm figure yet advanced on losses of state revenues if the Liquor Control Board and its stores are abolished.

A lot of state spending can be eliminated if Gov. Thornburgh's plan to drop some 81,000 "able-bodied" persons from the welfare rolls is adopted. But Senate Committee hearings on that issue are still going on, creating some doubt that the bill will reach the Senate floor before Election Day.



**POETS**—The Poets, a contemporary rock group, will appear again this year at the Luzerne County Fair, located on Route 118, Lehman. They will be appearing on Friday, Sept. 5, along with Frankie and the Corvettes, a Fifties rock group and possibly a Village People, spin-off of the Macho Man. Also appearing on Friday evening will be the grand national champion Lake-Lehman Band under the direction of John Miliauskas. The Luzerne County Fair will be held on Sept. 3rd through the 7th.