

Operation R.I.D.E. beset with financial woes

Operation R.I.D.E. is in financial trouble and has taken its plea for help to the Dallas Lions. Operation R.I.D.E. (Recreation and Instruction for Disabled Equestrians) in

Dallas continues to provide lessons and horse trail experiences for both physical and mentally disabled children and young adults, but the job is becoming more difficult for

coordinator Georseann Kostenbauder.

"It's not the time involved in lessons," she explained. "It's trying to get volunteers and financial

help."

At the moment, the problem appears to be keeping the horses fed. The cost for food is over \$200 per month, and Kostenbauder has taken out a personal loan to make ends meet. Still, she admits, R.I.D.E. is at least \$1500 in debt.

The program has existed through the generosity of various agencies, civic clubs and private citizens. Charles Dente allows Kostenbauder to teach and house the horses and give lessons from his farm in Kunkle, rent free. Dallas Kiwanis purchased two horses for use by the program, and Back Mountain Kiwanis donated over \$1,000 last year toward the purchase of feed and equipment. Girl Scout troops have volunteered their time to help with the lessons. They walk with the handicapped riders, groom horses and lend a hand wherever needed. But Kostenbauder said it takes phenomenal effort to keep a steady flow of volunteers on hand.

Her incentive in approaching the Lions is that they are holding their state convention in Wilkes-Barre this year. She believes the Dallas organization can perform an eye-catching function by supporting Operation R.I.D.E.

Because the program is not well-

known throughout the area, Kostenbauder said she has difficulty with fund-raising projects. A raffle and Ride-a-thon, sponsored last year, netted only a few hundred dollars. An organ concert, brought only about 20 people out. The concert featured an organist from Chicago brought to the area by Yurish Music Center.

Despite the fact that it is not a well-known cause, Operation R.I.D.E. has shown amazing results. Kiwanis and LUZARC combined last year to sponsor three picnics for the handicapped and their families. On all three occasions, at least 50 handicapped children and their families enjoyed a day of riding and fun.

The Luzerne County Parks and Recreation Department gave \$240 last year as well.

Kostenbauder also took the horses to Camp Daddy Allen at Hickory Run State Park (an Easter Seals Camp) on two occasions. One trip was sponsored by the Back Mountain Jaycees and the other by the Blind Association.

The riders have proven the worth of the project time and again with physical and mental advancement after taking lessons. Several were able to enter horse shows during the

year, with two participants bringing home second and third place ribbons. One young boy, who came to Kostenbauder in a wheelchair, now brags he can walk a mile or two and his boast is true. He has given up his wheelchair and leg brace, and looks forward to continued progress.

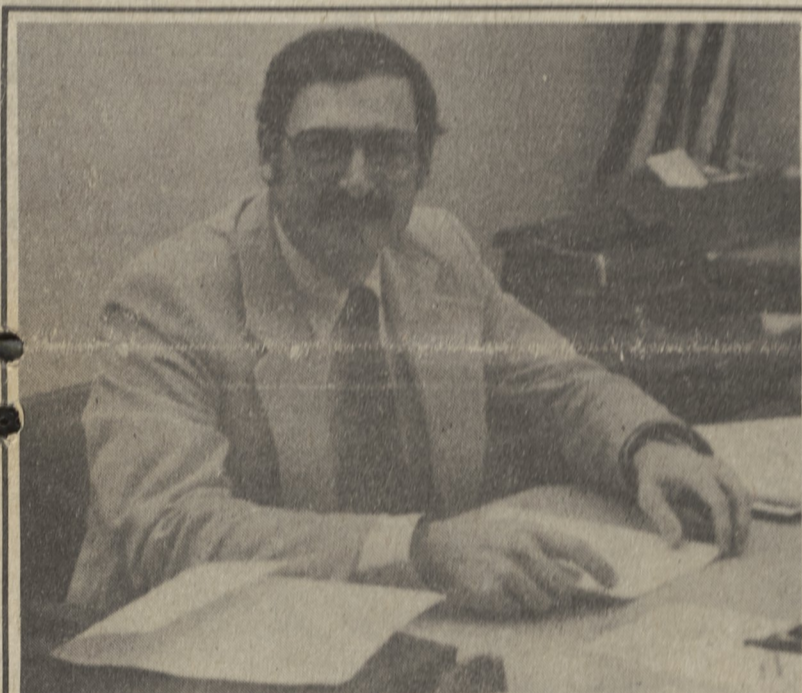
Last year alone, Operation R.I.D.E. served 20 physically and mentally handicapped people on a weekly basis. In addition, almost 200 handicapped persons toured the stable on field trips and experienced the sights, sounds, smells and feel of a real horse, most of them for the first time.

The program is considered therapy and is organized with the aid of a physical therapist. Kostenbauder herself is an avid horse lover and sees the project as a way of combining her enthusiasm for riding with helping people. She is well-skilled in her craft, having a B.S. from Penn State University in large animal husbandry.

She admits she will keep R.I.D.E. going by dipping into her own pocket as long as is necessary. Her wish is to see the program recognized as the beneficial cause that it is.



RIDING FOR FUN AND THERAPY—Chris Brown is led by his father Barry during Operation RIDE's demonstration at the 1982 Luzerne County Fair. Chris is one of 20 handicapped children who was able to benefit from horseback riding lessons last year. The Browns live in Huntsville.



Raymond A. Cecconi

Cecconi promoted

Thomas Bly, Dallas Postmaster, announced that Raymond A. Cecconi has been promoted to Superintendent of Postal Operations at the Dallas Post Office.

Cecconi began his postal career in 1962 as a substitute letter carrier in Seawaren, N.J. He was transferred to Wilkes-Barre as a distribution clerk in 1963. He transferred to

Kingston in 1972 as a window clerk. For the past three years, he has served as supervisor of collection and delivery, and superintendent of station and branch operations at the Kingston Post Office. His promotion to the Dallas Post Office became effective Feb. 5.

Cecconi, his wife, Mary Ann and daughter, Jill, reside at 418 Hoyt St., Pringle.



DISTRICT IX STATE BAND AT DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL. Dallas Senior High Band members who will be part of the 160 piece select District IX State Band are pictured above. The festival takes place Feb. 17 through 19 with all students housed in the community, and a public concert presented on Saturday, Feb. 19 at 3 p.m. in the Dallas Junior High Auditorium. Pictured above are Dallas members Heather Gless, percussion; Kim Moran, flute; Ruth Goldman, flute; and Dave Garber, tenor sax. David C. Benn is Senior High Band Director. For more information and photos about this big community event, turn to page 9.

Final sign up set

Back Mountain Baseball will hold its final registration for the 1983 season Saturday, Feb. 19, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Shavertown Methodist Church, corner of Center Street and Pioneer Avenue. Registration is open in the following leagues: Little League Hardball, ages 8-12; Little League Softball, ages 9-12; Teener League Hardball, ages 13-15; Senior League Softball, ages 13-15 and American League Hardball, ages 16-19.

Registration fees are \$10.00 per child for the first two children and \$5.00 for the third child per family. Registration for American Legion will be \$20. Children registering for the first time should bring their birth certificates.

All youngsters wishing to participate in any of the programs are urged to register at this time. In the event of inclement weather, registration will be held Feb. 26.

You can protect yourself from burglary

In response to his home having been broken into on two occasions, Jay Miller, director of activities at the State Corrections Institution at Chase has embarked upon a public information program to tell people their homes are not as safe as they might think. Miller uses an inmate, Ken Anderson, in his presentation and relies heavily upon the book *Are You Safe From Burglars?*, written by Early Barnes, another inmate.

The book was published in 1971, while Barnes, a professional burglar was incarcerated in another state prison. He is presently at Chase but does not have outside clearance so is unable to accompany Miller. On Jan. 10 Miller and Anderson spoke to the Mountaintop Junior Woman's Club in the first of what he hopes will be many such presentations. Treating the subject of burglary from the point of the burglar as well as someone who has been victimized, Barnes actually "blows a lot of theories about how safe, safe is.

Actually it is next to impossible to completely burglar-proof your home without overdoing it and interfering with natural ingress and egress.

Miller admits his house was an easy target for burglars because of his carelessness. For example, he had hung a canvas around his basement door to keep out the weather. This turned out to be a perfect hiding place for a burglar.

Miller also used doorknob locks, which are very easily jimmied by even an amateur burglar. Now, he has secured the basement entrance with a deadbolt action plus knob lock. He has also encased the door sash in concrete and added a 2x4 barricade bar.

On the main entrance doors, Miller has installed deadbolt and cylinder locking systems. He is aware, however, that it is still not enough to keep out the criminal element bent on burglary. As a perfect example in a second attempt to burglarize his home, thieves climbed on a gas grill to enter a second floor window.

Miller says the best defense against burglary is neighbors helping neighbors. "As one inmate told me, 'the key is to nose into other people's business for the right purpose.'"

He also advocates crime watch and house watch programs. He suggests using whatever means possible to make it difficult for someone to break into your home. He also advises considering cost effectiveness. A dog is fine if it is convenient to own one. On the other hand, a professional burglar is not put off by a dog.

Alarm systems are not completely burglar-proof, as they can be defeated by a smart gang with a pair of wire cutters. The fact is if a burglar believes it is worth his while, he'll find the weak spot in your home and get in. For this reason, Miller advises against showing off expensive jewelry or belongings.

His community program was initiated with a Jan. 10 talk to the Mountaintop Women's Club. He and Anderson are available to meet

with other groups upon request.

Although his work at the prison was not the initial impetus for developing the program, he has the advantage of daily contact with persons who have made a career of burglary. At the prison, Miller is in charge of leisure time and recreational programs for the inmates. This includes running athletic endeavors such as basketball, softball, boxing, football, volleyball and weightlifting teams. He is also in charge of the social inmate organizations such as Centurian Jaycees, Life Association, Latin-American Study Cultural Group, Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholic Anonymous.

He is available to take his burglary program to interested civic and social groups. Arrangements can be made by contacting Miller at the prison. He believes in light of recent burglary activity in the area, that homeowners can protect themselves better, providing they incorporate a little common sense into their planning.

'Free Store,' a big hit in the community

Shoppers in the Lake-Lehman School District received a very special treat last week when the Lake-Lehman Education

Association held its first "Free Store." The "Free Store" offered clothing, toys and other articles to local customers completely free of

charge. The items were all donations from members of the Association (teachers at Lake-Lehman) and their friends.

The one-day project was considered an overwhelming success. "We were thrilled with the response," explained association president Jane Morris. "We weren't

sure how it would go over but our fears were quickly put to rest."

The Free Store was conceived in an effort to perform a community service in light of present economic conditions. Morris noted the group could have used more children's things, and this priority will be remembered when planning a

second Free Store. She said the association is hoping to run another in the spring.

The Free Store was held in the Lehman Fire Hall and manned entirely by Lake-Lehman teachers. It was open from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. after school, Feb. 9.

Lefko resigns from negotiations team

Harry Lefko, Dallas School Board member, who has been under fire recently due to his frequent absences from board meetings, has resigned from his position as a member of the District's negotiations committee but not from his position as board member.

Russell Havey, chairman of the negotiations committee, confirmed the report that Lefko had resigned from the negotiations committee but not from the board.

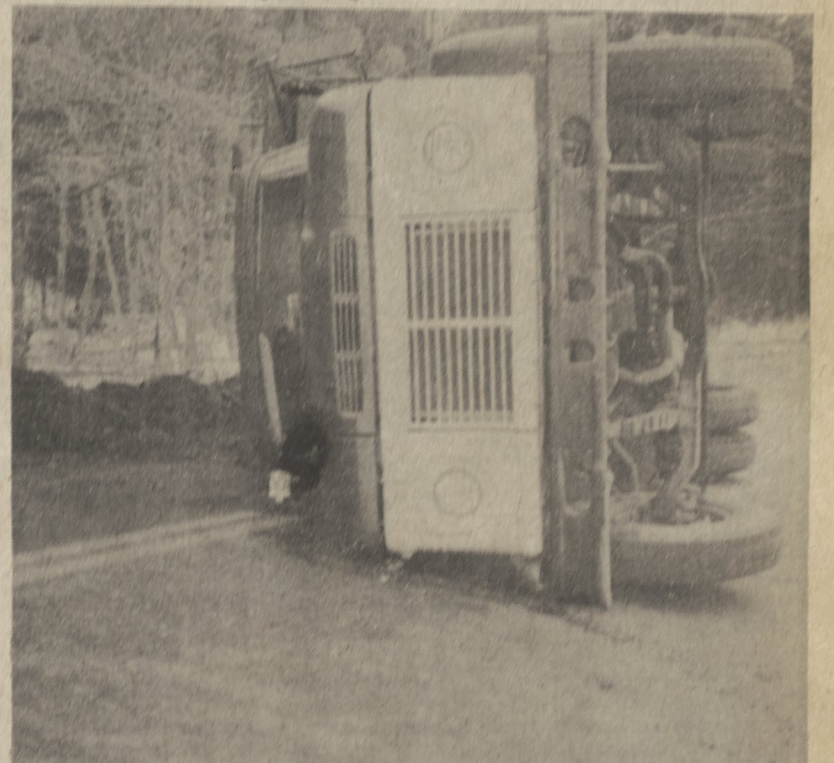
"Lefko said that he was submitting his resignation from the committee because his work made it impossible for him to attend the number of meetings being held for the negotiations," said Havey. "His resignation was accepted with regrets because I believe he has a lot to offer. I have asked Director Ernest Ashbridge to replace him and Ashbridge has accepted."

Havey said that the negotiations

between the committee and the Dallas Education Association (DEA) representatives are going well.

"Discussions are going well. I believe that we are making progress. Both sides have been very friendly and there has been no impasse. We have not reached the point of discussion on economic issues but I am optimistic at this point," said Havey.

John Johnson, Jr., president of the DEA, confirmed Havey's statement. "We have been discussing issues of mutual concern," said Johnson. "The meetings are a good opportunity to hear both sides, the district and the teachers. We haven't discussed any economic issues but there is plenty of time. This is only February. Our contract does not expire until August. To-date, our discussions have been very friendly."



ON ITS SIDE—State and local police directed traffic around a blocked Huntsville Road on Friday morning as a coal truck, owned and operated by Joseph Knorr, Wilkes-Barre Township, lay turned over on its side. The truck's contents were dumped along the roadway when the truck overturned. Road crews from Luzerne County worked throughout the morning cleaning up the ensuing mess. Knorr was uninjured in the mishap. He said his truck tipped as he rounded a curve in the road, confronted by several oncoming cars hugging the middle line. He admitted he was also driving near the middle of the road and lost control.