

THE DALLAS POST

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Summer Sky

The Chapel at College Misericordia is an imposing sight throughout the year at the Dallas campus, but it is especially beautiful on cloudless summer days when the sky is blue, such

as the recent one on which this photo of the chapel was taken.

Dallas Post / Bill Savage

Gay Convention Rumor At Lake

At press time, no confirmation had been received to confirm or strike down the rumor that several thousand gays are planning a summer gathering at Harveys Lake.

At a council meeting held last week, a number of residents asked about the rumor, but were told that at this stage, it is only a rumor and that until something definite was decided, there wasn't much anyone could do about the situation.

One resident stated that he is against the proposal and wanted council to check into ordinances to prevent the gathering. However, council was told, by its solicitor, that it is not very likely that anything can be done in the way of ordinances or other legal means to prevent the gathering; that to do so would possibly lead to a civil suit.

The Lake has a reputation as a family recreation area and most of the businesses located there are geared to family type activities. While it is not necessarily true that a convention of gays would do anything to alter this situation, some beach areas — most notably Fire Island and other areas of southern Long Island in New York — have in recent years attracted large numbers of gays, and this is what some residents and merchants on the lake apparently are concerned about.

Council chairman John Yenason stated that council will not take any kind of stand at this time. Yenason implied that so far, the situation has been limited to rumors and that no application for a permit to hold such a large gathering has been sought.

Councilman Ron Edwards told the audience that he had received a post card from a rock band requesting to play at this gathering and that money would be no object. Edwards said that at the time he thought it was a joke.

In other business, a complaint was filed by residents of Pole 202 and 203 against Michael Zabiriski, who has allegedly violated the zoning ordinance on the construction of a 22 by 26 foot cabana. The complaint also stated that a discharge of a brown substance is going into the lake and that Zabiriski allegedly allowed a swimming pool to be set up in the front yard of his residence. Councilman Yenason stated council is aware of the situation and will check into the matter.

Coun McMannus asked council to enforce an ordinance against the parents of a 14-year old boy who allegedly has disturbed neighbors by riding his trail bike.

State Claims Increase In Funding To Area Schools

According to information supplied by the Pennsylvania State Education Association, Dallas and Lake-Lehman School Districts will each get an increase in state subsidies for the 1984-85 school year of about \$200,000.

The PSEA estimates that Dallas will receive approximately \$215,000 more in its Equalized Subsidy for Basic Education — the amount the state pays for education in the district — for 1984-85 than it did for the school year just completed, and will also get about \$16,000 more as part of the Estimated Remediation Increase program set for the coming school year.

As a result, Dallas' total slice of

the state funding pie for education is seen increasing from the \$2,885,653 received in 1983-84 by approximately \$230,000.

At Lake-Lehman, the district got \$2,589,440 for 1983-84. That basic subsidy is estimated to go up approximately \$192,000 for the coming year, while the district is also seen receiving a little over \$14,000 in the Remediation Increase program. As a result, the total increase in the state subsidy forseen by PSEA for Lake-Lehman in 1984-85 should be just over \$207,000.

Both districts end up towards the middle among Luzerne County school districts in terms of both the total subsidy and the increases.

They are not close to the approximately \$10,000,000 Wilkes-Barre Area will receive from the state for the coming year, and neither are their respective increases.

Among the 11 districts in the county, Dallas will rank seventh in total subsidy and sixth in total increase.

Lake-Lehman's subsidy should only be higher than Crestwood and Northwest, but its increase is higher than Crestwood, Northwest and Pittson Area's, placing it eighth.

According to PSEA, the state is attempting to reach the point where it eventually picks up the tab for half of all the costs of education in Pennsylvania.



Thriller

Lisa Green (left) and Megan Sheehan of Dallas show off prizes they won in the Pepsi-Cola Michael Jackson Sweepstakes. Lisa won a t-shirt and Megan a Jackson's jacket. The girls entered the sweepstakes at the Dallas IGA.

Dallas Post / Bill Savage

Theatre Group Brings Hope To Local Prison

BY MATTHEW BERNSTEIN
For the Dallas Post

It was no ordinary day at the State Correctional Institution in Dallas last week.

Jay Miller, director of activities at the prison, came in on his day off to welcome the seven-member troupe, Geese Theater Company, which has been touring correctional institutions across the country.

Together the performers delivered a hopeful message, spiced with the gritty realism of prison life, to the local inmates.

The actors showed up in their slightly tumbledown, converted school bus (their home on wheels); they passed the security check and entered a different world.

"It's literally mind-blowing," said actor Jamie Peck, of nearby Waverly, after the show. "It's a whole section of society I hardly knew existed."

It's a section of society to which Geese Theater has dedicated itself since its inception in 1979. Since that time, the troupe has worked with men, women and young people confined in well over 50 institutions.

Their workshops and performances have received praise from prisoners and prison officials alike. Virgil G. Iverson, assistant staff chaplain at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, wrote: "Your ability to identify confinement issues ... has been honed to a fine edge. You ... are sensitive to feedback of those whom you help.... This method of drama knows no end of usefulness."

At SCI, Geese performed its principal production, "The Plague Game." The plague is crime, which destroys everyone it touches — offenders, victims, wives, children, friends.

"Once you're incarcerated, and you get out, you're an ex-offender," explained Ellen Stoneking, an actress with the company. "Once it touches your family, they're stuck with it. No cure."

But if there is a cure, it is found in the power of the family. One of the few statistics which holds any hope, says Geese founder John Bergman, is that which deals with the release of offenders to their immediate families. In these cases, says Bergman, there is a drastically reduced likelihood that the offender will be rearrested within the first year.

Unfortunately, the prisoner's attitude toward his family can be confused with negative behavior, hostility and violence. With "The Plague Game" and its uncompromising realism, Geese Theater attempts to show the prisoner the dark side of his world and suggest that there is a way out.

The play begins with the arrest of an actor. His wife, portrayed by an actress in the company, must then go through a series of visits with the prisoner and with several family agencies — lawyer, social services, school and landlord.

If the couple can get to the fourth visit, they have weathered the tempestuous storms of conflict associated with crime and its aftermath. The object of "The Plague Game" is simply to leave the game.

The object for the actors is more complex. What leads an individual to spend as much as a year and a half in and out of prisons, traveling in a crowded bus, sacrificing privacy, comfort and money?

Stoneking, unofficial leader of the company, said that over two years as a professional actress and secretary "bored me to death." "This is life experience," she said of Geese. "These are things I'll

'Plague Game'

The plague is crime, and the members of Geese Theater Company try to show prisoners they can get free of the sickness. In this scene from last week's show at the State Correctional Institution, an actor portrays an inmate husband, who is interrupted during a visit with his wife.

never experience in regular theater."

Peck plans to spend more than a year with Geese. "As an actor, it's right up my alley," he said. "It's a magnificent training ground."

Concerning comforts, actress Amy Hausknecht seemed to speak for the company when she said, "There's always food and always a place to stay."



Abington Journal/Matthew Bernstein

Stoneking remarked that some have likened Geese Theater to the activists of the 1960s.

"We're quiet activists," she said with a smile.

Jay Miller may also be called a quiet activist.

The Wilkes-Barre resident has been working at the prison since 1970, where he has gained great job satisfaction from dealing with the

inmates.

"These people have needs," he said. "I try to fulfill their needs."

But the job has its frustrations. "We have a large inmate population, and limited resources," Miller noted.

As director of activities, he stressed that prisoners should receive training in recreation. Hob-

bies, crafts and special events such as Geese Theater's performance all provide appropriate ways of channeling energy during free time, Miller added.

He was especially impressed with "The Plague Game," as a form of therapeutic psychodrama. "It helps (the prisoners) work out their real-life issues by watching them in the form of fantasy onstage."