

Weiss' feel left out

# Reward being offered in vandalism case

By JOHN F. KILDUFF  
Staff Writer

After 32 years of peaceful living in Dallas Borough, Edward and Bernadine Weiss of Elizabeth Street have found themselves victims of an unexplained string of vandalism attacks spanning a 13-month period. Incidents ranging from bags of paint thrown on their homes' aluminum siding, smashed windows, egg throwing and shrubbery damage have been reported to Dallas police officers. The Weiss' and Dallas police officials have become frustrated over the fact that no suspects, to date, have been located. The Weiss' now are planning to offer a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the vandals. However, in planning for the \$500 reward, the Weiss' say they have run into problems with Dallas police officials, who the Weiss' say have become complacent and disinterested. Dallas Borough officials say the Weiss' are wrong and that they (borough officials) are interested. "I just can't explain how frustrating this

whole situation has been," Bernadine Weiss said. "It just seems that they (Dallas police) don't want to be bothered with the whole thing." Mrs. Weiss said she and her husband Edward have repeatedly mentioned to Dallas Borough Mayor Paul Labar and Police Chief Ed Lyons that they would like to offer a reward, but have gotten nowhere with their requests. Said Bernadine Weiss, "I think they (police) feel that if a reward is published in the paper they will be 'bothered' with phone calls." Mrs. Weiss said she thinks the vandalism problem should also be Dallas Borough's vandalism problem. "Chief Lyons should be concerned with our problem," Mrs. Weiss said. "Our problem is his problem. After all, it is our tax dollars that are helping to pay his salary." Chief Lyons, commenting on the allegation that his department is not concerned with the Weiss vandalism problem, said, "If it is true that the Weiss' said we are not concerned with the problem, then it is a downright insult and a fabrication." According to Lyons, he and Mayor Paul Labar have, on numerous occasions, personally visited the Weiss residence offering to help. Lyons said that he

has even ordered extra patrols near the Weiss residence. "An officer has responded on every call they have placed," Lyons said. "I've even had extra police patrols just for them to try to help." Lyons said he has not been approached by the Weiss' to officially request information on offering a \$500 reward. According to Lyons, the Weiss' have "only talked about it." "If they are set on offering a reward," said Lyons, "then they should come to us and tell us." Lyons says he is not aware of any "special" procedure the Weiss' would have to follow to have the reward offered through the police department, but that he would look into it. "They (Dallas police) have known about the reward right from the beginning," Ed Weiss said. "My wife and I have talked with councilman Tim Carroll about it and he said we would have to go through the police department." Councilman Carroll said Friday afternoon that he became involved with the Weiss vandalism problem after repeated calls for assistance from the Weiss'. "It seems like no one is trying to communicate," Carroll said. "I have been looking into the problem and have been talking to the mayor. We

are concerned and feel real bad for the Weiss family. We hope we catch the vandals soon." Carroll said he is also unaware of what procedure the Weiss' would have to take to offer the reward, but that he would do all he could help. Said Mayor Paul Labar, "If a reward is going to be offered by the Weiss', I guess they should let the public know (publish them in a newspaper). More or less, that is up to them." Labar said he and the police department are very concerned with the vandalism problem and that they have not washed their hands regarding the issue. "When you are a victim in situations like this," Labar explained, "you sometimes tend to feel like no one is doing anything to solve your problem. I do not think the police department has washed their hands of this problem," Labar said. "We intend to answer all calls." The Weiss' have had over 20 vandalism incidents since May of 1984. According to Ed Weiss, when the vandals are caught they will be prosecuted. "My wife has gotten sick over this whole thing," Ed Weiss said. "I definitely intend to prosecute. After 13 months of this, (vandalism) everyone involved will be prosecuted and sued."

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## Could fire have been prevented?

By JOHN F. KILDUFF  
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When the subject of the tragic fire at the Thomas' Guest Home in Sweet Valley comes up, invariably the most asked question is "What could have been done to prevent the fire?"

Have Pennsylvania state agencies, in charge of inspecting and licensing boarding homes, provided the needed regulations to safeguard boarding home residents? This question is undoubtedly difficult to answer, but it needed to be asked in the aftermath of the July 23 blaze which took the lives of eight residents and injured 12 others.

The Dallas Post sought to find an answer to this question by asking state agencies in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York whether or not additional fire safety equipment, namely sprinkler systems, are needed.

"We are always looking at ways to improve the safety of buildings in the state of Pennsylvania," said Lynn Boyer, Deputy Press Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. "Sprinkler systems, however, have historically been used to save property, not lives."

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry is the initial agency which inspects prospective boarding homes for minimum safety requirements. Upon passing a PDLI inspection, a boarding home owner then applies for an operating license through the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

Asked if PDLI is planning to make safety regulation changes after the Thomas fire, Boyer said, "At this time, there are no immediate plans in the works for making sprinkler systems mandatory. We should, however, and we will take a look at that issue," Boyer said.

According to Boyer, the PDLI must first wait for the final investigation report from fire officials. Until an official explanation is offered as to how the fire could have been avoided, little can be done on the state level, Boyer said.

"We do not know as of yet, whether our safety regulations are inadequate," Boyer said. "Just like everyone else, we have to wait to hear the final result of the investigation. If we find that our regulations, currently in place, did not work, Boyer said, then we will be the first to change them."

Boyer did acknowledge that the high cost of installing a sprinkler system in a boarding home, is a major factor in determining minimum safety requirements.

"Sprinkler system costs are always a consideration when you are looking at minimum requirements," said Boyer. "Of course, lives are very important when considering new regulations, too."

Boyer said the problem lies with the size of the home. Some boarding homes, Boyer said, house only two or three residents. Others house as many as 30.

"You have to be fair to boarding home owners," Boyer said. "Sometimes, it may not be feasible to install a sprinkler system."

The state of New Jersey, however, requires all three-story boarding homes with 21 or more residents to install sprinkler systems. Sprinklers are required in all rooms, except bedrooms. Two-story and single-story homes, however, are not required to have sprinklers.

In addition, New Jersey requires all boarding homes with six or more residents to install emergency lighting systems near all exits. A com-

(see FIRE, page 10)



Dallas Post/Ed Campbell

## Tough competition

Karen Kutera of Nanticoke guides "Peanut" during competition at the Riding Ho 4-H Club Horse Show this Sunday at the Lehman Horse Show Grounds. Karen and Peanut were competing in the Quadrangle event.



Dallas Post/Ed Campbell

## Convinced!

Stuart Oakley of Dallas is shown here in the "Convincer," a device designed to encourage drivers to use seat belts. Presented by the Coca-Cola Company to Luzerne County Seat Belt Coordinator, Bernie Ott, the machine made its debut at the Back Mountain Community Safety Awareness Day held Saturday afternoon at the Gate of Heaven Church in Dallas. The device simulates the force of an automobile accident at six to eight miles per hour.

## Over zoning request

# Brdaric case may be in court for some time

By JOHN F. KILDUFF  
Staff Writer

If current sentiments among Kingston Township officials, as well as those of residents along Bunker Hill Road, remain the same in regard to John Brdaric's request for a Class 1 Demolition Landfill permit, the two combatants may find themselves clashing in court for years.

According to Kingston Township manager Fred Potzer, the township has already spent approximately \$4,700 on legal fees and road testing and repair along Bunker Hill Road, resulting in last week's injunction issued by Luzerne County Court Judge Patrick Toole.

The injunction, which was sought by Kingston Township in order to stop John Brdaric from allegedly operating a Class 1 Demolition Landfill on his property located at 230 Bunker Hill Road, was granted until either Kingston Township changes its zoning ordinance relating to Brdaric's property from conservation to mining or until Luzerne County Court decides whether or not the zoning ordinance is illegal.

"I'm confident we (Kingston Township) will stand on our current zoning ordinance," Potzer said. "We have spent a great deal of time and money on this situation and we will continue to spend money on it."

Potzer said that Kingston Township does not hold any animosity toward Brdaric and his request for

a mining zoning ordinance. Potzer said the issue is strictly "a matter of zoning."

The zoning ordinance Potzer referred to is the June 1975 zoning ordinance enacted by the Kingston Township Board of Supervisors. The ordinance, which Brdaric is appealing to Luzerne County Court, defines the Township's land use priority.

The ordinance states that the Township's land use priority is to, "promote, protect and facilitate the health and safety of Township residents." Brdaric's land is currently zoned conservation, which prohibits any type of mining on the land.

Brdaric and his attorney Charles Shaffer are appealing the ordinance claiming that an earlier ordinance allowed for strip mining activity. Brdaric also claims that he is not dumping any illegal material on his land. Brdaric said in court last week that he has been excavating on his land in order to construct a "Holding Pond" for run-off water.

Potzer said that in speaking with a number of township supervisors, he has found them to be "extremely pleased and satisfied with the court's injunction decision." The township's planning Commission heard Brdaric's request for a zoning change in December of 1983.

Brdaric was subsequently denied a zoning change and he filed a zoning appeal early in 1984 in Judge Bernard Brominski's Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas. The (see ZONING, page 10)

## 'Convincer' really convinces

Educating people about day-to-day happenings in their neighborhood and teaching vitally important safety habits were the major themes this past Saturday when the Dallas Borough Crime Watch program launched its first "Safety Day" at Gate of Heaven grade school, Dallas.

The "Safety Day," which included equipment demonstrations from the Pennsylvania State Police, Dallas Borough Police and Nesbitt Memorial and Mercy Hospitals, was conducted from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday afternoon and coordinator Polly Michael says it was a big success.

"I thought it was, for the first time, very successful," said Michael. "People are now more aware of the Crime Watch program in Dallas Borough."

A major attraction of the Safety Day included a six to eight mile-an-hour ride on a machine called the "Convincer" provided by the Luzerne County Seat Belt Program (LCSBP).

The "Convincer," said LCSBP director Bernie Ott, "is a device used around the country to educate people about the need to wear seat belts. The price tag for Convincer is approximately \$6,000."

Said Ott, "It (Convincer) has the right name. Anyone who has tried it knows how much of a jolt you get even at only six miles per hour."

Ott said devices like Convincer have been used throughout the U.S. for more than 15 years. Convincer operates somewhat like a sliding board in a playground. A rider is strapped into a seat and is allowed to slide freely down an 18-foot sled-like track. The rider then slams into

a rubber stopper, giving the rider a simulated experience of an automobile crash at slow speeds.

"I asked one man who tried the Convincer, to try it without a seat belt (Ott said he would not have allowed him to do, but asked anyway)," Ott said. "And the man said no way."

Machines like Convincer have proven, said Ott, to be effective tools in educating motorists about the need to wear seat belts.

In addition to the seat belt demonstration, members of the Back Mountain Kiwanis Club finger-printed over 25 children in order to aid area police departments in locating missing children.

Also local police assisted in registering nearly 20 children's bicycles. Nesbitt and Mercy Hospitals were on hand to offer free blood pressure tests and medical information pamphlets as well as information on their satellite medical centers located in the Back Mountain area.

Coordinator Michael said one of the biggest tasks of the Crime Watch program is to try to make people "mind other people's business."

"From the time we are small children in grade school," Michael said, "we are conditioned to mind our own business. We grew up that way and people sometimes feel they would look stupid reporting something suspicious, if it turned out to be nothing. But we must remember, Michael continued, today it is your neighbors' problem, tomorrow it could be yours."

Michael said neighbors should concentrate not on being "nosy," but rather on "being more alert to

what is going on around us."

Michael said that since the Crime Watch program began in June, 60 Dallas residents have signed up as participants. Michael expects many more to sign-up in coming months.

"We are looking in the future for fund raising projects," said Michael. "Right now we are in the planning stage. We have good support from the Dallas Police Department and Borough Council. And lately, more people have been asking questions about how they can get involved."

Michael said she want to make Dallas residents aware of exactly what the Crime Watch program does. Said Michael, "We are the police departments' eyes, in our neighborhoods."

— JOHN F. KILDUFF

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