

Inmates

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There is one problem, however. This Back Mountain "resident" is an inmate at the State Correctional Institute at Dallas (SCID).

His name is Michael Vaccarello. Vaccarello, a native of King of Prussia, is 24 years old and has been a prisoner at SCID since 1978. He was convicted of murder in 1978 and is currently serving a life-sentence at SCID.

Vaccarello recently told The Dallas Post that he believes education is the key to rehabilitating prison inmates. Education, Vaccarello said, is the only hope a "lifer" has of ever becoming a productive citizen again.

"You have to understand that a lifer needs some type of hope while in prison," Vaccarello said. "You could say he needs that light at the end of a tunnel. Education is the key to providing an inmate with that hope."

Vaccarello is what some SCID officials call a "model inmate." He has been a clerk-programmer in the SCID Education office since 1980. In 1983, he earned his Associate degree from LCCC. He has had job offers. But most of all, he hopes to get out of prison someday.

"Things tend to change every once in a while," said Vaccarello in reference to Pennsylvania governors. "Right now (under the Thornburg administration), getting a commuted sentence is not very likely. But maybe in the future with a new one (governor)."

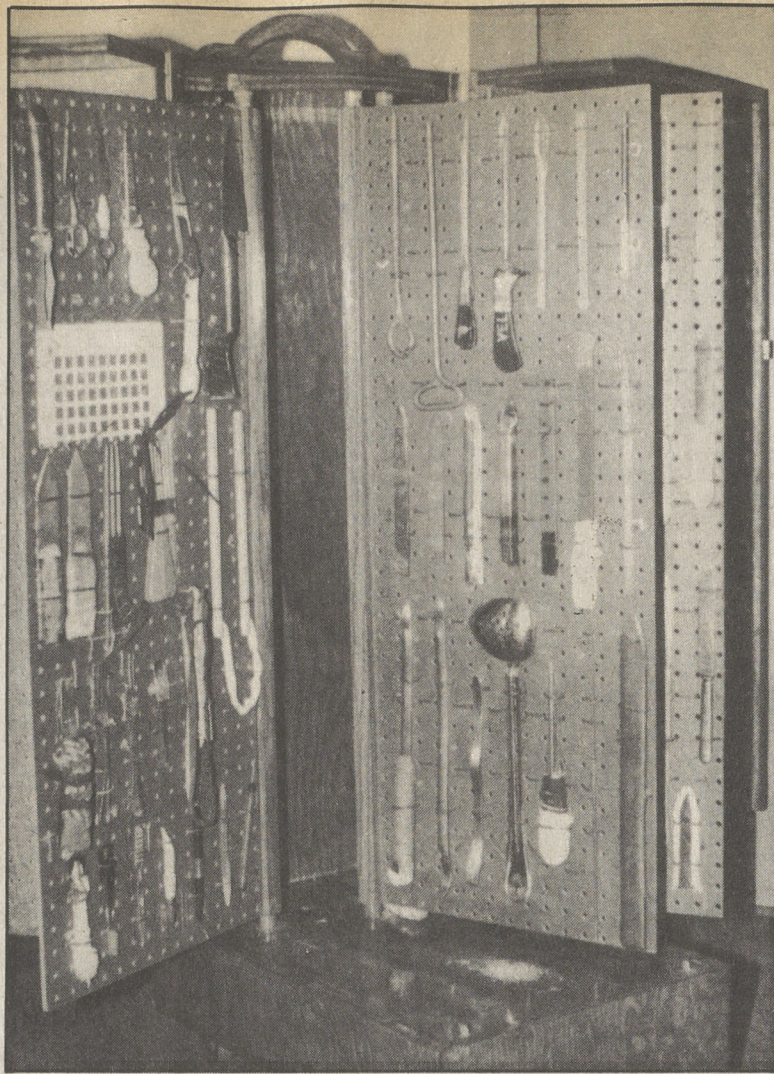
Vaccarello said he would like to get out of prison and begin working in the computer field.

"Right now, computer jobs are the mainstay of this country's economy," said Vaccarello. "I have had many offers for positions with major corporations. But right now, I am stuck here (SCID) but I hope to get out someday and become a productive citizen."

Vaccarello recently completed writing a computer program for GED students. He plans to give the program to the National Council of Education in Washington D.C. in order as he says, "to help other people get the education they deserve."

SCID currently operated a very extensive educational program for the inmates offering degree programs from LCCC and College Misericordia. SCID also offers GED-high school diploma training and many vocational trades. This education, said Vaccarello, is vital to prison inmates who, according to state estimates, read and write on a sixth grade level.

"It is (education) the only way for an inmate to prepare himself for



Dallas Post/Ed Campbell

Weapons case

This display of homemade weapons was shown to The Dallas Post last week by SCID officials. The weapons, which were confiscated from various inmates over the years, range from a toothbrush with a razor-blade at the end to a cooking spatula sharpened to resemble a hunting hatchet. SCID officials say inmates will make weapons out of just about anything.

when he gets out," said Vaccarello. "Without education, a prisoner does not care anymore and he often times gets into more trouble while in prison."

Vaccarello has been active in the SCID club called the "Centurion Jaycee Education Committee. (CJED)"

The committee works with state prison officials as well as state legislators in providing funding for the various education programs.

Funding for the educational programs comes largely from corporate sponsors and local civic organizations. For every dollar donated to the CJED, the federal government provides three dollars.

"We are very proud of what the CJED has done here in the prison," said Vaccarello. "Each year we keep growing and we will continue to provide whatever education to

the inmates that we can."

Vaccarello said that of the estimated 130 inmates involved in education programs, 60 percent receive "A's" in their courses.

"In fact," said Vaccarello, "I currently have 11 inmates who will be receiving their two-year degrees from LCCC in Computer Science. This has been a very successful program here at the prison."

When asked for the most important reason behind the need for education, Vaccarello said, "When I go out into society and begin to work for a living, people will not have to worry about me robbing or stealing from them."

Vaccarello will be meeting with the parole board within the next few months. He said he does not expect to get out but "I must keep a positive attitude."

Poetry reading slated

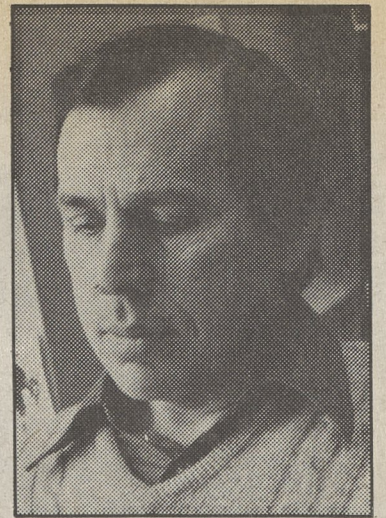
In observance of The Year of the Pennsylvania Writer, Wyoming Valley Poetry Society and arts at Hayfield will co-sponsor a reading by John Wheatcroft, novelist, playwright, and poet, on Wednesday, Oct. 16, at 8 p.m. at Hayfield House, Penn State-Wilkes-Barre.

Besides reading from his works, he will discuss his life as a Pennsylvania writer. The program, made possible through a special grant from Pennsylvania Humanities Council, is one of several taking place in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Wheatcroft, Presidential Professor of English at Bucknell University, has published a play, two novels, and four books of poetry and

has collaborated on two other volumes of poetry. His most recent novel, "Catherine, Her Book," a journal based on Emily Bronte's "Wuthering Heights," has received public acclaim as "a provocative re-vision" of the original.

A resident fellow at Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Wheatcroft received his Bachelor of Arts degree cum laude with honors in English from Bucknell University and his Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from Rutgers University. He was an instructor at the University of Kansas prior to coming to Bucknell in 1952.



JOHN WHEATCROFT

Volunteers working on United Way campaign

Back Mountain volunteers are busy working on the United Way of Wyoming Valley campaign. With only a few returns in, the volunteers are encouraged that they will reach their goal of \$5,350.

Back Mountain Area cp-team

leader, Peg Sordoni, thinks this drive has a positive outlook. "We have many new solicitors this year. That's a good sign," said Sordoni.

Thanks to these new solicitors and the other members of Back Moun-

tain campaign volunteers, the United Way hopes to reach its goal of \$3,185,000. The monies raised during the drive will be used to benefit the 28 member agencies in the Wyoming Valley. The campaign is scheduled to run until Oct. 30.

Township

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opment, is provided through the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency and is subject to numerous regulations.

The majority of the funds available are used for installing winterization materials such as new storm windows, attic, ceiling and wall insulation and additional plumbing safeguards.

The "target areas" the program mentions are those areas of a community which have suffered economically for a long period of time. Those areas then become a

"target" for property improvement, which eventually means greater tax revenue for a community due to increased property value.

Anyone interested in the program or wishing to determine if they are qualified, or within a "target area" can contact the Luzerne County Office of Community Development at 824-7214.

Pamphlets explaining the program are available at the Dallas Township municipal building.

In other action during the meeting, the Supervisors unveiled a plan for a new "Dry Fire Hydrant

Project. The project, which will be implemented by the engineering firm of Smith Miller and Associates of Kingston, will provide fire hydrants in local ponds which are located near housing developments.

The hydrants will offer firefighters a readily available source of water for fighting fires instead of waiting for a "pumper" fire truck.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$2,300. During the meeting, the supervisors agreed to allocate an initial payment toward services of \$612.

— JOHN F. KILDUFF

Jeff

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handicapped.

"Thank God every day for your children or your parents," he told the audience. "I wanted to belong to a family, but I didn't. My mother told me a mother raises her children, but that she didn't raise me."

Jeff said the Good Shepherd Home wasn't so bad, that one couple became attached to him and used to come and take him out. He persevered, passed a test for his driver's license, and graduated from William Allen High School, attended Bible College and in 1972 sang on the Gospel Hour in Lynchburg, VA.

When he was 18 years of age, Jeff, like most men at the time, received his "Greetings" from the Draft Board. He reported for registration, was classified 4-F, but, ironically, was asked if he had a signed certificate from his doctor that he was medically and physically unfit.

"I'm here today, doing what I'm doing because some people loved me for what I am. I came to realize that I'm a one of a kind "Masterpiece" because "God Don't Make Junk."

In 1973, Jeff went to South Carolina where he met Debbie, the girl who is now his wife. He realized when he asked her to marry him that he had three liabilities — she

would have to wait on him more than on another person; he would be away on tour a lot; and they would have to live on love offerings given at his concerts.

The Steinbergs are now married 11½ years and on June 7, 1977, their son, Benjamin Steinberg, was born.

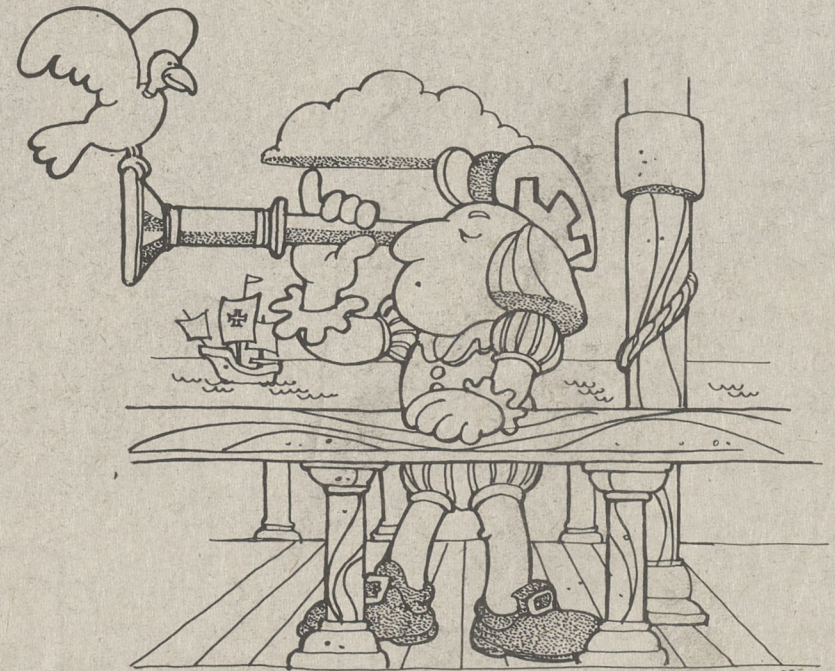
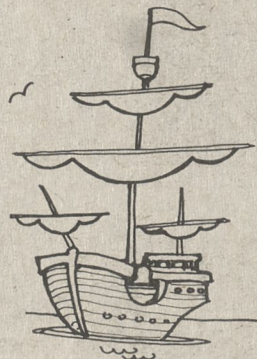
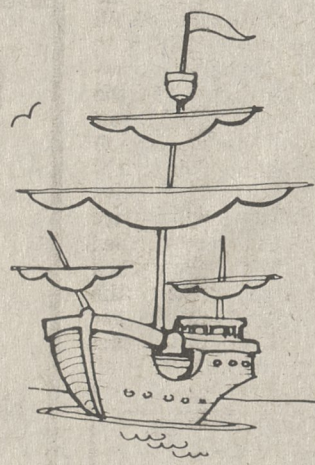
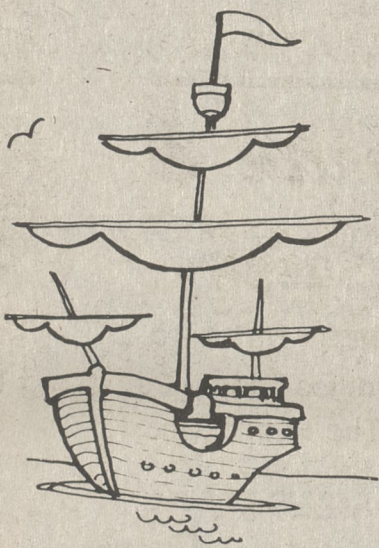
He is now eight years of age and just three inches shorter than his father.

In November, Steinberg will be the recipient of the National Youth Association's annual Courage

Award, given to the person they select as the most courageous in the country.

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