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Good news! Firefighters may get some relief

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

Volunteer firemen may be able to breathe a sigh of relief if a bill protecting them from civil liability suits as a result of their actions goes into effect.

The legislation, which has already passed both the state Senate and the House of Representatives unanimously, is expected to be signed by Governor Dick Thornburgh.

The bill, however, does not lift all restrictions to avoid liability. A volunteer could still be held civilly liable if his conduct fell substantially below standards generally accepted by volunteers, or if the fireman knew his actions created a substantial risk of actual harm to another person or their property.

But the legislation also says that liability cannot be imposed only to establish that a fireman's conduct fell below ordinary standards of care. And that is a big relief for volunteers.

"I think it's a great idea," said Gary Beisel, fire chief of the Shavertown Volunteer Fire Company. "These guys volunteer their time and their lives because they are trying to provide a service to the community. It isn't right that they should be held liable because someone says they didn't think they did certain things right."

Says Dick Heuer, fire chief of the Idetown Volunteer Fire Company, "This is definitely good news. It's a big relief. These guys put their lives on the line every time they go out on a call, and they do a good job. What people don't realize is that all their training and preparation is done on their free time and they do it for

nothing."

Both men say neither of their companies have ever been hit with a law suit, but they know the potential exists, and that the results can be disastrous.

"We operate on a budget of about \$50,000 a year," Beisel, a 16-year veteran said. "That barely gets us by. One mistake could wipe us out. I'm not saying people shouldn't be held responsible for their actions, but a lot of times people don't understand why we do certain things."

"For instance, if we arrive at a fire and we see smoke coming out of a house, the first thing you have to do is ventilate the house so the firemen don't get injured when they enter," Beisel added. "That means you may have to knock out windows or put a hole in the roof. Then when it's over you find that the fire was confined to the bedroom."

"The insurance company comes along and says they won't pay for certain items because they say the fire didn't cause the damage. Then the people file a suit against the fire company because they say you were careless."

Heuer, who has been a fireman for 34 years and whose company operates on an annual budget of about \$20,000, agrees. "It's easy for someone to say your equipment is not up to date or that you didn't respond fast enough," he said.

"We are strictly a volunteer unit. So if there is a fire, especially in the daytime, it takes a few extra minutes to contact the firefighters who are at their jobs, although the other companies around help out if they can. But it's easy for a lawyer to twist things around and make the story sound the way he wants it."



Dallas Post/Charlot M. Denmon

Favorite formation

Dallas High School varsity cheerleaders pose in one of their favorite formations following their return home from cheerleading camp where they won numerous awards, including the coveted "Spirit" award. Above are, first row, Sue Wells.

Second row, Ann Marie Danna, Molly Grasso. Third row, Michele Kirchner, Amy Cutter, Meg Gorgone, Shannon Cleary, Erin Cleary. Fourth row, Shauna Griffin, Kathy Farrell, Tracy Richardson, Lisa Gorman and Tairan Batory. Absent at the time of the photo was Kimberly Hall.

Dallas cheerleaders win award

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Correspondent

Dallas High School varsity cheerleaders have returned home from the Universal Cheerleading Association Camp at Pennsylvania State University where they won the "Key to Spirit" award for the second consecutive year, despite the fact that most of the members of the squad are new.

They were among more than 1,000 cheerleaders representing approximately 50

schools attending the camp while the local girls were there. In order to receive the "Key to Spirit" award, the entire number of cheerleaders were requested to vote for the squad they believed most exemplified the American Cheerleaders, who would set an example for others to follow.

The local squad also received a trophy for "Superior Performance" while at camp, as well as numerous other ribbons.

The Spirit award selection was based on appearance, performance, attitude, cooperation, friendliness and conduct.

This year's varsity has nine of 16 girls returning but the Junior Varsity squad is comprised of entirely new members, including seniors, juniors and sophomores.

The Dallas squads have a new emblem they will wear on their uniforms this year, one designed by Lisa Gorman. The emblem depicts a cheerleader doing a toe touch inside a circle and bears the letters around the edge of the circle—UCA Cheerleader Dallas High School in navy on white.

Mrs. Evan Bonawitz of Shavertown is the cheerleader advisor.

AD position at Lake-Lehman is still vacant

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Correspondent

When the Lake-Lehman School District placed an ad in the local papers advertising for an athletic director to replace Rodger Bearde, John Howe of Orange read it and, believing he qualified for the position, filed an application with the district before the closing date of July 14.

"When I submitted my application, I was not aware that it was only a part-time position," said Howe. "Neither did I know the background of the district nor the

political implications behind the situation."

Howe, a native of Harding, graduated from Wilkes College in 1969 and left that same year to teach school in Groton, Conn. He taught social studies, coached football, indoor and outdoor track, girls' track for a time, and served as athletic director for five years.

He and his wife, the former Nadine Kuderka, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Kuderka of Orange, left Connecticut to return to the Back Mountain three years ago. Since that time, Howe has done some substitute teaching in the area

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Area educators discuss financial problems

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

The presidents of five local colleges, along with several area legislators, met last week at the Wilkes College Center for the Performing Arts to discuss a number of higher education problems plaguing the state.

Two of the more pressing issues discussed at last Thursday's seminar were the lack of money available for education and the low percentage of high school graduates

enrolling at colleges and universities.

Addressing the funding issue, Dr. James A. Ream, president of the Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Universities, said part of the reason for the lack of money is because the economic growth of the state has been stagnant during the seventies and that money was not as readily available.

Rep. George Hasay, R-Shickshinny, citing another reason, said that Pennsylvania has more colleges and universities than any state in the country and that fund-

ing was spread out.

But, Rep. Tom Tighe, D-Hughes-town, offered another explanation. Already knowing the answer, Tighe said, "How many people wrote to me saying to lower the income tax? There's your answer. You get what you pay for," he said. "And we, as elected legislators, are not going to go against what the people want."

Although a proposal was introduced into legislation to use the states one-tenth of one per cent personal income tax cut for higher education, Tighe said, "There was no support for it."

Sen. Raphael Musto, D-Pittston, said most people wouldn't have missed the decrease and that a lot of good could have been accomplished with it.

"We never deliver what we would like to, but you can rest assured that we are constantly looking to explore new ways to provide for education."

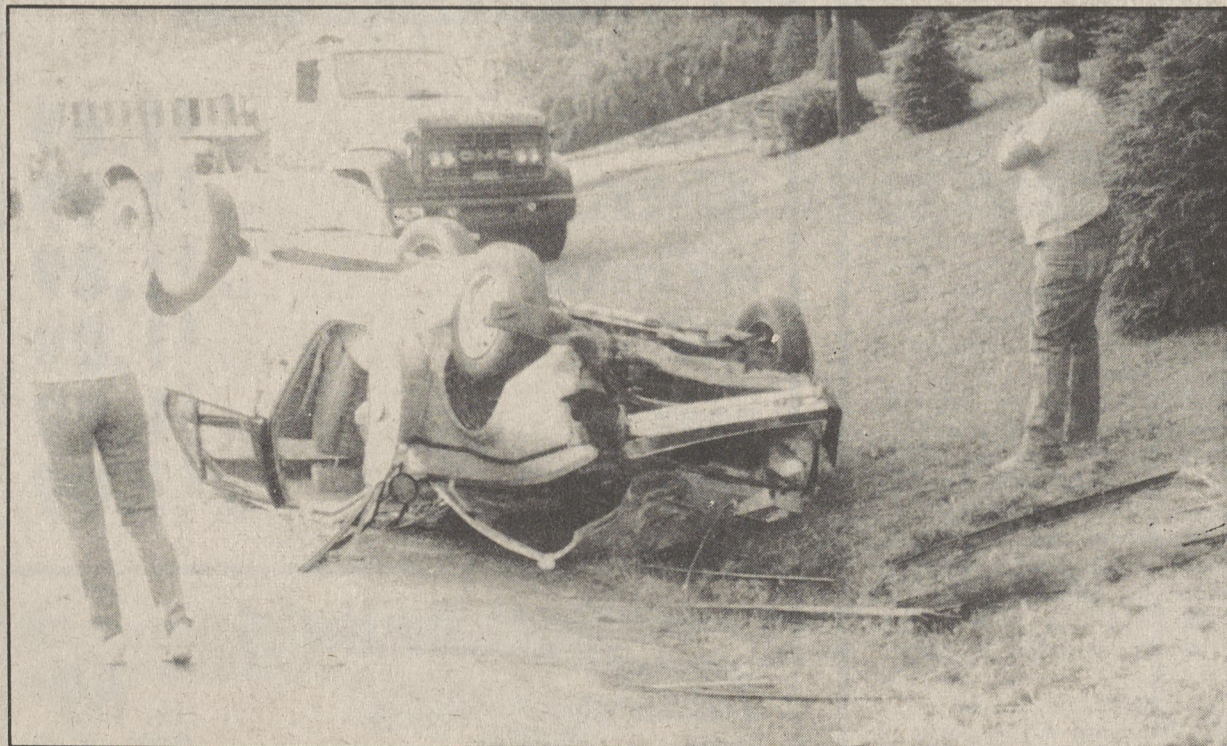
Ream also talked about the states low ranking (44th) in terms of students seeking a post-secondary education. "For years we knew the numbers were low but we couldn't understand why."

Ream said the answer may have been found in a study conducted by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) which found that many parents were not encouraging their children to pursue a college education.

"One man in Pittsburgh said, 'We don't encourage our children for 12 years to go to college, and then when they graduate from high school we tell them we can't afford to send them.'"

Hasay said, however, that educational appropriations have already been revised, making it easier to obtain a college education. "Today

(see AREA, page 2)



Dallas Post/Fay Broody

Noxen man killed

This was the scene of a fatal one car crash in Noxen late Friday afternoon. The victim was identified as James Schappert of RD 1, Noxen. According to reports, Schappert swerved to avoid a collision with an oncoming motorcycle at the intersections of Route 29 and 415 and struck a utility near the berm of the road, shearing it off at the base. The vehicle then rolled over on its roof. The victim died Friday night at the General Hospital.

SCID ranks fifth in inmate population

By JOHN HOINSKI
Staff Writer

The State Correctional Institute at Dallas ranked fifth in inmate population among Pennsylvania's 10 facilities according to the state Department of Corrections 1984-85 annual report.

With the exception of the minimum security prison for adult females at Waynesburg, all of the institutions are operating over capacity.

The State Regional Corrections facility at Mercer tops the list at 174.7 per cent capacity, followed by institutions at Huntingdon, 145.0; Pittsburgh, 140.4; Rockview, 140.3 and Dallas, 139.1. Camp Hill and Greensburg follow close behind at 137.8 and 135.0 respectively.

To help alleviate the problem, construction is now being done at building sites at Smithfield, Huntingdon County; Cresson, Cambria County; Frackville, Schuylkill County and at the former SCI Retreat in Luzerne County.

Those numbers have risen slightly since the last figures were calculated in the report, including those at Chase. Superintendent Joseph Ryan says the present count is at approximately 1,950 inmates, but that those figures often vacillate.

"Many times you have inmates who go out to different institutions. It's only temporary and we eventually get them back, so the numbers fluctuate."

"Plus, laws and penalties are getting tougher. Sentencing guidelines, penalties for parole violators and maximum sentences are all getting stronger. Even DUI offenders (Driving Under the Influence) effect us. They might be required to spend 30 days in the county jail. But they are already so overcrowded that, in order to make room for them, they send other people up here."

"We received 250 additional inmates since the report, but we also had two new cells added that house 200 of them."

Roughly, 800 inmates are still (See SCID, page 2)

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