

# Shavertown Fire Auxiliary brings back Christmas candle tradition

By CHARLOT M. DENMON  
Staff Writer

Back Mountain residents who have missed the Christmas tradition of the Vigil Candles will be pleased to hear that they will be able to purchase them this year from the Shavertown Fire Company Auxiliary.

Members of the auxiliary announced this week that the candle kits will be sold on Monday nights at the Shavertown Fire Hall for \$2.50 per dozen and will be sold on Saturdays at the Shavertown Acme in the Back Mountain Shopping Center. The vigil candles can also be purchased from the firemen.

The vigil candle tradition was started more than 10 years ago by residents in New Goss Manor after a resident of that area returned from traveling in the Southwestern United States.

While there she had the pleasant experience of seeing the residents light the candles on Christmas Eve and let them burn through the night to "light the way for the Christ Child." The vigil candles in that area originated in Mexico and soon became a tradition in the southwest.

The Dallas woman was so impressed with the project that when she returned to Dallas, she told her neighbors about the beautiful sight of street after street of candles burning on Christmas Eve.

She explained the project as it was carried out in the southwest and made arrangements to purchase the candles, sand and bags which were necessary. The next Christmas Dallas residents were awed by the sight of dozens and dozens of lighted candles lining the streets in front of homes in New Goss Manor.

Mrs. Gus Kabeschat, at that time a Dallas resident, was so impressed with the candles that she ap-

proached the auxiliary of the Dallas Fire Company suggesting that they sell the candles to all Dallas residents as a fundraising program for the organization.

The auxiliary members approved the project and for more than 10 years sold the candles to the residents of Dallas, soon covering the entire community.

A resident on each street of Dallas was asked to be responsible for selling and distributing the kits to each resident on the street or avenue. The personal solicitation worked so successfully that in only a few years, nearly every home in the community purchased the candles, set them up in each of the sand-filled bags along the front edge of their property (some even lined each side of their driveways and empty lots next to their homes).

The candles were lighted as it grew dark and burned long after midnight, burning brightly to keep vigil for the Christ Child's coming.

The auxiliary members began working on the candle project prior to Thanksgiving and spent countless hours packing the sand, just a

certain amount for each dozen candles, counting out the candles in quantities of a dozen, and the bags to hold the candles.

The candles became a Christmas Eve tradition in the Dallas area and visitors to the area used to drive through the various sections to admire the effect of the burning candles.

The thousands of candles burning throughout the community cast a true spirit of the meaning of Christmas to the dozens and dozens of families returning home from midnight church services or from Christmas Eve visiting.

The announcement a year or so ago by the Dallas Fire Company auxiliary members that their organization was disbanding due to lack of sufficient members brought disappointment to the many Dallas residents, who for years had looked forward to the annual candle sale.

Now Back Mountain residents have the opportunity to return to the beautiful tradition of the candles. All that is necessary is a trip to the Shavertown Fire Company on a Monday night or a visit to the Shavertown Acme on Saturday.



## Christmas carols

Members of Brownie Troops 639, 650, 649, 654, and 668 entertained Dallas area with Christmas Carols last week after trimming the Christmas tree in front of Dallas Post Office. The lights were donated by the Thomas Wilhelm family and Mickey Aicher assisted in making the pine cone decorations for the tree. (C.M. Denmon Photo)

## Lake-Lehman

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because it used to be easy to get away with skipping school. The seniors used to plan a special skip day, but now people are more careful," said Davis.

Senior Lisa Petruska said that the policy cuts down on her own tardiness, and also affects the likelihood of unauthorized early departures. Those who leave school for a doctor's visit must provide written verification of the authorized time spent away from school.

"It used to be that you could leave anytime," said Petruska.

Steve Juris is one senior at Lake-Lehman who will be cutting down substantially on the number of days he would have skipped school this year without proper authorization.

Juris missed 35 days of school his sophomore year and 30 days his junior year. He says he doesn't think that one should be required to have a doctor's excuse to justify an absence, but admits his grades have improved under the policy.

"I used to skip one day a week; not anymore," said Juris.

Guidance counselors at Lake-Lehman are responsible for making sure each student has enough course credits to graduate, and will be involved with the policy by making arrangements for students to make up credits lost because of too many unauthorized absences.

"The main reason this attendance policy has come about is that the faculty begged that something be done about the high absentee rate," said Florence Finn, a guidance counselor at Lake-Lehman.

Sylvia Bator, also a guidance counselor at the school, agreed that teachers were frustrated with the high absentee rate of students. Many often taught classes that were only half full. Teachers bear the brunt of the responsibility for scheduling make-up tests and aiding students

in making up for lost time in courses. "The benefit of this policy is that it places a sense of responsibility for attendance with each individual student, and gives the message that it is not okay to miss out on your education," said Bator.

If a student has more than the allowed number of unauthorized absences he or she is faced with losing credit for the course. The new attendance policy has a built-in warning procedure to let students and parents know of the possibility of losing credit.

The warning procedure helps to prevent a student from losing credit by maintaining communication between the administration and student and parent(s) after the unauthorized absences have occurred. In a semester course, after a student has missed five days, a letter is sent home to the student's parents and the student is called into the principal or assistant principal's office to have the situation explained. On the 7th day another letter is sent home and a conference is set up with the student, parent or guardian, and assistant principal or principal. After the 9th day of unauthorized absence, a registered letter is sent home to notify the student's parents that the student will not receive credit for the course.

A year long class involves warning periods of 10 and 14 days, and after the 17th unauthorized absence the notification of course credit loss is given. In both year-long and one semester courses the grade for the class will revert to a "W" or withdrawal.

Michael Toole, the home-school visitor at Lake-Lehman, keeps records of attendance and sends standardized letters out to parents every month detailing their child's attendance and/or tardiness record. Toole said he begins to realize quickly

which students are having problems getting to school.

"What we are trying to do with the policy is prepare these students for the future. If a student gets into the habit of being in school on a regular basis it will carry over to the work force or to college," said Toole.

Unauthorized absences include: illness covered only by parental verification, truancy, sleeping in, missing the bus, or similar violations. Authorized and excused absences include: illness verified by a doctor's note, death in the family, serious personal or family problems, medical appointments which can not be scheduled during non-school hours, religious holidays as designated by the Department of Education, suspension and administrative reasons such as school activities and college visits.

An attendance appeal committee was formed to hear cases brought by petition from parents or guardians of affected students concerning non-credit status.

Roberts said the main reason the new attendance policy was passed by the Lake-Lehman School Board was the high school's unacceptable absentee rate. He said that the enforcement of the new policy helps teach students values, and that there are consequences for non-attendance. High attendance has a positive influence on academic achievement levels, he said.

"When the policy was announced I got a few complaints from parents and students who didn't understand it. We explained the policy in an assembly, in every home room, as well as on an individual basis when necessary, and lately the school community has been very cooperative," said Roberts.

The assistant principal said that school districts nationwide are having problems getting kids to school, and keeping them there. He predicts strict policies like the one at Lake-Lehman will become a common tool in dealing with high absentee rates throughout the country.

summer of 1989 and finish by the following summer," said Bagley.

Bagley said that DAMA has been approved for a state Department of Environmental Resources Grant (DER) which will cover 55% of the project's cost. The bid process will take place January through March of 1989, and the bids are expected to take place in February or March.

DAMA had not had a rate-increase since 1975.

## DAMA

(continued from page 1)

now a secondary plant, and has a capacity of 85% to 90% waste water removal. The plant will be redesigned as an advanced waste water treatment plant, and will be required to remove ammonia and nitrogen from the waste water before it is discharged into Toby's Creek.

"The preliminary design figure for this improvement is \$5 million, and we hope to begin construction in the

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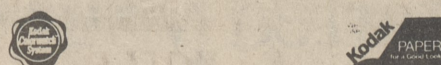
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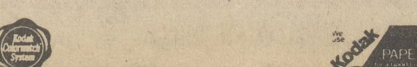


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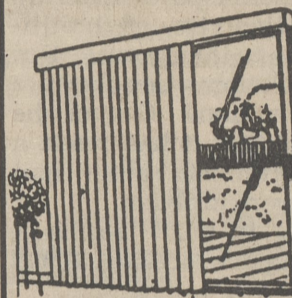
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