

THE DALLAS POST

EDITORIALS

CommCenter should answer all calls - then send the bill

Should the Back Mountain Communications Center have answered a call from the Harveys Lake fire department on March 7? That question is the subject of conversations in coffee shops and supermarket aisles throughout the area, and there appears to be no easy answer. Or is there?

The facts are this, as we are able to ascertain at this time: A car ran off the road at Harveys Lake, crashed through a boathouse and came to rest in the lake, its occupant trapped inside. When Harveys Lake emergency personnel learned that a person was inside the submerged car, they radioed to their department's base for assistance. The base dispatcher says he tried to call the CommCenter on the telephone, as Harveys Lake's fire and ambulance department must do, since they are not paying members of the center. When that call got a busy signal, the dispatcher called over the radio to the CommCenter for a mobile intensive care unit - at least three times - and received no response. At that point, the dispatcher called again on the telephone and the unit was dispatched.

Fortunately, the parties involved say the delay caused by this mixup did not affect the ultimate outcome of the incident - this time.

Some, including Harveys Lake fire chief John Martinson, contend that the CommCenter should have responded to a call for assistance in an urgent situation, regardless of the caller's status as a member or not. Martinson points out, too, that his dispatcher was calling for Medic 1, not another fire department.

Paying members of the CommCenter argue that to respond to a non-member's call could potentially destroy the financial viability of the center by eliminating any incentive to join. After all, the reasoning goes, if non-members get service for free, why pay dues? They say the outcome could be no CommCenter at all, since the dues are what pays for the equipment they use.

We think both positions are right, but we think the solution may be somewhat different than either.

We think the CommCenter should adopt a policy of answering all calls, regardless of their origin. That is the only conscionable thing to do. After all, they may hold the key to saving someone's life someday, and to not use it would be a travesty of justice.

But once they handle the call, we think the center should send a bill. And it should be large enough to make the requesting party think twice about their non-member status. \$100 would not be too much, and maybe it should be more.

This policy would get both parties off the ethical hook they're now on, a hook that is mostly monetary. No one could argue that \$100, or \$200 was too much to pay for a saved life. Nor could the requesting department complain that they didn't get service in a critical situation.

We hope the CommCenter considers this option. It may sound mercenary at first, but in the long run we think it is humane and fair. It is also more likely to save lives than the present policy. And we are sure that when you come right down to it, saving lives is what all the emergency personnel value the most.

Letters invited

The Dallas Post encourages readers to share their opinions with the community by writing a letter to the editor. All letters for publication must be signed and include a telephone number so that we may verify authenticity. We will not publish anonymous letters. Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612. Letters received by Noon on Monday may be included in that week's issue.

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Ronald A. Bartzek
Editor and Publisher

Charlotte E. Bartzek
Associate Publisher

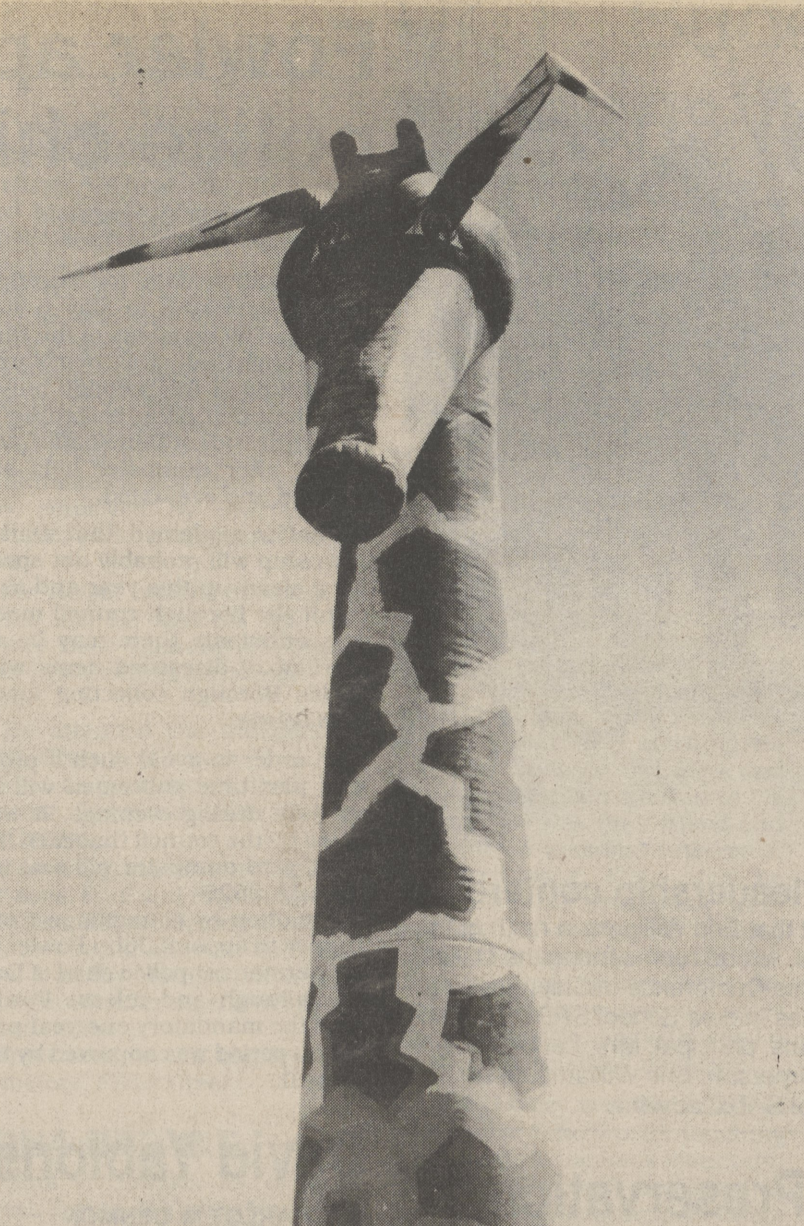
Tami Britton
Advertising Acct. Exec.

Charlot M. Denmon
Reporter

Rob Zapotoski
Composition

Olga Kostrobala
Classified/typesetting

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April foolishness

This winsome creature was found on Route 118 in Lehman. Can anyone guess who he is and where he belongs?

(Photo by Charlotte Bartzek)

Letters

Former fire chief says call should have been answered

Editor,

The citizens of the Back Mt. area are indeed fortunate. For among their friends and neighbors exist a few dedicated professionals. These are the professionals, the volunteers, that make up the memberships of the fire and ambulance companies. The citizens of the Back Mountain are also unique in that their emergency services, with the exception of the police departments, are operated solely on contributions and fund raising events. However, with the proper fiscal management, your fire companies manage to equip themselves with the latest and most advanced apparatus and technologies in order to best protect your lives and properties.

Over the years your companies have continued to respond, often within minutes, to most every type of emergency. In many instances, lives and property could have only been spared thru a system called mutual aid. With mutual aid, fire company helps fire company and neighboring ambulances fill in for each other if one is out on a call.

As a former Back Mountain Fire Chief I was fortunate to have served with many of today's officers. In the early 1970's a mutual aid committee was formed from within the Back Mountain Firemen's Association. Then, in 1975 we formed a Back Mountain FM Radio committee. This committee met many a night in the upstairs meeting room of Dallas Borough building. We more or less charted the course for a radio network that would encompass all of the Back Mt. fire and ambulance companies. It would not only be used for primary dispatching but would also allow all companies to communicate effectively at the scene of a major fire or accident; hence, mutual aid.

As communities grow, so do their needs. Since 1975 the fire companies have kept up as best they can with the changes of our society. In 1989, across America in both urban and rural environments, the proven method of fast, effective and proper emergency communications is by the telephone "911" system. Thus, with properly trained dispatchers, the right emergency services can be provided to the citizenry. Such a system is not new, however it cannot be installed and maintained without municipal support and funding.

It is only too common to sit back and criticize an incident after it happens. Conversations dwell on "what if," and "if only", not what should we now.

The recent incident at Harveys Lake should raise concern in the community. Is the fire and ambulance emergency communications network in need of review? It is indeed understood that in order to provide 24 hour dispatching costs must be met. But, when a life may be at stake or a home in danger, is there such a thing as law or strict regulation that prevents help from being rendered. Fiscal management of an emergency services organization is one thing, but physical mis-management may indeed soon lead to a life lost.

James E., Faerber
Midlothian, VA

Note: I served as an active firefighter in Dallas Borough from 1965 until 1969. I then served as an active firefighter at the D.C. Roberts Fire Co., Harveys Lake from 1969 until 1982, eight of the last years as Chief Officer. I now reside in central Virginia and have been an active volunteer firefighter here as well.

Only yesterday

50 Years Ago - March 31, 1939 BUSES TO REPLACE STREET CARS IN SPRING

Dallas Water Company filed a brief with the PUC this week intimating a rate increase may be necessary to aid in carrying out improvement program.

PSEA plan would boost state aid to local school districts. PSEA proposes shifting tax load from real estate to the general state funds.

Traction company will shift to buses when street car tracks are removed this spring.

Dallas Arrows baseball team seeks community aid for the 1939 season.

40 Years Ago - April 1, 1949 MEADE McMILLEN TO LEAD ROTARY

Dallas Rotary elects Meade J. McMillen as president of the club.

Dallas Post All-Star basketball team included Danny Gulitus, Lehman; Jack Richards, Kingston Twp.; Gene Strauss, Fairview; Charles Frankfield, Fairview; and Edwin Jones, Harter.

Flock of 30 egrets lands at Point Breeze.

Dallas Township High School Band of 70 members will present its annual concert under director Alfred M. Camp.

30 Years Ago - March 26, 1959 STOLEN SAFE AND JEEP RECOVERED

A safe and jeep stolen from Huston Feed was found on little used Bunker Hill Road by a schoolboy walking in the woods when he found scattered checks on the ground.

Dallas School District will be down to seven directors in 1963 when one member from each school district comprising the union and

three members at large will form the board.

Crispell's Farm Service expects record crowd at its open house.

Huntsville topples Shavertown 49-47 to win basketball playoff honors in the Church League.

Wed - Doris Helen Varner and George R. Stuart.

20 Years Ago - March 27, 1969 NOXEN GETS NEW TANKER

Drucilla Lutes Lowrie, Beaumont native, is a successful author of books on sewing.

Residents of the Lehigh Street section of Kingston Township filed a complaint last week with the PUC protesting the cost of a hookup for water meters and asking for a hearing.

Noxen Fire Company has purchased a new tanker from Michno Motor Company, West Nanticoke.

Lake-Lehman Band ready for its trip to Washington, D.C. to participate in the Cherry Blossom Festival.

Engaged - Nancy Hess and Robert E. Allen.

Wed - Alyce Woolbert and Raymond Francis Lowery.

10 Years Ago - March 29, 1979 GAS SHORTAGE SHORTENS HOURS

Gasoline shortage is called a hoax but the crunch is real as some gas dealers begin to cut back by closing earlier or on Sundays.

Dallas Post plans its 1979 Homemakers School for May 3 at College Misericordia.

Karen Passarella Boback was chosen Mrs. Pennsylvania at the pageant held in Beaver Valley.

Andrew Denmon Jr., named chairman of the Second Annual Dinner Dance, sponsored by the Harveys Lake Republican Organization.

Dallas Municipal Authority head defends sewer plans

Editor:

Please accept the following response to misleading and erroneous statements appearing in your newspaper, made by Hugh P. King, of the Dallas Borough Preservation Association, concerning the Dallas Area Municipal Authority.

Mr. King states that DAMA is extending its sewer line to serve the proposed Deer Meadow project in Dallas Borough, this is simply not true. The extension of sewer lines in the Powderhorn/Machell Avenue section was designed and permitted in 1972 as part of DAMA's Master plan for sewer extensions, and was accepted by Dallas Borough as part of their official plan for Wastewater Management in the Borough. In fact, a portion of the Deer Meadows project will be connecting to the existing sewers in Powderhorn, which were installed to correct a serious problem created by the installation of an on-site septic system. It must also be pointed out that, as part of the Capped Sewer Regulations the developer must, at his own expense, install all sewers within the proposed project and dedicate these sewers at no cost to DAMA.

Mr. King further states that DAMA will begin blasting shortly, creating a mess for months, may destroy private wells, increase

quarterly fees and burden Dallas Borough taxpayers. DAMA has in the past constructed numerous sewer projects (95% of the Boro is sewered), some of which have required rock excavation. In fact, sewers were installed in the Stonehedge development of Dallas Borough which required a great deal of blasting with very little inconvenience, and damage to the property owners. DAMA has made every effort through its construction specifications to insure that the sewer contractors abide by all the regulations concerning rock excavation whether it be blasting or jack hammering; and in the past, have not experienced any major problems in this type of construction. DAMA has budgeted monies for the construction of sewers to serve this area, and has never raised quarterly rates to pay for a sewer extension.

In conclusion, it is difficult to understand why Hugh P. King and the Dallas Borough Preservation Association would not be in favor of the municipal sewers. As evidenced by the growth of the DAMA service area, most residents welcome the sewers as an improvement to their property and a means to protect the health and welfare of themselves and their community.

Thomas J. Bagley
Dallas Area Municipal Authority

The Post asks: Why has there been an increase in vandalism and burglary?



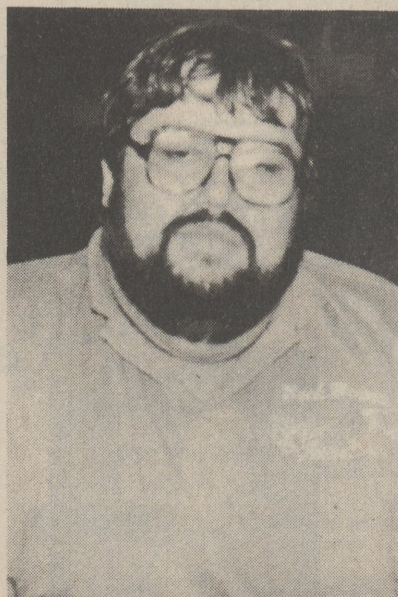
Andrew Denmon, Jr.
Food supervisor
Dallas

"Drug related and not large enough police departments to patrol areas."



Mary Patton
Receptionist
Beaumont

"I believe it is due to drugs."



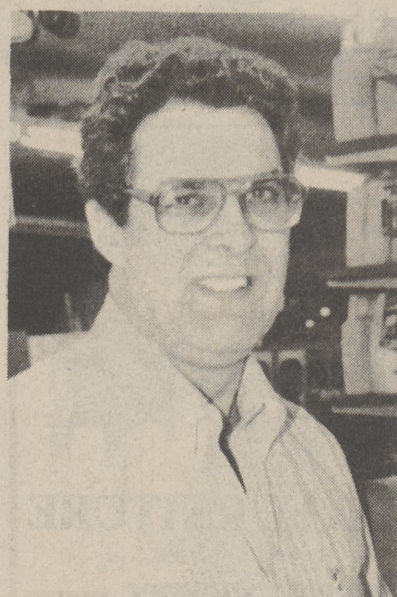
Rex Andrasko
Manager
Lehman

"They want to impress their peers."



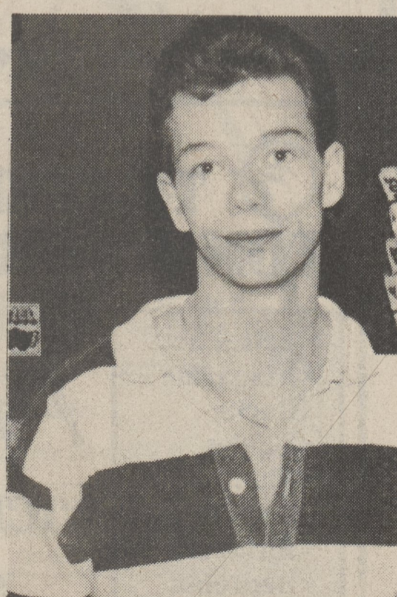
Jennie Centrella
Restaurant owner
Wilkes-Barre

"There are numerous reasons such as drugs, boredom, modern TV programs, among others."



Jim Eason
Businessman
Dallas

"Lots of reasons, but drugs probably the most specific one."



Jeff Mullen
Student
Dallas High School

"Some kids seem to get a kick out of doing such things."