



THE DALLAS POST

Vol. 101 No. 12

Dallas, PA Wednesday, March 28, 1990

35 Cents

Back Mountain arson trial goes to the jury

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A decision was expected today (Wednesday) from a Luzerne County jury which heard the case against John Tibus, a former Kingston Township firefighter who is accused of arson.

The 31-year-old Back Mountain resident is charged with setting an August 1988 fire that destroyed a barn owned by his neighbor, Robert Steiner.

During the week-long trial, the prosecution brought into evidence an alleged confession from Tibus. State Trooper William Balchune testified that while investigating the blaze he received several pieces of information from Tibus.

Balchune said that while questioning Tibus the firefighter admitted to setting the Steiner fire and 14 other fires in the Back Mountain area. Tibus has been charged with setting only the Steiner fire.

Under cross examination from

public defender Jonathan Blum, Balchune said that Tibus was not a suspect before the confession and he also stated that Tibus was not read his rights until after the confession was made.

Balchune also testified that Tibus confessed after he was told by the interrogators that Jesus Christ and the spirit of his dead father were in the interrogation room and would want him to do the right thing.

"He didn't confess until you confronted him with Jesus Christ and the spirit of his dead father?" asked Blum.

"I state that, yes," answered Balchune.

Blum also asked if the only evidence the police had to connect Tibus to the fire was the confession and Balchune told him that was true.

It was also brought out in the trial that Tibus has an IQ of 71.

See ARSON, pg 3

Harveys Lake man to face assault charges

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

The owner of a diving school at Harveys Lake has been bound over for court on charges of unlawful restraint, simple assault and making terroristic threats in connection with the abduction and assault of his former girlfriend in February.

The preliminary hearing for 60-year-old Thomas OBrien was held last week before District Justice Earl Gregory.

During the hearing, the victim, Lucy Harvey of Canadensis, Monroe County, testified that she and OBrien had been having an affair for the past 20 years. She

added the assault was a result of OBrien's jealousy of her trying to make amends with her husband.

Harvey said that she had lived with OBrien for a month, but a couple of weeks before the assault she moved back with her husband.

She testified that OBrien contacted her on February 8 at her home in Canadensis. "He told me that he wanted to see me and if I wouldn't meet him he said he would come to my house and break in if necessary," she said.

Harvey said she told OBrien that she would meet him in a public place and they set up a meeting.

See ASSAULT, pg 5

Harveys Lake about to hire two more policemen

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

The Harveys Lake Borough Council is in the process of hiring two part-time police officers to add to the force and the group is hoping the officers can begin work within the next month.

The council began its search for new officers a couple of weeks ago, according to councilman Edward Kelly, who is in charge of the police committee.

"We want to add two part-time officers to the force as soon as possible," Kelly said at last week's meeting of the council. "We are hoping that we can make a decision on hiring the new officers by next meeting," he added.

Kelly said that the positions are for part-time officers who will work approximately 20 hours a week. A few applications have been accepted already and Kelly hopes

even more applications will be turned in within the next month.

He says that the community has a lot to offer for the police department. "This is a nice recreational area to work in," he stated.

Currently the Harveys Lake police force consists of three full-time officers.

Also at the council meeting, the board approved an application to the Department of Community Affairs for a grant to help with local development. If approved the State Planning Assistance Grant will help development projects in the community.

In making the application, the borough listed its population and development growth throughout the past decade. The borough's population rose 36 percent and housing increased 108 percent in the last 10 years, according to

See LAKE, pg 5



Spring fever

Spring, boys and balls all came together in the Gate of Heaven recess area last week. (Photo by Charlotte Bartizek)

Residents unhappy with council's reply to rumble strip gripes

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

Complaints against newly-installed "rumble strips" found their way to the Dallas Borough Council meeting last week.

Dr. and Mrs. James Stallone of Dallas presented a petition to the Dallas Borough Council last Tuesday signed by 27 persons, 10 of them business owners in the vicinity of Route 309 and 415, requesting the removal of the strips, which had been installed recently by PennDOT to warn motorists traveling southbound on Route 309 that there is a stop light ahead.

Dr. Stallone and his wife, Linda,

27 residents and businesspeople signed a complaint against the strips

on behalf of the petitioners, recommended that the rumble strips be replaced with a flashing light. They explained that some people lose control of their cars when they go over the strips. They also explained that the noise hampers business in the buildings along that area and is disruptive to

See STRIPS, pg 3

PennDOT official says borough asked for strips

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

PennDOT official Ron Bonacci said several weeks ago that he met with the borough council members months ago to discuss ways of preventing accidents caused when vehicles were unable to make the turn to the right from Route 309 to Route 415.

At that time, the council members agreed rumble strips might be the answer to lower the number of accidents. Bonacci was out in the field when a Post reporter tried to contact him this week, but a PennDOT official said he knew that Bonacci told the council members there would be a certain degree of noise.

Council members at the March meeting said they expected the noise to become less as strips were

worn down by motorists, but residents in the area of the strips said the noise has not decreased.

A PennDOT official by the name of Kulken said Monday, "I'm surprised there is not a warning sign before approaching the strips. There should be." PennDOT said Tuesday, that a warning sign had been erected on Route 309 warning that there were rumble strips ahead as of Friday.

"There are also reflectors in the road," said a PennDOT official. "There are alternatives to rumble strips but the council requested the strips. I'm not positive, but I doubt very much if we would have refused a flashing sign on the highway above the intersection. That would be the borough's decision since they would have to pay the costs of a sign. We would just issue the permit."

'Justice for Animals' fights against animal abuse

By RICH JOHNSON
Staff Writer

A Wyoming Valley organization headed by some Back Mountain residents is doing its part in trying to put an end to mistreatment of animals.

The organization, known as "Justice For Animals, Inc.," is currently enjoying a rebirth to the area, thanks in part to Melinda Dugan of Trucksville.

Dugan joined the organization when it formed in the area in 1982. Back then she did a lot of work for the group, which tries to educate the public about the many abuses of animals by major food companies.

"Justice for Animals" worked in the area for many years but had a falling out about three years ago. Dugan said that the organization remained in a state of limbo until last December when she and another Back Mountain resident worked at getting the organization back on its feet and doing what it does best, informing the public.

"Our main goal is to educate

The group says large companies are the major exploiters of animals

the public about the many abuses and exploitations of animals going on today," said Dugan, during a recent interview.

She said that the organization is concerned about the animal abuse problem, but because of its size and lack of funding the group can only focus its goals on the education of the public.

"We do not write or release literature on the issues, we only distribute it," said Dugan. The group works with other animal rights groups across the country in getting out the word.

The group meets once a month at the Hoyt Library in Kingston. Dugan says the meetings are open to the public. She also dispels the stereotype that the group, and anyone associated with it, is radical. "We are not fanatics," she



says, "The animal rights campaign has really picked up across the country and we just want to bring out both sides of the issue."

One of the issues that the group is currently concentrating on is the abuse of farm animals. Dugan says that it is big businesses which commit the abuses.

"All of the lab testing and the poor conditions inflicted on animals is not necessary. There are alternatives which are actually safer for humans," says Dugan.

Showing these alternatives is what "Justice For Animals" is about, according to Dugan. "We aren't trying to make people stop eating meat and we don't want them to feel bad when they do eat

meat," she says. "We want them to know all the facts and then decide for themselves."

The non-profit organization is recognized around the world but concentrates within the Wyoming Valley. The reorganization began last December when Dugan and Anna Berezich, of Trucksville, started an anti-fur campaign in the area. "We wanted to show that there are other gifts besides furs," she said.

The success of the fur campaign helped lift the organization back on its feet and now there are approximately 50 full-time members.

The resurgence of the group surprised and pleased Dugan. "The turnout and interest so far is fantastic," she said.

Dugan also urges anyone interested in helping the group to attend a meeting. "If you are getting involved with animal rights, now is the time to do it. People are seeing past their noses and realize that the earth and animals are important and are not an undying quantity," said Dugan.

The group meets the second Monday of every month at the Hoyt Library. The next meeting will feature a movie narrated by television star William Shattner who, like Dugan, is a vegetarian.

'Tech Expo' will open Penn State building

By CHARLOT M. DENMON
Staff Writer

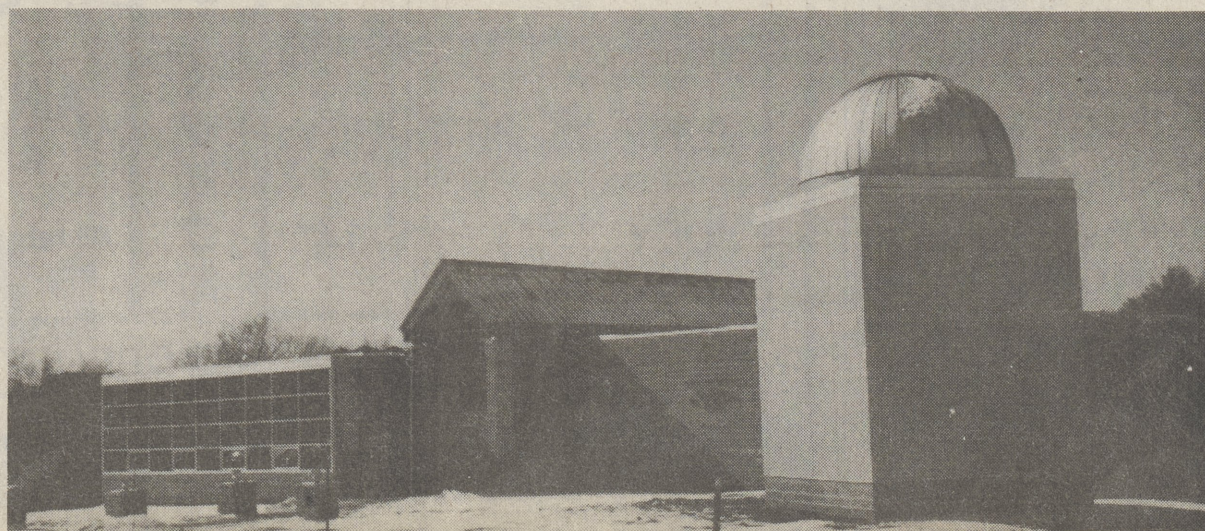
A gala celebration is planned for the opening of the newest addition to the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus next week.

"Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus will celebrate the dedication of the new Center for Technology with a three-day Tech Expo '90," said Dr. James H. Ryan, CEO of the local campus.

Dr. Bryce Jordan, president of Penn State University, will dedicate the new Center, April 5, in the Bell Atlantic/Bell of PA building, kicking off the series of events.

"We are providing a program that we think will be of interest to all ages and professions," Ryan

See TECH, pg 2



HI-TECH CENTER - The new Center for Technology on the Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus will be officially opened next week with a gala "Tech Expo" program.

Inside The Post

Calendar.....14	Police Report..... 2
Classified.11-13	Property Transfers..... 9
Editorials.....4	School.....10
Obituaries.....2	Sports.....11

Coming up:

- FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION - Mon., April 2, 6:30 PM
- FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS - Mon., April 2, 8 PM
- JACKSON TOWNSHIP SUPERVISORS - Mon., April 2, 7:30 PM, Jackson Twp. Fire Hall
- KINGSTON TOWNSHIP ZONING BOARD - Mon., April 2, 8 PM, Kingston Twp. Municipal Bldg., Carverton Rd.