

**BUILDING A DAM** - Fire personnel quickly built a dam from cinders dumped by the Kingston Township road crew. At one point, several hundred gallons of gasoline were contained in the pond that formed behind the piles. The gas was later siphoned up by another truck. (Post Photo/Ron Bartizek)

**Disaster**

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were ready for it," said Biesel. Personnel on the scene quickly began spreading fire-retardant foam around the truck and also began setting up materials to form a dike to contain the gas spill. Trucks from Kingston Township delivered loads of cinders that were shoveled into position below the truck, forming a pond on the roadway of several hundred gallons of gasoline.

These efforts helped alleviate the threat of a bigger disaster, according to Jim Siracuse, Director of the Luzerne County Emergency Management Agency.

"There are a lot of people who need to be credited with mitigating the danger," said Siracuse. "The actions they took early on really cut the danger in half."

Siracuse praised the work of all emergency crews who responded to the scene. "The police immediately began blocking off the roadways and getting the people away from the accident. The fire crews went right to work in containing the spill and the road department from Kingston Township helped get the needed materials to the scene," said Siracuse. "They all deserve a lot of credit."

Both Siracuse and Biesel said that required training for the fire departments helped with the handling of the situation.

Fire personnel are required by federal law to receive training in handling such hazardous material spills. However, many area crews go beyond the required training.

"We have a lot of men in the area who go to school and take extra training in something like this," said Biesel.

Siracuse agreed. "We are lucky in this area," said Siracuse. "Even though we have volunteer fire departments a lot of the members go the extra steps in getting qualified. They don't slack off when it comes to training."

In getting the training many area fire companies schedule mock drills to simulate an incident. Those drills helped emergency crews to react properly last week, according to Brian Johnson, first assistant fire chief for the Trucksville Fire Company. "I don't think we could have done much better if we would have been at a drill," said Johnson. "The practice on this really helps."

Police departments also receive training in hazardous materials. In fact, several policemen had finished training on handling spills just the night before the accident.

Communication was a key element throughout the day, as emergency personnel were summoned

and traffic re-routed. Authorities praised the work of dispatchers at the Back Mountain Communication Center during the accident.

Biesel also said that a new technique was used by fire crews at the scene to help with the communication.

"We set up a command post and had all calls go through it," said Biesel. According to the procedure the firemen all used the fire frequency for communication. Biesel acted as the commander and situations were then broken down and separated.

These separate needs were then handled by other fire chiefs who reported back to Biesel for communication. "This way we didn't have a dozen people on the radio asking for two dozen things," said Biesel. "Everything went through the command post and that helped keep everything organized."

Biesel said that area fire crews train with this type of communication but have never really had a situation big enough to use it. "It worked real nice this time," said Biesel.

Siracuse agreed and said that the whole situation was handled well. "I consider it to be textbook the way the crews worked," he said.

**Police praise emergency crew response**

By CHARLOT M. DENMON  
Staff Writer

"Back Mountain residents can't begin to realize the dedication and loyalty of the volunteers in all the emergency services back here," said Dallas Borough Police Chief Jack Fowler, reflecting on last Friday's accident involving a gasoline truck and a car on Route 309 in Shavertown.

Fowler himself suffered cuts to his hands when he ripped open the truck's windshield in order to extricate the driver as a fire smoldered in the vehicle.

"All the emergency service volunteers were on the scene almost immediately-Dallas and Kingston Township ambulances, the paramedics, the fire companies and Jim Siracuse from Emergency Management Service. The police from all the Back Mountain departments responded; even those who were not on duty. The united effort was the key role in averting a disaster," Fowler said.

Fowler was at the magistrate's office in Shavertown along with Jackson Township officer Jerry Leedock and Dallas Borough officer Don Gavigan when the accident occurred.

"I heard the crash and the wheels squealing and saw smoke and I yelled to the others, 'Let's go.' We jumped in our cars and went right to the scene. Dallas Township officer Jack Appel was coming north on the highway and he told the Comm Center dispatcher what happened. We went right to the scene where the truck was on its side and on fire. "Officer Leedock put out the fire, then we crawled up on the truck to get the driver out who seemed dazed. We tried to break the windshield but still couldn't get him out so I grabbed the sides of the broken window and pulled him out. That's when I cut my hands. We were standing between the fire and the gasoline and it wasn't until afterwards that we realized what could have occurred," Fowler stated.

Fowler said the accident occurred when a car stopped in a traffic lane in front of the truck and the truck's driver swerved to avoid it.

Dallas Fire Chief Ted Wright referred to the response of the volunteers as a "textbook operation".

"If it had been a planned emergency drill it couldn't have gone any better," Wright said. "Dallas, Shavertown and Trucksville fire companies were on the scene immediately. Kingston Township road department workers had their trucks filled with sand and dirt to put across the highway and Fire Chief Gary Biesel set up a command post and called Jim Siracuse of Emergency Manage-

ment Service to the scene. Siracuse in turn notified DER (Department of Environmental Resources)."

Wright explained that the fire departments eliminated the emergency then turned the job over to DER.

"There is a tremendous amount of expense involved with an emergency such as that and the state has the money to pay for it which the volunteer companies and the municipalities do not have," Wright explained. "Right next to the truck was a storm drain and if the police and firemen hadn't got the fire out heaven knows what would have happened."

Wright commended everyone for working together.

"Police from Dallas Borough, Dallas Township, Kingston Township, Jackson Township, Lehman, Lake Township and Harveys Lake Borough all came out to help," he said. "They also got a lot of help from civilians in the beginning. The police did a terrific job of directing traffic and keeping people away from the scene."

Sgt. James Balavage of Kingston Township, speaking for Chief of Police Paul Sabol who is out of town, said that the Comm Center immediately contacted Sabol and the chief immediately took over at the emergency scene.

"Since the spill caused the highway to be shut down, it was necessary to efficiently as possible re-route traffic for seven hours. Generally speaking the instance points to the need of a coordinated plan for any emergency in the Back Mountain whether this type of accident, a flood, or other disaster," Balavage said.

"There was no lead time for Friday's accident. We needed as much manpower as possible. The chief called out all of his men and he called Chief Miers and together they worked out a plan for re-routing traffic. He called the state police and the television stations. The stations informed the public that the highway was closed down and gave other routes to go around the accident."

"We had probably 3,000 witnesses throughout the seven hours it took to clean up the highway, to attest to the fact why Kingston Township has such an aggressive traffic enforcement program on the highway. We don't anticipate less traffic in the future and we don't know half of the material being transported through the Back Mountain."

"The prompt response from all Back Mountain services is an indication of the important role played by the Back Mountain Communications Center in any emergency whether it be large or small."

**Man who pushed Lake sewer hookup offers reward for vandals, offenders**

By RICH JOHNSON  
Staff Writer

The Harveys Lake man who has been largely responsible for getting some residents to hook to the borough's sewer system believes that is the reason vandals hit his home last week.

Bill Mann took the attack against his home personally and is now taking to his wallet as he is offering rewards for information about the vandalism and anyone not hooked to the sewer system.

Mann said that on the evening of October 23 someone threw eggs at his house and ripped American flags and yellow ribbons out of his yard.

Mann said that he thinks the people responsible are getting back at him for his part in making sure residents are connected to the borough's sewer system.

"I can't prove it," said Mann, "but I think someone is getting back at me because I forced them to hook up."

Mann reported the incident to police who were at his residence within minutes of the incident. "They didn't find anything but tell me it may have been kids pulling a Halloween prank," said Mann. "I don't think it was kids; this was a vindictive act against me and my

home." Mann noted that flags and ribbons in neighboring homes were not touched the night of the attack.

Mann is very upset over the situation and is offering a \$1,000 reward to anyone who can furnish information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the vandalism.

"My mother is 85 years old and was upset terribly by the incident," said Mann. "This was an act of retaliation but I'm hoping to get the last act."

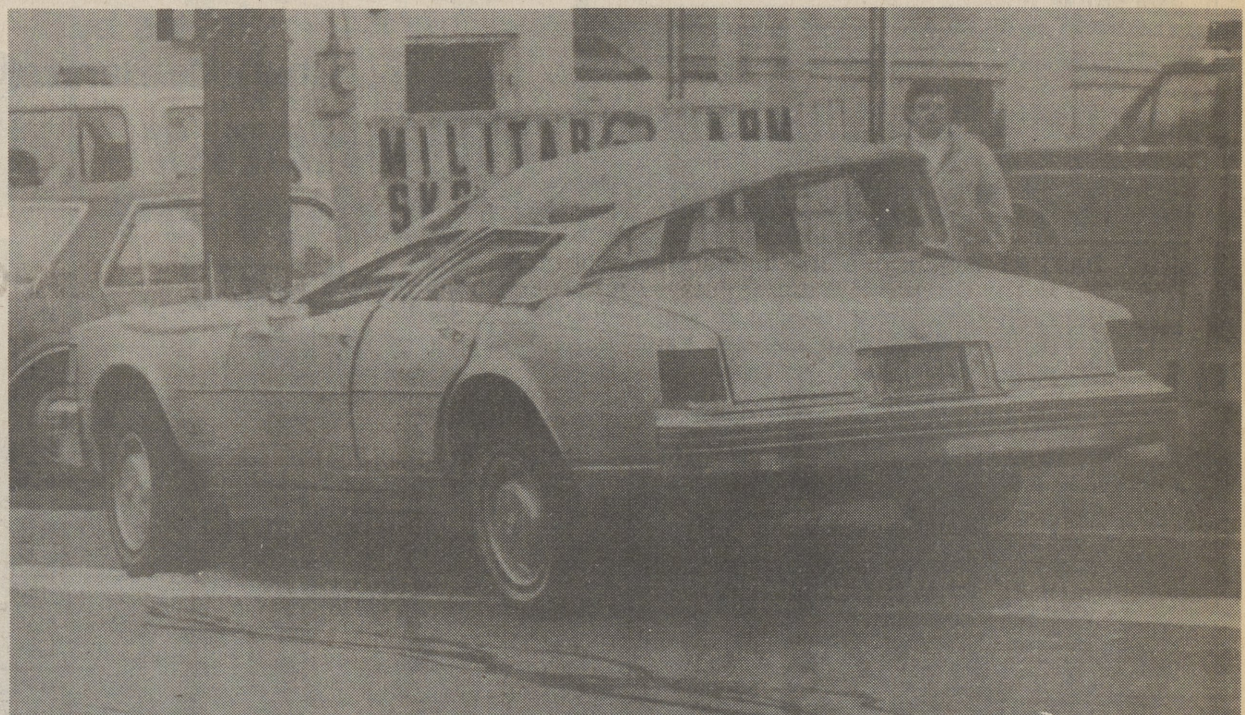
Mann has been working with the Harveys Lake Municipal Authority in making sure all residents are in compliance with a borough ordinance that requires homes to be connected to the sewer system.

So far he has helped take two homeowners to the District Magistrate to force them to make the connection to the system.

After the attack Mann said he was going to continue his efforts to make sure people are connecting. "This will only help me intensify my efforts," said Mann.

He has also offered a \$100 reward to anyone who will give valid information about residents who are in violation of the sewer ordinance.

"Anyone can contact me and I will make sure their name will be held in strictest of confidence," said Mann. "I just want to make sure people are hooked up to the sewer and I am not going to quit."



**CRUSHED CAR** - This Cadillac driven by Grace Wilson of Dallas was partially crushed by the overturning gas truck. Wilson received only minor injuries. (Post Photo/Ron Bartizek)

**Collectors group to meet Nov. 2**

The Back Mountain Collectors Group will meet Friday, Nov. 2, at 2 p.m. at Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Dallas.

**Adopt-a-pet**

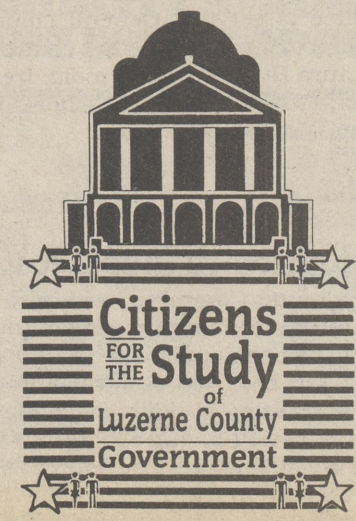
Duke is a 10-week-old black poodle-schnauzer mix, who loves children and makes a great house pet since he is paper-trained and just a small dog. It is unbelievable that his owners didn't want him because he is so good and so easy to train. Duke has had his shots and is looking for someone to give him a good home. Stop at the Luzerne County SPCA, Fox Hill Road, Wilkes-Barre, or call 825-4111 for more information about Duke.



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Vote "YES" to Study Our Luzerne County Government and Support These Endorsed Candidates for the Study Commission:

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		36B Betty M. Corcoran	38B Andrew Shaw, Jr.	
33C Jack Radzwilla	35C Michael J. Cefalo			
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33F Bernard J. Zielinski			38E Linda E. Casey	
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A study commission will determine if our county government:

1. Can be more economical and efficient.
2. Can be more representative.
3. Can be more responsive.
4. Can be more accountable.
5. Can have a better system of checks and balances.

In short, is our current form of county government satisfactory for the next century or can it be improved?

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