

Jackson chief

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His objections to the proposal included the salary of \$20,000, which is approximately \$8,000 less than chiefs of police in neighboring townships.

Jones also claimed that he was not consulted by the supervisors on personnel changes in the police department, he was not given a written summary of the charges against him, and he was denied a public hearing.

Jones' legal counsel, Attorney Peter Savage, has told the supervisors in a letter that any further attempts to remove Jones from his present position would result in litigation against the township.

Supervisor Joe Stager commented that he learned only last week that detailed job descriptions for all township employees were not on record with the township secretary.

"I've had detailed written job descriptions for the police department all along," answered Jones, showing Stager a thick booklet titled Resolution 2, 1986. "I showed them to the supervisors in 1986 and they adopted them."

The supervisors explained that they wished to further study the matter of written job descriptions for all township employees. Stager said that he did not know if the situation would affect hiring of any other township employees. They unanimously voted to formulate concise job descriptions for all township employees.

Stager also stated that the

supervisors are very interested in the concept of a regional police force. They plan to meet within the next two weeks with the Lehman Township supervisors to informally discuss the feasibility of merging Jackson and Lehman Townships' police forces.

Protected farm areas to be renewed this year

In other business, township solicitor Blythe Evans discussed the agricultural security area set up in Jackson Township in 1985 under a statewide plan initiated by Governor Thornburg in order to preserve family farms, prevent condemnation of land for sewers and to reconcile differences between farmers and homeowners in neighboring subdivisions.

Agricultural security areas are redesignated every seven years. More than 500 acres owned by 23 Jackson Township farmers received this designation in 1986.

The petition for this designation must be renewed this year. The supervisors directed Township Secretary Henry Zbick to contact the original agricultural advisory committee members in order to begin the process.

Report on prison water supply requested

After hearing a report from Pat Rusiloski of the Citizens Advisory Committee to Chase prison, the

supervisors directed Zbick to contact the State Bureau of Corrections, Senator Charles Lemmond, Representative Stanley Jarolin, Representative George Hasay and Representative Phyllis Mundy, asking for a hydrogeological study of the water table around the prison.

"The prison plans to use their new water line to Ceasetown Dam only in an emergency, while they're pumping more than 350,000 gallons of water a day out of the ground," Rusiloski said.

"We don't want them using the wells as a main water source because of the potential harm this can do to our home wells. PG&W has said that Ceasetown Dam can easily handle the demands of the prison."

Supervisor Walter Glogowski commented, "I am very concerned about the condition of the water table. A hydrogeological study will give us more information on our water resources. And measuring the water table levels in our wells every year can provide information on whether or not our water supply is improving."

The supervisors reminded citizens that regular open work sessions will be held the last Monday of every month at 7 p.m. in the fire hall. Public input at these meetings is encouraged.



NEW MERCY ASSOCIATES - Recently commissioned Back Mountain members of the Sisters of Mercy Associates program include, from left: Jean Brennan, Steffe Berdy, program director Sister Andre Dembowski RSM, Mary Pat Brody-O'Neil and Paulette Zerfoss. (Post photo/Grace R. Dove)

Mercy Associates learn how to help

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

"Bringing Mercy into the marketplace" is Sister Andre Dembowski's description of the Sisters of Mercy Associates program.

Formed three years ago, Mercy Associates is a lay group of women and men committed to compassionate service based on the philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy. The group recently welcomed Mary Pat Brody-O'Neil and Paulette Zerfoss of Harveys Lake, Steffe Berdy and Maryann Spurlin of Dallas and Jean Brennan of Shavertown as new members.

"When I began working as a secretary at College Misericordia, I didn't know anything at the time about the Catholic church. But I was impressed by the philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy that was so akin to my own personal beliefs," said Zerfoss.

Developed by Sister Catherine McAuley in Dublin, Ireland, 160 years ago, the Mercy philosophy includes not only ministering to the physical needs of the poor, imprisoned, homeless and sick, but also sharing spiritual comfort, counsel, instruction and prayer. The Sisters of Mercy was the first community where nuns went out into the public to serve, rather than remaining cloistered.

Although associates have jobs, homes and families, they maintain close ties with the Sisters of Mercy community through volunteer

work, gatherings, retreats and workshops. Their service to the lay and religious community takes many forms: Jean Brennan is a pastoral assistant at St. Theresa's Church, while Steffe Berdy has begun a personal ministry, a renewal project for the newly single—those who have been divorced, separated and widowed. "Sometimes all they need is someone to talk to, someone who cares what has been going on in their lives," she reflected.

"The associates' program provides an opportunity for religious and lay people to collaborate, minister and support one another, no matter what their lifestyle," explained program director Sister Dembowski. "It gives us a chance to network."

She added that Mercy Associates come from many different lifestyles, from Marine Corps nurses to students, teachers and volunteers working for peace movements. Associates' training includes orientation to the history and philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy, a one-day seminar and work with a sponsor, either a sister or another associate. Upon completion of orientation, new associates state their commitment in a commissioning ceremony.

"Many people are attracted to the associates program through a close friendship with a Sister of Mercy," Sister Andre added. "Many

associates are able to go where we nuns cannot, because of age or distance."

O'Neil described her experience as an associate as "an opportunity to step back, see who I am and get my spiritual batteries recharged."

Although rather new to the program, each woman felt that it had already made a positive change in her life.

Zerfoss said that she had learned to be more self-caring, to learn to say no. "I must do things to keep me healthy or I won't be any good to anyone," she explained. "I'm working towards a degree in social work, a profession which basically is similar to the Mercy philosophy."

Brennan added that she became more aware that she is part of a much larger group working together to help one another.

O'Neil has experienced sudden turnarounds in her personal life, "miracles" which she had no part of making happen. "When these things happen, I really know that others are praying for me," she said.

Steffe Berdy concluded, "I've noticed that many of us are so caught up in being Catholic that we have forgotten that we are also Christian. The Mercy associate program has given me an opportunity to live the Christian principle of helping others while keeping contact with the Catholic community."

Rock and Roll

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"Three weekends, a total of about two weeks where we were doing absolutely nothing because we were in pain," said Shemo. "These injuries were the only two weeks off we've had since the inception of Strawberry Jam."

Luckily, the band's main equipment was in a big truck parked in State College where they were to do another show. Though the van was demolished, the instruments—packed into cases—were not.

The band's back on stage even though Cummings, the most aggressive bassist in the area, will have a cast on his left hand for the next six weeks. With only his first finger free, he remains formidable, relearning all of his lines and incorporating slides where he would normally need more fingers to play the part.

Wednesdays, you can catch them at the Cabaret in Kingston, and on February 16 the group will be bringing live rock and roll to the Back Mountain when they play the Castle Inn on Route 309. Shemo describes the Castle show as an experiment that may turn into a regular event.

During a typical show, Strawberry Jam will blast out two hour-and-a-half to two-hour sets of what they call classic rock and roll along with some original songs.

Some songs, like "Smoke of the Water" and "Magic Carpet Ride," are performed as if they just came off the record. Others, like "Ride on Josephine," are embellished with extra solos or a harmonica part.

Each of the members of the band takes turns singing the lead vocals, and soloing.

In addition to their own gigs, the band opened for nationally-known Little Feat at the end of last year, and Edgar Winter and Rick Derringer the year before at the Kirby Center.

A test of endurance

The band is going into its fourth year this spring, and

Shemo describes the experience as making him and the band "more durable."

"You need a little endurance to perform for two hours," said Shemo. "With this job you can't

call in sick. You learn how to play five nights a week. You take care of yourself. You're not drinking. You have to eat right. We've been sick, but the show goes on. I was sick around the holidays, but we still had to perform. It just happens to be lucky that everybody does take care of themselves."

Those who think that rock and roll rhythms go hand-in-hand with irresponsibility may want to think again. Besides playing, each member of the band takes care of other jobs as well.

Blight keeps the van in shape and does the mailing list. Cummings does work on electronics, and Matchett built cases for the equipment. Shemo, who graduated from College Misericordia with a degree in business, does their business work. They've also got a road crew, Rich and Frank "Spanky" Cummings, Terry's brother and cousin.

"We keep the philosophy that the chain is only as strong as the weakest link," said Shemo. "Everybody relies on each other. If you don't have the equipment you don't have a show. There's been times when it's the last minute and is the show going on? Yes! We're real consistent."

During a typical week, on Monday Shemo will be going to the bank, paying bills and commissions, and meeting with the manager. That's also the day equipment is repaired and guitars restrung, and there's often a rehearsal.

"Tuesday, you can pretty much count on rehearsal Tuesday night," said Shemo.

Wednesday through Sunday they're on the road.

Planning for the future

"We treat it as a business and

a career," said Shemo, who arranged to have the band formally become a partnership. "We've made a living. It's very hard, especially with the recession."

The band's future goal is to re-record their original songs with Strumski on keyboards as soon as Cummings gets his cast off. When a recording is released, it will include some songs that the band's been working on but haven't yet played out.

"We've already had a lot of college radio stations that have heard 'The Letter' and ask about a tape," said Shemo. "Aside from the broken hand, I think we're better than ever now. We're very grateful that we can do what we're doing. It's a meager existence, but we're expanding."

For Shemo, who's married and has a son, the risks involved in the music business motivate him to work even harder.

"I went to a lot of interviews. Every job I considered I wouldn't be able to be a full-time musician," said Shemo. "I searched my soul and right now this is the only thing I can put 100% into. I'm not going to have a job where I put 40% in because I have benefits."

"It gets a little bit risky because you see how quickly things can go bad, like the accident," said Shemo. "You can't count on anything. You could show up at a job you're supposed to play and the place is shut down."

"That's what motivates you not to take lots of days off. I spend lots of my time with my son," Shemo said. "He's awake in the day, I work at night. I don't sleep my days away."

"It's fulfilling and rewarding, not necessarily monetarily but spiritually," said Shemo. "There's nights when there's three people and you wonder why am I here? But three minutes into the first song you know. I always seem uplifted after a day's work."

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