

Police intern

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situations such as writing up an accident narrative or requesting assistance from another officer.

"Chief Miers was very helpful, devoting lots of time to making my internship go as smoothly as possible and making sure that I learned many valuable lessons," he said.

Fleschut also commended the patrolmen as excellent teachers who shared their individual styles of handling complaints and enjoyed sharing their experience and expertise with him.

"You'll grow up quickly as an officer, especially when you're in charge at an accident or crime scene," they all told him.

Fellow officers also gave him a dose of good-natured teasing, especially about his age and his preference for hot chocolate instead of coffee on the graveyard shift.

Fleschut has taken their advice to heart, planning to apply to take the rigorous battery of oral, written, physical and psychological tests for admission to the Pennsylvania State Police Academy in

Hershey. "Basically, the only training that I need to become a municipal policeman is a municipal police training course and firearms qualification known as Act 120," he explained. "But the real challenge for me is state police work, possibly as a K-9 officer."

Several years' experience as a state trooper can lead to training in more specialized areas such as drug enforcement or the K-9 units, whose dogs do everything from finding lost children to retrieving evidence and apprehending criminals.

In his evaluation of Fleschut, Chief Miers described him as a person with "good common sense and the right personality for a police officer, always looking for more challenges. If I had an open position, I would strongly consider hiring him."

"I feel that my internship with Dallas Township will help to make me a better officer," Fleschut concluded. "It was a great learning experience."

Fresh Air

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up, she wants to work on television, possibly as an actress.

Ashley and Sharell both have enjoyed playing Barbie dolls and swimming at Warden Place. Ashley visited a horse farm, where she petted horses and fed one a carrot.

Jim and Lorraine Johnson, members of the Luzerne County Sheriff's Department SCUBA Team, took the girls to a practice drill, for which they received certificates of commendation from Lt. Rich Ziglin.

Ziglin has made up "care packages" filled with small toys and snacks for each girl to take home, and even swore them in as honorary sheriff's deputies, complete with special badges that he made.

"Meeting members of the sheriff's department has been an excellent experience for the girls," Lorraine said. "In New York, the county sheriffs work more closely with the police in law enforcement, so the girls had a chance to see a different side of their jobs here. They were fascinated with the diving and underwater rescue work."

Valerie and Todd Swanson, who live behind Hanson's campground, are sharing two weeks with nine-year-old Shawntiasha Smith of Queens. Shawntiasha, who has a sister and three brothers at home, wants to be a teacher, a police officer or a nurse. She jumps rope "double Dutch" - complete with fancy moves and special routines.

The family has visited many area restaurants; Shawntiasha's favorite is Treat Drive-In in Fernbrook, where Valerie's oldest daughter Ember works. "I love their soft vanilla ice cream with sprinkles," she smiled.

The Swansons have taken her exploring in the woods behind the house, where they found a garden snake, a turtle shell, snails and a pond to splash in.

Shawntiasha also has enjoyed playing with the kittens, riding bikes and going cruising in Valerie's venerable Volkswagen beetle with the Swansons' two younger daughters, Amanda and Alaina.

"We set up our pop-up camper

in the back yard, so the girls have their own private playhouse, where they can also sleep out," Valerie said. "Shawnie is interested in everything. She loves to go food shopping and help around the house."

"I want to come back next summer to Valerie's," she said. "Here I can play outside whenever I want to. It's always safe here."

The Johnsons have been Fresh Air families for two years, while this year is the Swansons' first.

"It's like having another daughter," said Valerie Swanson. Todd Swanson agreed, "Shawnie is a great girl. I've enjoyed having her here to visit."

Families wishing to host a Fresh Air child are interviewed and their references are closely checked before they are approved, according to Back Mountain Chairperson Karen Duncan. Agencies in New York City match children with host families and help to organize activities.

Families who have previously hosted Fresh Air children may request "their kids" the following year; these children may visit for a month instead of two weeks.

"While the children are here, we check how they are doing and work with their families if problems arise," Duncan said. "All that we ask of our host families is to have fun with the kids and to love them." Sharell and Shawntiasha have grown close to their "Fresh Air moms" and have already asked if they can return next year.

"I wish that we had walkie-talkies, one for you and one for me," Shawntiasha told Valerie Swanson. "That way, whenever I want to come to visit you, I could call you and you could tell me the safest way to get from Queens to Wilkes-Barre on the bus. And you could meet me."

Median Household Incomes in the Back Mountain

COMMUNITY	POPULATION				MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME			
	1980	1990	Change	% Change	1980	1990	Change	%Change
Dallas Borough	2679	2608	-71	-3%	\$20431	\$36875	\$16444	+80%
Dallas Twp.	7287	7625	338	+5%	19167	34288	15121	+79%
Franklin Twp.	1473	1414	-59	-4%	17443	31343	13900	+80%
Harveys Lake	2318	2746	428	18%	14317	27875	13558	+95%
Jackson Twp.	2941	3600*	659	+22%	20285	40881	20596	+102%
Kingston Twp.	6535	6763	228	+3%	17708	33402	15694	+89%
Lehman Twp.	3030	3035	5	---	14983	29277	14294	+95%
Total	26263	27791	1528	+6%				
Luzerne Cty.	343079	328149	-14930	-4%	\$13990	\$23600	\$9610	+69%

* Estimate. 1990 Census figures included prisoners.

Source: Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing. Subject to revision; the Census Bureau has reported minor changes may be needed.

Incomes

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We look for growth in particular. We look back to see if the market is over-saturated."

In researching whether or not to locate a supermarket in the Back Mountain, Insalaco used the 1980 census data as a starting point.

According to Howard Grossman, director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, it's not uncommon for large businesses to use census data to determine where to open new locations. The data also is used by federal and state governments to determine eligibility for a variety of programs.

In doing the study, Insalaco found that while there were already several supermarkets in the Back Mountain, some people from the area still traveled to Kingston and Wilkes-Barre to shop for groceries.

"We tracked them from 1980 on," said Insalaco. "We just liked the trends."

Recession proof?

While much of the nation is in the grips a tenacious economic recession, Insalaco predicts that the Back Mountain will be spared from much of it.

"I think that there are some pockets that are going to be recession proof," said Insalaco. "I think we're going to be somewhat recession proof."

"We've had very strong growth in our company right through the recession," said Kevin Smith, co-owner of Ruth K. Smith Realty. "Seven new developments have taken off in the last four to five years. If it's worth it, it's going. A customer sees the value in it. It's been a little slower just in the last two months."

After coming off of a very strong sales this winter, Mary Griffin, owner of Griffin Real Estate, also has found the market slowing in the last couple months.

Unlike areas like Texas, where wild overbuilding led to a crash in the real estate market, Smith says that property has held its value here.

Back Mountain Housing Characteristics

MUNICIPALITY	NUMBER OHU'S	% OWNER OCCUPIED	MEDIAN VALUE	% COUNTY AVERAGE
Dallas Borough	1006	82.5	\$85,600	153%
Dallas Twp.	2684	82.2	97,200	174%
Franklin Twp.	514	90.7	75,600	135%
Harveys Lake	1040	80.9	63,500	113%
Jackson Twp.	863	88.4	106,400	190%
Kingston Twp.	2480	85.1	83,000	148%
Lake Twp.	698	86.7	67,000	120%
Lehman Twp.	1125	88.0	77,600	139%
Total	10410	84.6	81,572	146%
Luzerne County	128,483	69.4	56,000	----

Source: Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1990 United States Census of Population and Housing.

"The Back Mountain market hasn't suffered," said Smith. "We haven't seen people in the Back Mountain losing money on the sales of their homes."

"When people move to the area, this is often the first place they look," said Griffin. "Mountaintop is often their second choice."

Griffin finds that it's much easier to find a home in the Back Mountain today than it was 16 years ago when she moved to the area from Boston.

"When I moved here, there were very few homes to choose," said Griffin. "What I've seen are a lot more homes to choose from in the Back Mountain."

Smith also sees the business climate of the Wyoming Valley area improving in general.

"The Greater Wilkes-Barre Partnership and Chamber of Commerce have done a good job as far as bringing industry in," said Smith.

In Kingston Township, where 75% of the township's budget is in earned income taxes, taxes collected so far this year are ahead of what's predicted in the budget.

Because it's a home rule township, Kingston Township collects a 1% earned income tax instead of .5%. For 1992, township manager

Poverty levels in the Back Mountain

The percentage of people earning less than the poverty level according to the U.S. Census.

Municipality	1980	1990
Dallas Borough	2.9%	4.8%
Dallas Township	5.4%	8.3%
Franklin Township	10.0%	6.6%
Harveys Lake	12.0%	10.2%
Jackson Township	2.9%	1.9%
Kingston Township	6.5%	8.0%
Lake Township	13.3%	7.3%
Lehman Township	12.7%	5.1%
Luzerne County	9.9%	10.9%

Jeff Box budgeted \$825,000 for earned income taxes, \$5,000 more than 1991. As of June 30, the \$495,000 in taxes collected was well above what was budgeted.

The flip side of the coin

And have the poor gotten poorer in the Back Mountain?

The percentage of individuals whose income is below the poverty level is lower in the Back Mountain than it is in Luzerne County: 6.6% overall for the Back Mountain

compared to 10.9% for the county. In three municipalities, Dallas Borough, Dallas Township and Kingston Township, the poverty rate increased slightly between 1980 and 1990, and in the others it fell, sometimes drastically.

Though the poverty level varies depending on the size and makeup of a family, a single person earning less than \$6,451 was considered to be earning less than the poverty level when the 1990 census was taken.

King's students receive summer internships

Chris Bedwick, director of the Center for Experiential Learning at King's College, recently announced that 35 juniors and seniors at King's are conducting internships this summer. The students represent 14 different academic majors, and have been placed at 32 different sites, 18 of which are new to the Center for Experiential Learning at King's.


The King's interns include Courtney Butler, Shavertown, Jewish Community Center, Wilkes-Barre; Gina Gallagher, Dallas; Robert A. Gonos, Esq. Office, Wilkes-Barre; Lea-Ann Malak, Trucksville, King's Personnel Services, Wilkes-Barre; Laura Napieralski, Shavertown, The Woodlands Inn, Wilkes-Barre.

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