

Fourth graders bank on the future

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Open for an hour a day, the bank is a table filled with stacks of money and blank checks. Lots of money. Fives, tens, twenties, fifties. The bank president sits behind the table, busily recording transactions. There are no guards, no vaults, no security system.

But the First Bank of Lake-Noxen Elementary School isn't an easy holdup target. And the money isn't real.

The bank is a learning experience for Mr. Armonde Casagrande's and Mr. Mark Steele's fourth graders, who earn and spend or save specially printed Lake-Noxen dollars.

"You can't sign someone else's check. You can't write a check for more money than you have," explained the students.

They even knew who had the most cash (Allison Bevan, with \$600) and who had the least (R.J. Frey, \$0.)

The students "earn" money by performing well on tests, volunteering answers, participating in class reviews, doing extra credit projects and helping their teachers by distributing and collecting papers, washing the chalk boards and running messages.

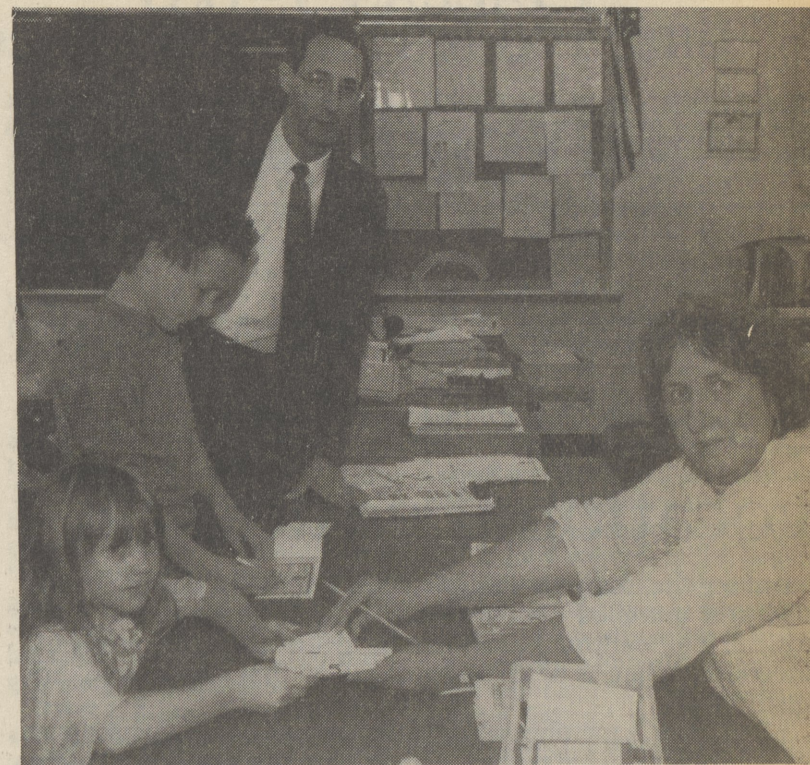
The teachers fine students by deducting money from their checking accounts for failing to do homework, disorderly conduct, bouncing checks or failing to do an assigned class job.

"I got some fines for not doing my homework. That's why I don't have any money," J.R. Frey explained.

Since the students can't spend their money at area businesses, Casagrande has set up special extra-curricular events and auctions, offering rulers, colored pens, novelty erasers and books. Students may also buy passes to use the class's computerized learning games or rent "houses," two desks placed together where they may sit with a friend for a month.

"Rents come due next week and I don't think that some of them have enough money in their accounts," said Mrs. Faythe Roberts, a parent volunteer who serves as bank president, working five hours a week recording all cash transactions and taking care of the money.

Casagrande set up the program to show students how they will use the math that they learn in class when they leave school to budget



HIGH FINANCE - Fourth-grader Chris Navin, watched by William J. Durdach of First Eastern Bank, makes out a check from his class account while Jennifer Barzilsoki completes a cash transaction with parent volunteer Faythe Roberts. (Post Photo/Grace R. Dove)

their money, pay bills, compute interest and balance their checking accounts.

"We tried to duplicate real-life conditions as accurately as possible," he said. "We hope that when the students begin to manage their own money, they'll remember the mistakes that they made here and not repeat them."

To acquaint the class with banking procedures, William Durdach, a vice-president at First Eastern Bank and professor of finance at Penn State, visited the school Wednesday, October 14.

After explaining to the students how a bank makes its money, what a credit rating is and how customers apply for loans, Durdach fielded questions.

"What happens if you take out a loan and die before it's paid off?" John Sutliff asked.

Maureen White had several questions. "Will a bank lend you \$5 or \$10? What's the size of the biggest loan that your bank made? Will a bank lend you money for medical bills?"

"How old do you have to be to have 'your own' bank account?" asked Katie Britt.

Scott Chimock seemed slightly

disappointed that a bank would lend money to purchase baseball cards only if they were a good investment, such as an original Mickey Mantle.

Before beginning the banking program, only four fourth-graders had ever been in a bank, although several had visited the MAC machines with their parents, Casagrande said. Most of them couldn't believe that the bank actually has a big locked room where they keep the money under guard (the vault).

Casagrande hopes to organize a class field trip to a local bank.

"By choosing how they spend or save their money and having to live with the consequences, the students are acquiring life skills," Casagrande said.

"The fourth-grade banking program is a good lesson in economics and life skills for the students," said principal Bob Kunkle. "We all need a better understanding of this."

Although any fourth-grader may use the bank, Casagrande said that one or two students don't have accounts, preferring to hold on to their money themselves. "They don't trust the system."



And the pub came a tumblin' down

The former Hearthstone Pub in the center of Dallas was torn down Monday, October 19. Cleanup continued this week. Workers from Brdaric Excavating knocked the building down in about two hours. The building had been cited as a fire and safety hazard by fire and police officials.

(Post photo/Ron Bartizek)

Hunting dates to remember

With the fall hunting seasons having begun with archery on Saturday, October 3, hunters should be aware of these important dates for hunting seasons and license application deadlines.

Refer to the Pennsylvania game law booklet that comes with hunting licenses for further information on special hunting areas, regulations and daily or season limits.

Hunting seasons:

- October 3-30: Fall archery season for any deer.
- October 10-17: Canada goose season, daily limit 1.
- October 10-24: Duck season for northern Pennsylvania.
- October 16-January 30: Atlantic brant, snow geese, blue geese.
- October 17-31: Squirrel and ruffed grouse season.
- October 19-December 18: Canada goose season, daily limit 2.
- October 31-November 28: Cottontail rabbit, bobwhite quail and pheasant seasons.
- October 31-November 14: Turkey season (Males and females.)
- November 23-25: Bear season.
- November 30-December 12: Buck season, limit 1.
- December 14-16: Antlerless ("doe") season.
- December 26-January 9: Flintlock muzzleloader and winter archery season: any deer.

License information:

- October 19: Antlerless deer licenses are available by mail at the county treasurer's office to non-residents.
- October 26: Bonus tags or combination licenses are available by mail at the county treasurer's office in counties that have not used up their allocation of antlerless licenses.
- November 10: Any unused antlerless licenses, bonus tags or combination licenses are available over-the-counter at county treasurer's office.

Piatt participates in Bulgarian seminar

Lee S. Piatt, a partner in the law firm of Rosenn, Jenkins & Greenwald, Wilkes-Barre, recently returned from Bulgaria where he was a principal speaker in a seminar entitled "Rebuilding Law and Life on a Firm Foundation."

The two day seminar was held at The Palace of Culture in Sofia, Bulgaria's capital city consisting of 1.1 million people. The seminar was sponsored by the Christian Legal Society, a professional association consisting of approximately 4,500 lawyers, judges and law students, of which Piatt is a member.

Piatt is co-chairman of Rosenn, Jenkins & Greenwald's Business and Finance Department. He is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and the University of Pennsylvania Law School. He is a member of the American, Pennsylvania and Luzerne County Bar Associations.

He resides in Dallas, with his wife, Meryth, and their children, Alyson and Caleb.

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