

The Dallas Post

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35 Cents

Inside Story



Valentine phantom

strikes again. For the third consecutive year, business owners in Dallas arrived to find pink Valentines attached to their front doors. The identity of the good-hearted bandit remains unknown.

Lehman asked to take over Walnut Woods Road. Page 12.

New cartoon by 12-year-old Larry Morris. Page 5.

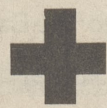
Citizens' council begins 5th year. Page 3.

SPORTS



Chris Lohin hits 500 point mark. Sports page.

Dave Puz passes 1,000 points in Dallas cage career. Sports page.



Red Cross Blood drive

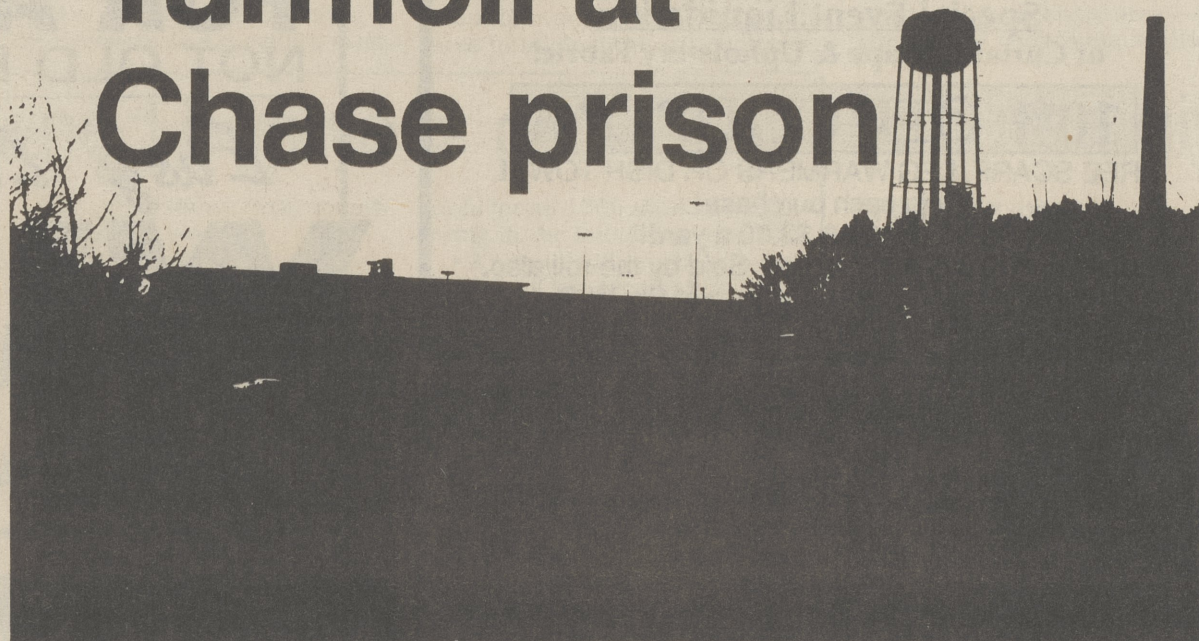
Mon., Feb. 22, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Meadows Nursing Center. Call 823-7164 for appointments.

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Turmoil at Chase prison



WORRISOME PRESENCE - The State Correctional Institution at Dallas, known locally as Chase prison, sits high on a hill in Jackson Township. (Post photo/Grace R. Dove)

Neighbors are worried

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

In the light of five recent incidents - two fights involving groups of inmates between August and November, 1992, and three assaults on guards within three weeks - at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCID) in Jackson Township, residents living within a mile of the facility have voiced concern about conditions at the prison.

All agree with the president of the corrections officers' union, George Vodzak, that the prison is overcrowded and there aren't enough guards. The prison's neighbors recall the 1989 riot at the overcrowded, understaffed state prison at Camp Hill, PA, in which several inmates became rowdy, took over a cell block, opened the cells, took hostages and burned several prison buildings before the outbreak was quelled.

"It's a little scary, I'm worried that a small situation could escalate into something bigger, like the Camp Hill incident," said Bonnie Dombroski. "One guard on duty alone is dangerous. Fortunately in the February 1 assault, the inmates didn't leave their cells after another inmate unlocked them."

Dombroski said that some people living near the prison aren't even aware of the prison's overcrowded conditions.

Concerned that the public heard conflicting reports about the February 1 and 3 assaults on guards, Debbie Murphy said, "I feel that something's wrong somewhere for two incidents to happen in two days. I feel that the overcrowded conditions could give the prisoners ideas to do other things."

"Naturally everyone is concerned. Things that happen at the prison affect the entire Back Mountain, not just the residents of Jackson Township," said Walter Zincavage.

He added that since the SCID Citizens Adv-

sory Committee was formed, the prison has installed better lighting, a double fence after several escapes, more powerful sirens and the water line to Ceastown Dam in response to the committee's input.

Prior to installation of the second fence, three inmates escaped in separate incidents in 1982. Each was captured without incident.

"Although the previous superintendents were good to work with, I don't believe that we're getting the same cooperation today," Zincavage continued. "The administration's present attitude seems to be 'lay off us, Don't touch us.' They don't seem to understand that we're not trying to tell them how to run their prison. We're simply concerned with public safety, so that the local residents don't have to be afraid."

Pat Rusiloski, SCID Citizens' Advisory Council president said that her group had been told that some inmates must sleep in the dayroom until cells for them become available.

Also concerned with the overcrowded conditions and apparent need for guards, Rusiloski has spoken to State Senator Charles Lemmond about hiring more corrections officers.

Lisa Baker of Senator Charles Lemmond's office said that Lemmond plans to meet with the SCID Citizens' Advisory Committee shortly to discuss their concerns and see what he can do to help. One topic will be whether the 24 percent increase in corrections expenditures in the governor's proposed budget can help to fund additional guards, Ms. Baker said.

Lemmond plans to work with Representatives Stanley Jarolin, George Hasay and Phyllis Mundy on finding solutions to the problems.

"I understand why Governor Casey is trying to control spending and not hiring new staff," Ms. Mundy said. "But I also understand the concerns of the local residents about public safety."

Guards want added staff

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Prison guards at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCID) know they are at risk the minute they walk through the main gate, their only protection a two-way radio and a telephone, unless prison supervisors issue them riot gear or special weapons for crowd control.

Often they must cover a cell block alone, in a facility described by their union as overcrowded and understaffed.

Corrections officer George Vodzak, president of AFSCME Local 2496, the union represent-

ing 360 non-commissioned corrections officers at the prison, described the working conditions faced by the prison guards.

"Over the past several years, we have noticed a younger, more aggressive, tougher type of short-term inmate coming into the corrections system," Vodzak said. Describing them as "jitterbugs," Vodzak said that these inmates have short tempers and bad attitudes, which tend to cause problems once the men are incarcerated.

Other inmates on medication can become agitated and cause

See GUARDS, pg 12

Assaults on guards common

Dial "5" on the phone for help. Other than using their two-way radios, this is the only defense that corrections officers at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCID) normally have.

According to AFSCME Local 2496 president George Vodzak, the prison records between two and 11 assaults on guards each month. Statewide, 11 percent of prison guards were assaulted in 1992.

Most inmates are disciplined by serving time in the restricted housing units, where they are locked in their cells 23 hours a day.

Since late in the summer of 1992, five incidents have been called to the public's attention:

Summer, 1992: Three inmates, Nelson Slaughter, Leroy Reddick and Victor Ramirez, were charged with failure to disperse after they reportedly attempted to incite between 600 and 700 other inmates to a fight in the dining hall. They were acquitted in a jury trial February 6 before Judge Gifford Cappellini, Sr.

November, 1992: A racially-motivated argument between two inmates on B-block escalated into a brawl, resulting in 16 inmates being transferred to other facilities.

Late January, 1993: A corrections officer was reportedly assaulted. No further information on this incident is available.

Feb. 1, 1993: Convicted murderer Tracey Marrero, awaiting transfer to restricted housing, where inmates are locked in their cells 23 hours a day, was reportedly charged with attempted murder after assaulting Corrections Officer Howard Rice in G-Block, breaking 14 bones in Rice's face and fracturing his skull. Marrero used a cake of prison-made industrial soap, reportedly as hard as a block of wood, in the initial assault, which may have lasted as long as 20 minutes. After repeatedly beating Rice's head against a wall, Marrero removed his radio, gained access to the guard control room and began to unlock the cells.

Rice was alone on G-block at the time; a second guard was at lunch and a third had been reassigned to cover another post.

Rice is still a patient at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, listed in fair condition, according to a hospital spokesman.

Feb. 3, 1993: Corrections officers Dan Long and Philip Pascoe were reportedly injured in an assault by an inmate on D-block. They were treated at Geisinger-Wyoming Valley Hospital, released and sent home from work.

February 4, 1993: AFSCME met with prison management officials to institute tighter security procedures for moving inmates through the jail and for block officers.

Brian Kelly will headline sports show



BRIAN KELLY

Brian Kelly, Lake-Lehman star soccer player and recently named number 1 soccer player in America by Parade Magazine will be guest sports celebrity at The Back Mountain Kiwanis Club Sports, Non-Sports and Memorabilia Show to be held at the Dallas Middle School on February 20, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., located on Hildebrandt Road, Dallas.

Brian a senior at Lake-Lehman High School has received a scholarship from Duke University in Durham, N.C. and will be majoring in pre-medicine. Brian will appear at the show between the hours of 1 and 3 p.m. to sign autographs.

There will be photo copies of The Parade Magazine article for Brian to autograph with donations requested for The Eddie Turchin Fund, a classmate of Brian's suffering from a serious illness.

Along with Brian will be College Misericordia Mascot, the Cougar and the college baseball team coached by Charles Etkins. The Dallas Booster Club will be donating a batting cage which the baseball team will man and give assistance to anyone wanting pointers on their game. Food will be served by mem-

bers of College Misericordia Circle K Club, which is sponsored by Back Mountain Kiwanis, Art Parks, advisor.

There still are a few good spaces left for any vendor wishing one. You can obtain your space by calling Art Parks at 675-0755.

There will be plenty of free parking for the public and special early parking for vendors and their assistants.

Grotto to open boat fuel station

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

If everything goes as planned, boaters at Harveys Lake will soon have a new convenience - the lake's first boat fuel-up station, scheduled to be open seven days a week.

According to Armand Mascioli, general manager and co-owner of Grotto Pizza, the fuel-up station, expected to cost at least \$25,000, will be located on shore at the marina, at the back of the restaurant's parking lot.

The gas will be premium grade unleaded (89 octane), suitable for most boats, and priced a few cents per gallon higher than local gas

stations. "Until now, boaters have had to fill their boats' tanks by hand from cans carried in their cars, a practice which can cause spills no matter how careful they are, especially when the water is choppy," Mascioli said.

Transporting the gas to the lake by car also is dangerous: on a hot summer day, the temperature in a car's trunk can go well over 100°, which could cause fumes from gasoline cans to catch fire in case of an accident, Mascioli said.

"Our new facility will reduce these dangers by allowing boaters to pump gas directly into their boats' tanks," he added.

Construction on the fuel-up will

begin as soon as permits from the Department of Environmental Resources and the Pennsylvania State Police fire marshal have been approved. Harveys Lake Borough approved the plan at its December meeting.

Located on the lake shore, the state-of-the-art equipment will include a diked steel tank (a tank inside of another tank), and gas pump. Mascioli hopes to have the equipment in place and ready to open by early April. The facility will be open every day for between six and eight hours, and will stay open from April through October, the lake's busiest boating and fishing time.

Lake-Lehman may gain state funding

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Although final figures aren't in yet, Lake-Lehman school district could benefit from an additional \$100 million, an increase of 3.4 percent, in education expenditures in Governor Casey's proposed state budget.

According to business manager Ray Bowersox, projected increases in the special education subsidy and special additional funding could bring in more state money for the district.

The additional funding, called

an equity subsidy, is part of a proposed assistance program for the state's poorer districts. It must be used only to fund educational programs.

Eligibility for this money is determined by dividing the district's total personal income, obtained from state income tax returns, and total market value by the number of students, then comparing these two figures with the other 501 school districts in the state, Bowersox said.

"Although I don't have any specific figures yet, I am fairly certain that Lake-Lehman will

meet the state's criteria to receive a share of the state funds," Bowersox said. "We expect to have more specific figures within the next few weeks."

A \$4 million state Basic Education Subsidy which the district received last year will not increase, Bowersox said.

Dallas School District probably won't receive any funding from the proposed new subsidy because its total market value and personal income are too high, according to business manager Charlotte Williams.