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FRED AND VIRGINIA SWANSON

He numbered Harveys Lake's poles

Editor's Note: This is the first part of a two-part series about the people and history of Harveys Lake. The second part will appear in next week's issue.

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

People unfamiliar with Harveys Lake addresses may wonder why people say that they live at Pole 12 or Pole 223.

Why not a box number? The pole numbering system was

devised by Fred Swanson, who served as chief of police of Lake Township for 30 years.

Back then, most of the lake lay in Lake Township, with the Dallas and Lehman township lines coming together at Sunset.

When he started in 1932, Harveys Lake didn't have an efficient locator system for homes.

People simply lived at Sunset, Alderson, Laketon, Point Breeze, Shawanese or Sandy Beach.

"I counted the utility poles along the road around the lake and had

Legends abound in lake's history, pg 14

them numbered in consecutive order, starting at Sunset and ending at Shawanese, so that I could find people's homes easier," he said.

Swanson calls himself the Andy Griffith of Harveys Lake and Lake Township, which resembled Mayberry RFD when he was po-

lice chief, though with more excitement.

He has pulled 17 bodies from the water, delivered two babies, doubled as fire marshal, constable, coroner and truant officer and worked 24 hours a day as the police chief responsible for the township's 34 square miles.

He also knew plumbing and electrical work.

"I was the only policeman in Pennsylvania who would stop, take off my gun belt and fix your washer," he joked.

Swanson was also the pallbearer at many funerals. Everyone looked up to the police chief in those days, he said.

He recalls many accidents and incidents at the lake, some of which, like the petrified horse and wagon, have become legends.

Many wagons, cars and trucks went through the thin spots in the ice during the winter when the frozen lake was used as a short-

See POLE NUMBERS, pg 14



Saving the day

Back Mountain Major League all-star April Naugle stabbed a soft liner during the team's second round win over Nanticoke last

Saturday. Second baseman Melissa DeCesaris and right fielder Courtney Bouthot ran to back up. More photos, story on page 9.

POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Two nabbed in vandalism spree

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Editor

Dallas Borough police have arrested two persons believed to have caused over \$3,000 in vandalism damage to two area properties.

Peter Thomas Palmentere, 21, of 119 Lehman Avenue in Dallas, and a 17-year-old male juvenile are both in custody awaiting hearings. They are charged with multiple violations for breaking into Slocum Insurance and the Daddow-Isaacs American Legion hall, and ransacking the buildings.

Police said the insurance office was entered in the early morning hours of July 6, after the outside electrical meter had been disconnected to disable an alarm system. A window at the rear of the building was smashed to gain entrance. Once inside, police said the two caused \$2,200 in damage by overturning file cabinets, breaking furniture and spraying fire extinguishers throughout the building.

The Legion building was entered in a similar manner at about 4 a.m. July 8, again after the

electric meter had been disconnected. Entry was gained by breaking the window in a rear door. The bar area was ransacked, bottles smashed and beer and liquor poured over the counter and floor.

About \$15 in quarters and six \$1 bills were taken from behind the counter, along with some beer and liquor, and the cash register was forced open. Damage was estimated at \$1,500.

Dallas Borough police chief Jack Fowler credited officer Russell Devens with quickly solving the crimes. "He just stayed with the case until it was solved," Fowler said. Devens is the investigating officer in the Legion incident, while patrolman Bill Norris investigated the Slocum break-in.

Palmentere has been charged with burglary, criminal trespass, criminal mischief, theft by unlawful taking and receiving stolen goods. He is being held in the Luzerne County jail.

The juvenile faces similar charges, and is in custody at the juvenile detention center.

Both face double counts, one set for each incident.

Railbeds may become place to hike, bike, ski

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Railroads, once the lifeline of the Back Mountain, may soon regain their importance in the area as part of a unique system of scenic hiking and bicycling trails.

A two-mile stretch of abandoned track between Main Street, Luzerne, and Carverton Road in Kingston Township has been selected by the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association as the first leg of a possible Rails to Trails system.

Rails to Trails is a statewide and nationwide organization dedicated to restoring abandoned railroad grades for use as hiking, biking and cross country ski trails.

Because they have gentle inclines and wide paths, the railroad grades, built to last practically forever, make ideal trails.

"We have been walking the trail and have applied for state and federal grants to develop design plans," said association president Judy Rimple. "Wildcat Falls behind the Dallas Area Municipal Authority (DAMA) is simply beautiful as it runs across the trail and down the side of Bunker Hill."

Because some private properties about the rail beds, the association is exploring easements and rights-of-way rather than outright purchase of the land, Rimple said. The original railroad rights-of-way were purchased by a realtor and sold to property owners after the railroads went out of business.

Trail users try to be good neighbors, producing no noise or litter, said Rob Lewis, the association's recording secretary.

Long-term plans call for a 47-mile trail network stretching from Luzerne to Dushore, much of it requiring no special easements. "A lot of the proposed trail goes through state gamelands and is already being used for recreation," said Lewis.

"Many man-hours went into the construction of the railroads. They're an untapped resource waiting to be rediscovered."

Joel Eneboe
Bike shop owner, "serious" rider

"It's a great idea, a good way to expose people to the beauty of the area," said Joel Eneboe, owner of Dallas Bike Works. "The gentle grades make easy riding, especially for the recreational cyclist."

During his ten years of "serious" bike riding, Joel has ridden sections of the Rails to Trails system and likes it.

"Many man-hours went into the construction of the railroads," he said. "They're an untapped resource waiting to be rediscovered."

Rimple said that many area conservation and outdoor recreation groups, including the Back Mountain Land Trust, the Susquehanna Trailers, the Back Mountain Trailers and the Wyoming Valley Bicycle Club, have become interested in a scenic trail in the area.

The 30-member Anthracite Scenic Trails Association plans to work with Luzerne Borough, interested in the trail as part of its Main Street revitalization project and plans a fall cleanup of the section of the railroad grade between Luzerne Borough and DAMA.

The group meets the third Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Kingston Township building. Memberships are \$15 for individuals and \$25 for families.

For more information on the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association and Rails to Trails, call Judy Rimple at 675-9016.



Proposed Luzerne to Trucksville trail

Auction met goal

Quilt, painting brought big bids

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Editor

Judy Dickson couldn't attend the 48th annual Back Mountain Memorial Library auction Saturday night, but she bought her special treasure anyway.

"I sent a friend with a check and told her not to come home without the quilt," Dickson said Monday. So, after spirited bidding, the friend wrote a check for \$950 and the quilt, made by third graders at Dallas Elementary School, was captured. Dickson's daughter, Jonelle, helped make the quilt, supplying the apple square which represented September.

Dickson couldn't do her own bidding because she was watch-

ing Jonelle's twin brother play in an all-star game at the time the quilt went over the block.

The \$950 price didn't faze her in the least. "I expected \$1,000 to \$1,500," she said. "I know how those third-grade parents are. It's a beautiful piece of memorabilia to have."

Dickson and a host of other bidders overcame erratic weather to make the 48th annual Back Mountain Memorial Library auction a success, according to auction chairman Joe Kluger. "To me, it was a success whether we made the goal or not," he said. Some

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Red Cross blood drive Tues., July 19, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Irem Temple Country Club. Call 823-7161 for appointments.

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