

Lake-Lehman school board members found not guilty of Sunshine Law violation

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Four Lake-Lehman school board members were found not guilty November 17 of breaking the state's Sunshine Law, after a hearing before District Magistrate Paul J. Roberts.

The quartet had been accused by a colleague of breaking the law, which requires that all government meetings be publicized.

Board member Patricia Gold had accused Jeffrey Fritzen, Thomas Williams, Elizabeth Sichler and board president Joseph "Red" Jones of breaking the Sunshine Law after they didn't notify her or the public of an executive committee meeting to discuss salaries for school administrators.

In his decision, Roberts wrote that Gold "had failed to meet her burden of proof that a violation has occurred."

"This action wasn't taken lightly," said Gold, who doesn't plan to appeal Roberts' decision. "It was a tough decision to make and to stand by, but when people withhold information from me, I have no other choice."

Jones, Sichler, Fritzen and Williams contend they didn't break the Sunshine Law. The executive committee, appointed by Jones, simply met several times to find out what the administrators wanted for raises in salary, they said.

"It was simply a fact-finding mission," Sichler said.

"There was never any basis for the accusation," Williams and Fritzen said. "The president appointed the executive committee, but we weren't empowered to act on behalf of the board at all."

"The law requires that we meet with the administrators to get a salary proposal," Jones said. "They gave us a proposal, then we gave them a proposal - similar to the way a negotiating team works. This is the way we have always done it."

"I always try to act according to my conscience - they can't call me a dissident over this."

Patricia Gold
Lake-Lehman school board member who sued other members

Accusing Gold of causing turmoil on the board, Jones described her as "paranoid and disruptive from day one."

"If she doesn't get her way on issues, she thinks everyone is out to get her," he said.

"Not at all," Gold said. "Many issues which should be discussed aren't. I promised when I was elected to never withhold anything from the public. When people withhold things from me, I have only two choices: lay down and die or do something about it. I always try to act according to my conscience - they can't call me a dissident over this."

Gold said she lost her case because she was "a real novice at this. I had no idea of how to proceed. I didn't subpoena any witnesses and didn't enter any tapes of school board meetings as evidence. Consequently much of my evidence was dismissed as hearsay. It has been a real learning experience. I hope they don't do this again - but if they do, I'll know what to do in court."

All five board members said they want to "put the experience behind us" and get down to the business of serving their constituents.

"We have to work together," Sichler said.

"True cooperation is give and take, something we all must be willing to do," Gold said. "We must be effective while also being respectful to one another, without tearing one another apart."



TAP-DANCING PILGRIMS - Alyssa Askew and Caitlyn McGuire strutted their stuff at the Dallas Elementary School's annual second-grade Thanksgiving program November 18.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Five injured in 2-car crash on Lower Demunds Road

Dallas Township police are investigating a two-car broadside accident November 19, around 5 p.m., which resulted in five injuries.

Police said that a 1988 Chevrolet Corsica operated by Trucksville resident Nicholas Metzgar collided with the side of a 1994 Chevrolet van operated by Dallas Township resident Eileen Kates as Metzgar was attempting to turn left from Upper Demunds Road onto Campground Hill.

Kates' van had been traveling from Upper Demunds Road onto Campground Hill, police said.

A passenger in Metzgar's car, Tanja Britton, 14, of Tunkhannock, was taken by helicopter to Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, where she was released

November 20, according to a hospital spokesperson.

Kates' daughter, Anita Kates, 3, was also taken by helicopter to Geisinger in Danville, where she is listed in satisfactory condition, according to a hospital spokesperson.

Eileen Kates and her other two passengers, daughters Amanda, 9, and Jennifer, 4, were taken to Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, where they were treated and released, according to a hospital spokesperson.

Metzgar wasn't injured, police said.

Patrolman Robert Jolley, assisted by the Pennsylvania State Police accident reconstruction unit, are investigating the accident.

Bunker Hill 78-year-old fires on driver, resists arrest

According to Kingston Township police, Willis Moses, 78, of Bunker Hill was charged with resisting arrest, aggravated assault, simple assault and disorderly while being arrested for firing a handgun at William Bostock as Bostock was driving his car on Bunker Hill Road.

Police said that when patrolman Walter Davis and sergeant Michael Moravec appeared at Moses' home to arrest him for the handgun incident, Moses

fought the officers while they were attempting to handcuff him and kicked Moravec in the groin.

Police also charged Moses with simple assault, aggravated assault, reckless endangerment, making terroristic threats and reckless endangerment for shooting at Bostock, according to the report.

Moses will have a preliminary hearing on all charges before District Magistrate James Tupper December 12.

Holiday

(continued from page 1)

the River." "Turkey Beware" and "Old Tom Turkey, followed by a cello solo by Andrew VanLoon.

The second-graders' talents extended to the production of the program, to which they contributed illustrations.

After the program they showed off their talents for eating munchies at a small party provided by class parents.

The Thanksgiving program was part of the school's observance of National Education Week.

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Published Wednesdays
675-5211
FAX: 675-3650

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612
Shipping Address: 45 Main Road, Dallas PA 18612
Office hours: Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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The Dallas Post (USPS 147-720)

Published weekly by Bartsen Media, Inc. \$18 per year in Luzerne and Wyoming counties (PA); \$20 elsewhere in PA, NY or NJ; \$22 all other states. Second-class postage paid at Dallas PA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas PA 18612.

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