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How a system to protect children failed

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

The system designed to protect schoolchildren from criminals didn't prevent Dean Lee Werts, arrested November 19 for multiple counts of child molestation, from getting jobs driving a school bus.

Everyone who began working with children after January 1, 1986, has been required by law to pass a background check of their

criminal convictions for the past five years.

Although Werts had pled guilty to furnishing liquor to minors in August, 1986, the conviction apparently never showed up on background checks done in 1986 and 1993.

The background check, called an Act 34 clearance, lists all of a person's criminal convictions within the past five years and is normally done only when a person is hired.

How Act 34 is supposed to work and Werts case timeline on page 12

Under Act 34, persons convicted of a specific list of crimes may not teach, drive school buses or work with children.

School bus drivers must also pass physical, written and hands-on tests on general knowledge and safe school bus operation, pass a training course and have a clean

driving record.

"I require everything that the state does, nothing more," said Leon Emanuel, owner of the bus line which transports Dallas students.

Jacqueline Nielsen, owner of the bus line which contracts to Wilkes-Barre Area, also requires

what the state mandates.

In addition, she checks drivers' licenses every year for moving violations.

"The district is notified of any drivers' arrests," she said.

Both bus owners said they expect to begin random drug and alcohol tests on drivers next year.

School districts rely on their transportation contractors to be sure drivers are qualified, then submit the drivers' names to the school board for approval.

"The contractor hires the drivers and sends me the credentials," said Dallas transportation director Susan Farr. "I keep copies of their Act 34 clearances on file here. We don't update them unless we suspect there might be a problem somewhere. We assume that everything is in order. We rely on the contractor and the credentials from the Pennsylvania State Police."

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Marching in the big parade

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Back Mountain residents watching the Tournament of Roses Parade and the Rose Bowl will see a familiar face in the Penn State band's brass section - Dallas Township resident Valerie Prothero.

The daughter of Jack and Carol Prothero, Valerie is a sophomore chemical engineering student at Penn State's main campus and has played mellophone with the PSU marching band for two years.

"A mellophone resembles an oversize trumpet and sounds like a French horn," she said.

Appearing on nationwide television while marching in the world-famous Tournament of Roses Parade and performing before millions of viewers at the



A PENN STATE FAMILY - Valerie Prothero, flanked by parents Carol and Jack, takes a break from playing mellophone with Penn State's marching band.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACK PROTHERO

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1994 in review

Browsing through a year of *The Post's* files

The year just past was filled with its share of drama, success, pain and silliness.

Perhaps the year's biggest story was the record-setting winter, which set new marks for cold temperatures, snowfall and property damage.

Major crimes against persons were rare, although bold burglars made off with a considerable amount of booty from several homes.

News that might be considered small made the pages also, including a couple of Eagle Scouts, a church's 150th anniversary and wild-animals' encounters with people and their property.

This review contains highlights of each week's articles in *The Dallas Post*.

Jan. 5: James Tupper was sworn in Jan. 3 as district magistrate, replacing Earl Gregory, who had retired at the end of his term. Tupper also moved the office from Franklin Street in Shavertown to the Village Center on Gerald Street in Dallas Borough.

Old Man Winter wasted no time starting 1994, dumping 2 to 3 inches of snow per hour in the year's first major storm. Fire apparatus were hampered in attempts to get through to a fire at Lake Silkworth.

Jan. 12: Marianne Baseski called for equal treatment among boys' and girls' sports at Dallas High School, suggesting an admission

fee be charged for girls' events.

Six employees of the Meadows complex in Dallas were honored for giving one to six gallons of blood in Red Cross blood drives.

Residents of Pioneer Avenue, complained that speeding traffic along the road was both a nuisance and a danger. "You're taking your life into your hands just going out to your mailbox," said Dwight Davis. Police said they had tried to slow things down, without success.

Jan. 19: Four small water companies asked the state for rate increases of 13 to 68 percent.

Newly-elected Lake-Lehman school director Pat Gold asked fellow board member Karen Whipple to resign because she was late filing a financial statement. Whipple didn't step down.

The year's third major snow storm (and there were more to come) hit the Back Mountain Monday, dropping about 20 inches of snow on top of the 20 inches already on the ground. With 11 days to go, it was already the snowiest January ever.

Jan. 26: Adding insult to injury, temperatures hit all-time record lows. Several Back Mountain residents recorded temperatures of -25°. Combined with huge snowfalls, the temperatures raised havoc with cable television and ice dams on countless roofs caused water leaks in dozens of

See 1994 REVIEW, pg 6

Borough thanks those who helped in 1994

By JACK HILSHER
Post Correspondent

At the last Dallas Borough Council meeting for the year on December 20, borough manager Milton Lutsey took a look back and acknowledged those who had

donated their time and talents to the borough during the year. Lutsey said,

"These are the ones who, in my phrase, 'Adopted a Spot' in Dallas Borough, and every single one

See BOROUGH, pg 2

HARVEYS LAKE BOROUGH BUDGET

Item	1994	1995	Change
Total budget	\$593,575	\$599,875	1.1%
Property tax income	\$264,700	\$266,000	0.5%
Number of taxables*	2,588	2,590	2
Millage rate	21.5	21.5	---
Average cost*	\$102	\$102	---

*Based on estimates only. Tax collector was unable to provide accurate figures.

Taxes steady in 1995 Harveys Lake budget

At a special meeting December 27, the council passed its \$599,875 budget for 1995. The tax rate will remain at 21.5 mills for the fourteenth straight year.

Although the budget shows a \$34,425 deficit, it will end 1994 with a \$51,438 surplus which council members said will more than cover the projected deficit.

"We may end up 1995 with about \$15,000," Kehler said.

The extra money came from projects which have been funded but haven't been completed yet, notably drainage work and resur-

facing on Maple, Baird and Green streets.

"We saved about \$30,000 by downsizing the road department," Kehler said. "We cut the staff from four full-time employees to two full-timers and one part-timer, who have done the same amount of work as was done before. We're also doing more of our own work instead of contracting it out."

The council also plans to apply for state grants for a new truck for the road department, expected to cost approximately \$15,000, and for dredging work at the Outlet.

Zoning rules will change

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

The Harveys Lake Borough council voted at its December 20 meeting to advertise three ordinance amendments which it will act on at its next meeting.

The first, an amendment to the zoning ordinance, which will also be submitted to the Luzerne County planning commission and the Harveys Lake planning commission, sets a 20-foot side setback for new docks.

Under this amendment, owners of 50-foot wide lakefront properties will be able to build new docks which are only 10 feet wide, taking the 20-foot setback on each side into account.

It replaces a council attempt at a special meeting September 23 to change the zoning ordinance by declaring invalid a section dealing with dock side setbacks, which would have been replaced by a curative amendment within 180 days.

David Abod had called and chaired the September meeting, at which Tom Kehler, Francis Kopko, Ed Kelly and George Andrews voted for the resolution declaring the section of the zoning ordinance invalid. Abod had abstained from voting because he said he had property which would be affected by the change in the ordinance.

See ZONING, pg 2



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

DUCK HOUSE DEDICATION - Ray DeArmitt, left, and Stanley Mickus, right, show off the small custom duck house DeArmitt built for a small flock of mallards who have taken up residence near ENCON on Lower Demunds Road. Complete with front stoop and company sign, the house is lined with wheat straw.

Ducks get custom home

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

A scrapped packing crate and several concerned people have made a difference in the life of four wild ducks who recently set up housekeeping on a stretch of Trout Brook near ENCON.

After neighbor Stanley Mickus began feeding the mallard family - two males and two females - they became break time entertainment for ENCON employees, who kept an eye on the little quackers from the loading dock and company lunch room.

According to company spokesperson Rosemarie Ciccarelli, Hanford Eckman, ENCON's chair-

man of the board, became concerned that the ducks wouldn't make it through the winter after noticing that they hadn't gone south, even after Mickus had stopped feeding them.

"Mr. Eckman decided we should build them a little house for the winter," Ciccarelli said. "Ray DeArmitt designed and built it."

It took DeArmitt, who often helps his son, Ray, Jr., in his carpentry work, only a day to design and build a snug little home from an old shipping crate and some aluminized sheet metal in the company workshop.

"I just measured the crate, took

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Office closed Jan. 2

So that our employees may enjoy the New Year's holiday, the office of *The Dallas Post* will be closed all day Mon., January 2.

All news and advertising material for the Jan. 4 issue should be in by 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 30.

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