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## Prisoners add \$23,000 to Jackson coffers

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

Figures may never lie, but they can be very inaccurate.

The inmates of the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCID) may not be considered Jackson Township residents, but their presence at the facility has unwittingly helped the township's budget.

According to the 1990 census, the township has 5,336 residents, including SCID's 2,765 inmates, who don't pay taxes or contribute in any way to the township, but are considered by the Pennsylvania State Data Center and the U.S. Census Bureau to be residents.

The state uses these figures to compute the amount of money for road work (the Liquid Fuels Tax) and a special subsidy from the State Police Fines and Penalties Account which each municipality receives each year.

Last year Jackson Township received \$4714.78 from the police fines and penalties account and \$78,435.20 in Liquid Fuels money, which breaks down to \$1,456.72 for each mile of township-owned roads and \$8.37 for every resident - including the inmates. That would mean the 2,765 inmates add \$23,143.05

### Government funds based on census give a bonus to the town

to the town's road account coffers.

"I don't understand how they figure that," said Gerald Kerprich, director for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's Bureau of Municipal Services. "I'm not sure what the census uses for residency requirements."

The census figures for the township were also recently used in a state-funded

feasibility study to consolidate area police forces, which could affect the consultant's recommendations for the number of officers needed.

The 1990 census figures first caused headaches for township officials in late 1993, when the Department of Environmental Resources attempted to force the township to immediately begin recycling after noting the township's population exceeded 5,000 residents.

At that time Pennsylvania State Data Center director Mike Behney said the fig-

ure painted a statistically and demographically correct picture of the township.

"It doesn't matter if they all live in one building," he had said. "We don't care if they're all in one place standing on each other's heads - it still works out correctly."

As long as a person lives in a municipality for more than six months of the year, whether or not they pay taxes, they're considered residents for demographic purposes.

Ironically, the Census Bureau recently contacted Jackson Township asked them to appoint a municipal census liaison person, to produce more accurate figures in the next census.

## Plowing up a storm

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

While most Back Mountain residents were still snuggled in their warm beds early Saturday morning, Franklin Township road foreman Art Owen was out warming up his snow plow.

He hadn't slept much Friday night - he'd kept waking up and looking out his window to see how bad the February 4 snowstorm was.

"I know I have to get going before the roads get too bad," he said. "We can't simply wait until the storm stops. People work all three shifts and need to get out."

Because the township doesn't have police to notify the road crew when the roads are getting slippery, it's Owen's responsibility to keep an eye on conditions.

It's a slow job clearing the township's 13 miles of roads, he said. Although it doesn't look like a lot, those 13 miles are part of a checkerboard of secondary roads, some maintained by Luzerne County, some by the state and the rest by the township.

"It's funny how everything is

laid out," he said. "It looks kind of like a crazy quilt."

An equipment operator for 30 years, Owen knows nearly every foot of the township's roads, which he has had plenty of time to learn while working on them during the dry weather.

His son, Art, Jr., also an equipment operator, is the other half of the township plow crew.

In a normal storm it takes both men about two hours just to open all the roads, without finishing the intersections or widening the plowed areas.

"If we start around 5 a.m., we can have the roads passable by 7 for the school busses and morning commuters," he said.

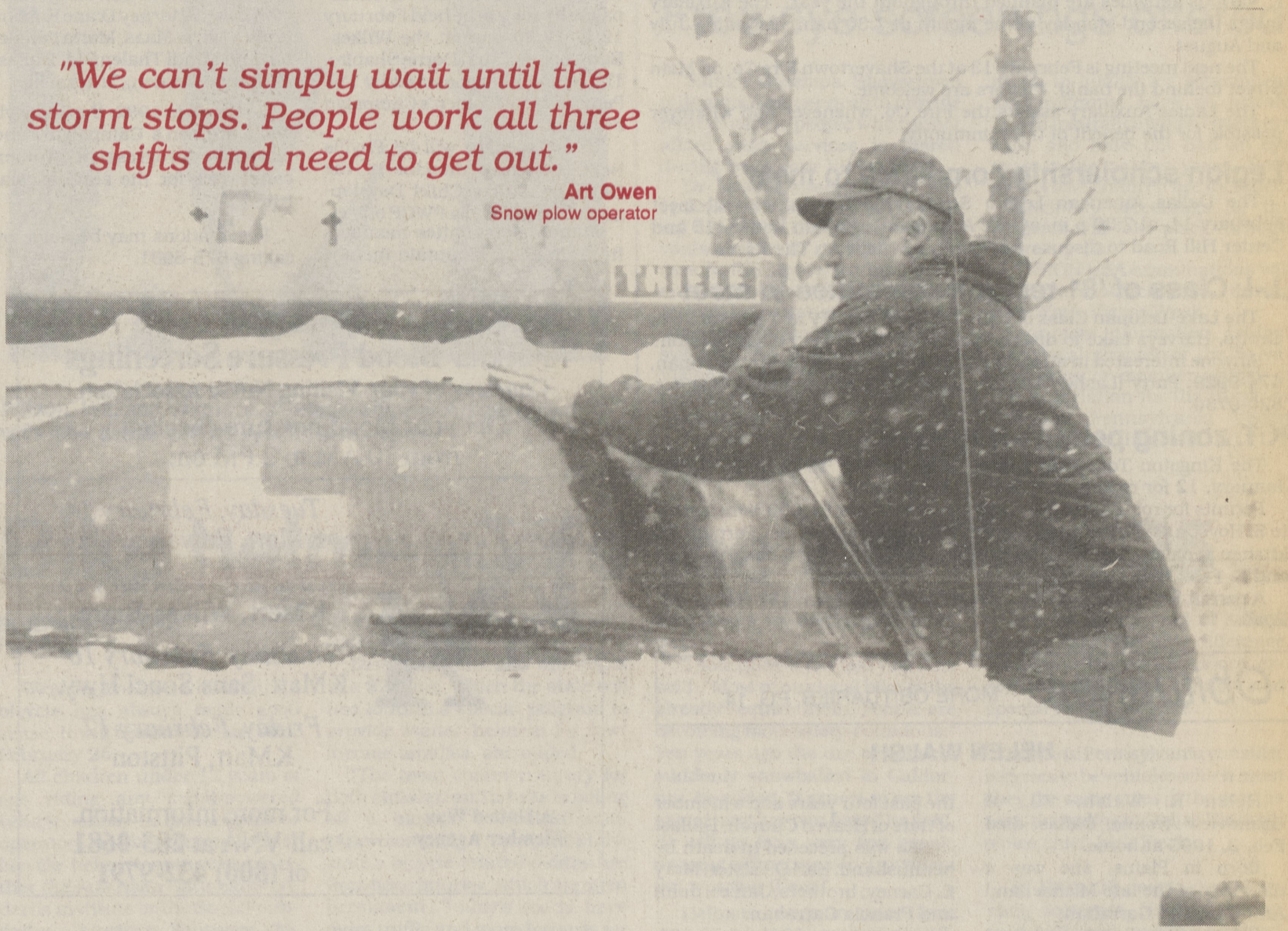
As he deftly guided the township's Ford through Saturday's swirling snow, Owen shared some secrets and observations.

"This stuff will give us trouble if it blows and starts to drift," he said. "I'd rather see eight inches of snow without wind than four inches with a good wind. We have many open areas which will drift shut again. At least we probably

See PLOWING, pg 16

"We can't simply wait until the storm stops. People work all three shifts and need to get out."

Art Owen  
Snow plow operator



A CLEAR VIEW - Franklin Township road foreman Art Owen takes a quick break to clear accumulated snow and ice from his

plow truck's windshield during Saturday's storm. Owen and other area road crews spent their weekend clearing the roads.

## Models racers hit the track in Sweet Valley

By JACK HILSHER  
Post Correspondent

Hey, all you race fans! How'd ya like to drive one for real? You can, you know...at Sweet Valley, of all places. And you won't have to worry about crack-ups; if one occurs you won't even be in the car!

We're talking model car racing of course, but the thrills are all there, same as the real McCoy. No, not radio control, Sweet Valley tracks are all indoors and feature neat little replicas called "slot cars." Slots have a little fin which rides in a slot in the track and use two brass brushes to pick up a current of 12-volts which runs, tiny high-performance electric motors.

Slots are faster than radio controlled cars (some have been clocked at 70 MPH!) are more fiercely competitive and nowhere near as expensive. They came to Sweet Valley's Main Road, about 4 miles on the left from its intersection with Rt. 118, last November. Yet already owner Doc Wolff needs to expand his "RACE-AR-AMA". It just isn't big enough; some race days, drivers and spectators are shoulder-to-shoulder.

A larger RACE-ARAMA is slated to open by April 1 and will have a new longer track, in addition to his present two, a new drag strip and lots more spectator room. The added space is a must because Wolff is holding talks with two national organizations - Keystone and Parma - which are inter-

### Slot car craze has up and down history, page 16

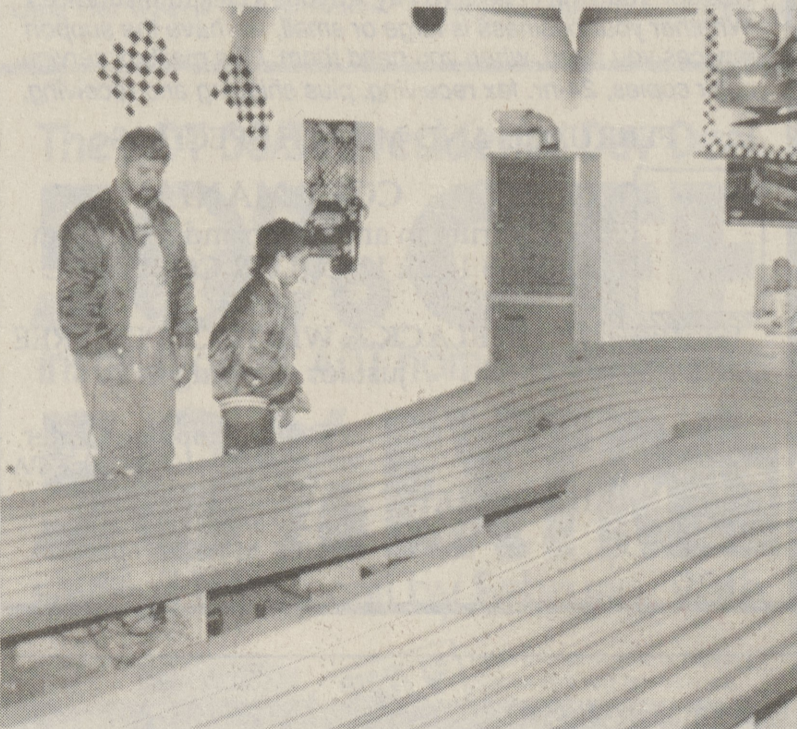
ested in staging their events at the Sweet Valley facility. This means, among other things, invitational tournaments which will bring in out-of-town racers.

Buddy Dan Williams, a Lake-Lehman graphic arts teacher, is helping Doc build the new track, and framing is already in place.

Doc Wolff, a native of Muhlenberg and an ex-army tank commander, says, "If you're wondering, my given name is Louie, but my Mom and Dad have called me 'Doc' every since I was born 42 years ago. I guess it stuck." Wolff is also a master carpenter, but he says, "I got tired of working for someone else and I decided to try something I have loved since I was 14 - model car racing - only this time for more than fun."

Eight-lane commercial tracks can cost up to \$50,000 so Wolff's trade made it a snap to build his own. At his facility you can bring your own car and take over a slot at one of the tracks for a modest \$1.50 per fifteen-minute segment of time. Or, you can rent a car and electric controller at twice that.

Sweet Valleyites and surrounding communities have welcomed the new addition as something sorely needed. "There was nothing like this around anywhere, nothing for kids to do but watch



TEST RUN - John Pimm, left, and son Jeff tried out the track at Doc's Race-A-Rama in Sweet Valley recently. The slot car emporium is so popular it is about to expand.

TV or play video games," says John Pimm of Harveys Lake, father of three boys. Pimm at first brought son Jeff, 9, just to see what was what. Jeff bubbled over, "It's great!" And his Dad said "I'll be back - only next time with the other two boys."

Dan Ryan, an ex-Marine and now owner of Dallas Cleaners, is equally enthusiastic. He's been back with sons Chuck, 9, and Peter, 8, more than once, and he says, "This is a better bargain than the movies, and much more fun. Not like those video-game arcades either...they take your money faster than Vegas."

Another regular, Gerald Hoover, a modular home designer from

Hunlock Creek, sheds some insight into why Doc's adult customers all seem to be in the same age bracket: 40-something. Hoover reflects, "Like me, most of these guys were hooked in their early teens on model racing when it was the hot sport. And some of them drove full-size cars later on. Then they grew up - wised up - and quit. It was that or be killed. So now they recapture all the old thrills with slots. Of course a few still race both. They're the stupid ones."

One ex-racer who wasn't stupid is Sweet Valley's Rick Post, owner of R&K Landscaping. He

See RACERS, pg 16

## 5 more towns named Dallas

If you have been following this series of articles you already know about the five Dallahs. Well, are you ready for this - there are five more. Yes, for a total of 10 cities, towns, boroughs, townships or villages with the name of Dallas in the United States.

Dallas, Alabama is 20 miles from Birmingham in the North Central part of the state. Dallas is at the edge of the Red Mountains and 15 miles from Lewis Smith Lake, one of the larger lakes in

Alabama. That Dallas compares somewhat with ours, near Red Rock Mountain and near Harveys Lake.

As with all the last three newly-discovered Dallahs, the population is under 600 and they are listed only in the Comprehensive World Atlas.

Dallas, Iowa is 25 miles S.E. of Des Moines, just south of Lake

See DALLAS, page 5

### 4-year starters

Tim Sayre, John Wood and Mike Stuart are finishing 4 years on the region's premier squard. Page 9

### Talent to spare

Gate of Heaven students strut their stuff. Page 3.

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