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## Source of fumes still a mystery

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**JACKSON TOWNSHIP** - Extensive tests have failed to turn up the source of fumes which sickened three Jackson Township employees and a firefighter April 12.

The fumes, described by assistant police chief Jerry Leedock as smelling similar to hot battery acid, were concentrated in the police department. A small amount also filtered into an upstairs office.

Leedock, who came on duty shortly before 7 a.m., said he didn't notice any odd odors at first.

"My throat and chest started burning and I was coughing," he said. "I went upstairs to borrow a cough drop, then went back to my desk."

While talking with cleaning lady Margaret Yascur, Leedock suddenly couldn't catch his breath and ran outside for some fresh air.

"I thought something had spilled on my clothes," he said.

A few minutes later Mrs. Yascur also came outside and told him her throat and chest were burning. Her face was bright red, Leedock said.

"I thought the furnace had backed up or the building was on fire," he said.

When he checked the police cruiser, he found the same smell and thought one of the officers had run over a skunk.

See FUMES, pg 14



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

**A FAMILY AFFAIR** - Jackson Township emergency management coordinator Sam Wilkes, left, and his brother, Jay, who is the ambulance chief, confer during a hazardous materials incident April 12 at the municipal building.

## Trial by fire for rookie chief

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**JACKSON TOWNSHIP** - Until his pager beeped, April 12 was just another school day for emergency management coordinator Sam Wilkes, who was studying in Wilkes University's library.

Three Jackson Township employees and a firefighter had accidentally inhaled some type of gas, possibly acidic, and the municipal building had been evacuated, the 911 dispatcher told him when he called in.

Wilkes, 22, a senior majoring in earth and environmental studies, was appointed emergency services coordinator in January.

"This was my first emergency, and, I hope, my last," he said. "One minute I was studying for class, the next I was running with my book bag on my back across the campus to my truck."

It only took him 20 minutes to drive to the scene.

*"I didn't know where in the building it had happened or how serious the situation was. All I knew was that lots could happen."*

Sam Wilkes

Jackson Twp. emergency management coordinator

"I didn't know where in the building it had happened or how serious the situation was," he added. "All I knew was that lots could happen."

His first concern was to secure the building and protect the people.

Leaving traffic control to police chief Donald Jones and care of victims to ambulance personnel, Wilkes worked with Luzerne County Emer-

See CHIEF, pg 14

## Burglars hit 6 businesses

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**BACK MOUNTAIN** - Police in Lehman and Dallas townships and Dallas Borough are investigating five burglaries and one attempted break-in within two days of one another.

The same method of entry - a crowbar - was used in all six incidents, which may be related, according to Dallas Township police chief Carl Miers.

In Dallas Township, patrolman Jeff Dennis is investigating three burglaries, reported April 13 at the Ziemba Insurance building, which also houses Jenkins Insurance and Lakeside Construction, on Route 415.

Burglars forced their way into the building, then into each locked office, police said. Jenkins Insurance reported \$134 in cash missing, while the other two businesses reported damage to doors, locks and doorjambes, police said.

An attempted break-in at Hartman Insurance and a burglary at Mary Taylor's Hair Care Center, both on Memorial Highway in Dallas Borough, were reported April 13, police said.

A Mary Taylor's employee told police someone broke in through a rear door sometime between 9 p.m. April 12 and 8:45 a.m. April 13.

Change was removed from a vending machine which had been pried open and \$39 was removed from a cash drawer at the front counter, police said.

Patrolman Russ Devens, assisted by Trooper O'Donnell of the Pennsylvania State Police Research and Identification Unit, are investigating the case.

Patrolman Sev Newberry is investigating a theft at the new Bryant's RV Showcase on Route 415 in Lehman Township, reported April 14 at 9:30 a.m. No further information was available at press time.

## Lehman roads get new speed limits

Church Road resident's pleas lead to road's first limit at 25 mph

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**LEHMAN TOWNSHIP** - Drivers using Church Road between Old Route 115 and Jackson Road will have to go slower after this week, when the speed limit becomes 25 mph.

Previously the road didn't have a speed limit.

Church Road resident Susan Baber gave the supervisors a petition requesting that the road be posted at 25 mph, signed by four of the road's ten families, at the regular April 17 meeting.

"We're here to beg and plead with you to do something about the speeders before we become a TV news story with a child being hit and killed by a car," she said. "The road is used as a shortcut, mainly by students late for class. They fly down the paved section and lose control when they hit the gravel area, or vice versa."

She added that last winter a pickup truck trying to pass a stopped school bus slammed into a snowbank. Her daughter was boarding that bus, she said. A police officer investigating the pickup truck accident was nearly run over by a second car, she added.

"There have been a lot of near misses on Church Road," said

supervisor David Sutton. "We'll post our end of it, but you'll have to ask Jackson Township to also post its end."

The speed limit signs will go up this week, according to road supervisor Doug Ide, who added the township will now be able to set up speed traps there.

The supervisors added the speed limit on Church Road and several other roads to the traffic ordinance: 25 mph on sections of Trojan, Sayre and Briar Crest roads; 35 mph on sections of Meeker, Jackson and Fedor roads. Only Meeker and Jackson roads had previous posted speed limits, Ide said.

The supervisors voted to give a price quote for repairs to three pave cuts and an excavated road berm at Oak Hill to National Utilities service manager Fred Bechetti, who requested them.

"One isn't really a pave cut," Ide quipped. "It's more like a pave bomb crater."

Ide said the road crew won't begin work until "we get the money up front" from National Utilities. "At least we know it will be done right," he added.

The supervisors also voted to advertise the first reading May 15

See SPEED, pg 5

## Three contend for supervisor seat

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP** - One seat on the board of supervisors is up for grabs and three candidates want it.

Republicans Michael Prokopchak and incumbent Timothy Dymond, who is seeking his third term, are squaring off for the party's nomination. Besides their party, their only other common denominator is that both want to preserve the township's rural character and avoid rapid, explosive development.

If elected, Prokopchak wants to:

- Improve the condition of the roads by making maintenance a priority. "We should maintain what we have first, then upgrade the rest of the roads," he said.

- Formulate and follow a long-range government plan for the township.

- Abolish the \$10 per capita tax for disabled residents and retirees older than age 65 if it's legal.

- Improve the municipal park, which needs repairs to the baseball field and nets for tennis and basketball courts, which could

also use a resurfacing job. "Many young people use the park, both for sports programs and for something fun to do in their spare time," he said. "Recreation programs and our park are good for them."

- Work hand-in-hand with the planning and zoning commissions. Supervisors and planning and zoning commission members should attend one another's meetings so that they know what each is working on, he said.

"I want to use a hands-on approach to the township government," Prokopchak said. "I'm re-

tired and plan to devote whatever time is necessary to township matters. I plan to have my home telephone number on the township's answering machine so that people can call me when they need to."

Incumbent Tim Dymond, who has served 10 years as a supervisor, wants to continue projects begun during his tenure:

- Continue to upgrade the roads. In the past two years the township has completely rebuilt half of Lockville Road, widening

See SUPERVISOR, pg 2



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

**WATER WOES** - A sign invites buyers to check out the Cedar Lane development, where residents have experienced many water problems since they moved in. Seven homeowners are challenging a Kingston Township ordinance for the right to drill their own wells.

## Suit filed over wells

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

**KINGSTON TOWNSHIP** - An ordinance requiring residents of new developments to tie into public water systems is causing headaches for residents of an upscale subdivision, who were promised plenty of good, clean water when they first moved in.

At the entrance to the Cedar Lane development a sign proclaims, "Discover the Back Mountain's finest. Build your dream home in this extraordinary country neighborhood," and lists the amenities: half-acre lots, paved roads, concrete curbs, underground utilities and public water.

Seven residents say Cedar Lane's public water supply, a common well supplying 25 homes,

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■ **Fix-up time**  
Special home, yard and garden section inside.

■ **In the running**  
Candidates for office in the May primary make their announcements. Page 2.

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