

### Musical banks

An employee of Plastic Arts Sign company installed the sign for the Franklin First Savings Bank office on Route 309 in Dallas Township. The bank is moving its office this week from the Dallas Shopping Center into the former PNC Bank office near Country Club Shopping Center, where it will be open June 5.

POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK



### Gangs

(continued from page 1)

Panel members are Dallas Township police chief Carl Miers, Kingston Township police chief James Balavage, Assistant District Attorney Dan Pilletts, Deputy Attorney General Fran Sempa, Dallas High School principal Frank Galicki and Dallas Middle School principal Anthony Martinelli.

Assistant high school principal David Eleri will be the moderator. Superintendent Gerald Wycallis will introduce the speakers and offer remarks.

Area legislators are also expected to send staff members to the meeting.

"This has been in the works since October, when a group of students were involved in a fight at the Westmoreland School," Wycallis said. "At the time we promised to hold meetings to help parents become aware of things happening with our young people."

Each panel member will have five minutes to speak, he added. Audience members will have an opportunity to write questions on cards and give them to the panel for discussion.

The town meeting is designed as an open conversation between residents and the authorities, Wycallis said.

"We want to alert parents to what we feel is an emerging problem in the area," Balavage said. "Parents should be alert for drastic changes in their children's behavior, attitudes, philosophy - especially concerning specific ethnic groups - dress and friends. A child who suddenly is reluctant or afraid to go to school or their favorite hangouts could be the target of threats or intimidation by gang members or gang wannabees."

Dallas Middle School principal Anthony Martinelli said he has noticed some students adopting new attitudes or wearing certain articles of clothing, for example bandannas or T-shirts with drug-related slogans.

He wants parents to be concerned if their 13 or 14-year-old children suddenly start hanging out with much older students, for example 19-year-olds.

"Middle school kids naturally

**"Dealers also like to use juveniles to distribute drugs because juvenile penalties are much more lenient."**

**Fran Sempa**  
Deputy attorney general

look up to the older ones as role models, but their everyday associations should be with people their own age," he said.

High school principal Frank Galicki said he hasn't noticed "gang activity per se" in school, but he has also discouraged students from wearing bandannas, which could be construed by some people as gang colors.

"This town meeting is a community service to help educate the public," he said. "It's preventive, not reactive."

#### Juveniles often recruited by drug dealers

Deputy Attorney General Fran Sempa will discuss increasing local drug problems and how his office is handling them.

"No area escapes drugs," he said. "We have been fortunate not to have the drug problems of the inner cities, but drug involvement here is serious. We find the whole spectrum of substances, from marijuana to crack cocaine."

Marijuana has enjoyed a resurgence as the drug of choice, he added. Some is grown locally, while most comes from the Southwest - Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. Some is imported from Mexico.

"Young people ages 12-14 are selling and using more marijuana," he said. "Dealers also like to use juveniles to distribute drugs because juvenile penalties are much more lenient."

Assistant District Attorney Dan Pilletts will discuss new legislation which affect how the courts handle juvenile offenses, especially those involving drugs or gangs.

"If a juvenile is 12 or 13 years old and has committed a serious violent felony or is older than 14 years old and has committed a crime which would be a felony in adult court, the public may at-

tend his juvenile court hearing," he said. "The press may publish his name and photo and the specifics of the case."

Other new laws allow the dissemination of juvenile offenders' fingerprints, allow courts to use an adult offender's juvenile records when setting bail and prevent a person's juvenile crime record from being automatically destroyed when he becomes an adult.

Representative Phyllis Mundy became concerned when police chiefs in her district told her gang activity was starting in the area.

"Unfortunately gangs aren't confined to the inner cities," she said. "Gangs and drug activity are creeping into the suburban and rural communities. We want to inform parents and the community what to look for, and that children are at risk of becoming involved. We want to nip this in the bud and prevent it from becoming a serious community problem."

#### Gangs or just groups?

Police define gangs as groups of three or more young people organized to commit crimes or terrorize the community.

Since October, 1994, police in the Back Mountain have investigated four incidents involving groups of young people and weapons or illegal activity.

Police broke up a fight involving about 30 students October 19 at the Westmoreland school, confiscating baseball bats, pepper spray, knives and a box of .22 caliber ammo. No guns were recovered.

Kingston Township police arrested a 14-year-old Dallas boy and a 15-year-old Trucksville boy October 27 for stealing a .25 caliber semi-automatic pistol from a Trucksville home.

The boys told police they wanted the gun for protection because they had been involved in an altercation with teens from the valley. Although not loaded and without an ammunition clip, the gun was capable of firing single rounds, police said.

Police arrested five boys from Dallas and Franklin townships during early morning raids May 12 and confiscated four handguns, one with a banana clip capable of holding 30 bullets, and more than 1,600 rounds of ammunition.

Six young people, all 19 years old or younger, and four juveniles were arrested March 21 for using two stolen credit cards to go on a \$1,607 shopping spree at stores in the Back Mountain and the Wyoming Valley Mall.

Charges were later dropped against one of the boys for lack of evidence.

"We don't want to cause people to panic," said Dallas Township police chief Carl Miers. "We want to help the public become more aware that kids are picking up gang-type things from MTV and acting them out. Right now they're wannabees, loosely-knit groups of students using gang-type names for themselves."

Books about making explosives, poisoning, Special Forces fighting and infiltration tactics, survival and homemade weapons are easily available through mail-order catalogues and are also out on the street, Miers said.

"We've known about this for quite some time," Miers said. "Police must be as streetwise as the kids are. If this program prevents one kid from getting hurt or killed, it's definitely worth it."

### Methodist Women's luncheon June 7

The Back Mountain United Methodist Church Women will hold their annual luncheon June 7 at Irem Temple at noon. Cost is \$8.50. Reservations must be made before May 31 by calling either the Shavertown UM Church office at 675-3616 or 696-3615.

### Boro won't pick up grass clippings

The Dallas Borough road department will not collect grass clippings this summer. Only leaves and small branches may be left on the curb for pickup.

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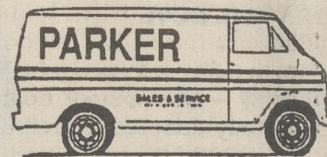


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