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'I just shot my father and grandfather'

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

DALLAS TOWNSHIP - After a decade and a half without a murder to investigate, Dallas Township police chief Carl Miers and his department are handling the second killing in only three years. And this time it hits close to home.

Dallas Township resident Frederick C. Kirkendall, Jr., visit-

ing his family on an eight-hour pass from the Clarks Summit State Hospital, told police Satan made him shoot his father and grandfather June 11 around 6 p.m.

Kirkendall's grandfather, 81-year-old Charles Besteder, was declared dead at his Kunkle Corners home Sunday, after being shot at close range with a .16 gauge shotgun. His father, Frederick C. Kirkendall, Sr., is in critical

condition at Community Medical Center in Scranton with similar wounds.

"I knew Besteder for about 35 years," police chief Carl Miers said. "I graduated from Dallas High School with Fred Kirkendall, Sr., in 1963. Fred played with the Starfires, one of Eddie Day's bands, during the '60's. They often played at dances at Hanson's at Harveys Lake."

The Kirkendalls had lived in Kingston Township, where Fred, Sr., operated Back Mountain Music, for several years, Miers added.

He said he also had gone to school with the suspect's mother, Judy Kirkendall.

Kunkle fire chief Jack Dodson, who was first to reach the scene, saw the suspect standing alongside Route 309 and asked him what had happened.

Kirkendall replied, "I just shot my father and my grandfather," repeating the statement several times.

When Dodson and Kirkendall, Jr., met police arriving on the scene, the suspect told police, "I killed them with a shotgun. Satan made me kill them." He told police his grandmother, Florence Besteder, had taken the gun away from him and it was in the house.

Kirkendall, who has "numerous involuntary commitments" for treatment of psychiatric illness, had made more than 10 home visits since March with no problems, according to Department of Welfare communications director Mary Ellen Fritz.

Kirkendall was first committed to Clarks Summit in February.

See SHOOTING, pg 10



Joy Scott, left, and Laura Popilelar were all smiles after graduating from Dallas High School Monday night.



Chuck Kindler, left, and Robert Brown celebrated graduation from Lake-Lehman High School last Thursday.

Graduation Day at Dallas, Lehman

PHOTOS BY CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Be proud, Dallas Valedictorian tells class At Lehman, thanks, farewells and plans

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

DALLAS - Rain didn't dampen the spirits of Dallas High School's Class of 1995, since graduation ceremonies were moved indoors to the middle school's auditorium.

Valedictorian Scott Sobocinski compared graduation to the end of one life journey and the beginning of another.

"I was anxious for a change of scenery and sometimes a change of company as well, but over the past few days I began to wonder why everyone was in such a big hurry to get away from everyone else," he said.

Reflecting on the camaraderie which only high school can provide, he reminisced about meeting best friends each day in English class and exchanging friendly smiles in the hall.

Sobocinski reminded his classmates of "failed economics tests, broken hearts and the endless fights we had with our friends over pointless things."

"For far too long this class has accepted the criticisms and negative labels of others."

Scott Sobocinski
Dallas Valedictorian

He also commented on the community's description of his class as "one of the worst to ever pass through this school."

"For far too long this class has accepted the criticisms and negative labels of others," he said. "Many of us even began to actually believe these detractors. Now, as I look out into this class today, I see creative, bright and ambitious young people, whom I am proud to call my peers...future engineers, painters, physicians, pharmacists, educators, scientists and lawyers."

Sobocinski concluded by reminding his classmates to cherish their high school friendships and

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By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

LEHMAN - The leaders of Lake-Lehman's Class of 1995 quoted poetry, thanked teachers and parents and reminded friends to remember them during a moving commencement June 8.

Valedictorian Jennifer Fehan compared high school and graduation to chapters in a book, each complementing the next, each "a stepping stone for our future."

"Our parents, teachers and friends may have been supporting characters, but in the end only we can complete the story," she said. "We must use the lessons we have learned and the knowledge we have gained to discover what we will become...It is now time to turn the page and begin the next chapter..."

Quoting from a poem by an anonymous author, she spoke of "learning the subtle difference between holding a hand and chaining a soul," learning to accept defeats with the grace of an adult, learning "to build all your roads today because tomorrow's ground is too uncertain for

"Love those around you and love yourself too."

Jaclyn Race
Lake-Lehman Class President

plans, and futures have a way of falling down in mid-flight...and even sunshinhe burns if you get too much."

She urged her friends to plant their own gardens and decorate their own souls instead of waiting for someone else to bring them flowers.

Class president Jaclyn I. Race reminded classmates that they had been through many experiences together, and "even though we may not have always supported one another's decisions, we have stood by each other."

Quoting from a poem from a graduation card she received, she reminded her classmates to treasure the world's beauty and try to add some to it, honor others' different opinions, stand up for

See LEHMAN, pg 9

'Kids Around Town' raise funds to make trails

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - They wanted to do something to improve their community and ended up becoming part of local history.

When a group of 170 Dallas Middle School students read about the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association's efforts to transform two miles of abandoned railroad grade between Luzerne and Trucksville into the Back Mountain's first bike trail, they decided to help out.

All members of a school organization called Kids About Town, the students had voted to build a bicycle trail as a community service project but had become bogged down until they read about the proposed trail in *The Dallas Post*.

"It seemed hopeless at first," said Randa Shahin. "All we could do was promote bike safety. Now we're happy - we're involved in something that will help the whole

community."

Joey Youngblood, a student in Mrs. Boyer's homeroom, organized a bake sale and a collection which he dubbed "Pails For Trails," setting out canisters to solicit donations at 91 area businesses. The cans were out only a week or two, and the response was outstanding.

The group raised nearly \$390 from the sale and collection, which it donated to the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association June 12.

"This is really exciting!" said ASTA president Judy Rimple, who didn't know about the collection until the students gave her the money. "These students are the reality to the vision - they're help-

See KIDS, pg 10



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

STUDENTS COLLECT MONEY FOR BIKE TRAIL - Members of Dallas Middle School's Kids About Town organization raised nearly \$390 to donate to the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association, which is developing a bicycle trail on a former railroad bed between Luzerne and Trucksville.

They're tops!

8-page Top of the Class tabloid of Dallas academic stars in this issue.

Bribe case will move to county court. Story, photo on page 2.

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