

Shooting

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1990, after having undergone psychiatric treatment at other facilities, she said.

Except for a three-month period between January 24, 1991, and February 27, 1991, he has been a psychiatric patient, mainly at Clarks Summit State Hospital.

Because of aggressive behavior towards staff and patients, he was transferred to Farview State Forensic Hospital for two three-month periods, in August, 1990, and February, 1993, then back to Clarks Summit after showing signs of improvement, Fritz said.

"For the past year Kirkendall had responded well to medication and treatment and had shown no aggressive tendencies," Fritz said. "His family was very involved in his treatment and often visited him or took him home for visits."

After every home visit, which must be approved by the patient's psychiatrist, the family is required to complete detailed written reports of the patient's behavior,

she said.

"For the most part, he was pleasant, relaxed and helpful and interacted well with his family," Fritz said. "The only unusual thing they reported was in May, when he seemed withdrawn."

A former schoolmate described Kirkendall as "never very stable," a loner who didn't hang out with anyone.

"He was definitely not on the same frequency as other people," the schoolmate said. "He talked to himself and listened to himself. Imaginary things went on in his head. You would try to talk with him but the conversations would go nowhere, as if he was on another planet."

Kirkendall was arrested at his grandfather's Kunkle home. According to an autopsy performed Monday morning by coroner George Hudock, Besteder died of a close-range shotgun wound to the right chest.

Kirkendall's father suffered a

shotgun wound to the back and was taken by ambulance to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Hospital, then flown by helicopter to Community Medical Center in Scranton, where he is listed in critical condition.

Police took Kirkendall, Jr., into custody at the scene "without incident." He was charged with one count of criminal homicide, a general charge which includes first-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter, one count of criminal attempted homicide and two counts of aggravated assault, police said.

Police confiscated a .16 gauge Ithaca double-barreled shotgun from the crime scene.

According to the arrest warrant affidavit, the Back Mountain Communications Center dispatched patrolman Joseph Bren, Kingston Township patrolman Robert Parrish, Dallas Borough patrolman James Drury and the Kunkle ambulance to Besteder's home at Kunkle Corners around

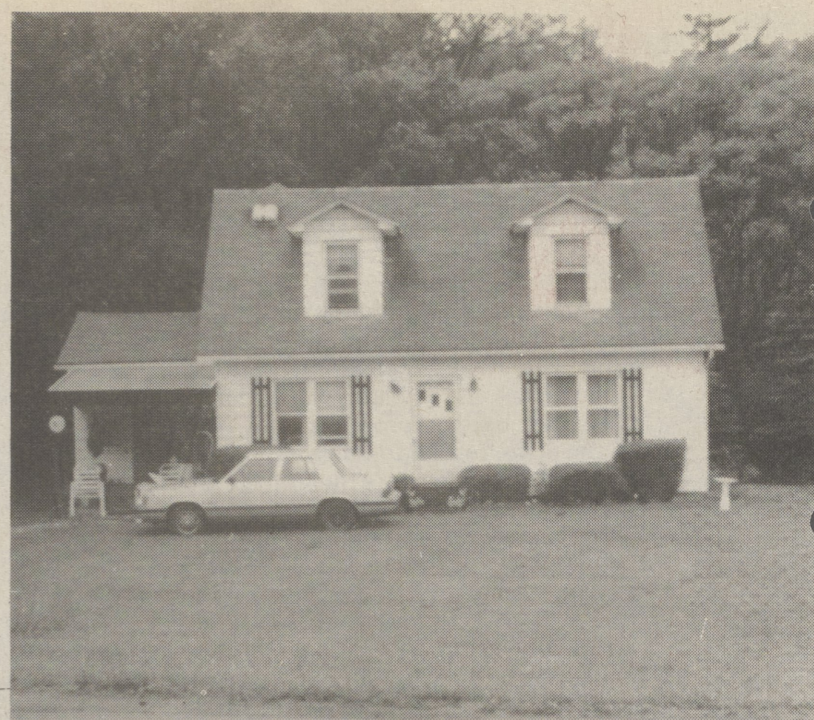
6 p.m. June 11 after receiving a report of a multiple shooting.

The suspect said he had been thinking about shooting his relatives for several hours before he left his parent's Hildebrandt Road home with several .16-gauge shotgun shells, which he knew weren't available at his grandparents' home, according to the affidavit.

Besteder had lived at Kunkle Corners, where he operated a gas station and feed mill, for about 35 years, Miers said.

Fred Kirkendall, Jr., is incarcerated at the Luzerne County Prison, where he will remain until his preliminary hearing June 19, Miers said. No bail has been set.

Assisting evidence officer Wayman Miers and patrolman Robert Jolley, who is handling the paperwork, are Pennsylvania State Police Lt. Stan Jezewski and detectives from the Luzerne County District Attorney's office.



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

MURDER SCENE - This home on Route 309 at Kunkle Corners was the scene of a double shooting which left Charles Besteder dead of a gunshot wound to the chest and Frederick C. Kirkendall, Sr., in critical condition with a shotgun wound to the back.

Kids

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ing us create it."

All week Kids About Town members plugged their lunchtime bake sale during morning announcements on the school's in-house television station. Commercials and bike safety sound bites included a takeoff on *Saturday Night Live's* Hans and Franz.

"It's the end of the year and the cafeteria snack table's almost empty, so we'll probably sell a lot," Amanda Russ said.

Students in Mr. Chiarucci's class also made bicycle safety posters to distribute to area businesses for display.

The students said they "definitely" planned to ride their bikes on the trail and to bring their friends there. "All kids ride bikes," they said.

Several students said they're willing to help work on the trail if they're needed, even next year.

"It will give kids and their parents something to do together," said Amanda Russ.

"It'll be fun - we won't be sitting around watching TV and playing video games," Randa Shahin chimed in.

'Y' to offer junior lifeguard class

The Greater Pittston YMCA will offer the "Y" Jr. Lifeguard Class starting July 1, 9 a.m. Classes will be held on Saturdays from 9 to 11 a.m. for eight weeks.

This program is open to youth 11 years of age and older who have good swimming skills.

For more information call the Greater YMCA at 655-2255.

"These students are the reality to the vision - they're helping us create it."

Judy Rimple
ASTA president

"Yeah, we'll get some exercise," quipped Ryan Stredny.

Megan Rogan and Dan Fetko said they would like to spend time on the trail if possible.

Kids About Town is a schoolwide organization dedicated to helping the community and devising ways to improve it. Any student may join.

Raising money for ASTA's bike trail and making and distributing bicycle safety posters had an unexpected benefit for the students.

"We learned who our elected officials are, in case we had to discuss the project with them," said Amanda Russ. "Some kids didn't even know what township they live in."

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

TRUCKSVILLE - Hikers and bikers will have a chance to be a part of local history this weekend when the first leg of a proposed network of hiking and biking trails along abandoned rail beds opens.

Developed by the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association (ASTA), the two-mile trail links Parry Street in Luzerne and Carverton Road in Trucksville. ASTA members hope to eventually extend the system 47 miles along abandoned railroad grades through the Back Mountain, Noxen and Mountain Springs to the former rail hub at Dushore.

A ceremony June 17 at 11 a.m. will formally open the trail as part of Luzerne's Downtown Days celebration, according to ASTA president Judy Rimple. ASTA members will give guided tours of the trail at noon and 3 p.m. June 17 and 18.

The trail has drawn attention from different parts of the community, including an Eagle Scout candidate, Dallas Middle School students and area conservation and land preservation groups.

Eagle Scout candidate Jonathan Bradbury, 15, is waiting for the Boy Scout Council to approve his project to clear litter, cut brush and fill in washed-out gullies along the trail.

"They could approve it this week," said the Shavertown resident, a sophomore at Wyoming Seminary.

Members of Dallas Middle School's Kids About Town recently donated nearly \$390, which they raised from a bake sale and collection cans set out at area businesses in a "Pails for Trails" campaign, to ASTA.

"These students are the reality to the vision - they're helping to create it," said Rimple, who didn't know about the fundraiser until ASTA received the donation. "This is really exciting!"

She also commended the Luzerne Borough council, Kingston Township supervisors and manager Jeff Box, representatives Phyllis Mundy and George Hasay and Senator Charles Lemmond, who obtained state grants for the project.

Area organizations dedicated to the outdoors and land preservation - the Back Mountain Land Trust, the Susquehanna Trailers, the Back Mountain Trailers and the Wyoming Valley Bicycle Club - have also helped out, Rimple said.

To date ASTA's 60 members have raised \$8,000 of the \$10,000 it needs to obtain a federal matching grant for further work on the trail, Rimple said.

The group hopes to make up

the rest through a raffle offering a first prize of a mountain bike, a second prize of a Robert Bateman limited edition wildlife print and a third prize of a night for two at a bed and breakfast inn in Dushore. Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5 and are available from members and participating area merchants.

Rimple, secretary Rob Lewis and vice president Mark Albrecht are Back Mountain residents, while treasurer Glen Manahan is also a member of the Rails to Trails organization in Plains.

Rails to Trails is a unique statewide and nationwide organization dedicated to transforming abandoned railroad beds into hiking and biking trails. The rail beds' gentle inclines, wide paths and sturdy construction are ideal for this use. Many cross through state gamelands and some especially

beautiful country.

Area hikers and cyclists have described abandoned railroad grades as an untapped resource waiting to be rediscovered.

Railroads and spur lines, once an important mode of transportation, crisscrossed the Back Mountain, connecting major lines north at Dushore and Mildred and south in the Wyoming Valley with the lumbering areas and icehouses of Alderson, Stull and Ricketts.

The last railroad line, which connected Dallas and the valley, was abandoned in 1963, when Route 309 was upgraded. Its iron trestle over Carverton Road was a Back Mountain landmark for many years.

For more information on ASTA, call president Judy Rimple at 283-9118.

Kingston Township rec center activities

The 1995 summer recreation program will be held from June 19 through August 11. The program is open to resident children of Kingston Township who have completed kindergarten up to and including fifth grade; but no children older than 12 years.

The program will be held weekdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Center Street park. Children should bring a bag lunch and

drink each day.

Activities will include sports, games, guest speakers, music, arts and crafts, field trips throughout the summer and swimming at Frances Slocum State Park pool, every Tuesday and Thursday.

Registration is June 17 at the Center Street Park Pavilion from 10 a.m. until 12 noon. The last day for registration is June 23. There is a fee of \$10 per child.

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