

DUI

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In 1997 there were twice as many D.U.I. arrests in Dallas Township as in the year before. "D.U.I. arrests are a major part of crime here. I think many people think it's just a traffic violation, but it's a misdemeanor. The person gets a criminal record. It's a crime and we deal with it that way," said Dennis.

Kingston Township police chief James Balavage said in addition to arresting drunk drivers, Kingston Twp. provides preventative education in the schools with its D.A.R.E. program. Kingston Twp. police cover the longest stretch of Rt. 309 in the Back Mountain.

Many people involved in the fight against drunk driving are in support of House Bill 642. This bill would lower the legal limit of alcohol in the blood from .10 to .08 percent. But there are no plans in the Legislature to move on the bill at this point.

Ruthann Young, Luzerne County Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.) president, believes the lowered limit would save lives. "I think there are too many fatalities with the .10 limit. They're too drunk at that point," she said. "There is a 50 percent loss of driving skills by .08. Most researchers believe impairment

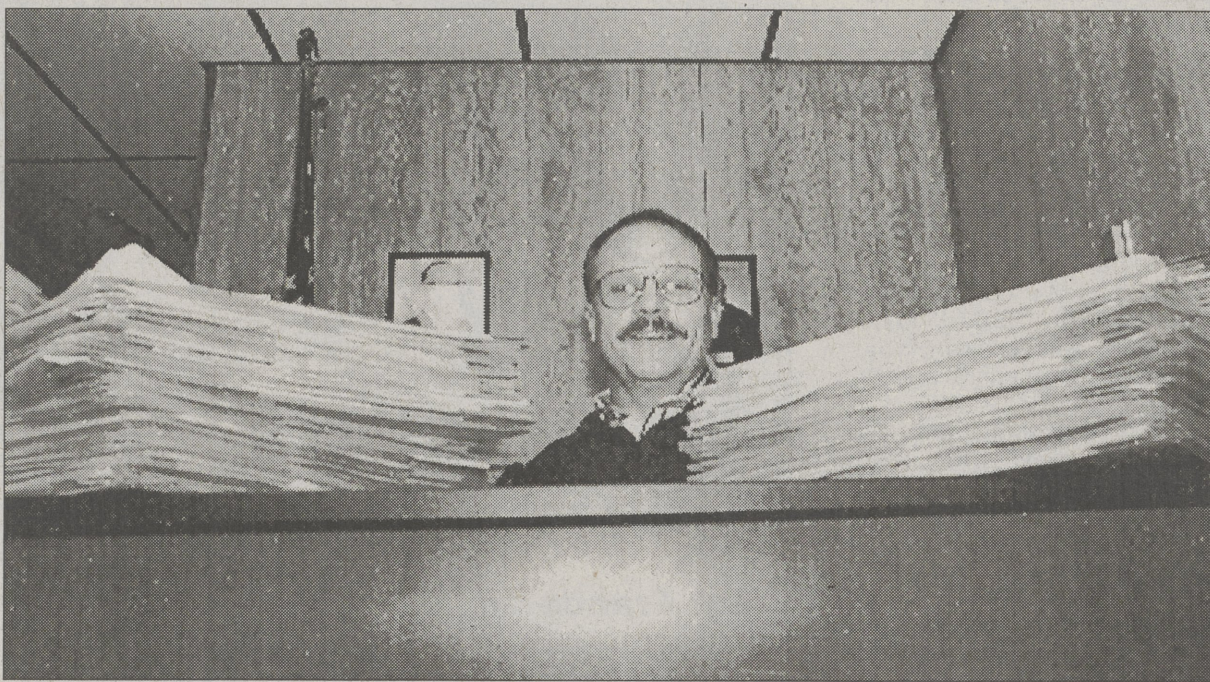
starts at .05."

She said the number of lives saved with the .08 limit would offset any anticipated cost to the police. M.A.D.D. has had people from the state office in Harrisburg fighting for the stricter legislation.

Stephanie M. Wolownik, prevention education supervisor for Wyoming Valley Alcohol and Drug Services, Inc., said the two tenths of a point would make a big difference. "In Luzerne County, the average person is being pulled over at .20, double the legal limit. Maybe if it is lowered, people can be caught earlier," she said. "If that's what it takes to make people more aware, I'm all for it. As long as everyone is educated on it."

Some opponents of the lowered limit include the alcohol industry, hospitality industry and real estate industry, according to James J. Dietrich, Esq., who wrote a point/counterpoint article in IDU magazine regarding the debate over a lower limit.

In his article, Dietrich shows both sides of the debate. The opponents of the lowered limit believe it is costly and will overburden the courts and divert police from those with a higher blood alcohol level. Also, they argue that not everyone is impaired at



POST PHOTO/KYLIE SHAFFERKOETTER
District Justice James Tupper with a pile of DUI court records. DUI is by far the largest type of case he handle, and the same is true for other district justices.

.08, the new law would only affect moderate drinkers instead of heavy ones, there isn't enough evidence that shows this would have an impact and it will reduce alcohol consumption.

Dietrich writes that the actual cost of enforcing the proposed

limit would be slight. He cites a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) study in California that found the limit led to an increase in arrest rates, but that there was not enough to significantly burden police departments or courts. "Ultimately, the

number of lives saved by a .08 per se laws will offset any cost to the criminal justice system," wrote Dietrich, who is a staff attorney with the National Traffic Center.

Money is the last thing on patrolman Dennis' mind. "I think Pennsylvania should reduce the

limit. It would serve as a better tool to help make it easier for us. This is very serious. Statistics show that more people are dying from D.U.I. related accidents than any other traffic accident," he said.

He acknowledges that there can be no all-purpose blood alcohol content (BAC) due to the differences among people that affect their impairment, such as weight, height and age. But, Dietrich wrote that most researchers agree that impairment in most people begins at .05.

According to a study done by Dr. Ralph Hingson of the Boston University School of Public Health, a comparison between states with the .08 limit and those without showed a 12 percent decline in fatal crashes involving drivers with .08 BAC or higher. Also, the study concluded there was an 18 percent drop in fatal crashes involving drivers with a BAC of .15 or higher. "It is apparent from the Hingson study that .08 per se laws directly impact heavy drinkers," wrote Dietrich.

As far as a decrease in alcohol consumption, Dietrich found no hard evidence.

Wolownik said the limit change has been actively and aggressively pursued in the last two years.

Chorus

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have qualified for districts in past years, and they now get a chance to experience what it takes to put the festival together. "It's a lot of work," said junior chorus member John Dawe. "Sometimes it doesn't look like much, but there are a lot of little details to worry about."

One of the biggest challenges is providing housing for students coming from outside the Wilkes-Barre area. "I never realized how hard it is to set this up," said housing committee member Dorothy Dawe. "For example, you have to match the students up with the right families, because some kids may have allergies or the family may have a preference about hosting a boy or a girl, and they also need transportation to and from the school for the rehearsals."

Other tasks include finding volunteers to act as chaperones, setting up a hospitality area for the visiting directors, printing the concert program, and trying to let the community know about the festival. "We've contacted members of the local media to raise interest in the festival, and to help with the housing situation," said Chorus Booster president Linda Gaylord.

The festival itself involves various parts; placement auditions, rehearsals for the concert and most important, auditions for the upcoming Regional festival. Because there is so much involved, the students are at the school

from 8 a.m. until 9 at night. "During that time, they meet the guest director, and work on the music for the concert, with individual practice, sectionals and a few breaks included," said Pineno.

While the festival is a huge undertaking, those involved see it as a positive experience for the school, the community and the students. "This will give everybody in the school a chance to see what the role of music in the school is," said junior Stephanie Pineno. John Dawe added, "It's a good opportunity to meet people from other areas, and experience other teaching styles from the visiting directors and guest conductor."

According to Dorothy Dawe, "the community is also given an opportunity to see the musical talent in the area, because these kids are the cream of the crop." Jonathan Pineno sees the event as, "a chance for the students to excel individually and in a group. It may also demonstrate the importance of the music program, and hopefully attract more interested members."

Linda Gaylord is quick to credit Pineno for his efforts to make the festival happen. "He's been involved in every aspect of it, and has done a lot of work to coordinate everything," she said.

Pineno said he would like to thank the Lake-Lehman School district, "for all their support," and the Lehman Chorus Boosters. "The parents have been a

Local District Chorus participants

Lake-Lehman and Dallas high schools will each send six students to this week's District Chorus. They are:

- From Lake-Lehman**
 Jeff Offshack, sr.
 Shelby Wandell, sr. *
 Erica Williams, sr.
 Stephanie Pineno, jr. *
 John Dawe, jr. **
 Rick Blaine, so.
From Dallas
 Todd Kern, sr. **
 Jennifer Moser, sr. *
 Brian Miller, jr.
 Norah Krakosky, so.
 Morgan McOwen, so.
 Tally Thomas, so.

* Made Districts in past years
 ** Made Regionals in past years

great help, and the festival wouldn't be happening without them."

The P.M.E.A District 9 Chorus festival is being held at the Lake-Lehman High School Wed., Jan. 28 - Sat., Jan. 31. There will be a concert on Saturday the 31st at 2 p.m. in the high school gym. The public is welcome to attend. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$2 for students. For further information contact Jonathan Pineno at 675-7458.

Blood

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cations or holiday celebrations. "The American Red Cross is not seeing the usual rebound of donations following the holidays," Rodgers said. "Donors are not turning out at blood drives in great enough numbers to meet the need for blood by hospitals in the region."

Rodgers said the number of people who take the time to give blood has been dropping steadily while the demand for blood in our local hospitals has risen. "We have some fantastic blood donors out there giving blood," she said, "but we need more. If we cannot increase the number of blood donors, our hospitals will not have the amount of blood they need to help their patients. All it takes is

"We have some fantastic blood donors out there giving blood, but we need more."

Chris Rodgers
 CEO, American Red Cross
 Blood Services, NE Region

a major trauma to wipe out a large part of our entire blood supply."

Patients undergoing surgery, burn and shock victims, cancer and leukemia patients, hemophiliacs, accident victims, and people who have blood diseases are just some of the people who can be affected by a low blood supply.

"Blood is a more precious and

valuable commodity than any material object known to man," Rodgers said. "Almost everyone knows someone who has needed blood in their lifetimes. Those of us who are eligible to give blood must make donating blood a routine act."

To find a bloodmobile or donor site in your area, please call 1-800-432-8045. If you have a question about your eligibility ask for the nursing department.

The American Red Cross Blood Services, Northeastern Pennsylvania Region provides blood and blood products to 41 hospitals throughout 19 counties in Pennsylvania and two counties in New York covering a territory of 1.5 million people.

Volunteers needed Wednesday for children's wing

The Back Mountain Memorial Library could use some help restocking books and moving furniture into the new children's wing. Volunteers can just come to the library at 96 Huntville Rd., Dallas, Wed., Jan. 28 anytime from 6 to 9 p.m. There will be plenty of work to go around.

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