

The Dallas Post

50 Cents

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS & LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Vol. 110 No. 33

Dallas, Pennsylvania

August 18 thru August 24, 1999

Search continues for escaped convicts

By KASIA MCDONOUGH
Post Staff

JACKSON TOWNSHIP — Communities surrounding the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Dallas are on alert as police and prison officials hunt for two escaped convicts.

David Larkins, Superintendent, implemented the facility's emergency plan after discovering the inmates were missing. "Officers reported the two did not return to their cell following a yard detail," said Kenneth Burnett, Public Information Officer at SCI. "Once it was verified no one could locate them, the whole institution went into a lock down procedure."

The lock-down, which is in effect state-wide following an order by Governor Tom Ridge, involves returning inmates to their cells for a head count. All recreational activities at the prisons have been suspended and the number of officers on duty has been increased.

Pennsylvania state troopers are inspecting car trunks, the back of pick up trucks and the interior of tractor trailers as helicopters equipped with infrared focused on a 20-mile radius bordering the prison grounds. Door-to-door searches have also been conducted in neighboring residential areas.

Other law enforcement officials urged residents to take extra precautions until the escapees are apprehended. "We're encouraging people to keep an extra eye out for anything unusual," said Burnett. "Everyone should be sure doors and windows are locked, keys should not be left in cars and people should check in on elderly neighbors."



POST PHOTO BY KASIA MCDONOUGH

Trooper Tomano of the Wyoming State Police Barracks inspects passing vehicle in Jackson Township.

Lake-Lehman School District, adhering to a standard procedure, cancelled all scheduled activities Monday. "The situation necessitated tightened security and as always our first priority is the safety of our students," said Dr. William Price, Superintendent. "Activities have resumed as of Tuesday but we are insisting that the kids keep their cars locked and we have asked the local police to increase patrols in the area."

The security measures are re-

assuring to those living near the prison. "I have lived here since 1972 and this is not the first time there has been an escape," said Pat Jachimovich, of Jackson Township. "But I did notice that this time a number of police officers were immediately out checking cars. They seem to have a handle on the situation."

While satisfied with the efforts of law enforcement to ensure public safety following the escape, Jachimovich is wary of the correc-

tional intuition's ability to maintain control of its incarcerated population. "It is my understanding this is a medium security prison so it concerns me that a convicted murderer and an arsonist were there in the first place," she said. "It did kind of make me wonder if they had exceeded the limits of what they are capable of monitoring."

This escape is the third jail-

See CONVICT, pg 2

Lehman school board member issues warning

By KASIA MCDONOUGH
Post Staff

LAKE-LEHMAN - Ron Payne, Lake-Lehman School Board Director, threatened to quit recently citing an objection to the appearance of impropriety involving an administrator's contract extension.

Payne, who had been vacationing when the board voted to extend the contract of Kathleen Williams, Business Manager, expressed disapproval of the manner in which the new deal was struck. "You go away and come back to find out something like this has been decided, seemingly at the spur of the moment," said Payne. "If you're trying to get me to quit, keep doing things like this. Because I will quit."

Robert Allardyce, school board member, also made inquiries about the rush to reach a new deal. "I have an idea, we are going to have to negotiate a new contract with the teachers in a year-and-a-half or so," he said. "Why don't we offer them a guaranteed cost of living pay increase and save ourselves all the trouble. We can get this thing done right now."

The board members, although objecting to the approval process, repeatedly confirmed their satisfaction with Williams' perfor-

"If you're trying to get me to quit, keep doing things like this. Because I will quit."

Ron Payne
L-L school director

mance. "I'm not trying to make accusations," said Payne. "I think Mrs. Williams has done a good job and she may deserve five years on her contract but when you do things like this it causes people to wonder, 'Well, who got paid off for that'. It just stinks."

Foul-scented objects continued to be the topic of conversation. "If it looks like a rat and smells like a rat then sometimes it's a rat," said Payne. "This kind of cushy-cushy business is not done anywhere in the corporate world."

The objections, which Payne stated were not meant to cast Williams in an unfavorable light, were taken to heart by the business manager. "These comments were personal against me and I take a personal exception to them," she said.

Williams said the contract ex-

See PAYNE, pg 2

Independent candidate's name will appear on ballot

By KASIA MCDONOUGH
Post Staff

LAKE-LEHMAN - The battle to secure a seat on the Lake-Lehman School Board has finally taken a positive turn for Sheila Gionfriddo, an independent candidate from Region 3.

Gionfriddo's application to be included on the November ballot was approved, following a review by Kevin Jordan, Luzerne County Director of Voter Services. "We had been looking at the results from the 1995 election as the basis for determining the number of signatures Mrs. Gionfriddo was required to have on her nomination paper," said Jordan.

Initially, the board of elections, had established an independent candidate seeking nomination from Region 3 would need 16 signatures. "Our confusion results from our view that Mrs. Gionfriddo was running to replace Mrs. Whipple on the board when in fact she is running to fill a spot on the board," said Jordan. "The state's and our legal department's interpretation of laws pertaining to this situation indicates the total number of signatures needed should, in fact, be based on the number of votes received by the top vote-getter in the 1997 election."

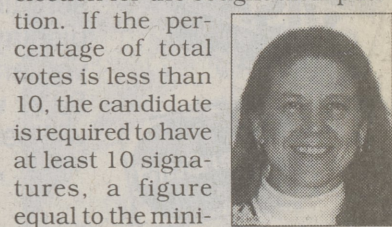
A letter explaining the decision has been sent to Gionfriddo. "I have written to Mrs. Gionfriddo to inform her officially that her name will appear on the ballot in November and to apologize for any inconvenience or embarrassment she may have encountered," said Jordan.

This is just the latest in the series of twists and turns which have so far riddled Gionfriddo's bid for school board director. Her original application was denied for failure to gain the required number of signatures on her nomination paper.

The shortfall was the result of a miscommunication between Gionfriddo and the office of voter services. "I called the courthouse in mid-July to inquire about the process and I was told that I would need 10 signatures but I found out later that I was actually required to have 16 signatures," said Gionfriddo, who acquired 14 signatures.

Successful completion of the nomination paper includes a requirement to obtain 2 percent of the total votes cast in the last

election for the sought after position. If the percentage of total votes is less than 10, the candidate is required to have at least 10 signatures, a figure equal to the minimum number required by major party candidates.



SHEILA GIONFRIDDO

Jordan explained the regulations are in place to ensure candidates a level playing field. "The quota was set so that indepen-

See CANDIDATE, pg 6

When Little League began in the Back Mountain

1951 Fernbrook team was a surprise in the playoffs

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN - One of the region's most popular youth activities started nearly 50 years ago on a decidedly quiet note, getting this mention in the July 28, 1950 issue of The Dallas Post:

"Back Mountain Kids Little League baseball went into full swing last Thursday night with the Truckville Tigers, managed by Charles Steinhauer, defeating the Shavertown Shavers, managed by Merton Coolbaugh, by 5 to 2."

The Dallas Indians, managed by James Durkin, were the other team that inaugural season, but the contributing writer of the article exhorted the rest of the Back Mountain to get involved. "How about Lehman, Jackson, Harveys Lake, Fernbrook or any other community joining the Little Kids League," he wrote. "It is wonderful. Something like this can show the rest of the valley that the Back Mountain is again tops — that we do things right."

And did Steinhauer, the founder of the league, get a response. The next season, 1951, more than 200 boys were playing in the "Back Mountain Little League" at the field in Shavertown, behind the present Burger King. The press coverage had improved as well, with the league championship series between Jackson and Fernbrook getting a front page announcement.

Darryl Dickson played third base for Fernbrook that year. "No one gave Fernbrook much of a chance," he said, "but we played in the championship game" even though no one on the team hit a home run all season. But the pitching was strong, Dickson recalls, with Raymond Shultz and John Sholtis on the mound, each striking out 13 of 18 batters in games during the year.

Bill Steinhauer left

after moving several times has settled in South Carolina, just across the state line from Savannah, Georgia. After 48 years, he retains fond memories of the early years of Little League here. "I could hit pretty well, but not long," he said. "But I couldn't throw very well." Still, he was a good enough player to continue the sport. "Gosh, I played all the way through the senior teens," he said, and then for the Dallas High School team.

The league was funded by a combination of team sponsors and donations. "We used to go around to collect donations," Steinhauer said. He recalled, carrying quart-size ice cream containers with slots in the top for people to drop money in.

Sponsors were drawn from the local business community and service clubs. The first two sponsors were Gray's Barbecue of Shavertown and Coal-O-Matic of Truckville. Fernbrook began the 1951 season without support. "Fernbrook couldn't get a sponsor for quite a while," said Dickson, "then the Kiwanis picked us up."

Barry Landmesser was 10 years old in 1951, and one of the younger members of the team. He remembers one thing in particular. "I have very strong memories of Frank Hemingway," the team's manager. "He really taught us respect. You wanted to play for Frank," he said of the man who had three daughters, but no sons.

Dickson said the team started

See LITTLE LEAGUE, pg 5



POST PHOTO/RON BARTIZEK

Roger Bellas, a member of the 1951 Fernbrook Little League baseball team, looked over old team photos at his kitchen table of his Franklin Twp. home.



On the way to Philly. In 1951, players assembled for a short bus ride to Wilkes-Barre, where they boarded Martz buses to Philadelphia to see a game between the Athletics and the Yankees.

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