

For 'Red' Jones, calling is a calling

Red Jones is known for many things. In addition to his political career, which included the position of Luzerne County Commissioner, he was a Lake-Lehman school board member for 14 years, a highly successful basketball coach at St. Vincent's in Plymouth during the 1960s, a volunteer and fundraiser for numerous causes and organizations, an auditor, financial analyst and a salesman.

But he is most widely known as one of the best square dance callers in eastern Pennsylvania, a distinction he has earned over the past 50 years. Red called his first square dance in 1951 at the age of 13 and the rest, as they say, is history.

It began quite accidentally for Red as a seventh grade student at the former Harter High School in West Nanticoke. Square dancing was a regular event at the school but that day, due to a misunderstanding in scheduling, the caller never arrived. Jones's brothers and friends convinced the freckled-faced kid to give it a shot.

The former county commissioner admits he was nervous. "I

kept my eyes shut for the first three songs," Jones said as he reminisced about those early days.

Square dancing was popular in the Wyoming Valley throughout the 50s and 60s. It was not unusual for Jones to call six or seven nights a week in places like the old Sans Souci Park, Kunkle, Hunlock Creek, Lake Silkworth, Franklin Twp. and in his hometown of Plymouth.

"Back then, a lot of the volunteer fire companies and churches held dances as fundraisers. I used to make \$12 a night and I thought that was big money. It sure helped pay the bills when the kids were young," Jones recalls.

Jones met his wife of 40 years, Marie, at St. Stephen's church in Wilkes-Barre at a square dance. Today, the couple has four children and four grandchildren.

During the late 1970s Jones cut his square dance calling to two nights a week. For the last two decades Jones has called only for good causes and benefit fundraisers. He donates his time and doesn't remember the last



'Red' Jones is marking his 50th year calling square dances.

"I just enjoy doing it and helping organizations raise a few bucks to do good community work," Jones said. In recent years he has used his talents to help raise money for Little Leagues, volunteer fire companies, high school booster clubs, Habitat for Humanity, churches, Valley Santa and other non-profit civic groups.

Square dance will raise funds for needy

Volunteers of America, Wilkes-Barre, will hold a square dance fundraiser Friday, August 17 from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m. at the Irem Temple Country Club Pavilion in Dallas. Proceeds will benefit local programs run by Volunteers of America, including the Caring Alternatives Pantry, the Hartman Home and Dial-A-Driver.

This fundraising event will feature the 50th anniversary of square dance caller Red Jones. Jones began calling dances at the age of 13 in 1951 and is known as one of the best square dance callers in eastern Pennsylvania. For the past two decades Jones has donated his time to worthy causes and benefit fundraisers and will be doing so again for the Volunteers of America event.

In addition to square dancing, attendees will enjoy listening to

the Polka Dukes and Eddie Derwin and the Polka Naturals. The evening will be hosted by well-known polka personality Bobby Z. Tickets are \$10 per person and can be obtained by calling Volunteers of America at 825-5261.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for Volunteers of America," noted Bill Jones, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "We've not held a fundraiser like this before and it's nice to combine that with my dad's 50th anniversary as a dance caller."

"When Bill went to work for Volunteers of America, I really took an interest in the work they do," said Red Jones. "They operate with a strong social mission and reach out to people in real need. I wanted to offer my help."

Volunteers of America is a faith-based organization and is one of the oldest, largest and

most diverse non-profit human services agencies in the nation. Volunteers of America of Pennsylvania is headquartered in Wilkes-Barre with many offices located across the state. They have been providing services to Pennsylvania since 1896.

Locally, Volunteers of America provides clothing, baby items and baby food to low-income women who are pregnant or to families with an infant child through the Caring Alternatives Pantry. The Hartman Home provides shelter and safety for homeless and runaway youth. The Volunteers of America Dial-A-Driver program provides transportation for the elderly and handicapped.

Proceeds from the square dance fundraiser will be used to support and expand these local Volunteer of America programs.

Dallas F&A

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I was deeply moved by that experience and re-dedicated to what we do here."

Vivian has been a firefighter for more than 20 years. "I wanted to be a fireman since I was a little kid. So when I became 18, I joined the department. I enjoy the public service. We dedicate a lot of time to the job, but it takes us away from our families."

A lot of work goes on behind the scenes. They have training one night a week and a business meeting once a month. In addition, they have calls to respond to, equipment to clean and maintain, and the building to manage.

"But when the alarm sounds, being prepared and able to respond quickly makes it all worthwhile," said Vivian. "A good day is one that ends with a favorable outcome. We recently had a fire on Upper Demunds Road. The man was trying to put the fire out by himself. We had to pull him out of the burning house. We always urge people to get out, stay out, and call 911. We have the manpower and equipment to get the job done safely."

Jack Wega, a Dallas Fire and Ambulance volunteer, shared a

story about the air rescue group. "About two weeks ago, we had an ATV accident and called Guthrie One for help. They did a 'hot land,' which is touching down, keeping the engine running, and taking off with the patient. That day, they were worth their weight in gold."

Coming to our rescue is an expensive proposition. Each fire truck costs approximately \$250,000 and a new ambulance is about \$130,000. The cost of equipment for the units adds tens of thousands of dollars more. The gear to outfit each firefighter, which includes the helmet, hood, coat, pants, gloves and boots, costs about \$1,300.

Dallas Fire and Ambulance, Inc. is in the midst of their annual fund raising drive. Letters have been sent to all residents in the area who benefit from the service they provide. The ambulance subscription program costs \$25. For this fee, each household is protected from any ambulance or paramedic unit charges that are billed but not covered by medical or vehicle insurance. Fire department services remain as voluntary contributions.

"Recipients of the letters are urged to respond because we

need the public's support to keep us going," said volunteer firefighter Bill Shaffer. "We only have one fundraiser per year. We get some support from Dallas Township and Dallas Borough. We really appreciate donations from the public. Sometimes we get memorial gifts. A resident recently gave us \$1,000 in memory of her son."

Northeastern Pennsylvania's small towns are not unique in their dependence on volunteers to provide fire and rescue services. Shaffer observed the ages of the personnel on duty on Sunday and said, "we are desperate for volunteers. We need young people. We need new blood, new energy and new ideas. There are too many things for us to do and not enough volunteer hours available to get them all done. We don't want the community to suffer. We hope that young men and women will come forward and volunteer to perform this valuable service. It's true that we don't get a paycheck, but saving a life is priceless."

Dallas Fire and Ambulance responded to more than 1,000 emergency fire and ambulance calls last year.

Scouts weather storm at National Jamboree

Editor's Note: John Gilligan, Boy Scout Troop 155, Shavertown, is attending the National Boy Scout Jamboree. He filed this report by e-mail. A story and photos will appear in next week's issue of The Dallas Post.

Boy Scouts from NEPA Jamboree Troop 425 withstood a severe thunderstorm Thursday, July 26 at the 2001 National Jamboree at Fort A. P. Hill in Virginia. The storm, which restricted all scouts to their campsites, featured high winds, driving rain, and lightning strikes.

Countless acts of minor bravery were displayed as many scouts left the safety and shelter of their dining flies to prevent damage. Junior Assistant Scoutmaster Dave Kowalek, Jr., Shavertown, ventured into the

mud to pound tent pegs into the newly softened ground so that his troop would remain dry. Patrol Leader John Gilligan, Dallas, Troop 155, and Quartermaster Sean Young ran through the storm to bring scouts stranded at a bus stop under cover. Several scouts including Assistant Patrol Leader Pete Yurchision, Shavertown, Troop 155, and Scout Justin Lech, Kingston, Troop 281, were stranded at the Commissary bringing food to their comrades. Through the constant vigilance of Assistant Scoutmasters Dave Kowalek, Sr., Shavertown, and Larry Morten, the campsite remained intact. Scoutmaster Paul Strunk was unlucky enough to be stuck in the showers for the duration.

The greatest single act of courage was displayed by Scribe

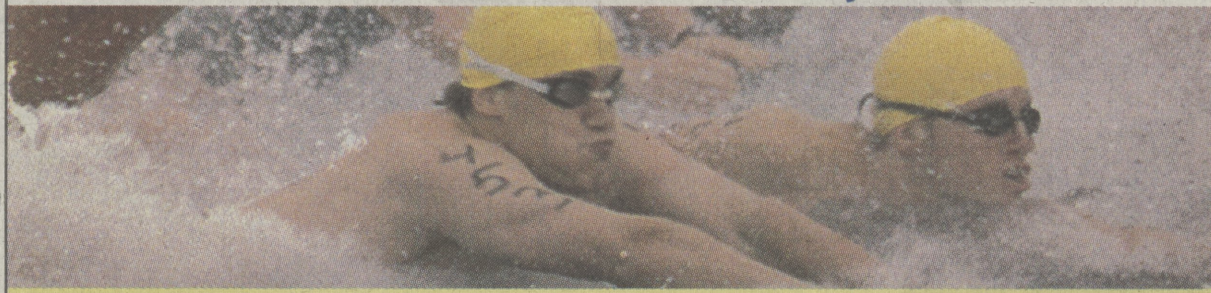
Joe Bednash, Dallas, Troop 281, when he leaped from his spot at the table to valiantly save the playing cards blown away by an near gale-force breeze. In the opinion of this reporter he should be given a medal.

Unfortunately, the 42,000 scouts at the Jamboree did not escape without injury. Two scouts are in satisfactory condition after being struck by lightning. Thankfully, through the efforts of BSA staff and the United States Army, fatalities were avoided, and the NEPA contingent escaped without injury.

Through true scouting spirit, what could have been a disaster was turned into a giant card game by the men of NEPA Jamboree Troop 425.

by John Gilligan

Race Weekend Schedule The 20th Wilkes-Barre Triathlon • August 5, 2001



Saturday, August 4, 2001

9:00 am Registration begins
Future Triathletes Run

10:15am Future Triathletes Pre-Race Meeting

10:30 am Future Triathletes Run

12:00 Noon Registration begins at Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus

12:00 - 5:00 pm Sports/Health/Nutrition Expo - Penn State Wilkes-Barre Campus under tents (Athletic Center in case of rain)

12:30 pm Bike Area Open at Harveys Lake

5:00 pm Pre-Race Meeting for Elites, Age Groupers and Teams

Sunday, August 5, 2001

6:00 am Athletes and spectators catch buses bound for Harveys Lake at PSU Wilkes-Barre

7:20 am Last bus leaves campus

7:40 am Swim Check-in Closes

8:00 am 20th Wilkes-Barre Triathlon begins

9:00 am Huntsville Road access to Penn State closed; access via Rt. 118 & old Rt. 115. Spectator parking at Lake Lehman High School-shuttle buses available to PSU.

9:15 am First biker finishes (est.)

10:00am First overall finishes (est.)

10:00 am Swim Course Closed

11:30 am Bike Course closed

1:00 pm Run Course Closed

1:30 pm Awards ceremony in Athletic Center, Penn State Wilkes-Barre



Race reserves the right to adjust time restrictions on each course segment. Times are estimates only.

- Experiencing seasonal working capital needs?
- Growing your business?
- Planning an acquisition?
- Establishing a plan of reorganization?
- Looking for a new financing source?
- Restructuring your balance sheet?
- Purchasing major assets?

"What's on your mind?"



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