



POST PHOTO/HEATHER B. JONES

Supervisor Al Fox, police officer Scott Davis and supervisor John Wilkes addressed the crowd outside District Justice James Tupper's office after a hearing for Warren Rensa.

Neighbors fearful

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of the Step-By-Step facility, of pending charges. According to the police report, when police advised Rensa of the charges, he told police he knew he was not supposed to be in the house and was not supposed to take items from the home.

Rensa was found with \$10 cash, a few cassette tapes and a cassette recorder from the Morris home. The Morrises still have a number of items which are still unaccounted for, such as a diamond wedding ring set, a man's gold ring and a hatchet.

When police told Rensa he could turn himself in at the district justice's office the next day, Rensa became violent and began threatening to "kill" and "hurt" when he gets away again. According to the police report, Step-By-Step workers had to restrain Rensa at that time.

"I've never been scared here," Sandy Morris said. Even though the home she has lived in almost her whole life is only a hop, skip and a jump from the State Correctional Institute in Dallas, she has never felt like this.

Sandy's husband Tom is now called to check upstairs before Sandy will venture up the steps on her own. She is very aware of her surroundings and does not go outside alone to check on her 11 cows. The fear has definitely affected her life.

About 30 Jackson Township residents showed up for Rensa's

August 2 hearing before District Justice James Tupper. In the privacy of Tupper's office, Rensa waived the charges to court and may plead guilty to felony burglary, felony trespass, misdemeanor agricultural trespass, and a summary criminal mischief charge, said Scott Davis, Jackson Township Police Officer.

"Is he dangerous? Yes," said Davis, "Can he burn your house down? Yes," he told residents as they asked questions regarding Rensa and their safety after.

"Neighbors have to keep their eyes open and report anything suspicious," Davis advised residents.

Concerned residents were first told by authorities that Rensa would be equipped with an electronic monitoring bracelet within 30 days. The monitoring device will alert authorities directly if Rensa leaves the Step By Step facility. But according to District Justice James Tupper, it may take more than 30 days.

"They are working as fast as possible on getting it done," said Tupper. The holdup is due to the sentencing process. Rensa must first be sentenced in criminal court before the electronic monitoring bracelet is issued. Criminal court is not in session right now and that may delay the sentencing process.

Step By Step has been a private non-profit human agency since 1977, said Michael Berna-

tovich, Step By Step northeast regional director. He said the agency has operated more than 30 homes in Northeastern Pennsylvania in that time.

Step By Step took over operations of the home at 513 Smith Pond Rd. in the spring, said Bernatovich. Human Services Consultants had operated the home for the mentally disabled from January of 1999 until the company went out of business earlier this year.

Since Step By Step assumed the Smith Pond Rd. residence there have been two residents at the facility, Bernatovich said.

"For whatever reason, residents have chosen not to contact me," said Bernatovich. "I know they have questions," Bernatovich said he would be happy to try to answer those questions if asked.

At the Jackson Township's Supervisors meeting on Monday, Aug. 6, residents condemned Step By Step and their lack of cooperation with the police and the community. "(Step By Step) needs to brush up on the golden rule and get some communication skills. They should treat (Jackson Township) residents like they lived in their neighborhoods," said Sandy Morris.

Residents packed the meeting room on the second floor of the municipal building. "They are here because something has happened in this community they don't like," said Al Fox, supervisor.

The supervisors have asked Jeffrey Malak, township solicitor, to research and report back on group homes and what the municipality can or should do.

The township provides for residences such as group homes through a special exception in zoned areas Residential R-1 and Agricultural A-2. Malak said special exception statutes still need to be applied for by whoever is operating such a home.

Malak said he will be able to advise the supervisors on what course of action can be taken at the September meeting regarding homes operated by companies like Step By Step.

Concerned residents can contact Michael Bernatovich, Step-By-Step northeast regional director, calling 829-3477 with concerns and questions.

Blueberries

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and let the berries freeze individually. Then put them in freezer containers, and rinse the berries when taken out of the freezer to be used.

The blueberry is the leader of fruits and vegetables when it comes to anti-oxidant content according to a Tufts University and a USDA Center for Aging report by Dr. Ronald L. Prior. Anti-oxidants have been credited with reducing the effects of aging, and Jimmy Sicker likes the sound of that.

"I like blueberries," said Jimmy. "I eat probably a half pint to a pint a day."

The Sicklers bought the blueberry farm in 1972. "It's an awful lot of work," Jimmy said, but he still

"I like blueberries. I eat probably a half pint to a pint a day."

Jimmy Sicker
Farm owner

loves his blueberries.

The farm is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to pick your own blueberries. Items to bring are buckets, baskets, mosquito repellent and sunglasses. Alicia Sickler also suggests adding sun screen and a hat to the list.

Sue Aita's Easy 15 minute blueberry jam

(lower sugar recipe)
6 1/2 cups blueberries
4 1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup of water
1 box of sure gel
1 tsp. butter

Place blueberries in bowl and mush the berries, but don't puree. In a pot add water to berries and heat. In separate bowl, mix 1/4 cup of sugar and the box of sure gel together. Add mixture to pot and bring to rapid boil. Add remainder of sugar and boil for one minute. Add 1 tsp. butter to stop foaming. Takes about 15 minutes.

Blueberry Facts

- Blueberries are the second most popular berry in the U.S.
- The blueberry is native to North America and 95 percent of the world's crop is grown in the U.S. and Canada.
- Over 200 million pounds of blueberries are grown in North America every year.
- One cup of blueberries has 15 percent of the recommended daily amount of vitamin C and 14 percent of recommended fiber.
- Blueberries contain no fat or cholesterol and are low in calories.
- Blueberries were once called 'star berries' because of the star shaped calyx on the top of each berry.




POST PHOTO/HEATHER B. JONES

Alicia Sickler, 8, enjoys what she picks on her grandparents' blueberry farm.

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We are grateful for the generosity of our contributors to date. Pledges now total \$1.2 million
Now we are asking you to Help Us Better Serve our Community and raise an additional \$500,000


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- The non-denominational Trucksville Nursery School** - serving children ages 2½-5 since 1969. Enrollment stands at 140.
- Boy Scout Troop 155, Cub Scout Pack 155 and Girl Scout Troop 657** - serving nearly 150 Scouts annually.
- Back Mountain Food Pantry** - Organized in 1977, it has been housed in the former Kingston Township Municipal Building. With the completion of the new educational center, the food pantry will move to the new facility and provide much improved conditions for volunteers and the 130 local families it serves.
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