



POST PHOTOS/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Short day's journey on the ice Ice fishermen Don Hunter and Scott Nicosia spent a recent weekend day testing the waters at Harveys Lake. Accompanied by their faithful companion, who seemed unimpressed with their persistence, they trudged across the ice before setting in.

Lehman police

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With the change in coverage, the 911 call center dispatches all third shift evening calls Sunday through Thursday to a state police officer in charge of six other municipalities in addition to Lehman. Prior to the change, Lehman had one officer patrolling 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Jones said if it wasn't for the Lehman police department patrolling the area the night his business was robbed, the burglar may not have been apprehended and a cash register drawer returned.

"Lehman was driving by because of a burglary in Sweet Valley. He saw a car pull out, the (gas station) door open and heard the alarm," said Jones. He said the police apprehended the burglar down the road, where the cash register drawer was found in his trunk.

"I'm just concerned about response time," said Jones. "They'll have to prioritize the most important things. You may have to wait an hour while your house is being burglarized."

Trooper Tom Kelly, community relations officer for State Police Troop P in Wyoming, said that is the most common concern he hears from communi-

"When we found out the police were going to be cut, we took extra precautionary measures."

Bob Jones
Lehman business owner

ties faced with losing their police coverage.

"Some days we could respond and it could take two minutes. Another day it could take 30 minutes," said Kelly.

He said response time depends on how each call is classified. He said the state police use codes that correspond to severity, one for the lowest priority and three for the highest. For example, he said, a burglary that has already occurred is not high priority and a caller might have to wait a while. For a burglary in progress, though, Kelly said troopers would come immediately with lights flashing and sirens on.

Kelly said Lehman is part of a zone that includes Lake Township, Plymouth, Larksville, Jackson Township, Pringle, and

Harveys Lake. At least one state police officer has always covered these areas to assist municipal departments and cover municipalities that don't have their own police, such as Lake Township.

When one municipality or multiple municipalities don't have their own police coverage, such as Lehman and Lake townships, Kelly said the state trooper covering the zone tries to stay in those areas.

But, he said, calls that could come in from any one of the municipalities within the zone take precedence over patrolling.

Lehman being added to the state police's coverage for two shifts a week, doesn't, according to Kelly, mean additional state police will be added to the zone during those times. Kelly said if the number of calls rises, more troopers would be added.

"Nobody wants to see a local department succumb. It means a larger work load for us and people resist us because they don't want to lose their department," said Kelly.

In the meantime, Jones has installed a security camera at his gas station. "When we found out the police were going to be cut, we took extra precautionary measures," said Jones.

HL cops

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rity number and what municipality they work for.

Officers John Richards, John Young and John Edwards all were certified in other municipalities before coming to Harveys Lake, Boice said. But none, according to reports, were recertified once they started work for Harveys Lake.

Once an officer is certified, the commission sends a notice every two years to the municipality that recertification is required. It is then the police chief's responsibility to confirm his officers' status and return the notice.

Richards and Young have since left the department, Harveys Lake Borough Council

President Betty West said. Edwards is still listed as a borough employee but was deployed to Turkey with the military.

Ironically, the certification process was tightened several years ago after then Harveys Lake chief Lionel Bulford failed to take or pass some requirements. But the regulations at that time did not lay out a process by which certification was proven, and Bulford successfully challenged attempts to remove him. That situation led to the training commission promulgating the specific rules and regulations under which the present controversy erupted.

Boice defended Harveys Lake

Police Chief Jeff Butler, saying Butler is an on-the-road chief who responds to calls during his shift as well as tackling paperwork.

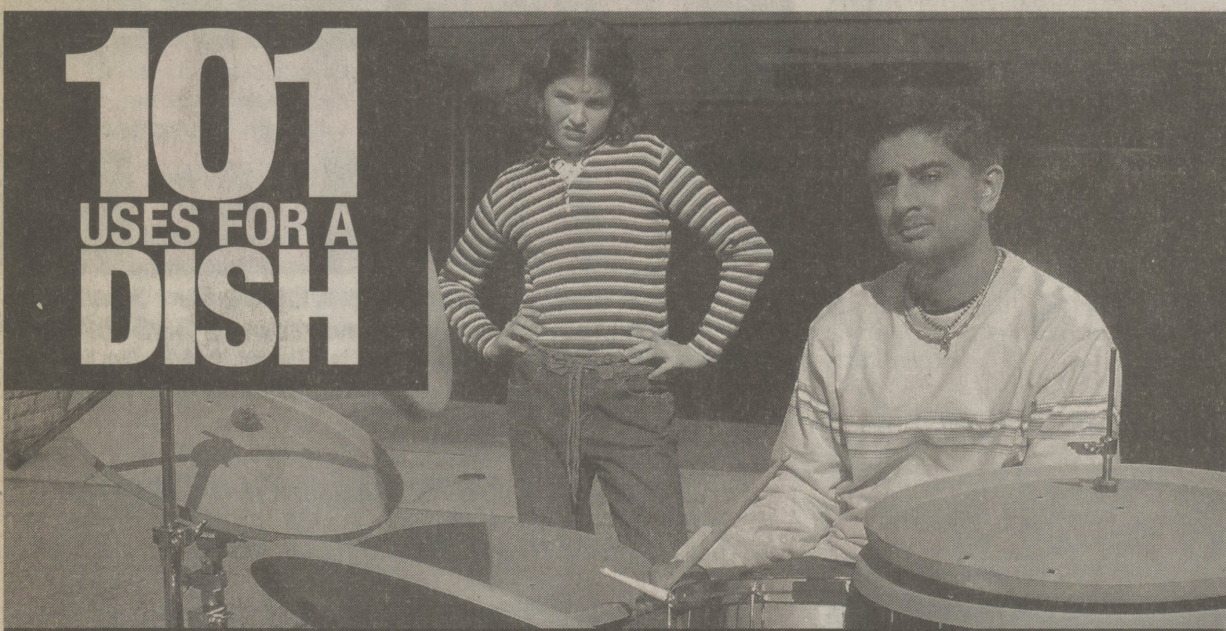
"It (the situation) gives us a chance to take measures to see that it never happens again," Boice said.

Butler did not return a telephone call seeking comment.

The certification issue first emerged in late January when it was learned two working Harveys Lake officers were not certified. Charles Musial and John Mendygral are still on the department's roster but are not working or being paid pending the resolution of their situation, Boice said.

Q: Where do you find the most Back Mountain news each week?

A: Only in The Dallas Post



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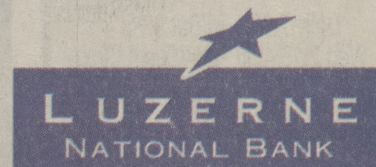
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