

Police officer cleared after investigation of incident

By SCOTT VINNACOMBE II
Post Correspondent

LEHMAN TWP. — Part-time police officer Timothy Carroll has been cleared of wrongdoing in a January incident at a Lake-Lehman High School wrestling match.

Three juveniles from Berwick vandalized a vehicle on school property and one on Old Route 115 in Lehman Township. They also threw beer bottles through the living room window of a home in Jackson Township. The investigation was undertaken after a newspaper article intimated that the students were intoxicated at the event and that Carroll had confronted them and was aware that they had been drinking before he asked them to leave the school. The vandalism occurred after they left.

Carroll was removed from the work schedule while Lehman Police Chief Howard Kocher and the supervisors investigated the incident. During the internal investigation, Kocher interviewed several police officers and employees of the school who were present during the removal of the Berwick students.

Carroll was the only one to have direct contact with the juveniles before they left the school. He said he noticed a smell of alcohol, but not specifically from the juveniles, and they did not appear to be intoxicated.

Rather than leave the gym, where he was the only security

officer, Carroll decided to ask the students to leave the school, which they did. School officials involved with the investigation agreed that there were no noticeable signs that the students were under the influence of alcohol.

Jackson Township Police Sgt. Scott Davis filed the arrest warrant/affidavit against the juveniles, in which he alleged that Carroll was aware the students had been drinking, but, according to Kocher's report, Davis did not interview Carroll, nor was he present at the high school during the event.

After reviewing the investigation, the supervisors decided not to sustain the allegations.

Carroll has returned to the police department work schedule. The supervisors and Kocher said they intend to provide additional manpower at school events, and possibly make breath testing equipment available.

There was also a heated discussion over cuts in the police department, and the substitution of state police coverage for local shifts. Board members made it clear that for several years there has been an issue with the amount of police coverage the township can afford and whether cuts should or would be made.

State police are now covering the midnight shift in the township five days a week.

Supervisor Douglas Ide, who is also the roadmaster, said because Community Improvement funds are constantly used in the

police budget, the township has been unable to pave roads for the last two years, other than those that qualify for special low-income grants.

The township is at the maximum property tax rate allowed by the state, and levies an special 2-mill tax for equipment purchases. Even so, police officers and the road crew did not receive raises or bonuses for the first time in 22 years.

In other business:

- The supervisors discussed entering into a Council of Governments (COG) with Kingston Township, Dallas Township and Dallas Borough in an effort to share services and planning. In its early stages, the cooperative effort will include traffic, aquifer, zoning and planning. Other municipalities could join the group. Under the agreement, each community would have the right to choose which activities will be shared and which will not.

- Construction of a heliport at Reading Materials at Lake Silkworth has been completed and it is ready to host a tour of local emergency services officials. The private company that built the heliport will allow it to be used in emergency situations, which should be safer than landing in open fields.

- Brian Sims and Mel Segan were appointed Lehman Township Fire Police.

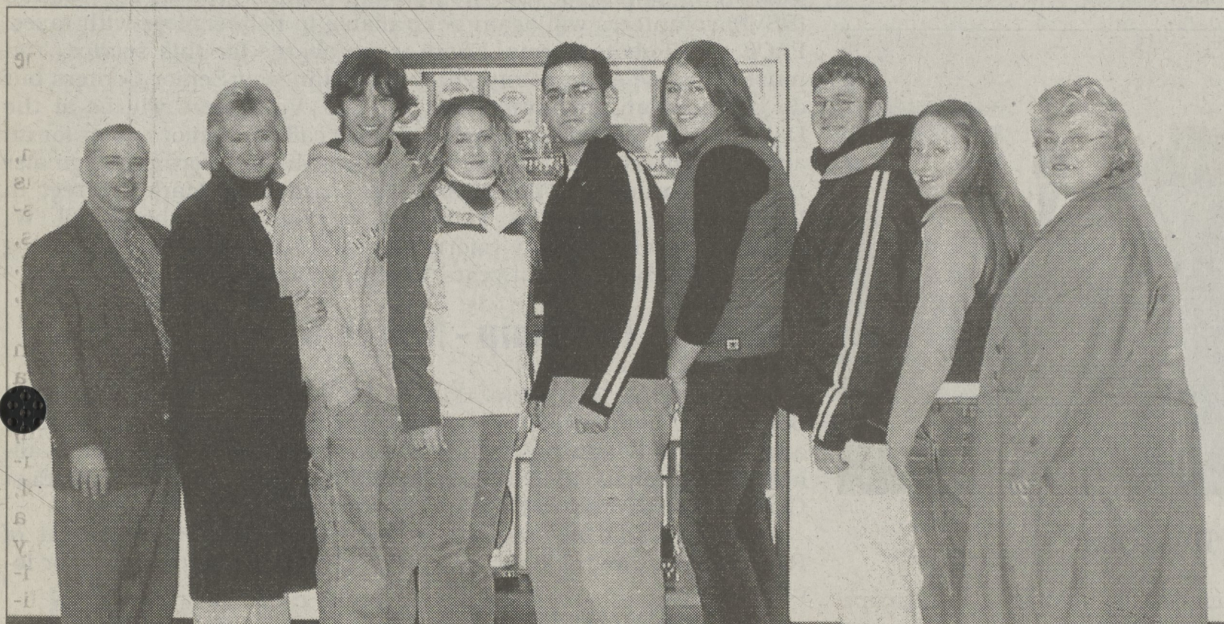
- Jim Welby was elected Emergency Management Coordinator for the township.



Trucksville UMC welcomes new members

The Trucksville United Methodist Church recently welcomed six new members. Rev. Charles Gommer interim minister, conducted the service assisted by Margaret Johnson, lay leader and Jim Jury, chairperson of the membership committee.

From left, first row: Rev. Gommer, Fern Sabol, Karen Laskowski, and Allison Hastings with Abby. Second row: Margaret Johnson, Jim Jury and Ian Hastings with Emma. Absent: Clark and Carol Rosenko.



Dallas High School students tour LCCC

Students from Dallas High School recently visited the Luzerne County Community College campus. The students were given an overview of the College and a campus tour.

From left: Francis Curry, Forty Fort, director of admissions, LCCC; Robyn Jones, Tannersville, school counselor; Chase Pennell, Dallas; Chrissy Cobleigh, Dallas; Devin Kelley, Shavertown; Sheree Senausky, Trucksville; Jason Ostrum, Dallas; Karissa Donahue, Dallas; and Barbara Deeb, Dallas, learning support instructor.

Fitch completes fellowship, begins work at Pottstown Hospital

Dr. Stacy L. Fitch, daughter of Ralph and Betsy Fitch, Dallas has successfully completed her clinical rheumatology fellowship at Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia and has accepted a position with Pottstown Medical Specialists, a multispecialty group in



Stacey Fitch

Pottstown, and Pottstown Memorial Hospital, a Jefferson affiliate. Dr. Fitch is a graduate of Dallas senior High School and Wilkes University where she obtained her Bachelor's of Science degree in Biology with secondary disciplines in Chemistry and Sociology.

Fitch attended Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and received her Doctor of Osteopathy degree in 1997. She continued her training in internal

medicine through Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and its hospital affiliates. During her training Dr. Fitch served as chief medical intern and administrative resident.

In August 2000, Fitch completed her board certification in internal medicine while attending her fellowship. Her Rheumatology training included working with top professionals in the field of Rheumatology.

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