

Horror

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the double figures. Two of the bodies are those of a missing Tunkhannock pharmacist Michael Kerkowski Jr., and his girlfriend Tammy Fasset. Kerkowski, a 1983 graduate of Lake-Lehman High School, was awaiting sentencing on charges he illegally sold prescription painkillers, when he and Fasset disappeared in May 2002. Their remains, unearthed Thursday, were identified Sunday. An autopsy showed the couple had been strangled. Lupas said a drug connection to Kerkowski's and Fasset's deaths is one of the theories being pursued, but would not comment on any drug connection to the other bodies.

He has not said how long police believe the remains of the three other people have been at the site, or identify the exact location where they were found. Luzerne County Coroner George Hudock determined Kerkowski and Fasset had been dead for at least six months before their bodies were unearthed behind the home that Kerkowski's friend, Hugo Selenski, shared with his girlfriend, Christina Strom. Authorities were led to the Strom property after investigators working another case were told an unspecified number of bodies were buried there, Lupas said. He declined to reveal details of the other



FOR THE DALLAS POST/PETE G. WILCOX

The Pennsylvania State Police have established a permanent presence at 479 Mount Olivet Road in Kingston Township, as they investigate the remains of at least five persons found buried there.

investigation. Selenski, who grew up on Dallas Township and graduated from Dallas High School in 1991, is awaiting a preliminary hearing on charges he robbed Kerkowski's father of \$40,000 that belonged to Kerkowski Jr. Police have not named him or Strom as suspects in the homicide investigation.

One of Selenski's cousins, Brian Higdon, said he doesn't believe Selenski is a mass murderer.

"I'm totally shocked. The whole family is shocked," Higdon said. "He said he is innocent. He doesn't know what is going on."

Higdon said he had been staying at the couple's house when police arrived to look for bodies. He said Selenski reacted with disbelief when he read the search warrant.

"He said, 'You're looking for bodies? Go ahead, dig up the yard,'" Higdon said. "He offered them shovels and rakes. ... He couldn't believe it."

Lupas said investigators have "leads" regarding the identity of the newly found remains and were working to confirm the information. He cautioned the identification may take "quite a bit of time."

"Obviously bones are part of the remains we're looking at. That's why we brought in the anthropologists. ... They can be helpful in giving us a gender and race," Lupas said.

Lupas said review of missing person reports is a "logical place" for investigators to start. He did not provide further details, and did not say if investigators have obtained reports from departments other than Wilkes-Barre.

Lupas said an "extraordinary" amount of resources are being dedicated to the case. Five assistant district attorneys, six county detectives and 15 to 20 state police investigators are working the case along with Hudock and three forensic experts.

The experts, Dr. Michael Baden, pathologist and chief

medical examiner for the New York State Police, Anthony Falsetti, a University of Florida forensic anthropologist, and Lowell Levine, a forensic dental expert, were called in because of their specific areas of expertise, he said.

U.S. Attorney Tom Marino also visited the crime scene Tuesday. Lupas said Marino has offered assistance of federal prosecutors, but they are not involved in the investigation at this point.

Lupas said investigators have made significant progress in the case, but he cautioned the investigation will take time. He is asking anyone with information "pertinent to the activity" at the home to contact police.

"Investigators are out conducting numerous interviews and are pounding the pavement, making a lot of headway with the investigation," he said. "We have a firm grasp on the situation and the public should not be overly alarmed."

Board honors retiring teachers

By ERIN YOUNGMAN
Post Staff

DALLAS — At Monday's meeting, the Dallas School Board recognized the retirement of several long-time Dallas teachers.

Gilbert Griffiths, Superintendent, thanked Mick Weyman, middle school teacher, Maryann Jesse, 6th grade teacher, and Valeria Rothrock, 4th grade teacher, for their numerous years with the district. Between them, the three teachers amassed a combined 94.5 years in the classroom.

Griffiths presented Weyman and Rothrock (Jesse was not present) with a combination desk clock and plaque.

"It's been a memorable time for each of them," said Griffiths about the teachers many years with Dallas. "And we hate to see that kind of lineage leave the Dallas School District."

"I hope by seeing this (plaque) every day, you'll remember the district and the many students that you taught," said Griffiths.

Also at the meeting, Paul Degillio of Foreman Burkavage, provided updates on the completion of the middle school renovation project.

He said two out of the 14 contractors working on the project have completely "punched out," leaving 12 that still have "quite substantial balances" to finish up.

Degillio reported the six new tennis courts initially scheduled to be built last fall are now nearly complete. The lights and fencing are up and the finishing surface coat went on this week.

The Dallas Elementary School security vestibule project will begin next week and will be completed well before the next school year. The addition will mean visitors to the building will be required to enter through a door leading directly into the school's office.

Degillio said the project is expected to take a couple of weeks to complete.



FOR THE DALLAS POST/PETE G. WILCOX

Members of a Pennsylvania State Police forensic team sifted through buckets of dirt looking for evidence left behind from a double homicide discovered June 5 in Kingston Township.

Recount

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menced Monday and were still ongoing Wednesday. The Kingston Township recount requested by Republican candidate Sean McAndrew is, however, complete showing McAndrew still trails Yankovich by three votes.

Jeff Box still leads with the most votes, followed by David Jenkins and Yankovich. Chris Concert will be on the Democratic ballot in November along with Republican Neil Allen, who squeaked onto the Democratic ballot with 13 write-in votes. Ten write-ins are re-

quired to get on the ballot.

Although the recount didn't affect the outcome, vote totals have changed. Original numbers provided by voter services put Box at 570 votes, a number that has gone down to 566. Jenkins originally had 495, a number that has gone down to 490. Yankovich originally had 414, a number voter services reports is down to 407, but still separates him from McAndrew by three votes.

Kevin Jordan, Director of Voter Services did not return messages asking for comment.

Legion elections coming up

Daddow-Isaac Post 672, The American Legion will hold their annual election, Friday, June 13. Time for voting will be 5 to 8 p.m. All Legion offices and three director offices are open. Proof of membership is required.

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