

Hayley Zavislak, Hunlock Creek, and Joseph Daniels, Sweet Valley, waited for the Easter egg hunt to begin at Commonwealth Telephone. More egg hunt photos, on page 3.



THE POST

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'AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY' AT HARVEYS LAKE

Dallas man was witness at notorious trial

A killer from a "good family home atmosphere with religious training."

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK
Post Correspondent

HARVEYS LAKE — No modern television drama has a better plot than the story that played out at Harveys Lake 70 years ago this summer. It had all the elements: a love triangle, a handsome leading man and a dastardly deed.

In the summer of 1934, Harveys Lake was a place for summer camping, amusement and large church picnics, recalls Danny McCue, 89, of Dallas. It was not a place for murder, or so he thought.

"It was really hopping out there. It quite a place," McCue said recently. The Larksville family of 13 children set up a tent each summer at Rood's Campground, just up West Point Avenue from Sandy Beach. The 19-year-old Danny came to the Harveys Lake campground to have some fun. He also helped his father and brothers with an ice-delivery and hauling busi-

ness at the lake in the summer. "We bought the ice from Bert Brian, who had an ice house on a pond near Meeker," said McCue.

He never intended to become a star witness in a murder case that drew national attention.

The rainy evening of July 30, McCue went down to Sandy Beach. "I thought I would see what the roller skating was all about. I saw them in the canoe." McCue saw a young couple paddling off of the Sandy Beach shore. Rev. G. Elston Ruff, pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Shavertown, saw more.

Testimony from the subsequent murder trial, published in The Dallas Post on October 5, 1934, noted that Rev. Ruff was one of the last people to see Freda McKechnie, of Edwardsville, alive.

According to the story, a party of young people was enjoying a roller skating party at the Sandy Beach rink. Rev. Ruff and his wife were present. Sometime after 9:30 p.m. Rev. Ruff looked out the window toward the bath house to see a young woman and

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FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Danny McCue held a copy of The Dallas Post front page from August 3, 1934, announcing the arrest of Robert Edwards in the death of his girlfriend, Freda McKechnie. McCue found the dead woman's clothes and watch, and testified at the trial.

70 years ago, nation's eyes were on the sensational case

For a number of reasons, the July, 1934 murder of Freda McKechnie created headlines across the nation. Perhaps the greatest factor was its startling parallels to Theodore Dreiser's novel, "An American Tragedy," which was published to a mixture of praise and condemnation only nine years earlier.

In the book, Dreiser told the story of Clyde Griffiths, who seduces Roberta Alden, an employee of the collar factory where he works, but falls in love with a rich girl who seems to offer a path to the life he desires. After Roberta, who is pregnant,

See TRIAL, pg 2

Little League will stand by decision

11-year-olds not assured of a spot in Majors

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff

BACK MOUNTAIN — The board of directors of Back Mountain Baseball decided last week to let stand a decision that will keep some 11-year-old players from starting the 2004 Little League season on Major League teams.

"We're confident we're doing the right thing," said Jack Snyder, president of the league. He said the change had been contemplated for several months, and discussed at meetings beginning in January.

Snyder said most of the passed-over players would be able to advance to a Major League at some point during the season.

"They'll be the first to be called," he said, as coaches fill vacancies created by injuries, vacations or other demands on players' time.

Parents whose sons had been left

See LITTLE LEAGUE, pg 3

Neighbors say factory noise keeps them up

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. — Some residents of Orchard View Terrace have been losing sleep because of a steady "thumping" sound coming from Pulverman Enterprises on Lower Demunds Road.

A frustrated group gathered to voice their complaints at the April 6 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Dr. Michael Kovalick read a statement reflecting the mutual feelings of his neighbors. The thumping sounds they are hearing are more apparent at night when background

See NOISE, pg 3

Police Claim Solution Of Murder At Harvey's Lake

Prisoner Says Fear Prompted Use Of Blackjack

"Smiles for the ladies, Never tears; Bobby's conquests will last for years."

They wrote that in the Edwardsville High School class annual in 1929 when handsome, broad-shouldered, clean-looking Robert Edwards was graduated from high school.

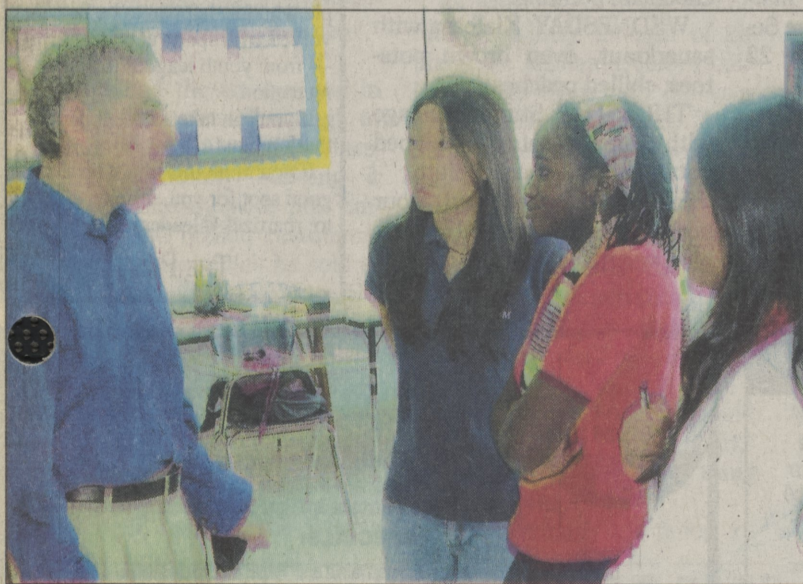
Today Robert Edwards, 21, is in Luzerne county prison awaiting arraignment for the murder of Freda McKechnie, 26, at Harvey's Lake last Monday night.

His conquests, harmless and innocent at the beginning, have ended in tragedy.

This headline in the August 3, 1934 Dallas Post announced the arrest of Robert Edwards in the murder of Freda McKechnie. It was tame compared to what came later during the trial.

Robert May builds a business from his boyhood dreams

By RONALD BARTIZEK
Post Staff



Robert May, producer of The Station Agent and executive producer of The Fog of War at The American International School of Muscat discussing The Fog of War with students.

TUNKHANNOCK — Two films produced by SenArt Films, a company founded by Robert May of Franklin Township, will be featured at the Dietrich Theater during its Spring Film Festival.

A month ago, May was in the Middle East, presenting the films to a select audience of college and high school students, filmmakers, journalists and government officials.

He brought the films — "The Fog of War" and "The Station Agent" — to Oman at the request of the U.S. Department of State, as part of its cultural programs division.

"The Fog of War" enabled the Embassy to showcase Americans' ability to debate issues freely, hold leaders accountable, analyze and re-think assumptions, and attempt to learn from history,"

wrote U.S. Ambassador to Oman Richard Baltimore in an unclassified report dated April 1.

The movie, an introspective interview with former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, won the Academy Award for best documentary feature film of 2003. It has also been a popular and critically-acclaimed success, as is "The Station Agent."

While May has a passion for producing films that tell great stories, he also runs a business, and knows that economic reality will dictate the range of his accomplishments.

"We're a commercial entity," he said recently during a telephone interview from his New York office. "To continue what we're doing, we have to make money."

He credits his focus on financial success to his parents, who grew up during the

See DREAMS, pg 3



Homecoming Queens selected for State Pageant

Whitney Adams, Homecoming Queen at Dallas High School, and Jackie Lovecchio, Homecoming Queen at Lake-Lehman High School, were recently selected State Finalists in the America's Homecoming Queen State Pageant. Whitney and Jackie were selected from Homecoming Queens across the state to participate in the two-day pageant which was held in Lancaster March 27-28. The girls competed for scholarships and awards, and were judged on a personal interview and evening gown competition. They are pictured in their evening gowns.

Church community supports stricken siblings

By SANDY PEOPLES
Post Correspondent

DALLAS TWP. - From a distance, the children at the Trinity Learning Center all looked pretty much the same. They were walking in circles, squealing and laughing, as they participated in the recent mini-march to raise money to fight cystic fibrosis.

Most of them had no clue about the disease they were marching to help stamp out. Some couldn't even pronounce it. But two little classmates, Andrew and Nicholas Matcho, are painfully reminded every day what the

disease is all about and how it affects them and their family. Nevertheless, the afternoon was filled with games, happy children and prizes provided by several area merchants and parents.

"This is our sixth year to host this event," said Diane Kerestes, director of the learning center. "We do it to show our support for the Matcho family and to help raise money for research. It's such a cruel disease."

Six-year-old Andrew and 4-year-old Nicholas have recently returned from a three-week stay at the Children's Hospital in Philadelphia.

"It breaks my heart to see them suf-

fer and have so many trips there," Kerestes said.

"I am quite emotional about all of this today," said Donna Matcho, mother of Andrew and Nicholas. "It is unbelievable to me that the staff here goes to such great lengths to do this mini-march every year."

Nancy Guyette, a teacher at the school, chaired the event and has worked tirelessly to obtain raffle prizes and items for gift bags for the kids.

"I am so grateful for every dollar

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