

The DALLAS POST

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Rotary Club honors first responders for heroism

Second annual event held at Appletree Terrace recognizes police officers, firefighters and emergency medical techs.

By REBECCA BRIA
Staff Writer

The second annual Dallas Rotary Club First Responders of the Year Awards was held on Thursday, May 14, at Appletree Terrace at Newberry Estates in Dallas.

The event honors the police officer, firefighter and emergency medical technician of the year, as well as the first responder of the year. In addition, a lifetime achievement award is given to recognize someone who has served an extended period of time as a police officer, firefighter or emergency medical technician.

Joseph W. Schmider, director of the Bureau of Emergency Medical Services for the Pennsylvania Department of Health, was the guest speaker. Close to 200 people attended the awards dinner which was held during National Police Week 2009, which was May 10 through May 16.

Rotary Club members first came up with the idea for the awards two years ago as a way to recognize associates of the 14 fire departments, 13 emergency medical services departments and six police departments of the Back Mountain.

Sen. Lisa Baker (R-Lehman Township) and Rep. Karen Boback (R-Harveys Lake) are co-sponsors of the Rotary's First Responder of the Year Awards. The awards are self-supporting through funds solicited from Back Mountain businesses and individuals.

First Responder of the Year

Officer Carl Puskar, Jackson Township Police Department

Officer Carl Puskar was off duty on October 28, 2008 when he observed a vehicle that matched the description of one belonging to an alleged burglar who robbed several residential homes and homes under construction in the Back Mountain. Puskar called for backup by cell phone because he was concerned the suspects had a police scanner. Assistance was provided by Sgt. Scott Davis, also of the Jackson Township Police Department.

Puskar followed the vehicle into a Jackson Township housing

development and observed three suspects stealing property. One suspect surrendered and the other two fled on foot. Puskar apprehended a second suspect in the woods.

Police Officer of the Year

Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Investigation Section, Troop P, Wyoming Barracks: Lt. Richard L. Krawetz, Trooper First Class Charles Prula, Trooper First Class Michael Boone, Trooper First Class Joseph Plant

This unit citation was awarded for the dedication, professionalism and commitment to the Back Mountain community and working with investigators from Back Mountain law enforcement agencies.

Lt. Richard L. Krawetz serves as the unit commander of the Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Investigation Section, Troop P, Wyoming Barracks. The Criminal Investigation Section provides police departments with the services of a criminal intelligence officer, a fire marshal, a polygraph examiner and forensic science personnel. Krawetz's excellent supervision of his section resulted in the prompt and professional utilization of his manpower, which has supported crime prevention efforts of the Back Mountain.

In February of 2008, information about a white-collar theft at the Dallas School District was reported to the Dallas Township Police Department. Trooper First Class Charles Prula was assigned to assist the investigative team. As a team effort, numerous search warrants were executed and bank records were obtained, resulting in interview admission obtained by the investigators. The subject of the investigation pleaded guilty to the felony theft charges.

The Forensics Services Unit, an important part of the Criminal Investigation Section of the PA State Police, was requested to process a crime scene on Lower Demunds Road in Dallas in June 2008. Trooper First Class Michael Boone was assigned to the investigation and collected blood droplets from the crime scene that led to identification of DNA. The DNA was searched in



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Shavertown Fire Chief Gary Beisel looks over his award for being named Fireman of the Year.

the national database and a suspect was identified. A search warrant for the suspect's blood was executed and an arrest is pending.

The Dallas Township Police Department was involved in the investigation of a number of burglaries in September 2008. Trooper First Class Joseph Plant was assigned to the investigation to provide the services of the Forensic Services Unit. Plant photographed and casted tire tracks at the crime scene. The castings were similar to other cases in the Back Mountain area. The vehicle was located and numerous burglaries were solved.

Firefighter of the Year

Chief Gary E. Beisel, Shavertown Fire Department

Fire Chief Gary E. Beisel responded to 60 percent of all emergency calls received by the Shavertown Fire Department in 2008. His service to the department requires the commitment of almost 1,100 hours per year. In addition, Beisel has been responsible for obtaining federal and state grants that have saved the community approximately \$1.5 million. Beisel has been a member of the department for 39 years and has served as fire chief, which he was elected for at age 25, for 30 years.

EMT of the Year

Robert G. Smith Sr., Franklin-Northmoreland Township Ambulance Association, Franklin

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Bob Besecker, of Dallas, was awarded a lifetime award for over 50 years of service to the community with the Dallas Fire and Ambulance Company.

Relay is heading back to WB

By REBECCA BRIA
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An annual Back Mountain event to raise money in the fight against cancer has been absorbed into its parent fundraiser.

According to Carol Marino, community income development specialist for the Wyoming Valley Unit of the American Cancer Society, the Back Mountain Relay for Life has been disintegrated and will merge with the Wyoming Valley Relay for Life beginning this year.

Relay for Life of the American Cancer Society is a fundraiser held throughout the year in locations across the country. Teams of eight to 15 people pay a \$100 fee and walk around a track or path



JONATHAN J. JUKA/
DALLAS POST FILE PHOTO

Carolyn Leja plays frisbee at the 2008 Back Mountain Relay for Life.

for a 24-hour period. Formed in 2003, the Back Mountain Relay branched off of the Wyoming Valley Relay and was held each year on the campus of Misericordia University.

Marino says Commonwealth Telephone Enterprises, formerly located in Dallas Township, provided a strong

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Back Mountain Primary Election results posted

DALLAS BOROUGH

Mayor - Timothy J. Carroll (R)

Council - Robert Edgerton Jr., Jack Appel, Brian Stevens (R)

Tax collector - Mark W. Van Etten (R)

Judge of elections, Ward 01 - Linda McDermott (R)

Judge of elections, Ward 02 - Hazel L. Garris (R)

Inspector of elections, Ward 01 - Marie Belasco (R)

Inspector of elections, Ward 02 - Timothy F. Herbert Sr. (D); Norma Crispell (R)

DALLAS SCHOOL DISTRICT

School director - Karen Z. Kyle, Maureen Banks Matiska, Richard G. Coslett and Charles Preece (D); Richard G. Coslett, Karen Z. Kyle, Charles Preece and Maureen Banks Matiska (R)

DALLAS TOWNSHIP

Supervisor - Elizabeth Martin (D); Philip L. Walter (R)

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Susan Roese casts her vote at the Lehman Township Fire Hall in the Primary Election on Tuesday.

