



In Boyertown

Communication Center is dead

By Fred G. Phillips
Times Editor

The Boyertown Area Emergency Communications Center is dead.

When a post-mortem is done on the remains of the dispatch center, the cause of death will be money -- about \$36,000.

The center dispatches fire, police and other emergency services for Boyertown, Bechtelsville and Bally boroughs as well as Douglass (Berks), Colebrookdale, and Earl townships.

Late last year Boyertown announced in what had become an almost yearly event, that it would leave the group and go with Berks County radio dispatch.

After a number of public and private meetings were called to attempt to save the center, member municipalities began looking into what it would take to keep the center operating without Boyertown.

Chief Todd Heckman of Douglass (Berks) and Colebrookdale District Chief Larry Mauger began working to refine an operating budget without Boyertown's contribution.

"We came up with a new budget and met with the representatives of the member municipalities," said Chief Heckman. Heckman is also head of the center's governing body.

"No one was willing to go

higher," Heckman said. "All the members were there except Earl Township. No one wanted to spend more to save the communications center."

Heckman said he and Mauger figured it would take \$169,238.40 to keep the center on the air in 2002.

"They wanted to save the center but the money was just not there," he said. "I asked for a lot but ..."

The communications center will close its doors March 31 and all of the communities will go on the Berks County radio system on April 1, 2002.

"That's fitting, April Fool's Day," the chief added in dismay.

Heckman and Mauger had figured that the municipalities would pay more for emergency dispatch services, but in some cases members would pay more than double their current dues.

Earl, Bechtelsville and Bally would each have to find \$11,940 for the new year. They currently pay \$5,700 each.

The new budget also called for Colebrookdale District to pay about \$46,000 and Douglass to pay about \$28,700. Boyertown would have had to kick in just \$9,900 for the remainder of its share.

Heckman said he told the head dispatcher at the center Monday that the center would no longer be functioning after March, 2002.



Berks-Mont Photo by Fred Phillips

Work has begun on plans to build an outdoor classroom at the Washington Elementary School near Bally. Principal Dr. George Giovanis on the tractor helps some of the 29 volunteers who moved 30 tons of stone and five pallets of pavers for the first phase. See story inside.

Inside:

- Ground Zero pictures
- The Cub
- Calvalcade of Bands
- Fire Prevention special

Times Capsules

At Ground Zero

Berks-Mont Newspapers, Inc. General Manager, James Davidheiser, is at Ground Zero in New York City.

Davidheiser volunteered to serve with the Salvation Army units on the scene and was selected to go with a group from the Allentown area.

He left for the assignment Sunday afternoon.

Davidheiser is stationed with a unit at Church street near World Trade Center building #5 which is about one block from where demolition has begun.

Davidheiser called to say he was serving eggs and pancakes as well as handing out medical supplies to the rescue workers.

"It is almost impossible to talk about the devastation," he said. He added that security is very tight.

He also wanted people to know that Pastor John Brown of Shepherd of the Hills is also there.

Davidheiser will have a complete report on his experiences at Ground Zero in next week's newspaper.

White Cane Days

The Boyertown Lions White Cane Days will be held October 12-13.

The annual event is when the Lions, in their yellow "Boyertown Lions" vests, will ask for a special donation.

All of the money raised by this event will benefit the Delaware Valley Eye Bank and the Pennsylvania Eye Research.

Crime Watch

Members of the Earl Township Crime Watch will meet October 9 at 7 p.m. in the Earl Township building.

Heritage Fest

The 20th Annual Heritage Festival and Pennsylvania German Day will be held October 6 & 7 at Berks County Heritage Center on Red Bridge Road off Rt. 183 about one half mile south of the Rt. 222 exit.

In addition to all of the great things planned for the annual event, the GoodLife TV Network and Comcast will present, "Flea Market Mania."

Antique expert Christopher Kent will do free appraisals. Just bring a special antique or collectible between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Also, there will be a canal tender living history walk, covered bridge tour and more.

There will be antique cars, arts and crafts, the Reading K-9 unit, student horse riding demonstrations as well as special demonstrations, lecture, walks and special events for the kids.

The event is rain or shine and there is a \$2 parking fee. Call 610-374-8839 for more information.



Berks-Mont Photo by Harold Hoch

The 42nd Annual Cavalcade of Bands marched into Boyertown last weekend thanks to the Boyertown Music League. See more photos on Page 22.

Businesses donate \$2,081 to Red Cross

The Red Cross will get an extra \$2,081 thanks to donations from 173 area businesses.

The money comes from a Berks-Mont Newspapers flag advertising campaign which asked area businesses to contribute. Money collected would go to the Red Cross for their rescue and recovery efforts in New York

City. The flag campaign was just one of several ways local businesses and residents have been able to show their support for those killed and injured in the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center and show their support for the recovery efforts which have continued since.

Halloween Parades

Halloween Parades have been scheduled in Boyertown, Gilbertsville, Bally and Oley.

In Gilbertsville, the parade will be October 15 at 7 p.m..

In Bally, the parade will be Oct. 16 at 7 p.m. and in Boyertown the parade will start at 7 p.m. on Oct. 20.

The Oley parade will also be held Oct. 20 but will begin at 1 p.m.

A full list of area parades, times and dates will appear in next week's newspaper.

Federal-Mogul files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

Federal-Mogul Corporation has filed for Chapter 11 relief under the bankruptcy code.

A spokesman for the firm which employs 330 people in its Boyertown facility, said that none of the local jobs will be affected by the bankruptcy move.

In short, Chapter 11 allows the company to reorganize and remove a firm that has been the cause of asbestos liabilities.

Kasey Bussell, spokesperson for the company, said Federal-Mogul acquired a British firm in 1988 which apparently used asbestos in building materials.

Federal-Mogul also bought the liabilities when it bought the foreign firm.

Settlements, court costs and



other costs attributed to the asbestos liabilities came with a \$351 million price tag in 2000. She said estimates for 2001 were already at \$350 million when Federal-Mogul filed for Chapter 11.

"This action, taken primarily to resolve asbestos-related claims against the company, should also preserve our asset base, protect

the interests of our commercial creditors and shareholders, and ensure our operations maintain their competitive advantage in serving customers," she explained.

"The restructuring allowed under Chapter 11 will enable Federal-Mogul to operate normally," she said. "It will be business as before and we will have the funds available to take advantage of new technology."

The Boyertown facility has been in operation since 1945.

Federal-Mogul is headquartered in Southfield, Michigan and is an auto parts manufacturer. The Boyertown plant produces lighting components for the automotive industry.

Rock quarry hearing grinds on in New Hanover Twp.

By Diane Van Dyke
Berks-Mont Writer

New Hanover Township zoning board members and residents heard yet another session of testimony on Sept. 27 from Uday Patankar, a permit expert for the proposed quarry Gibraltar Rock, Inc.

Gibraltar also introduced a proposed expert in environmental assessments, Paul White of Walter B. Satterthwaite & Associates, Inc., West Chester.

The owners of Gibraltar, brothers John and Laurence Silvi, II of the Silvi Group Companies, are seeking a special exception to operate a quarry and related businesses, asphalt and concrete facilities, on a 163-acre site located along Route 73 between Route 663 and Church Road.

Township solicitor Robert Brant commenced the hearing with cross-examination of Patankar regarding the depth limitations for a quarry.

"There is no limitation on depth," said Patankar. He explained that depth would depend upon the geological structure as well as the stability of the walls since a quarry is a "reverse cone" structure.

Of the 30 different quarry applications on which he has worked, Patankar said the deepest quarry was 750 feet.

Resident Roger Buchanan of Kulp Road also questioned Patankar about the requirements for a quarry operator to restore water to adjacent property owners if the quarry impacted the water supply.

"The regulatory requirements

under the non-coal surface mining act require a quarry operator to replace water," said Patankar. He also said that a quarry operator would want to be a good neighbor.

Patankar said that the onus would not be on the homeowner but the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection to determine whether the quarry operations affected the water.

"More than likely the quarry operator would provide an alternate form of water," said Patankar.

"I'm looking for something more than likely because there are some who are less than likely," said Buchanan, who wanted a written agreement with the quarry owner to ensure that water would be supplied.

See QUARRY, page 7.

Boyertown debates over prayer continue at district

By Diane Van Dyke
Berks-Mont Writer

To pray, or not to pray, that was the question debated by the Boyertown Area School Board of Directors at recent school board meetings.

Member John R. Crossley asked fellow board members on Sept. 18 to consider saying a prayer before each meeting and having the students enrolled in the Naval Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps program present colors.

School board solicitor Jeffrey Sultanik agreed with Crossley at a subsequent meeting on Sept. 25 that prayer before a board meeting has not been declared illegal

although it could be challenged.

"The board has the prerogative to send it to the policy committee (for a formal policy)," said Sultanik.

Even if the board members determine that they do not want an official policy to incorporate a prayer in their meeting procedure, they would still need a motion, said Sultanik.

"Prayer would be a deviation from your procedure and you need to have it embodied in a motion," said Sultanik.

Currently, the board holds a moment of silence following the pledge of allegiance at the beginning of each meeting.

Several board members were opposed to creating an official

policy.

"I'm so sick of policies and papers for everything," said member Michael Kulp. "I feel very strongly about prayer. Having a policy on it would turn it into a rote procedure."

"If there is a policy, we have to do it," said Lucie B. Smith. "It is not a separation of church and state."

"The moment of silence is not in a policy - it was voted on as a board," said President Gayle V. Buckman.

The board unanimously agreed that all nine members should be present for discussion on a motion

See PRAYER, page 6.