

Murder

From Page One

Systems. Karen Gerholt, a native of the Hopewell area, was employed at the McDonald's in Bedford Square. In addition to being survived by her sons, Damon and Dalton, and daughter Kensley, Karen is also survived by a local grandparent, Mavion Moffat of Wells Tannery.

The alleged November 9 incident involving John Gerholt Sr is not the first scrape with law enforcement officials for the Huntingdon County man. On October 31, an indirect criminal contempt complaint was filed through the Court of Common Pleas in Bedford County by his estranged wife, and Gerholt was found in contempt only days later on November 4.

Gerholt was also found in contempt of another court order on August 28, 2006, in Huntingdon County. In addition, he entered a plea of "nolo contendere" in Huntingdon County to violating a court order on August 18, 2006.

A total of five criminal incidents falling between 1992 and 2006 in Huntingdon County involving Gerholt stem from multiple charges of driving under the influence as well as propulsion of missiles onto roadways and resisting arrest. In nearby Mifflin County, charges of simple assault and harassment were logged in 1994 by state police in Lewistown against Gerholt.

Karen Gerholt's funeral service was held Friday, November 14, in Broad Top City followed by burial at Grandview Cemetery, Saxton. Her obituary can be found on page B3 of the "News."

some 199,750 outstanding stock options of Graystone to acquire shares of Graystone common stock. In addition, the agreement provides that the Tower shareholders will receive a special cash dividend of \$1.12 per share prior to the effective date of the transaction.

Despite the recent economic downturn affecting many of the country's banking institutions, the press release states that "both institutions have produced steady and progressive quarters of financial performance and growth. The combination will produce a dominant institution in central Pennsylvania and northern Maryland."

The merger will likely take place sometime in the first quarter of 2009 after a shareholder's meeting is held to vote on the proposed merger

primary focus will now be the rehabilitation of existing structures as well as the relocation of several components of county personnel.

Monday's press release states that for the purpose of the at-risk list, Preservation Pennsylvania defines endangerment as "threat of demolition, significant deterioration, vandalism, alteration, and/or loss of historic setting." The preservation group publishes the list to draw statewide attention to the plight of Pennsylvania's historic resources, to promote local action to protect resources and to encourage additional state funding for historic sites.

Other resources named to Preservation Pennsylvania's 2008 at-risk list are Pennsylvania's metal truss bridges; the Pennsylvania Turnpike; Schenley High School, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County; Kemmerer Park Carriage House, Jim Thorpe, Carbon County; Pennhurst State School and Hospital, East Vincent Township, Chester County; Roosevelt Middle School, Erie City, Erie County; and Pennsylvania Railroad Station, Newport, Perry County.

The Pennsylvania At Risk list is released in partnership with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Located in Harrisburg, Preservation Pennsylvania is a statewide, nonprofit, educational and advocacy historic preservation organization and serves as a statewide voice on historic preservation issues. For more information, visit the Web site at www.preservationpa.org.

At a town meeting held by the commissioners Sept. 4 at the Wells Tannery Community Building, Commissioner Dan Swain said that he and fellow commissioners Bonnie Mellott Keefer and David Hoover, in response to residents' pleas to save the building, would take steps toward looking into razing just the jail's circa 1900 addition.

At the commissioners most recent town meeting held Nov. 4 at the Warfordsburg Senior Center, the three county officials said that they have scrapped their plan to construct the two-story office building that was part of their upgrade plan. Instead, they said, the upgrade's

Casino Business Up Despite Economy

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) - Business is apparently still booming at Pennsylvania's casinos despite the nationwide economic downturn.

Gaming industry analysts say Pennsylvania was the only East Coast state to post higher numbers last month than at the same point last year. Data shows revenue is up 30 percent over last year, as of Oct. 31.

Officials say part of that may be because the gambling industry in Pennsylvania is young and still growing. Casinos in other parts of the country are struggling.

Las Vegas slot machine revenues are down 12 percent. Casinos in Atlantic City, N.J., have gone down 19 percent since last year.

In Pennsylvania, officials say that four of the five casinos that have been open more than a year are doing better than at this point last year.

drawing charges instead of allowing a district justice to dismiss them, they could be refiled.

Police say they'll charge Lynch with making a false report.

Lynch was chained on Nov. 7 without a phone. She was freed seven hours later after yelling to a neighbor that she needed cigarettes.

Zearfaus had been charged with simple assault, false imprisonment and harassment.

Head Start Students Explore Nature

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Students in the Bedford/Fulton Head Start classroom in Fulton County learn firsthand about nature through the science center in their classroom.

With two hermit crabs, a wolf spider, garden spider and praying mantis, the science center most recently focused on bug exploration. The children have been learning about the animals' eating habits and where they live.

In one activity, the children observed the differences between the wolf spider and the hermit crab, discussing hard and soft shells and the differences in the eyes of the two animals.

"It is important that children learn to respect and care for their environment and the animals within that environment," explains Stacey Feaster, Head Start child development manager. "This activity developed the children's curiosity and taught them about taking responsibility for their class pets."

The Fulton County classroom is a collaboration of Bedford/Fulton Head Start, which is operated by Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries, and the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit II. Allegheny Lutheran Social Ministries (ALSM) is a not-for-profit faith-based organization affiliated with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Allegheny Synod. Celebrating its 60th anniversary this year, ALSM employs more than 500 staff and serves an eight-county area in Pennsylvania, including Bedford,

Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset counties.

ALSM operates retirement living communities, in-home personal care services, Senior Daily Living Centers, counseling, Growing Years Early Learning Centers, Kid Stop before-and-after school care programs, Head Start, Early Head Start and Family Centers of Bedford County.

Head Start and Early Head Start provide families many opportunities to learn and interact together. Free educational, health, nutritional and family services are available to qualifying families. Programs are available to income-eligible families/children, and children with identified special needs may also be considered, regardless of income.

"Head Start allows children an opportunity for quality learning, allowing children to enter school ready to learn and prepared to achieve," reports Tonya Carson, Head Start director. "Studies show that this window of opportunity is brief; by age five, 90 percent of the brain is developed. If a child enters kindergarten behind, he or she will most likely stay behind."

In Bedford County, the Head Start program has numerous partnerships, including the Tussey Mountain, Chestnut Ridge and Northern Bedford school districts for preschool programming. In addition to a partnership with the Tuscarora Intermediate Unit II in Fulton County, Bedford/Fulton



Malachi Gress and Elijah Ebersole, students at the Fulton County Head Start classroom, closely examine a wolf spider in the science center of their classroom.

County Head Start also partners with the Southern Fulton School District to provide preschool programming. Federal and state funds make these partnerships possible.

Early Head Start programming is also available in Bedford County. This family-focused program offers free educational, health, nutritional and family services to help children have a better start on life through home visits and parent-child opportunities. The program is available for pregnant parents and parents of children ages birth through three years.

For more information about Bedford Fulton County Head Start or Bedford County Early Head Start, call 814-623-3200 or 1-877-257-6543.



Fulton County Head Start students Mireya McGaha-Eastep and Laci Kellerman observe a hermit crab in the science center of their classroom. ⓑ

Natural Gas Rush Stirs Environmental Concerns

By Mary Esch

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - Advanced drilling techniques that blast millions of gallons of water into 400-million-year-old shale formations a mile underground are opening up unconventional gas fields touted as a key to the nation's energy future.

These deposits, where natural gas is so tightly locked in deep rocks that it's costly and complicated to extract, include the Barnett shale in Texas, the Fayetteville of Arkansas, and the Haynesville of Louisiana. But the mother lode is the Marcellus shale underlying the Appalachians.

Penn State geoscientist Terry Engelder believes it could supply the natural gas needs of the United States for 14 years.

But as word spread over the past year that a 54,000-square-mile shale field from southern New York to West Virginia promised to yield a trillion dollars worth of gas, environmental alarms were sounded.

Would gas wells damage water wells? Would chemicals poison groundwater? Would fabled trout streams be sucked dry? Would the pristine upstate reservoirs that supply drinking water to New York City be befouled?

"This gas well drilling could transform the heavily forested upper Delaware watershed from a wild and scenic natural habitat into an ugly industrial landscape that is forever changed," said Tracy Carluccio of Delaware Riverkeeper. She'd like a moratorium on drilling to allow an inventory of natural areas to be done first.

So loud were the protests in New York that Gov. David Paterson directed the Department of Environmental Conservation to update its oil and gas drilling regulations to reflect the advanced drilling technology, which uses millions of gallons of water and poses waste-disposal challenges.

Now, while new drilling rigs sprout in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, development of the Marcellus in New York is on hold until next year, while the DEC holds hearings and drafts regulations.

Gas developers say environmental alarms are exaggerated and New York could miss out on much-needed capital investment and jobs if it takes a heavy-handed regulatory approach.

"These are surgical operations utilizing the most advanced drilling technology known to man," Tom Price Jr., senior vice president of Chesapeake Energy, told state lawmakers in Albany at a recent hearing.

The heaviest Marcellus Shale drilling activity is believed to be in Pennsylvania, where regulators say they need to hire dozens more inspectors to monitor the rapidly proliferating drilling sites and add capacity to treat waste water from the wells.

Concerns over impact on water wells and communities has prompted a state Senate panel to schedule a hearing for Tuesday.

Pete Grannis, New York's environmental commissioner, said there are 13,000 active gas wells in upstate New York and there has never been a documented case of groundwater contamination resulting from gas drilling.

The technology that has raised

concern involves horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. Thousands of wells have been drilled and fracked in New York in the past 50 years, Grannis said. But refinement of the technology makes it feasible to extract gas from deeper, denser shales.

The latest technology, known as "slick water fracturing," uses far more water than earlier methods - 1 million to 5 million gallons for each fracking operation, Grannis said. That fact, and the proximity of the Marcellus to New York City's watershed, prompted the regulatory review.

Deborah Goldberg is an attorney for the environmental law firm Earthjustice. She said the water used to frack wells is mixed with chemicals that pose human health hazards, but federal laws don't require disclosure of them.

However, New York and Pennsylvania regulators promise full disclosure of all chemicals, which industry insiders say are not hazardous. John Pinkerton, chairman and CEO of Range Resources, said used fracking fluid is no more toxic than what goes down the drain at a hair salon.

Roger Willis, who owns a hydraulic fracturing company in Meadville, Pa., said thousands of frack jobs have been done in rock formations above and below the Marcellus shale in New York state with no damage to aquifers.

Willis said frack fluids are isolated from groundwater by steel and concrete well casings. The well bore goes thousands of feet deeper than potable water supplies, through multiple layers of rock, until it reaches the gas-rich shale. Then it turns sideways and continues horizontally for several thousand feet.

The fracking fluid is blasted into the shale, opening cracks that let trapped gas escape. The fractures are held open with sand mixed with the fluid.

Flowback pipes collect the gas and used fracking fluid, which now has a high concentration of salt from the ancient sea where the shale sediments formed.

The well casings that are meant to protect groundwater have been known to fail.

"There are going to be some problems, although they're not commonplace," said Bryan Swistock, a water resources expert from Penn State. "Laws on the books are adequate to take care of that."

The biggest problem is that there aren't enough state inspectors to make sure drillers follow regulations, Swistock said. "There has been discussion of raising permit fees to hire more inspectors," he said.

Disposal of salty fracking water is problematic because of limited capacity in existing treatment plants, which can't remove salt but can only dilute it to an acceptable level for discharge into rivers.

Alternatives include new recycling technologies and injection well disposal.

More than 5 billion gallons a year of frack water is shot into the earth for permanent disposal in Texas, said Gene Brock, president of STW Resources of Midland, Texas. "That's water that could be reclaimed and utilized," Brock said.

STW provides portable desalination plants for drilling sites.

While New York and Pennsylvania require that waste water be stored in a holding pond with an impervious liner until it's disposed of, critics fear such ponds could leak, or overflow in a rainstorm.

Earthjustice wants regulators to require storage of all wastes in steel tanks.

The Delaware and Susquehanna river commissions regulate water use in much of the Marcellus region of New York and Pennsylvania.

Susan Obleski, spokeswoman for the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, said the agency expects the gas industry could require up to 28 million gallons of water a day from the Susquehanna watershed when it ramps up.

"To put it in perspective, golf courses take about 50 million gallons a day, and nuclear power plants use 150 million gallons," Obleski said.

The concern isn't how much water is used, but where and when it's taken. Withdrawals during dry seasons or from small streams in remote areas would have a greater environmental impact than in other cases, Obleski said.

Tom Rathbun, spokesman for the

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, said the agency favors recycling and reuse of wastewater and encourages withdrawals from streams during high-flow periods such as early spring.

"One of the most expensive items in the drilling process is water, so the less we can use, the better," said Scott Rotruck, a Chesapeake executive. "We're finding ways to use less water, transport less water, and find ways to reuse it."

Besides water concerns, the Natural Resources Defense Council is worried about air emissions from the hundreds of tanker trucks that will haul water to and from each well, and the clearing of large land areas for each site, said NRDC attorney Kate Sinding.

"There are reports of well and surface water contamination, human and animal health impacts, and air quality impacts" at drilling sites around the country, Sinding said. "No regulatory agency has done the work to compile all of those, so you just have a lot of individual reports collected over time. To us, all of those reports substantiate the potential risks."

Would-Be Pa. Governors Already Lining Up For 2010

By Peter Jackson

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) - Pennsylvanians won't elect their next governor for two years, but signs are popping up all over that the 2010 campaign is already in progress.

In Miami, state Attorney General Tom Corbett and Patrick Meehan, the former U.S. attorney in Philadelphia, were among gubernatorial prospects from across the country honored as "VIP guests" at the Republican Governors Association meeting this week, according to GOP consultant Mark Holman, who also attended. Both veteran prosecutors have been publicly coy about their political intentions.

In Harrisburg, state Revenue Secretary Tom Wolf, a former York County businessman and generous Democratic campaign donor, said he was stepping down after nearly two years in Gov. Ed Rendell's Cabinet to pursue "another option in public service." Wolf refused to elaborate, but has previously expressed interest in running for governor.

In Philadelphia, businessman Tom Knox, who pumped \$12 million of his own money into his 2007 mayoral campaign before he lost the city's Democratic primary to now-Mayor Michael Nutter, has already put up a "Knox for Governor" Web site.

But those are only the most visible manifestations of what could be a crowded campaign.

"The race for governor begins probably ... right after the new year," said Terry Madonna, a pollster and professor from Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster.

In the GOP, Corbett's political capital was recently reinforced by his decisive statewide re-election victory in a year when Pennsylvania voters dealt Republican presidential nominee John McCain a resounding defeat.

Corbett had the benefit of leading

a high-profile investigation into allegations that state legislators and their aides funneled millions of dollars of public money and resources into political campaigns. A dozen people connected to the House Democratic caucus face criminal charges, and Corbett has said he anticipates more arrests.

Meehan, as chief federal prosecutor for southeastern Pennsylvania, has good-government credentials of his own.

He cracked down on corruption in Philadelphia's city government and oversaw the four-year probe that resulted in scores of criminal charges against once-powerful Sen. Vincent Fumo, D-Philadelphia, whose trial is continuing.

Another potential Republican candidate is Pat Toomey, the former congressman who nearly unseated Democratic Sen. Arlen Specter in the 2004 primary and is now president of the conservative Club for Growth in Washington.

"He hasn't ruled it out," Toomey spokeswoman Nachama Soloveichik said Friday.

On the Democratic side, two elected county executives - Dan Onorato of Allegheny County and Don Cunningham of Lehigh County - have been quietly raising money and courting supporters for months.

Onorato was re-elected last year, while Cunningham, Rendell's former secretary of general services, faces a re-election campaign next year as the gubernatorial race heats up.

Also seriously considering a campaign is Jack Wagner, who was re-elected as state auditor general in the Nov. 4 election. The former state senator from Pittsburgh said he would make a decision in the first few months of 2009.

The primary will be in May 2010 and, he said, "you would certainly have to be out front publicly a year in advance of that."

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