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THURSDAY WEEKLY

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McCONNELLSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

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Two Get Prison Sentences

Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

A Hancock, Md., man and a Big Cove Tannery resident were sentenced last Tuesday in connection with two unrelated incidents involving a Warfordsburg area convenience store heist and the indecent assault of a teenage girl.

Nineteen-year-old Nathan Lee Skidmore of Hancock was ordered by Court of Common Pleas Judge Carol L. Van Horn to complete between four months and 23 months in the Franklin County Prison after entering a guilty plea to one misdemeanor count of theft by unlawful taking-movable property.

Skidmore, who was represented by defense attorney J. Gregory Hannigan, was originally charged with robbery, criminal conspiracy, theft, reckless endangerment and simple assault by physical menace as a result of the armed holdup of the Warfordsburg-based Exxon on July 31, 2007. Approximately \$1,711.11 in cash was stolen from the store's cash registers and from a drawer held in the business' back office.

A jury was unable to come to a conclusive answer on Skidmore's involvement during the robbery. As a result of the hung jury, charges against Skidmore were refiled. He opted to enter a guilty plea in late October. At the time, he told court officials he drove to the store and took money from a cash register operated during the evening hours by store employee Joshua Crouse and the drawer stored in the back office.

Crouse, of the Needmore area, was also charged in conjunction with the robbery. Charges of robbery, criminal conspiracy and theft by unlawful taking-movable property were waived, and he is reportedly awaiting trial.

In the meantime, Rodney Eugene Hull of Big Cove Tannery appeared in court last Tuesday for sentencing on one misdemeanor count each of indecent assault and the corruption of minors. Hull had originally been charged by investigators with the Pennsylvania State Police, McConnellsburg substation, with three counts each of the corruption of minors, indecent assault without the consent of another and indecent assault of a person less than 16 years of age.

The charges against Hull stem from three incidents involving a 13-year-old girl between July 4 and July 29 at a Thompson Township residence. Hull reportedly inappropriately touched the girl through and under her clothing. After the final episode, the 31-year-old man apologized to the victim for what he had done.

Hull was sentenced by Judge Van Horn on December 9 to between one month and 11 months in the Franklin County Prison for indecent assault and an additional six to 12 months for the corruption of minors



McConnellsburg Junior Girl Scout Troop 898 members, left to right, Cloe Richards, Kaylee Gress, mom Lori Fortney, helper Hunter Souders and junior scout Michaela Rosenberry wrap some of the 1,800-plus Christmas gifts that St. Stephen Catholic Mission will distribute to more than 600 children here next week. The gift-wrapping session, one of several, took place Monday afternoon at St Stephen's. Girl Scouts with Cadet Troop 456 were also on hand to help wrap gifts. The two troops are led by Marie Shimer, Joan Mellott and Kristy Garlock.

Catholic Mission Works To

"Make Glad The Hearts Of Children" On Christmas Morning

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

STAFF REPORT

As we pause to reflect on the upcoming holiday season amidst a world torn by war and economic strife, it is, perhaps, fitting to remember the words of the late missionary, Amy Carmichael, who was a famous Irish Christian missionary and founder of an orphanage and a mission in India, said, "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

Never have the words from half a world away felt so close to home as they do at St. Stephen Catholic Mission and Salvation Army in McConnellsburg. At the local mission, sisters Margie Monahan and Martha Burbulla have undertaken a labor of love that is large enough to intimidate a team of workers let alone two women who are making it their mission to "make our children happy on Christmas morning and to show them love and care from their community."

In that spirit of Christmas, the two women will be distributing more than 1,800 gifts to more than 600 children before the holiday.

This year marks the 18th year

of the mission's gift-giving program, but it's a little different this year. What started out 18 years ago, as a program for about 50 children has, this year, grown to a project for more than 600 children.

Although in recent years, the mission has served about 300 children, this year Fulton County Services for Children, its advisory board and the local Xi Eta Lambda Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority asked the mission to take over a Christmas for Kids program that had been run by the agency and its partners for more than 30 years.

According to Jean Snyder, Fulton County Services for Children director, "The Christmas project had just become too big for our agency to handle and still maintain effective day-to-day operations within the agency. We just didn't have enough staff to do it, so we asked Sister Margie if there was any way she could help. She said "yes" without hesitation and took on our nearly 300 children normally served and graciously added them to her 300. It has turned out to be a win-win situation for all involved, but especially for our county's children and families during these tough economic times."

In return for the favor, Sny-



Sister Margie Monahan

der asked previous Services for Children donors to give to the mission, and board members, Girl Scouts and sorority members have also offered their assistance with gift-wrapping to the mission.

According to Sister Margie, the mission has an application process for the gifts that includes the children's wish lists and the rest of it she attributes to the generosity of our county's communities. She talks of the many churches and businesses that have taken names promising to fulfill the child's wish list - names

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FCCM Foundation Kicks Off \$2.5 Million Campaign

Fundraising to support the patient services building project

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

The board of directors of the Fulton County Medical Center Foundation announced last week its \$2.5 million "Continuing the Dream" campaign to support the new patient services building project at Fulton County Medical Center.

With over half of the goal already committed, the campaign for the new patient services building will run through June of 2010 when the 16,000-square-foot addition will be completed. Fulton County Medical Center Auxiliary was the first to pledge to the project with a \$20,000 gift.

The new patient services building is phase two of a 25-year plan. This project will enable the Medical Center to consolidate its six off-site offices into one loca-

tion on its 22-acre campus. This will, in turn, create significant operating cost savings while creating better efficiencies for patients, physicians and the community at large.

"Our vision of a medical campus to care for our community is becoming a reality as each new phase of our plan is completed," said Jason F. Hawkins, president and CEO.

The new project will feature specialty physician offices and exam space as well as procedure rooms. This is an important element in recruiting additional specialty physicians to the area, as well as retaining current specialty physicians who already care for the community.

"The state-of-the-art facility and expanded equipment from the last campaign enable us to care for this community with the highest quality atmosphere combined with the dedicated and highly qualified staff. I look forward to working in the new patient services building; it will be a great addition to serving the community," states Dr. Robert Kaneda. Dr. Kaneda has been a caring for the community for more than 20 years.

The patient services building will result in improved customer service and convenience. Outpatients will no longer need to travel across town for labwork or tests following an appointment with a specialty physician because they will be directed to the labs adjacent to the specialist's offices. The new addition will be attached to the current Medical Center to provide easy access for all patient services.

The two-story addition will house specialty physician services and home health services on the first floor, with administration, human resources, a computer lab, patient billing, a community room and community relations and development on the second floor.

The large community room designed on the second floor of the new facility will enable community groups to use a large meeting space to host classes, seminars, lectures, special meetings and open forums.

When asked how successful this campaign will be in the current economic climate, Helen Overly, who led the most recent hospital campaign, said, "It's the best place people can invest and re-invest their money, leaving a legacy that will give back to the community for generations to come. The Medical Center is a major employer in our area and these jobs will remain here. Gifts and pledges arrive on a daily basis and we are confident that this campaign will be as successful as the original 'Vision to Reality Campaign' that raised over \$7 million locally to build the new hospital and nursing home, which was on time and on budget."

Spence Perry, FCCM foundation board chair, states, "This campaign is the first of many initiatives planned by the foundation. This spring the foundation will host the annual dinner auction with half of the proceeds slated for this project and 50 percent earmarked for the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life. The foundation also looks forward to working with the FCCM Board of Directors on a collaborative effort to award scholarships to local students pursuing careers in the health field so that we can continue to recruit and retain healthcare workers locally."

For more information about the campaign, naming opportunities, the new addition and other foundation initiatives, contact Cheryl A. Brown, director of community relations and development at the FCCM Foundation at 717-485-6842 or visit the

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Needmore Home, Business Destroyed In Blaze

Propane tanks explode in fire; no one injured

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

A Needmore area man safely escaped his home last Tuesday evening after a propane explosion caused the rear of his residence that also housed the homeowner's welding business to erupt into flames.

Nine fire companies, including three from Fulton County, were dispatched to the 8:20 p.m. fire at the 3771 Pleasant Grove Road home of Mark Kazda. Primary responders from the Needmore Volunteer Fire Co. arrived at the scene of the blaze in Belfast Township to discover flames shooting through the roof of the multi-level building.

Assisting Needmore were firefighters with engines and tankers from McConnellsburg, Hustontown, Breezewood and Hancock as well as tankers from Berkeley Springs and Great Cacapon, W.Va., and Clear Spring and Little Orleans, Md.

In speaking with the "News,"

Needmore Fire Chief J.R. Sigel reported the initial explosion was detected by Kazda's nephew, who happens to reside in a trailer adjacent to his uncle's residence. Kazda and his nephew were both able to get to safety, but one of Kazda's two dogs ran back into the building after firefighters arrived and succumbed to the fire.

Sigel stated the propane explosions were tremendous as an individual residing three-quarters a mile from Kazda heard blasts and felt his house shake.

"It's a shame we were unable to contain the fire," said Sigel, who added the business's propane tanks were blown in two, a steel door and frame were blown off from the force of the explosion and steel beams were warped as a result of the extreme heat. The building, which was the former site of a ethanol plant, was a total loss but was fortunately insured.

Sigel stated the exterior building was unique and different as a result of Kazda's special touch with windows and welding. His business, known as BB Express, reportedly worked with window



The home and welding business of Needmore area Mark Kazda located at 3771 Pleasant Grove Road was destroyed in a fire last week that has been linked to a malfunctioning propane heater.

framing for skyscrapers and had only recently received a shipment of \$80,000 in materials for an upcoming job.

Kazda is temporarily residing with neighbors and will be staying with family over the holidays. The Fulton County chapter of the American Red Cross was called to the scene to assist in Kazda's needs.

Pennsylvania State Police Fire Marshal M.B. Gordon of the Mc-

Connellsburg barracks visited the fire scene last Wednesday to determine both the cause and origin of the December 9 blaze. Gordon's final report indicates the origin of the fire has been traced to a room under construction that was being heated by a propane heater. It is, however, undetermined as to what caused the heater to malfunction due to the destruction of the heater in the fire.

DEATHS

- Keefer**, Howard, 60, McCbg.
- Klock**, Gerald, 77, Chambersbg.
- Lowans**, Maurice Jr., 84, Greencastle
- McCullen**, Annis, 77, McCbg.
- Peck**, Martha, 90, Ft. Littleton
- Walters**, Carol, 67, Bedford

OBITUARIES, Page B3

