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Morton, Novak Place First In District Elks Hoop Shoot Competition

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THURSDAY WEEKLY

The Fulton County News

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109TH YEAR, NO. 6

McCONNELLSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

FEBRUARY 5, 2009

Rouzer Gets More Jail Time

Sentenced in Franklin County Friday

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

A Harrisonville man has been sentenced to an additional five years in a state correctional institution, bringing his overall minimum sentence to approximately 20 years for his involvement in a hired hit-man plot and the attempted murder of Breezewood resident Randy Walters.

Forty-one-year-old Gregory Rouzer of 1291 Possum Hollow Road entered a "no contest" plea to criminal solicitation to commit murder before Judge Richard Walsh in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas Friday.

The charge stems from an arrangement made by Rouzer from a jail cell in the Franklin County Prison to have Walters killed in order to prevent his testimony from being aired in an attempted murder that occurred in February 2008 in Fulton County.

In exchange for the plea agreement, a sentence of between five and 10 years in a state prison was levied against Rouzer, who was represented in court by defense attorney Eric Weisbrod.

The newest sentence imposed brings Rouzer's overall minimum time in jail to just under 20 years. The maximum jail term is 60 years.

Rouzer had been previously sentenced in December in Fulton County by Judge John R. Walker. He was granted 10 months credit for time already served, but the original sentence read 14 years and seven months to 50 years in connection with a guilty verdict from area jurors on attempted murder and various related charges.

Rouzer maintained throughout the attempted murder trial he had visited the home shared by Walters and his girlfriend, Marian Wertz, last February after Walters had issued him an invitation to go squirrel hunting. The visit erupted into a shootout of sorts between Rouzer and Walters, who suffered several bullet wounds and required medical treatment. Following the incident, Rouzer disappeared from public sight for almost one week.

He resurfaced in the parking lot of Chambersburg Hospital with ex-girlfriend Mildred

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DEATHS

- DeHart**, Nancy, 60, Marion
- Dixon**, Adam, 15, Greencastle
- Hepburn**, Annabelle, 57, Hancock
- Jennings**, Allan, 82, Chambersburg
- Rosenberry**, Clarene, 75, Chambersburg
- Ward**, Opal, 86, Hancock

OBITUARIES, Page B3



Punxsutawney Phil Was Right On The Money



This snowy scene along Meadow Ground Road Tuesday morning is proof positive that Punxsutawney Phil called it correctly on Monday when he predicted that winter will stick around another six weeks. Snow overnight Monday greeted the county in the morning but caused few problems for commuters and schools. Cold temperatures are in the forecast for the middle of the week, but the National Weather Service calls for a warming trend as the week ends and the new week begins.

Police Crack Hustontown Burglary Ring

Six charged in 24 county incidents

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

Six Hustontown area men were charged this week following an ongoing and extensive investigation by criminal investigators with the Pennsylvania State Police, bringing to a halt a rash of break-ins and thefts that primarily occurred in northern Fulton County but also spilled into bordering counties.

Twenty-five-year-old Max Harold McQuait III, already being held in the Franklin County Prison, currently faces an

array of charges spanning 24 different incidents in Fulton County, with the first dating back to June 2007 and the most recent occurring in mid-December 2008. Trooper James Lupey of the McConnellsburg state police barracks told the "News."

Aiding McQuait and allegedly playing a role in some of the burglaries and thefts in Fulton, Huntingdon and Bedford counties were Christopher George Shotts of 3823 North Clear Ridge Road; Brian Allen Cutchall, 379 Pitt Street; Jonathan Lee Kauffman of 7475 Waterfall Road; Joshua Michael Weaver, 3404 North Clear Ridge Road; and Samuel Gardner Ranck III, 353 Pitt Street.

Max McQuait III

Docket sheets indicate the first in a long line of formal charges against McQuait began rolling in on January 13. McQuait was charged through Needmore-based Judge Carol Jean Johnson and District Judge Wendy Mellott of McConnellsburg in connection with cases that were initiated on December 30, 2008, and January 6, 2009. Unsecured bail totalling \$35,000 was posted for the charges involving theft by unlawful taking-movable property, receiving stolen property, criminal conspiracy-theft, criminal mischief and access device fraud.

Trooper Lupey indicated the charges against McQuait through Judge Johnson's office involve two separate thefts from Town Hill Salvage yard in mid-June 2007 as well as an incident at Breeze Auto Sales along Route 30 near the Bedford County line. Brian Cutchall, Lupey added, has also been charged with the two incidents at Town Hill, while Joshua Weaver allegedly lended McQuait a hand at Breeze Auto Sales.

The multitude of charges against McQuait, however, have been filed through the Magisterial District Judge Devin Horne based on the repeated occurrences in the northern end of the county that left many residents wary of coming home to an empty house.

• In criminal complaints and affidavits of probable cause, Trooper Lupey states the first confirmed theft in the north occurred between January 14, 2008, and April 9, 2008, at the Barry Stofflet farm located along McKinleyville Road in Taylor Township. In an interview with state police, Stofflet indicated he had previously made an arrangement with McQuait, who was to haul away items that had been marked with blue spray paint. Stofflet and McQuait would then split the money received for the scrap metal. A variety of farm equipment, farm machinery, stoves and scrap metal, with a value of \$2,990, were cashed in, but Stofflet never received his share of the money.

• A short distance away, between February 15 and June 2008, in a field located on the northern side of Iron Bridge Road in Taylor Township and adjacent to Shotts' residence, an aluminum boat belonging to William Ray Voegel Jr. was stolen. The boat was valued at

See BURGLARIES, Page A2

Toddler Dies In Fort Loudon Inn Blaze

Coroner links death to smoke inhalation

By Chanin Rotz-Mountz
STAFF WRITER

A 19-month-old Greencastle toddler succumbed to smoke inhalation last Tuesday morning during a blaze at the historic Fort Loudon Inn that emanated from the second-story room where the girl was staying overnight with her mother and older sister.

Franklin County Coroner Jeffrey Conner reported following the January 27 fire an autopsy was completed at Lehigh Valley Medical Center in Allentown for 19-month-old Kayla Jo Myers. The findings revealed Kayla suffered from smoke inhalation after she became separated from her mother, Stacey Pine, and older sister, 2-1/2-year-old Jasmine Myers, during the fire.

The family had spent the night at the inn, constructed during the 1700s, with friend Dennis

Fox. Fox had reportedly been residing at the inn for approximately two months. After the Myers children had gone to sleep, the adults spent the evening hours talking to a friend in emotional distress.

Jasmine Myers had been pulled from the smoke and fire-filled room by Fox. Fox then returned to his room on the second floor and pulled out Pine, who was still frantically searching for her youngest daughter.

Both Pine and Jasmine Myers were transported from the scene to Chambersburg Hospital where they were treated and released for smoke inhalation. Fox refused treatment.

Also receiving treatment at Chambersburg Hospital were two firefighters from the Maudsenville Goodwill Fire Co. One firefighter was injured when a ceiling fell in, and the other individual was injured trying to get to him.



Kayla Jo Myers, 19 months old, died of smoke inhalation in a fire at the Fort Loudon Inn last Tuesday morning.

At the scene throughout the tragic event was local fire marshal M.B. Gordon, who heard the call for assistance while on his way to work at the McConnellsburg state police substation.

According to Gordon, he was the second to arrive on the scene after fire companies were dispatched shortly after 7 a.m.

See FIRE, Page A2

German Minister Leads United Church Of Christ

Reception to be held for Rev. Valeria Schmidt

By Jean Snyder
STAFF WRITER

When Valeria Schmidt was a little girl, she thought she might like to be an opera singer. Years later, Rev. Schmidt still loves to sing, but her career plan as an adult has brought her to the ministry and from Germany to the United States.

Schmidt, born in Croatia and raised in Germany, has only delivered three sermons in Fulton County, and says that she likes the small-town, quiet life. The church will hold a reception for its new minister on Sunday, February 15, from 2-4 p.m. at the church, and everyone, regardless of church affiliation, is invited to meet the new pastor.

Her road to McConnellsburg has been circuitous. While working as a pastor in D'sseldorf, Germany, the German citizen reached out to the Penn Central Conference of the United Church of Christ and found there was an opening in the McConnellsburg/Fort Loudon Parish. The Penn Central Conference has a close partnership with her church in Germany, and they have "full communion," which means they respect each other's

theologies, according to Schmidt

She visited here in May and returned in August for an interview. She was offered the job and the rest is history. In the past three weeks since her arrival, Schmidt has just "been trying to meet people, getting to know parishioners better and spending time just listening" as she formulates her plans for her new churches, St. Paul's United Church of Christ in McConnellsburg and Trinity United Church of Christ in Fort Loudon.

Although McConnellsburg may be new to Valeria, the United States is certainly not. Schmidt's father was a German diplomat and, growing up, her family moved quite often, living in Washington, D.C., when her father was assigned to the German Embassy and in Manhattan when he served at the United Nations.

Although she received two theological degrees in Germany, she also studied on a scholarship at Duke University's Divinity School in Durham, N.C.

Schmidt says she was drawn to the ministry from studying the theology of Martin Luther, who was a German monk, theologian, university professor and was considered the father of Protestantism. He was a church reformer whose ideas influenced the Protestant Reformation and



Rev. Valeria Schmidt

whom many believe changed the course of Western civilization.

She became interested in Latin, Ancient Greek and Hebrew because the New Testament was written in Ancient Greek while the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. She is fluent in English, German and French. Along with those interests, she said she was drawn to the ministry because of her faith. "I was always sure God existed and was supporting me," she said.

For now, Schmidt says she "wants to see her church grow" and she is interested in bringing in more young people "to keep

things lively." She says she is looking forward to meetings with the Church Ministry Committee and hearing its ideas on what it feels are the church's needs. She says the main focus of her ministry is preaching and planning worship services, working with children and families, and pastoral counseling. In her statement on ministry, she said, "As a person of faith it will always be my aim to do God's will, to be just and merciful and loving to all His creation."

In her spare time, she enjoys singing, practicing the guitar, reading, watching movies and exercising. She is residing in the UCC parsonage and awaiting the arrival of her belongings from Germany.

Schmidt has a brother who is studying at the University of Chicago and a sister who lives in Germany. Her parents are retired and spend time at their homes in Bonn and Berlin, Germany.

And now back to that singing plan. Her new church does not currently have a choir and Rev. Schmidt is very anxious to bring a choir back to the church. She invites all who may be interested in singing in the choir to be in touch with her. She may have given up the dream of being an opera singer, but she clearly has not lost her love of music and singing.

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