

120 Retreat Ave.
Hartford, CT 06106
Sept 4, 1986

A letter to the people of Hegins:

It is the way of life that you have always known, here among the beautiful mountains and valleys of Pennsylvania. It is the teaching of your fore-fathers, - the teaching you first heard when you were very young, as young, in a way, as the very young birds who were stopped in their flight or kept from flight by gunshot, on Labor Day.

But, animals feel pain. Birds feel pain. Every living creature with a nervous system feels pain.

Enclosed is a small donation. May it be used for the maintenance of your parks, and serve at least as a little apology for whatever unkindness we showed you, on Labor Day.

Martha Fitzgerald



Andrew Keintzelman
Assistant Editor
The Citizens Standard
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17983

Opinion

A6

Letters to the editor

Help avert disaster

To the editor:

In a few weeks, the Pennsylvania legislature will recess for the summer months and will not reconvene until two weeks after Labor Day — two weeks after an event which, for many Pennsylvanians, represents the worst of what our state has to offer: the annual massacre in Hegins (Schuylkill County) of 7,000 to 9,000 birds in the name of fund raising and "sport."

The Coleman Memorial Shoot is not the only live bird shoot in Pennsylvania, but it is, by the organizer's own boast, the world's largest. It also involves the highly objectionable practice of hiring children to kill the wounded birds. In spite of nationwide publicity and outrage, hundreds of letters to

the governor and Pennsylvania legislators, editorial outcries by a dozen newspapers, and strong support among many Pennsylvania Representatives, HB 455 is still stalled in the Judiciary Committee chaired by Rep. William De Weese, who evidently has no intention of releasing the bill onto the House floor for a vote.

If the legislature fails to act on this bill within the next few weeks, it is safe to say that the bloodbath in Hegins will be repeated for the 54th time — and this time around it may include harm to humans as well, if another explosive confrontation occurs in Hegins.

It is still not too late to avert a disaster. Contact the governor and your own representative, asking them to support the bill, and Rep. William De Weese, asking him to release the bill from committee

before the legislature recesses at the end of June. For information on the issue, contact: Trans-Species Unlimited, P.O. Box 1553, Williamsport, Pa. 17703.
Dr. George P. Cave, President
Trans-Species Unlimited

Sincere thanks

To the editor:

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for your cooperation and the publicity you gave our open house held June 10.

Approximately 700 to 800 people visited our office. There were many favorable comments.

Thanks again for your support in helping make our open house a success.

Morris F. Good
Postmaster
Williamsport

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RTS
 o High School golf team
 Cedar Crest — Page 17

URES
 onial communities relied
 blacksmiths — Page 2

AGES 4 SECTIONS

sements	10, 11
less	7
ified	28-31
cs/Feature	22
rial	4
ily	25, 26
l	9, 10
aries	27
s	17-21

scrupulous haulers on vacant lots in crowded city neighborhoods. He acknowledged that the letter was confusing.

Steiner explained that state regulations allow the authority to accept trash from medical facilities if

ones who wouldn't. We couldn't see us fighting it. We wanted to get the monkey off our back." Spannuth told Brightbill the members had decided to let the doctors and hospitals take up the fight. "Frank can't take all the
 (Continued on page 2)

Animal Rights Group Claims It Took Traps

By **JOSEPH KOSACK**
 Staff Writer

HEGINS — An animal rights activist group known as the Animal Liberation Front has acknowledged responsibility for stealing pigeon traps from Hegins Park in an attempt to halt the annual Fred Coleman Memorial Shoot on Labor Day.

Jill Maurer, a member of the Lehigh Valley Animal Rights Coalition, reported Tuesday morning that a spokesman for ALF, identified only as "Ben" asked her to relay a message to media acknowledging his group's responsibility for taking 26 collapsible pigeon traps and spraying graffiti on park equipment.

Maurer said that the AFL decided to take action to put an end to the pigeon shoot after authorities refused to halt what is considered the largest single-day, live-bird shoot anywhere.

She said the AFL had appealed to the Schuylkill County Court but had been "laughed out of court."

With no legal means to thwart the Coleman Shoot, she said ALF members decided to raid the grounds and

release the pigeons. When they were unable to find the birds, she said, they opted to gather as many pigeon traps as possible in an effort to halt the shoot.

It went on as scheduled, however. "We cannot understand why live pigeons are used when clay pigeons can be used," Maurer said. "The pigeons are shot, then kids twist their heads off or stomp them into the ground."

Herman Coleman, Hegins, secretary for the Labor Day shoot, said in an earlier interview that if the birds weren't shot in the park, they'd probably be poisoned because they are a nuisance.

"I don't argue with those that are opposed to the shoot — they have a right to," said Coleman. "But I don't know what other purpose pigeons have in this world."

"We don't force anybody to watch the shoot, nor do we pay any shooters to come," said Coleman. "This is an area where there has always been a lot of pigeon shoots. They've existed

(Continued on page 2)

Claims It Took Traps

(Continued from page 1)

since before I was born, and people still tolerate them in this area."

According to Ed Hauck in an interview before the shoot, the 52-year-old event draws 5,000 to 7,000 spectators, who gather to enjoy a homecoming-like atmosphere and watch more than 250 shooters, some of who come as from as far away as Great Britain.

"This park was built entirely from funds generated from the shoot; not one dollar of taxpayer's money was ever used in the construction or maintenance of the park," Hauck said. "Over the years, over a quarter of a million dollars has been raised for this park from the shoot."

Maurer, however, found the park and its appearance less than desirable.

"The park is a slum, for crying out loud," she said. "I'm sure a lot of it (the money raised) is pocketed."

Their action in Hegins is not the first time the ALF has left its mark on private property, Hauck said. In May 1984 five members stole videotapes of experiments with apes from the laboratory of Dr. Thomas A. Genarelli, clinical head of the injury center at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and disrupted ongoing experiments, reports stated.

The stolen videotapes were shown to organizations throughout the country, including a public showing in the Art and Ethnic Center in Pottsville.

Melvin Stutzman, police chief of

Hegins Township, said Tuesday that no charges have been yet been filed, but that an investigation is continuing. He said he thought it unfair that recreational equipment used by children should be used for ALF's statements. "Stop the slaughter now. ALF" was sprayed on a scoreboard and "ALF" painted on a basketball court backboard, he said.

Maurer said "Ben" told her he and the others involved could not release their identities because they are being pursued by the District Attorney of Philadelphia for acts they perpetrated at a research center there. "They're underground," Maurer said, noting that those who conducted the raid are from throughout Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

"I hope they don't think of doing it next year," Maurer said of the shoot, "because I don't know what the AFL will do. But I do know they won't stand for it."

Hauck said that about 5,000 pigeons are used in the shoot, the number depending on how many shooters show up. The birds are bought from contractors who raise or collect them. Most of the dead pigeons are used for fertilizer, he said, although some people take them home for food.

Ted Godshall, a spokesman for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, said the killing of pigeons is legal because they are classified as domestic birds rather than song or game birds.



Boys hold
Hegins pi