

## Northumberland conservationists to receive awards

LEMOYNE — Two soil conservationists from Northumberland County will receive this year's Environmental Improvement Recognition Awards from the Pennsylvania Medical Society.

Individual Environmental Awards go to Raymond D. Shaffer, Dalmatia, and Mark N. Witmer (posthumously), Dalmatia, for their outstanding leadership in the Northumberland County Conservation District.

Both men are honored for their years of leadership in soil conservation. Their nomination was endorsed by the Northumberland County Medical Society.

Almost from the day Pennsylvania's soil conservation law was passed, Mark Witmer became active. He sat on the first board of district supervisors of the Northumberland Soil Conservation District in 1943. A farmer in Stone Valley, Mark Witmer helped

turn the valley into a national showplace of contour farming.

Ray Shaffer served the district for over 24 years as both a director and a board chairman. Although retired as chairman, Mr. Shaffer continues his long service as director. He has seen the district's budget grow from a few hundred dollars to more than \$60,000 in 1980.

The legacy of the Northumberland County Conservation District has been not only increased soil moisture, increased farm yields, and reduced soil erosion, but improved flood control as well.

The Pennsylvania Medical Society, representing more than 14,000 state medical doctors, presents Environmental Improvement Recognition Awards each year to individuals, communities, and voluntary agencies for outstanding work in improving Pennsylvania's environment.

The Environmental Im-

provement Recognition Awards will be given by the Pennsylvania Medical Society at its annual Officers' Conference dinner, Wednesday evening, April

23, at the Penn Harris Motor Inn in Camp Hill. Matthew Marshall, Jr., M.D., of Pittsburgh, PMS President, will make the presentations.

## Seeing Eye Club to hold open house

NORRISTOWN — The 4-H Seeing Eye Puppy Club of Montgomery County will hold a press conference and open house Thursday, March 27, 7:30 p.m. at the 4-H Center on Snyder Road, Lansdale.

Members and their puppies will be present as well as a representative from the Seeing Eye Foundation who will present a movie on the use of dogs as eyes for the blind.

Seeing Eye Inc. of Norristown and 4-H have had a workshop partnership for more than 35 years to provide dogs as guides for blind people.

Seeing Eye furnishes the dogs, the instructors and the training that brings freedom of mobility to blind people. 4-H provides homes for the Seeing Eye puppies during the critical first year of their lives.

Adults as well as 4-H youths are now actively involved in the 4-H program and attend 4-H meetings as co-leaders, taking the puppies with them to jobs in schools, offices, stores, and even garages. During the first year it is important that the puppy be exposed to as many people, situations, and places as possible so that by the time the blind person and the dog are trained together, the dog will be used to walking up and down stairs, through traffic and traveling

in automobiles and on public transportation.

It is important that the pup is exposed to all kinds of situations in every day living. And also that someone in the family is with it most of the day.

The one obligation is that the person in charge of the dog (adult or 4-H'er) must take it to 4-H meetings for training instructions. This also provides the dog with experiences in travel and association with other people and other dogs.

During the first year, the pup must be house broken and must learn a few basic commands. An allotment is made for the dog's food and Seeing Eye picks up any veterinary bills that are incurred.

Families parting with dogs are given preference in the placement of new puppies. Some families have consecutively trained as many as 20 puppies. In the few instances where a dog is rejected for further training, the family is given the opportunity to take it back as a family pet.

The puppies, largely German Shepherds, are bred at the Seeing Eye puppy farm near Mendham. Labrador or golden retrievers are also used. When the puppies are about eight weeks old, they are put into a 4-H home where they remain for about a year. After that time, they are returned to Seeing Eye for three months' intensive training with a professional dog trainer.

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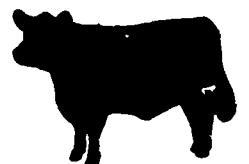


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