

Student Sets Up Recycling Center For School Project

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Cambria Co. Correspondent

PORTAGE (Cambria Co.) — Mike Conlon, a junior at Portage Area High School, attended the Governor's School of Excellence for Agricultural Sciences during the summer of 1994. It was during this five-week session at Penn State University that it was suggested to the students that they use their leadership ability and knowledge to do something that would benefit their communities. Mike returned home with an enthusiasm for doing a recycling project.

Mike is extremely interested in environmental issues. This particular Governor's School attracted him because of its broad spectrum of ag-related courses including those concerning environmental problems. Sixty-four high school sophomores and juniors from across the state attended these classes.

"Recycling" and "Community Service" are the basis of his "paper-to-food" project. Mary Kenney, local high school science teacher and sponsor of the Portage Area High School Environmental Club, helped Mike in fine-tuning his idea.

Mike is the project coordinator and is assisted by other club members. He explains that the purpose of the project is threefold: first of all, to recycle old newspapers; second, to help local dairy farmers who are able to use shredded newspapers for animal bedding; and third, to assist local needy families with vouchers for dairy products.

Club members made posters advertising their newspaper drive and placed them in many places throughout the community. Portage Area High School has a morning television show and advertisements and project goals were outlined on this show. Mike is the "Anchor Man" for the school T.V.

news.

Mike, along with other club members, has been at the high school each Monday evening since the beginning of November to receive newspapers from local residents. As soon as a full truck load is collected they then take the truck to Vale Wood Farms in Munster and unload at the barns. Vale Wood has a shredder and shreds the paper as it is needed for bedding. This trip to Vale Wood is made on Saturday mornings as the loading and unloading requires a few hours of time.

The papers are measured (a certain number of inches of paper is equal to one pound) and a refund rate of between one-half cent and one cent per pound is credited in the form of vouchers. These vouchers are then distributed to local needy families and can be redeemed for dairy products. The vouchers, which were earned in November, made the Thanksgiving holiday a little brighter for those who received them.

The Conlon family is very supportive of one another. Doug and Sue, Mike's father and mother, are both employed by the local school district — Doug as a guidance counselor and Sue as a physical education and health teacher. Acquaintances of the family say it is easy to understand where Mike gets his sense of commitment. Both Doug and Sue have been involved in many activities that benefit area youth. Younger sister Molly is a freshman at Portage Area where she is also involved in many activities.

Mike is an honor student and is committed to numerous extracurricular activities some of which include the environmental club, SADD, Student Council, sports, National Honor Society, Peer Tutoring Program, Peer Counselor Program and many others. Besides school-related activities, he enjoys archery hunting and



Mike Conlon helps a local resident unload newspapers that she brought to the school for the recycling project.

music. He has received numerous honors over the past few years with the latest coming just a few days ago. Mike has been chosen as Pennsylvania's Ambassador for the EF Ambassador Tour. Representing Pennsylvania, he, along with 50 U.S. and 11 Canadian student delegates, will take a 10-day educational tour of Europe this summer. This is quite a prestigious award. Doug is very proud of his son's accomplishment and feels that this may be one consequence of his attendance at the Governor's School and also his participation in the "recycling" leadership project.

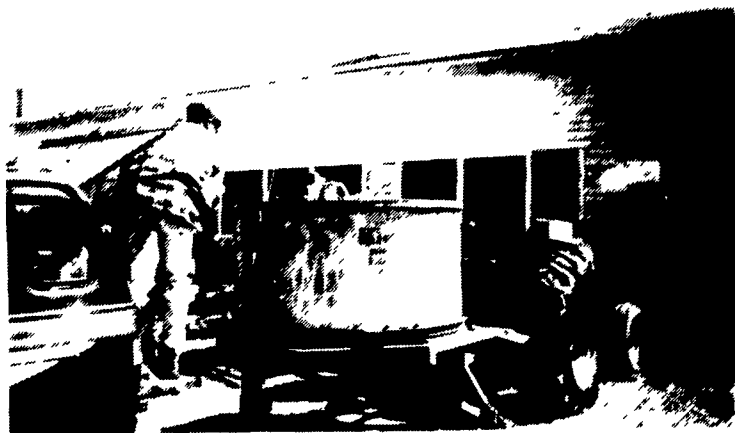
On reflecting back to last summer's time spent at PSU, Mike says that the Governor's School was one of the best experiences of his life. One highlight was the friendships formed with other students over the five-week period. Another highlight was more personal. "Besides the educational advantages of using the Penn State science labs and their instructors, I learned about myself."

The recycling project is important because it is helping him to see that people want to recycle and will cooperate. "Perhaps all that is needed is to have the programs available and for someone to take charge."

Mike's future plans include college, perhaps at a service academy most likely majoring in some type of environmental study.



The Conlon family from left, Molly, Sue, Mike, and Doug.




Marc throws newspaper into the shredder at Vale Wood Farms in Munster.



Mike Conlon, Marc Popchak, Jason Willinsky, and Angel Feathers load newspapers into the truck to take to the dairy farm for recycling.

*Ida's
Notebook*

by
Ida Risser



We've just had a long visit with one of our children and her family from Atlanta. It was different to have youngsters in the house. The girls were not very good eaters but they liked my blueberry pancakes and the scrambled eggs with bacon for breakfast.

We visited the Hans Herr house near Lancaster as it is the oldest house in our area and it was used as both a dwelling and a meeting house. I'd been there at least four times before, but because my husband's grandmother was a "Herr" they wanted to see it again. Now they are back home and I'll miss all those hugs that I got each morning.

Today I am studying to teach our Bible Study group tomorrow. As our daughter-in-law is in Chicago for a week, I ask our son to come for dinner again. He was

here the other day and I made pig stomach as it was nice to have a guest to help us eat it. But since I also have a large committee meeting here tonight, who will expect refreshments, I expected to be quite busy.

Thus, when my husband ask me to have dinner in his camper, that he bought recently, I was reluctant as I thought he wanted me to cook in it. But, he said that he would do it. I was really amazed as he has never done something like that before. He went to the grocery store alone so I shall be surprised.

He has been working on the camper all winter trying to figure out where all the wires go and fixing the lights and brakes. He even bought a generator and has asked me to supply pots, pans, silverware and dishes. He is more enthusiastic than I am to use it for camping.