



Photo by Barb Parkyn

Deck the Mall

Gingerbread men and candy canes set a holiday mood at Nittany Mall and prepare shoppers for Christmas.

Drunk and Drugged Driving Week set

Thornburgh signs drunken driving bill with mandatory jail sentences

New Year's Eve can be one of the most fun nights of the year; it can also be one of the most dangerous nights to be driving, even if you are sober.

To make people more aware of the dangers involved in driving under the influence, Gov. Dick Thornburgh has proclaimed Dec. 12-18 as Pennsylvania's Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week.

The awareness week got a big boost at 2:45 p.m. yesterday when Thornburgh signed a tougher drunken driving bill. The law requires mandatory jail terms for all levels of offense and stricter enforcement of fines and license suspensions.

Centre County's drug and alcohol specialist,

Michael J. Barrett, said, "Drunk and drugged drivers on our county's roadways cause death and injury to innocent victims and to themselves."

Centre County's Drug and Alcohol Program in Bellefonte has used local radio publicity to caution against drunken driving.

Area citizens can help by raising public interest to combat the problem, he said. Barrett encouraged all citizens to:

- Use safety belts, which have been proved effective protection in accidents.
- Designate a driver who will refrain from drinking to ensure group safety.
- Remember that "Friends don't let friends

drive drunk."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 250,000 Americans lost their lives in alcohol-related crashes in the last decade. More than half of all fatal crashes involve a drunken or drugged driver, Barrett said.

The county's alcohol-related accidents numbered 166. Of those, 163 people were injured and 10 were killed.

"Impaired driving costs the public as much as \$25 million each year," he said, "but emotional cost to the family of the victim is incalculable."

—By Bonnie Morter

Bellefonte DER office to close Dec. 20

By BRIAN MAGEE
Collegian Staff Writer

Because of the results of a computer-aided study, Centre County will no longer have a regional office of the Department of Environmental Resources after Dec. 20.

The DER is consolidating four offices, including the one in Bellefonte. They will be temporarily relocated in Philipsburg until construction of a permanent office in Hawk Run, five miles north of Philipsburg, is completed.

The DER expects the new office, now being converted from a water

treatment plant, to be completed in 1½ years.

The Hawk Run and Bellefonte offices will be consolidated with offices in DuBois and Coudersport, in Potter County, for "budgetary purposes," said Richard E. Ayers, DER regional business manager.

The decision to consolidate was the result of a computer study that determined the best location with respect to the work being done in the region, Ayers said.

Some regional offices only had two or three employees, he said. No jobs will be cut because of the consolidation.

However, the general feeling at the Bellefonte office is that service in this area may suffer from the move.

"It will be inconvenient for all of us," said Alan Bigatel, air quality engineer at the Bellefonte office.

Bigatel said the move will decrease efficiency in Centre County because of the time it will take DER employees to travel to and from Philipsburg.

It will be more difficult to respond to calls or to make routine inspections in the State College-Bellefonte area where most of the region's population lives, he said.

Bigatel said the computer study may have been weighted toward relocation in Philipsburg because of the mining work done there. But monitoring such things as water quality, air quality and solid waste in the whole region may be more difficult from the new location, he said.

Bigatel was also concerned about the costs of converting the water treatment plant to office space and of renting temporary space in the meantime.

The new office is at 103 Presqueisle St., Philipsburg. The phone number is 342-6421.

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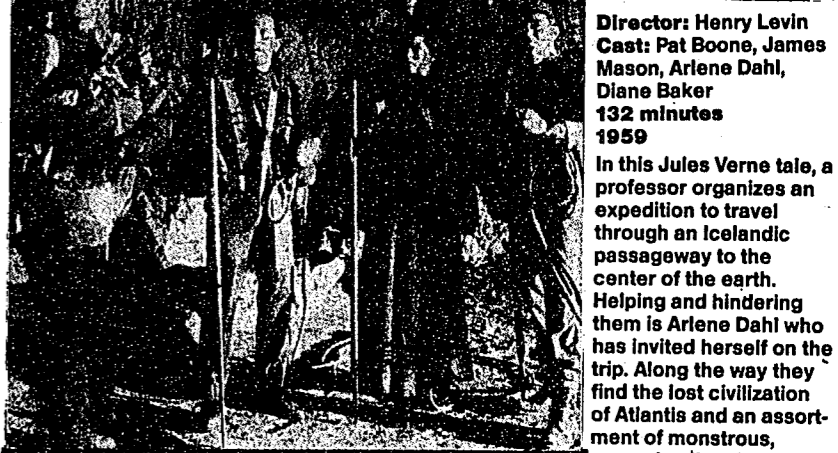
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