



FORMER CAR WASH SITE—The remains of the Whirley Car Wash on Main Street, Dallas, after it was razed by its owner. The debris will be hauled away through

arrangements made by the owner of the property. (Photo by Charlot M. Denmon)

MY TYPEWRITER TALKS

About Twinkletoes

by The Rev. Charles H. Gilbert

We have two cats. They are nearly two years old, and we have had them from kitten-hood. We wanted them to be "house cats," trained to take care of all their needs on an indoor basis.

Know what that means? Cat food, specially made for cats and kittens. Even kitty litter, commercially prepared for house kitties, meaning to be "house broken."

We know that a house-broke cat sometimes means house-broke people! You get what you pay for. We don't want cats that live to roam far from this, their home sweet home.

Commerce takes care that such home-loving habits can be paid for. They eat their cat food straight from the big bag, because if it were put in their dish, Kynarion the dog would eat it instead of her own dog chow which is in her dish nearby. Sometimes for a change of diet they go around and eat dog chow.

We want a cat to catch mice. They do that. And then they really have no use for a worn-out dead mouse that will not play any more!

Neither do we, but we know what to do with such. And to make sure it's not abandoned in some out-of-the-way place where we will have to use our noses to find it, we trade the cat a can of nice smelly mackerel for the dead mouse.

That delicious odor also comes in handy when Twinkletoes dashes out the door and decides to go exploring in the wilderness or up the weeping willow, instead of just munching a salad of the nearest green grass.

Ever watch a cat? A living illustration for over-wrought human

nerves. Watch a cat in relaxation. It knows how to relax and let go. It will go relaxed in your arms and let you handle it as if it were a bunch of rags and bones.

But watch a cat on alert. He can come immediately alive on the slightest note of movement or unusual noise, sponsored by fear or the smell of special food, or kindled by stimulation to competitive play or racing.

My mind cannot work that fast; I seldom see all those steps involved in the change from sound sleep to quick motion. He is suddenly a highly equipped working instrument of coordinated muscles with an armory of claws, teeth, legs and tail thrashing as if a battery had just been shorted or a lot of switches turned on at once.

When Twinkletoes is in action on the run playing, it is fun to watch him instantly change his mind and without making any directional signal turn around in mid-air and start running in the opposite direction.

I never want to run like a cat. But I wish sometimes I could make the cogwheels in my skull suddenly stop whirling and then drop down in sleep and rest as quickly and completely as he does.

We never actually saw one of our cats catch a mouse. Usually Twink, but sometimes Goldenrod, suddenly appears with one in its mouth. We try to head them back to the kitchen then and shut the door, so we won't have a wounded mouse hiding under the sofa.

But only Twinkletoes has caught a bat! Three of them so far, the first one the evening after we made the

opening in the hall ceiling getting ready to insulate the attic. Again, we didn't see him do it, but can imagine the dark shadow speeding through the dim twilight, then Twink going into instant action, bringing down the prey with one swoop of an over-sized foot.

He didn't really know what to do with it, or how to handle the "flying mouse" once he had it. He looked a bit bewildered when he came into the living room, the body in his mouth and the wings spread open across his face. We weren't quite sure what to do next either!

He seemed rather relieved to turn the problem over to us humans. We've all gained more experience since then, and we expect there will be more before we can get the attic closed up again. It's hot up there!

One night when I lay almost asleep I saw a big black shadow swoop in silence across my ceiling. I called to Catherine, but before she could come up and get the tennis racket, she found that Twink had already made a catch of a small bat in the kitchen.

Don't know where the big one went; probably back up the black hole into the attic and out through a knothole. We don't really mind having them swoop around outside catching insects on the wing with their wonderful radar to guide them, but NOT in the house. I don't think they really like being in here either!

I remember some poet, maybe it was Tennyson, writing something about "When the blackbat night has flown." Twink cares little about poetry, but is delighted with his reward of mackerel for his bat.

GROSSMAN

Environmental council

by Howard J. Grossman

The Luzerne-Lackawanna Environmental Council, a key organization in the improvement of the quality of life in Northeastern Pennsylvania, needs your help.

Lu-Lac, as it is affectionately called by its friends, has a history of strong environmental education programming involving many of the school districts in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Through the cooperation of the intermediate units in the region and through the abilities of the staff and board of the Environmental Council, Lu-Lac, has performed admirable services over the years.

Originally established through the efforts of the Tuberculosis and Health Associations serving this region, the Luzerne-Lackawanna Environmental Council has spent considerable time on monitoring the environmental problems of the region. It basically services two counties, Lackawanna and Luzerne, but consideration is being given to expanding the program of the Environmental Council to serve at least one other county, Monroe, which forms the Northeast Pennsylvania Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area.

The most recent important work which the Environmental Council indicated is the Air Quality Index System which is being reported on by the leading media in the region and which helps to guide actions to correct air quality problems in the air shed which forms much of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Environmental Council has offices in Scranton at 700 Vine Street and in Wilkes-Barre at 63 N. Franklin Street. The Council has a technical committee which is available to provide guidance in specialized fields concerning environmental control.

The need for the Environmental Council is self-evident in a region which has undergone a history of landscape scarring and little design creativity as well as the

environmental problems raised by mine fires, acid mine drainage and related questions.

The Environmental Council, however, needs your help. Its financial base has not allowed the Council to provide a steady flow of services to Northeastern Pennsylvania. A commitment on the part of Northeastern Pennsylvania's organizations, community clubs, industries, labor and government to the support of the Luzerne-Lackawanna Environmental Council is of the highest priority.

The whole concept of economic development and environmental sensitivity in a balanced process to allow the region to have the quality of life which our residents desire is in jeopardy without a strong and effective Environmental Council.

((Continued from P. 1))

Council

Although an answer was requested whether or not the borough would participate by the end of the month, council members asked Chief Lyons to have Wilkes-Barre's Captain Swim appear at the Aug. 9 council meeting to answer any questions they might have before they make a decision. Earl Brown asked if council had

Growth areas such as the Back Mountain and Mountaintop in Luzerne County, the Abingtons in Lackawanna County, and much of Monroe County are in particular need of the services of such an organization.

Areas which have not grown substantially such as the downtown urban centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania and in fact which have lost population, need a focal point by which design improvements can be made on the landscape.

The Environmental Council with its leadership and expertise can help in this direction. Thus, the citizens of Northeastern Pennsylvania should rise to call on environmental sensitivity in combination with appropriate economic development and support the work of this priority organization, the Luzerne-Lackawanna Environmental Council.

received information on the easement in the creek situation near Agway but Solicitor Charles Lemmond said that to date, he has had no word from the post office. The postal service's failure to reply regarding an easement has hindered any effort to control flooding of properties in that area.

THE DALLAS POST

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O'CONNELL

by Rep. Frank J. O'Connell

During a lull in the recent budget debate I found the time to go through the mound of memoranda that seemingly accumulates every hour on my desk.

After an evening of interesting reading, I'd like to share some highlights with you. So, here are some facts to file away for use at a later date.

Did you know that California Governor Jerry Brown has a \$3 billion budget surplus while Pennsylvania Governor Milton Shapp claims a \$1 billion deficit?

Did you know that in Pennsylvania there are 333 separate State agencies, boards, departments and commissions?

Did you know that the Governor's Mansion, which cost \$2.4 million to build in 1968, remains fully furnished,

'It wonders me...'

operated and staffed—but Governor Shapp refuses to live there or allow it to be used for public functions?

Did you know that when General Harry Meir, former commander of the Pennsylvania National Guard, pleaded guilty recently to misappropriating Federal gasoline to make personal trips around the country in the National Guard aircraft, he became the latest in a long-line of Shapp Administration officials to be convicted or indicted on criminal charges?

Did you know that the State will collect more than \$450 million in additional tax revenue through growth during fiscal 1977-78?

Did you know that the State Budget has doubled in size since 1971? And that salaries and fringe benefits of State employees have also doubled?

Did you know that as of this date approximately 50 Shapp Administration officials or employees have been either convicted or indicted for abuse of their public office?

Did you know that Governor Shapp during his 6½ years in office has spent more money than all other governors since World War II combined?

Did you know that the State now owns 7,459 cars and if they were all parked in a single line it would stretch for more than 24 miles?

These facts are enough to make you stop and think. There will be more of these columns in the future.

The Pennsylvania Dutch have a phrase which is apropos for "did you know..." it goes like this, "It wonders me..."

It sure does. How about you?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Finn explains dilemmas of road repair

Dear Editor:

As you have probably read by now in your local newspapers, PennDOT has called a total halt to all bond-financed construction included in the Twelve-Year Program for Highway Improvement.

The Department has also been forced to cut its maintenance program back by some \$100 million from its original 1977-78 requests in order to work responsibly within the budget passed by the General Assembly July 7th.

These are drastic steps, which will directly affect the quality of highways in your area and which threaten to undermine the economy of the entire Commonwealth.

As a result of the halt in bond-financed construction starts, just as one example, we must order the furlough of up to 1,000 technical and engineering employees. Hundreds of other workers face layoff as a result of the maintenance cutbacks. The private construction industry and those businesses related to it will, of course, also feel a sharp impact from such extreme attrition.

Because you have, in the past, expressed a strong interest in the Department of Transportation's improvement programs, I felt an equally strong responsibility to explain to you the reasons for our actions, and to enlist your support in our efforts to put the Department on a strong financial working basis.

In short, PennDOT simply cannot go on borrowing money for critically needed highway work without some assurance from the General Assembly of having sufficient funds with which to repay such borrowed funds.

And the Department can no longer expect to carry out a sound maintenance program while it must use its current available funds to pay off its gigantic debts incurred in prior years.

From the mid-sixties until now, we have borrowed some 2.5 billion dollars to generate federal matching funds of more than triple that amount for our highway construction programs. These programs, such as the 1,500 mile interstate program, have provided Pennsylvanians with tremendous savings in fuel and accident costs as well as time spent traveling.

At no time has the General Assembly provided specific monies to repay these loans, choosing instead to leave obligations as a preferred requirement of the Motor License fund.

As a result, we now have a yearly bill of about \$200 million for debt service, which by law, must be paid before we pay for anything else. In other words, before we can patch a pothole, paint a bridge, or fix the berm on a country road, we must first pay out \$200 million from the money we realize from gasoline taxes and motor license fees.

In recent years, while our debt service has soared, our expenses for materials have quadrupled in some cases, overall construction costs have doubled, and State Police Highway patrol costs have risen to \$95 million annually.

In the face of these snowballing costs, revenues have been declining at a steady and dismal rate. Revenue from the gasoline tax, the principal source of highway funding, was increasing at the rate of five to six percent annually prior to the oil embargo in 1973.

The rate of increase has averaged only 0.2 percent annually since 1973. Moreover, the recent increase in motor license fees, which are still extremely reasonable when compared to many other states, has done little more than cover the State Police allotment.

Faced with these realities, PennDOT has been tightening its belt beyond what anyone in the transportation business thought possible. Our payroll, just as one example, has been reduced by about 4,000 employees since PennDOT was formed in 1970 when it took on a vast array of new duties, including aviation and mass transit, licensing and vehicle registration.

But even with our manpower

reductions—along with our efforts to find less expensive means of performing our maintenance and construction work—our costs have continued to soar, just as I am sure you have found your own household costs soaring.

So we have come to the point where we can no longer continue to try to maintain the highways we have and still finance the critically important new construction which our system demands.

And that is where we are today.

And in ordering severe cuts in both maintenance and construction, we have done exactly what you would have done in your own household.

I am sure that if you saw the prospect of no new income, while at the same time you faced a stack of bills from charge accounts, you would immediately say: "Okay, No more charging until we find the money to cover our bills." That is exactly what we have said: "No more charging until we have money to pay our debts."

So where do we go from here?

That is up to the people of Pennsylvania, especially people like you who have expressed an understanding of the important role transportation plays in all of our lives.

At this moment, your representatives and senators in the General Assembly are facing some

tough questions concerning the financial future of the Department of Transportation.

Most of these lawmakers are fully aware of PennDOT's plight, and I think most of them would like to make the moves necessary to put the Department on a sound fiscal footing.

But they will probably wait until they hear from you and other concerned Pennsylvanians.

What they need, in fact, is permission to do what they know must be done.

And I hope you will do what you can to give them that permission.

If you will explain our situation to just two of your friends and ask them in turn to pass the message to two of their friends—and to their legislators we will be able to spread this important message throughout the Commonwealth in very short order.

And, believe me, you will be heard in Harrisburg.

But the time is now. We can't put this important business off until tomorrow. If we are to have a solid, balanced highway program, we must have additional revenues immediately.

And I am urgently enlisting your support in making these additional revenues a reality.

Sincerely,
John M. Finn, P.E.
DISTRICT ENGINEER 4-0

PUBLISHERS NOTEBOOK

Through this world quietly

"Threescore plus ten" is about what life is supposed to give a man. And by that measure, my late Uncle Art was blessed, he was in the waning months of his 84th year before life, almost suddenly, departed from him.

His passing warranted about five lines in the formalized obituaries in the St. Petersburg (Fla.) Times, and that probably paid for by the inflated funeral home fees they charge these days.

But he was a good man, a kind man, and deserving of far more attention than the world at large ever gave him—and in that regard he's probably like the scores of those who pass through this world quietly unnoticed by news columns, mass media or assemblies, beloved by a few friends, a few neighbors and a few kinfolk.

His interests would be called pedestrian by some—puttering around the garden came first, followed by the light paint-up, fix-up activities which sustain common man's urge to creativity.

His hobbies were few. Perhaps the Chicago Cubs and White Sox in season, followed by Chicago Bears in the fall—but even as a sports fan, he found the humble recourse to his liking, preferring radio or television exposure to on-the-scene fan-fare.

In his mid-fifties, I believe, Uncle Art made peace with his Maker, influenced by the urging of his three sisters, and from then on dedicated much of his weekend time to helping the ethnic Swedish mission church he attended with paint-up and fix-up tasks.

Indeed, when Pullman exercised its retirement options about 20 years ago, Uncle Art—then a retired railroad car trimmer—spent several years trimming out the house of the Lord, serving as caretaker for the mission church.

In his early seventies and still unmarried, Uncle Art joined in a retirement move to milder climate in Florida—the migration that many make, finding more year-round warmth but stretching the other family ties.

I didn't see him much after that—about once a year, perhaps, when we could mobilize the resources to head south or if a business trip brought me nearby. But I still retained the fond memories of the kindly uncle, soft spoken and with patient smile, who had time for tiny tot and growing youth.

As the years wound down, Uncle Art had time to share his hand-in-hand walk around the garden with my own youngsters, as he assisted their toddling through the yard—or gave them squirting rights with the garden hose.

All that is gone now and Uncle Art, along with many others unnoticed who bless only the lives of those they know best, has gone to his eternal reward.

We all miss him and this spare tribute is for him and others like him, who brought kindness and warmth, seldom a harsh word, to a world sorely in need of those very attributes.

--Ray Carlsen