

HEINZ ON AGING

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Senator John Heinz, chairman of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, periodically writes a column for the aging. This week's topic is "too-good-to-be-true bargains.")

Every Spring, along with the daffodils and crocuses, quick-buck artists renew their efforts and arrive on Americans' doorsteps offering "too good to be true bargains and deals." Those who fall prey to these schemes too often get "nothing for something" - and not the other way around!

These quick-buck schemes can take the form of a driveway or roofing repair man who is willing to make a "free" inspection or an offer of an opportunity to "achieve financial security" through a unique investment or a new "miracle cure" which is bringing relief to millions.

No one is immune from these scams. Several recent surveys have suggested, however, that the rate at which these unscrupulous tricksters are targeting the elderly is on the increase. They have apparently learned that older individuals are often more trusting, that many have accumulated some life savings, and a good number are searching for means to assure financial security.

A Senate Special Committee on Aging survey showed a staggering array of fraud, deceit and callous exploitation--the consequences of which often amount to small dollar losses, but a lot of embarrassment for the elderly consumer. There are instances of major financial investments gone wrong as well, with devastating effects for those living on fixed or reduced incomes. Medical frauds are among the most frightening, since they can have drastic physical as well as financial and emotional impacts.

Combating fraud is a job for smarter and tougher consumers.

The Pennsylvania Bureau of Consumer Protection, which last year along mediated over 20,000 violations of the state's Unfair Trade Practices Act, makes the following suggestions to help us all avoid being "had" by these con men.

Get references from previous clients before you make an investment or a purchase, particularly with door-to-door salespeople.

Get a second opinion from a family member or a friend before you hand over any money. Quick-buck artists will prey on an elderly person's desire to remain independent.

Never give your credit card account numbers over the phone to callers offering low prices on goods to be delivered C.O.D.

Don't be pressured into acting quickly; take time to check out the offer and be especially suspicious if you are asked to keep news of the "very special" deal to yourself.

Shop around, especially if the transaction requires a large financial outlay.

Call the Chamber of Commerce or Better Business Bureau to determine if the company has a good track record. Remember--these groups are in business to help you so don't hesitate to use them as a business reference.

Think twice about dealing with transient contractors or business people without an established base in your community.

Don't hesitate to call the Bureau of Consumer Protection about your rights as a consumer; attorneys and investigators are on hand in seven regional offices and will be happy to answer your questions.

Should you believe you have been deceived or treated unfairly in a business transaction, contact the Bureau as soon as possible. Of all the cases handled by the Bureau last year, 70 percent were settled to the satisfaction of the consumer. And remember, one fraud detected means several unsuspecting victims saved from the harrassment of the quick-buck schemer.



Remember, water is still major asset

By HOWARD J. GROSSMAN

Reams of stories have been published over the last three months on the extent of giardiasis in populated sections of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Accusations have been made against organizations and agencies as to their role or lack thereof, in the maintenance of facilities, enforcement of laws and ordinances, and general involvement with water resources or water quality. Even more so, many surveys and studies have been accomplished over the last decade on the subject of water resources and water quality such as the Comprehensive Water Quality Management Program (COWAMP) and the various water related projects and programs of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission and the Delaware River Basin Commission.

Lost in the onslaught of blame-casting and emotions which have struck the giardiasis issue is the fact that water resources still represent a major asset to the economic future of Northeastern Pennsylvania. What is needed is moderation and cool heads to examining the current situation in an orderly manner, and determine what courses of action will be beneficial to the citizens of Northeastern Pennsylvania, many of whom have had to face personal hardships in relation to the current problem.

To examine drinking water conditions in Northeastern Pennsylvania, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania formed a Water Quality Management Task Force chaired by Don McFadden, an attorney in Wilkes-Barre. The mission of the Task Force is to accomplish the following:

1. Quality of the drinking water in Northeastern Pennsylvania, its assets and limitations, including a statement of the implications of water quality on economic development.

2. Examination of the issues and an inventory of those issues relating to the protection of quality of the drinking water supply in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

3. An inventory of resources, financial and technical, available to improve the quality of drinking water in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

4. Evaluation of the status of ground water supply in relation to the quality of drinking water in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Task Force consists of 25 citizens and officials throughout the seven counties of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Thus, the objective is to look beyond the current giardiasis impacted area and examine the entire region. Recommendations will be made by the Task Force to the Executive Committee and Board of Directors of EDCNP. Both verbal and written comments will be accepted in the way of information which the Task Force should consider in relation to its mission.

One of the Task Force's objectives is to impartially and objectively establish factual information and interpret such information to determine what courses of action are necessary to maintain the highest standards of drinking water possible in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Its relationship to economic development is clear, as the significance of water resources in general has always been a strong factor in determining how economic growth takes place.

Those persons interested in more information pertaining to the Water Quality Management Task Force should write the Economic Development Council, 1151 Oak Street, Pittsboro, PA 18640-3795.

Public hearings on water scheduled to begin today

A six-member bipartisan Senate Committee, authorized to investigate the availability of safe drinking water throughout the state, has scheduled a series of public hearings beginning April 25, 26, and 27 in the northeastern region and May 4 in the western region.

Senate Committee Chairman, Frank J. O'Connell (R-Luzerne), will be joined by Senators David J. Brightbill (R-Lebanon), Tim Shaffer (R-Butler), Robert J. Mellow (D-Lackawanna), Raphael J. Musto (D-Luzerne), Edward P. Zemprelli (D-Allegheny).

"The purpose of these hearings will be to garner as much input as possible concerning the water contamination crisis as it exists, and to report back to the full Senate with our findings and recommendations to ensure the availability of safe drinking water once again and to prevent such a crisis from occurring in the future," the senators said in a joint statement.

The April 25, 26, and 27 hearings will be held at the studios of public TV station WVIA, located on Old Boston Road in Pittston. The April 25 hearing will be held in the evening beginning at 6 p.m., while the hearings on April 26 and 27 will get underway at 9 a.m. both days.

The May 4 hearings in western Pennsylvania will be held at the McKeesport City Council chambers beginning at 9 a.m.

A further hearing is expected to be conducted at the State Capitol. The Harrisburg hearing has not yet been scheduled.

According to the Senate panel, members of the public will be allowed to testify and should provide the committee with 20 copies of their testimony and a separate page summarizing the remarks. Those persons wishing to testify should contact Kathleen R. Boone, Counsel to the Senate State Government Committee at (717) 787-7428.

PACE program is underway

Rep. Frank Coslett said today that application forms for the Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) program will be mailed this month.

Rep. Coslett urged constituents with questions about the program to contact his office at 1265 Wyoming Avenue, Forty Fort. The telephone number is 288-3990.

Dallas resident may be the next 'Dance Fever' star

By WALLY KOCHER
Staff Correspondent

It's a long, hard journey on the road of fame and fortune to reach Hollywood, California, but that's the road Marilyn Walko, 21, of Dallas has decided to take.

Thanks to the nationally syndicated television show, "Dance Fever", Marilyn may be California-bound sooner than planned.

Ms. Walko, who has been dancing as long as she can remember, thought the audition for the show would be an ideal way to express herself in the way she feels most comfortable.

Along with her dance partner, Karlton Stevens of Wilkes-Barre, she appeared in the preliminary auditions held in the Scranton Ballroom at the Hilton at Lackawanna Station in Scranton. To say they did well is an understatement.

The couple received a perfect score on their dance routine which featured a variety of styles such as, break dancing, popping, jazz, ballet and disco to Midnight Star's song, "No Parking on the Dance Floor." This also entitles them to compete in the final auditions held at the Station Complex in Wilkes-Barre on May 1.

"We were thrilled when we found out what our scores were," said Marilyn. "They told us it was very rare for a couple to get perfect scores like we did."

The reason for the high scores can be attributed to the couple's routine, Marilyn explained.

"We wanted to come up with something different," she said. "Everyone in this area seems to go for disco and disco is fine as long as it's done correctly. However, we thought it would be better for us if we mixed a lot of different styles together. I think we have a pretty decent routine."

Marilyn admits that she and her partner only had about eight hours of practice in total for their first

audition. However, they are now practicing every chance they get for the final audition.

"I just can't wait!" she exclaimed.

Paul Gilbert, producer of "Dance Fever", will be among the judges for the final auditions.

If Marilyn and Karlton score well enough at the final auditions, they will be chosen to travel to Hollywood to appear on "Dance Fever."

Once there, they will again compete against couples from all over the country before being eligible for the Grand Prix.

The winning couple of the Grand Prix will share a total of \$31,000.

Births

A son to LYNN AND GALEN MILLER, RD 1, Box 258, Sweet Valley, on April 14 in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.

A daughter to JOAN AND ROBERT ROVINSKY, 110 E. Franklin St., Shavertown, on April 16 in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.

A daughter to SUSAN AND ROBERT WALL, 75 Maltby Ave., Swoyersville, on April 13 in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.

A daughter to CINDY AND PAUL CHOCALLO, RD 4, Box 307E, Dallas, on April 17 in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.

A daughter to JUNE AND DAVIS DEFINE, Dallas, on April 15 in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.

A son to DENISE AND WILLIAM CILVIK, RD 1, Box 274E, Sweet Valley, on April 18 in Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

A daughter to SUSAN AND ROSS PIAZZA, 101 N. Pioneer Ave., Shavertown, on April 17, in Wilkes-Barre General Hospital.

A daughter to JUDITH AND ROBERT HISLOP, 36 Carverton Road, Trucksville, on April 16, in Nesbitt Memorial Hospital, Kingston.



ROBERT SANDO

Sando is named to Pa. All-State Band

Robert Sando, a member of the Lake-Lehman High School Band has been selected to participate in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association All-State Band in Pittsburgh on April 26, 27 and 28.

Bob was chosen for this honor through competition at the Regional Band level. He has been a participant in Regional and District Bands for the past two years. He also participated in the District Orchestra Festival this year.

Bob, a senior at Lake-Lehman High School, plays trombone. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Sando of Lake Silkworth.

A concert will be given on Saturday at 1:30 p.m. at the Syrian Mosque, Pittsburgh. Guest conductor will be Robert Fleming of Youngstown, Ohio.

Lake-Lehman Band director John Millauskas will accompany Bob to Pittsburgh.

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