

Regional Arts Forum promotes area's assets

By Howard J. Grossman

A new initiative has been launched in Northeastern Pennsylvania to promote the arts as a useful and effective tool for economic growth. A group of community leaders in Luzerne and Lackawanna counties have joined together to establish a Northeastern Pennsylvania Arts Forum. The group's purpose is "to strengthen and promote the arts in Northeastern Pennsylvania by building bridges among the arts organizations through networking, professional enrichment and cooperative projects." The first project is to produce a brochure which highlights cultural resources in northeastern Pennsylvania. A second project will be a directory of all arts organizations in the counties.

The brochure will be produced in two phases. The first will be a "cover" piece with splashy upbeat graphics and text which will describe the cultural scene in a general way, highlighting major organizations through text and photographs. The message would be "The Arts are alive and well in northeastern Pennsylvania." The format would allow for easy expansion and would be a type of folder into which other promotional pieces could be placed.

The second phase will be a directory listing arts organizations and will be designed to complement and be inserted into the cover piece. It will also be in a format which can be updated periodically.

Spearheading the new initiative was the publication by Money magazine of a ranking of metropolitan areas in the United States, which ranked Northeastern Pennsylvania as 9th most livable in the nation. In that ranking, cultural resources, among other indicators, were used for the purpose of establishing the listings for the different areas. In the factor of cultural resources, Northeastern Pennsylvania did not rank as highly as community leaders felt was actually the case. Therefore, the group sent a letter to Money magazine outlining its thoughts and concerns. In part of the letter, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Arts Forum noted the following, "For example, the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic Orchestra has grown substantially both in size and stature over the last ten years. It is now rated as one of the

finest symphony orchestras of its kind and size in the United States, with a budget exceeding \$1 million. We have several outstanding ballet ensembles which have been featured regionally, and members of the ballet companies have toured in several cities around the country. In September, 1986, the F.M. Kirby Center for the Performing Arts opened its doors in downtown Wilkes-Barre. It has seating capacity of 1,850 and represents the finest facility of its kind in the United States with respect to the size community within which it is located. It has achieved national ranking already, through its variety of nationally renowned performers who have played, and the continuing increase in usage of the facility as a major performing arts center."

Additionally, such featured cultural resources as Broadway Theatre of Northeastern Pennsylvania, WVIA-TV and WVIA-FM, the Masonic Temple, the Sordani Art Gallery at Wilkes College, the Everhart Museum in Scranton and the local performing and visual arts organizations were referred to in the letter.

Much of this is important to the Back Mountain. Many of the leaders within the arts community live in the Back Mountain, and within the area itself reside institutions that provide cultural activities, such as College Misericordia, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, Arts at Hayfield and other resources important to the quality of life within the greater Wilkes-Barre region.

One of the first arts organizations in the region was the Back Mountain Cultural Center, the predecessor of Arts at Hayfield. These and other attributes substantially add to the quality of life in the Back Mountain.

The Northeastern Pennsylvania Arts Forum should continue to be an important adjunct to the organizations and individuals who are contributing their time and energy to the northeastern Pennsylvania region. Those who wish to know more about the Arts Forum can contact Sally Preate at the Northeastern Pennsylvania Philharmonic, Box 71, Avoca PA 18641 or the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1151 Oak Street, Pittston PA 18640.

Howard Grossman is Executive Director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Meeting

(continued from page 1)

in favor of consolidation of governments as well as consolidation of resources.

Sen. Charles Lemmond, Jr. reminded residents that the school districts did a fine job of defining the Back Mountain and, as did Hasay, Lemmond said he believed government closest to the problems worked best.

"There is no 'they' out there," Lemmond said. "There is room for everyone to jump in and do something."

Nancy Eckert, former Dallas Borough council member and one of the committee members who worked on Dallas Borough planning ordinances, stated that she thought volunteers in the fire and ambulance services were being overtaxed by the increased population of the area.

Drugs and alcohol, garbage and recycling were concerns expressed by Fred Templin, superintendent of curriculum in the Dallas School District. Ellie Rodda of Kingston Township asked how we were going to pay for this, and Hugh King, owner of Recyclery, was interested in who was going to be responsible for guiding the development problems. King told how he had seen a similar situation to that facing the Back Mountain develop in Vienna, VA thirty years ago, as former two acre zoning was changed to half acre. That, and the rapid increase in residential land values combined to eventually force his family to sell their farm and move.

Murray Miller, an architect who works throughout the East Coast, explained that in some other areas of the country development projects are reviewed by professionals in various fields to decide whether plans are suitable for their location. The review includes planners, traffic consultants and many others. Developer must pay for these services via a fee that is collected by the state and then given over to the community. He explained that in New Jersey, as much as \$100,000 or more must be paid before the review process even begins, but that developers are lined up to submit their projects. He also mentioned that esthetic considerations are a part of the review, and that \$150,000 was spent on landscaping a new site to meet the requirements.

Luzerne County Planning Director Adrian Merrolli stated that political bodies must adopt and revise ordinances to make them stronger. Present law requires that every zoning ordinance and change must come in for review but it is a procedural law and has no enforcement powers attached to it.

Several other members of the audience expressed concerns about overdevelopment and lack of adequate planning.

After the general session, Dr. Ryan asked the audience to break into groups of about 12 persons each and discuss their concerns, selecting one person from each group to record them on large tablets.

The people broke eight groups where they spent a brief period of time discussing the rapid growth and their concerns for the Back Mountain and issues which needed to be resolved.

This accomplished they came together again and the recorder from each group read their list of concerns.

Before the meeting adjourned, members of the audience agreed with Ryan to meet August 17, 7 to 9 p.m., at Penn State Campus, to continue discussion of the various concerns and how to resolve them.



COMMUNITY MEETS—110 citizens attended last week's meeting to discuss growth and planning issues. Shown in top photo; Hugh King, left, tells of a similar situation he faced in Virginia as Dr. James Ryan listens. Above, Kay Strickland records some of the concerns of her group. Left, Murray Miller explains what regulations he must face in other areas of the northeast.

Topics listed at meeting

- Below are listed some of the topics of concern that participants in last week's meeting on growth and planning held at the Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus.-Citizen involvement in political process
- School planning for increased growth
- Preservation of farmland
- A uniform zoning code
- Consolidation of governments
- Water management
- Public & private task force
- Back Mt. planning commission
- Referendum for joint planning to avoid local politics
- Developers to pay for service improvements.

- Integration of municipal services
- Recycling
- Uniform zoning
- Professional planning
- Transportation and roads
- Industrial waste
- Green space
- Septic & waste disposal
- Road maintenance
- Anti-litter laws
- Property reassessment
- Water runoff
- Construction of recreation facilities
- Air quality controls
- Change of people's attitudes
- Moratorium on building

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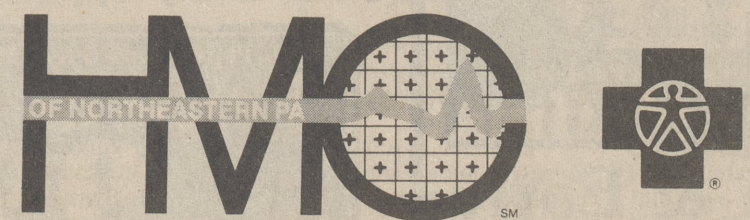
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The Health Maintenance Organization of Northeastern Pennsylvania, in conjunction with Dallas Family Practice, is pleased to invite you to attend an open house.

August 10, 1988, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
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Sterling and Machell Avenues, Dallas

Dr. Thomas Campbell
Dr. Robert D. Greenhalgh
Dr. Irvin Jacobs
Dr. Charles Krivenko
Dr. Diane Lowe

Open houses such as this provide a unique opportunity for you to visit neighborhood health care facilities. Physicians will be available to answer your questions and refreshments will be served. Stop by and say hello.



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