

Hard work a pleasure for this wall maker

By ERIC FOSTER
Post Staff

While many businesses are hurting in these recessionary times, Drew Weber says he has no shortage of work.

"Right now I'm booked for next year," says Weber, 44 of Sweet Valley.

The catch is that Weber's work is far from easy.

He builds stone walls - by hand - one stone at a time.

"I've had guys helping me. They've lasted one or two days, that's it," says Weber. "Needless to say, when I go home at night, I don't have any trouble sleeping."

You can see Weber's work throughout the Back Mountain, including some walls in Carverton and several along Harveys Lake's Lakeside Drive.

"People seem to be coming back to stone walls," says Weber. "Farmers, they have stone walls which have been here for hundreds of years. Back then, it was a lot harder. They didn't have machines."

Weber has a small bucket loader to take the stones to where he's laying the wall, but his hands do the crucial work of fitting the stones together.

"The object is to overlap your joints instead of piling one stone on top of another. You tie them all together."

Today, the popularity of stone walls has meant that some farmers have sold their stone walls to businessmen, who load them onto pallets and resell them.

"A lot of farmers used to dig a hole and bury the stone walls," says Weber. "Now they wish they

had those stone walls."

Presently, he's working repairing a wall on Huntsville Road in Dallas, where he also constructed two nine-foot tall pillars of stone. Each of the pillars took two to three weeks to build.

Weber first began working as a stone mason many years ago when his parents built a home in Trucksville with stone walls in the basement.

His father, Jack Weber, worked as a milkman for some 40 years, while his mother, Lida Weber, worked for Dr. Post for 18 years.

"They've never seen any of the work I've done," says Drew Weber. "I wish they could, especially mom, but they both passed away."

Weber has been involved with construction work for much of his life, but he always had an interest in working with stone. He started by helping other masons build walls, and for the past four years, it's been his full-time profession.

"I wanted to be my own boss and if I want to work 10 hours a day or 12..." said Weber, his voice trailing off but clearly saying he liked the independence of his career.

"Stone work is getting to be a lost art. The old-timers are quitting and nobody is going into it," says Weber. "It's too hard a work. There's not too many young guys. There's older guys, but they're retiring."

Why not something easier?

"Because I like working out in the open more than inside," says Weber while laying rocks on the top of one of the pillar's he's working on. "You have something like this, you look back and you have



MAKING GOOD NEIGHBORS - Drew Weber of Sweet Valley builds walls of stone. He is shown above working on a project on Huntsville Road in Dallas. (Post photo/Eric Foster)

something that's going to be there for awhile. You have a lot of satisfaction. It'll last longer than you're lifetime, longer than my lifetime."

And while Weber says that it's usually a seasonal work, the last few winters have been mild enough for him to work through most of

Construction begins on water line to prison

Will be used only in emergencies

By ERIC FOSTER
Post Staff

Construction has finally begun on a pipeline which will carry water from the Ceasetown Reservoir to the State Correctional Institution at Dallas in times of drought.

For the Citizens Advisory Committee to the prison, the work comes none too soon, and may not go far enough. Concerned that water usage from the prison would cause neighboring wells to run dry, the advisory committee has lobbying to have the pipeline built for the past two years.

According to Rose Wuenschel, press secretary for the state's Department of General Services, construction of the \$706,994 project began January 15. The water pipeline is expected to be completed in mid August.

"It was supposed to be done by last September," said Pat Rusiloski, chairman of the Advisory Committee.

Instead the project was put out for bid only on September 16. With the state appearing to be dragging

its heels on the project, the Advisory Committee pushed for a meeting with prison officials and State Reps. Stanley Jarolin and George Hasay, and Lisa Baker from state Sen. Charles Lemmond's office later that month.

While the prison would normally use about 350,000 gallons of water daily, according to Tom Figmik, public relations officer at the prison, conservation measures have reduced the demand on water. Begun last September 4, the measures, such as having inmates shower every other day, has reduced the prison's water usage to between 240,000 and 250,000 gallons daily.

Even with the pipeline, the prison plans to rely on wells as the main source of water, only using the pipeline as a backup.

"Not if the committee can help it," said Rusiloski, concerned that the current demand will still drain the water table. "We would rather use the water from the dam, and use the well water as a backup. I can't see taking all that water out of the ground."

Dallas Twp. will build pole barn

Dallas Township Supervisors authorized secretary-treasurer Glen Howell, to solicit bids for a 40'x48' pole barn to house township trucks at its regular meeting Tuesday, January 21.

In other business, Howell reported that he expected that the township's books will be ready January 22 for the regular internal audit.

Township residents are reminded that overnight parking on township roads is prohibited and will be strictly enforced by the police. Roads must be kept clear so that snowplows can clear them of snow and ice during inclement weather.

Dallas Borough honors police officers

Dallas Borough council commended two borough police officers, James Martin and Chief Jack Fowler, at its regular meeting Tuesday, January 22. Martin was elected president of the Back Mountain Police Association, while Fowler was recently elected president of the Luzerne County Police Chiefs' Association.

The council also voted to purchase a series of police training videos for all borough officers to study and be tested on. Officers who successfully pass the courses

will receive credit towards their mandatory ongoing police training.

In other business, the name of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, headed by Jay Pope, was changed to the Property Committee. Pope felt that since his responsibilities include more than buildings and grounds, that the new name would be less ambiguous.

At Pope's suggestion, Council authorized borough manager Milt Lutsey to sell the snowplow for-

merly used on the borough's payload. Lutsey was also authorized to have the equipment storage barn inspected for safety and to obtain the inspector's suggestions for the structure's renovation or replacement.

Lutsey reported that he expects the borough's books to be ready for the annual internal audit in approximately two weeks.

The next regular borough council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, at 8 p.m.

Joint Police

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lice with another department.

"It seems to me that if you take two municipalities with two full-time officers next to each other, it has to be cheaper," said Sutton.

"I'd like to study the thing," said Lehman Township supervisor Raymond Iwanowski. "I think there's a lot of room for consolidation, be it police, fire and ambulance."

Dallas Township supervisor Frank Wagner remained skeptical of the idea.

"It's not going to be cheaper, no way," said Wagner. "It may be providing each department is fully manned, like they should be, We're

short-handed, Kingston Township is and Dallas Borough."

Herbert Hill, a Kingston Township supervisor, said he felt that the area would have a consolidated police department someday, but that it would be a long way off.

There are four three-year grants available to help start consolidated departments, but they require the department to have at least six officers. The grants provide up to \$49,000 the first year, \$33,000 the second, and \$17,000 the third year.

Other requirements for the grant include having a computerized record system, and allowing the

DCA to be involved in selecting a chief.

"It takes a good manager to run a regional police department," said Martin.

Before the department even gets off the ground, the DCA requires municipalities to have a feasibility study done. Currently, 20 groups of municipalities across the state are having feasibility studies done, which the DCA will provide at no cost to the municipality.

"It's pretty obvious that the DCA is a pretty strong advocate for regional police departments," said Martin.

Traffic Lights

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traffic light in the state. In most instances, local municipalities bear the cost of installation and upkeep; only under special circumstances will PennDOT fund the installation of a traffic light.

"The intersection must have a significant number of angle accidents which could have been prevented by a traffic signal in order to receive state or federal funding. Head-ons, sideswipes and rear-ends don't count because they can't be prevented by a traffic light," Bonacci said.

PennDOT uses a complicated set of criteria to determine whether or not an intersection merits a traffic light. Factors such as the size and type of streets involved, vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns and congestion during peak hours are considered.

"Our goals are to reduce traffic congestion and accidents, save gasoline and reduce pollution caused by vehicles waiting in line at the intersection," Bonacci said.

"When we install a traffic light, we must consider that we will be causing a certain number of accidents in order to prevent others."

George Cave and Dallas Borough Councilwoman Marie Eytel both said that they live near the Center Hill Road intersection and that these conditions already are present without a traffic light. Cave's granddaughter was seriously injured in an accident there in 1990.

Dallas Township Supervisor Phil Walter commented, "A basic traffic signal costs at least \$70,000, depending on its size and com-

Do traffic lights cause accidents?

PennDOT traffic engineer Ron Bonacci has stated that it must first consider that traffic lights cause accidents before it approves installation of a new light. "We must take into account that we will be causing a certain number of accidents in order to prevent others," he said.

Bonacci also stated that only angle accidents can be prevented by a traffic light: sideswipe, rear-end and head-on crashes cannot.

The Post contacted two area police chiefs for their comments, based upon their experience with traffic accidents.

Dallas Borough Police Chief Jack Fowler feels that traffic lights are a deterrent to accidents. "I see fewer head-on and broadside accidents at traffic lights," he said. "Many rear-end accidents are minor or non-reportable." He feels that traffic lights also reduce accident severity. "Accidents happen under all different conditions," he said. "It's hard to generalize about them."

Kingston Township Police Chief Paul Sabol agrees that traffic lights deter accidents. "The only problems with traffic lights are that drivers try to beat them or don't pay attention to them. A yellow caution light does NOT mean to hit the gas pedal and run the intersection! It is a signal to drivers to prepare either to stop for a red or to proceed for a green light."

Sabol also agreed that traffic lights at intersections reduce the severity and frequency of accidents. "At intersections where there is no traffic light, everyone thinks that he has the right of way and does what he wants."

Both chiefs stated that they would rather see traffic lights at intersections with a high rate of accidents, than no lights at all.

"Many accidents could be prevented if drivers paid attention to other drivers as well as to where they're going and followed the rules of the road," Sabol concluded.

plexity. Where are the smaller municipalities to get that money?"

Bonacci also said that a new federal program initiated in October, might affect approval of traffic lights at these intersections, but he was not sure of details. The government has not passed the regulations down to the states yet.

Luzerne County Engineer Jim Brozena said that although no county funding is available for traffic signals, the municipalities might consider using some of their Community Development Block Grant money for the lights.

Dallas Borough Council members decided to check on funding sources before scheduling another meeting.

At the meeting's conclusion, Eytel commented, "I expected more from this meeting. At the last meeting of the Traffic Management Association, District Engineer Chuck Mattel had suggested that we could get further on the traffic light issue at a closed meeting, and hinted at possible federal funding. I didn't expect to see the money on the table, but I really didn't expect to hear all these uncertainties."

Teenager

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fulfilled.

"I always wanted to be on the cover of Vogue," she said, and "it would be neat to do a commercial - see myself on TV."

Becky has already been in the background of commercials for Channel 28 weather and Mark II Restaurants.

Becky was asked to audition for the Chef Boyardee advertisement October 1 and had to be in New York for the shoot two days later. Her advertisement will appear in issues of Family Circle, Ladies Home Journal, McCalls, True Col-

ors, Woman's Day and Good Housekeeping. Chef Boyardee has the rights to run the ad in magazines for the next year.

So how much does it pay? Mom won't say because it may hurt future contract negotiations.

"I like getting my picture taken," said Mathers, which is a good thing, because for the Chef Boyardee ad, she had to sit in front of a camera for four and a half hours, after having her hair and makeup done for an hour and a half.

"My arm got so sore holding that plate," said Becky of the dish of

Chef Boyardee that she held up for the camera while smiling.

To be sure they got just the right look, the photographers took pictures of Becky holding the plate, just Becky's face, and finally just Becky's hands holding the plate.

"She was sitting on a stool and she got down once in four and a half hours," said Sharon Mathers.

Besides modeling, Becky is on the Dallas Middle School cheer-leading squad, and has been a member of the field hockey team.

Her father is William Mathers, also of Trucksville.

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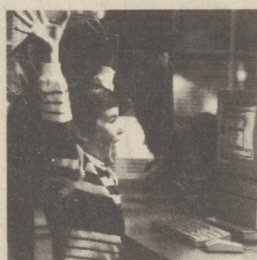
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