

Renovated farmhouse wins award

Former tenant house on Schooley Farm has new lease on life

Doug Burak says he'd do it all again, only better. "I'd add some things we forgot, like a swing on the porch," said the winner of the Back Mountain Citizens' Council Home Beautification Award.

Burak, who lives in the home at the intersection of Harris Hill Road and East Center Street in Kingston Township, doesn't take all the credit for the renovations. His father, Dr. William Burak, owns the house and the property surrounding it, and Doug's brother and sister, Greg and Lisa, added their sweat to the project, helping to gut the interior of the 80-year-old farmhouse.

How far did they have to go? "Right down to the studs," Burak said, though he pointed out that the original hardwood floors were saved and refinished.

Originally a tenant house on the Schooley Farm, the home sits on about 2 1/2 acres of land carved from a total plot of 131 acres. Dr. Burak and a partner, Leonard Romanowski, purchased the land in November of 1991, and subdivided it into 29 lots. They could have put as many as 50 homes on the land, but wanted to preserve as much of the rural character of the property as possible.

"We didn't want a high volume development on the land," said Dr. Burak, whose own home in Midway Manor looks over the property. "Our intent was to preserve it as naturally as possible."

The house came with the land, but at first the new owners weren't sure what to do with it. "It was so dilapidated, we thought about razing it," said Dr. Burak. But after a second look, the family decided the house could be renovated.

Work on the farmhouse began in December, 1991 and was pretty much completed by July, 1992. While the basic layout of the existing rooms was retained, a first floor addition houses a new master bedroom, and a bathroom, powder room and mudroom were added to the first floor. Two bed-



ALL FIXED UP - The old tenant house on the former Schooley Farm in Shavertown gained new life when renovated by the Burak family. (Post photo/Charlotte Bartizek)

rooms, a bath and a study that may soon become a nursery are upstairs.

And then there's the garage. "It looked like the Leaning Tower of Pisa," Burak said of the structure that has now been replaced with a usable version.

Burak lives in the house with his wife, Ruth, and her two children, Marc and Francis. But the upstairs may get some use soon, as the Buraks are expecting another child soon.

While the Burak clan did the tearing out, they left most of the construction to Paul Simkulak, a West Wyoming contractor who has done work for Dr. Burak for several years. Doug Burak added his own touches with tile work on the kitchen floor and island counter.

The family will have some new neighbors soon. Dr. Burak said that final papers for the subdivision will be signed early next month and installation of sewers and underground utilities will begin shortly after. With commitments in hand for four lots, he expects construction to begin on several homes in early spring.

This is the second year of the Home Beautification Award. The Back Mountain Citizens' Council created the contest to honor individuals who improve the appearance of an existing building. Entry forms for the 1993 award will be available soon.



PROUD OWNERS - Doug and Ruth Burak enjoy living in the old tenant house on the former Schooley Farm in Shavertown. They are shown with Ruth's son, Francis. (Post photo/Charlotte Bartizek)

Fair

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sediment discharge into a nearby stream."

The filling in of wetlands and other violations noted by DER's Bureau of Dams and Waterways during excavations at the fairgrounds between May, 1991, and July, 1992, have been corrected and the case closed, Carmon said. DER never fined the fair board for these violations.

According to a written statement released by the Luzerne County Soil Conservation District, the fair board was first cited but not fined in 1988 for similar violations, according to Dr. Brian Redmond, chairman of the Soil Conservation District's board and author of the statement.

The Luzerne County Soil Conservation district has been delegated the responsibility for administering erosion and sediment pollution control programs for DER's Bureau of Land

and Water Conservation, according to Peter Menjack of the Soil Conservation District.

"The fair board was given ample opportunity to correct the deficiencies of May, 1991-July, 1992, before we were obligated to turn the site over for enforcement," Redmond wrote.

DER reviewed the entire case with the Fair Board at a meeting Thursday, January 21, and assessed them a fine of \$12,750 for soil erosion and sediment discharge violations, Redmond wrote.

The fines were reduced to \$5,000, contingent upon the Soil Conservation District and DER being allowed to develop a 5-hour training seminar on the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law and its accompanying regulations, to be presented at the State Fair Association meeting in January, 1994.

"The Soil Conservation District

is aware of the volunteer nature of the fair board and recognizes the public benefit they provide. However, they must recognize that we have obligations...to carry out our delegated responsibilities in an unbiased fashion," Redmond concluded.

"Despite rumors that the fair's future could be in jeopardy, the Luzerne County Fair will go on as usual," said fair president Ed Kelly. "We already have some of our entertainment set up. S&S Amusements plans to bring in the largest Ferris wheel in the history of the Back Mountain."

The number of exhibitors nearly doubled from 1991 to 1992, and the board has already sent out nearly 170 books to interested exhibitors, Kelly said.

The Fair Board also plans to break ground for a second exhibitors' building in April, Kelly said

Charnick named to Who's Who in college

Peggy Charnick of Shavertown, has been selected to *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges* for 1992-93.

A senior liberal studies major at College Misericordia, Charnick has held the positions of president of the Literary Club and co-editor of *The Misericordian*, the campus student newspaper and *Instress*, the campus literary magazine.

Peggy and her husband, Stanley, are the parents of three children, Ellen, Laura and Elizabeth.

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