



PHOTOS BY CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Heritage Sunday

Trucksville United Methodist Church noted its 150th anniversary April 24 with a special "Heritage Sunday" service. In the photo above, Louise Schooley Hazeltine, left, presents a copy of her book, "A History of Trucksville United Methodist Church," which was dedicated during the service. Margaret Johnson and Rev. Charles W. Naugle looked on. Below, parishoners began to fill the church before the special service began.



Cottage

(continued from page 1)

"When are you moving out? Who owns this place?" every time they come out of their house.

"I feel like we're not allowed to even walk down the street," Carol Rayes said.

"I'm afraid to go out to my mailbox because someone might try to start an argument with me," Michael Rayes added. "I don't know whose business it is, except mine, who owns this property and pays the taxes on it."

He said that he is responsible for the taxes on the property.

Rayes said in August, 1993, that he bought the cottage at a tax sale in 1991, while Carol Rayes had told a Department of Environmental Resources field investigator the preceding May that the cottage had belonged to her late father, who had died without leaving a will.

The couple was especially upset that neighbors said that their yard smelled.

"That odor came from a swampy area in the front yard, which we have been filling in for a year with leaves and rocks," they said.

They blamed Lehman Township for creating the swampy area, which they say developed after the March, 1993, blizzard, when township plow trucks left a huge pile of snow in front of their yard.

When the snow melted, the water accumulated in a low spot in their yard and created the swamp, they said.

"The neighbors knew what the odor was," Carol Rayes said.

Although the cottage now has electricity, it still has no water or septic system.

Carol Rayes said that they had tried to tie into the water system available to summer residents for six months of the year, but all of the pipes to the cottage had been broken. They can't afford to fix them, she said.

"When we bought this place, no one ever told us that we couldn't live here without water," she said. "We made a mistake - we should have gotten a lawyer when we bought the place. No one ever said we couldn't live here."

The front yard is much cleaner than a year ago.

A new red "Keep Out" sign hung on a tree, while five chairs, six tires and several large pieces of scrap aluminum lay on the ground. The leaves had been cleared away.

A wall improvised from a wooden shipping pallet and the remains of an aluminum storage shed separated the front yard from the rest of the property.

A large blue tarp hung between the wall and a small pop-up camper, also covered by a blue tarp.

"It's no one's business what we have inside our compound," the couple said. "Do you see any junk out here?"

It was quite a change from a year ago, when the lawn was cluttered with what Rayes had described as yard sale items including two old recliner chairs and several large television consoles.

The odor seemed to have dissipated. Last year the yard had smelled like a combination of human waste and garbage, with occasional whiffs of stale beer.

According to Pat Dorrance, who lives across the street, Rayes put the aluminum wall up this week. She said that she has videotaped him unloading more large appliances from people's vans.

Rayes had been cited July 19, 1993, by township sewage enforcement officer Frank Eginsky, for violations of the state sewage act which requires that homes have either a septic system or a vented underground concrete tank topped by a wooden privy shed.

DER field investigator Chuck Rogers had described the prop-

erty as "a major eyesore" after a visit in May, 1993, to check out reports of accumulated garbage and human waste.

The cottage had been on the tax sale roster last summer, but was removed at the last minute, although Dorrance was ready to buy it.

Part of the problem is that no one can find out who actually owns the property, according to township solicitor Peter Savage.

"The last owner of record had an address at a post office box in the Poconos, which had been closed," Savage said.

If no owner of record can be found, the property can't be sold for back taxes, he said.

The township supervisors have directed Savage to petition Luzerne County court for a preliminary injunction to have Rayes clean up his property and to check the status of the sewage act violation.

Irem Women open season

The Irem Temple Women's Golf Association held its opening brunch and golf tournament for the 1994 season April 19. The tournament was a captain and crew format.

The winning team members were Sis Ertley, Carol Smith and Shirley Evans.

The runner-up team was made up of Ellie McKeage, Barbara Vivian, Lois Degennaro and Evelyn Eck.

Pine bark mulch available

Pine bark mulch is available at the Kingston Township Maintenance Complex, 225 East Center Street, Shavertown, free of charge.

Residents must bring their own containers and load the material themselves.

The site is open 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Residents with questions may call the Kingston Township Municipal Office at 696-3809.

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