

Plowing

(continued from page 1)

won't use a lot of anti-skid today because it's a dry snow."

It's a slow, monotonous job. Plow a section, turn, do the other side. Lift the plow, head for another township road.

The truck's radio crackled with messages on a shared frequency with crews in neighboring Kingston and Dallas townships. When it's been a long day, the drivers often joke back and forth to relieve the monotony, Owen said.

"They're all good guys," he said. "If one of us breaks down, the others try to help out. We all have a good working relationship."

Inside his truck's roomy cab is a bewildering array of switches, dials and levers - two knobs to control the flow of anti-skid material from the spreader, a gearshift and levers to engage the four-wheel-drive, raise the dump body, set the plow angle, raise or lower the plow and turn on the spreader. A set of switches on the dash operates the hydraulic pump and lights for the truck, spreader, emergency lights and the dump body.

"I added extensions to the dump body and plow levers and made them different heights," Owen said. "It's easier to tell them apart by touch that way, and I don't have to look to raise or drop the plow."

He stopped frequently to clear ice from his windshield.

"We use special wiper blades for snow, but they still break," he said. "I try to keep the cab warm to keep the windshield clear. In a heavy snow it can get rough."

He chuckled as he avoided two joggers trotting down Orange Road in the storm. "At least we don't have to dodge parked cars and manholes out here," he said.

Turning onto Brace Road, Owen lowered the plow blade so smoothly that it couldn't be felt inside the cab.

"The main thing is to know

"There's no way you can know what this is like until you've gone out and done it."

Art Owen
Snow plow operator

your equipment, learn each road's bad spots and pay attention to what you're doing," he said. "You also can't abuse your equipment. Don't do something you shouldn't - take it easy. Equipment will break down whether it's new or old."

Mill Hill is a narrow, winding, deserted dirt road which runs through Franklin, Exeter and Northmoreland townships. It's a pretty road, but very tight to turn around in.

"When I first started plowing Mill Hill, I hated it," Owen said. "It was much narrower then, and didn't have a guide rail. It was a straight 50-foot drop from the roadway to the creek. You have to pay attention here. If you get stuck, you're on your own. It's a bad spot for the radio to get through."

A few other roads run through two townships, which share the responsibility for plowing them. Cider Run and Hills Road are very sparsely populated. Owen only plows to where the houses end and doesn't worry about the rest.

Stops are few and far between. Franklin Township has no small corner store to get a cup of coffee or a sandwich, so the plow crew's only breaks are when it's time to head back to the garage for more fuel or anti-skid.

At least it isn't like last winter, when Owen and his son lost count of the hours they spent in their trucks, he said.

Heading out Coon Road, Owen didn't take the truck over 15 mph. The snow slid neatly away from the plow blade and onto the road-

side.

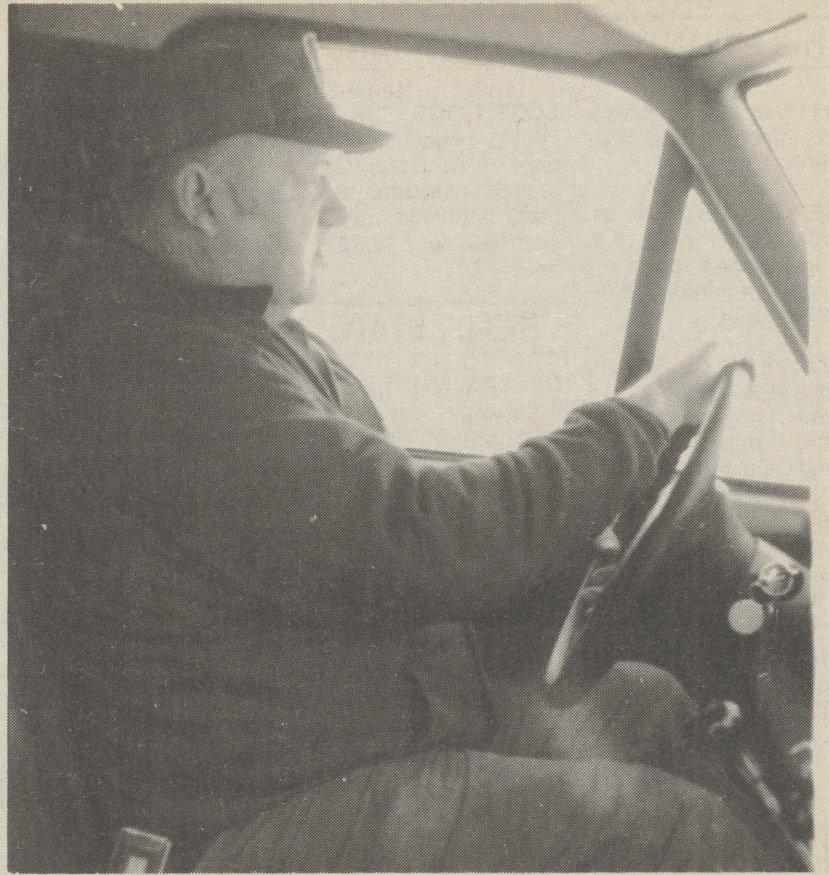
"You go any faster and you'll throw snow all over the place," he said. "Or you'll make a whiteout for yourself and won't be able to see. Some people swear we're doing 60, but we can't go near that fast."

No matter what the plow crews do, they can't avoid plowing in people's driveways, he said. It's impossible to raise the plow or change its angle for every driveway.

"I read last year that people got so disgusted with their driveways getting plowed in after they had just dug them out that they threw their snow shovels at the trucks," he said. "I know they're upset."

After clearing Franklin Township's half of Sickler Road, barely two lanes wide, it was time to turn around and head back through the storm to the other end of the township for another of many seemingly endless rounds of dropping the plow, clearing a pathway, raising the plow and heading for another road.

"There's no way you can know what this is like until you've gone out and done it," Owen said.



POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE
EYES ON THE ROAD - Franklin Township road foreman Art Owen was out in his snowplow early Saturday morning during the season's first heavy storm.

Racers

(continued from page 1)

quit the big cars but loves to race the slots, and wife Kathie shares his enthusiasm with her own cars. She is far from the only female hooked on slots.

Doc's wife Debra, who helps "mind the store" is also a fan. So is Mandy Scovish of Sweet Valley, a freshman at Lake-Lehman. Mandy says, "Gosh I love it, all of it. My Dad helps me but I can do my own tuneups and make my own repairs." She proudly displays a huge carrying case filled with auto bodies and parts, and

"My Dad helps me but I can do my own tuneups and make my own repairs."

Mandy Scovish

her new "caddy," a plastic and metal device which can cool off hot electric motors after a grueling run.

And grueling is the word for race events. Hectic would be

another. So much so that "Race-master" Wolff has had to caution drivers in his newsletter: "All drivers are required to do track work, watching your section to get deslotted cars moving again as fast as possible and avoiding wrecking oncoming cars. Failure to watch your section, carefully may result in disciplinary action. Drivers screaming at track workers will not be tolerated."

What is it they say? "Gentlemen, start your engines!"

Slot car tracks boom..and bust

Tabletop model car racing started in England around 1948. During the 50s over a dozen different systems competed with each other. Usually a wire on the track surface guided the cars. Small metal fins picked up electric current from the guide wire and returned it through metal strips or a braid which ran beside the guide.

An improved design utilizing a slot to replace the wire also started in England. In the late 50s several American firms introduced similar sets based on the small HO scale. These were intended to be action scenery behind model railroad layouts.

Tracks you could rent time on appeared in 1961, and by 1967 the hobby shot up sharply with over 3,000 commercial layouts in use, many of them franchised.

During that time you couldn't drive anywhere near a major population center without seeing at least one model car raceway. In the immediate Atlanta area in Georgia alone there were 72. But by 1970 there were only about 50 in the whole country. The market had become super-saturated.

"Slot car enthusiasm tends to wane when a racer learns to race well."

Steve Ogilvie
Slot car track builder



Raceways gathered dust in warehouses or were taken to junkyards and unloaded along with their owners' dream of instant wealth.

Today, despite a sort of resurgence, there are said to be only about 700 commercial facilities. There are 35 firms making car bodies, motors and parts, and 25 national organizations of hardcore fans. The hobby is a strange one, and fickle. Craze never seem to last and slot racing is no different. Veteran builder Steve Ogilvie

in Canada is responsible, along with his pupil Don Bryans, for over 350 tracks, but says, "I would never try to make money by operating them because it is just too tough."

Ogilvie says, "Slot car enthusiasm tends to wane when a racer learns to race well. He learns to correct his mistakes, reaches a certain level and stays there...the challenge goes away."

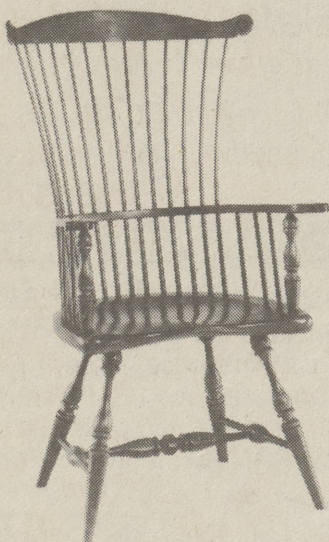
He adds, "And their buying binges don't last either. Maybe for six months or so they pick up extra cars, cases, tools, gadgets and all of a sudden it's over. When I learn beginning raceway operators are planning to quit their regular jobs I tell them they are making a big mistake. They don't listen and soon find out there are no millions to be made...far from it!"

But in spite of those dire words, there are always going to be those who will be willing to experience the thrills of high speeds on four wheels, but without any risk to life, limb and of course, pocket-book.

By Jack Hülsher

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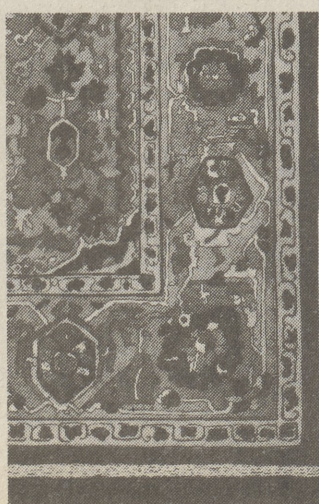
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HEALTH AWARENESS PROGRAMS

From the Heart:

February is American Heart Month...and Wyoming Valley Health Care System is pleased to offer a series of special Health Awareness Programs.

Mark these important dates on your calendar:

FEBRUARY

8
WED

"Cooking for Your Valentine"

Featuring:
Shelley Gardner, R.D., STAR Nutrition
Arlene Felliccia, R.D., STAR Nutrition

TPS Medical Pavilion
Health Enhancement Classroom 7:00 P.M.

If you don't cook on a regular basis and want to surprise a special someone on Valentine's Day, join Registered Dietitians Shelley Gardner and Arlene Felliccia as they lead a lively group demonstration in creative cooking! Learn how to cook a delicious, healthful meal. Then, find out how you can create a romantic dining atmosphere for your Valentine.

Designed for men and women who want to make Valentine's Day special! Class size is limited to 30 people, so please register today. And bring your appetite! Fee: \$5.00

PLUS! "Children's Corner: Passenger Safety"

While you attend this presentation, let Health Awareness staff instruct your child (ages 3 to 10) on the importance of car safety when riding as a passenger.

FEBRUARY

15
WED

"Hormone Replacement Therapy: Benefits and Risks" (a program especially for women)

Featuring:
John DeCaprio, M.D.
Wyoming Valley GYN-OB Associates
A division of General Medical Services Corporation

TPS Medical Pavilion Auditorium 7:00 P.M.

Dr. John DeCaprio will discuss the benefits and risks of hormone replacement therapy, with an emphasis on the prevention of heart disease. Dr. DeCaprio will also address hormone replacement therapy's role in preventing osteoporosis and relieving menopausal symptoms.

FEBRUARY

22
WED

"What Everyone Should Know About Heart Disease"

Featuring:
John Ellis, M.D., Chief of Cardiology
Wyoming Valley Health Care System

TPS Medical Pavilion Auditorium 7:00 P.M.

Discussing issues related to heart disease and its prevention, Dr. John Ellis will review the latest treatments, procedures and other heart-healthy considerations.

Come early (6:00-7:00 P.M.) and enjoy:

- Nutrition questions answered by a registered dietitian
- Complimentary low-fat recipes
- Information on STAR Cardiac Rehabilitation
- American Heart Association Display
- Exercise tips from STAR Fitness staff
- Informational displays
- Blood pressure readings

To register for any of these American Heart Month presentations, please call 283-7222 or 1-800-838-WELL.

TPS Medical Pavilion, 468 Northampton Street, Edwardsville

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