

## A Case for Conservation



Alene N. Case

Last week I stood a moment resting against the handle of my shovel. As I surveyed the white expanse that is usually our back yard, I began to daydream about squishing my toes into some nice warm mud. Wouldn't that be refreshing about now?

Let's think for a few moments about mud. Yes, I know it's terribly difficult to get it out of the carpet or Junior's jeans. But, when you really look at mud, it is pretty amazing stuff. It is simply soil with water added. Yet, people make beautiful pottery out of it or make bricks to build shelters out of it. The mud in the bottom of a pond or wetland shelters worms, frogs, insects, and fish during this winter weather.

Now, let's get even more basic — let's consider soil. Almost every book or article that deals effectively with human relationships with the world around us comes to the same conclusion: soil is fundamental. Soil has been variously described as "the living universe," "the moist, dark womb of humanity," or "an enduring and versatile form of wealth." Understanding the soil, then, is an important key to understanding how the earth works and how we fit into this scheme. Let us squish a little deeper into the mud.

Soil begins its existence as small pieces of rock are broken off by various forces of nature (wind, rain, frost) or by biological action. Lichens were likely some of the first soil-makers. These combinations of algae and fungus cling to the face of the rock and slowly

## In praise of glorious mud

dissolve and physically pry tiny bits of rock from the larger mass. As they die, they mix with these inorganic particles and a small quantity of soil is made. In fact, it is almost impossible to think of soil without also thinking of the various life forms that help create it and, in turn, find their existence in it. These include fungi, bacteria, insects and worms. These beings process the soil particles and decompose the leaves and other materials that are on the surface of the ground. They also add to the soil as they die and decay.

The process of building soil is a very slow one. Therefore, care should be taken not to interfere with it. That means considering the effect of our actions on the tiny creatures that are so intimately connected with soil. Everything from pesticides to compaction can be threatening to the health of soil. The type of soil, the weather conditions, the animals and plants in the area, and many other factors differ from one site or time to another. These differences make the soil more or less vulnerable to possible abuse. So, we would do well to try to learn as much as possible about the soil in our area in order to conserve it well.

Obviously, it is the nature of soil to wash away eventually. The rain or snowmelt or wind dislodges it and it finds its way into a lake or ocean where it settles to the bottom. Now it is called sediment. There are probably more kinds of sediment than there are soils. Beach sand is a form of sediment. Oil, coal and rock salt are all of sedimentary origin. Some sediment — like the black muck on the bottom of a marsh — is highly organic. Some is almost all clay or sand. Again, the type of sediment is often dictated by the activity of the plants and animals that create it or inhabit it. The two cannot

be adequately studied separately.

One of my professors in college, Dr. Daniel Livingston, once wrote an article entitled "In Praise of Mud." In it, he explains his life-long fascination with sediments. You see, he is a palynologist — one who studies the history of climate by looking at the pollen grains preserved in the mud of lakes. (And, you thought pollen was only good for making you sneeze!) As he says, "It is common for a thimbleful of lake mud to contain ten million identifiable microfossils....The pollen grains and spores of terrestrial plants provide an index of the vegetation that grew around the lake, whether tundra or steppe, taiga or dense tropical forest."

Sediments record the history of the earth in many other ways, also. Oceanic mud contains layers that are light in color and correspond to periods of high volcanic activity with ash distributed around the globe. In the deep ocean, ooze forms from the tiny skeletons of plants and animals that float in the surface waters when they are alive and then sink when they die. It is particularly interesting to study the distribution of oozes made primarily of calcium carbonate because these only accumulate above about 4,500 meters. Below that, the chemistry of the cold water and the pressure at such depths dissolve the shells before they can settle to the bottom. Therefore, if calcareous oozes are found in deeper sediments, it can be assumed that these formed in shallower water.

To summarize, then, many of the same attributes that make soil and mud so interesting to farmers, foresters, and scientists, also make them quite vulnerable to human interference. We all need to pay closer attention to the earth beneath our feet — if it ever reappears.

## As I was saying



Jack Hilsher

"Shoe shine boy, you work hard all day. Shoe shine boy, got no time to play. Shine, shine, shoe shine boy."

You may recall the lyrics, even the tune, but you haven't seen one in a half century. Yet before WWII, and even after, shine boys were all over central cities. They plied their trade near the hotels, near the city hall, in the pool parlors, in taverns all over, for mankind liked shoes gleaming and would pay to get them that way. It was part of being dressed up and being on the town. Hot dog! Remember the feeling?

Hardly in early teenhood, usually scruffy, some talkative and some not, young boys carted around boxes of polishing wax and cloth strips, the box hanging from their shoulders by a rope. Upon getting a "yes" to their query of "Shine, Mister?" they would place the box down, kneel in front of it and prepare to polish one shoe at a time. Payment was usually only a few silver coins...hardly ever a bill.

## Might shoe shine boys make a comeback?

I believe I read that ex-Governor Arthur H. James was once one of these boys. Of course, it could have been he was a breaker boy, but surely more than a few politicians, and surely a few future captains of industry, started in this trade. They learned self-reliance, and some salesmanship. Most developed customers of their own who wouldn't use other boys.

Where has this activity gone? And why? Job recruiters list a shined shoe quite high, next to the steady gaze and firm handshake, among the attributes they look for during interviews. And didn't the Army teach the importance of "spit and polish?" Do we, with a bunch of other items, toss shoes away when they become scruffy? Or do they sit in the back of a closet awaiting God knows what day to dawn on them again?

Of course now many shoe materials (like man-made leather) are made to stay shiny longer. Or, not to need a shine at all. But Kiwi is still going strong, and that name should sound familiar to most of you.

Kiwi is, of course, the maker and marketer of hundreds of shoe-care products. It was founded in Philly (1948) by an Aussie and named in honor of his wife, a New Zealander. (A kiwi was a bird,

wasn't it? Well that's Philadelphia for you.)

Their introduction of things like "Scuff Magic" which you spread on the shoe with an applicator — supposedly it "dries glossy to cover scuffs" and is called "self-shining" — have nowhere near wiped out the old-fashioned paste wax.

A Kiwi spokesman says, "You'll never beat paste for brilliant shines. Besides, guys like the ritual of opening up a newspaper and spreading, then polishing, the paste wax. They like the smell, they love the results."

I am not ashamed to say I've got that box of round polish tins, and the brushes, and I use them. Perhaps not as often as I should, but when I do I feel better when I look down.

There have been, in our lifetime, households where (this is a son reminiscing) "mother shined father's shoes every weekday morning for as long as they were married." Would be interesting to have market research find out how many such marriages lasted. I couldn't find that statistic for you, but here's one: "Close to 30 percent of Americans throw their shoes away before they need polishing." (That one came from Kiwi itself.)

But at today's shoe prices? I wonder.

## Century 21/Ruth K. Smith sponsors bowl-a-thon to aid Easter Seals

Century 21 Ruth K. Smith Real Estate, Inc. is proud to announce their 4th Annual Easter Seals/Century 21 Ruth K. Smith Charity Bowl-A-Thon to be held on Saturday, Feb. 3, at Stanton Lanes Bowling Center in Wilkes-Barre. Real estate brokers, associates, employees and their families will be bowling together to raise funds in support of the Easter Seals Society of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Participants in last year's Bowl-A-Thon were able to raise over \$30,000.

Last year's event proved to be a great success due to the overwhelming support of the agency's many fine clients, customers, local businesses and friends throughout the Wyoming Valley.

Anyone interested in supporting their favorite agent may contact them at any of the three Century 21 Mary K. Smith Real Estate offices. The numbers are: Shavertown, 696-1195; Kingston, 287-1196; and Mountaintop, 474-6307.

No paper has as much Back Mountain news as The Post

## Isn't it Nifty Barbara is 50!



Love, Drew & the Kids

## If you missed The Post - you missed the news!

Guaranteed Money Market Account

# Even In An Unpredictable World, There Are Some Guarantees.

Guaranteed Money Market Account

**5.00% APY\***  
\$25,000 Minimum Deposit

So why not invest in something you can always count on. A Guaranteed Money Market Account from Mellon. It comes with a guaranteed great rate available when you open an account with money from another financial institution. The security of FDIC insurance. And there's no penalty for early withdrawal. Plus, for added convenience, you can also write checks from your account. To apply, visit a Mellon office or call our **MellonDirect 24** center any day of the week at 1 800 MELLON-24.



© 1996 Mellon Bank Corporation. \*A minimum daily balance of \$10,000 is required to earn interest. The Annual Percentage Yields (APYs) for the Guaranteed Money Market Account are set weekly and may change after the account is opened. The APY for balances of \$10,000-\$24,999.99 (currently 3.50%) will be at least 60% of the IBC/Danoghue's Money Fund Average™. All Taxable Seven-Day Compounded Yield as reported in the most recent IBC/Danoghue Money Fund Report® available to us ("Index"). The APY for balances of \$25,000-\$249,999.99 (currently 5.00%) will be at least 80% of the Index. Fees could reduce the earnings on the account. The APYs listed are effective as of the date of this publication. New Guaranteed Money Market Accounts with these APYs may only be opened with funds from another financial institution. The graphic figure illustrated is not intended to depict the past, present or future performance of the Index or of APYs for the Guaranteed Money Market Account. Mellon Bank, N.A. - Member FDIC. Northeastern Region



We fix it fast, we fix it right, for the right price!

# Grand Opening!

90 Days Same As Cash!

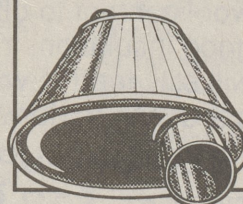
MONRO MUFFLER/BRAKE

Now open in Dallas at:  
**State Route 309** (Next to Dallas Shopping Center) **674-6021**

Kingston - 332 Wyoming Avenue ..... 283-1965 Wilkes Barre - Route 309 Plaza ..... 826-8970

## Mufflers 30% off

Manufacturer's list price



- No appointment necessary!
- Free written estimates!
- Fast free installation!
- Worldwide Lifetime Muffler Guarantee!

## Tires \$37.95

All-Season Steel Belted Grenadier Radial

- 40,000 mile treadwear warranty!
- All-weather dependability!
- Everyday low price!

## Wynn's power flush & fill \$49.99

Our flush-&fill doesn't just drain your cooling system, it cleans it! Helps prevent deterioration of your car's radiator, hoses and gaskets, and prevents overheating due to cooling system deposits. Limit one coupon per purchase. Coupon valid through 1/27/96 9867

## Lube, oil & filter \$12.99

Includes up to 5 quarts Kendall motor oil, new Kendall oil filter, chassis lube (where applicable) and free undercar inspection. Available for most vehicles. Please call for an appointment. Additional charge for filters on some vehicles. Coupon valid through 1/27/96 9864

## 10% off any Monro service

Save 10% off our regular price on any undercar service at Monro. Tire and sale items excluded. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Coupon valid through 1/27/96 9865

## \$20 off Disc pad or brake shoe installation

Put a stop to your car's brake problems with our guaranteed disc pads & shoes. Save \$20 off our regular price per axle. Limit one coupon per job. Coupon valid through 1/27/96 9866

Mufflers • Brakes • Shocks • Springs • Alignments • State Inspections • Tires • Front Wheel Drive Experts  
OPEN: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri: 7:30 am - 8 pm, Wed: 7:30 am - 6 pm, Sat: 7:30 am - 5 pm. Fleet & commercial accounts welcome.

