

EDITORIALS

Hoopla over the Women's World Cup makes perfect sense

After Sunday's victory, what could you say about the performance of the U.S. Women's World Cup soccer team that hadn't already been said? Plenty, judging from some of the commentary on radio and television, especially what escaped from the mouths of people who just don't get it — who don't understand how and why this team attracted so much attention and caused so much excitement. After all, they're only girls.

First, to answer those who question why this was such a big deal. For one thing, a U.S. team beat the best in the world in a sport that is much more popular nearly everywhere else than it is here. Just like the 1980 U.S. hockey team that won Olympic gold, this team captured our hearts because they performed at their peak against the toughest competition available, and came out on top. The reasons soccer caught on earlier elsewhere are many and varied, but we would hazard a guess that soccer's simplicity and low cost have allowed the sport to bloom in the most backward and poor nations on Earth, as well as in some of the most advanced. All you need is a ball and a few kids to play a game, not a hoop on a 10-foot metal pole, or pads, or a precisely turned bat.

There was more at work in this team's popularity than the players' combined excellence, though, and it wasn't just Mia Hamm's good looks. In the past decade or so, soccer finally caught on in the States, attracting millions of young players, both male and female. Across America, in small towns and big cities, kids are playing soccer, on intramural teams, in travel leagues, around the backyards and in the school playgrounds. Women's soccer — and the men's side as well — is reaping what it has sown; fans who are or were players, and their families. The biggest boost comes from girls, who only a generation ago weren't expected to do much more than cheer for boys' teams, but now suit up and take the field with enthusiasm, and more than a little skill. It's only natural they would go gaga over new role models who seem to embody their wildest sports dreams. And we are fortunate that in America, women's sports can receive ardent support, while in some of the most soccer-crazy nations women are still regarded as too fragile to play sports at a high level. Apparently there are still some people in America who feel the same way, or perhaps they are threatened when women — girls — show some grit and stamina.

It still may be some time before the majority of sports fans of either gender sit back and enjoy a women's game just for the quality of the play and the drama of the competition. But that's not a problem for the outstanding players who brought home the World Cup trophy — or rather who kept it home. Their victory was sweet, and judging by their swelling fan base, there will be plenty of players coming up the ranks to keep the U.S. at the top of the soccer ranks.

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Do you agree? Disagree?

Editorials are the opinion of the management of The Dallas Post. We welcome your opinion on contemporary issues in the form of letter to the editor. If you don't write, the community may never hear a contrasting point of view.

Send letters to: The Dallas Post, P.O. Box 366, Dallas, PA 18612. Please include your name, address and a daytime phone number so that we may verify authenticity. We do not publish anonymous letters, but will consider withholding the name in exceptional circumstances. We reserve the right to edit for length and grammar.

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Patently waiting for the harvest. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

LETTERS

A thank you to all the auction helpers

Editor:
Although the 53rd Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction is now just a memory for those of us who attended, the auction volunteers and library staff who made it all possible are still at work: sorting, tabulating, assessing, and setting goals for the future. For the past eight or nine years, I have painted on location at the auction, and I am continually amazed at the organization, camaraderie and unselfish devotion of the people who make it all possible.

The time and energy they expend before, during and after the event is incredible.

This year I was excited to create a painting of the auction as viewed from high in the air in a bucket truck. I would like to publicly thank Ray Conrad and Conrad Electric for donating their bucket truck and their time (and patience!) for making the view possible.

I would also like to publicly thank Charlotte Bartizek of The Dallas Post, one of the auction

committee chairpersons. Charlotte's encouragement, support, and arrangements gave me the impetus to make my ideas for the painting a reality. Special appreciation to all of you who bid on my painting!

Thank you to all of you who made the 53rd Library Auction a wonderful event for all of the families and friends of the Back Mountain community.

Sue Hand
Dallas

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

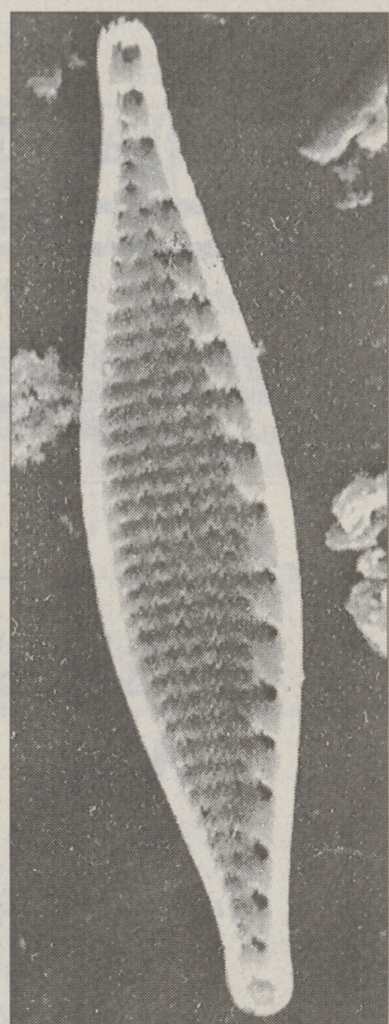
Human beings, especially those of us who live here in North America, are attracted by anything that is very large. We think that large houses, large cars, giant basketball stars, and blue whales must be most interesting and most important. But, I am here to inform you that tiny plants called diatoms (one-celled algae that have thin silica walls) are at least as important and as interesting as those gigantic red woods in California.

Diatoms live in almost every imaginable place on earth from the ice flows of Antarctica to brine lakes to fast flowing streams. They come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes - round, rectangular, long and slender, star-shaped, etc. They often live singly, but sometimes form mats or chains by sticking to each other in various ways. Although they are plants, many of them can move slowly from one place to another without the assistance of currents or winds.

In spite of the fact that diatoms are so tiny that one author estimated that 25 million of them would fit into one teaspoon, these plants provide between 20 and 25 percent of the oxygen we breathe. They are also the base of most aquatic food webs. Insect larvae, fish, and other animals eat them and, in turn, are eaten by larger animals. In fact, one quarter of all plant life by weight (!) on the earth at any one time consists of diatoms. That's a lot of glass houses!

As you can see from the picture that accompanies this article, the glass (or silica) cell wall of a diatom is often quite intricately designed. All have small holes which makes the cell wall somewhat like a sieve. These, in addition to the oils and other lightweight inclu-

Diatoms: Tiny plants that live in glass houses



A single diatom, made visible by a scanning electron microscope.

sions in the cell itself, help the cells stay suspended in the water so that they can use sunlight to produce "food." Some diatoms also have spines which act to keep them suspended.

One of the most fascinating things about diatom shells is that they are made of two valves which fit together like the parts of a petri dish in the laboratory. That means that one half is slightly smaller than the other. Since most reproduction of diatoms is vegetative (non-sexual), each time the valves

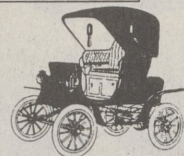
separate to form two new cells, the resulting diatoms are somewhat smaller than the original. After several generations, the cells are only about one third of their normal size and can no longer function properly. At that point, most diatoms reproduce sexually to regain their optimal size.

Diatom frustules, as the shells are called, do not go away when the cell dies. Most are preserved in the mud that accumulates on the bottom of the lake or ocean in which the diatom lived. There are many places, especially on the west coast of the USA, where ancient frustules are piled into strata thousands of feet thick and miles long. These deposits are used for a wide variety of things: fillers in paints, filters for swimming pools, silver polish, absorbents, and insulation materials. We know it commonly as diatomaceous earth.

Scientists also use these diatom frustules to help them learn about the climate and conditions when the diatom lived. Since each species can be identified by the characteristics of its shell, diatoms can tell the researcher a great deal about the kind of river or lake or bay in which it lived. Such things as temperature, salinity, and acidity can be estimated by looking at the various communities of diatoms in the mud.

Some people have speculated that diatoms could meet the future needs for human food. However, these tiny plants are better cared for in their native environments. It is rather ironic that the very petroleum products that are causing the most problems for diatoms, and aquatic environments in general, were likely originally derived from diatoms and other algae. We would do well to respect the tiny plants on which so much of the other life on earth depends. In keeping their watery habitat natural, we just may learn the secret of our own longevity.

ONLY YESTERDAY



**70 Years Ago - July 13, 1929
ROAD IMPROVEMENTS MAKE GETTING AROUND EASIER**

Completion of two Luzerne County projects and inauguration of paving operations on a third, during July is announced by Chief Engineer Eckels of Harrisburg. Division Engineer S.P. Longstreet, Shavertown has reported four miles of new surfacing open to traffic during the week on two routes, the Harveys Lake road on the east side to Alderson and Route 115, Luzerne and Courtdale Boroughs.

**60 Years Ago - July 14, 1939
SNAKES HAMPER WORK NEAR BOWMAN'S CREEK**

Driven from the mountains by the dry weather, an unusual number of rattlesnakes is being killed along Bowman's Creek by workmen who are building the new concrete link on Rte. 92 above Lute's Corners. As many as four snakes had been killed in one day and one of the serpents had 10 buttons.

You could get - Lams liver, 19¢ lb.; chuck roast, 19¢ lb.; Little Neck Clams 100 for 55¢; water-melons 45¢ ea.; red beets, 3 lb. bunches, 10¢; Ivory Flakes, 3 small pkgs., 25¢.

**50 Years Ago - July 15, 1949
LIBRARY AUCTION DRAWS NATIONAL ATTENTION**

The greatest community auction gets underway at noon today in Dallas. Unique from every angle the auction has attracted the attention of nationally known newspaper and magazine writers. Starting two years ago as a means of raising money for the Back Mountain Memorial Library, the auction has excited the enthusiastic response of an entire community and is the culmination of weeks of effort on the part of no less than 200 informal committee members.

Now playing at Himmler Theatre, "The Barkleys of Broadway" starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

**40 Years Ago - July 9, 1949
DALLAS POLICE CRACK BURGLARY RING**

Prompt and alert work of Dallas Township Police operating on a course of action suggested by Pennsylvania State Police has produced the first break in the long list of crimes that has terrorized Back Mountain and Wyoming Valley residents for more than a year. Four Philadelphia men, members of a big gang of experienced criminals which has been operating in several states are now in Lycoming County Jail at Williamsport, in lieu of \$20,000 bail each on charges of burglary, conspiracy and possession of burglary tools.

**30 Years Ago - July 17, 1969
DALLAS JR. HIGH MAY NOT BE COMPLETED IN TIME**

Dallas School Board met Tuesday with contractors to determine whether the new Junior High School will be ready for occupancy in the fall. No definite answer was forthcoming. The end of the month was set for a final review. Several strikes and shortages have held up the schedule. Should the classrooms not be ready, half day classes may be resorted to for a time. The old school annex will shortly be torn down.

Early returns on the Library Auction indicate that the library will net over \$20,000 after all bills are settled. Antiques Committee is responsible for around \$5,000 of this amount. Full returns are not yet available.

**20 Years Ago - July 12, 1979
HL TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION INJUNCTION TURNED DOWN**

Harveys Lake Borough Council could wind up its controversial borough building purchase within two weeks according to its president, now that the Taxpayers Association attempts to obtain an injunction have been turned down. Just the day before, Commonwealth Court in Harrisburg turned down Harveys Lake Taxpayers Association appeal of Luzerne County Judge Peter Paul Olzewski's refusal to grant the injunction it had sought to halt the purchase proceedings until the law suit could be ruled on.