

EDITORIALS

Time has come to fix Hemlock Garden roads

Perhaps something will finally be done to repair the roads in the Hemlock Gardens development at Harveys Lake. It appears there may be a ray of light for home owners who have struggled for years to have the steep gravel roads in the subdivision paved. They have fought with the borough and the developer over who is responsible for bringing the roads up to standards, with each of those parties offering reasons they aren't the one. Meanwhile, sediment that runs down East and West Hemlock ends up in Harveys Lake, where it contributes to pollution that leads to algae blooms and other annoyances.

Now the Harveys Lake Protective Association may have found a solution that avoids the rancor and expense of protracted litigation. The organization is looking into a state "Growing Greener" grant that could be used to bring the gravel streets up to the standards that would allow them to be taken over by the borough, then paved. This may be the only way such a complicated dispute can be resolved, and at this point it is better to solve the problem than to worry over who is at fault.

'Butch' Chamberlain leaves a legacy of service

The Back Mountain lost a stalwart champion of the old school when Robert "Butch" Chamberlain collapsed and died while shoveling snow Friday. No, he wasn't a Congressman or a captain of industry. Butch Chamberlain was one of the quiet people who, as road superintendent of Kingston Township for 29 years made sure we could get where we needed to go no matter the weather or obstacles. After retirement, just a year ago, he chose to run for the office of township supervisor, and won easily. His was not a rancorous campaign — quite the opposite as he praised sitting supervisors for their handling of township matters. Butch didn't want to reform Kingston Township; he thought it was a pretty nice place to live and wanted to keep it that way. He would have known, since someone in his line of work would surely hear about any serious shortcomings.

It's a shame that Butch Chamberlain, a Kingston Township High School graduate who married his high school sweetheart, served in the army and returned home to serve his neighbors so well, didn't get to enjoy his retirement, after working so hard to reach it. We hope it's a comfort to his wife, Lorraine, and his children, knowing that their husband and father was held in such high regard by the people who knew him best outside of his family.

Publisher's notebook

Ron Bartizek



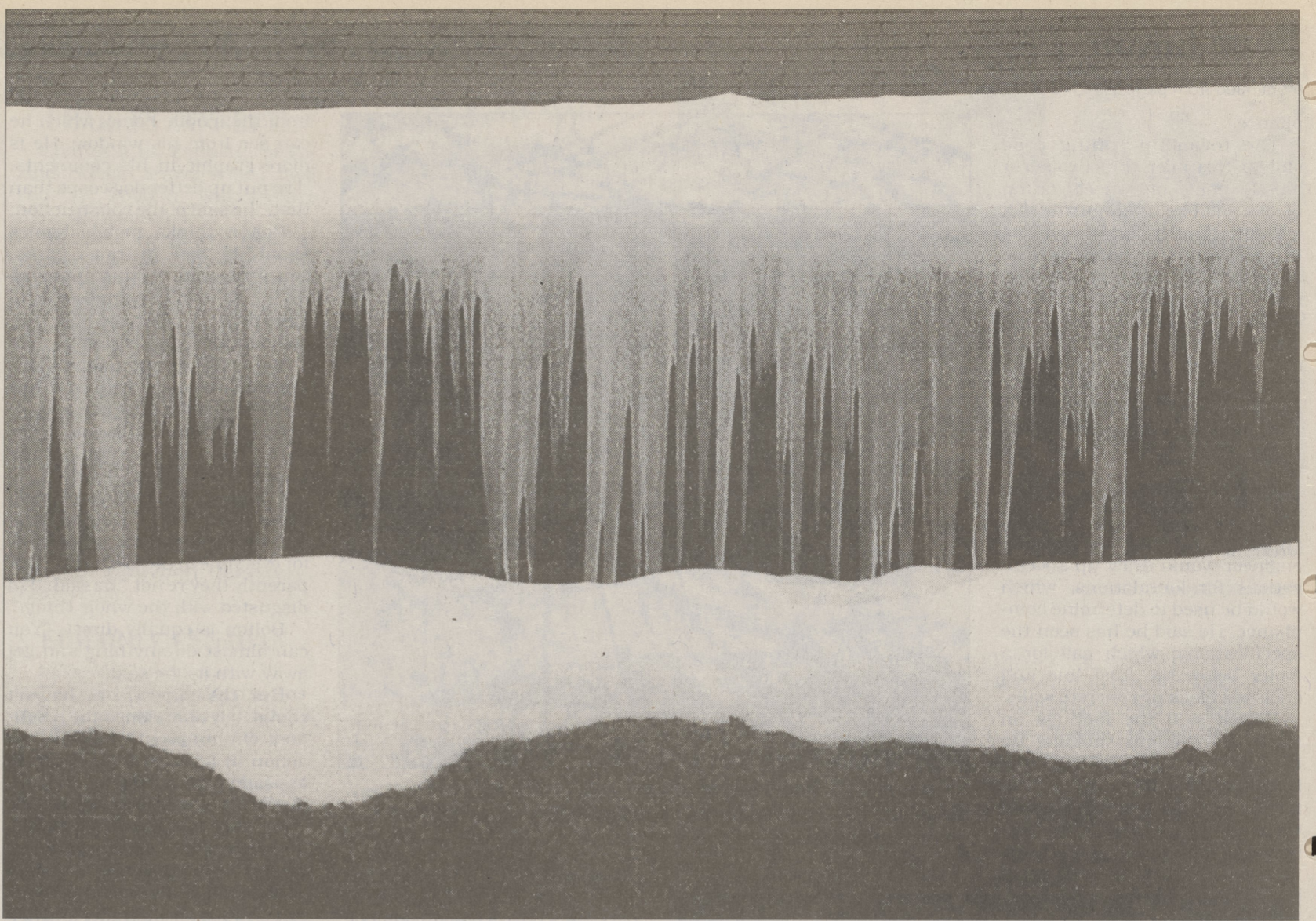
After years of hopeless struggle, I finally understand how an alcoholic feels, and can commiserate with his or her inability to kick the habit. You see, I realize that I too have been addicted for years, and after all attempts at denial have failed, I'm ready to head for the next 12-step meeting, stand up and proclaim that I'm a prisoner . . . of clutter.

Don't laugh, this is serious business, especially when you're married to a German. (Well, a half German, but that's more than enough for me!) It dawned on me last week that I was too far gone to run away from it anymore, after I ordered yet another accessory in hopes of organizing the scattered papers on my desktop. This one is neat — a little wire rack thingie with four slots on top and two trays below — just the ticket I believed to provide a place for everything so I could put everything in its place. But it was not to be. Sure, I've put folders and files in the rack, but for every one that was removed from my desktop, another replaced it.

And I always make the same excuse: "I don't want to put it away, because I might forget about it, and it's important." Never mind that some of this "important" stuff has been buried alive for months as I piled newer critical papers on top of it. Even worse, some of it really was important, but I never got around to it because I couldn't find it.

So, now it's time to 'fess up. I'm a clutterholc, and I'll always be one. Even if I get the desk cleaned off, even if I put everything in its place, I'll still be an addict. It's one day at a time for me, folks, and then another and another until perhaps some day I can look back at a year, a month, even a week when my desktop has been clean and neat. It's hard to live this way, but it's the only choice for me.

Actually, the more I've thought about this, the more I think it's not that I'm weak. No, it's not any failing on my part, it's a disease that makes me this way. I must be lacking the neatness gene. And I've read about counselors who will come to the office and teach you how to be neat and organized. I think I need one of those, and I'm going to ask if my health insurance will pay for it, because it's not really my fault at all. And after I've conquered this challenge, I'll be ready to tackle my Attention Deficit Disorder, which I know is a disease because it's capitalized.



Along Icicle Row. They may be gone for now, but they may return. Photo by Charlotte Bartizek.

The economic viewpoint



Howard Grossman

Do the citizens of the Back Mountain, Mountaintop area, the Clark Summit area, and other places across Northeastern Pennsylvania where there are major bedroom communities desire the restoration of rail passenger service? If the answer is yes, \$160 million was set aside in the 1998 Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21) federal legislation will assist efforts which have been undertaken over the last 25 years to bring rail passenger service back to northeastern Pennsylvania.

While still a number of years off, the \$160 million announcement is designed to restore rail passenger service from Scranton to New York City. The Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP) has been a leader in the effort to restore rail passenger service. Now energy should be directed to restoring service not only between Scranton and New York but to other points within northeastern Pennsylvania such as greater Wilkes-Barre.

The history of rail passenger service of northeastern Pennsylvania has been resplendent with rail stations of major historical significance, a rail movement which led to tourism and eco-

Restoring passenger rail service

economic growth excursions in northeastern Pennsylvania, and an institutional movement to protect rail freight interests in the region. This led to the formation of a Railroad Task Force for the Northeast Region which included the seven EDCNP counties, the five counties of the northern tier region and the 10 counties to the west and flourished from 1973 until the early 1980s to help achieve stabilize rail freight service.

In 1981, federal legislation passed and was signed into law which enabled Conrail to abandon rail branch lines easily: The EDCNP and Railroad Task Force went to work to protect the interests of rail branch lines across northeastern Pennsylvania, and was successful. Now, Conrail is being merged into CSX and Norfolk Southern. The EDCNP Railroad Committee is working to measure the economic impact of this merger and again protect the interests of the economy of northeastern Pennsylvania.

The latest development, however, concerns itself with the restoration of rail passenger service. The work of the Lackawanna County Rail Authority and the Monroe County Rail Authority should not go unnoticed. They have been stalwarts in the latest round of decision making with respect to the restoration of rail passenger service.

The project involves restoration of passenger railroad service in the heavily traveled and congested I-80 and I-380 corridor between Scranton and northern New Jersey. The portion of the

corridor from Scranton to the Delaware Water Gap (59 miles) currently has freight train service and a portion is used by the National Park Service for passenger trains on the Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton. A portion from the Delaware Water Gap to Lake Hopatcong (28 miles) where connection is made with New Jersey Transit's existing commuter rail service, was acquired by the New Jersey Department of Transportation for this project in 1996.

Lake Hopatcong to Hoboken, New Jersey and Penn Station, New York City (46 miles) and the upgrading of the rail corridor will increase tourism in the corridor, which includes the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and the Pocono Mountain resorts, without requiring automobiles.

Total cost is estimated at \$158 million, with approximately \$1 million in study funds and funds to perform the major Capital Investment Study, which includes an Environmental Assessment. The project appears in the "Circle of Mobility" legislation in New Jersey and in the Metropolitan Planning Organization as Unified Planning Work. It is a high priority in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation priority system.

When completed, the project is expected to carry 684,000 riders annually. Both Pennsylvania and New Jersey applied for Federal Transit Administration funds and received them to conduct studies in the I-80 and I-380 corridor.

The Major Investment Study (MIS) is required for the federally funded project and must analyze transportation options to ensure

that the most effective alternative is chosen for the region. The MIS must be conducted to select a "locally preferred alternative." The study sponsors have selected LS Transit Systems to consolidate the previous studies of the corridor and to develop the MIS document.

Primary highways in the corridor are I-380, I-80, and combinations of highways in New Jersey most notably US 40, I-280, I-287 and I-495. A key transportation asset in the corridor is the Lackawanna Cut-off. The Lackawanna Cut-off is a 29 mile, grade-separated segment of abandoned railroad right of way built in the early 20th century that traverses northwestern New Jersey from Port Morris near Lake Hopatcong to the Delaware Water Gap. Restoration of rail passenger service is part of the revitalization of the region.

The Lackawanna County and Monroe County Rail Authorities deserve great credit for achieving the success reached thus far. As the residents of the Pocono Mountains and those generations to follow begin to assemble their views on rail passenger restoration, development organizations within northeastern Pennsylvania need to reinforce the effects on the economy and quality of life in the region. For more information contact the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania (EDCNP), 1151 Oak Street, Pittston, PA 18640-3795.

Howard J. Grossman is executive director of the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania. He lives in Dallas.

ONLY YESTERDAY



70 Years Ago - Feb. 21, 1930 NOXEN H.S. SENIORS TO VISIT NATION'S CAPITAL

The Senior class at Noxen is planning to take a trip to Washington D.C., in June. The trip will enable students to see the U.S. government buildings and better understand the work of the government. A supper was given at the Lutheran hall last Wednesday evening to benefit the Senior class. They are also planning to perform a play and one other activity in order to obtain sufficient funds to pay the fares to Washington.

The Wilkes-Barre Symphony Orchestra gave a one hour concert to pupils and parents of Dallas Township last Wednesday afternoon. The purpose was to organize a school band. Students were loaned instruments on a trial basis to determine which one they would prefer to play.

60 Years Ago - Feb. 23, 1940 MISERICORDIA WOMEN TAKE TO THE AIRWAYS

Members of the student body of College Misericordia will be heard in a series of radio programs to be presented by the college, starting some time in March. The programs will be educational and will be comprised of dramatic skits, organ melodies with reading of appropriate poems, piano, vocal and instrumental pieces, talks by alumna and senior students on food, nutrition and health.

The students at the Shaver-town grade school will present their operetta "Aunt Drusilla's Garden Party", in the high school tonight. Between the acts the first grade rhythm band will give several selections and a second grade chorus will sing several songs. More than 100 children are in the operetta.

50 Years Ago - Feb. 24, 1950 SUNSET PARK VISITORS TO ENJOY MERRY-GO-ROUND

Dan Robinhold has purchased a thirty-eight foot merry-go-round complete with thirty-two horses and two chariots, which he will install at Sunset Park, Harveys Lake, this spring.

At the meetings of the Lake Township Alumni Association and Lake Township PTA, in May, uniforms for the rapidly growing band were discussed. Since that time a series of dances and other fund raising activities have brought a total of \$750. In addition, the school board has assumed part of the burden and plans to contribute at least \$500.

40 Years Ago - Feb. 25, 1960 YOUNGSTERS LEARN VALUE OF STAMP COLLECTING

Stamp collecting was the theme of a Youth Crusaders meeting Monday night at Trucksville Methodist Church. Why collect stamps? Assistant Chief Herbert Updyke, held up one book. "See this book? It's worth enough to put my son through college".

In the midst of all the wind blown and heavy snow, Mother Nature showed one of her unpredictable capers, when Mrs. Hughes found a large brown, fuzzy caterpillar curled up in the snow on her back porch.

30 Years Ago - Feb. 26, 1970 LOCAL MUSICIANS PERFORM AT KIWANAS FESTIVAL

The Kiwanis Music Festival will

begin with auditions conducted March 1 and 8, at Dallas Senior High School. The semi-finals will be held at Wilkes College Performing Arts Center, April 12. The finals, scheduled April 25, at Irem Temple auditorium, conclude the festival. There are two divisions of talent this year, high school and open. The open division includes any person or group beyond high school age and is not limited to college students.

You could get: King Midas flour, 5 lb. bag, 45¢; Jif Peanut Butter, 1 lb. jar, 75¢; Bounty paper towels, 22¢; Nardones Pizza, 1 lb., 59¢.

20 Years Ago - Feb. 21, 1980 DALLAS HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA GETS FACE LIFT

Students of Dallas Senior High School are classes are making the dining room of the high school cafeteria brighter and more attractive than it has been in past years. The artists are painting murals and pictures during art classes and study hall time.

Boy Scout Troop 225, of Jackson Township, has announced plans for a newspaper drive on March 1. Papers will be collected on Route 118 across from Lehman Sunoco Station.

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