

## Letter to ed.; opposes new park

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the article you did about the Chickies Rock County Park proposal. It was a balanced presentation, and certainly, in view of the results of your mini-poll, a service to the community you serve...the people who will bear the brunt of it, should it come.

We are not surprised to hear that people of this immediate area know little or nothing about the renewed interest in land acquisition here. If your poll had covered the whole of Lancaster County, we believe you will find (as we do in our day-to-day contracts) that most people believe the issue was settled against the park five years ago, when the media coverage was extensive.

We did find, however, that you sub-headline "homeowners' rights vs. preserving natural features" was not completely definitive of the situation or do we feel it to be the "main issue". The natural features are not in the least jeopardy (unless, perhaps, if the County buys them). Chickies Rock at present belongs to two utilities, PP&L is willing to sell the 117 acres it owns. The Lancaster Conservancy has an option to buy that area...with the intent, we believe, of donating it to the County as the nucleus of what they hope and intend will expand to the park size envisioned by the County Planning Commission. This seems evident, as many of the same people are involved both in the Conservancy and as County appointees. The Chickies Homeowners support West Hempfield Supervisors' attempt to acquire that acreage (177 acres) for a township natural recreation preserve. We believe it beneficial to have township control of this area; local interest is best served by our elected officials on the local level.

The remaining 2/3 of Chickies, including its face, belongs to the Marietta Gravity Water Co., which is determined not to sell; believes it cannot be forced to sell even via eminent domain as its water supply originates there; and whose officers have expressed serious concern that such vast a park would jeopardize its water supply. There will be no loss of natural features there...ever...not only to preserve the vital water, but also because there was a covenant in the terms of the purchase of the land, that it would be kept open space forever. Dozens of groups ask and receive permission every year to visit, explore, and study the area. Mountain climbers get permission to practice their techniques, without rules, restrictions, permits, etc. Individuals

and families (as local people surely know) come to the Rock by the thousands and are never restricted or turned away.

So the truth is, the chief natural features of the area, the one whose name they use as a park site, the one they are most valuable about protecting, is now and always will be open space...undeveloped and undevelopable...which can be visited freely by anyone at any time.

The heart of the proposed park runs along Donegal and Chickies Creek. Studies have shown that the ecological-balance of these creeks is marginal and will not support an influx of people such as would use a 623 acre park. Then, too, the area floods once or twice each year, not such serious floods as Agnes or the one we're facing now, but water high and swift-moving enough that nobody, ever, would be so rash as to build there.

The bulk of the land is farmed. When asked how building park facilities on it was preserving farmland, Mr. Ahlfeld, Director, lpc, said "the farmland would be there, underneath" (as it is at Park City?). Even if they could simply erase the park and all its "improvements" to find fertile soil, who would be left to farm it?

The Planners say: "we want to preserve natural resources now in jeopardy of being overly developed." We answer: this area is full of open space that can be developed, so if that is the real intent, the county can save itself the money! West Hempfield Township has offered to buy PP&L's section of Chickies for a locally-controlled park, the balance is owned by the Water Company. However, if you must own Chickies, limit your park to that area. This they cannot do, they say, because there is no flatland, which is necessary for ball diamonds, tennis courts, pavilions, etc. (In other words, development). The Homeowners counter-proposal was to limit the size of the park, keep it south of Rte. 441 on land not privately owned. We have never said that they take somebody else, not me!

We have recently heard a second counter proposal which has great merit: that a Lancaster-Susquehanna Trail be developed along the River from the southern tip to the northern. It would lie between the River and the railroad on land which presently belongs to the rail lines. It would be kept as a natural trail for hiking, biking, and fishing with appropriate areas to serve as picnic spots on school-study sites. It would be easily available to all who live in Lancaster

County, and would have unique attractions unlike any other County Park in the world. It would be simple and inexpensive to maintain, only cleaning-up would be necessary even after a flood. No property would be taken from tax rolls, it would feature our beautiful river, it would be an original idea that would lift the reputation of Lancaster County Planners and Officials out of the carbon-copy class to national prominence for innovative use of prime, natural resources.

The planners are employees of the County. Isn't it worth the time and maybe even the loss of the federal funds, to assign them the task of working on this suggestion? Its merits speak for themselves. Let them go at it with the same enthusiasm, spend as much money for investigating possibilities and developing presentations as they did in the present proposal. Then let the Co. Commissioners choose, or better yet, let the people vote. Should we be stuck with a second-rate idea simply because it was first? Or because we may lose federal funds? Hasn't urban renewal taught us anything?

Questions we'd like to have answers to:

Lancaster Co. has a 650 acre park just about 12 miles away (Lancaster County Central Park). Is Lancaster (is the U.S.) going to have 600+ acre parks every ten or fifteen miles plus municipal, township, and private parks? (Every political subdivision is obligated by law to provide and develop recreation areas of their own. Pennsylvania now boasts of having 10 million acres, 1/2 of Pa., available for some kind of outdoor recreational activity.)

Have the Planners evaluated the new evidence that the projected population figures are way out line; today's population is barely reproducing itself. It's easy to see even in popular Lancaster County, because of the decline in school enrollments.

Is the population explosion used as a device to gain control?

Is the park for Lancaster Countains (who after all will buy it, maintain it, police it, etc.) or is it to be provided by us for busloads from the cities of the megalopolis?

Are the Commissioners being pressured to "designate" the area as parkland so as to not lose federal funds?

Is not the term "designated" so ambiguous that planners can determine its meaning as suits them... whatever present planners and present commissioners intend? We believe that formally expressing the in-

tent of keeping the area for future acquisition and park, without first defining proper procedure. The land would remain in limbo as it has for the past five years. (One man has a lot to sell, and a buyer for it. He is not legally restricted from selling, nor is the buyer legally prevented from buying...but he has been advised by the planners, whom had to be consulted about subdivision, not to buy because "this was going to be part of the park." This occurred before any designation was made.)

We hope that your article and this letter, will generate some thinking on this subject because it affects everybody in the area. The business people will not find customers here (has Sam Lewis Park made

Wrightsville prosperous? When you go there, do you shop in Wrightsville?) The school district will lose revenue, and people. Centuries-old homes, the mill, and other building will be lost irretrievably to our children and grandchildren; the ecological balance of the streams is endangered; farmland lost to parking lots, ball diamonds, pavilions, tennis courts, etc.

The County Commissioners have been most cooperative with us, welcoming and encouraging our comments, listening carefully and considerately to our presentations. Letters to them objecting to the park-playground have been sent from ALL local municipal governing bodies. The effect is support of our position, but that is not the basis of their objections. They do not believe the

park is in the best interest of the people of their areas, now or in the misty, fifty-year vision of the future.

We've been involved to our earlobes for five years, never for a minute believing (as others maintained) that the park was a dead issue. We are told by well wishers, "don't worry, they'll never take your property for a park." And by cynics, "it's all programmed, you haven't got a chance." Whatever the outcome, we all agree that our efforts have had some worthwhile effect...we've slowed down the timetable. While they are concentrating on us, the planners are staying off other people's backs.

In behalf of the Chickies Homeowners,  
Elaine Baum, Secretary

## Steve Bailey top ambulance driver

Steven Bailey was elected chief driver for the Marietta Area Ambulance Association at a session held Sunday afternoon. Stephen Nickey was elected to the position of assistant

driver. Personnel for the ambulance were instructed in spine board procedure by Charles Marley and Steven Bailey.

The ambulance service will have IV available in

the vehicle for doctors' use in the future.

The next meeting of the MAAA will be Monday, February 21, at 8 p.m., in the Board Room of Farmers First Bank.

## Donegal Bicen Committee had an active year

Dennis Shumaker, chairman of the Marietta, Maytown, Donegal Bicentennial Committee, has reason to be satisfied with the work of his group. There is money in the bank. All that remains to be completed is to make distribution of the funds which will be used for community betterment.

Shumaker is pleased with the fact that although the Bicentennial events were not planned to be money-

makers the committee accomplished their work without the necessity of appealing for funds from the Federal Government.

The program was carried out without flooding the area with souvenirs or gadgets. The only memento designed by the group was a Bicentennial pewter spoon, handcrafted in an 18th century mold. Completing the spoons proved to be more of a job than anticipated and the supply

had to be limited. Each spoon is numbered and each carries the name of one of the three communities. Marietta spoons have all been sold. A few carrying the Maytown and Donegal stamps are available. Undoubtedly these spoons will become collectors' items in a few years.

Spoons are available from Dennis Shumaker, Marietta, and Hazel Crankshaw, Maytown.

## Local men make dean's list at Penn State

Three local men qualified for the Dean's List at The PA State University for the Fall Term, which ended in

November.

They are: Philip S. Hollinger, R.D. #1, Mount Joy, (term average, 3.50); Newton E. Kendig, 62 E. Main

St., Mount Joy, (term average, 4.00); and John P. Weidman, 240 S. Market St., Mount Joy, (term average, 3.75).

## Girl makes F&M dean's list

Patricia A. Peifer, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Peifer of 705 Bruce Avenue, Mount Joy was named to the Dean's List for the fall, 1976

semester at Franklin & Marshall College in recognition of exceptional academic achievement.

To be named to the list, a student must attain a B

average or better and have no grade below C-minus.

Miss Peifer is majoring in English.

## Jaycees offer coupon booklet

The Lancaster Jaycee's "1977 Lancaster County Guide to Good Living" discount coupon booklet is still available.

This coupon booklet offers tremendous savings for dining, recreation, and entertainment. These discounts are available in a

variety of establishments in Lancaster County. The booklet only costs \$10.00, yet the total value of all the coupons is approximately \$200.00. There is something in the booklet for everyone, young and old.

The proceeds from the

sale of these booklets support Big Brothers of Lancaster County and other community projects and non-profit agencies.

These coupon booklets are available in the Big Brothers' office, 630 Janet Avenue, or by calling 397-7567 until April 15.