



Comment

PAUL CARPENTER

East Penn increases taxes, lunch prices

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Lower Macungie to pay sewer, trash bills to bank

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To fix velodrome, politicians need to have integrity

"One picture," according to Fred Barnard, an advertising whizbang of the 1920s, "is worth a thousand words."

(The story about that being an old Chinese proverb was just hokum from Barnard.)

Either way, the big picture on Sunday's front page was worth 1,073 words, to be exact. One word for every lousy seat.

The photograph showed a race in progress at the Lehigh Valley Velodrome. Behind the blurred images of the speeding racers was the velodrome's 1,073-seat main grandstand, which was only partly filled.

If you remember the previous grandstand, you can see why the old grandstand was often completely sold out and the new one generally isn't. The front row of the old grandstand was right behind the little white wall separating racers from spectators. Those in the front row, and even those behind them, could see everything. Many events started with competitors poised along that wall, so spectators were inches from them.

Look at Sunday's picture. The new aluminum monstrosity puts a gaping space between riders and spectators, and that's not the worst part. The "line-of-sight" from many seats makes it hard for fans to see all the track in the finish line area, where much of the wild and woolly action occurs. This is what happens when politicians stick their fingers into specialized projects — instead of letting qualified people, such as the late Robert Rodale, handle things.

As reported in a superb two-part series Sunday and Monday, it was Rodale who donated the land for the velodrome and had it built in 1975. It has been one of the leading meccas for top-notch bicycle racing since then. Olympians, professional racers and other cyclists from all over the nation and the world have been attracted to the Lehigh Valley just because of that track.

Also, the series said, there are exciting things in the works for the Lehigh Valley Velodrome. The stories focused on velodrome director Erin Hartwell and assistant director Marty Nothstein, and how they have succeeded in crafting an "ambitious campaign" for a great racing program.

The Trexlertown facility is now one of three USA Cycling centers, along with those at Colorado Springs and Los Angeles. Nothstein noted the "best riders in the world" are here or on their way. In vivid contrast to predecessor Ron Horn, Hartwell and Nothstein seem to know what they're doing. Both are former Olympic racers, with Nothstein bringing glory to the Lehigh Valley with a gold medal. (Hartwell took silver and bronze home to Indiana.)

No amount of skill and effort on their part, alas, can overcome what Lehigh County's political establishment did in 1995 and 1996, when the velodrome was "renovated."

The \$2.3 million renovation included the new main grandstand. The construction manager hired by county politicians was Alvin H. Butz Inc., which wins government contracts in the Lehigh Valley at a fantastic frequency.

I had a lot to say when I saw the resulting horror, but much of the public criticism came from an Allentown lawyer and bicycle racing enthusiast, William G. Malkames. "Up to the point they built that new grandstand," Malkames told me Monday, "I was a season ticket holder. ... I have never been back." Where fans once could see everything from the old grandstand, he noted, "now [racers] disappear from view. ... It takes away the excitement of the race."

I have been around government long enough to know politicians rarely take responsibility for fixing their mistakes. This time, I hope the pols recognize what they did to a world-renowned facility and have the integrity to put it right — by relying on people who know what they're doing.

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LOCAL

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THE MORNING CALL

SECTION B 5

PennDOT steering toward 511 system

Phone line and a Web site seen as tools to help fix traffic problems.

By Dan Hartzell
Of The Morning Call

The state Department of Transportation intends to launch a Web page offering motorists information on traffic tie-ups in time for the winter season, and hopes to dial up a

511 telephone call-in service for such information by April 2009.

That was the tentative schedule outlined by Doug Tomlinson of PennDOT's Bureau of Highway Safety at Monday's meeting of the Lehigh Valley Transportation Study, a board that helps set spending priorities for area road projects.

The Web page, which would provide more detailed information than the travel alerts posted on PennDOT's regional

Web sites, is part of the comprehensive Statewide Transportation System Operations Plan, Tomlinson said.

With 19 components, the plan is seen as a tool to help improve response to traffic problems small and large, including the likes of the potentially dangerous shutdown of portions of Interstates 78, 80 and 81 for as long as 22 sub-freezing hours on Feb. 14.

The plan was being developed before the Valentine's

Day snowstorm, but the event led to a consultant's study on what went wrong and helped focus attention on the need for improved emergency communications and coordination.

Legislation has been proposed that would formalize PennDOT's plan to implement the 511 phone system by making it law. The 511 traffic information system is used in 27 states. Pennsylvania operates a toll-free traffic information hotline (888-783-6783), but only during

the winter driving season, November through April. The 511 number would be available year-round.

Officials have said they do not want to rush Pennsylvania's 511 implementation, in part because glitches have been experienced in some other states. "We want to ... get it right," PennDOT spokesman Rich Kirkpatrick said earlier this month.

TRAFFIC PAGE B2



Demetra Stamus Special to The Morning Call

A STATE STUDY of the Francis E. Walter Dam will try to find the best balance between recreational use and flood prevention. Here, kayaker Don Harris of Slatington has fun on the Lehigh River during a demonstration by Jerry McAward of Weissport.

A delicate balance

Army Corps aims to find best uses for Francis Walter Dam.

By Arlene Martinez
Of The Morning Call

When Jerry McAward joined the staff of Pocono Whitewater Adventures 20 years ago, the discussion on how to best utilize the Francis E. Walter Dam had already started.

A small but vocal group of anglers, boaters and environmentalists were united in their request: Store more water, please.

Many riverside residents concerned about the increased potential for flooding if reservoir levels got too



MILES BOGER, 12, of Orefield gets a lesson from Jerry McAward on how to get into and out of a kayak. McAward has a home in Weissport that is in a flood plain.

Demetra Stamus Special to The Morning Call

high also came together with a request: Don't store too much.

How recreation and flood control can best co-exist will get its closest look to date, after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced Monday it had received federal

and state money to begin studying how best to manage the water behind the dam.

The first phase of the two-phase project will use modeling to determine the impact of higher water levels. Engineers will also examine the effect of making struc-

tural changes to the dam to allow for different ways of releasing the water.

The state and federal government each paid \$75,000 for the study, which begins next month and will conclude in May 2008. A second study will focus on what will happen to ecosystems as the water's chemistry changes based on things such as water temperature and depth. That will cost another \$250,000.

McAward understands better than most the complex, controversial relationship between recreation and flood control. He owns a kayaking company in Lehighton and has a home in Weissport along the Lehigh River

WATER PAGE B5

University faculties could strike

Contract expires this weekend. State schools may be affected.

By Genevieve Marshall
Of The Morning Call

Summer classes at Kutztown University and the 13 other state universities could be interrupted next month if faculty members strike over a contract that expires Saturday.

Some state universities would be affected immediately should union leadership call for a strike this weekend. The majority of the union's 5,500 members authorized a strike in April.

East Stroudsburg University students in the second summer session should attend their classes Monday, university officials said.

Courses will be canceled and full refunds given if the instructor does not show up for the first class because of a strike, said Kenn Marshall, spokesman for the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

The faculty union is not required to give notice to university officials if they call a strike, he said. There could be little or no notice.

"I don't know if that's what they [the union] would do," Marshall said. "We've never been in this position before."

Contract bargaining has extended past the previous contract's expiration many times since the union formed 30 years ago, and the union has never called a strike, he said.

About 25,000 students at-

STRIKE PAGE B2

Ex-Monroe inmate testifies she had sex with guards



Dana Simpson ... accused of impregnating inmate

Prison scandal spurred warden's resignation. Case sent to court.

By Joe McDonald
Of The Morning Call

A former Monroe County Prison inmate testified Monday she had sex multiple times with two guards on a weight bench in the gym and got pregnant while serving a six-month sentence for disorderly conduct.

The sexual encounters happened in a corner on "rec-

night" when inmates were locked in the gym with one guard and another inmate acted as a lookout, she said.

"There was so much going on at that jail," she said.

The charges against the guards followed a grand jury investigation that so far has led to the resignation of the warden and a long list of proposals to reform policies and procedures at the prison in Hamilton Township.

In the wake of the scandal, Warden David G. Keenhold said he would resign once a replacement is found to fill his \$60,000 a year position. The

warden has said he takes the blame for what went wrong at the 332-inmate facility.

On Monday the jailhouse sex accounts surfaced at two preliminary hearings, which ended with all charges sent to Monroe County Court.

The same former female inmate, a Lehighton woman whose name is being withheld because she is the victim of a sex crime, testified she had sex about three times with Richard Chilmaza, 40, who along with five other guards was charged in March with

PRISON PAGE B2



Richard Chilmaza ... sex charges headed to court

ONLINE
extra
mcall.com/extra



COOL HUNTER
Catch up on Kurt Blumenau's scoops with the archive of his Retail Watch column.

IN TUNE
Watch a video of guitar enthusiasts gathering at C.F. Martin & Co. in Upper Nazareth.

STEEL IDEAS
Drop a line in 'Recasting the Steel,' where experts talk about developing south Bethlehem.