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Park is Hopewell's problem

Advocate asked to join Bicen battle

By J. STRYKER MEYER
Special to the Times

HARTS CORNER — Hopewell Township wants the state Public Advocate to help in its running fight for a voice in the state's plans to handle Bicentennial visitors at Washington Crossing Park.

Township Mayor Michael S. Arcieri said he will meet with Public Advocate Stanley Van Ness today to present the problems the township has had with the Department of Environmental Protection, the state agency doing the park planning.

"I'm going to ask Van Ness to intervene on behalf of Hopewell Township with DEP; first to try and improve communications with them and if that fails, then for some sort of legal action on our behalf," he said.

This action comes 11 days after Hopewell Township's planning board sent a letter to the DEP's acting director of parks and forestry, Alfred T. Guido, demanding that it be allowed to formally review the improvements planned for the park. The planners threatened legal action unless they got a chance for review.

"A good case" Van Ness said that when this conflict started last May he thought Hopewell Township had a valid case against the DEP. "I understand Hopewell Township's concern, and based upon what little I know about the case to date, I think they have a

legitimate concern . . . It sounds like a good case."

Van Ness, who had two meetings with Arcieri during the summer about this situation, said he couldn't predict what he and his department would do until he has had further conversations with Arcieri — an old schoolmate of his.

The township committee's problem with the park plans centers around how much money the township will have to spend for police and health services for the estimated 3.4 million Bicentennial visitors that are expected in the park next year.

Estimated daily crowds of 5,000 to 10,000 and weekend crowds of 40,000 to 50,000 are expected during the summer. The police estimated costs, including health services, would be between \$500,000 and \$1 million for 1976. Hopewell Township's operating budget for 1975 was \$1.8 million.

"I was at a Bicentennial Task Force meeting last week, and they repeated what we've been told by the New Jersey Bicentennial Commission before: 'Hopewell Township is going to be devastated by the Bicentennial next year,'" said Committeeman Christopher F. Bannister, who has been the leading opponent of the DEP's plans.

Not kidding "To date we're getting only dribble from DEP instead of the information we've requested. There must be some way we can hammer down on

the state that they wise up. We're not kidding," Bannister said.

"The time for saying please and acting conjugally is over," he said. "Indeed, it may be too late. All the state cares about is getting tourists into the state. It doesn't care about taking care of them or the areas that will be impacted by those visitors."

Last July, after the township committee threatened to take the DEP to court, Guido held a public meeting in Hopewell Township and explained in general terms what the DEP had planned for the park.

Last month John Kraml Jr., the supervisor of construction and design at DEP, presented a \$700,000 revised plan for the park. At that meeting, Kraml couldn't answer specific questions leveled by the planning board. He said he could only present general data.

Want specifics The township committee and town-

ship planning board have gone on record as saying those meetings were "only for information", "only incomplete and schematic" and insisted that the DEP provide complete and specific data without delay.

Last night Arcieri said Guido hadn't responded to that letter. He said the DEP and Governor Brendan T. Byrne had failed to answer a series of letters he and Bannister had mailed to them.

"I sent Byrne two letters last summer, and I still haven't heard from him," said Arcieri, a Democrat.

He also said he and Committeeman Frederick G. Rasweiler had a meeting Monday with David J. Barling, the state environmental commissioner, about another matter, but hoped to be able to pull the commissioner aside and "fill him in on what's happening out here . . . it's ridiculous."

Guido couldn't be reached for comment.

Hopewell program in doubt

PENNINGTON — Hopewell Township's recent withdrawal from the Hopewell Valley Joint Recreation Commission has left the summer opportunities program without the funds or supervision it needs to exist.

In addition, the Hopewell Valley Regional school board, which this year contributed \$4,785 to the program, has no money allotted for it in the 1976-77 school budget.

"It's extremely clear that the program is desired by everyone in the Hopewell Valley," said Hopewell Township Committeeman Gary B. Hammond. "The problem is the municipalities have to figure out how they're going to fund it next year and (want to know) whether the school board will be willing to help pay for the cost of the program."

School Superintendent William J. Numan said the school board is will-

ing to supervise the program next summer but wouldn't say if the board would include money for the program in its new budget.

The summer opportunities program began 14 years ago, as a volunteer effort financed by door-to-door collections.

Nine years ago, the school board took it over and charged participating municipalities according to the number of students each community had in the program. The program grew to include swimming, tennis, supervised playgrounds, and shop, elementary reading and mathematics enrichment courses.

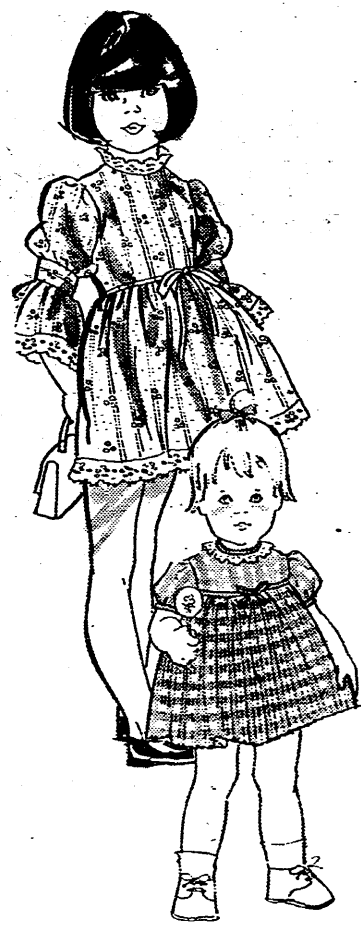
Last year the program was taken over by the recreation commission, shortly after the commission was formed by the three Hopewell Valley municipalities.

Crewmen jailed in fatal air crash

BERLIN (AP) — The three surviving crewmen of an East German charter plane that crashed at Leipzig last September, killing 26 persons, have been sentenced to prison for negligence, the official East German news agency reported today.

The agency, ADN, said the pilot was sentenced to five years in prison, the copilot and the navigator to three years each and a ground radar controller to four years.

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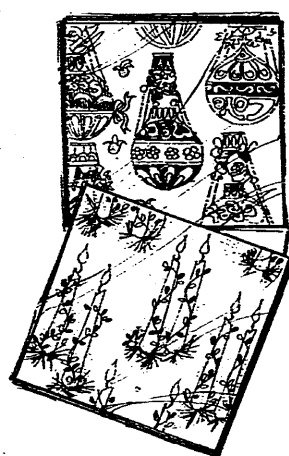
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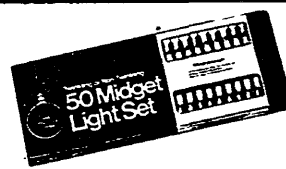
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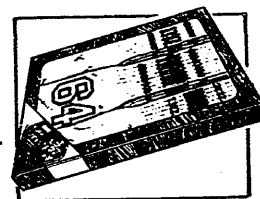
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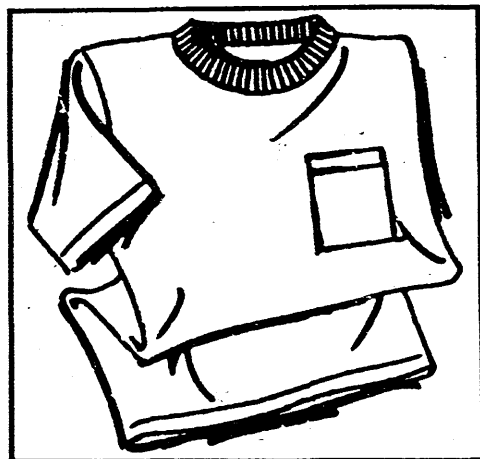


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