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Mercer Has Plenty To Offer In Fun, Relaxation

By H. ARTHUR SMITH
Staff Writer

With another Sun and Fun season dawning on the Delaware Valley, Mercer County residents can look forward to a pleasant summer right in their own backyards.

The Mercer County Park Commission once again is ready to offer area residents a wide range of recreational joys at its two public golf courses and many parks.

Sun-splashed greens and

fairways . . . fish breaking from blue water . . . sun-speckled woods . . . rainbow-hued wildflowers . . . rain-bow spreading shade trees and the invigorating scent of food cooking over an open fire while you relax in a quiet picnic grove.

And for those who like more zip and dash in their leisure, the county also serves up a wide range of athletic programs, such as organized baseball, softball and outdoor basketball during the summer months.

In the twilight of the Sun and Fun season, the County boots off its organized soccer league and starts the indoor tennis center at Mercer Airport on Oct. 1.

The thrill of a small white ball swinging high into a blue sky to drop inches into a red flag on a lush green carpet of grass.

Two Courses Await

That's the joy awaiting golfing buffs at the county's two 18-hole championship courses, Mountain View and the Princeton Country Club.

Mountain View is a tough, demanding 6,800-yard layout that will challenge the best of golfers with its 72 stroke par.

Princeton is a shorter course — 6,000 yards — but its fairways are tight, tree-lined alleys that require pinpoint control off the tees and with many of the approach shots.

A stray drive can rattle around in the big trees and make the 70-stroke par seem mighty small.

A one-under par 69 by Thomas Regan of Hightstown last year stands as the course record at Princeton.

Boat Launching Site

For those who like their sun and fun enjoyment wet, the county maintains a free boat launching site on Lambert Street below the Trenton Marine Terminal.

The three-acre site is open during daylight hours, and includes parking for 100 cars and a serrated ramp to provide traction and keep autos out of the Delaware River.

An attendant is on duty during the day.

For fishing bugs, picnickers and naturalists, the 250-acre John A. Roebling Memorial Park, with access from Schiller and Park Avenues in Hamilton Township, has a lot to offer.

Water, picnic tables and individual fireplaces are available and the spring-fed lakes lure the rod and reel crowd.

Much of the park — open from dawn to dark — has been left in a natural state and offers wanderers a look at some unpolished Jersey nature.

For History Buffs

For the historian in the family, there is the Watson House, built in 1708 and one of the two oldest houses in the county.

The house is now operated as a museum and is headquarters for the state chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Nature lovers call Herron-town Woods on Snowden Lane in Princeton Township Mercer's answer to paradise.

A number of trails wind through this 87-acre green diamond, where you can see many of the wildflowers, trees and animals native to Jersey.

Booklets describing a self-guided tour are available in the parking lot and a naturalist will be on duty five days a week during about 15 weeks this summer.

For small family picnics,

the county maintains the attractive Belle Mountain Park on the slope of a hill overlooking a small man-made pond on Valley Road in Hopewell Township.

The picnic tables and fireplaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis and the pond is open and stocked for fishing.

Group Area Booked

Further up Valley Road is the county's seven-acre reserved group picnic area. But if you haven't already made a reservation, forget it this summer.

The attractive picnic and play site is booked solid during weekends for the rest of the summer, with the exception of two Sundays in late October.

The county's six-acre camp site, Cedarbliss, adjacent to the Washington Crossing State Park, will serve as a day camp for about 80 city children each week from July 8 through August 19.

The program is being sponsored by the Presbytery of New Brunswick with cooperation from the Council of Churches of Greater Trenton.

The day camp will only operate during the week and the George Washington Council of Boy Scouts will continue camping there on weekends.

When the first screen of snow closes out the Sun and Fun season, the Belle Mountain Ski Run will slide into action giving area skiers a chance to enjoy their spills while still at home.

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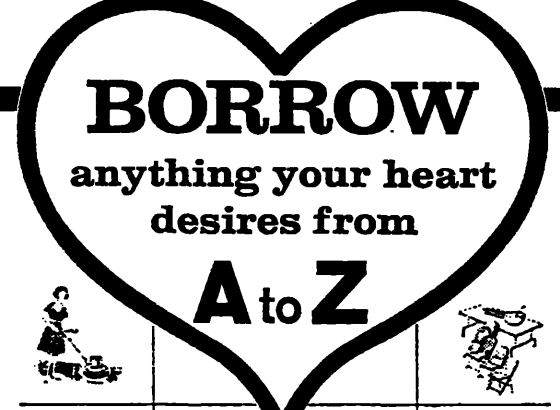
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