

## The editor's notebook

## What's in a name?

By BOB CLARK

Editor of the Editorial Page

Some time ago Mayor John Kennedy asked the citizens of Elmira for suggestions on renaming State St. now that it has become the route of the north-south arterial.

Right at the start, a number of suggestions were trotted out that the street honor Elmira's favorite adopted son and be named either Mark Twain Blvd. or Samuel Clemens Pkwy. Those advancing such a suggestion observed that the street runs past the Clemens Center, and the name would help direct visitors more directly to what has become the community's showplace.

There's some credence to such an argument, but it didn't set with a number of

people.

As one of our letter writers observed a short time ago, our Letters to the Editor columns seem to have become the forum for suggestions for naming the arterial.

In our eyes, that's great. What better place for such a dialogue?

In quick order have come suggestions that the new thoroughfare honor an explorer and a policeman. The name of Ross Marvin, who accompanied Adm. Robert Peary to the North Pole, was advanced by a great-nephew, Wayne Colegrove of Elmira. Dick Rohde of Horseheads thinks the honor should go to his late father, Jacob (Jake) Rohde, who patrolled a beat which included the

area through which the arterial runs during his years on the police force.

Some other letter writers have vented their spleen against government and rising taxes by suggesting all sorts of facetious names for the street.

One letter writer thought Elmira should step out boldly and do something no other community has done — getting itself some incidental publicity: Name the street for the person who eventually pays for it: Taxpayer's Ave.

A new suggestion came out of a City Council meeting the other night. One of the council members said he favors the name of "Queen City Blvd." The nickname for Elmira was once promoted by the Chamber of Commerce at the time Binghamton was calling itself the Parlor City and Rochester, the Flower City.

None of these campaigns have caught fire in the way that I imagine their original proponent had hoped it would. But the mayor's invi-

tation has created some interesting byplay, and we welcome Letters to the Editor conveying such suggestions.

It will be interesting to see what name is finally chosen — and what reasoning is given for the choice.

Speaking of names, how about those people with thinking caps applying their active gray matter to a couple of other places.

For some reason or other, the building at 307 E. Church St. still is being called the former State Armory.

The National Guard moved out of the building quite a number of years ago so the building is in need of a new, more suitable name.

And yet another target for renaming could be the Park Station Park on the Laurel Hill Road near Erin.

Chemung County has a beautiful new facility for all sorts of recreational activity. There's a lake for boating, fishing and swimming. There are sites for camping. There are playfields for a variety of games. There are plenty of

places for picnicking. And trails for hiking and, in season, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

But methinks the area needs a new name. Park Station acquired the name from the family that settled the area and the fact that the railroad had a depot there.

But what we have now is an unwieldy combination. I know that the official designation is the Park Station Recreational Area. But it won't sell. Park is too handy a handle. And Park Station Park is too big a mouthful. It's rather like the names the Welsh adopt out of custom, with the first and last names being the same.

Couldn't an entirely new name be thought of which would have real meaning and yet sound better?

"A rose by another name would smell as sweet," wrote the Bard.

But sometimes it might help to give a flower, or a street, or a building, or a park a better name.

## A page of opinion

And lo, the Great God Gas stood forth  
...Suddenly, a new religionBy CARMEN BRUTTO  
Harrisburg Patriot-News

HARRISBURG (AP) — It started the year the gas pump became a shrine. You may be too young to remember it, but that's when it started.

Before that, a gas pump was something that pumped gas. Sometimes a pump was red and white, or green and blue, or even a mixture of yellows. But eventually it evolved into what you see today, a pure white god-figure with acolytes in vestal virgin gowns giving proper respect to both the pump and the motorist.

It was back in the mid to late '70s when somebody down in Washington said that when gas got to be a dollar a gallon, people would cut back on its use and that would solve the conservation problem.

Although that never came to be, the pronouncement itself frightened certain people in Harrisburg. They said something had to be done to assure a steady flow of money to what was then called PennDOT, a den of corruption, so that those citizens who wanted to travel from New Bloomfield to Halifax on a Sunday afternoon, for reasons of their own, would have properly maintained roadways to do it.

After some scrapping in the Legislature, the then-governor was successful in tying a new tax to the price of gasoline, in addition to the regular tax, and the money began pouring in.

Pennsylvania's success in raising money through the gas tax hit the national headlines and eventually worked its way into the inner councils of the various emirates.

Revolutionary activities (1776 type) and ceremonies commemorating the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign Bicentennial.

What's the cost, you say? Thanks to a lot of hard-working volunteers and many very generous contributors, these events are all free. There is a promotion for baseball which says, "Baseball Fever, Catch It." Maybe this summer there will be an epidemic of Elmira Fever. I hope so.

JAMES E. HARE  
303 S. Hoffman St.  
Elmira

## 'Maybe, an Elmira Fever epidemic'

To the Editor:

What a good feeling I had Saturday morning! Not only was it a beautiful day, but I was still excited about the very special evening I had on Friday, an evening shared with about 10,000 others. Congratulations, Clemens Center, the Star Spangled Salute to Elmira was a "booming" success. As far as I could tell the only disappointed people were the crew of the train which passed by during intermission. They were too early for the fireworks and in between songs.

What timing!

Last year I wrote to the editor lamenting the lack of July 4th activities in Elmira. I still wish there was a parade, but the outdoor concert was a terrific idea. In fact, this summer offers a great deal for those of us who want things to happen in our own community.

The Arts in the Park-Mark Twain Festival was a great beginning, the first outdoor concert an unquestioned success. Coming up we have the Elmira-Thon, two more outdoor concerts, a weekend of authentic

justice is not served.

Hopefully, people like Straley will never be faced seeing perjury, subordination and conspiracy (all felony crimes) being committed to keep the truth from being exposed.

Inefficient police work, careless autopsies and improper presentation of the cases involved all can result in the conviction and possible death of an innocent man.

I do not ignore the fact "that violent crimes have increased steadily," but Mr. Straley ignores the fact that these crimes, along with other crimes and vandalism, were on an upward climb while the death penalty still existed in New York. I strongly feel if the majority of our citizens believed the death penalty deterred such crimes they would have voted another man in as governor of this state, one they knew was for the death penalty. Records show that states with the death penalty had a higher murder rate than states without such a penalty.

I feel Mr. Straley is not correct in his views such a penalty would deter crime. Records show otherwise. I am aware cases like the Son of Sam, Manson and others tend to turn people's minds toward the death penalty. However, such is not the right frame of mind to decide such important issues. I have full sympathy for anyone harmed by any crime, but there is a more civilized way to protect this nation. We should all pray and work for a better and safer system by voting the very best people in positions where honest acts and truth are the guidelines, not prestige and political greed. We should always have someone opposing the office holder, not just sit back and allow a few political powers to decide to keep a public servant in that position because they claim to be doing a wonderful job. Too often records could prove otherwise.

BURTON C. GRAHAM  
345 Woodlawn Ave.  
Elmira

If Pennsylvania can make a big buck on our refined petroleum, perhaps we had better get a little more ourselves, the sheiks said, in effect, and prices spiraled.

The emirates prospered, the gas pump manufacturers prospered and PennDOT built a new building on a knoll overlooking Harrisburg.

With some agitation, the unions were successful in creating a new position in PennDOT, that of potholeperson, a nonsexist term. Contrary to earlier thinking, the job of the potholeperson was not to fill potholes, but to create them.

And so those potholepersons went around with their jackhammers looking for smooth stretches of roadway in need of potholes, and there they dug them.

With all those new potholes, people had to be hired to fill them. And with all that money figuratively pouring out of the gas pump nozzles nobody really noticed how large PennDOT was becoming.

## Letters

## Reader dreams up answer to crisis

To the Editor:

The other day, as I headed home from the Pennsylvania Dutch Country, I was fully confident that my even numbered license plate and the June 30 date would assure me of all necessary gasoline. Then I was reminded what Thomas Jefferson once said. He said, "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread," and I wondered how he would have applied his wisdom to the gasoline situation.

My confidence of lots of gasoline and the country-side beauty dulled my awareness, when realization hit me that I should reach a gas station in the next few kilometers; or I would be walking to the station with a bucket in one hand and my license plate in another. Then, to my joy, I could see a sign ahead with numerous cars parked helter skelter. I assume that an antique sale was in progress.

About 150 car lengths from the station I took my place in line, with cars three abreast. Now I was happy, or at least I was until I wondered how many times I could stop and start my car; and I was more unhappy when I figured that 150 cars at five minutes each service placed me 750 minutes from the pump.

Then I was to learn that uneven numbers in the Dutch Country have a certain hex. So most residents request even numbered plates, and the fetish has been amplified since the Three Mile Island disaster al-

As insects become immune to insecticides, so the motoring public became immune to rising gas prices and numbly kept saying "fill 'er up" because the word was out of Washington that gas was indeed in short supply.

So it came to pass that one day a tired and devout follower of an obscure religious sect set down his boxes of chocolate-covered mints and collection can in the shade of a gas station and viewed with awe the money pouring out of the pumps into the state's coffers as the gasoline poured into the tanks.

This, he came to realize, must have some religious significance, that something seemingly mundane could make so much money when he, devout as he was, could only raise a couple of bucks a day.

He returned to the temple and told the other followers and they came to view the pumps that pumped money. Somebody

thought it was a protest demonstration and called a television studio which dispatched a camera crew and the 11 o'clock news spread the word.

A couple of fundamentalist preachers made it an issue and somebody tried to pass a law, all to no avail. The splinter sects donned their robes and sandals in the middle of the night and began painting gas pumps pure white.

The benumbed motoring public, not wanting to offend anyone having anything to do with gasoline, dutifully alighted from their cars and genuflected to the pumps.

A television network made a documentary about gas pumps and religion and a tolerant public chastised as un-American anyone who criticized the free exercise of beliefs.

The only religious connection theologians concede to gasoline is that it is found in the opposite direction from heaven.

most charred their doorsteps.

The minutes were ticking away when I realized the line was stagnant. So I ambled up to the head of the line, only to find that the procession was headed by an uneven-numbered gentleman from the Southern Tier. He was claiming that an out-of-state guest had rights to fuel. He was determined to show his children the site of Three Mile Island disaster; also he wanted them to remember the energy disaster.

The station attendant had sought advice from the governor's office but the chief executive was enroute back from the golf course in his even-numbered limousine.

So back I went to await my turn. I settled down in the seat and closed my eyes momentarily. And just then the truck driver in the next line did a very stupid thing. He began to rant about the fuel situation, then jumped out, opened all tank valves to release many thousand gallons of Propylene Glycol Monesters. He was determined

that, if he had to go without fuel, that you and I would be denied all that health-giving chemical in our cake mix.

He was still ranting, when a large hissing object, emitting sparks all over, flew overhead and headed straight for Three Mile Island. At the next instant a mushroom cloud arose from Three Mile. Skylab and the nuclear plant were no longer Washington's problem.

Just then there was a loud banging on the hood of my car. An unhappy gentleman was demanding that I remove my car from the line. I maintained that I was in line on my even day, while he reminded me that the uneven day had come in at 12:01 a.m. while I was napping.

So now I am in the market for a gentle horse which will get me back and forth to the post office and the grocery store. —If the oil and coal companies don't corner the oat market.

SELDON W. CAMPBELL  
Wellsburg RD 2

'Don't just stand there, man — Play something soothing!'

The Star-Gazette and Sunday Telegram welcome contributions to our Letters to the Editor columns.

Our aim is to publish as wide a range of community opinion as space permits.

Please contribute and note the following guidelines:

Brief letters are preferred. We may have to edit and condense so that more letters can be printed.

Be sure to sign your letter and include your address.

Type your letter if possible.

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Robert L. Colson, Publisher

Burton H. Blazar, Editor

Wayne R. Boucher, Managing Editor

Robert J. Clark, Editor of the Editorial Page

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