

# CAPITOL REPORT

## from

# Rep. Paul Semmel

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Dear Friends,

Serving you in the State Legislature during the past five years has been a great privilege and one that I enthusiastically look forward to continuing in the coming years.

With the beginning of the new year, comes the beginning of the second half of the current legislative session. I, like many of my colleagues are approaching the session with a positive attitude and the aim to resolve overdue issues such as local tax reform, solid waste disposal, and spiraling insurance rates.

My tenure as your representative has been rewarding. Being able to help area residents cut the red-tape bureaucracy strings so often has been very gratifying. Although serving the needs of the 187th District and meeting with constituents is part of the "job description," I often feel these responsibilities are fringe benefits. I thoroughly enjoy the people part of this business.

Remember, we are here for you. So, if you need help with any state-related problems, please do not hesitate to contact any of my offices.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Semmel

P.S. Thanks to the many of you who were kind enough to share your views with me on my recent questionnaire. The results will be coming soon!

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## "Specially for Seniors"

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### **OLDER ADULTS PROTECTIVE SERVICES ACT**

New Legislation has been signed that is aimed at protecting our older citizens from mistreatment and neglect.

The bill establishes a uniform statewide system for reporting and investigating suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation or abandonment of persons age 60 and older.

Each local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is required to establish a protective services plan, including a round-the-clock mechanism for receiving reports of abuse or neglect. For each report, an investigation must be started within 72 hours.

The new law will go in effect on July 1, 1988.

### **FREE AND REDUCED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

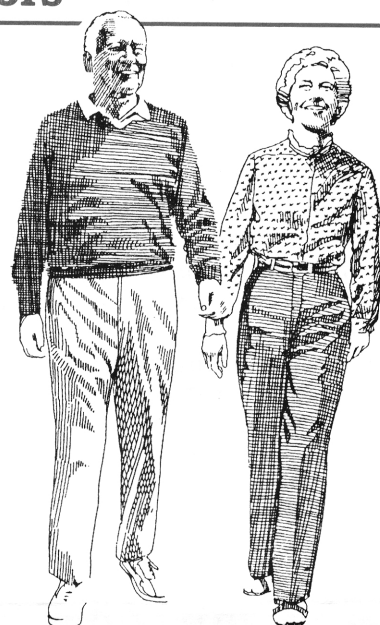
Under the free-ride program, persons 65 and older are entitled to free transit service on local established bus routes, trolley and rapid transit lines during off-peak hours on weekdays and all day on weekends and holidays.

Free rides are not permitted on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. or from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

### **DENTAL CARE ASSISTANCE**

The Pennsylvania Dental Association (PDA) has a program providing reduced fees on all types of dental care for seniors. PDA's Access to Care Program is open to patients 65 years or older with annual incomes of \$12,000 or less for single and \$15,000 or less for married couples who are not receiving public or private dental coverage.

Call the PDA to find out if your are eligible for this program. Their toll-free number is 1-800-692-7256.



### **PROPERTY TAX/RENT REBATES...APPLY NOW**

The 1987 property tax/rent rebate forms will be available at my district office.

Those eligible are persons 65 and older, widows and widowers age 50 and older, and permanently disabled persons over the age of 18 whose income is \$15,000 or less. If you qualify for a rebate, you will automatically qualify for an inflation dividend.

### **REDUCED MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS**

Motor vehicle registrations can be obtained for \$10, rather than the usual \$24 registration fee, if you are 65 or older and your annual income is \$14,999 or less. Only one reduced registration is allowed.

This form should be mailed with your annual registration renewal application and is available at my district office at any time.

### **NOW IN EFFECT...INCOME TAX HELP**

On July 1, 1987 an important tax break for senior citizens went into effect. After that date, persons over age 55 are permitted a one-time exclusion from taxable income on the capital gains realized if the person sells his or her principle residence. The maximum amount of the tax exclusion is \$100,000 for married couples filing jointly, or \$50,000 on individual tax returns.

To qualify, the residence sold must have been used by the taxpayer as his or her principle residence for at least three of the last five years prior to the sale.

### **A NOTE ON INCOME ELIGIBILITY**

Income eligibility for the property tax/rent rebate and PACE programs is based on income from all sources. This includes: salaries, wages, bonuses and commissions, value of an inheritance and self-employment or partnership income, Social Security (except Medicare), veterans' disability payments, interest (including that on federal, state and local government obligations) and dividends, lottery or other prizes won, royalties and rental income, compensation benefits, cash public assistance, alimony and support payments, Railroad Retirement benefits, life insurance death benefits in excess of \$5,000, gifts of cash or property when the value exceeds \$300 (except between household members) and capital gains.

### **DO YOU PAY MORE THAN**

#### **\$4 FOR YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS?**

You may only have to pay the first \$4 of your prescription if you are at least 65 years old with an income of not more than \$12,000 if single, or \$15,000 if you are married.

PACE (Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly) is designed to help senior citizens with the cost of prescription medicines through a co-payment program.

Applications are available at my district office.

### **EASIER TO READ LABELS**

Labels and directions on prescriptions will be easier to read if Congress honors the state's request to change labeling requirements for over-the-counter drugs.

Too often, people with poor eyesight and elderly persons have difficulty reading instructions and warnings on their medication packages. This could be dangerous if the drug is used improperly or mixed with other prescriptions.

If the resolution we proposed is enacted into federal law, we can avoid mishaps like this by enlarging the print on prescription labels.

## **RECREATIONAL BENEFITS**

Persons age 65 or older are entitled to certain recreational and cultural benefits in Pennsylvania. The cost of hunting, furtaking and fishing licenses is reduced. A hunting or furtaking license costs \$10.50; a lifetime license \$50.50. A fishing license costs \$2.50; a lifetime license \$10.50. Proof of age is required. In addition, free fishing licenses are available for Pennsylvania veterans with 100 percent service-connected disabilities. For more information on any of these benefits, contact the PA Game Commission (717/787-4250) or the PA Fish Commission (717/787-4519).

In addition, persons age 65 or older are eligible for free admission to the Pennsylvania State Historical and Museum Commission museum. However, there is a \$.50 admission fee for the planetarium. Those 65 or over are eligible for reduced camping fees at state parks Sundays through Thursdays.

Admission to state parks is free and most state park facilities are free for use as well. For more information on these items, contact the Bureau of State Parks (717/787-8800) or the PA Historical and Museum Commission (717/787-4978).

## **THE VOTER HALL OF FAME**

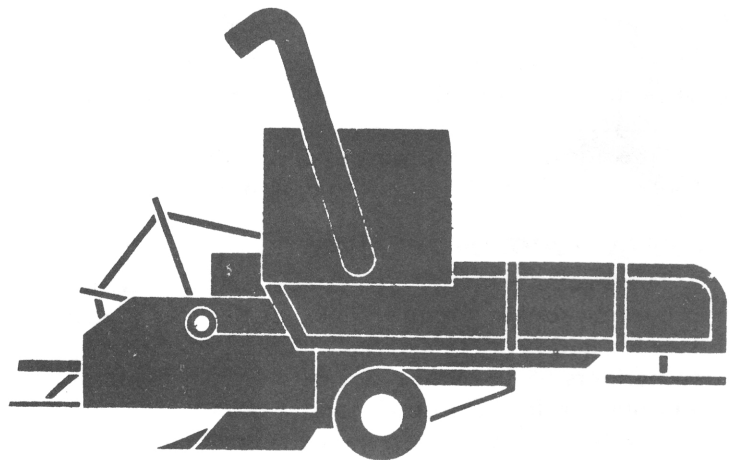
Residents who have voted in every general election for 50 years or more may be eligible for the Pennsylvania Voter Hall of Fame. This prestigious club is open to all state residents who have voted consecutively in every November election for which they were eligible for 50 years. Those seeking admission to the Voter Hall of Fame must also agree to encourage the registration of new voters. The Voter Hall of Fame was formed two years ago to honor citizens with exemplary voting records and to encourage all citizens to exercise the right to vote. It is administered by the state's election bureau.

District residents who think they may be eligible for the Voter Hall of Fame may obtain applications from my district office or the Courthouse.

## **PRESERVING FARMLAND**

Growing concern over the loss of prime farmland prompted the General Assembly to allow the voters of the Commonwealth decide whether or not the state should implement a farm preservation measure.

This past election, through a ballot referendum, the voters overwhelmingly approved an agricultural preservation fund of \$100 million to protect our valuable farmland. As a result, legislation has been introduced that will implement the statewide program so that farmers and local governments can go about the business of protecting farmland. The final decision to preserve the land, of course, is left with the farmer. The voters' approval of this bond does more than protect the economy of our number one industry, it preserves in perpetuity the tradition and heritage of our state's farming history.





## JOB SECURITY FOR VOLUNTEERS

The House has unanimously passed legislation, with my strong support, to prevent volunteer firefighters, ambulance and rescue workers and fire police from being penalized by their employer for lost work time due to an injury suffered while responding to an emergency. Under an amendment added on the House floor, students could not be penalized for responding to an emergency call if they are members of a like volunteer organization.

Our volunteer emergency response organizations provide a necessary and valuable service and we should do all we can to make it easier for them to attract active members.

Volunteers and the organizations they support are the lifeblood of public service programs. We must protect them so that the services they provide can continue uninterrupted.



## LOCAL TAX REFORM

A recent state Supreme court decision and many questions about Governor Casey's proposal for local tax reform have delayed legislative action on the tax reform package. The court recently ruled that the state must pay all county court costs, a decision, which if upheld, could cost the Commonwealth up to \$300 million.

This would put a serious hole in the state budget and more than eat up a \$140 million appropriation included in the budget to help local governments make the transition to new taxing systems.

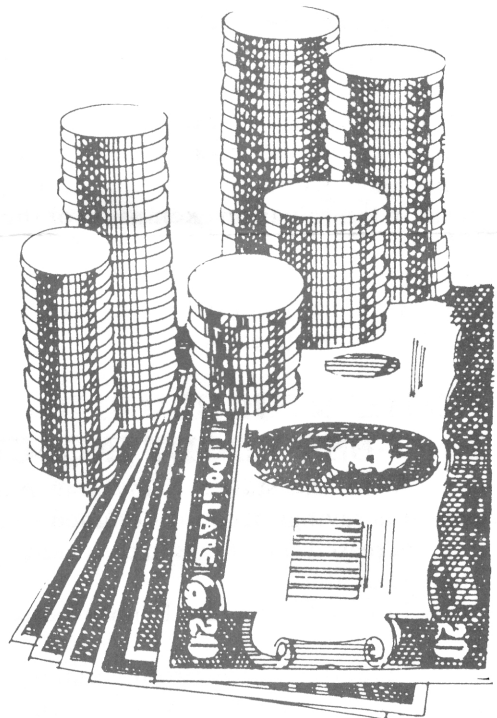
In addition, there are serious questions about whether or not the Governor's plan would be a bonanza for big cities while doing relatively little for suburban and rural areas. Another key area is that of the Philadelphia wage tax relief for suburbanites. While the Governor's plan would provide a one percent reduction, it would also provide for increased sales taxes and may result in increases in other taxes that more than offset wage tax reductions. Others have noted that under the plan, taxes could be increased to levels higher than they are now, only three years after enactment of the "reform proposal".

While the General Assembly will continue its special session on local tax reform, it is obvious that no simple solution is forthcoming immediately.

## EDUCATION FUNDING IS INCREASED

A record \$2.35 billion for basic education is included in the state budget and state assistance for basic education was increased by \$214 million statewide. Other education funding highlights are:

- a \$9.6 million increase for higher education grant programs administered by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA);
- a 5.7 percent increase to \$300 million for the 14 state-owned universities which are part of the Commonwealth system;
- a \$500,000 appropriation for a new program aimed at reducing the number of high school dropouts in the state;
- \$5 million for a new program to combat adult illiteracy;
- a 70 percent increase in state reimbursement for school construction and renovation.



## COMBATting CHILD ABUSE AND ABDUCTION

The growing problem of child abuse and abduction is a national tragedy.

We must take steps to correct this intolerable situation.

I have cosponsored legislation to combat child abuse and abduction in Pennsylvania by creating a state Office of Child Abuse and Child Abduction Prevention.

With over 110 cosponsors, including House Speaker Irvis, we are encouraging the Legislature to adopt a formal abuse and abduction prevention program as the cornerstone of a massive statewide public education campaign.

Ken Wooden, founder and director of the National Coalition for Children's Justice and co-producer of the "20/20" TV Program, has joined us in promoting this worthwhile effort. Mr. Wooden developed the "Child Lures" program - the most successful abuse/abduction prevention program of its type in the nation.

By teaching children, educators and parents about the specifics of abuse and abduction, we hope HB 1440 will succeed in preventing many child abduction and abuse attempts.



## LET'S GET TOUGH WITH DRUG PUSHERS

More than 100 colleagues and I have joined in supporting a package of bills that would impose stiff mandatory prison sentences against sellers of dangerous drugs. As a member of the PA Legislative Coalition Against Drugs, I am also actively supporting educational initiatives to teach young people to "Just Say No" to drugs.

The legislation would do the following:

- Impose mandatory 10 year jail sentences for sellers of dangerous drugs to adults and 15 year sentences for sales to minors; double jail sentences for second and subsequent offenses; the death penalty for sellers of drugs when the victim dies as a result of such a sale; double jail sentences for those who sell drugs to minors within 1,000 feet of a school; an additional five year jail term for possession of a gun during a drug transaction.
- The home of a drug seller could be seized if the home is used to store for sale, manufacture or sell drugs.
- Initiate a toll-free hotline for citizens to anonymously report illegal drug activity.

The Attorney General reported that of 1,720 drug sale convictions obtained in a 28-month period ending Dec. 31, 1986, 79 percent of those convicted serve no more than one year in prison and 626 served no jail time at all. The need for tough mandatory sentences is clear.

## EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY TARGETED

### General Assembly Enacts State Budget and Tax Cuts.

A mix of consumer and business tax cuts and increased funding for education, environmental protection and economic development comprised the 1987-88 state budget.

A significant surplus from last years state budget allowed the General Assembly to enact tax cuts and, at the same time, increase funding for other priorities. State budget analysts say another surplus is likely this year if our state's economy continues its current growth rate.

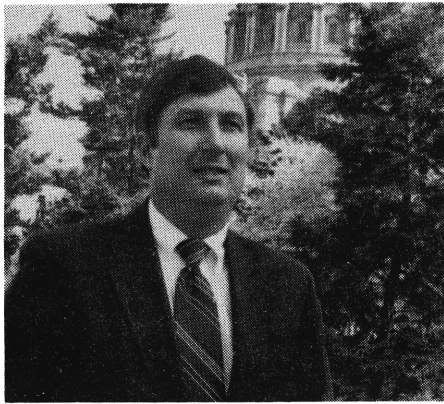
#### TAX CUTS in the 1987-88 Fiscal Year include:

- \* A reduction of the Utilities Gross receipts tax, resulting in savings to utility customers.
- \* A reduction in the Capital Stock and Franchise Tax that will help lower the cost of doing business in Pennsylvania and encourage economic development
- \* An increase in the valuation exemption of the Capital Stock and Franchise tax which will specifically help small businesses.
- \* An increase in the exemption from the state's personal income tax for low wage earners.

#### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF 1987-88 BUDGET INCLUDE:

- \* An increase to the state's Rainy Day Fund, the commonwealths savings account designed to prevent the need for increased state taxes in the event revenues are less than estimated.
- \* An increase in state funding for Pennsylvania's public schools.
- \* An increase in funding for environmental protection, including the establishment of the state's first "super-fund" for hazardous waste cleanup.





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Dear Friends,

This newsletter will bring you up to date on a number of legislative happenings and events of local interest. I hope you will find it informative and helpful.

Although I would like to send out more district wide mailings such as this one, time and expenses make that impractical. So, if you have a question, a concern that is not addressed in this newsletter, give me a call.

Anytime you or a family member need help with state-related problems, please do not hesitate to contact any of my district offices. The addresses and numbers are listed above. My legislative assistants and I will be glad to help you.

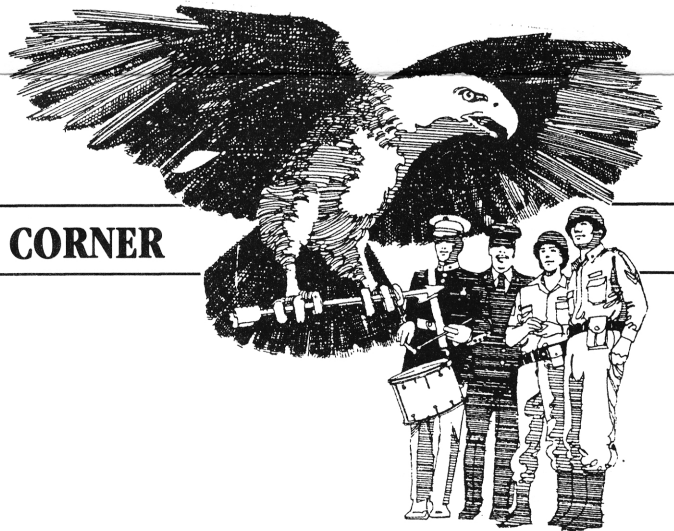
Sincerely,

*Paul Semmel*

Paul W. Semmel

## PROBLEMS WITH YOUR BANK?

If you have a problem with your bank that you are having difficulty resolving, maybe the state's Banking Department can help you. For your convenience, the department has installed a toll free number. You can contact the department at 1-800-722-2657 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



## VETERANS CORNER

### P.O.W. Medals

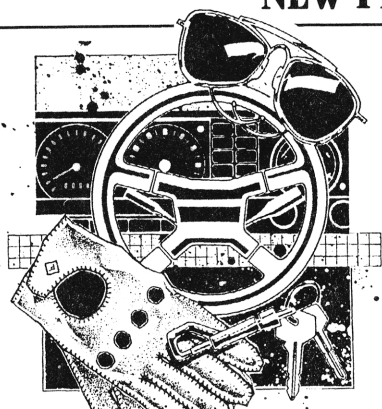
The Prisoner of War Medal is now available to veterans who were taken prisoner or held captive after April 5, 1917. The medal may also be awarded posthumously to the next-of-kin.

If you or a family member is eligible, please contact my office at 799-0187, 683-9199 or 562-3411.

## MERCHANT MARINES

If you served in the Merchant Marine, Army Transport Service, or Naval Transport Service during wartime, you may be eligible for Veteran's Benefits. Again, please contact any of my offices for additional information.

## NEW PHOTO LICENSE CENTERS OPEN



On July 1, two new photo license centers opened in the Lehigh Valley. The centers are located at Hess's South Mall in Emmaus and at MacArthur Business Park in Whitehall.

The Whitehall location, at MacArthur Road and Lehigh Street replaces the facility at 13th and Liberty Streets in Allentown.

The Emmaus center is located at the eastern end of the enclosed mall on Lehigh Street.

The centers are open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.



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## LOCAL HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

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The Cementon Bridge that spans the Lehigh River in Whitehall Township will be renovated by November 1989.

Safety will be improved when the left turn lanes and signals on Route 61 in Shoemakersville are eliminated. The project will begin in October 1988.

The upgrading and improvements being made on Interstate 78 should be completed by July 1990.

MacArthur Road and Schadt Avenue in Whitehall Township will be widened and traffic signals will be installed by October 1988.

Almost six miles of traffic route 100 in Lowhill and Heidelberg Townships will be resurfaced.

Over 2 miles of T.R. 143 between Landfill and Lenhartsville in Windsor and Greenwich Townships has been resurfaced and restored.

A section of Walbert Avenue in South Whitehall Township will soon be resurfaced.

The Ruch Street bridge in Whitehall Township will be removed by August 1990.

MacArthur and Mickley Roads in Whitehall Township will be widened and signals will be installed.

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## KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY RECEIVES \$\$\$ FOR RESEARCH

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Hats off to the Kutztown University and Dr. Joseph Piscitelli for securing \$9087 from the states Center for Rural Pennsylvania for research.

The money will be used to complete a study entitled "A Poll of the Citizenry and the Environmental Impact of a Trash to Steam Plant in Berks County."

More than 69 proposals totaling more than \$2 million were submitted for the grant money, but only the most meritorious proposals received funding.

Congratulations Kutztown University!

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE 187 TH DISTRICT

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### CUSTOMIZED JOB TRAINING

Approximately 67 people will be able to or have received on the job training at Windsor Knitting Mills, Inc. as a result of the state's Customized Job Training program.

The program, initiated in 1982, provides funds to train employees in specific skills to meet an individual employer's needs. The Windsor Knitting Mills received \$46,828 of state money to implement the program.

Most growing firms are eligible for the program as long as individuals who complete the training are hired by the company.

Any business interested in the program should contact the Department of Education, 333 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333. The phone number is (717) 787-5293.

### CAPITAL LOAN FUND

\$100,000 has been awarded to the Kutztown Quarry from the Pennsylvania Capital Loan fund, a program that helps growing firms meet their financing needs. The company, in turn, promises to create 10 new jobs within a three year period. This loan approval is part of the Commerce Departments ongoing efforts to stimulate economic development in the area.

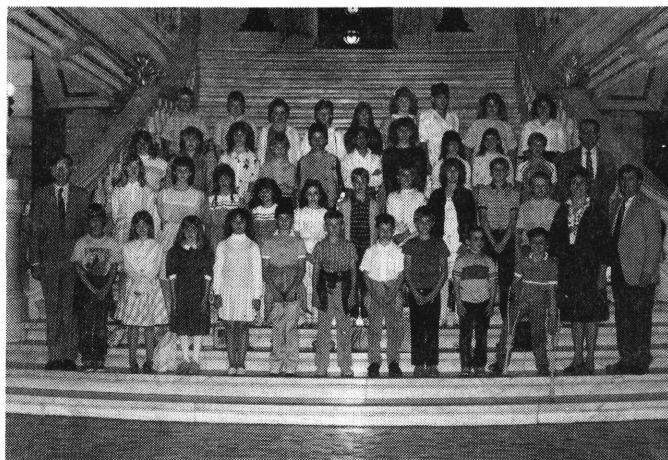
### AREA RECYCLING EFFORTS RECEIVE

#### A \$\$\$ BOOST FROM STATE

The Kutztown Borough and Washington and Whitehall Townships recently received grant money from the Department of Environmental Resources to aid in their recycling efforts.

Kutztown Borough received \$23,100 and Whitehall Township received \$22,775 for curbside recycling programs. Washington Township received \$13,200 that will help develop a recycling center.

The grants, part of 36 recently awarded to support local recycling efforts, help start recycling programs and reduce the demands on solid waste facilities.



Students and teachers from the Albany Elementary School recently visited Representative Paul Semmel (far right) and Senator David Brightbill at the state's capitol. If you would like to tour the capitol, please contact my offices at (215) 799-0187, (215) 683-9199, (215) 562-3411, or my Harrisburg office at (717) 787-3017.



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## TREXLER-LEHIGH GAME PRESERVE GETS NEW TRUCK

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From the Department of Environmental Resources, Representative Paul Semmel presents a \$10,000 check to David Bausch, Lehigh County Executive, towards the purchase of a new Chevrolet 350 utility truck for Trexler-Lehigh County Game Preserve. Joining Representative Semmel is (left to right) Dale Daubert, Purchasing Director of Lehigh County; Sterling Raber, Lehigh County Commissioner; Keith Archibald, Legislative Aide to Semmel; Chris Comisac, intern; and Anthony Mazziotta, Director of Lehigh County's Game Preserve.

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## LEGISLATION SUPPORTED BY REPRESENTATIVE SEMMEL

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**SPECIAL EDUCATION - (HR 58)** The state House Education committee was directed to study the needs of the Special Education Program in order to evaluate and improve the system.

**HIGHER EDUCATION - (HR 186)** The reasons for the spiraling costs of the state's Higher Education was investigated as a result of this resolution.

**CAMPUS HOUSING - (HR 222)** On-Campus Housing and Off-Campus Housing conditions for the state-owned and state-related universities will be studied if the House adopts this resolution.

**CHILD SAFETY - (HB 1652)** Children and others using playgrounds will not run the risk of being injured by a stray hunter's bullet if this legislation becomes law. Currently, if a playground is not within 150 yards of an occupied building, it is legal to hunt on it.

**FARMLAND PRESERVATION - (HB 442)** This legislation will implement the \$100 million agriculture program that the voters overwhelmingly approved. If the measure passes and is signed by the governor, this bill could resolve an issue that's been debated in Pennsylvania for years — the role of the state in preserving farmland.

**AGRICULTURE COMMISSION - (HB 441)** This legislation would create an Agriculture Department administrative commission, known as the Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission, to facilitate and integrated approach to the diagnosis and investigation of disease in farm animals. The commission would provide grants for the acquiring of data regarding animal health research, and coordinate animal health, research, and diagnostic programs.



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## SPECIAL SECTION FOR SPORTS MEN AND WOMEN

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### TOLL-FREE NUMBER

The Pennsylvania Game Commission has recently started an "800" telephone number service. The new toll-free number is in direct response to a 1987 study where the commission found that sportsmen and others in the public sector needed better access to the commission.

All callers should direct their inquiries and complaints to 1-800-228-0791.

### BONUS DEER

In order to control the deer population and lessen the damage being done on farms, the Game Commission has approved a proposal under which in certain counties, it will be possible for a hunter to purchase a bonus antlerless deer tag and legally harvest two deer.

Under the plan, all 679,300 allocated antlerless deer licenses will be put on sale by county treasurers October 3. However, on and after October 24, unsold antlerless licenses may continue to be sold as regular antlerless licenses, or they may also be sold as bonus antlerless tags. A hunter who has a bonus tag may take a bonus or extra antlerless deer in the county where the tag is issued.

The bonus deer may be taken during the regular antlerless season December 12-14. If the hunter has a muzzleloader or archery license, the bonus deer could also be taken during the muzzleloader/winter archery season December 26 - January 7.

# 1987 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**1A.** Divestiture...divestment of companies doing business in South Africa.

13.7% favor

**1B.** Divestiture...except companies adhering to "Sullivan Principles".

34.5% favor

**1C.** Divestiture...NO divestment at this time.

40.3% favor

**2A.** Seat Belts..."Primary Enforcement".

28.6% favor

**2B.** Seat Belts..."Secondary Enforcement".

31.4% favor

**2C.** Seat Belts...Oppose any mandatory seat belt law in Pennsylvania.

37.1% favor

**3.** Favor or oppose 65 mph speed limit on rural highways.

45.3% favor 50.8% oppose

**4A.** Favor or oppose legislation to require recycling.

85.4% favor 10.6% oppose

**4B.** Willing to participate in "source separation".

75.5% yes 9.7% no

**5A.** Smoking...Ban smoking in all public places, including work areas.

52.8% favor 25.1% oppose

**5B.** Smoking...Ban smoking in all public places except work areas.

24.0% favor 31.4% oppose

**5C.** Smoking...Ban smoking in all public places except designated areas.

51.9% favor 20.3% oppose

**6A.** Tax Reform...School district and local governments impose tax on earned income.

22.9% favor 56.6% oppose

**6B.** Tax Reform...School district and local governments impose a general income tax.

13.7% favor 65.7% oppose

**6C.** Tax Reform...Lower sales tax rate and broaden the base.

13.4% favor 65.2% oppose

**6D.** Tax Reform...Increase the statewide sales tax.

25.9% favor 51.4% oppose

**6E.** Tax Reform...Increase the state income tax by 1%.

48.8% favor 31.9% oppose

**6F.** Tax Reform... Committee to study tax policies/local referendum.

63.3% favor 22.3% oppose

**7.** Support increase in gas tax for highway maintenance.

28.6% yes 48.9% no 14.7% undecided

Saturday, July 16th, Representative Paul Semmel participated in the 1988 Tart Cherry Baking Contest at Strawberry Acres, R. D. #1, Copley, owned and operated by Pamela and Daniel Haas. The two other judges and Representative Semmel selected Judith Metzger of Laurys Station as the first prize winner out of 15 contestants.

## The winning recipe is as follows:

Cherry Neopolitan Delight - Judith Metzger

Pie Shell: 10 Sugar Cone Ice Cream Cones (crushed)

6 Tbsp. Butter

Melt butter in 9" pie plate, stir in crushed cones and press with spoon to line bottom and sides. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes.

Cool before filling.

Pie Filling: 1-1/2 Cups Sour Cherries (chop in blender)

1-1/2 Cups Vanilla Ice Cream

1 Chocolate Pudding Recipe

Mix 1/2 cup of chopped cherries with vanilla ice cream and place into cool pie shell.

Place this in freezer. Make Chocolate pudding. When pudding is cool blend 1/2 cup of

chopped cherries into 2 cups pudding. Spread pudding mixture over ice cream mixture

(be sure pudding is completely cool). Cover pie and return to freezer.

Before you are ready to serve, place pie in refrigerator for 20 minutes. Then top with

whipped cream or your favorite whipped topping. Decorate with chocolate shavings.

For the sour cherry lover, add a few whole cherries that were coated with powdered sugar

and dipped in milk chocolate to adorn the top of your pie.

### Chocolate Pudding Recipe:

1/2 Cup Sugar

4 Tbsp. Flour

1/8 tsp. salt

1/3 Cup Cocoa

Mix above ingredients with 1 Cup milk. Stir until smooth.

Add another Cup of milk and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until thick.

2 Egg Yolks, slightly beaten

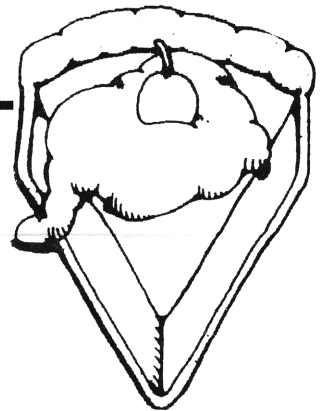
Add a little of the hot mixture to egg yolks, stir and then gradually add to hot mixture while stirring.

2 Tbsp. Butter

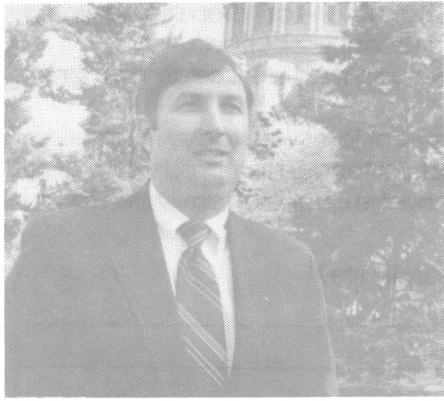
1 tsp. Vanilla

Add butter and vanilla and cook mixture a few minutes longer.

Cool before continuing with pie recipe.







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## QUESTIONNAIRE

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### I. DRUGS

The Pennsylvania legislature recently passed legislation stepping up its effort against drug trafficking in schoolyards by declaring a "Drug Free School Zone" program. These zones are part of our loud and clear message to drug dealers that they will face harsh mandatory prison terms if convicted of selling illegal drugs within 1,000 feet of a school, college, or university.

While the nation is teaching our youth to "say no" to drugs and alcohol, we in the legislature are helping wage the war against abuse by saying "yes" to proposals cracking down on substance abuse, including underage drinking.

In addition to the recently enacted tough underage drinking measure, the legislature has nearly a dozen bills relating to Driving Under the Influence offenses, drug testing, funding for rehabilitation and educational programs, specific penalties for drug dealing and use, and parole violations for drug offenders.

In your opinion, is the state legislature doing enough to combat the war on drugs? If not, how do you propose that we improve our fight? \_\_\_\_\_

### II. EDUCATION

This year, the General Assembly approved a 10 percent increase to the funding level for state educational grants of more than \$116 million. The additional money will help the agency expand its eligibility requirements so that more college-bound students can take advantage of the program.

The maximum state educational grant was increased from \$1,850 to the maximum of \$2,000 where the family income is less than \$18,000.

Do you feel everyone has the right to a college education, and if so, how can the state improve its programs to ensure that right? Is higher education becoming too expensive for America so that it is becoming an elitist commodity?

At the elementary and secondary levels of education, do you feel that we should raise our educational standards? If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

**Post-Secondary:** Are there any courses or curriculums that you would like to see added or strengthened to our local and state assisted colleges that aren't already in place? If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

### III. ENVIRONMENT

It won't be long until municipalities across the state begin implementing the recently passed solid waste recycling law...and it won't be long until we start seeing the improvement it will have on our environment.

Beyond the environmental concerns associated with solid and hazardous waste disposal, what other environmental issues would you like the state to address? For instance, where should the money come from to preserve and protect our Commonwealth's state parks and recreation areas? Do you think the environment of our area is in danger? And if it is, what should we do about it? \_\_\_\_\_

**IV. FAMILY**

Nearly \$19 billion changes hands in America yearly as family members help one another—children aiding aging parents, mom and dad helping offspring start a household—the Census Bureau recently reported.

While the largest share of the assistance is child support, the bureau said that about one-third of those giving money to relatives were aiding an adult—most often elderly parents.

Child support and helping aging parents, however, are only two of the components of family life today in America. Other issues changing the tradition of family are drug abuse, rising education costs, extended families, health-care costs, and helping abused children and their families are all forces that are effecting the quality of family life. Do you think the family unit is deteriorating?

What do you think the state legislature can do to help improve the quality of family life?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**V. GOVERNMENT**

Too much government. Too little government. These are complaints that people simultaneously have about our democracy. Are we as Americans, too dependent upon government programs, or do you think government can do more for its people? How do we achieve that balance? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel that you have an effort upon what is done in state government? \_\_\_\_\_

YES  NO Do you feel that you have easy access to your State Senator?

YES  NO Do you feel that you have easy access to your State Representative?

If not, how can I make myself more available to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

YES  NO Do you have confidence in state and local government? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**VI. HOMES AND THE HOMELESS**

One of the "American Dreams" has always been to own our own home. What can be done in the state legislature, if anything, to ensure the ability to realize this dream? What can be done in the legislature to help the homeless? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**VII. INFORMATION**

Because much of our news and information is gained from the local newspapers and television, including public and cable T.V., do you feel the areas' media should cover additional issues? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Weekly, I write a column that appears in some of those newspapers. Have you read any of them? If so, how do you feel about the content? Are there issues you would like me to address in these columns?

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