

# Let's save White's Woods

At the White's Woods meeting March 29 at Indiana Senior High School, a memo from Todd A. Chambers Vukich Associates to interested citizens of Indiana was distributed. It commenced, "White Woods is a unique parcel, not only for its sylvan wooded hillsides and valleys, but also for its proximity to Indiana Borough and White Township. There are precious few communities with this large of an expanse of open space in such close proximity to so many people." It was downhill after that.

Jerry Kozusko, despite writing in the Indiana Gazette's "As I See It" feature on March 25 that the "eventual master plan may give justification for timber removal from White's Woods," said in his opening statement at the March 29 meeting that trees would have to be cut in order to pay the White Township portion of the phase one expansion of Getty Heights Park.

This was substantiated later in the meeting by White Township Manager Larry Garner, who stated that "there will probably be some timbering done" because the "Supervisors (White Township) feel there needs to be 'development' whether you (the public in attendance) like the word or not." He concluded by repeating "some timbering will be done."

This destroyed the stated intent of the meeting, which was to begin developing a master plan for White's Woods since the more than 100 in attendance were interested in keeping the natural and wonderful recreation area we

## As I See It

By JOHN D. COFFMAN



have rather than planning how to best use a significantly denuded tract of 250 acres.

I would like to make a series of points:

1. White's Woods currently provides a variety of recreational uses including hiking, running, biking, cross-country skiing and wildlife viewing. It offers solitude to those so inclined to simply sit, meditate and enjoy.

2. The woods are now used by people ranging in age from under 10 years to those over 70 years. Enjoyment of a recreational facility by almost the complete spectrum of human ages is unusual, to say the least.

3. The cost of maintaining the more than four miles of trails is very low and much of it could be accomplished by volunteers, thus reducing the park expenditure even more.

4. The present land use of the township's 250 forested acres well matches the use of IUP's 270 acres that abut the western end of the property.

5. Selective cutting is not well

understood by all involved in this process. Any significant culling will dramatically alter the nature of the woods for at least 20 years. When a targeted tree falls, other trees will also fall and debris will be left on the forest floor. And, of course, access to the cut trees will cause considerable damage to the flora and the ground itself.

6. The validity of point five was tacitly accepted by the Chambers Vukich consulting firm, which said that uncut buffer zones were to be left near roads and on the Indiana side to maintain the present long-distance beauty of the woods. This is an example of the philosophy that "if it looks good, it is good," even if those wishing to enjoy the woods find it impossible because of a donut effect with trees on the outside but no trees on the inside.

7. It is true that proper forest management requires that mature trees be cut in order to gain financially from the forest being managed. This is not true if the purpose of the management is human enjoyment. Forests have

done quite well on their own for a long time.

8. Pennsylvania Project 70 moneys were used to help White Township purchase the woods. These funds were to be used only for recreation, conservation and historical purposes. This would seem to prohibit the cutting of trees to earn money for the expansion of another park.

9. Any major "development" will provide more facilities such as those already enjoyed at other parks. They will be expensive to build and to maintain.

10. Environmental studies will show that drainage patterns and water flow will be altered if trees are cut. There will be substantial cost in maintaining the necessary water control facilities to insure those living near the woods will not be flooded or sustain property damage.

I see no reason to "destroy" White's Woods and find it an anathema to ruin one park to expand another. My wife and I are of like minds and invite all who agree to join in forming a "Friends of White's Woods Association" to protect what we have.

Interested persons should write to John D. and/or Claudine Coffman, 471 South Seventh St., Indiana, Pa. 15701. Give your name, address, telephone number and any special help you can provide, such as a place for us to meet.

John Coffman is a teacher in the Marion Center School District, a member of the Indiana Planning Commission and chaired Indiana Borough's park- ing permit ad hoc committee.



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**INSIDE**

Forecast



Some clearing tonight with a low of 35; partly sunny Wednesday with a high of 63. See weather information on Page 8.

Cultivated interest

Gardening is enjoying unparalleled popularity these days, but behind the hoopla you'll also find people dropping out. It's a mystery how anyone who has tasted a home-grown tomato, still warm from the sun, could

# Chevy Chase Center's

## Board needs to raise at least \$20,000

By JOHN COMO  
 Gazette Staff Writer

Reduced hours for its executive director could be just the start of cutbacks in personnel and services at the Chevy Chase Community Center, which needs more than \$20,000 to stay open until the end of the year.

Sandy Moser, the center's full-time executive director, will have her job cut back to 15 hours a week beginning Monday, May 1, said Charles Stokes, president of the center's board of directors.

"The well is running dry on the money we have been getting to operate the center," Stokes said. "We need to raise from \$20,000 to \$25,000 to keep the services available through the end of the year."

The financial crisis will be discussed at an emergency meeting of the board at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the center, 740 N. Fifth St., in White Township.

Stokes said layoffs or reductions in hours are also pending for Kathy Abbey-Baker, director of the Unemployment Help Program, and Archie Curnow, maintenance director, the

two other full-time staff members at the center. Margaret Jones, who works in housekeeping and also serves as the executive director, is employed through the Green Thumb Program.

"At the meeting Wednesday, we will be asking residents of the Chevy Chase community and through the Indiana County to help us by volunteering time at the center and donating money to help cover the costs of services and operation," Stokes said.

Contributions to the center are deductible, he said.

"We are looking at the possibilities of sponsoring bingo, dinner dances, adult dances, and flea markets to raise money," Stokes said. "We want to do anything and everything we can to keep the lights on at the center and continue the services."

He said applications for funding will be submitted to private foundations.

