

HALLOFFAME

In a community as rural and small as Fairview Township, practically everyone knows **Mont Clark** and counts on him for honest, knowledgeable, and helpful service.

Where Everyone Knows His Name

Mont Clark

Fairview Township, Mercer County
31 years of service

BY AMY BOBB / CONTRIBUTING WRITER,
PSATS

When Mont Clark was elected to office in Fairview Township, Mercer County, a long-time supervisor sat him down after his first meeting and gave him some advice.

“He told me to be truthful and not lie,” Clark says. “He said if I don’t know the answer, don’t guess. Find out. And when I don’t know, call PSATS. They always have the answer.”

Those words of wisdom have helped to guide Clark throughout his 31 years of service to the township, and now as the senior supervisor himself, he offers this sage advice to others.

“If you call him or ask him a question, he gets back to you,” secretary-treasurer Robin Hostetler says. “If you ask for help, he helps, and if he doesn’t know the answer, he finds it.”

A rural existence

In a small, rural community like Fairview Township, where the population barely surpasses the 1,000-mark, nearly everyone knows Clark and counts on him to take care of things for the township.



Except for a two-year tour of duty in Vietnam in the 1960s, supervisor Mont Clark has lived in Fairview Township his entire life. In fact, he and his wife reside in the house he was born in, which sits on a piece of property that had been a part of his grandfather’s farm. The Clarks’ two daughters, Kimberly and Kelly, and three grandsons also live nearby.

“He’s been a supervisor for so long and lived in the same house,” Hostetler says. “People get to know him from seeing him on the roads in a truck or on a tractor.”

Throughout Clark’s three decades of service, Fairview Township has stayed rural. Today, about 45 percent of the population is Amish, and many resi-

dents work on farms, at sawmills, or as furniture or cabinet makers.

“We have no zoning, no sewer, no [public] water, no police, no parks,” he says. The supervisors’ major responsibility is maintaining the roughly 21 miles of paved and dirt roads.

“We had five or six miles of blacktop roads when I started,” he says. “We have doubled that to about 11 miles today. The rest are dirt.”

Improving the condition of the roads, including widening what had been narrow country lanes, has been one of Clark’s proudest accomplishments.

“I’m also proud of the fact that we never raised taxes in my 31 years,” he says.

He attributes that to saving money and spending wisely. While remaining frugal, the supervisors have kept their operations current and their equipment up to date.

In 1991, the township moved its operations from a one-room schoolhouse and old garage to a new township building with office space, a meeting room, a three-bay garage, and a social hall that can be rented. A communications tower built in the early 2000s on the property brings in enough income to pay for the building’s upkeep, Clark says.

Upgrading equipment has been a priority, too. When he first became a supervisor, the township owned an old Case backhoe. Since then, the fleet has

been expanded to include an excavator, a trailer, two new dump trucks, and a boom mower that was purchased with a grant in partnership with two other municipalities.

“When I started plowing snow, we had one truck and needed two people to operate it: one to drive and the other to run the hand-jake to lift and lower the plow,” Clark says.

Nowadays, with newer equipment, he and fellow supervisor Barry Struthers split the township into two plow routes, each covering one half of the community. It takes them about two and a half hours to clear the roads, including five miles of PennDOT roads they maintain through an Agility agreement.

The township has also implemented a road maintenance program that ensures that every paved road is chipped and sealed on a four-year rotating schedule. Each summer, Clark and the other supervisors tar and chip about two miles of road.

A better place

Fairview Township has just four part-time employees — three working supervisors and a secretary-treasurer — and they agree that Clark makes their township a better place to live and work.

“He’s knowledgeable about the roads, the equipment, and the township,” says Struthers, who has worked alongside him for 15 years. “He’s very reliable and knows what he’s doing.”

Clark worked as an equipment operator at an industrial mill for more than 40 years and then at PennDOT for nearly a decade before retiring. He’s an excellent operator, Struthers says, noting that Clark is also a champion tractor puller and has competed in contests around Pennsylvania and Ohio.

His knowledge of equipment has served him well in his work for the township, including many years when he provided mechanical upkeep of the equipment.

In the day-to-day administration of the township, Clark is always helpful and kind, says Hostetler, who became the secretary about two years ago when Clark’s wife, Jane, retired from the position. “I know I can always go to him with a question. He’s done this for so

How PSATS has helped this Hall of Famer

If you ask Mont Clark how PSATS has helped him over the years, he chuckles and replies, “I don’t know where to start.”

In his three decades with Fairview Township, he has come to rely on the Association’s various resources, including sample ordinances and resolutions and phone calls to staff for advice.

“It can’t be beat,” he says.

For the past couple of decades, he also religiously attends the PSATS Annual Conference in Hershey.

“You can’t go wrong there,” he says. “If you go and keep your ears open, you will learn a lot more than you ever thought you could.”

long, and since his wife had been secretary, he’s familiar with much of what’s going on.”

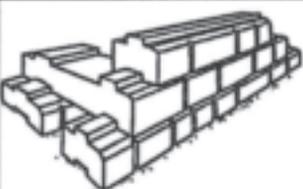
Clark, who is 75, will leave a big hole to fill whenever he decides to leave office, she says.

“He has spoiled me,” Hostetler says. “If he ever decides to retire or not run again, he will be terribly missed. He’s

an all-around great guy.”

Not that Clark is planning to leave anytime soon. His current term runs until 2021, and as long as he continues to feel healthy, he says he plans to remain a supervisor.

“It’s interesting work,” he says. “I like dealing with the people, plus it keeps me out of trouble.” ♦



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