

Building

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"I've written a letter to Daytop requesting information but so far we haven't heard anything from them," said Bill Drummond, Essex town supervisor.

That lack of information, however, has stirred a hornet's nest in the tiny residential hamlet.

"Everyone's getting very excited," noted Drummond.

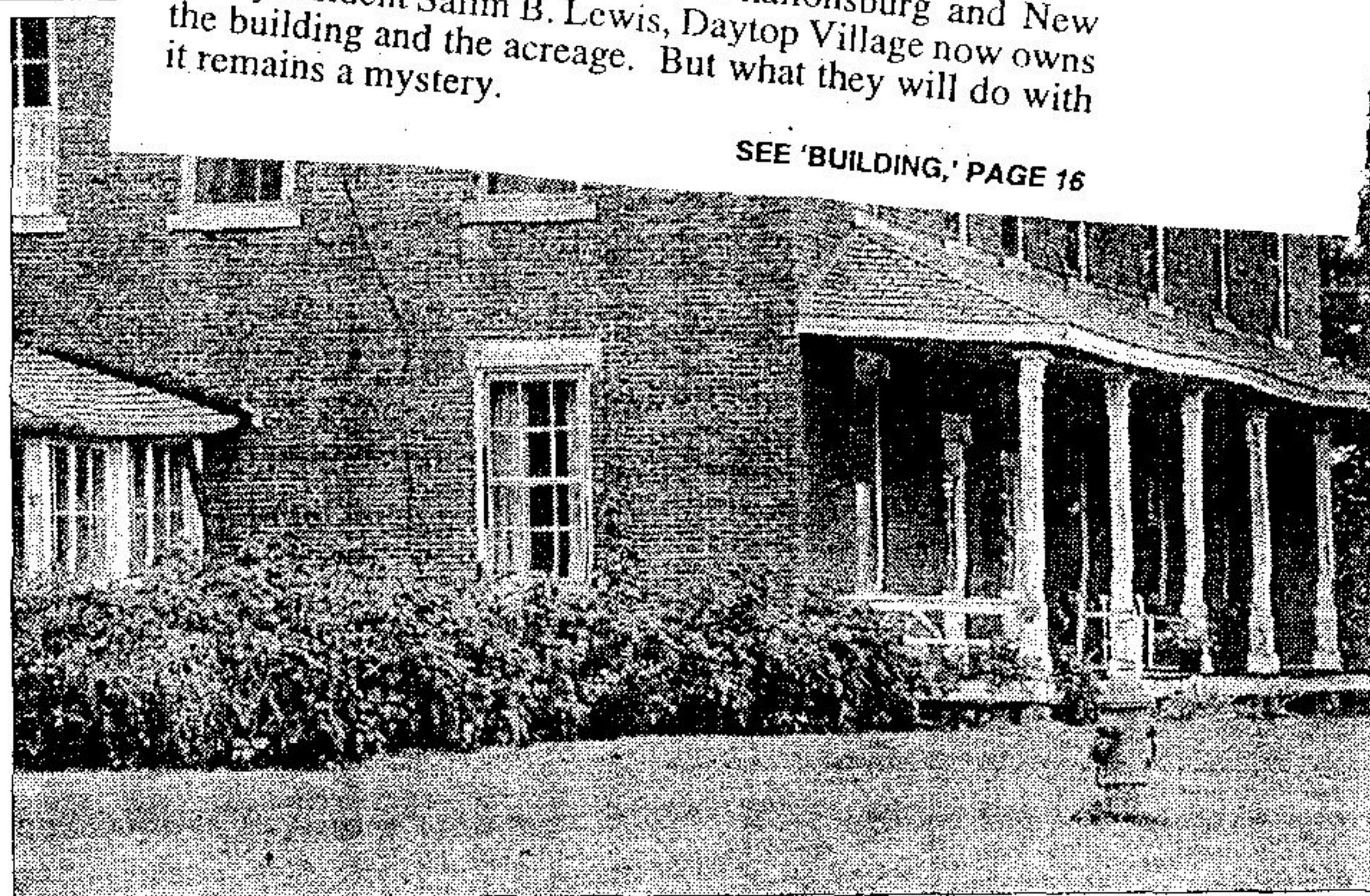
Concerned may be a better word.

Scot Hurlburt lives six-tenths of a mile from the aging county building and he is very concerned about the rumors of a residential drug rehabilitation facility moving into his neighborhood.

"We've heard astronomical numbers... a 120-bed youth facility and a 250-bed adult treatment facility. This small rural community cannot be expected to shoulder that kind of responsibility," Hurlburt said.

"We, as a community, have a responsibility to remediate social problems but it needs to be in proportion to the size of our community," he added.

Hurlburt and other residents have formed a citizens' committee to research the entire situation and they have received support and funding from several private donors. The group has a lot of questions.



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FUTURE UNCERTAIN: The old county home building in Whallonsburg we recently purchased by the international drug rehabilitation facility, Daytop Village.

Will the Willsboro/Essex school district be responsible for educating these youths? What kind of security will be available to the residents of Whallonsburg? How will this affect tourism? But acquiring accurate information has been difficult.

"There's a lot of information about Daytop on the Internet... some of it good and a lot of it bad," said Hurlburt.

An international drug rehabilitation facility, Daytop is known for its regimented program in the treatment of addicts. It is, however, a voluntary program with a

supervised but open campus. Residents are free to leave.

"Supposedly, there's a 50-percent flight rate at Daytop. That means that half the people in there are leaving the place. Well, where are they going to go in Whallonsburg? Are they going to hide out in my barn? Steal my car?" a potential neighbor to the facility wondered.

"I'm against it because of the safety of the residents in Whallonsburg," echoed Drummond.

Drummond also said that concerned residents had approached the town board

asking it to change the zoning on the aging building the hope that new zoning might thwart Daytop Village.

"You can't change a zoning ordinance overnight. You have to have public hearings and a public referendum, it takes time. As by the time we did that would be too late anyway. We don't know what to do because we just don't have any answers from Daytop," Drummond said.

At presstime, Daytop Village officials had not responded to four phone calls from the Valley News.

Building buy stirs residents

BY MARGARET BOLSTER
STAFF WRITER

WHALLONSBURG — There are a lot of questions and only a few answers.

The Old County Home building on Route 22 in Whallonsburg has a new owner. Daytop Village, a drug rehabilitation facility headquartered in New York City, purchased the 20,000-square-foot building last week. Built in several stages throughout the mid-1800s, the Old County Home has been on the market for several years. The building, which sits on 12.8 acres of land, is listed on both the state and national historic registers. With financial backing from Whallonsburg and New Jersey resident Salim B. Lewis, Daytop Village now owns the building and the acreage. But what they will do with it remains a mystery.