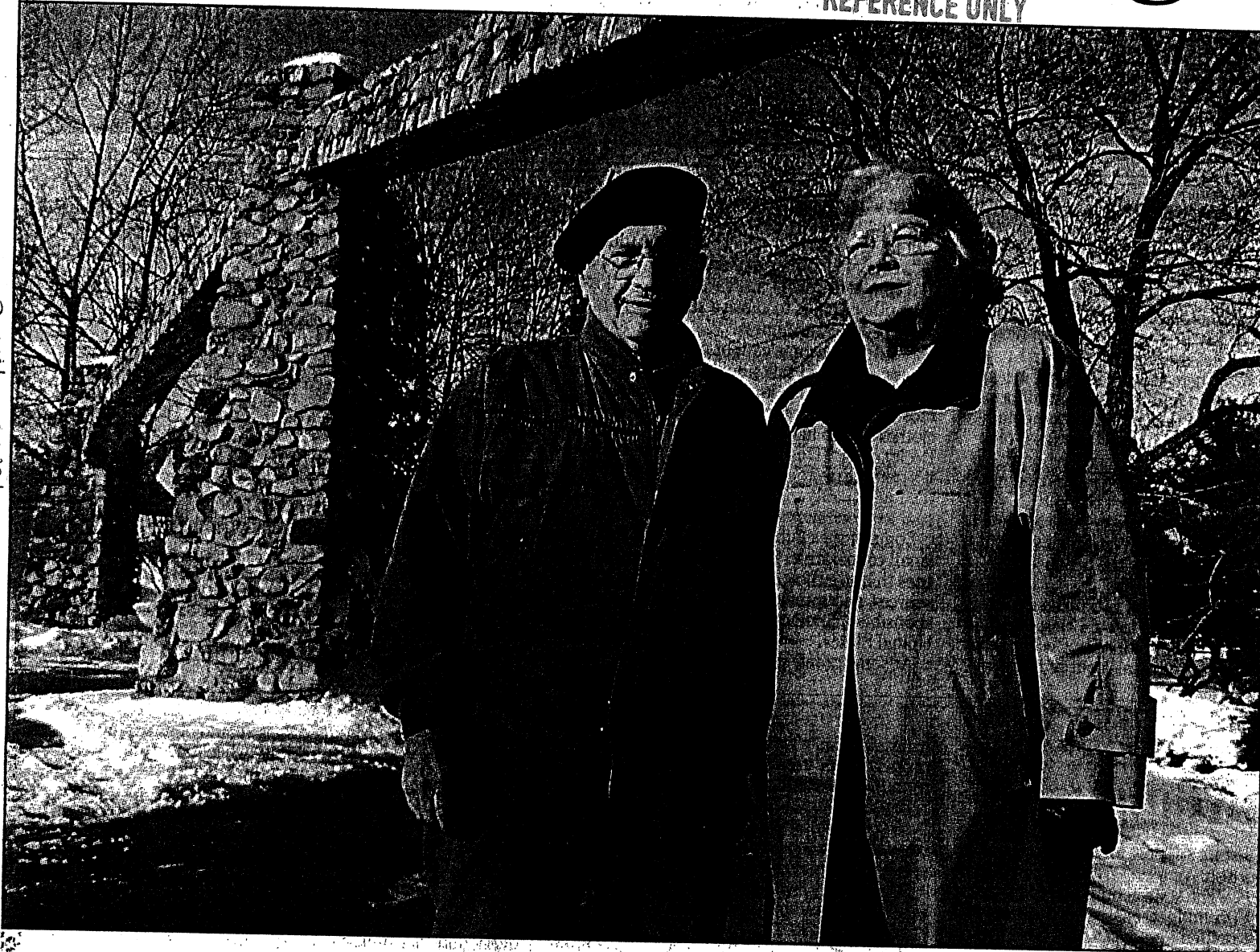


Historic arch cracking

REFERENCE ONLY

Petro Park



William Gering, left, recently elected chairman of the Mishawaka Historic Preservation Commission, and Bev Donati, right, stand beneath the archway to Petro Park on Shanower Drive. Donati, a nearby resident, hopes the city will find a way to restore the archway, which was built by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s and has fallen into disrepair. Tribune Photo/BRYON COPPENS

Entrance to Petro Park built by the WPA in 1930s

By **BRYON COPPENS**
Tribune Staff Writer

MISHAWAKA — Bev Donati watched in dismay last month as a too-tall delivery truck tried to dislodge itself from its wedged-in position under the stone archway straddling Shanower Drive a short distance from her home.

Already concerned the 70-year-old structure built by the Works Progress Administration during the Depression

may be on the verge of collapse, she ran over to the driver of the truck and pleaded with him to let the air out of his tires before trying to back out.

She said the driver was apologetic but declined to deflate.

Donati held her breath as the truck slowly scraped backward against the cracked stonework before finally clearing the archway.

To Donati's relief, all was still intact. "The driver was so fascinated by the arch, he didn't pay attention to the

sign," Donati said.

A sign on the double archway declares its clearance height of 10 feet 6 inches.

Another sign declares it as an entrance to Petro Park, immediately north of the Eberhart-Petro Municipal Golf Course.

Like the driver of the delivery truck, Donati has been fascinated by the archway's beauty since she and her husband, John, bought their home on Shanower Drive in the early 1970s.

"We bought it because we loved that whole entryway," she said, noting the long fieldstone wall along Shanower that complements the archway.

But over time, the stonework on the wall and the archway has deteriorated and cracked. Overgrown brush obscured some of its features above ground, while tree roots pushed and poked at the stones below the surface.

"It was a total disaster," Donati said.

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