

editorials & commentary

Fire And Ice

"And fire and ice within me fight
Beneath the suffocating night."
So wrote the poet Alfred Edward Housman. He might well have been describing the scene on Market Street last Thursday morning as volunteer firemen fought valiantly in sub-zero temperatures and a stiff breeze to extinguish a fire that burned four business establishments and two apartments and could have threatened the entire east side of the Market Street Historic District.

Anyone who was there throughout that frost-bitten battle will verify that the volunteers worked with an intense sense of purpose under those extremely hostile conditions.

Any attempt at crediting all those groups, both volunteer and professional, that labored as frigid night turned to frigid day would undoubtedly fall short. But some observations are in order.

Notably, the coordination between the numerous volunteer fire companies, the volunteer rescue squad, and the police department were remarkable.

That coordination extended through the traffic control efforts of Thursday morning through the day Thursday and we hope will continue to extend right through the conclusion of the arson investigation.

The mere suggestion that the building may have been torched to cover up a burglary comes as a shock here in Potsdam. Arson itself is not unknown in the North Country. And neither, certainly, is burglary. But the combination of both has, as far as we know, stayed fairly clear of our area.

The fire destroyed a lot of property. Thankfully, no lives were lost.

Sense Of Community

The fire that struck Potsdam last Thursday undoubtedly struck at the heartstrings of a lot of business people in the community.

Fortunately, from all indications, the businesses intend to rebuild, relocate, or somehow stay in operation.

We praise the businessmen for their tenacity and their faith in Potsdam.

We also praise the village officials who made it quite clear even on the day of the fire that they would support the business people in their rebuilding efforts.

And we praise those others in the business community who have offered assistance to the victims of that fire.

That is the type of community spirit that makes Potsdam a good place to live. Some readers may notice with slight irony

today that we are running two special sections on St. Lawrence County's progress in the business and industrial arenas during 1979. On the whole, the section sketches a picture that shows business in the county to be on the upswing.

They may notice, too, that some of the businesses that were affected by the fire are featured in stories in the special section. Unfortunately, the pages were on the press as the fire was raging; they could not be altered or deleted.

But, come to think of it, perhaps it is more fitting that they were not changed or deleted. Because the sense of community that we have seen in the wake of this fire is as much a testimony to the local business climate as anything else on those pages.

Where Are All The Whistlers?

People don't whistle anymore. What have they to whistle about? Dying dollars and skyrocketing prices? Have you heard anyone whistling lately?

Whistling was once considered a proud accomplishment. I know, for I never developed a hardy and vibrant whistle. Secretly, I envied my brother and friends who had accumulated an extensive repertoire of merry songs which they whistled whenever compelled to do so. Whistling denoted a certain reckless joy. The boy whistler was playing the superior man.

I remember many revered attributes about my father but one of the most colorful was that of his strong, melodious whistle. Not only was his heart in its pleasant whistles but also paternal authority. For example, when it was time for my brother and I to come home his piercing call, made by placing two fingers between his teeth and blowing, was quickly recognized and it penetrated our most clever hiding places. Once hearing it we knew what direction we had better be going without delay.

When the old man whistled in the house it was as if a huge warbler had perched on a kitchen chair or on the shower curtain rod. These favorite chirping stations provided ample amplification which flooded the rest of the rooms with his musical renditions.

I don't know if my mother whistled for she died early in my life without leaving any clear recollections. However, other adult females whistled in the house. While visiting other homes it was not uncommon to hear emissions of happy persons being expressed in this way. No street or apartment house was without its exceptional whistler be it man or woman. If these whistlers were still alive I doubt that they would be whistling very much. It seems we have lost the spirit to whistle. Age has nothing to do with it.

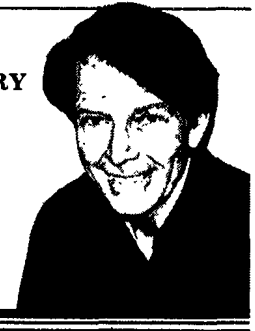
Thank God there are exceptions. For example, the other day a middle-aged man briskly passed me on a busy avenue. After he had gone by I wondered what it was about him that impressed me. Was it his brisk walk? Then, I realized it was not his ruddy face or general appearance but his cheery whistling that caught my attention. Wow! When was the last time I had

witnessed such light-heartedness openly displayed without the influence of alcohol or some other artificial aid to promote merriment?

Where are the whistlers? Sure we still have the whistle of the tea kettle, the referee's whistle on the athletic field, the policeman's whistle along traffic-clogged city streets and those found on various noise toys. And of course there are the New Year's Day fan whistles used to welcome the start of another 365 days of non-whistling! The natural whistle, emitted from the mouth without the use of a foreign object, is a near extinct sound. It is dying out not because of excessive exploitation but from the lack of it. Without the party whistle many of us might go through life without

NORTH COUNTRY

EDWIN REID



Whenever I think of whistling I can not but think of the late Bing Crosby who whistled his way through many recordings and films. He may not have been the world's greatest whistler but he probably did more for whistling than anyone else for he was the personification of the naturalness and jolliness that we associate with whistling. He was the epitome of good cheer even in bad times. His pleasant, tender whistling cleverly spaced between his bubbling boo-boo-boos and crooning of catchy tunes lightened the burdens of millions of listeners during his heydays.

However, Bing was only one of hun-

dreds of old Vaudeville personalities who used whistling as an important part of their act. Remember, Al Jolson was also a great whistler. This skill added a special dimension to his songs. Where are the performing whistlers today? None of our famous popular singers dare to whistle for fear that it would sound too corny and old-fashioned. More power to whoever has the courage and know-how to crush this false barrier and zoom whistling back into the limelight.

Whistling, after all, is a type of wordless singing. Perhaps, then, it is up to these singers to bring it back to us. Unknowingly, the public may be waiting for it to happen. Each person can be his own juke box. We have listened too long and too much. It's again time to participate and whistle a favorite song.

The novices have done much to popularize whistling. Shortly after the release of Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" with the hit song "Whistle While You Work" in the late 1930s, we became a nation of whistling workers and warriors. This song was such a great success because the public was looking for the uplift which whistling provided. In other old movies it was a common technique to show the young lover whistling while enroute to his new date. It mattered little whether he was strolling gleefully along a country road or rushing through crowded city streets or driving his convertible, so long as he was whistling. This proved he was really in love. Today's motion pictures and television programs demonstrate love by other less innocent and sexy displays which hardly prove anything more genuine.

Remember the many paintings of the country boy waking down a dirt road with his fishing rod over his shoulder and his faithful mongrel at his side. How did you know he was happy? Well, his head was tilted upward and his lips were pinched into a circle to show he was whistling. This was enough to tell you how carefree and happy the lad was. This was the good-hearted American boy emulated by millions of males into adulthood. This was the boy to be!

Where are the whistling youths of today. Or, for that matter, the contented old man emitting tunes few around him might know. Is the world again ready to listen to the whistler? Are you?



THE AFTERMATH—As one bystander put it, the east side of downtown Potsdam's Market Street Historic District looks like it had a tooth pulled. But for many, the pain that came with this extraction was more like heartache than toothache.

Arson is suspected in the blaze that swept through four businesses and two apartments last Thursday. Fortunately, the businesses seem willing to carry on. See editorial. (Hal Stokes photo)

NUCLEAR POWER: Dyson Explains PANSY Rate Hike

NEW YORK — Trustees of the New York State Power Authority have approved an increase in the rates for electricity produced at the Power Authority's James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Plant on Lake Ontario near Oswego.

The new rates, which will take effect April 1, are required because of increases in operating costs, fuel costs and nuclear reserves and improvements.

John S. Dyson, the chairman of the Power Authority, said the increased expenses have resulted in large part from studies and system modifications that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has required at the plant and from the federal government's ban on reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. Chiefly because of the reprocessing ban, the Power Authority requires additional revenues to establish reserves to pay for spent fuel storage and its final disposal.

"As a non-profit agency, the Power Authority must receive sufficient funds from the sale of power to balance its operating budgets and meet its commitments to bondholders," Chairman Dyson said. "Regrettable though the rate increase is, we cannot absorb these costs in any other way."

Despite the rate adjustment, which will increase average annual revenues by about \$3.8 million through the end of 1982, the cost of power from the FitzPatrick Plant will remain below that of

most other electricity sources in New York State.

The new average rate in 1980, exclusive of delivery charges, will be about 2.23 cents per kilowatt hour (kwh), compared with about 1.57 cents per kwh at present.

Part of the increase is due to expenses and loss of revenues arising from an NRC-ordered reanalysis of potential earthquake forces on 96 piping systems at the FitzPatrick Plant. As a result, the plant was shut down from March 15 through September 6 of last year to permit completion of much of the work.

In addition to \$15½ million in increased operation and maintenance costs resulting from the reanalysis, the Power Authority transferred \$5 million in bond reserve funds to meet bond interest requirements because of revenue losses related to the shutdown.

Reanalysis of the piping systems using a new mathematical technique required by the NRC has confirmed that potential seismic stresses on all pipes and most pipe supports are within NRC safety requirements. Some supports have been modified by the Power Authority to insure compliance with the standards, and this work is continuing.

Other system modifications at the plant, ordered by the NRC, will increase costs by about \$10 million.

Costs of establishing the reserve for spent fuel storage and disposal are expected to average about \$6.5 million a year through 1982. Another reserve is required to begin providing for eventual

decommissioning of the plant and other contingencies. An average of about \$2.2 million a year will be needed for this purpose.

Increased revenues of about \$7.6 million in 1980 and almost \$15 million in 1981 will be required to pay for uranium to fuel the plant and for fuel enrichment and fabrication. The price of uranium, which averaged about \$12 a pound five years ago, is now about \$43 a pound on the spot market.

In addition to meeting the higher operating, maintenance and fuel costs, the new rates will insure the Power Authority's ability to meet its bond service and to begin to restore funds to bond reserve.

The 800-000-kilowatt (kw) FitzPatrick Plant provides electricity to each of the state's seven major private utilities for resale to retail consumers at substantial savings, to 11 high load factor industries, and to municipal systems and rural electric cooperatives that require it to meet growth in customer demand. The public systems are served primarily with power from the Power Authority's hydroelectric projects on the Niagara and St. Lawrence Rivers.

Letters

Memorial Service For Anne Widmann

There will be a memorial service for Anne (Barbara) Widmann at 10 a.m. Jan. 29.

Anne had an interest in all living things. She believed that man should live peacefully with and within his environment, and she gave freely of herself to all movements which subscribed to this belief. She was an activist during the movement to Stop The Line; she worked to help the Traditional Mohawks at Akwesasne. She understood compassionately the needs of women; and worked to help keep the Women's Shelter open during its time of crisis. Recently she was employed by Planned Parenthood.

Her death at this time is particularly sad. She had just enrolled at SUCC; she wanted training to develop her talents in working with people.

The Women's Shelter plans to furnish a room in her name. Contributions may be made to the shelter.

Deborah Kaplan
Potsdam

Mayor Thanks The Many Volunteers

The following has been submitted as a letter to the editor:

To Potsdam Volunteer Fire Dept., West Stockholm Fire Dept., Canton Fire Dept., Norwood Fire Dept., Norfolk Fire Dept., Racquette River Fire Dept., Parishville Fire Dept., Hannawa Falls Fire Dept., Colton Fire Dept.

The fire in our Market Street business section Thursday a.m., Jan. 24, 1980, again demonstrated that the spirit of volunteerism and lending a helping hand is not dead.

On behalf of the Village Board and all our residents, I extend to you our sincere appreciation for your "helping hand." Without it, Potsdam might have lost a good share of the east side of Market Street.

St. Lawrence County Mutual Aid functioned without a hitch. Fire departments moved in and took up assigned duties to combat a raging fire. In this day and age, it appears many times the volunteer fireman is not truly appreciated. It is a real dedication to duty that gets these men out of bed at 3 a.m. on a bitter cold morning to risk their lives and stay on duty for upwards of nine hours.

Too often, we take the volunteers as a matter of course, but we want you to know you are tops in our books. Come back again but under different circumstances, please.

You have our heartfelt appreciation.

Very Truly Yours,
Ruth F. Garner
Mayor

Village of Potsdam
P.S. And a special thanks to the Norwood Fire Department for a return visit at 1 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 26, 1980.

OUR ANIMAL SHELTER



New York passed a new dog law which went into effect on Jan. 1, 1980. Each city, town and licensing village must provide a dog control officer and shelter services in order that the state and any local dog laws and ordinances may be enforced and that lost or stray dogs may be picked up.

The license fee for an unspayed or unneutered dog is now \$7.50. If your dog is neutered or spayed or spayed the license fee is \$2.50. New York is trying to help solve the over-population problem in dogs.

The Potsdam Humane Society thinks this is a step in the right direction. It is just not responsible to let your dog or cat have litter after litter. Every hour in the United States 2,000 to 3,500 cats and dogs are being born. As a result, cats and dogs are treated as disposable items. Be responsible and spay or neuter your pet.

The animal shelter asks that you please put identification on your pet. We have so many animals come into the shelter that we know have an owner, but we can do nothing because the animal does not have any identification. Give your pet some life insurance and put your name and phone number on his collar, and make sure he is wearing a license tag.

New Shelter Hours
Monday through Friday Noon to 1 p.m.
Monday and Friday night 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

From Our Files

EBEN 1922—All the pupils and several of the parents attended the track meet at Five Corners Saturday.

1922—The milk from 16 farms beyond Canton came to the Dairymen's League factory at Eben Sunday. Two butter makers are employed and it's said to be equal to the best butter made.

1922—First gentleman, "Did you get home before the storm?" Second gentleman, "That was when it started."

1922—Human fly to climb Ives block. Jack Williams will climb the outer walls, using nothing but his hands and feet.

1922—Many students in local schools. Clarkson has over 75 freshmen, except total enrollment of 230. At the Normal there are 160 new students and a total registration of 300.

1922—83 babies in contest at fair—First prize \$10 in gold, second prize \$5 in gold. Babies were scored on the general care, cleanliness, Fresh Air, feeding, preference being given to breast fed babies, the mental development, weights and measures.

PARISHVILLE 1922—Electric lights turned on—Village streets now much better illuminated by new current.

Compiled by Earl Pattison

Ice Carnival Starts This Week

Anyone who saw the Norwood Fire Department's ladder truck cakes in ice on Thursday morning during the fire downtown might have thought that the Ice Carnival parade started a week early.

Actually, Potsdam's Ice Carnival starts this week. Unfortunately, the lack of adequate snow has forced the cancellation of the ice sculpture competition. I sure am going to miss those imaginative, monumental ice statues.

But the college students are promising that they will throw even more effort into their ice carnival parade floats to make up for it. I sure hope so. Remember, community groups are entitled to enter floats in the parade. I'd say Wally Siebel would be the best person to contact.

I think I'd better make some corrections about things from last week's paper before someone does it for me. Unfortunately, we had two big goofs

in the same story. We turned Village Justice Robert Halliday from a Republican into a Democrat. Actually,

(MORE)



HAL STOKES

the judge is a GOP representative. Secondly, William Krebs is running for village justice, not village attorney.

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