

LAST WEEK'S WEATHER

	Hi	Lo	Pcp
Tues.	47	39	.05rn
Wed.	42	37	.23rn
Thurs.	42	38	tr rn
Fri.	39	35	.27rn
Sat.	37	32	tr rn .19sn
Sun.	32	29	.4sn
Mon.	30	21	tr sn

Courier Freeman

A PARK NEWSPAPER

Give to the Potsdam Volunteer Rescue Squad. Annual fund drive began Nov. 22.

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Traffic Reverts To Two-Way

BY BETSY BAKER

So far, so good. Potsdam motorists changed the driving habits of 13 years this morning (Tuesday) without traffic tie-ups or fender-benders, and officials said they are pleased with the smooth transition from one-way to two-way traffic in the downtown "loop."

The return to two-way traffic marks the completion of the Relief Route, a \$6 million-plus, two-year construction project that provides a way around the village for through traffic and provides a second bridge across the Racquette River.

Tuesday dawned clear and cold, slightly uncomfortable for the workers moving traffic cones or changing traffic signals, but ideal for motorists to observe the newly-marked village streets.

Workers were actually out before dawn, placing traffic cones in the street shortly after 4 a.m. to keep motorists from using the lanes that were shortly to be reversed. Just before 6 a.m., crews began to remove the wrapping that had covered new directional signs.

By 9 a.m., motorists were able to turn left onto Elm Street from Market Street or continue down Market Street to turn left onto Main Street, under the watchful eyes of four village policemen directing traffic as workers from the state Department of Transportation removed traffic cones placed temporarily along the yellow center lines on Market, Elm, Main and Park Streets and made changes to traffic signals.

'No Problems'

Village police chief Clinton Matott reported "no problems at all" as of noon, and Raymond T. Powers, assistant to the DOT's regional director said he is "pleased with the way it's gone so far."

Powers said all the traffic signals have now been changed, and shortly before noon DOT workers were busy removing "glitches" from some "Walk" signals. Most of the orange traffic cones had been removed, as had old traffic signs. Some parking meters that are facing the wrong way will have to be turned around.

Powers also noted that local police were "very cooperative" in the effort.

Sgt. Frank Keleher, who was directing traffic on Main Street, said a few motorists had gone the wrong way this morning, but he added that overall, "things seem to be going well."

Traffic was light, largely because motorists were advised to avoid downtown Potsdam today and because many of the students at Potsdam and Clarkson College had left for the Thanksgiving vacation.

And those who were looking for a rash of accidents, irate motorists or monumental traffic jams were disappointed.

Place With A View

Potsdam's Deli Cafe, on the corner of Main and Market Streets, offers patrons a view of traffic in three directions, and the breakfast and mid-morning coffee crowd had plenty to watch this morning.

One patron asked someone to "sell me a seat in the

bleachers," only to be told "the only thing left is the cigarette machine."

A local insurance agent quipped: "I should have had signs made — get your insurance now, before it's too late."

Two teachers from the high school used a free period to make a test run through downtown, noting: "It feels like I'm going the wrong way."

WVNY-TV had a film crew in the village to catch footage of the traffic and talk to officials.

Bridge Opens

But today's activities were only part of the new traffic situation. A second bridge and new road were christened last week.

Last Thursday morning a crowd of about 50 people watched as three former mayors and Mayor James Penneck cut the ribbon officially opening the Relief Route.

Village officials, DOT officials and others watched as former mayors Ruth Garner, John Hayes and John Van Ness snipped at the wide satin ribbon, leaving the last cut for Mayor Penneck.

WPDM radio broadcast the event live, and WVNY-TV's film crew shot footage of the ribbon cutting and of the mayors taking the first ride across the new bridge in a convertible loaned by local automobile dealer Red Curtis.

Mayor Penneck told the crowd he wished to express the thanks of the people of the village to the DOT for the Relief Route and for the new Racquette River bridge.

And Penneck thanked former mayors Garner, Hayes and Van Ness for their participation in the project, noting the "periods of frustration" and "moments of happiness" during the almost 20 years of controversy surrounding the Relief Route.

Attending the ribbon cutting from the DOT were Raymond Powers, assistant to the regional director; Bruce Irwin, regional planning engineer; Frank Beaman, regional traffic engineer; Ed Hourigan, Albany, director of structures, design and construction division; Paul Mullen and Joan Marvin, traffic section, Watertown; John Lehr, engineer in charge and Tim Vreat, construction inspection team.

Some motorists complained almost immediately about the view from the new road, saying that the "backside" of houses, dilapidated buildings and warehouses is a less than pleasant introduction to Potsdam.

Also seen from the new road is the Potsdam Depot, which was moved from its former site as part of the contract. Although work is not yet completed on the building, motorists have a look at the side of the old railroad structure that was once seen exclusively by train passengers. Once the site work associated with the move is finished, the building is to be turned over to the village and put up for bid.

The road, which connects Route 11 (the Canton Road) with Route 56, is designed to funnel through traffic around downtown Potsdam.

General contractor William E. Bouley, Inc., Auburn, has completed the project slightly ahead of a Dec. 31 contract expiration date.



GRAND UNVEILING — Two-way traffic was restored to downtown Potsdam this morning after 14 years when Department of Transportation crews began unveiling the new directional signs about 5:45 a.m. Above, the sign at Elm and Union streets is uncovered by Bill Fitzpatrick while engineer Ray Powers, left, and Jim Bissonette, right, lend a hand. (Hal Stokes photo)

School Board To Meet In New Format

The Potsdam Central School Board of Education will meet tonight (Tuesday) for the second meeting of the month, but this time the regularly scheduled meeting will be run in a new format. Instead of first convening in separate committees and then meeting as a full board, the school board will convene in full at 7:30 in the high school cafeteria.

On the agenda is first a section of presentations and reports, to be followed by a section of items that require action by the board.

Listed among the presentations and reports is a report from high school principal Wilford LeForestier on computer scheduling; a report from middle school principal Mike Loconti on an indoor track team; a presentation from American Field Service exchange student Ernest Gmeunder, who is from Switzerland; and a report from Superintendent of Schools Ken Daniels on storage of athletic equipment.

Items for action on the agenda include acceptance of bids on three vehicles, a bus, a van and a tractor; action on the by-laws of the high school athletic Booster Club, as presented by board member Conrad Baur; action on the indoor track team; and action on the recommendation for employment of Sharmin Smutz as a cafeteria monitor in the middle school at a pay rate of \$4 per hour for two and a half hours per day.

Meters Will Be Read In December Before Rates Go Up

All Village of Potsdam water meters will be read in December before newly established water and sewer rates go into effect on Jan. 1, 1982. Village Treasurer Mary Welch has announced.

The village board of trustees approved two local laws last week, raising the water rate from \$1.17 per thousand gallons to \$1.40 and the sewer rate from 92 cents per thousand gallons to \$1.10.

The 20 percent increases are needed to facilitate financing of the construction of the village's new water treatment plant.

In a press release this week Mrs. Welch stated: "In order to put the new rates into effect, and to deal fairly with all customers, the village will have to read all meters at the end of December to establish the total usage at the current rate. Usage after this final reading will be calculated at the new rate."

"Any residents who will be away from their homes or place of business during the last week in December are urged to contact the village office at 265-5770 or 265-2330 and you will be advised as to the best procedure to follow. In some cases the consumer can fill out a meter card and return it to the Civic Center (cards will be available at the cashier's office); the meter department can arrange to take the reading over the phone; you may make an appointment to have the meter read at a specified date and time."

"It is inevitable that another increase in rates will become effective during 1982. The cost of the new water treatment plant, which has been mandated by the New York State Health Department, must be borne by the consumers, and every effort is being made to adopt rate increases that will minimize the total cost of the project. The board of trustees must make these decisions, and public interest and input is vital. You are urged to attend public hearings, or contact board members and express yourself," Mrs. Welch's statement concluded.

\$36,500 Settlement Ends Old Urban Renewal Suit

BY BETSY BAKER

A five-year-old legal battle between Potsdam businessman Harry M. Bronson and the Potsdam Urban Renewal Agency ended last Thursday in a settlement of \$36,500, shared among Bronson and L and H Constructors, Potsdam.

The settlement ended a week long trial in State Supreme Court, Canton, before Judge Edmund Shea and eight jurors. Testimony from both plaintiff and defense had been heard, but the case had not yet gone to the jury.

Bronson will receive \$19,000 and L and H \$17,500 in the settlement. Bronson brought suit against the urban renewal agency in 1976, claiming \$600,000 in damages for lost income, moving expenses, punitive and other damages. L and H had sued both Bronson and the agency, claiming \$21,577 was owed the construction company for work done on property owned by Bronson.

In the early 1970s Bronson was told by the agency that he would have to relocate his plumbing and heating business from a Main Street block slated for demolition under Potsdam's Urban Renewal project. And Bronson was told he would receive federal reimbursement for the move.

Bronson bought the old St. Lawrence Creamery building on Maple Street from William J. Benjamin, then chairman of the urban renewal agency.

Alleged improprieties surrounded the sale from the first, including an apparent violation of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulations which states that no agency member should have a personal interest in any transaction.

Along with other agency matters, the Bronson case became the subject of an investigation by HUD auditors, a federal grand jury and the FBI.

According to John Benjamin Carroll, attorney for the agency in the Bronson case, Bronson had originally claimed \$600,000 in several causes of action. All but one cause of action was dismissed by Judge Shea before the trial began.

Dismissed were a \$16,000 claim for condemnation blight, based on the "mere fact that the village had urban renewal," according to Carroll; \$174,000 for harrasment, because Bronson was questioned by the FBI and others during the urban renewal investigation; a \$250,000 claim for punitive damages.

Testimony was allowed on two causes of action, first, that the agency be required to pay Bronson \$150,000 to build five new apartments in the creamery building to replace five apartments he had in his Main Street building, and second, that Bronson be granted \$125,000 for lost apartment rentals.

Carroll said that proof for only \$18,000 for apartment construction was offered during the trial, and he said the defense established that zoning regulations would have prevented apartment construction anyway.

Both the \$150,000 and the \$125,000 claim were dismissed during trial. Remaining was one cause of action, that three claims submitted to HUD, one to Kellam Electric for \$1,084; one to L and H for \$3,655.80; one to the Van Ness Company for \$6,260, were submitted twice, and there were other claims against HUD as well.

Representing Bronson was S. Paul Battaglia, Syracuse.



ROUTE OPENED — Four well-known figures in Potsdam presided over the official opening of the Relief Route last Thursday morning when Mayor James Penneck was joined by three former village mayors. Shown

at the ceremony are, from left, Raymond Powers, a DOT engineer; Penneck; and former mayors Ruth Garner, John Hayes, and John Van Ness. (Mark Simeon photo)

Grandmother's Platter: A Thanksgiving Story

BY BETSY BAKER

The platter belongs to me now. I found it years ago in a box of "miscellaneous" at an auction. It is old; by the color and design of the Haviland mark it was manufactured in 1876, and plain; only one green line decorates its white rim. Heavy too, more like ironstone than porcelain; weighted down with food it takes two hands to lift.

An old lady at the auction said it was her grandmother's Thanksgiving platter. No one in the family seemed to want it, and she was going into a nursing home, so the platter was sold with the rest of her things.

I use it for everyday. We travel to relatives at Thanksgiving; my aunt uses the platter that matches her china.

At home I found other things in the box — old postcards, railroad timetables, photos, and four leather-bound diaries — recording the life of Eleanor Jones from her marriage to Edward Foote in 1881 to her death in 1942.

The platter is mentioned on the first page of volume I: "Nov. 12, 1881. Mother has given me her white platter. It is almost new, and not chipped, and Father would let her give me almost nothing else when I married Edward. She cautioned me to put it away safely. Edward gets very angry when he has been drinking, and with the cold and lack of work this last month he has been drinking most days."

Editor's Note: a fictionalized account

"Thanksgiving Day, 1881. Edward found me crying this morning, holding the platter, tears falling on it. The house is so cold, the wood is almost gone, and I have nothing to put on the platter for Thanksgiving dinner. This is so different. In my mother's house the windows are steamed with warmth, good smells of cooking are everywhere and the children are already asking when the turkey will be done. Edward was angry. He stomped out. I thought to find some friend to drink with, but he came back later with an armload of wood and two rabbits. I stewed them, with potatoes, carrots and parsnips, and I made biscuits for the gravy. Our first Thanksgiving together."

Martha Jane Foote was born in 1882, and she shared Eleanor and Edward's second Thanksgiving.

"Thanksgiving, 1882. I am so tired. Martha is often fretful and requires much care. We are three this Thanksgiving, and Edward has been working, so we will have a small chicken to put on Mother's platter. Edward is watching Martha while I scratch these few lines. He laughs at me, says I waste time and precious oil on hen tracks. He cannot write, or read either."

Twin boys were born in 1884, and a fourth child, a girl in 1887.

"Nov. 5, 1887. We buried Mary yesterday. She was born just eleven days ago. I was in great pain, and she was so frail, her fingernails all blue. Edward had to go to the cemetery alone. I am too weak to leave my bed. He said

they would not have dug in the hard ground but for so small a coffin. He and the sexton warmed themselves with brandy. Edward did not come home until morning."

"Thanksgiving, 1887. I left my bed to cook dinner for Edward, Martha and the boys. I am still weak, but it is Thanksgiving. I looked around the table at Martha, such a sweet child, and the boys, sturdy and noisy. At three they eat so much I had to roast two chickens. They are already like their father, all swaggering and bold, hard to manage. Bless Martha."

In 1894 Edward was killed in an accident.

"July 23, 1894. Edward fell from the loft today, striking his head on the hay wagon. It was very warm, and they were rushing to get the hay in before the storm. They brought him home and laid him in bed. Dr. Hanley and I sat with him until early evening, when he died."

"Thanksgiving Day, 1894. I carried the platter very carefully to Mother's today. I had not eaten a meal in her house since I married Edward, now that he is gone. Father says I am his daughter once more. Mother and I laughed like girls as we put the turkey on the platter. Eighteen of us sat around the table. My three were wide eyed to see so much food."

Martha married in 1902 and took the platter with her to her new home. The boys left soon after for San Francisco, where both settled.

"Thanksgiving Day, 1904. I have had letters from the

boys. They don't write well, or often, but they sound happy. I am going to Martha and Richard today for dinner. She is roasting a goose that Richard shot. It will just about fill up the platter. They have invited a gentleman from Richard's bank, a widower."

Eleanor married the widower, and they lived together until his death in 1927, after which she moved in with Martha and Richard.

"Thanksgiving Day, 1932. Martha laughs at me for writing every day. 'What can happen to you at your age?' she says. Sixty-six isn't old, my head doesn't feel old, but her three boys are home with their wives and two babies, and the roar is deafening. We needed two platters today, my mother's white one and one that Martha bought. The old one looks small and shabby beside the new one."

Eleanor died in 1942 at the age of 77. Her last Thanksgiving Day entry was in that year; she died less than a month later.

"Thanksgiving Day, 1942. Martha promised me she would always keep the platter. She and Richard are moving. He is too old for the Army, but he has been offered a civilian banking job in California. I am not going. My eyes are failing, and my hearing, and I am just too old to be uprooted, I guess. I am going to stay with one of the boys, although his young wife isn't too happy about it. We had turkey today. Martha kept telling the boys to talk up so I could hear."