



GHI

*Wreadin Writin n Wreminiscin
December Dusk. Volume I
26 December 2003*

The Family Hour



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That thing we all strive for as parents, you know, to be supportive and not judgmental with our kids? Well it can lead to some interesting and strange experiences. Mark, my youngest at 34, with his Dad and Jabari, at age 2. I will also include a shot of my date for the Thanksgiving weekend.



As Thanksgiving approached, I was contemplating the longest trip yet on the motorcycle (new to me in June of this year): to Santa Monica to visit with my son. After talking with several friends who have owned bikes longer than I, however, I booked flights on Southwest, as the majority opinion was that Thanksgiving weekend is not the time to see Bug Sur and then try to mosey on to LA on a motorcycle.



A visit with Mark is always pleasant and relaxing, but this trip Mark was anxious to introduce me to some of the animals he helps train as a volunteer. The Friday after Thanksgiving Mark and I left for the Malibu hills at about 7:30 am. Mark told me our day would start with the cleaning of the cages. I did not know this meant he would literally go into the lion's den, and that the same enclosure was home not only to a lion but to a 2-year-old Bengal Tiger as well. He did and it was. I stayed on the outside to observe the animals and to watch the routine for safe handling that is practiced by Mark and Sid, the trainer, and indeed, partially out of appropriate fear. As I watched Mark with the animals and he told me what he was doing and why, I relaxed a little and realized that he was cautious and respectful of the wild nature of the animals. I didn't like it one bit, however, and yes, Siegfried and Roy were on my mind.

Two more cages containing 3 small and two large chimps were cleaned, and it was time to take the chimps on their nature walk. Six of us took five chimps down the dirt road and the playful

behavior began in earnest. Chimps are apparently 3-4 times stronger than humans by weight. The smallest chimp, at 70 lbs, could have arm wrestled me to the ground. We spent a wonderful hour giving the chimps exercise and chasing them around, and running from them. Even the adults love games.

Mark's fiancée, Laura, left her job at MGM recently and now works full time at the ranch. Laura books gigs for the animal performers and often accompanies them when they go to work. Mark volunteers two days per week as a trainer and caregiver.

In addition to the cats and the chimps, the ranch is home to a 9 foot python and assorted goats, Llamas, pot-bellied pigs, buffalo and longhorn steers.



Late morning was training time for the cats and Mark and the other trainer walked them to a large ring fenced with electrically-charged wire. One cat at a time was taken off its chain leash and put thru its paces. I was inside the ring with them, and it was not long before I was comfortable with the cats. I was not, am not and probably never will be comfortable with Mark training the lion to jump on him as if attacking. It may be a necessary part of the training for a lion that is hired out to movie studios, but I could not repress the thoughts of instinct taking control of the lion and the injuries he might inflict.

Three of the chimps went to work that afternoon, so we romped with the other two gone. The work of the day was basically done, and it was play time for all. We had a ball. And yes, this was a rather unusual experience for me, although one that I hope can be repeated



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Moving up: Paul Disario, who led the San Juan Unified School District's two recent successful bond elections, is headed for Fresno, where he will be the chief financial

officer and an associate superintendent. He had a similar title at San Juan, the state's 11th-largest district



with 50,000 students. But Fresno is fifth-largest with 80,000, and he's leaving for the chance to work for a larger district, Disario said.

Response to the Davino Collection



Tom **GORIN** . Old Greenwich . CT
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The Edgewood Inn was just south of Glenville Road, in the area including Valley Drive parts of Calhoun Drive and on down towards the Post Road. There are deed restrictions on most properties there which go back to the post-Edgewood Inn developers. Edgar Manor has specific 1.5 acre minimums and \$5,000 house cost! Some of the balustrades from the inn can be seen from Valley Drive, on the hill to the west. Across Glenville Road from this was the Hutton Estate (Marjorie Meriweather Post) where the "castle tower" gatehouse still stands. That house is part of Eagle Hill School (formerly Daycroft and Edgebrook? Schools).

As to Mitchell Castle: the architect was named Green, and he also built Crowley Castle (owned by Prince Drutsky from 1948 to 1974 or so) across the street, and our third castle, on Hemlock Drive, owned for many years by Israel Putnam's descendents. All three look fabulous today, and date from 1900 to 1909.

Yes, there was an inn near the Homestead on Field Point Road by the old "secret" exit ramp from northbound I-95. It was called the Kent House, and was torn down when the highway was built.



I just reread my last thing - I think "Drutsky" was the right spelling. Prince Alexis Drutsky was married to Princess Ruspoli. My andirons came from the 1976 tag sale at the castle (which included their 1020 Fifth Avenue apartment contents, too) The castle had taken 5 years to sell (during the oil shortage and gas lines and service stations) and brought a princely \$225,000. If we could have predicted...

The Hubba Hubba was a truck stop on West Putnam Ave on the south side near the road to the dump. Open 24 hours, it was the place to get steak and chili pizzaola w edges after a hundred 25 cent beers in Port Chester... Bad idea then; impossible now!

Gene's collection of postcards and GHS memorabilia is quite amazing. Yes, I have the Wonderland by Night thing, among others. Greenwich Time ran social notes on parties and I saved some where we were mentioned. The original bold face names. I'll scan some old band photos soon. I will be dead before I share any tapes.

My info on local lore comes from 30 years in Greenwich real estate. In 1973, when I started, there were brokers who had grown up in Greenwich in the 1920's, they took me to open houses and taught me everything about the old days - some of it may have been true.

The C. W. Post gatehouse postcard is almost right. Marjorie Meriweather Post (C. W's daughter) was married to E. F. Hutton when she lived there. Later she moved on to Mar-A-Lago in Palm Beach, among other places.

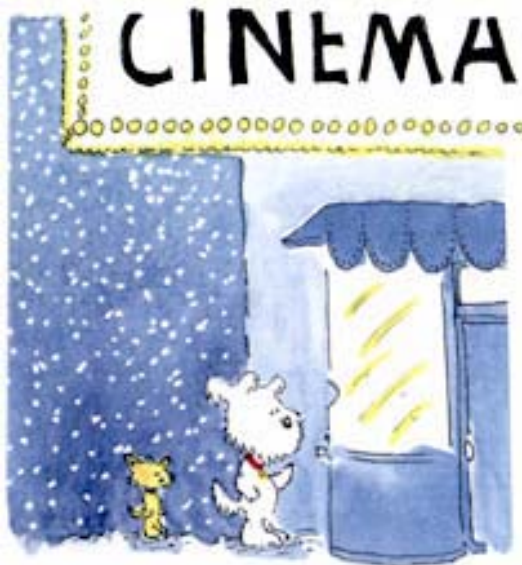
The "Castle in Old Greenwich" really eludes me... There was a "castle" that looked like it on Byram Shore Road once. Torn down decades ago, it is in The Great Estates book. (Post cards aren't very reliable)



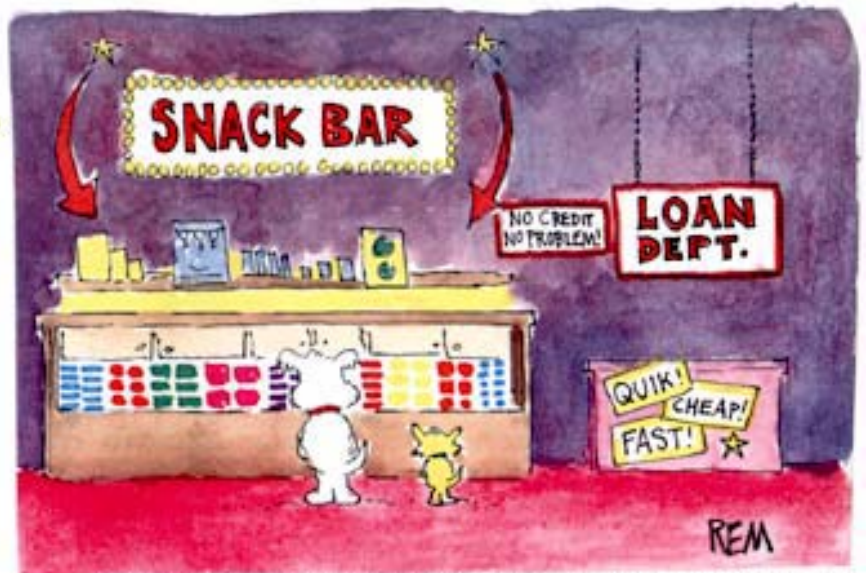
Kolbe **PITKIN** Smith . Toledo . OH
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Do you all remember how it poured rained just as graduation ended and all the guys white shirts turned red w hen the gown s got w et? Kps

Webbster n Button



AlachuaHumane.org/comics



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Let's UP the ante a bit and do something to be remembered by. How 's about a bronze statue of Mark Tw ain? Or some other notable Nutmegger. It doesn't HAVE to be life-size.

OR perhaps a bronze of the w orld's first written constitution: Connecticut's 1639 Fundamental Orders. (Would be a LOT cheaper!) Zzzzzzz... Let's float the idea. Are there any sculptors in the class?

My first thought w as to go w ith Mickey Mouse for all the bullshit w e had to put up w ith; I mean, w hat was the deal w ith No Smoking in the Boys Lavatories? Who came up w ith THAT loopy idea? - Ah, but then w e'd have to deal w ith Disney and a couple of years ago here in Florida they had some Kindergartners scraping Pluto and Donald off the walls of their school over some copyright infringement. Michael Eisner: Whadda' Guy! Anyw ay, with help, I think w e could get something done for \$20-30,000.

Naturally, YOU w ill be the coordinator. IN BOB WE TRUST.

From a Different Perspective



Nancy **SCHMIDT** Lambert . Somerset . CO
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Evening view from the sunroom windows. That's Mt. Gunnison in the distance - Ragged's in a different direction.....



Do I Have to Go to School, It's Snowin'?



Tom **GORIN** . Old Greenwich . CT
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I'll throw in my 2 cents. I remember the "no school" signal as 5-5-5 on the fire horn, repeated a few times.... what a welcome sound. There was a code for all neighborhoods (ours on Wesskum Wood Road was 2-1-3) and we used to try to guess where a fire was by the number of blasts...

Merry Christmas,



Kathleen **VRTIAK** Staby . Pioneer. CA
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My husband George (Staby) tells me that the no school signal (because of snow) sounded by the five fire departments in the town was 5-5-5, meaning five blasts from their respective air horns, repeated three times. This occurred at 7:00 AM.

Editor's Note: WW-N-W has attempted eMail contact with (info@sbvfd.com) the Sound Beach Volunteer Fire Department (Old Greenwich) to see if there is any "artifacts" from the 1962 era, that will list the codes for the neighborhoods and the "emergency" codes. We have not had a return on this request.

Response to Pleddin Skatin n Skiin



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Editor's Note: The following series of eMails resulted after the issue of the Holiday Bulletin Board. This interchange was happening between Lionel in Virginia, Nancy on holiday in Germany, and "yours truly" in New York.



Lionel wrote: I remember Derby Pond as being little more than a swamp with some deeper spot for skating. The few times that I ventured up there (off from Weaver Street) resulted in the neighbor across the street from me (Gus Scherer, class of '60) breaking his leg and several unsuccessful attempts to get a hockey game going.

Hubbard Pond was a small pond with a with a puck-eating, never freezing spillway at one end. We used to sneak on to the pond to play some pick up hockey. (we being George Genise, St Mary's '62 and Gary I-can't-remember-his-last-name. Gary lived on Weaver near the intersection with Moser. He wanted to be professional golfer. I think he slept with his clubs).



It think that the street that dead ended at the "lake" (Byram River) was Dale Drive. When it was particularly cold, a fire would crop up in the lot at the end of the street.

The Playland Ice Arena was the venue for the GHS hockey games. Occasionally we would go to places like Sleepy Hollow to play "away" games.

Bob, that river picture next to Dorothy Hamill's picture...is that the Byram River? If so, where?

Merry Christmas to All

Nancy wrote: Yes, Derby's was a mess... but we skated there all the time... I think because it was the easiest place for us to get to and close to the road if I remember correctly...we didn't have to walk too far into the woods off Weaver Street. I remember branches always protruding out of the ice and I remember a sort of "stream" like area or something at one end of the pond... Hubbard's did have a spillway... I didn't know what it was called then or now for that matter, just remember a "run off" area, which never froze over.

Yes, Bob, I'm checking my emails from Germany. Only about 1/2 inch of snow, here in Wiesbaden, tonight with more expected... we are talking about sledding tomorrow if the predicted snow arrives, so these emails are great fodder!

Oh also, the Gary on Weaver Street who I said Curcio? I think now maybe Callabro? He had a brother Nick? Lived on the corner of Moshier Street and Weaver Street....are we talking about the same Gary? If so, guess what? They were my cousins.....not close, but related!!!! Small world if you knew them Lionel.....and yes, Gary wanted to be a golf pro if I remember correctly, and Nick I think became a priest....



I want to tell you all, that I find myself here in Wiesbaden with my daughter-in-law's sister and her two sons, ages 13 and 11, whose dad is in Iraq this Christmas... so folks remember the fathers, brothers, mothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles in our military over there or around the world who have to, like this family, do without a very important person this Christmas... believe me, it gives you a new appreciation for what our military men and women give up when you stay in someone's home while they are somewhere far away ensuring your freedom and way of life continues... I am most grateful I can tell you...

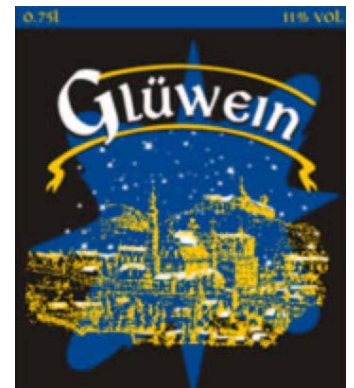
Lionel wrote: Gary Callabro...did he ever get close to being a golf pro?

This is a special time of the year for the military away from home. I can remember the 2 foot high Christmas tree, all decorated, that my wife sent to me in '68...organizing round trip transportation to the Bob Hope show (missed my chance to see Ann Margaret) at Freedom Hill...and actually missing snow...trying to get the Major to let me try a court martial on Christmas Day... another experience... another life... not that far away at times. Hey... Merry Christmas again...

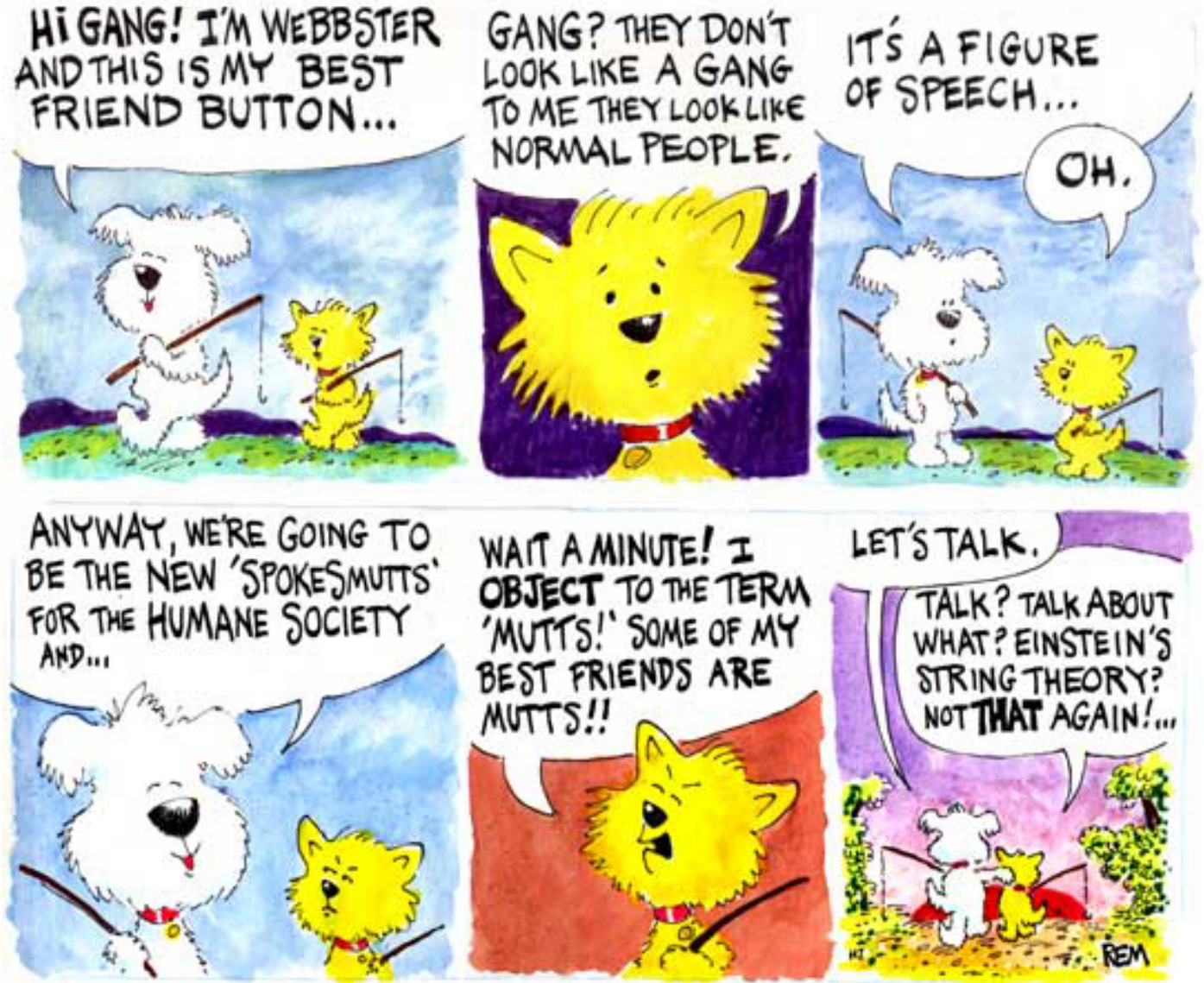
Nancy wrote: Hi Again on Christmas Eve Day... Don't know if Gary got to be a golf pro or not... but I hope he did. Enjoy the wonderful season...I'm drinking Gluwein at this moment... never was good at the spelling of this stuff, but it surely tastes wonderful... warms me well... how funny it still seems to be talking about the old skating places from this side of our life... who knew !!!!

Sounds wonderful the tree you got sent... yes, it is a special time here with this military family... it is so obvious that our troops are still at war... and that is difficult for all... You all be well, have a great, great Christmas...

I am so amazed that we can be doing this....how great is that? And when we think on it, I am remembering how we all "met up" with each other way back then to skate or sled somewhere...occasionally we knew we'd be there, but most times not... if then was now, we could email, use our "handy" (as the cell phone is called here in Germany - interesting name!) to make sure we knew we'd be going wherever....I like this new connected world we live in!



Webbster n Button



More on Pleddin Skatin n Ikiin



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Kent Remington said it...it w as the Pomerance property in Cos Cob. I had a GREAT place to skate, and you could skate up the stream that fed it to. The nice thing w as it had room enough to play a hockey game AND for regular skaters. We used to go there w ith a snow shower, after a storm, and carve out a "rink" w ith goals and all. If you scraped the ice, you got to use that part exclusively...an unw ritten rule.



I do remember skating on the Mianus River. The problem with that spot was not only the wind, but the ice always seemed so damn bumpy and full of cracks. Also, it was ALWAYS covered with snow, which made skating difficult. You also had to watch out for the ice boats.

The difference between the various skating venues was this: some were crowded and had more kids, and some adults, that just wanted to skate. Others, the ones I tended to frequent, were more for speed skating and hockey.

Bruce park was beautiful with all the skaters, but it could get so crowded that it was almost impossible to skate...same with Riverside and Pinetum (although Pinetum never seem to get TOO crowded).

What Better Way to End a Volume I



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The river next to the photo of Dorothy Hamill is the Mianus River Gorge way up the Mianus River, where Connecticut meets New York in Bedford Pound Ridge.

I get these photos off the Internet using Google and Yahoo search engines... The next issue has photos of the Mill in Glenville and the Byram River Bridge... but there are very few photos of the pond on the Byram River...

By the way... The Mianus River is very popular in "Humor on the Internet"... If you type the name "Mianus" into a Search Engine, you get sites like.... The River Flows Dark From Mianus... Come Visit Mianus... and other such things... of course, it is the only "Mianus" in the USA.



On the Internet one site has two road signs with one from the Thruway, that has the caption "Who wants to live in Mianus" and the other from a store's parking area and the caption "Mianus has it's own general store"



The Derivation of the Name Mianus

Theoretical History from the Conservancy of the Mianus River Gorge: The name "Mianus," meaning "he who gathers together," is derived from the name of a Wappinger Confederacy Indian Chief, "Mayanos" or "Mayanne", who was killed near the gorge in 1664. Native Americans used the gorge as a winter hunting ground. With the arrival of European settlers in the mid-17th century, much of the forest land was cleared for farming, grazing and quarrying, though the steep hemlock ravine was left intact.