Plans for the Old Playground

The roughly triangular area of land that lies between Dean Path and Damside in the centre of Dean Village was at one time the playground of the Schoolhouse. Edinburgh Council is now prepared to support plans to upgrade this land into an up-to-date children’s play area and visitors’ rest centre.

This land is owned in three parts: one part by a private owner, one part by the Council and the third part jointly by the private owner and the Council. Over the years the Dean Village Association has tried to introduce improvements to the area. The late Chairman, Lawrence Walker, had placed the mill grinding wheels from Lindsay’s Mill in the playground. These millstones have been adopted as the logo of the Dean Village Association. An information board was placed there two years ago to describe their history. A birch tree was planted and several plant tubs were strategically placed. The memorial bench was put in place to celebrate the life of Peggy Valentine (1928 - 1998); the plaque will be up-dated to include her husband Findlay, a founder of the

(Continued on page 2)
But the Dean Village Association committee has been long aware that more could be done. Committee member Javier Albert has approached Councillor Lesley Hinds with a view to implementing these proposals. As a result of this consultation Julia McVean, the estate manager of Edinburgh Council, ascertained that the present part owner of the playground would be happy to proceed with any improvements approved by the Council and by the Association. James Galloway, Senior Parks Planning Officer had produced two designs for a children’s playground. A meeting between Lesley Hinds, Julia McVean, James Galloway of the Council and Barry Mackay, David Perry and Conrad Hughes representing Dean Village Association took place on the afternoon of Monday 24th January in the Council Chambers. After some discussion James Galloway was asked to produce a plan that incorporated the children’s play area together with a rest area for walkers along the Water of Leith. The rest area would include an information board describing the history of the village.

The Draft Plan is shown on the accompanying insert.

As always the sticking point is raising the money to pay for the improvements. The plan as displayed is likely to cost in the region of £60,000. However Edinburgh Council itself has no money available to invest in the project. Some savings could be made by reducing the scale of the facilities shown. The committee will be looking into various options to raise the money.

This plan will be displayed at the Annual General Meeting scheduled to take place on the evening of Tuesday, April 26th at the Dean Parish Church Hall. Please come along, look at the plan, and indicate any ideas that you might have. This is a unique opportunity to create a new and valuable amenity within Dean Village.
Dean Village News

This issue of the Dean Village News has been delivered to every household in the Dean Village Conservation area. If you have enjoyed reading this issue, or found it useful or helpful in any way, you can help by joining the Dean Village Association and help us look after our village. Yearly membership is £5 (or £8 per couple) or opt for life membership at £35 (£50 per couple).

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for further details
Edinburgh Recycling Initiatives.

The City of Edinburgh Council is making greater efforts to encourage recycling as much waste material as possible. One of the Council’s top priorities is to reduce the amount of waste material sent to landfill sites.

Every household should soon be receiving information about how to increase their recycling and reduce the amount of general rubbish. Each household could apply to receive coloured bins in which to place their waste, which will be collected at designated times.

We do have packaging and paper recycling bins both in Damside and on Belford Road. However there is a problem about disposing of glass. No glass recycling bins are placed in Dean Village because the sound of glass being thrown into bins is extremely disturbing to residents. Thus it is planned to allow each household to have a glass disposal bin which can be put out at appropriate times. Otherwise information about disposing of glass can be found on the web at www.sort-it.org.uk.

There are four Community Recycling Centres (CRC) around Edinburgh as follows: -
Braehead CRC, Craigs Road, EH12 0AA
Sighthill CRC, Bankhead Avenue, EH11 4EA
Seafield CRC, Fillyside Road, EH7 6RD
Craigmillar CRC, Old Dalkeith Road, EH16 4TB
These are open from 8am till 5pm in winter, longer in summer. The rule for householders is that any site is accessible for residents in their cars or with single axle trailers. All others must go to the Seafield site. Virtually any goods may be taken to these sites and placed in appropriate skips. Unfortunately for Dean Village residents, these sites are far away and transport is needed. Large items may still be collected on application to the Council.

Another area of pollution that is excessively annoying is the receiving of junk mail. One or more of the following options may alleviate this:
1). Register with the Mailing Preference Service
Go on-line at www.mpsonline.org.uk or call 0845 703 4599. This may reduce direct mailings to you by up to 95%. Each member of your household should register.

2). Register with Your Choice
Contact the Direct Marketing Association by e-mail; your choice@dma.org.uk or call 020 7291 3300. This may reduce unaddressed mail such as flyers, circulars and various leaflets.

3). Opt out of Royal Mail’s Door to Door Service.
The above spam may be reduced by getting an opt out form.
Go to www.royalmail.com, or e-mail optout@royalmail.com, or phone 08457 950 950

4) Opt out of the unedited version of the electoral register. The unedited version of the electoral register is available for sale and may therefore be used for marketing. When registering to vote, tick the opt out box and into the edited version.

5) Write to companies that you have already contacted but with which you no longer wish to deal

Scottish Parliament Hustings

at Broughton High School

Come on Friday 18th March at 1.30pm to put your questions to the prospective candidates for Edinburgh Central

With any queries contact Nicola Ross on 0131 332 6316

Access to the School from East Fettes Avenue opposite Inverleith Park
S’no Joke

How did you cope with the extreme cold spell that we endured towards the end of December. Every way out of Dean Village Centre seemed to be fraught with hazard. Steep icy slopes of Bells Brae, pavement, or the solid slush of the road. Similarly up Dean Path. The river path to Stockbridge was no better, solid ice all the way. And there was ice on the iron bridge, and a tricky walk either up steps or up the slope to the west end of Belford road. The owners of 4 by 4s came into their own. These were the only vehicles capable of making it out of the village, and they were very busy helping others less fortunate.

Inspection of the Council website was not encouraging for residents. Pavement Category 1 covered the City Centre, and high levels in Balerno, Gilmerton and Liberton. Category 2 cover other central urban shopping areas and precincts, shopping areas along the main arterial routes and busy pavements to hospitals and schools. Category 3 covers pavements on other (undefined) priority routes. Sorry to say Dean Village is last on the list, despite it being virtually impossible for the disabled to leave their homes. It is incumbent on all residents to look out for their neighbours should we have a repeat of such extreme conditions.

St Mary’s Music School

SPRING CONCERT

The Choir of St Mary’s Cathedral
The Choir and Orchestra of St Mary’s Music School
John Butt, conductor

HAYDN Symphony No. 49 in F minor (“La Passione”)
HAYDN Cello Concerto No. 1 in C major
Soloist: Tom Pickles
HAYDN Seven Last Words from the Cross

WEDNESDAY 30 MARCH 7.30pm
St Mary’s Cathedral, Palmerston Place, Edinburgh
Tickets (unreserved): £9, concessions £6, schoolchildren £3 from St Mary’s Music School, Coates Hall, 25 Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EL. 0131 538 7766 and at the door on the night
The Edinburgh based Blackwood’s Magazine was started by William Blackwood (1776 - 1834) in 1817 and lasted until 1980. John Blackwood (1818 - 1879), William’s grandson, edited the Magazine for 33 years when he took over on his grandfather’s death. It was conceived as a Tory rival to the Whig magazine “Edinburgh Review” which was supported by the Lords Cockburn and Jeffrey. Known by its readers simply as “Maga”, Blackwood’s promoted “modern” writing, and over the years its contributors included George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Joseph Conrad, John Buchan, and Thomas de Quincey.

In the early years the principal writer of the Maga was “Christopher North”, real name John Wilson. Wilson was the son of a rich industrialist who died when Wilson was just 11. He was educated at Magdalene College, Oxford, and would probably had a life of ease had he not put his fortune into the hands of his uncle who lost it all in a poor speculation. Forced now to work for his living he joined the Maga shortly after its inception. His satire and barbed criticism gained an admiring large readership.

In 1820 Wilson was elected somewhat surprisingly as Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University. He perhaps did not possess a great scientific knowledge, but was an excellent professor, having a powerful stimulating effect on his students. He had plenty of time left over for his contribution to Blackwood’s, in one year completing 50 articles. His best work was considered to be between 1825 and 1835. He died in 1865. His statue may be seen in East Princes Street Gardens.

The controversial style of the Maga got it into trouble when John Gibson Lockhart, a friend and co-writer of Christopher North, abused some of the contributors to the London Magazine, in particular the “Cockney School” of John Keats and Leigh Hunt. John Scott, editor of the London Magazine, retaliated by writing a series of articles in defence of his contributors, which provoked Lockhart into calling him
“a liar and a scoundrel”. Jonathan Henry Christie, Lockhart’s London agent, made a provocative statement and Scott challenged him to a duel. Christie accepted and Scott was shot and died of his wounds several days later. Christie was charged with murder, but was acquitted on the grounds that Scott had made the challenge.

Next to the gravestone of John Blackwood is a sad memory of the First World War. Inserted into the stone is a wooden cross. The inscription reads as follows:

“Aubrey Blackwood-Porter, grandson of John Blackwood, Lt. 4th attached to 2nd Highland Light Infantry. Killed in action at Loos, France, 3rd October 1915 aged 24. “Faithful unto death”. This wooden cross was sent from France where it stood on his grave in the British Cemetery at Vermelles, previous to the placing there of the headstone which now marks the grave of British soldiers killed in France in the GREAT WAR 1914 - 1918. Placed here in honoured and loving memory by his mother”

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The Phantom Sculptor of Old Dean Village.

Over the last six months a number of interesting figures have appeared along the walkway beside the Water of Leith between Dean Village and Stockbridge. The photos below show two recent efforts just by St. Bernard’s Bridge: -

At the start of their appearances they were made largely of branches, twigs and leaves. More recently the figures are made of wire frames into which the natural material is fixed. The sculptor must be well provisioned with hats, gloves, scarves and assorted footwear. The recent effort of two figures on the bench by St Bernard’s Bridge are fully clothed and extremely lifelike. Many passers-by sit with them to have their photo taken. The mystery artist appears to operate during the night. The works are much appreciated by all who see them.
Cafe Morfal

Dean residents should welcome the initiative of Derek, the proprietor of Cafe Morfal at the west end of Belford Road. He opened up in September of last year, and immediately had to suffer a long spell of bad weather. However you can now go and enjoy refreshments from 9am till 3pm Mondays to Fridays (10am till 3pm on Saturdays). You can get soups, baguettes sandwiches, toasties, wraps, rolls, salad boxes, cereals, fruit, scones, cakes, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and a range of soft drinks. Either eat in or take away. He can also provide you with a hot meal. And if you are wanting someone to cater for an event why not give Derek a ring on 0131 220 5479.

Dean Village is poorly supplied with convenience shops. The nearest are at Craigleith, Haymarket or the West end Queensferry Road, a fair walk for most of us. So the presence of Cafe Morfel should be appreciated by all.

Dean Village Association Website

We must apologise that our website has been down for some time. We will be doing our best to get it back up and running as soon as possible. Please keep checking on www.deanvillage.org, where we will have details of the history of the village, dates of our walks and other activities.
Water of Leith Hydro-electric Schemes

A meeting of those interested in the various Hydro-electric projects along the river was held at the Water of Leith Centre, Slateford Road on the morning of 17th December 2010. The meeting was chaired by Georgy Davis of Community Energy Scotland.

Barry Mackay and David Perry of the Dean Village Association attended the meeting. The original estimate of £166,000 for the project had not taken into account the particular problems of accessing Dean Weir, the problems of re-siting sewers running underneath the weir, and various other environmental problems. When these were taken into account the new estimate was £789,000, a massive cost inflation. Possible financial models indicated that the project would not provide an acceptable return for an investor. Consequently the Association would not be pursuing the project any further.

However there are other sites along the river which do have potential. The Associations involved with these sites will be considering how best to bring such schemes to a successful conclusion.

Dean Village Association

Notice of AGM

Tuesday 26th April at 7.30pm
in the Dean Parish Church Hall

Main item of business: Development of the playground

Registered Scottish Charity SC000404,
A Message from Sarah Boyack

There are few areas in Edinburgh more keenly aware of the risk of flooding than the Dean Village.

The area’s location on the banks of the Water of Leith prompts considerable concern during heavy rainfall such as we have seen in recent months and the level of contact I receive from constituents on the issue seems to rise in sync with the water line.

Eleven years have passed since devastating floods caused £25 million worth of damage to hundreds of properties along the Water of Leith. However it is only now, in the next few months, that construction will begin on the first phase of flood prevention works.

Since the flood of 2000 there has been a great deal of confusion over the flood prevention scheme. Initial proposals in 2002 put the cost of the entire project at almost £12 million however this has escalated to around £80 million today.

A significant factor explaining the increased cost of the scheme was the SNP Government’s decision to change the way that flood prevention is funded. Under the previous Labour led administration, the Scottish Government would pay for 80% of the cost of flood protection projects with the remaining 20% being funded by local government.

However, the SNP have now withdrawn this commitment leaving the Council to find the entire cost from within its own budget. The result of this change is that since the last election the Council’s projected share of the costs of the work has leapt from just over £12 million for the whole project in 2007 to £56 million for a scaled back version of the
scheme in 2011. I take little satisfaction in having predicted that this would be the result of the Scottish Government’s funding changes.

In theory money given to local authorities by the Scottish Government includes resources allocated on the basis of flood risk for each area, but the money is not ring-fenced for that purpose. The problem for Edinburgh is that the delays to the scheme, and the removal of the guaranteed 80% contribution from the Scottish Government, has made construction of the scheme in one go unfeasible.

The Council has therefore decided to proceed on a phased basis which has required a costly re-tendering process and an inevitable increase in costs. Today the scheme is anticipated to be rolled out in three stages. Phase 1 work, which covers the area between Newhaven Road and Deanhaugh Street, is due to start in the next few months. This should provide some protection to parts of the Dean Village however the remaining areas will have to wait for phase 2 which will continue upstream to Murrayfield. While funding has been confirmed for phase 2 works, there is, as yet, no confirmed start date for construction.

At present the Council is only working towards phases 1 and 2. The combined cost of these sections accounts for the Council’s £56 million liability for the scheme. Details on the proposed third phase, which would complete the scheme, are sketchy with an estimated cost of £24 million and no start date. If built, phase 3 would take the total cost of the scheme to £80 million.

The delays to this work have caused constituents living along the banks of the Water of Leith a great deal of concern. They should not have to worry about the safety of their property every time it rains.

I am continuing to press the SNP Government to provide the resources Edinburgh needs to protect its residents from flooding and am encouraging them to help find a solution to accelerate the construction of the works.
Belford House and Douglas House

A revised plan for the block of 48 flats and an office suite proposed for the site following the demolition of Belford House and Douglas House can now be seen on the Council Planning website. The building would be generally 5 storeys high, but rising to 8 storeys on the corner of Belford Road and Sunbury Mews. To see the plans go on to the Council’s web-site and go through the Planning and Building Standards Portal as described in Dean Village News Issue 156. Enter the Planning Number 1803 in the application search form.

The revised plan is as follows: -

“Revised massing

1 One storey has been removed from the curved northern courtyard block, adjacent to the existing townhouses on Sunbury Place.

2 The footprint of this element has also been reduced by 3600mm. on the courtyard side, stepping further back from the existing adjacent apartment block.

3 The Sunbury Mews block (running north to south) has been cut back a further 5000mm. away from the northern boundary and adjacent apartment building.

Circulation and layout

4 The ground floor of the block on Sunbury Mews now has properties which have separate and private access directly off the street. This will further animate the street edge and reflect the entrance arrangement as per the adjacent mews properties.

5 The Pend entrance to the courtyard is now gated to stop public access from Belford road.

Architectural treatment

6 The Eastern facade of the vertical end element has been revised to reflect the architectural treatment of the southern elevation. This facade is now completely finished in stone.”
The Planning Officer defined the following issues of concern: -
Do the proposals harm the character or appearance of the conservation area? If they do, there is a strong presumption against granting of permission.
Do the proposals comply with the development plan?
If the proposals do comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for not approving them?
If the proposals do not comply with the development plan, are there any compelling reasons for approving them?

The proposals were investigated and the Planning Officer concluded that they comply with the development plan and the non-statutory guidance, with the exception of privacy. The non-statutory guidance on privacy allows for a reduction in privacy standards where the spatial pattern requires it and therefore an exception is justified in the case. The mix of office and residential accommodation represents a positive contribution to the area. The quality of the urban design solution will enhance the area as a whole, and strengthen this section of street in particular. The level of impact on residential amenity is acceptable and the reduction in vehicle movement is a positive outcome. There are no material considerations which outweigh this conclusion.
It is recommended that the Committee approve the application subject to conditions relating to site survey, materials and noise.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee on 22 December 2010 when members indicated their intention to refuse the proposal. The reason given was that the proposal does not comply with the Edinburgh City Local Plan policies and the Non statutory Guideline on Daylighting, Privacy and Sunlight as it would adversely affect the character and appearance of the conservation area and harm neighbouring amenity.

The complete document may be seen on the Planning website, or by contacting the Secretary (see back page). For the moment the ball is back in the planners’ court.
Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership

There are twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships in Edinburgh. The Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership includes Blackhall, Comely Park, Craigleith, Drylaw, Inverleith, Stockbridge and Dean Village. Each Partnership consists of representatives from Community Councils, Lothian and Borders Police, the National Health Service, the Voluntary Sector (that’s us, folks) and Councillors Hinds, McIvor, Whyte and McKay.

What is the role of a Neighbourhood Partnership?

The best people to consult about local issues are the residents themselves. Each Partnership uses a variety of ways of gathering the views of local people, including surveys, consultations and public meetings. Anyone who feels strongly about an issue that is affecting their district can voice their concerns. The members of the Partnership can then set up a local community plan based on the most important issues raised. For instance one of the most important issues that concerns Dean Village is collection and recycling of waste material. Edinburgh Council has conducted a survey on how best to solve this problem in each individual district. This concluded on January 21st and we await their decisions.

How do they work?

Neighbourhood Partnerships can make recommendations to the Council, police, NHS, or any other official body about the way services may be delivered to local areas. They can comment on strategic decisions made by these bodies as they affect local areas. And they can award small grants (up to £5000) to community groups for local projects.

So if any resident within Dean Village has a particular concern, please contact one of the committee members (see back page) and this concern will be passed on to the Partnership.
Your editor and his wife recently spent two weeks in Singapore. Our son was travelling in Asia and at the turn of the year he suggested we meet up. So at the end of January we made the 20-hour journey to this city-state.

Singapore is a mixture of the old and the very new. Skyscrapers dominate the landscape, surrounding the more traditional areas of Little India and Chinatown. We found the city to be multi-cultured, vibrant, exciting, prosperous, safe and very clean.

There are no midges, no mosquitoes, no rats, no feral cats and very few pigeons and seagulls. And how do the authorities achieve this? By eliminating their food sources and habitats. All food hawkers were removed from the streets 20 years ago and were provided with numerous hawker centres where there are literally hundreds of tables surrounded by small stalls selling a wide variety of foods. The quality of food and service can therefore be closely monitored. A nutritious meal can be had for a few Singapore dollars. There are plenty of more expensive cafes and restaurants throughout the city, and staff are frequently seen sweeping the outside areas and removing excess food from the tables. Resting places for birds have been reducing by installing spikes in appropriate places. When an infestation does occur, as did happen when a cloud of non-biting midges suddenly appeared in a city suburb, a team goes out with sprays to eradicate the problem.

Much interest was shown in David Cameron’s speech about how past government policies on multi-racialism in the UK had failed. In Singapore there are Chinese, Indian, Malaysian, Indonesian, Thai, Nepalese and many other nationalities. The government policy is that all citizens are Singaporean first, and are faithful to their ethnicity second. This is achieved, incredibly, by having English as the principal language. In schools English is the first language and any other language second. One Chinese mother wrote to The Straits Times (an excellent broadsheet newspaper) that her son was worried that he could not correctly write his name in his own language. This was corrected by extra tuition.

Crime rates are low in Singapore, probably because punishment for transgression is severe. The first notice to be seen at the airport is that drug trafficking is punishable by death. Crimes are punished by fines, or jail, sometimes accompanied by a number of strokes of the cane. Although crime is low, notices throughout the city warn you that ‘low crime does not mean no crime’. There is a running joke that Singapore is a ‘fine’ city. You can be fined for eating and drinking in the street, jay-walking, spitting, dropping chewing gum, leaving durians (a very malodorous fruit) in the subway, and (please don’t ask me how this is monitored) failure to flush toilets.

There is an excellent subway and bus system. Taxis are inexpensive. Places to visit include the zoo (there is a night-time safari), the botanical gardens, and the Jurong Bird Sanctuary. There are boat trips on the Singapore river and the harbour. And of course you must go to Raffles for a Singapore Sling. A visit is recommended.
Winter Nature Notes  by Barbara Mckay

Mid - November:-  As I begin these musings I cannot help but wonder what the weather has in store for us over the next few weeks, but just now let us enjoy the late autumn tints clothing our trees. Warm days and frosty nights towards the end of October are said to be responsible for this show. Along Ravelston Dykes there is a magnificent avenue of mature trees in their autumn wardrobe. If you missed the show this year put it in your diary for next year. Why do leaves change colour? A question that is often asked. One theory is that the colours tell insect pests to go away. Another is that the pigments in the leaves drain their nutrients back into the tree. I'm sure there are many more.

26 November:- The snow fell heavily and stealthily and we awoke to a deep silence broken only by the scraping of windscreens, the revving of cold engines and the skidding of tyres. A lot of criticism about one's driving prowess in the snow could be heard. The snow continued covering trees, shrubs, and then eventually freezing the edges of the Water. Ducks survived thanks to people donating bread and cracking the ice. Birds survived, though maybe not all, thanks to people feeding them regularly.

Our Water continues its course, changing the mood with the weather. Mink are still busy. One poor mallard in eclipse, had a narrow escape. Being in eclipse means that they have shed most of their glossy flying feathers, finding getting into flight cumbersome, but this one managed, no doubt with heart-a -flutter, and needing a G and T back at base. A few herons have been seen but latterly the Water has been very full and fast flowing which makes feeding difficult.

10 February:- Thankfully plants are beginning to show green tips and the trees will soon have that spring blush which comes from their buds. It's an exciting time of year possibly made more so by the dramatic winter we have experienced. When it comes have a Happy Easter.
Dates for your Diary

Dean Village Annual General Meeting: The AGM will take place on Tuesday April 26th in the Dean Parish Church Hall at the top of Dean Path at 7.30pm. The principal topic will be the development of the Village playground. New members and, in particular, committee members would be welcome.

St. Bernard’s Well will be opened from 12 noon till 3.00pm on the first Sundays of April, May, June and July. And also the Sundays of the Edinburgh Festival. Volunteers to help staffing the Well would be appreciated. Contact the Secretary if interested.

Village Walk and Cemetery Walk: - Village Walks will take place on Tuesday June 7th and 28th and Thursday July 21st at 7.15pm. Meet at the top of Bell’s Brae by Kirkbrae House. Cemetery Walks will take place on Sundays June 19th, July 10th and 31st starting at 2.30 pm. Meet at the cemetery gates.

Water of Leith Clean-up: - Spend a couple of hours with other volunteers on a Sunday morning (date to be arranged) cleaning up the river and river bank between Belford Bridge and Dean Bridge. Equipment provided.

Scottish Food Guide

Award-winning Scottish Food Guide and its associated initiatives Scottish Cheese Trail and Scottish Farm Shops, make the positive connection between Scotland’s finest producers, suppliers, and best places to eat and stay in one highly effective website, providing a showcase for all seekers and providers of good food. All recommendations are independently researched and listed solely on merit.

www.scottishfoodguide.com is funded and published by Wendy Barrie Ltd., Drumsheugh Toll, Dean Village. Well known contributor to Scotland’s food scene, Wendy is an uncompromising crusader for good food. For further information contact wendy@scottishfoodguide.com.
Dean Village Association
Committee 2010/2011

Chairman: Barry Mackay, 3 Sunbury Place
Tel: 226 5219, e-mail:- barrymackay@tiscali.co.uk

Vice Chairman: Caroline Gerard, 6 Belford Mews,
Tel 225 8879, e-mail:- caroline.gerard@btinternet.com

Secretary: David Perry, 22 Damside
Tel 226 7544 e-mail:- davper@aol.com

Treasurer: Vacant

Committee members: Dorothy Forrester, Pat Sinclair
Javier Albert, Conrad Hughes

Dean Village News
The deadline for articles for the next edition of
the News is
22nd June 2011

If you would like to submit an article for the News
please e-mail the Editor at davper@aol.com

David Perry, DVN Editor

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