

YESTERDAY

YESTERDAY ...
10 years ago

As reported in the Bangor Daily News

CALAIS — It may be nearly 115 years old, but it's worth saving. And that's why restoration work continues on the Calais Free Library. Only this time it's the cupola that is getting a makeover, thanks to a \$7,500 grant from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

This is phase two of a project that began in 2002. Much of the restoration in 2002 included replacing rear and side walls on the library itself. That project cost \$285,000.

Although a lot of the work was completed, there wasn't money to fix all of the cupola, so librarian Marilyn Sotirelis applied for a grant from the commission and learned last month it had been approved. The library's board of trustees raised the rest of the \$19,000 needed to complete the project.

Overlooking the St. Croix River, the library is on the site of the home of James Shepherd Pike, who was a friend of Abraham Lincoln and an associate of editor and politician Horace Greeley. Pike, a prominent abolitionist, served as U.S. ambassador to the Netherlands during the Lincoln administration. In his will, he left his homestead property and some money for establishment of a library.

The yellow-brick building with red granite trim was built in 1892. It was designed by architect A.H. Vinal and built for about \$10,000. It opened to the public on July 4, 1893. Vinal was greatly influenced by the architectural style of Henry H. Richardson, designer of Boston's famed Trinity Church.

Problems with the building began more than 15 years ago after an addition was put on the rear of the library. The design did not factor in proper drainage, so soil was removed from the back of the older part of the building, which caused the library's foundation to weaken.

Thursday the staging was in place and the construction crew was working about 60 feet in the air. They expect to have the work completed in about three weeks. Sotirelis said she had confidence in the construction workers. "The same people that are doing this work were here in 2002," she said.

Amy Cole Ives, grant coordinator for the commission, was on site Thursday to inspect the work that needs to be done.

"This is a national registered building and we have just given it a New Century Community Program grant to work on the restoration of the cupola," she said. Ives said the cupola had seen a lot of weather over the years.

In 2002, two pillars and two wooden exterior sections of the eight-sided cupola were restored. Sotirelis said Thursday that although rainwater did get inside the cupola, the top part of it is so steep that the water did not damage the inside boards, but boards on the bottom of the cupola have rotted and need to be replaced.

Reconstruction calls for replacement of the rest of the pillars. The louvers all need to be removed and replaced with new wooden boards of equal size; the larger boards holding the louvers in place all need to be replaced.

An important part of the restoration is screening over the louvers to keep the pigeons out. Asked if the pigeons were getting in to read, library trustee Pam Bridges laughed and said, "These are illiterate pigeons."

Bridges said saving the cupola was important. "This will actually be the final touch. It's actually the crown," she said.

25 years ago

As reported in the Bangor Daily News

WASHINGTON — As a journalist, Kent Ward, who retired from the Bangor Daily News this week, has always seemed a little like the Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court, a curious figure from another time zone, running roughshod over social conventions of the day.

In an era when print journalists are increasingly viewed as homogenized extensions of computer databases, shorn of individualism and personality, Ward has been stampeding sacred cows, ridiculing the sanctimonious and telling outrageously funny stories in a weekly column that has run in the Bangor Daily News since 1967. For nearly as long, he has been a key figure in guiding the news coverage of Maine's largest daily newspaper.

Last Thursday, Ward retired as associate managing editor of the NEWS, a post he has held since 1982. His column will continue to appear in the paper's weekend edition.

"I'm going to have more time to go to some meetings and trav-

PICTURE FROM THE PAST



BANGOR DAILY NEWS FILE PHOTO BY SCOTT HASKELL

Moose hunters were waiting in line to register their kills within hours after the state's experimental moose season opened Sept. 22, 1980. Norman Jalbert (left) of Sabattus and Mike Reynolds of Lisbon stand with their trophy, shot by Reynolds in the morning near Rockwood on Scott Paper Co. land. Their bull weighed 830 pounds. The state granted permits to 700 hunters.

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el around, looking for interesting Maine characters and writing about them," Ward said.

Kent Ward's retirement did not go unnoticed. On Friday, he was named "Maine Journalist of the Year" by the Maine Press Association during its annual convention at Sebasco Estates. "Kent was the unanimous choice of the judges," said Nate Barrows, who is editor-publisher of the Weekly Packet of Blue Hill and current president of the MPA.

An Aroostook native, Ward began his journalism career in 1954 when he returned from an Army tour in Korea to edit the hometown Limestone Leader. He joined the Bangor News eight years later as Rockland bureau chief, moving to the paper's State House bureau in 1967. It was from Augusta that he began writing a weekly column initially focusing on Maine politics.

Harrison Richardson, a Republican gubernatorial candidate from that era, recalled "he was straight, humorous ... I never had the impression he could be manipulated." Davis Rawson, managing editor of the Central Maine Sentinel who inherited the Bangor News political column in 1978, described Ward as "one of the few bridges between the green eye shade era of journalism and today's video display terminals." And a newsman renowned for his prodigious output of stories.

Ward covered three sessions of the Maine Legislature, three national political conventions — including the bloody 1968 Democratic Chicago convention — and all the gubernatorial campaigns between John Reed and Jock McKernan.

It's Ward's weekly column, though, that brought him a legion of loyal followers and

some loud detractors. The Maine Times once described Ward as Maine's "paper red-neck," an image he carefully nurtures.

"I try to write about things that nobody else notices, like stupid Massachusetts drivers or gum chewers, and then tweak them gently," Ward explained. He feasts on people who take themselves too seriously.

For example, Kent Ward "tweaking" Sen. Bill Cohen: "Before he comes back to Maine, he sends his shirts to the laundry to be wrinkled."

Kent Ward "tweaking" Tabitha King, the wife of Stephen King, after she pointed out that Ward, in a tirade against a political function held at her house, wrote that the residence was painted one color when it actually was another.

"I felt like taking a switch to him," said King. In a column that began, "Dear Tabitha, Picky ... Picky ... Picky!" Ward explained there were so many mansions with gothic fences owned by billionaire horror novelists on Bangor's west side that such a mistake was inevitable.

"He once used the phrase 'radical-feminist-lesbian conspiracy.' That so enraged me I thought about writing a novel about a real radical-feminist-lesbian conspiracy. It would be set in a beauty parlor. If I write it, I'll dedicate it to him," she said.

Asked to describe Ward, NEWS Managing Editor V. Paul Reynolds said, "He's a classic to Maine ... a true country curmudgeon on the outside, but big-hearted underneath." Around the newsroom, Ward never referred to himself in the first person. It was always "the Dawg," a nickname from so

long ago he isn't sure where it came from.

"He's made some people upset ... but with Kent, they never seem to stay mad," said Reynolds. David Platt, a former NEWS environmental writer who went on to become editor of the Maine Times, said that Ward always had "a wonderful sense of the outrageous and ridiculous," which came across in his columns.

Where do the columns come from? Ward said many readers write to him, or phone with tips. The column that stirred the greatest response, he said, was about a woman whose pants fell down while skiing at Sugarloaf. Ward got that one from a spectator at a basketball game.

He tries to answer all the letters he gets from readers. One loyal fan is Frank Hopkins of Fort Kent, a retired journalist himself.

"The tone of his columns is what first appealed to me. He has a tremendous command of the lingo ... the country vernacular, and he uses it deftly. Out of it all comes a picture of a great wit," said Hopkins, who has never met Ward.

Mel Stone, who was the NEWS managing editor before Reynolds, thinks Ward should have been assigned to write his own retirement story.

"That's the only way you'd separate the old Dawg from his bite," said Stone.

"Listening to Kent Ward talk on the phone to the public in the newsroom," Platt said, "taught me more about relating to the newspaper readers than any-

thing else I've learned in journalism. He has an ability to laugh at himself. That's great for cooling people off."

As for the future, Ward said, it's one column a week and "let's see what it's like to loaf for a while." Joe Brooks, who replaced Ward briefly in Augusta and has worked with him in the newsroom for nearly three decades, summed up Kent Ward this way.

"He really doesn't have an angry side. Behind the red-neck humor ... he's just a nice guy from Limestone who got into the right business." (by John S. Day)

WASHINGTON — First impressions linger.

My introduction to Kent Ward was the bell on a Western Union machine. It was the summer of 1963. I was the rookie reporter at the Bangor Daily News Washington County Bureau, a one-room walk up over Crane's hardware store in Machias. The person who actually ran the bureau was a red-headed telex puncher named Botina Pettigrew, in those moments when she wasn't fending off the manly advances of a local state trooper.

On my first day of work a family of Canadians surfaced on the rocks of a desolate island in Machias Bay, having lived the life of the Swiss Family Robinson for a week after their

yacht cracked up en route to the Panama Canal. President Kennedy was killed in Dallas on my last day as county bureau chief.

In that long-ago age before laptop computers and micro tape recorders, Western Union was the lifeline between the Bangor Daily News and its far-flung outposts. Botina and I shared our telex line with the Rockland Bureau. Because our deadline was earlier than Rockland's, we were supposed to transmit our stories first and then make way for the Rockland gang.

Being a brash rookie and a slow writer, I sometimes ignored those rules. That's when the bell on the Western Union machine went "ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling, ding-a-ling." And this message appeared in the middle of one of my stories.

"Isn't it about time you got off this (#@&*%!@**) machine?"

The first time it happened I asked Botina, "Who in hell is that?"

"Oh, that's Kent Ward," she answered, "He does that a lot."

More than lot, in fact. As the summer wore on, Ward began critiquing my stories, bragging about his exploits in a semipro baseball league and otherwise making a pest of himself. The biggest problem for me, how-

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Death Notices

LIBBEY, Herman S., Weymouth, Mass., Feb. 28, 2016. Service 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 25, at Mattawamkeag Cemetery.

FICKETT, Harold 'Thomas' III, Clifton, 19, Aug. 16, 2016. Service 2 p.m. Sep. 24, 2016, at his residence in Clifton.

MADDOCKS, Chester, Fletchers Landing Township, Aug. 12, 2016. Service 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 1, at Bible Baptist Church, 986 US Hwy 1, Hancock.

CROCKER, Lillian E., 95, Bangor; at Bangor, Sept. 1, 2016. Service 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016, at Pine Grove Cemetery, Hammond Street Ext., Bangor. Brookings-Smith, 133 Center St., Bangor.

FINDLEN, Dr. Frederick A., DMD, 62, Hot Springs Village, Ark., Pownal and Fort Fairfield; at Hot Springs Village, Ark., Aug. 6, 2016. Service 1 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30, 2016, at The Taste of Maine, Route 1, Woolwich.

DOUGHERTY, William 'Billy' Graham, Wash.; at Puyallup, Wash., Sept. 15, 2016.

PICARD, Verna L., 84; at Van Buren, July 19, 2016. Service at 11 a.m. Sat., Oct. 1, 2016, Sunset View Cemetery, Norridgewock. Lajoie Funeral Home, Van Buren.

DUNN, Robert P. III, 46, Bangor; Sept. 22, 2016. Service Saturday, Sept. 24, Bangor Baptist Church at 4:00 p.m. Brookings-Smith, 133 Center St., Bangor.

ROBERT, Albert L., 69, Boston and Frankfort, Sept. 3, 2016. Service 11 a.m. Oct. 8 at Moose Point Park, Searsport.

MCMAHAN, David, Bangor, Sept. 16, 2016. Service 1 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 29, 2016, at 238 State St., Brewer.

MOORS, Fr. Clifton 'Cliff' S.M., 88, Lawrence, Mass. and Bradley, Sept. 21, 2016. Service 10 a.m. Monday at Parish of the Resurrection, St. Ann's Catholic Church, Bradley.

MINGO, Donald R., 75, Bangor; at Bangor, Sept. 22, 2016.

TOOTHAKER, Reginald, Newburgh; Sept. 19, 2016. Service at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016 at the Hampden-Gilpatrick Chapel of Brookings-Smith, 45 Western Ave., Hampden.

COLE, Faye L., 100, Monticello; Sept. 22, 2016. Service at 2 p.m. Sept. 25, 2016, Monticello Calvary Pentecostal Church. Dunn Funeral Home, 11 Park St., Houlton.

CYR, Aubrey, 90, Portage Lake; Sept. 22, 2016, at Fort Kent. Daigle Funeral Home, Fort Kent.

MCABOY, Frank P. "Sid," 63, Bangor; Sept. 21, 2016. Service at 5 p.m., Monday, Sept. 26, 2016, at the Family Reception Center of Brookings-Smith, 163 Center Street, Bangor.

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