



Above: The clear skies at Holden stayed that way until Wednesday.

A Holden Dispatch – September 4 - 10, 2022

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ...”

This famous phrase that begins Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* easily sums up my whole third trip to Holden this year. There were times when nothing seemed to go right, and other times when things worked out great. Not only was this true at Holden, but also traveling to and from there.

On the Monday before going up to Holden, I received the phone call I have come to dread during this pandemic: someone with whom I had been in contact later tested positive for COVID-19. These days Holden has a policy about people who come to the village: there must be ten days since contact with someone who tests positive, and that a negative COVID-19 test result within three days of arrival must be sent to the village. An attestation form declaring one's compliance has to be signed and sent to the village before arrival. So here I was with less than ten days before going and possibly having an infection. I scheduled a PCR test for that Friday, then emailed the archivist and the village about my situation. The Holden medic responded more positively than I would have expected: he commended me for being proactive; stated that while a negative PCR test is great, a negative rapid antigen test on the day I travel up-lake would be required; and that, upon arrival in the village, I would mask for four days and always eat outside. I could live with that.

The PCR test results were negative. I sent them to Holden. So far so good. I packed like everything was nominal and that I would be going for the week. I took extra N95 masks with me. On Sunday I load up the car, close and lock the home, gas up the car, and head for the Holden Bed and Breakfast. Shortly after leaving Seattle, I realize I forgot to take a rapid antigen test with me! I stop in Issaquah, buy a test kit, and

get going again. When I arrive at the B & B, I realize I forgot to take my jacket and wide brim hat with the cloth in back to shield my neck from sunburn! Thoughts of me having succumbed to senility fill my mind.

Roberta and her dog greeted me at the B & B. She told me a couple were also expected but had not yet arrived. It turned out they never did. So, in the morning Roberta fixed a fine egg dish along with fruit and yogurt and blackberry muffins for the both of us. My COVID-19 test showed negative. Hooray!

At Field's Point, when I was delivering my luggage to the dock, I was greeted by Rev. John Hergert. We have seen each other several times at Holden in the past ten years. When not at Holden he serves as an interim pastor to Lutheran congregations in the midst of the call process. He had a ticket for the *Lady Express* – the fast boat. This concerned me since, on the advice of the boat company, I had purchased a ticket for the *Lady II* – the slow boat. I was also concerned that I could not find a sign for luggage going to Holden on the *Lady II*. When I went to the concessions building to take care of my parking at Field's Point, the attendant told me there was only one boat running that day! When the *Lady Express* arrived, I talked with an employee on board about all this. She cleared things up for me: yes, the *Lady II* is running, and yes, there is a place on the dock for my luggage.

I also met Pastor Patricia "Pat" Simpson, who would be the substitute pastor for the week at Holden while Pastor Mark was taking time away from the village. Pastor Pat had been one of the interim pastors at Holden before Pastor Mark agreed to take the call.

Larry Howard – the archivist, and Nancy Winder arrived with little time to spare before the *Lady II* docked. I helped get their luggage and several boxes going to the Archives on the dock. Once on board we got to talking. I learned that Nancy preached in Leavenworth Sunday morning. Most of the time was spent on what we were going to get done during the Archives Work Week (AWW). When the boat crew made an announcement, we interrupted ourselves, even though most of these were their scripted descriptions of the boat we were on or various locales of or along Lake Chelan. Normally, we don't listen to the content since we have heard these same blurbs every time we have gone up-lake. This time there was one blurb that was truncated; that was a surprise. But there was – and I presume still is - one blurb that always bothers me when the boat nears the Lucerne dock: the announcement that talks about Holden Village, and the copper mine that had been operated during the years 1938-1957 by "Howe Sound of British Columbia." The fact is that Howe Sound Co. was organized in the state of Maine, therefore it always was an American business, even though it operated and financed mines all over the North American continent.

The next mishap I experienced was totally my fault. I had packed a battery-operated megaphone in my luggage. Depending on how the luggage was laid down, it would emit noises. When it was placed in the bus, it was initially silent. By the time the people were on board – wearing masks - and the driver was about to start the trip up Forest Service Road 8301, it was making a ticking noise like that of a time bomb. People were disturbed. So, I got up out of my seat and made my way to the luggage, with difficulty opened it, extracted the box with the megaphone, opened the box and then the megaphone itself to extract a couple of batteries. I left the luggage open, apologized profusely for the distraction and delay, and sat back down. After arriving in the village, I let all the other passengers get off the bus, went back to my luggage and – with difficulty – repacked the megaphone. (I also noticed that there was no welcome sign for me; Larry and Nancy received one.)

When I finally disembarked from the bus, I was greeted by Val Cannard, who gave me my room assignment. (I have known Val and her husband Nick for many years.) One of her village roles was being a medic. I showed her my negative COVID-18 test from that morning. She gave me the same instructions that had been previously emailed: wear a mask whenever indoors for the next four days, and eat my meals outdoors during that time.

Food Woes and Pleasures

I was late for lunch. The buffet line was being cleaned up and food was being taken away. I had some hard-boiled eggs from the reach-in refrigerator and a couple slices of bread. What I missed was the sandwich bar. This is all that was available. No hot entree. No specially fixed meal. What I learned later was that the only prepared hot meal for the day was dinner. A Continental Breakfast was “offered” in the morning, but nothing was really done for there was no first shift kitchen staff. What in the past had been a buzz of activity each day was dead quiet. What the term “Continental Breakfast” amounted to was “fend for yourself.” You could have your choice of cold dry cereal out of some dispensers along a wall, whatever was available from the reach-in refrigerator (juices, milk, cold hard-boiled eggs) and / or what was on top of the island (bread, butter, jams, fruit). Lunch each day was always a sandwich bar. This way of doing food service began the day we arrived in the village.

Nancy became unhappy: she said that she was not told ahead of time that food would not be served in the morning as in the past; had she known, she would have brought food up-lake. It turned out that requests for provisions could be made to the kitchen staff so that people could make breakfast in their chalet or lodge. Larry, Nancy, and I were staying in Lodge 1, one of the staff lodges. On the second floor of the staff lodges there are small kitchens and a medium-sized refrigerator/freezer which could be shared by all the lodgers. Nancy procured thirty eggs, plus cheese, green peppers, and onions, from the kitchen and got it stored in the already stocked refrigerator. Members of the Washington Trail Association (WTA) were housed on the second floor and had already been using the kitchen facilities; they had come two days previous. We were able to use the kitchen after the WTA people were done and had gathered outside to head out for their trail work.

As for the dinners, we had the following:

- Monday - Clam chowder
- Tuesday - something Mexican, which did not set my juices flowing, but there were pieces of chicken meat that had already been separated from the bone, offered separately, of which I eagerly partook
- Wednesday - “Pancake Dinner” – included bacon and sausages (the heartiest breakfast I had all week, even though it was dinner)
- Thursday - “Lefties”, meaning leftovers
- Friday - Baked Potato, as many as you wanted; I had only one, begrudgingly

Salad was also available at every dinner. (As you can see, I don’t eat Mexican food or, generally, baked potatoes.)

I have described the meal situation at Holden Village in detail because, in all the 57 years I have been coming to Holden, I have – until this trip – never experienced such minimalist, Spartan meals. The first time I visited Holden, there were less than 30 people in the village, yet we all enjoyed three hot meals each day of that visit. Please understand that I did not go hungry on this trip; there was plenty of food available if one asked at the right time (definitely not in the morning). Just a very limited menu.

The reason given for the lack of full food service was that there were not enough staff volunteers to run it. That is certainly been the case all year, when several staff people – including the directors – have been doing multiple jobs throughout the summer. One long-term staff person I met while I was eating dinner outdoors, told me how registration had become the primary job when originally it was supposed to be bookkeeping and how difficult the registration job was. That person was scheduled to be in the village for three years, but was considering reducing it to just two years on account of the stress and adverse conditions experienced so far. The air of hospitality – whether it is the abundance of cooked food or

satisfaction in the work assigned - that had existed at Holden seems to have gone out of the village. Something needs to be done to bring that back. On the positive side, one of the directors told me that more applications are being received for long-term and short-term staff than in the previous months, and from places not traditionally partial to coming to Holden. Perhaps this will help bring back the hospitality currently lacking.

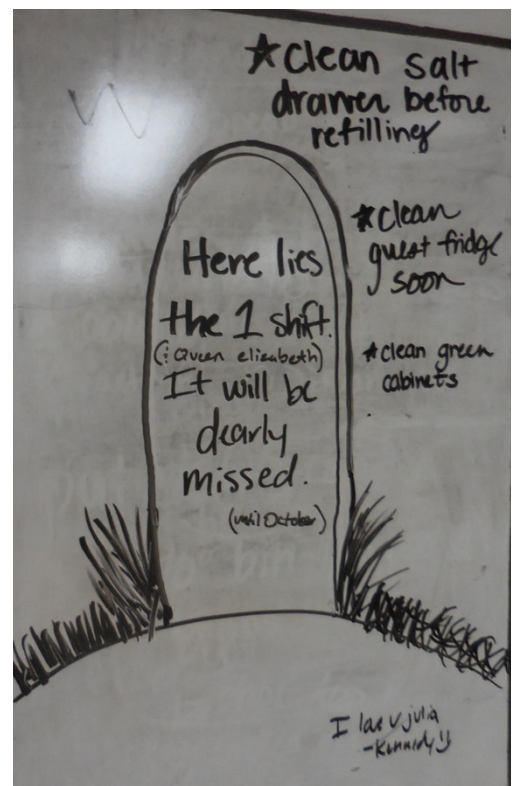
One bright spot on this trip was that, during the announcements at dinnertime, people were asked if there were any birthdays or anniversaries. On Tuesday Rev. John Hergert spoke up that it was the 40th anniversary of his ordination. When asked how he wanted the song sung, he answered, "Reverently." So, the happy birthday/anniversary song was sung stately and quietly, with an "Amen" added at the end. When it was announced that the snack bar would be open the next night, he piped up, "... and I'll pay for it." That was gratefully greeted with applause and cheers. On Wednesday evening at the Snack Bar as ice cream was being served, when it was my turn to state my order, one of the scoops of ice cream I wanted was Huckleberry. Peter Hernes, a Holden board member and one of the scoopers (Rev. Hergert was the other scooper), served me. He determined that there was not enough of that ice cream in that tub for him to scoop, and offered to give me the tub for me to spoon out for myself. I accepted. So, I took the tub and a scoop of Strawberry in a dish to the deck outside the Snack Bar and dug into the tub. There was more than one scoop of huckleberry ice cream left in the tub. I got a good deal! When I finally finished everything, I went back inside to drop off the dish, tub, and spoon. Then I went back to the entrance line. Rev. Hergert gave me a severe look, and said in a loud, stern voice, "No seconds!" After all that ice cream, I did not need more. I wanted to thank him again for his generosity and wished him well on his ministry. I did so, and he warmed up to that.

A second bright spot was some extra hours activity. Val Cannard had started a 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle, titled "Hummingbirds," on a table in the Library. The image was a drawing of many different hummingbirds from North and South America. There was also text which described each type of hummingbird depicted. She let me help put in puzzle pieces. At one point we decided to sort the many remaining pieces by shape. It was a difficult puzzle, and it was not finished before I left the village.

Another bright spot was that, due to the reduced food service, only one dish-team a day was required to clean dishes, cups, glasses, utensils, and all the cookware from the kitchen. (See sketch at right, celebrating this turn of events.) For the first time, neither Larry, Nancy, or I were assigned to a dish team. Without that added responsibility, we were able to devote more time to the Archives.

The Archives: Progress Is Made

The archive work went well. It was well organized. Larry had made lists for Nancy and myself of tasks he wanted us to focus on while we were there; Larry's list for himself was over twice as long as Nancy's or mine. It took me a little while to get back into the groove. I left an inventory of a box incomplete as I had run out of time on my visit in June. The box mostly contained many cassette tapes of sessions over the years on no particular topic, though there were some audio recordings of reminiscences of mining families. Also, there were copies of audio tapes of museum presentations. So, there was a modest sense of order to the collection. Once I understood how I had left things with that inventory, the work went smoothly, and I completed the inventory the next day. Another task to complete was to take



and incorporate photos of articles of clothing into the inventory lists of the respective boxes in which the clothing was found. I made use of the camera on the laptop as well as its photo editing tool. It was a two-person process, as one person had to hold the garment for display—away from the laptop—and another person has to press a button on the laptop to take the photo. I had to organize things so that the time Larry spent as button presser was kept to a minimum. Larry had an initial list of boxes in which clothing was stored, but he kept running into additional boxes that had apparel that needed to be photographed. We got it all done.

This trip was the first time I had access to the Internet from my laptop. That accessibility came in handy on a couple of occasions. The first was a task Larry gave me: to look up the monetary value of a Motown recording of some speeches to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from 1968. Larry expected that this vinyl long-play record would be worth a lot of money. I checked on amazon.com and found that a used copy—as this item in the Archives was—had a sale price of \$58.88. Larry was disappointed. The second occasion involved my checking my email. I was able to resolve a personal issue that had come up while being away from home. It also meant that staff at the skilled nursing facility could contact me via email in case something happened to my father.

Larry decided to give me a set of the inventory lists. He wanted me to be able to conduct word searches on the files from a folder level like he does. Much of his time, when he is home, is spent answering inquiries from people around the country, as well as the Holden staff, and the Holden board of directors. His file-level word searches have worked really well for him. Upon completing the search through the inventory lists, he can point to particular boxes which may contain material they need to answer their questions. He wanted me to have the same search capability. However, when I tried to do the same task on my laptop, it didn't work. The laptop would not search the content of each MS Word document in the folder, only the file titles. The technique worked on both Larry's and Nancy's laptops, but not mine. I don't know what was wrong with my laptop. That was very discouraging.

One thing my laptop does have is a working DVD drive. We were able to use it to view a digital conversion of an 8mm color film that had the title "Holden Village." There was no soundtrack. In this film were scenes of Holden in the days when the original Chalet 2 was still standing, as well as the old boxy river sauna with the painted flower on one of the exterior walls. That would make the film from around 1967 or 1968, as both of those structures burned down after that. I had not seen this film before. Some of the people in it I recognized, many I did not. It was nice to know that that film had been digitized. There are plenty of other films—8mm and 16 mm—that are not. One 16mm film that has yet to be converted is something that Werner Janssen produced himself, which he titled "Holden Was ..." We found the actual reel of 16mm film. There are also twenty small spools of additional material that was shot in those early days of Holden Village. Since returning home, Larry has been pricing what it would take to convert the film to digital: he found a studio in Interbay which could do the job.

All in all, a lot of work was accomplished this trip. Larry was very pleased. The vast majority of the boxes have been inventoried. He took home with him six boxes of water-damaged materials that he will inventory during the winter. (The damage occurred over ten years ago when the Archives were stored in the basement of Chalet 4. There was a rapid spring melt, and the basement filled with two feet of water.) I also have my list of Archives work to get done this winter, one of which I have already completed: a cross correlation by title of all the film media stored in the boxes.

Haze, Hazy History, and a Hazy Itinerary

All the while we were working in the Archives, it was bright, sunny, and warm outdoors. The weather was clear through Wednesday. However, on Thursday, it became so choked with smoke, that I could not continue with the restrictions placed on me. (*See photo, next page.*) That day I wore my mask outdoors

and ate meals indoors. Friday was less hazy, and on Saturday it returned to what it was like on Monday. It was so warm all week that I did not need that jacket I forgot to bring with me. I did miss my hat, though.

During the week there were few departures or arrivals. On Wednesday, some staff returned. Terry Sanderson came up to perform some maintenance on some vehicles. He worked on a tractor for the first time. When he works on something with which he is unfamiliar, he works alone so he can concentrate on all the steps he is taking to fix the vehicle. Sometimes that requires some heavy lifting, where it would be better if he had assistance, but he still does it all by himself. Another person I knew who returned was Amy Carlson. She played flute and joined in what few musical offerings were given. On Friday, the first of the weekend cohort guests were welcomed into the village.

Earlier in the week I checked the schedule on the kiosk for when departure would occur on Saturday. No departure or arrival was listed. I got concerned. I told Larry and Nancy about this. Nancy inquired, and found out that there was indeed a “mystery” departure on Saturday as the WTA team would be leaving and another WTA team would be coming up the same day.

One of the directors, Mark Bach, has an interest in history. When he learned that I spent last winter researching, primarily on the Internet, how the responsibility for the cleanup of the Holden Mine ended in the lap of Rio Tinto, he took an interest. I had previously given him in June the MS Word document I made of the chronology from 1957—when Howe Sound Co. closed the mine—to 2012, when the Record of decision was jointly issued by the U.S. Forest Service and the Environmental Protection Agency. The chronology is 16 pages long—including all the citations supporting the facts presented—along with an additional four pages that discuss the issues and problems encountered while making it. Mark had questions. We got together before Friday lunch in the dining hall, and I fielded his questions. He found the chronology to be too granular: too

much detail. He was looking for something much simpler, easier to comprehend. He is getting involved with a new book on Holden Village, that covers the years after the 1987 publication of Charles Lutz’s book on Holden—Surprising Gift. Part of this new book would cover the years of the Remediation of the mine and the tailings. Why Rio Tinto got involved would need to be included in that section. There is a reason why what I produced is so lengthy and involved: the history is complex. I would be very cautious about simplifying what happened. I tend to follow the dictum attributed to Alfred North Whitehead: “Seek simplicity, but distrust it.”

As there were no guests in the village during that week, there were no teaching sessions. Evening worship in Koinonia, called “Sacred Space,” was infrequent. On Thursday evening, we remembered Dan Erlander, who was village pastor in the early 1980s, who had died earlier this year. These reminiscences were recorded to give to his widow. Nancy related a story about Dan on a day when he was making announcements during lunch. At that time there were two sessions of each meal. At the point of



the announcement when the names of all the people who were about to leave the village were read, he wanted to avoid the situation where applause was given after each name was read, which used up a lot of time. He said, "There are a lot of people leaving us today. Please hold your applause while the names are being read. When I have finished reading all the names, you may send them out with the Holden clap." The whole dining hall erupted in laughter, since "clap" was a euphemism for a sexually transmitted disease. Dan didn't understand what was so funny ... at first. When Nancy told this story, the laughter was not as immediate or boisterous as when the event actually happened. Other stories were told. Testimonials were given for the books on the Christian faith Dan wrote and illustrated so well.

On Friday evening, "Prayer Around the Cross" was held in Koinonia. In the center of the fire ring were some stones, a bowl on top of the stones, with a lit candle in the bowl. I asked Nancy, "Where's the cross?" She didn't see one, either. Maybe the stones formed a cross; from where we were sitting, it was not apparent. No matter. It was held. It was dark. People prayed: some alone, some with many villagers gathered around them. Pastor Pat played guitar, Amy played flute, among other musicians, for the Taize-style music in the service. But, after that music was over, someone began to play a harp. It was exquisite! The music was so well played. It was soft, not cloying, tuneful but not "in your face." It conveyed more of the contemplative sense one desired in a prayer service than the Taize music did. I did not want to leave, the music and the harpist were that good. I never learned the name of the harpist. But I eventually did leave as Larry, Nancy and I planned to celebrate the completion of our AWW.

We celebrated in Larry and Nancy's room. Along with wine and snacks, we watched on her laptop the broadcast of the Sept. 8 service in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II. (Nancy follows the news wherever she goes. She announced the queen's death to Larry and I Wednesday morning while we were in the Archives.) Early in the service, as the clergy were filing in, she pointed out a particular verger who was leading the clergy, then indicating where the clergy needed to go. That person was no-nonsense, decisive, and moved stately and effectively. She was so impressed with that verger's actions, that we watched that portion of the service a couple of times. Throughout the service Nancy would make comments. She was also impressed with a lone bagpiper who played while walking the whole length off St. Paul's Cathedral front to back. After that we talked some more, noting that the inventory of the boxes in the Archives was complete after 12 years of work, and that the next task was to inventory the many boxes of Operations materials. Then we broke it up as we had to pack for the journey home.

Time to Depart

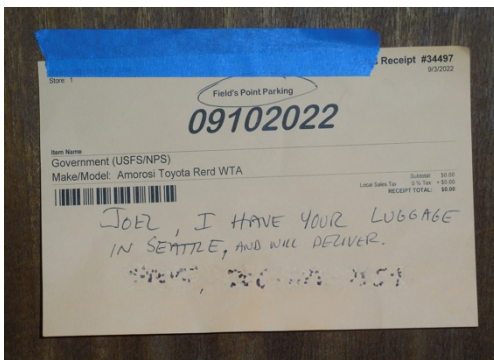
The "mystery" departure on Saturday manifested itself that morning in confusion over the time for that departure. There were at least three different times expressed for when the bus would leave the village. I made sure my luggage was on the loading dock as early as possible, thus I would be ready for whenever departure actually occurred. After the bus was driven into position in preparation for departure, I put my carry-on belongings on board. When the time for goodbyes was at hand, I saw, greeted, and briefly talked with Marc and Nancy Rerucha Borges. They are still working for the Forest Service. But they have also helped Holden by driving buses. For that help, Holden provides them fresh vegetables to supplement their supply of dried vegetables. The bus I was on was driven by Dana (pronounced like the last two syllables of "bandana") Peterson. Though he is an MD, he had been working on repairing the porches of Chalet 1 and Chalet 3, as well as driving bus. This was also Dana's departure day, and his driving the bus was a final task for the village.

At the Lucerne dock we waited for the *Lady Express* to make its down-lake run. I read a book. Others conversed with each other. Larry got to talking with one of the WTA crew, named Steve, about his work at The Boeing Co. and a book he had written. Dana unpacked his set of bagpipes and strolled and played several tunes I did not recognize. He finished with "Amazing Grace." When the boat arrived, I made sure both pieces of my luggage got on board.

The trip down-lake was uneventful. Once docked at Field's Point, I took off to reach my car in order to drive it to the loading area. When I returned to the dock, I could only find one piece of my luggage. The boat had departed for Chelan. There was an unclaimed bag left on the dock, but it was not part of my matched set of luggage. I loaded what was mine into the car, and made my way to the boat company. As I neared Chelan, I could see that the *Lady Express* was close to docking. I parked and went into the boat co. office. Who should I see but Katie Turner. She was a long-term staff person at Holden during and after remediation. She has been working several summers for the boat company as on-board crew. This was the first time I have seen her in the office. I told her my situation. She let me go on the dock and talk with the crew of the Lady Express. I watched the people getting off the boat and their luggage. After all the passengers had departed, the hold was bare: my luggage was not there. I described it to the crew, who then kindly searched the boat, and turned up nothing. I was distraught.

I talked some more with Katie. She offered to go up to Field's Point to pick up the bag that had been left behind, and counselled that I should wait in Chelan. I wasn't too keen on that. Katie took off for Field's Point, leaving another staff person on hand in the office. After briefing a person in the office who wanted to camp near Wenatchee about Confluence State Park, I went back to Field's Point. I met Katie again as she recovered the luggage, opened it, and eventually found a slip of paper with the Holden room assignment which had the name of the owner of the bag. She called the boat company office for the phone number on record for the owner. I described for Katie my luggage and its brand name. She called and left a message that included my description of my luggage, as well as instructions for how to retrieve his own luggage.

After talking with Katie some more and saying goodbye, she took possession of the luggage on behalf of the boat co. and returned to Chelan. As there was nothing further I could do regarding my luggage, I went to Wenatchee, fueled up the car and ate a fine dinner, then headed home. Just before the turnoff for Highway 97 south to Ellensburg, there was a sign warning that Stevens Pass Highway 2 was closed at milepost 49.3 and to use 97 and I-90. So I did.



When I got home after 9:30 p.m., I found taped to the front door a note on an orange Field's Point parking receipt: "JOEL, I HAVE YOUR LUGGAGE IN SEATTLE, AND WILL DELIVER.", along with his name and phone number. (See photo, left.) Once inside, I called the number and got an answer. It turned out that this person lived in Ballard and was still willing to deliver my luggage. I met him outside as he drove up to the block where I live, and he returned my luggage. He thought it was his by the shape of the extendable handle (!!! I can assure you that, while the handle might be the same type, the luggage shape is quite different). We talked a while. It

turned out this was the same WTA person who had been talking to Larry back at Lucerne 11 hours previously. We both looked at the brownish red moon as it was rising above Queen Anne Hill. I thanked him again for returning my luggage, and for the hard work he and the crew did maintaining the trails around Holden. Once inside again, I rejoiced, for in the returned luggage were my Sunday morning church clothes and my razor. I'm not sure what I would have done without them.

That Megaphone...

By the way, the reason I had packed a megaphone was that I had hoped I could get in on the First Day of School. I intended to stop the school bus and not allow it to move on until the school children or any onlooker correctly answered the following question: Who, or what, named this place "Holden Village"? It turned out that the First Day of School was held the week previous to my arrival. So, I will have to wait until next year to try my skit. In the meantime, do you know the answer? Let me know if you think you do. I can assure you that there is an answer, and it can be found in the Archives.

—Joel Matter