



Post-Bulletin Photo by Harold Severson

Al and Rita Gilbert display commemorative centennial starting July 5. Videotaping is Tom West Concord's Avery, a West Concord contractor.

West Concord remembers railroad's role as centennial celebration nears

By HAROLD SEVERSON
Post-Bulletin Town & Country Editor

WEST CONCORD — Welcome to Gilbert's Cafe, unofficial headquarters for the West Concord Centennial Corp.'s movers and shakers.

It sounds odd but this is the town that exists because of stubbornness. A hundred years ago there was no West Concord. There was a Concord, however, a few miles to the east. One day the Chicago Great Western's promoters came to Concord and said, "Hey, fellows, we'll put you on our railroad line but we'll need a little financial help."

"Heck, no," was the response. "You've got to build through our town. You're not going to shake us down."

The Concord people thought they were safe in defying the railroad promoters. To the west the ground was swampy.

"Too wet to support a railroad roadbed," the local experts said.

But they were wrong. The Great Western swung to the west and West Concord came into existence a hundred years ago.

Today West Concord is planning a gala for July 5th through the 7th to mark the town's birthday. Heading the celebration committee is Al Gilbert, who eight years ago didn't know West Concord existed. His co-chairperson is Mary Ellen Organ, who prefers the nickname of "Mardy." Like Al, she is not a native of West Concord, but grew up in Cumberland, Wis. She and her husband, Allan, came to West Concord 19 years ago when he accepted a position with the Farmers State Bank, which he now serves as president.

"Al Gilbert does most of the work," she said. "He's in the restaurant downtown and it's very easy to find him there."

You walk into Gilbert's Cafe on a spring morning and it's filled to the last booth. Outside the fields are a soggy mess. Too early for planting corn and beans; too wet for seeding oats and barley.

Al is busy slapping packaged slabs of ground meat onto a griddle. Rita, his wife, is busy at the far end of the kitchen. Strangers eight years ago, they're now fully accepted and are playing leading roles in the town's centennial gala.

The Gilberts take time off to pose for Tom Avery, who is making the rounds with his new videotaping outfit. It's a honey, and Tom is becoming an expert at interviewing people while preserving them for immortality just like the Hollywood and TV stars. There'll be special showings at the high school of Tom's photography.

Gilbert's is more than a place where desiccated townspeople are revived. It's become the town's favorite watering hole.

The Gilberts came here from California. First, however, there was a numbing experience at Hayward, a small town near Albert Lea. They had planned to purchase a restaurant there. On arrival they found the owner had sold the place without bothering to notify the Gil-



Town & country scene

berts, who had sold their home and packed their belongings.

"That was a jolt," said Al Gilbert, who has grown a beard streaked with gray in conformity with centennial edicts. "But we still wanted to get into the restaurant business. We found one for sale in West Concord and bought it."

Rita, who is blonde and pleasant and a good cook, will never forget the day the new owners opened for business. She and Al were novices, with no previous experience in cookery other than boiling water and making toast. He worked for General Motors, Rita in a doctor's office. Their opening day was a fiasco; call it a flop. Things became so fozzled that at 1 p.m. they locked the front doors, pulled the shades, and Rita sat down and bawled.

"Cried my eyes out for an hour or more," she recalled.

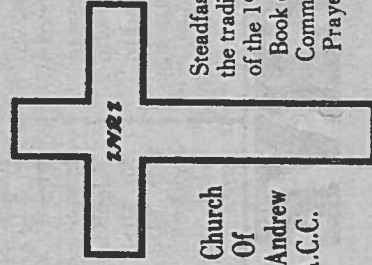
No tears today, however. The competition has withered and died. Morning coffee has become de rigueur at Gilbert's. You order a cup-pa java and a roll. Or a hamburger if you're a two-fisted eater. No need to subscribe to the town's newspaper, you get a generous helping of the day's news events, the weather forecast, sports scores, commentaries on politics, a searching analysis on the state of the economy from Clem Chambers and, just possibly, a little gossip, fresh and uncensored, with your coffee.

From time to time the chairman of one of the numerous centennial committees enters with a report on progress to date. The centennial is coming along great after a slow start. Al laughs when oldtimers tell him about the name-calling that went on when the railroad created West Concord.

The rejected Concordites scorned the new town to the west.

"West Concord people were

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She said her husband's death "changed the face of the nation as well." She said the Soviets "killed one of the most effective members of the United States government we've ever had."

McDonald likened the United States' relationship with the Soviet Union to having "an outlaw neighbor. We have been sold a bill of goods."

It is no longer fashionable to oppose communism, she said, and Americans have been told that trade and aid improve the chances of lasting peace. "History shows that that attitude is not correct," she said.

McDonald said believing that helping the Soviets will result in peace is ignoring the lessons of history.

"The fact that we help to build the military might of the Kremlin is usually ignored," she said.

The United States has sold computers to the Soviet Union with the understanding that they would be used only for civilian weather forecasting, but the computers were reprogrammed by the Soviets to direct Soviet missile launches, she said.

Clinic gets kidney stone

Mayo Clinic is one of the first medical centers in the Midwest to get a new German-made device that breaks up painful kidney stones with "blitz bath" shock waves, it was announced today.

According to a Clinic statement, the shock waves travel through the body without causing tissue damage.

The device is called an extracorporeal shock wave lithotripter or blitz bath and has been installed at St. Marys Hospital at a total cost of \$2 million, the Clinic said. Patient treatment will start Monday.

The blitz bath takes about an hour to break up the kidney stones, Dr. Joseph Segura, a Clinic urologist, says. It cuts hospitalization to two days, half of the time required for conventional surgical proce-

Rochester Community Presbyterian Church

at Izack Walton League
937 7th Ave. NE (off 14th St. NE)

ALL ARE WELCOME

Worship Service 10 a.m.

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Tom Moen — Preaching

Coffee hour follows the service.

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Unitarian Universalist Church

1727 Walden Lane SW

(Off U.S. 52 Frontage, S. of 6th St., W. between Cong. Ch. & Dentist Tree)

10:30 A.M. Religious Service (Toddler and Child Care Available)

Sermon: "Why the God's are silent and ting in our sleep" Rev. Ted Tollefson (Revisiting of Humanism begins by crossing the natural-supernatural divide)

Music: Happy 300th J.S. Bach
10:30 A.M. Church School

The Rev. Warren Turner, Minister
Elizabeth Katzmann, DRE

Kevin Dobbe, Music Director

Salem Road Covenant Church

3401 Salem Road SW

Sunday School . . . 9:10 a.m.

Church . . . 10:30 a.m.

Message - John Thompson

Song Leader - Dave Hatcher

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The Rev. Nathaniel Hynson, Rector
The Rev. Wesley E. Crowle, Hospital Chaplain

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

PALM SUNDAY . . . 8:00 a.m. The Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist
10:15 a.m. The Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist

MONDAY 7:30 p.m. The Holy Eucharist

TUESDAY 7:30 p.m. The Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY 7:30 p.m. The Holy Eucharist

MAUNDY THURSDAY (at Zumbro Lutheran Church) . . . 7:00 p.m. The Holy Eucharist. Combined choirs "The Seven Last Words"

GOOD FRIDAY 7:30 p.m. Good Friday Liturgy

HOLY SATURDAY . . . 7:30 p.m. Holy Saturday Liturgy and The Great Vigil

EASTER DAY 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. The Holy Eucharist