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The Berkshire Eagle

Vol. 101 — No. 188 © 1992 Eagle Publishing Co. Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Monday, November 2, 1992 32 pages — 50¢

Joel Librizzi / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Rachel Fletcher, who coordinated the river walk project, lofts flowers into the Housatonic after yesterday's ceremony in Great Barrington. River cleanups involving 2,800 hours of volunteer labor made the walk possible.

Housatonic River Walk opens

Volunteers inaugurate 136-foot-long path

By Abby Pratt
Berkshire Eagle Staff

GREAT BARRINGTON — The official opening of the Housatonic River Walk in the center of town was marked yesterday with the cutting of a long red ceremonial ribbon by dozens of volunteers' shears.

The 136-foot-long path along the river bank behind the Community Land Trust on Main Street was the result of more than 1,100 hours' labor by 400 volunteers, according to Rachel Fletcher of Division Street, who coordinated the project.

It includes a wooden stairway from Main Street to the walk and a canoe landing. The bank has been landscaped.

Equation of people

Yesterday's ceremony began with a brief speech by Fletcher to the standing-room-only crowd of at least 100 people somehow affiliated with the project.

"The river is only one part of the equation," said Fletcher. "The other is and always has been people . . . bringing the river back into our lives."

Susan Will, who heads the Community Land Trust, was the first of a dozen "greeters" to read a list of the volunteers' names in alphabetical order. Each presenter paused occasionally to dedicate his or her part of the list to something associated with the work that went into the first leg of the River Walk.

State Rep. Christopher J. Hodgkins, D-Lee, dedicated a portion of his list to neighboring property owner Melvin Katsh's coin collection, which was buried in the bank when the former Melvin's Pharmacy burned to the ground and its remains were pushed down the river bank.

Katsh and the Community Land Trust have granted an easement to the Great Barrington Land Conservancy for public use of the River Walk during daylight hours.

Negotiations with four other abutters for similar easements are in progress and are promising, Fletcher said yesterday. The council of St. Peter's Church has already approved the idea and is awaiting final approval from the Roman Catholic Diocese in Springfield, she said.

A 266-foot stretch of the walk on town land has been cleared by pupils at Searles Middle School on Bridge Street.

Started in 1988

The River Walk project began with the first of three river bank cleanups in July 1988, behind the Community Land Trust office where Fletcher was working at the time.

During the next four months, about 20 volunteers removed three decades of rubbish and debris from the river bank.

RIVER, continued on A5

Clinton runs a marathon vote blitz

By Gwen Ifill
New York Times News Service

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. — Gov. Bill Clinton, nearly voiceless from laryngitis, opened a 48-hour drive through Republican areas with stops yesterday in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey in an effort to cripple President Bush in a crucial belt of industrial states.

"I may have lost my voice, but with your help on Tuesday, we will win a new day for America," Clinton told a bone-chilled crowd at the airport here yesterday.

At one stop, he spoke briefly before ceding the microphone to his wife, Hillary. His shortest speech was 21 seconds in Cincinnati. But at Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport, he spoke somewhat longer to lay out the theme of the day: promises to restore economic optimism and fairness to the White House.

'We've fought for a year. We've got two days to go. Fight on.'

'Hope and fear'

"Don't forget there have been a lot of charges and countercharges and ups and downs, but when you strip it all away this election is a race between hope and fear. between the courage to change and the comfort of the status quo," he croaked. "Between those who say things are fine and those of us who believe that we can do better, that America deserves better and that starting on Tuesday, with your help, it will be a new day for this country."

Clinton's speaking voice was so bad that supporters at the tailgate party the campaign threw for him in Cincinnati in advance of the Cincinnati Bengals-Cleveland Browns game winced when he attempted to speak.

"I want you to remember," he said, just before he ceded the microphone to his wife, "we've fought for a year. We've got two days to go. Fight on."

Hillary Clinton followed the same course, exhorting supporters to vote and saying that a vote for her husband would "bring this country together."

Perhaps because he could no longer voice his criticism of the Bush administration, Clinton's campaign stops began to take on the aura of pep rallies yesterday as he turned up his overcoat collar against the chill, worked the crowds and played an impromptu energetic game of touch football with an aide in a parking lot outside Riverfront Stadium in Cincinnati.

At the airport in Wilkes-Barre, to underscore his point about optimism, the Democrat's advance staff played a selection of 1960s pop music, including Paula Abdul's "Promise of a New Day."

Everywhere Clinton traveled yesterday, he was greeted by supporters holding up two fingers in the traditional V-for-victory sign and chanting, "Two more days!"

Sees big turnout

Paul Begala, a senior Clinton strategist, predicted that there would be a "massive turnout" tomorrow as support for Clinton begins to solidify.

Clinton's voice, which seemed to strengthen slightly as the day wore on, lent some unintended levity. "I'm doing my Lauren Bacall," he confided to a reporter Saturday night as he prepared to tape the half-hour election eve program that will air tonight.

And in Pennsylvania yesterday, Sen. Harris D. Wofford told the crowd that Clinton "has given his voice to the nation and to you and

CLINTON, continued on A4

Israel, Jordan agree: Their goal is peace

By Clyde Haberman
New York Times News Service

JERUSALEM — Israel and Jordan have agreed in writing for the first time that their goal is a formal peace treaty within the framework of a comprehensive Israeli-Arab settlement.

Israeli Cabinet ministers described the agreement yesterday as a breakthrough. Some officials, providing details of a draft accord reached last week by both countries' negotiators, said they hoped that it would serve as a model for Israel's discussions with other parties in the Middle East peace talks, especially Syria and the Palestinians.

The officials also said the chief negotiator with Syria, Itamar Rabinovich, would be named Israel's ambassador to the United States, replacing Zalman Shoval, who has held the position for the last two years. An Israeli newspaper reported that the change would take place this month, but officials said that it would take longer and that in any event Rabinovich, who is rector of Tel Aviv University, would remain in charge of the talks with Syria.

For the Israelis, there was great significance that after four decades of a technical state of war Jordan had unambiguously accepted the words "peace treaty" in defining objectives.

In turn, Israel agreed to discuss water and land claims, the intricate problem of Palestinian refugees, and arms control, including the destruction of non-conventional weapons. A press report here yesterday said the two countries are talking as well about a "Dead-Red Canal" that would run from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea and would be used to control water levels and enhance tourism.

Praise from Amman

In Jordan, officials also praised the tentative agreement, reached four days ago in Washington and

PEACE, continued on A8

In The Eagle

Associated Press

Lisa Ondieki and Willie Mtolo won yesterday's New York Marathon. Story, more photos on Page C1.

Columbia returns

The space shuttle Columbia glides to a bull's-eye landing at Cape Canaveral, Fla., concluding its 13th orbital mission. Page A3.

No, thanks

Bosnia's Muslim-led government rejects Serb-made clothing brought by UNICEF for needy children in the ravaged capital of Sarajevo. Page A2.

Reader's Guide

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Weather: Today: Cloudy, rain. Tomorrow: Periods of rain. Complete weather, A2.

Bush tries to stir last-minute doubts

By Karen Hosler
The Baltimore Sun

STRATFORD, Conn. — President Bush raced across the country yesterday trying to stir last-minute doubts about Democratic nominee Bill Clinton as new polls suggested Bush was losing ground to his challenger.

The president said he believed in "my heart of hearts" that he will win tomorrow. But he sounded tired and dispirited after he was told that the latest CNN-USA Today daily tracking poll showed his support receding following a surge last week that had him advancing to a virtual tie with the longtime front-runner. [Story, Page A8.]

Short some states

Bush campaign manager Robert M. Teeter said that the president could count on states with only about 130 to 140 electoral votes and that another 61 electoral votes were leaning his way. But Bush needs at least 270 electoral votes to win.

Of the hotly contested battleground states, the Bush camp was claiming only Ohio.

"We didn't invent the name Slick Willie, it came from Arkansas," Bush told a boisterous rally of several thousand supporters at the Palace arena in Auburn Hills, Mich. "It is difficult for him to level with the American people."

As Bush aides passed out copies of an affidavit supporting a recently published report that Clinton representatives had removed his ROTC records from the University of Arkansas in the mid-1970s, the president cited conflicting explanations of Clinton's military draft record as prime evidence that the Democrat can't be trusted to give a straight story.

"When Governor Clinton first ran for office, his friends used special connections to seal his ROTC files and destroy all others," Bush said. "He's got to level with the American people on this kind of thing."

He and other critics claim Clinton avoided being drafted during the Vietnam War by obtaining a student deferment under the false pretense that he planned to join the Reserve Officers Training Corps at the University of Arkansas law school. Clinton says he gave up his de-

BUSH, continued on A4

Strident Perot questions Bush, Clinton

By Steven A. Holmes
New York Times News Service

LONG BEACH, Calif. — In his most stridently negative attacks on his presidential rivals since he re-entered the campaign, Ross Perot yesterday lambasted President Bush and Bill Clinton, suggesting that he would not hire either man to run a small business. He also seemed to question the Democratic nominee's morals because of past use of marijuana.

Speaking before a crowd of supporters at a rally in Long Beach Arena, the first of two appearances yesterday in California, Perot seemed to go out of his way to criticize and ridicule Clinton.

At the beginning of his speech he turned toward the Dixieland combo that had played to warm up the crowd and referred to the Arkansas governor's ability to play the saxophone.

"You guys call area code 501 first thing Wednesday morning,

PEROT, continued on A4

U.N. cease-fire apparently halts Angola fighting

LUANDA, Angola (AP) — The Angolan capital fell quiet early today after the United Nations announced a cease-fire across this southern African nation, where clashes between government and rebel troops had threatened to renew civil war.

About 200 people died in fighting in the capital and other cities Saturday and yesterday, unconfirmed reports said.

The cease-fire was to take effect at 12:01 a.m. local time today, and details were to be worked out by U.N. officials, according to a statement issued in New York by Joe Silva, a spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

The truce appeared to be holding in the early hours in Luanda, site of heavy clashes for two days. The city calmed just before midnight.

There were no reports on Angolan state radio of fighting elsewhere, but there was no official announcement that a cease-fire had taken hold.

Edmund de Jarnette, head of the U.S. mission, described the situation as "still confused." At least one U.S.-based oil company was working to evacuate its employees from Angola, he said.

The U.N. statement also said that foreigners being held would be released, but it did not elaborate.

"Some foreigners' movement was impeded because of the heat of the situation," said Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill, a spokesman at the U.N. press office in New York. He said he had no other details.

Western diplomats, who demanded anonymity, said the cease-fire was reached after a series of radio and face-to-face contacts between the government and rebels, with U.N., U.S. and Portuguese mediation.

The fighting had threatened to ruin 1991 peace accords between UNITA — the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola — and the ruling MPLA party, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola.

The accords halted a 16-year civil war in what was once a Cold War battleground. Cuba and the Soviet Union armed the government, and the United States and South Africa backed UNITA.

At least 350,000 people died in the war.

Assaults

Before the cease-fire yesterday, government forces backed by armored personnel carriers and armed civilians moved against UNITA strongholds in the capital, pounding the rebels with mortar shells and machine-gun fire.

Armed civilians including teenagers fought alongside government police against the rebels.

Portuguese news reports said

ANGOLA, continued on A8

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