

## EPILOGUE

ON DECEMBER 18, 1988, as the early evening darkness settled over Goeres Square, a small group of carolers gathered at the gazebo next to the Blanchard House Museum. With voices lifted in song they celebrated the Christmas season just as generations of townspeople had done over the preceding century. Their music, as it drifted away into the night, carried with it the final vestiges of Avon's centennial year.

It had been a good year indeed, a full twelve months of celebration, homecoming and civic pride. In November, for example, the story of Derek Staffier was brought to national attention. Legally blind and baffling a host of other physical disabilities, young Derek had earned a spot on the championship cross country team at Avon High School. Proving that courage and endurance are all around us, he ran for the fun of it, unafraid to test his own limits. At year's end, Derek was a student at Massasoit Community College in Brockton. (Note 1)

Throughout 1988 Carl Lundgren's Centennial Committee planned and co-ordinated numerous activities designed to commemorate Avon's 100 years as a town. On February 20 an overflow crowd of 540 people packed Lantana's in Randolph to enjoy the Centennial Ball, chaired by Betty-Ann Klimas. The next day Bill Enright, who lives now in the old Moses Curtis homestead, organized a reenactment of Avon's first town meeting.

On June 26 the Centennial Field Day, held on the grounds of Avon High School, featured rides, games and evening fireworks. The coordinator of the event, Police Chief Robert Geary, was surprised when a small gift was handed to him during the festivities. Inside the package was the old town marshal's badge that had once been worn by his great-grandfather Cornelius, one of Avon's original constables.

Scarcely three months later, on Sunday, October 2, the largest crowd in

Avon history - at least 20,000 persons - was on hand to watch the Centennial Parade. The planning committee headed by Francis A. Hegarty, Jr., had been able to secure the participation of the famous Mummers Band of Philadelphia. Several floats were entered in the parade, including an impressive tableau depicting the U.S. Marines raising the Stars and Stripes over Iwo Jima in 1945. This float was sponsored by the Frank M. Noyes VFW Post 8892. (Note 2)

The celebration continued throughout the fall, and on November 10, 1988 artist Ruth M. England donated a beautiful oil painting to the town. Presently hanging in Buckley Center, the painting depicts the grace and serenity of the town square, with the Avon Soldiers' Monument as the center.

It was, then, a grateful town which celebrated Christmas, 1988. As the music of the carolers filled the air around Goeres Square, the town of Avon, laden with both the history and challenges for the future, prepared to embark upon its second century.

## NOTES

1. See John E. Frook, "Going the Distance," Family Circle. November 1, 1988, pp. 98-102.
2. This work has not touched upon the participation of Avon men in either the Korean Conflict or the war in Vietnam. This comes from no disrespect of their heroism or dedication to duty. After World War II the state adjutant general discontinued the longstanding practice of listing soldiers by hometown and instead instituted a system whereby all soldiers are listed alphabetically. Thus it becomes almost a monumental task to examine the records of all Massachusetts servicemen in the hopes of gleaning the names of those from a particular town. This valuable public service will, I hope, be undertaken by some future Avon historian.