EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ARNOLD EXPEDITION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May, 2015



Calendar of Coming AEHS Events

May 16, AEHS Trail Clearing Trip

June 13 Fort Halifax Reenactment Weekend

June 20 AEHS Directors Meeting,

Sept. 19 AEHS Annual Meeting,

details in Sept. Messenger

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Feature Article, Quebec Captured!
- Artoc;e. Tje BDA Rpcl
- AEHS Directors to Meet
- Ft. Halifax Reenactment & Celabration
- Trail Work Day

Celebration and Reenactment at Fort Halifax

The town of Winslow will be conducting a weekend celebration and reenactment at historic Fort Halifax in that town. They are kicking off a campaign to raise funds to upgrade and renovate the park on the confluence of the Sebasticook and Kennebec Rivers.

The fort was build in 1754 during the French and Indian War. It was built to guard both the routes leading to the Penobscot along the Sebasticook River and the route to Canada along the Kennebec.

The wooden blockhouse is the oldest remaining structure of its kind in the United States.

It will be held the weekend of June 12-14 with the main events to take place on Saturday, June 13. New England Reenactors for the Colonial period are being invited and will set up their camps on the point on Friday, June 12.

On June 13 there will be a whole series of events that will begin at 9:00 AM and extend throughout the day. A period encampment will be set up along with many solders in period costume. Musket firings and battle senario will also be held.

As the event firms up, watch the local Waterville Morning Sentinel for more details. The AEHS will be represented there under the guidance of AEHS Directors Fred Clark, Hank Dillenbeck and Steve Clark.

On Sunday, June 14, the action will shift to Ft. Western in Augusta for a another series of events at the fort. Events there will be published in late spring. Fort Western was the supply deport for Fort Halifax, 18 miles up the Kennebec River. The men of the 1775 Expedition encamped at both forts on their assent of the Kennebec, on their way to attempt the capture of Quebec City.

We invite all members of the AEHS to attend this event. It should be a most interesting event taking place on very historic ground.

AEHS Directors to Meet

The AEHS directors will meet on Sat. June 20 on beautiful and historic Swan Island, a short ferry ride from downtown Richmond. The group will leave the parking area and board the ferry at 9:00 AM. The meeting will be held in one of the historic houses on the Island, a short distance from the ferry landing. Bring your own email, sclark60@live.com lunch and we will be finished by 1:00 PM. Arrangements for a truck tour of the island can be made as well. Henry Dearborn, Aaron Burr and others stayed here for one night while ascending the river to the Colburn shipyard in AEHS members are always welcome at directors meetings and if any member wishes to attend, please call President Jay Robbins to co-ordinate the ferry ride and get discussed the reopening of the new Great details on where and when to meet. His telephone number is (207) 737-2239.

It should be a most interesting meeting, and contact with a history of a time past. Hope some of our members will join us.

Annual Trail Clearing Day to be Held

Carrying Place Trail will be held on Saturday, May 16, with an inclement day date of the following day, Sunday. Because of the fact that we have two crews to operate, one on the west side, near West Carry Pond and another on the east side, near East Carry Pond, there will have to be a coordinating process to divide us into Therefore, please call or email two crews. coordinator, Steve Clark a week ahead of this date. He can then discuss which group, east or west, that you wish to participate. Both groups will meet at a specific site and begin activities at 8:30 in the morning.

Bring chain saws and brush clippers as the main tools to clear trail. Pack in a trail lunch and a rain poncho just in case. We hope to have a good crew present to open the trail for the upcoming season. All new signs for the trail have been erected except for the new

interpretive sign to be located at Arnold Point on West Carry Pond. This beautiful routed sign has been recently completed by the MATC and will be erected on cedar posts, sometime this spring.

All are welcome. Good weather guaranteed! No black flies are allowed.

Contact Steve Clark at (207) 510-1230 or

Directors Appear on TV

AEHS directors Rocky Freeman and Kenny Wing, have recently appeared on a TV program WSKI, a local station near the Sugarloaf development.

One program occurred in February focusing on the AEHS as an organization, and Carrying Place Portage Trail last fall.

The second, in late March dealt with both the history of the expedition and the recovery of artifacts.

It is this type of public discussion that will aid the Society in presenting to the public, the expedition's heritage to not only Mainers, but The AEHS's annual clearing of the Great the American and Canadian people as well.

Thanks Rocky and Kenny for jobs well

Major revamping of AEHS Website

AEHS Director Rocky Freeman and his son Josh have spent considerable time in a complete overhaul of the Society's website this winter. We think you will be very pleased with their efforts. We would encourage you to examine their work. We also would recommend that you encourage friends to go online to look it over.

Rocky and Josh have archived past Society newsletters, so that one can go back in time to look over old articles about history and AEHS activities. It is another step forward for the Society. Thanks again Rocky and Josh for a job very well done. The Society website is

arnoldsmarch.com

The BDA Rock by Rocky Freeman

In the year 1903 Justin H. Smith wrote his book on the Arnold Expedition. The army was tasked to overthrow Quebec City and assure a 14th Canadian Colony that would stand with us to defeat England.

During Smith's journey through various regions of Maine, undertaking his research for the book, he described a section of the Kennebec where the Great Carrying Place began.

"...is very remarkable, a large brook emptying itself into the river just above [Carrying Place Stream], which comes out of the first lake. When abreast of the carrying place in the river, you will observe at about four hundred yards above, a large mountain in the shape of a shugar loaf [Hawk Ledges], at the foot of which the river turns to the eastward. This mountain, when you are at the carrying-place seems to rise out of the middle of the river."

He goes on to say, "Beside the river, just below the brook just mentioned, are four or five acres of cleared ground and a couple of small farm-houses. I inquired of the venerable proprietor of one of these places, as I did everywhere, for traditions and especially for relics."

[said the farmer] "Oh yes, there used to be a big rock in my mowing field, with 'B.D.A. 1775' on it; but the durned thing was in the way, and I blasted it out"

"What did those letters mean,....' B.D.A.?"

"Why, Bennie Dick Arnold, of course"

This rock has been a mystery for 240 years, but this summer it was solved...up to a point. It was not a rock in a farmers field but a rock that is forever permanent in our history.

The current rock still holds an expedition mystery, yet to be discovered. However it still exists! The rock proves that many historical suppositions may be misleading at times, can eventually be uncovered.

[Ed. Note. The farm described by Smith, and the actual mouth of Carrying Place Stream, now lies under the impoundment of Wyman Lake, which closed over this area in 1936. The first several hundred yards of the Great Carrying Place Portage Trail are also inundated.]



Quebec Captured!

By Stephen Clark

[Ed. Note: One of the favorite pastimes for historians is to discuss "what ifs..." There were many mistakes or poor estimates made before and during the 1775 Quebec Expedition. Because this was a fledgling army in the making, this was to be expected. Other than the ongoing siege of Boston, this was the first offensive action of the war.

This article attempts to project an alternative to what actually occurred. This alternative was within the capabilities and resources of the army at that time. As often occurs, the key reasons for the inability to capture Quebec were made in front of the fireplace at Washington's headquarters in Cambridge. So for a while, let's do a bit of speculative rewriting of history. Another "what if."]

In August of 1775, General Washington and high ranking staff officers met with the newly appointed commander of a proposed secret expedition. Its objective was to attack and capture Quebec City as a part of a larger strategy to bring all of English Canada into the American cause. The meeting was held at the General's headquarters in Cambridge.

After lengthy deliberations, it had been decided to conduct a two pronged attack, the main army proceeding up the Champlain Valley into Canada, the other through the wilds of the Maine wilderness. Orders had already been dispatched to Albany and General Schuyler to commence the attack up Lake Champlain.

The officers at the table were pouring over maps, journals, correspondence, and personal lists, considering the many options concerning the secret expedition through the Maine wilderness.

This second army would utilize a little known route ascending the Kennebec River, through the mountain wilderness, then descending the Chaudiere River to the St. Lawrence near Quebec. There were serious logistical issues confronting the leaders.

The Albany army's route up Lake Champaign had only to deal with a slight elevation gain of less than 100 feet and few portages. They already held Ft. Ticonderoga on the lake. This allowed easy water access for the transportation of the needed tons of military supplies and food necessary to support an army in the field.

The officers planning the Kennebec route had no idea of the crucial elevation gain on this route. It had been described by an English engineer named Montresor who had explored the route in 1763. He said there were many portages.

The planners had already estimated that more than 100 tons of food must be transported. [The elevation actually turned out to be two high points, both about 1600 feet.] The elevation had a great bearing on the overall speed of the expedition.

The officers at the table were finally realizing that the logistical problems of this huge weight to be transported over an unknown elevation, requiring many portages threatened the possible success of the expedition. Only by speed, stealth and surprise could Quebec fall into their hands. Another factor that had been discovered, was that the many miles of portage trails would have to be widened. According to Capt. Colburn and others familiar with the route, the portage trails were only wide enough for one person carrying a canoe. To portage the bateaux, the path would have to be widened to 8-10 feet. This would substantially slow the progress of the expedition. The gross weight to be transported at the beginning of the expedition was estimated to be approximately 130-140 tons, plus the weight of the individual bateaux, oars, paddles, and setting poles. Montresor's journal had not hinted at the total elevation to be overcome, but the number of portages he described, indicated it was very substantial. Certainly it would slow the expedition. (Cont. Page 5)

The entire strategy for success was dependent upon speed of march and surprise of the defenders of Ouebec.

Arnold had estimated that using a waterborne transport would require 45 days to reach Quebec. [This turned out to be badly underestimated. It took 61 days to reach Quebec's walls.]

Nor could they consider carrying more tons of heavy cannon to batter the walls of the city. They did not have them at that point in the war.

Only by speed of march could they hope to succeed.

45 or more days was far too slow to achieve surprise. They must pass through 200 miles of wilderness from the jumping-off place at Fort Western to reach the first of the French settlements on the Chaudiere River where more food could be obtained.

The traditional mode of moving large armies and their tons of supplies in Colonial times was by the use of heavy wooden boats called bateaux or by ships. All the officers at the table knew this. General Washington himself had participated in Braddock's terrible defeat, 20 years earlier.

At that point, they looked at each other, perplexed, as it appeared there was no alternative to the use of bateaux in order to transport the many tons of supplies necessary to sustain the army. Nor could they send them into the St. Lawrence Valley by ship, as the most powerful navy in the world would have prevented that.

[ed. note. The army could be easily transported by small coastal ships from Newburyport to Ft. Western quiet safely. But at that point when the army transferred to bateaux, the army would be slowed to a crawl. It would average less than five miles a day. Once they abandoned most of their remaining bateaux at the Height of Land, and proceeded on foot, they averaged approximately 12 miles a day through the wilderness, even in the desperate physical condition they were in at that time.]

Back at the conference room planning became bogged down. Once the officers recognized that water borne travel for the army north of Ft. Western would be so slow that the element of surprise upon which the success of the army depended, would be lost. They were unsure as to how to proceed. Silence!

Finally, Col. Arnold, who had been appointed as the expedition's commander, said, "there is another way, although it will be novel and some may consider it risky." The officers including Washington, all gazed at him expectantly. "The issue is obvious. In order to march rapidly, we cannot be burdened with tons of food that would limit the speed we must travel.

"We cam use a cache system. By that I mean we can get local patriots to carry food and other supplies ahead to several locations along the route. I calculate it will require that we cache about four tons of food at each location. This is based on the consumption of three pounds of food per soldier, per day. Each cache will provide for each man for two to three days in advance. Each man will carry his own food which will mean about ten pounds each. This is based on establishing four locations along the Kennebec and Dead Rivers. This is within the abilities of the local settlers living along the valley as far north at Norridgewock Falls. According to Capt. Colburn, boats and men can be found to carry the supplies upstream, supplemented by food purchased from local farms. At least two men will be left as guards at each cache site. Locally purchased cattle can be driven to each site and slaughtered as each contingent reaches the site. Local men at each of the caches after the food is gone, can double in purpose by transporting disabled or injured soldiers back to Ft. Western."

"Beyond the Kennebec, we need an Indian screen that can establish two additional caches, one on the lower Dead River, the other somewhere near the large lake near the Boundary Mountains, that Montresor described. To these two sites, we can drive cattle for food or use horses. (Cont. Page 6)

Page 6

I estimate six at each site to provide fresh meat. That should carry us to the French settlers near Sartigon where more food can be obtained. Our Indian friends will also be able to provide meat from moose and deer hunted along the way."

"By using the cache system, the army will be on foot and can cover between 10–20 miles per day according to conditions."

"The weight of the military supplies and tents can be carried on pack horses, each carrying about 3-400 pounds. This will require about three horses for each of the 13 companies, plus some for the staff and a few extras to replace horses lost. That would mean we need about 45 horses. We will need to purchase and transport some of them from Newburyport. Also, if we run short of food in the wilderness, we can use the horses."

"This arrangement will require only a narrow path, wide enough for a single file of men or animals. This will eliminate the need to waste time and energy to widen portage trails."

"I would recommend that as there will be little or no contact with the enemy until we reach the St. Lawrence, that we divide the army into four divisions, of about 250 to 300 soldiers. Each of these four contingents can be started one day apart from Ft. Western. This will avoid congestion on the trails or at campsites. Also I recommend our Indians act as a screen ahead of us to guard against surprise. They can also be employed to carefully mark the path through the wilderness sections we must traverse. Beyond the Kennebec caches, the Indians can also act as hunters, to bring in fresh meat."

"It is my estimate that from the time we leave Ft. Western and begin the march, it will take the army around 25-30 days, including several days to rest. This will put us before the walls of Quebec, well before the onset of cold weather. We can obtain cold weather clothing after the city has been taken. We should plan to leave Ft. Western about Sept. 15, which means we should arrive at the city after crossing the St. Lawrence, on or before Oct. 15. We can then immediately begin the attack before reenforcements to the city can arrive."

"It is my estimate that if we begin with about 1100 soldiers, we will loose 10-15 percent, so we will have about 900 effectives for the attack, plus any we can gain among the French settlements. We will not use the Indians as a part of the attack as they, as you know, are not effective in this type of warfare."

"We suspect that most English defenders will have been sent upriver to try to stop Gen.

Montgomery's army moving into Canada via the Champlain Valley and Montreal. Quebec will most likely be lightly defended and surprised. We will make no frontal assaults as we have no cannon. So the Lower Town is venerable and the city can be invested that way. Once the city is taken, any English troops still in Canada can be cut off and their arms or supplies will be ours."

"We need to confer with the leader of the local forces along the Kennebec, Capt. Colburn. He operates a small shippard south of Ft. Western and can employ locals to transport food and supplies to the three caches along the Kennebec above Ft. Western. He can also help us to secure the horses needed. Col. Tracy in Newburyport can also begin immediately to ship supplies and horses into the Kennebec."

"There are several other needs for this plan to succeed. Since the army will be on foot, and shoes will break down frequently in the wet paths, each company must have several cobblers or leather workers to repair and replace damaged shoes. Also, we will need several butchers to cut up the cattle and horses, to provide fresh meat for the soldiers."

"If this plan is approved, I will need to depart for Newburyport to work with Col. Tracy for the (Cont. Page 7)

arrangements for transportation of supplies and men to Ft. Western. I will then proceed to that place to begin arrangements with Capt. Colburn for the establishment of the caches before the army arrives. Lt. Col's. Greene and Enos can manage the departure of each of the 13 companies to Newburyport and then on to the Kennebec at Ft. Western."

"If it meets with your excellency's approval, I will leave for Newburyport before the end of August. The 13 combat companies should begin the two day march up to Newburyport about Sept. 4-5. It will then take the ships three days along the coast and up the Kennebec to reach the head of tide at Ft. Western. There we can organize and equip the army into four divisions".

Gen. Washington and the staff after a long discussion approved Arnold's plan and the wheels began to turn.

Arnold was at Ft. Western on Sept. 8 overseeing the three contingents of boats striking upriver to establish the various caches. Each group consisted of about 10 boats collected from existing settlements along the lower river. They were filled with supplies shipped up from Newburyport and collected from surrounding settlers. Luckily, it was harvest time.

As the troops arrived at Ft. Western, Col. Arnold soon organized the first division of three rifle companies under the command of Capt. Daniel Morgan. They would be the army's spearhead. On Sept. 15 the first division began the 18 mile trek to Ft. Halifax via a rough road along the east side of the Kennebec. It reached Ft. Halifax the same day. The following day it crossed the shallow river below Ticonic Falls and continued north along the west side of the river. Each succeeding day, another division left Ft. Western following the well worn route northward. Lt. Col. Enos's three companies making up the fourth division left on Sept. 18th. Arnold accompanied this division.

Below is the presumed progress of Morgan's lead division. Each of the subsequent three divisions were one day apart.

15 Sept. Marched from Ft. Western. Reached Ft. Halifax

17 Sept. Reached first cache at the Wesson Farm, four miles below Skowhegan Falls. The next day, after reaching the falls, they crossed the Kennebec to the east side passing several farms.

19 Sept. Reached second cache at site of the old Indian village near Norridgewock Falls. Local settlers help to support and supply the army and its horses. This was the last contact with valley settlers. The army remained on the east side of the river to avoid the two large tributaries, the Sandy and Carrabassett Rivers. There were no paths or roads above this point so a rough path had been blazed in the woods paralleling the river.

Just above Caratunk Falls, they crossed to the west side of the river at a shallow ford as the going was easier on the valley intervals.

22 Sept. Reached the third and last cache on the Kennebec at the mouth of Carrying Place Stream. The Great Carrying Place Portage Trail began here. A well blazed path, one person wide had been cleared and cattle tracks marked the way.

23 Sept. Left the Kennebec and traversed the entire 13 miles of the GCP to the Dead River.

24 Sept. Morgan's division crossed to the north side of the Dead River at a shallow spot near what is now Hurricane Falls. This was followed west to an Indian campsite on a point of land on the Dead River. A flagstaff was erected here [this was the later site of Flagstaff Village]. The next day was a badly needed day of rest. They had covered 115 hard miles in 10 days. Cattle were butchered for fresh meat. This was as far as they were to be driven.

The day of rest allowed them time to repair their boots and shoes for the rugged terrain ahead. Arnold had caught up with the head of the army at this point. He would stay with them going forward. Greene's second division caught up with them here. A number of sick and injured soldiers

(Cont. Page 8

Page 8

were sent back here.

26 Sept. Morgan's division struck due west, leaving the winding Dead River. They followed a newly blazed path due west. In eight miles it rejoined the North Branch of the river. This was followed NW into the wild Boundary Mountains country, passing many falls.

[because of the expedition's early start, by luck, it entirely missed the disastrous late fall hurricane.]

By sticking to the east side, they avoided serious marshy country near what is now Alder Stream. The next day they reached the Chain of Ponds. At the end of the day, they reached another stopping point at a prominent point near Natanis Pond. Here their Indian allies met them with fresh meat, although several horses also had to be butchered.

29 Sept. Morgan's division and their remaining pack horses pushed on along the narrow Height of Land Portage Trail passing Horseshoe, Mud and Arnold Ponds. They then struck north uphill to a mountain pass, then descended to a beautiful meadow. Here, the Indians had brought more fresh moose meat. Remaining food was getting short, but Arnold decided a day of rest for horses and men was needed before the final push for the French settlements and the St. Lawrence. The horses who had scanty food since leaving the Kennebec feasted on the rich grass in the meadow.

1 Oct. The lead elements of the army departed the Beautiful Meadow for the French settlements. The Indians had already blazed a route around the swamp country at the south end of Lac Megantic. Soon they reached the east shore of Lac Megantic, following it northward. From the 1100 foot lake it was all downhill to the St. Lawrence. The march was rapid along the Chaudiere River and on Oct. 4th they encountered the first of the French settlements at Sartigon. Here Arnold began to purchase food for the following divisions still to emerge out of the wilderness. He immediately dispatched several officers and a small contingent down river to procure boats for the St. Lawrence crossing.

5 Oct. As Green's and Meigs, divisions emerged from the wilds, Arnold and the first division struck north down the valley on a rough road. Enos's fourth division was only one day behind.

7 Oct. The large village of St. Marie was reached, and Arnold halted the army here to allow its reorganization. Enos's fourth division came in on the 9th and plans were made for the last push to the St. Lawrence. Men were issued powder and ball to make cartridges. They did not have a large supply of powder as some had become wet. It was estimated that they had enough for about twenty rounds each.

11 Oct. All four divisions of the army numbering 900 strong, left for the St. Lawrece. On Oct. 13th they reached the St. Lawrence at Caldwell's Mill, directly across from Wolfe's Cove. They encamped there and waited for the arrival of various craft being collected for the river crossing. They could see the spires of Quebec four miles downstream. There were two British warships anchored at Quebec, but they had not moved to intercept them. Word would have reached the city that an American force had arrived and frantic activities to defend the city must be underway. 16 Oct. Under the cover of darkness, the army began the crossing of the mile wide river. They had only enough boats to carry 150 soldiers per trip. Three were accomplished that night. The remainder were brought safely across the next night. Scouts were immediately sent out to reconnoiter. About 50 were left at Caldwell's to cover the south side of the river.

18 Oct. Arnold's spies had told him that the city was lightly defended and that there was panic in the city. Most of the regular English soldiers and Gov. Carlton had sailed upriver weeks before to confront the other American army approaching Montreal. Only a few regulars were left, plus some confront auxiliaries and some sailors maned the walls. The gates had been closed.

Arnold and his officers decided there was no reason not to commence an attack immediately
The attack was designed as follows. Lt. Col. Green would use the boats and in the darkness,
two companies would float silently down the river and land directly at the Lower Town. They were
(Cont. Page 9)

to proceed only as far as the road leading up to the Upper Town to prevent any reenforcements from coming down.

Lt. Col. Enos would be in reserve covering any sallies from either the St. Louis or St. Johns Gates. Two of his companies would also create a diversion. Another company would position itself in St. Roche to cover the Palace Gate to prevent any sally to the rear of the main force.

This force of eight companies, approximately 600 soldiers, lead by Arnold and Morgan would rapidly march through the suburb of St. Roche and attach the Lower Town. They also carried two kegs of powder, to blow any temporary barricades.

The attack was to begin at 11:00 PM and luckily it was a cloudy night.

Greene's force on the river landed without opposition but soon was engaged near St. Louis Square. Arnold's main force received several volleys, but soon drove off the weak English forces. By 3:00 AM they had secured the Lower Town and overcame several lightly defended batteries. From them they were able to replenish their gunpowder supplies.

After joining Greene, Arnold ordered the soldiers to proceed up the steep connector road to the Upper Town. They amazingly found the gate at the top of the hill still open and lightly guarded. Morgan's riflemen, supported by the two Pennsylvania companies screaming like banshies rushed through the gate and the frightened garrison fled. Quebec was theirs!

Lt. Col. Greene had been killed, Major Bigelow badly wounded and Arnold had his hat ventilated by a ball. The Americans lost 75 men killed or wounded, a light loss against a fortified city. But the surprise had worked. Quebec had been captured!

Aftermath

The Americans held the city only for seven months. In May, 1776 a huge fleet and army under the command of Gen. Johnny Bourgogne came up the river with more than 10,000 crack troops. These were carried by the powerful English navy consisting of 43 warships and transports. This was actually observed by Major Meigs and Capt. Dearborn who where being paroled and on a ship bound for Halifax.

Gen. Montgomery and Col. Arnold recognized that they stood in danger of being bottled up and forced to surrender the entire American Army which had grown during the winter to 2,000 men. Also, they were too far from their source of supply, hundreds of miles away in Albany. Therefore they wisely abandoned the city-trap, and retired up the St. Lawrence toward Montreal.

That retreat would be a series of defeats, even losing Ft. Ticonderoga.

It was all a part of a story that would climax on the farms and fields of Saratoga in the fall of 1777. There, the proud English army, 7,000 strong, was defeated and the entire army surrendered. Historians have determined it was one of the world's 15 most decisive battles. It all began at a planning table in Cambridge, in the wilds of Maine, and before the walls of Quebec!

AEHS New Membership Form Note: membership fees change after Jan. 1, 2014
Mail this in with your check and membership info. Include your phone
number and email address if this is acceptable to you. Make check payable
to AEHS.

Category:	New fees as of Jan. 1, 2015
Individual Member	\$ 30
Family Membership	\$ 35
Contributing Membership	\$ 75
Life Membership	\$ 250 (one time payment)
Additional donation for Society programs	\$ (tax deductible)

- To order the Booklet, **The Great Carrying Place Portage Trail**, send check for \$5.00 to AEHS. For non-members, add one additional dollar for postage (\$ 6.00 total).
- To order the AEHS map of the 1775 Expedition's route from the Kennebec River to Lac Megantic, Canada, send check for \$ 5.95 to AEHS. These can be ordered unfolded, for framing or wall mounting for an additional \$ 6.00 to cover cost of shipping tube and postage.

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