

The Last Great Place In the Spirit of Janus

By Michael Capuzzo

Real change spins 'round us bewitchingly sheathed in winter glory. Bears slumber, woodchucks dig deeper, folks layer on wool and eggnog. It's the coldest of times and the warmest, as we wintering animals fall into survival rhythms and stories, headlong into the most desperate, sweetest stories. Together, no matter our flag or faith, we form hushed audiences to mark the death and rebirth of the world. These are mercurial days when a sermon by Wellsboro Presbyterian pastor Glen Hallead—accompanied by Vivaldi's *Gloria*, the song the angels sang to the shepherds, recorded in St. Luke's account of Christ's birth—can change a single heart, and thereby all existence. It's the time when Peggy Dettwiler raises her baton to direct the "Winter Wonderland" concert at Steadman Hall, and transforms into a white-robed goddess summoning voices from Mansfield University students and the grave (Debussy, Irving Berlin, a 17th Century song from *King Arthur*).

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In the January spirit of change—we invoke here the Roman god Janus, the two-faced one who looks back and ahead—*Mountain Home* this month explores the earth-shattering change wrought by the Marcellus Shale. When in history has so small a place (Wellsboro, pop. 3,245) been the fulcrum of so vast an array of forces? The fate of the planet and millions of people, the energy we use or don't, the geopolitics that shape war and peace, the fate of an historic president this fall all hinge in some way on the success or failure of the fracking a mile beneath our feet.

And not just beneath Wellsboro, of course, but the Twin Tiers and beyond. In this month's Marcellus cover story you'll meet Ken Davidson, a new sheriff in town of sorts. Full disclosure: I met Davidson as my wife and I leased our house to his safety technicians, and if that implies a conflict, he was too good a story to pass up. His remarkable tale is the closest I could come to peering through the eyes of Janus for the readers of *Mountain Home*.

Mountain Home also introduces for 2012 expanded event and cultural listings, "Doings 'Round the Mountain." Email me at mikec@mountainhomemag.com with listings. Meanwhile, put Wolfram Jobst's travel photography exhibit on your calendar, Jan. 8-29 at Gmeiner Art & Cultural Center, 134 Main St., Wellsboro. *Beauty, Faith and Power* is the title of the exhibit, and I can tell you Wolf's vision possesses all of those things, so apt for these coldest and warmest of days. 📷

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