

# hilltopper

Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume 2 , Issue 10

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

October/November 2009

## TMHSAA Celebrates Its First Anniversary

### ASSOCIATION ACCOMPLISHED MUCH IN OUR FIRST YEAR

BY: JOSEPH LINDLEY,  
President, TMHSAA

It's hard to believe that October 2009 marks our first anniversary as an association! Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined the success we have had in our first year in business. Several hundred alumni worked together to accomplish the impossible! You are all to be commended for the extraordinary work you accomplished this year.

Projects we completed over the past 12 months include:

1. The completion of the first ever full inventory of the Tourtellotte Collection. All the artifacts were cleaned and the art work dusted. We encourage everyone to come and see the work!

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*This picture was taken in August 2009 during the Memorial Room restoration project. The photo shows the stencil restorers doing their work.*

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## 2010 TMHS ALUMNI BANQUET

MARK THE DATE!

June 19, 2010

at the Thompson Speedway

Tickets available in March – Reservations can be made by Emailing [TMHSAA@Charter.net](mailto:TMHSAA@Charter.net)

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2. Restoration and repainting of the Tourtellotte Memorial Room. This is the first time in 70 years that the room has been painted. The restoration included new stenciling, lights, air ducts, and reconditioned marble mosaic floor.
3. We added two large oak historical display cases on the second floor of the 1909 TMHS building. They now hold many donated historical artifacts dating back to 1907.
4. We re-established the **hilltopper** newsletter and have produced 12 editions. Check them out at <http://www.thompsonpublicschools.org/TMHSAA/index.html>
5. We had the first TMHSAA banquet in many decades, and we filled the Thompson Speedway! We are already planning our second banquet.
6. We advocated for the Tourtellottes and led the charge in establishing a new town ordinance that protects the Tourtellotte Trust for the next 100 years, and through our work, we now have a representative on the Tourtellotte Board of Trustees.
7. We applied for and were granted State of Connecticut State Historic Register recognition for the 1909 Tourtellotte building.
8. We petitioned the Thompson Board of Education and were granted permission to establish an alumni office and archive room in the 1909 building. We now have many hundreds of articles, pictures and artifacts collected.
9. We were instrumental in the rededication ceremony held on September 9, 2009. This event was attended by nearly 600 students, teachers and citizens and celebrated the Tourtellottes and 100 years of learning at TMHS.
10. We applied for 501-C status with the U.S. Government, and expect to obtain this status within the next few months.
11. We had nearly a dozen art and curatorial experts visit TMHS to help us establish a direction in regards to the art collection and Memorial Room.
12. We produced several publications to include the Rededication, Inventory Process, and banquet booklets. All are available to members for a nominal fee.
13. We established a data base from which we hope to build a better tool for alumni to get reconnected.

## Projects we are looking at for 2010 include:

1. Completing the auditorium seat project. We still have seats left!
2. Restoring Mrs. Tourtellotte's 1895 Steinway piano.
3. Restoring Mrs. Tourtellotte's music books.
4. Developing an interactive website where we can share all the photos we have logged.
5. Restoring several of the damaged paintings.
6. Developing the Tourtellotte Committee that would be responsible for managing the Memorial Room and establishing better methods to make the room available to students and citizens.
7. Membership recruiting drive.
8. Installing a fire suppression system in the Memorial Room
9. Restoring the floors in the 1909 building.

The accomplishments of this past year demonstrate what a motivated group can do. If you have any ideas for 2010 projects, please pass them along. OR if you are interested in becoming part of the team, or would like to help with any of the above projects, please contact us at [TMHSAA@charter.net](mailto:TMHSAA@charter.net).

## WE WANT YOUR OLD PICTURES AND STORIES!

We are looking for pictures and stories from your time at TMHS. They can be about anything Tourtellotte and can include athletics, classmates, plays, special events, etc.

We have a new hilltopper editor. If you have any stories, please send them to Kris Blanchard '87 at:

[jkblanchard87@charter.net](mailto:jkblanchard87@charter.net)

or mail them to TMHSAA, PO Box 347 No. Grosvenordale, CT 06255. We'll scan them and send them back.

## **LOCAL HURLER INDUCTED INTO EASTERN CONNECTICUT HALL OF FAME**

**Brian Murphy, a Thompson Native recognized  
for his accomplishments on and off the field**

BY: J. Lindley  
October 27, 2009

Over the years, Tourtellotte Memorial High School of North Grosvenordale, Connecticut has produced a number of talented baseball players, but few could throw a baseball like Brian Murphy. Murphy, a 1975 Tourtellotte Memorial High School graduate, and five other outstanding Eastern Connecticut State University scholar athletes were inducted into the Eastern Connecticut State University Athletic Hall of Fame. In a ceremony held at the Eastern Student Center on October 25, 2009, six former Eastern athletes were recognized for their efforts and accomplishments both on and off the court and playing field.

During his baseball career at Tourtellotte Memorial, Murphy became one of the area's most dominant high school pitchers. Among his many, well-deserved accolades, Murphy earned All State honors three of his four years at Tourtellotte. In addition to baseball, Murphy also excelled on the soccer field and basketball court while at TMHS.

In 1975, Murphy joined the Eastern Connecticut State University baseball team and began playing for the well-known Division III champion head coach, Bill Halowaty. According to Dr. David Yeo, Co-Chairman of Eastern Hall of Fame Committee, "As a junior, Murphy led Division III with 12 victories and New England Division III with a 1.61 ERA (11<sup>th</sup> nationally) on the way to third-team All-American accolades." He went on to state, "Murphy compiled a 24-8 record with three saves and a 2.62 ERA in 209 2/3 innings. He compiled a remarkable 15 of his 29 career starts with four shutouts, 178 strikeouts, and 81 walks. Murphy won nearly one-quarter of Eastern's 102 games in his three-year varsity career, and led the Warriors to three NCAA Division III tournaments and an overall winning percentage of .739."

Brian was drafted by the New York Yankees in the 23<sup>rd</sup> round of the 1979 draft where his pitching abilities grew. He was selected to the Minor League all-star team for two years and was a roommate with Yankee's great, Don Mattingly. He and Mattingly remain friends to this day. Brian continued to play baseball for many years after

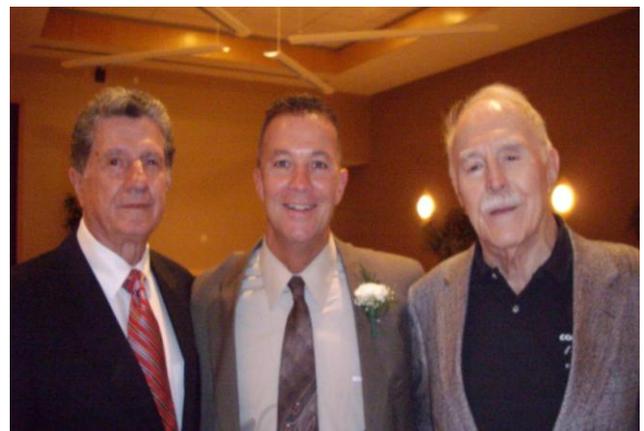
his professional playing days and has continued giving to the game by participating in several local baseball coaches clinics as a pitching instructor.

In 1981, after his life in professional baseball ended, Brian began his career with the Connecticut Department of Correction as a Corrections Officer. He quickly progressed through the ranks to his current position as Interim State of Connecticut Commissioner of Corrections.

During his acceptance speech, Murphy thanked his former teammates, Tourtellotte high school coach Paul Morin, his family, especially his dad Arthur Murphy of Thompson, Connecticut. "In spite of only having one eye, dad, always had time to catch me, and for that I will always be grateful. He was always my number one fan," stated Murphy.

Accompanying Murphy to the induction was wife Tara, father Art, stepmom Trudy, and children Kyla, Lexi and Kaden who could not have been more proud of their father. In a surprise addition to the festivities, Coach Halowaty read a proclamation from Governor Jodi Rell, which formally proclaimed Sunday, October 25, 2009, Brian Murphy Day in the State of Connecticut.

Other 2009 Eastern inductees included Jeffery Brewer, baseball (1981-1983), Louis Canady, basketball (1974-1978), Terry Hinseley, soccer (1982-1986), Susan Mullany, volleyball (1986-1989), and Tammy Schondelmayer, softball (1986-1989).



*Above: Brian Murphy (center) during the recent Eastern Connecticut State University Hall of Fame induction ceremony with family friend George Dargati (left). Dargati is also a graduate of Tourtellotte Memorial High School and is a recent inductee into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame. Right is Brian's biggest fan and father, Arthur Murphy of Thompson, Connecticut.*

## 5 things you may *NOT* know about TMHS

1. The Class of 1987 dedicated its yearbook to George Jewell, who is now an 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Thompson Middle School.
2. Mr. Ryscavage offered these wise words to the class of 1959:

*Four things a man must learn to do  
If he would make his record true;  
To think without confusion clearly,  
And love his fellow men sincerely,  
To act from honest motive purely,  
And trust in God and heaven securely.*

3. 1959 Student Council included: Louise Beulac, Nedjat Ali, John Lewis, Richard Garvais, Lloyd Sharples, Patricia Leite, Charles Panu, Chester Chawlek, Richard Feige, and George Carabina.
4. The 1959 yearbook says of graduate Suzanne Buell, "This lass from Tourtellotte sure did rate, as number one soprano at All-State.
5. Ed Negip's '59 greatest pastime, as listed in the 1950 yearbook, was Golf. His son David, also a graduate from TMHS, followed his dad's love for the game and is now a highly respected golf pro in Florida.

## Bill Bates '46 One of TMHS's Best Athletic Assets ..... and One of Its Greatest Foes

Over the years there have been several TMHS grads that went on to post-grad school at the local Tech Schools. Bill Bates, who led the Tigers to an undefeated 1946 regular season, found himself on the opposite bench the following year playing for the Putnam Techmen. Unfortunately for Tourtellotte, the former Hilltopper did not lose a step during his time between TMHS and Putnam Tech. He went on to lead the Techmen in an unexpected win in the very first interscholastic game of the 1947 season.

The article reads:

### ***Bates on Scoring Spree as Tech Cagers Edge Tourtellotte, 44-40***

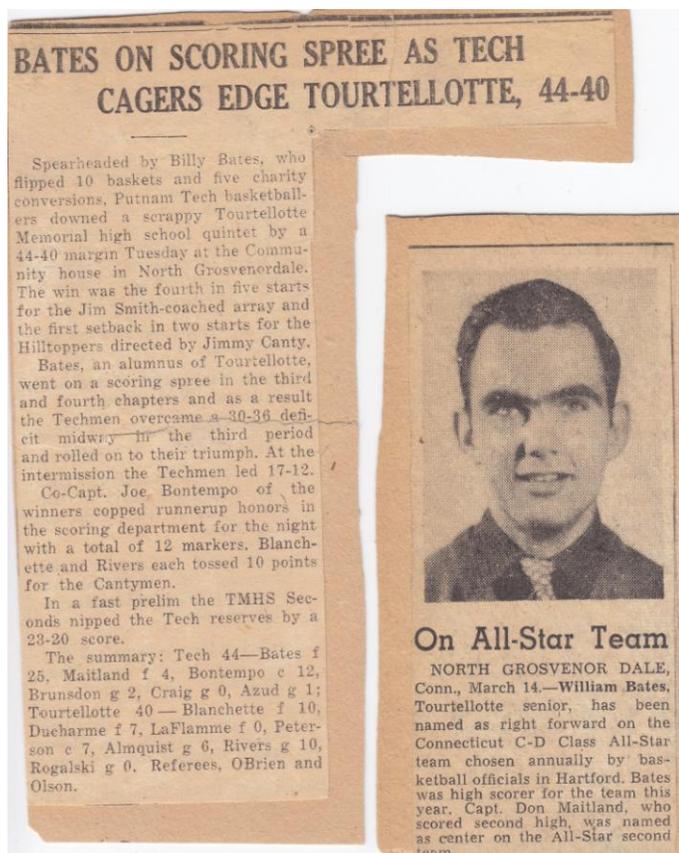
*Spearheaded by Billy Bates, who flipped 10 baskets and five charity conversions, Putnam Tech basketballers downed a scrappy Tourtellotte Memorial high school quintet by a 44-40 margin Tuesday at the Community house in North Grosvenordale. The win was the fourth in five starts for the Jim Smith-coached array and the first setback in two starts for the Hilltoppers directed by Jimmy Canty.*

*Bates, an alumnus of Tourtellotte, went on a scoring spree in the third and fourth chapters and as a result the Techmen overcame a 30-36 deficit midway in the third period and rolled on to their triumph. At the intermission the Techmen led 17-12.*

*Co-Capt. Joe Bontempo of the winners copped runner up honors in the scoring department for the night with a total of 12 markers. Blanchette and Rivers each tossed 10 points for the Cantymen....*

Also left, is an article outlining Bill's selection to the 1946 All-Star team while at Tourtellotte Memorial High School.

Thanks Bill for the fond memories!



Above: Two articles sent to us by Bill Bates Class of 1946

**Visit the TMHS Website at:**  
<http://www.thompsonpublicschools.org>

## THE TOURTELLOTTE STORY CONTINUES

Over the past few months, we have been in contact with the Blue Earth Historical Society of Mankato, Minnesota in an attempt to better understand the Tourtellottes' stay in the Midwest. One of the more interesting researched pieces they sent to us was the following story written by Anna Weicking in February of 1971. A quick search of Anna has indicated she was an 83-year-old member of the Blue Earth Society, but we could be wrong here. Enjoy! (PS: Copied verbatim)

### *The Tourtellotte Story*

*Mr. Lester Johnson, a resident of Mankato, came here from Windham County, Connecticut. Noting that we had a Tourtellotte Park in Mankato, and that there had once been a hospital here by that name, he wondered whether the Tourtellottes here could have any connection with the family of the Jacob Tourtellottes in his home county. Jacob, first a teacher then a doctor, and his wife, were wealthy and generous people. They had given a large sum of money and had endowed a High School in Thompson, Connecticut, which Mr. Johnson had attended. They had also given large sums for art galleries, hospitals and other public donations.*

*It was the same family Mr. Johnson has been investigating the activities of the Tourtellottes in Minnesota. While in Minneapolis, he noted a building, a former Methodist Deaconess Home, that was an exact replica of the High School he had attended in Connecticut, and over its entrance he saw the name Tourtellotte.*

*Dr. Tourtellotte was born in 1835. His medical career was interrupted by heart disease, after his service as a navy doctor in foreign waters a change of climate was recommended, and a brother who lived in Wisconsin urged him to come west, as Minnesota climate was considered very "salubrious," he moved to Winona in 1870, where he went into banking, did very well, and did much for Winona. He had accumulated quite a fortune. Leaving Winona in 1892 he moved into a handsome home near Loring Park in Minneapolis. He contributed generously to public welfare in the city.*

*One of the brothers of Dr. Jacob Tourtellotte was Colonel John T. who settled in Mankato in 1857. He formed a law partnership with C.O. Pitcher but, the Civil War interrupted his law career. He became a brilliant military man. He went from*

*the rank of Colonel to that of Brigadier general, and fought in several important battles. He was an aide-de-camp to General Sherman, and there is said to be a monument to honor him at Vicksburg.*

*After the war, he became a law partner of Judge Waite in Mankato, but again his work was interrupted... service to his country. He had several important posts, including Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Utah, the making of a manual revision for the Army, and he was the escort of the Marquis of Lorne and Princess Louise in their journey through The United States. Later he lived in Washington D.C. became ill and came to LaCrosse to be with relatives, and died there in 1891.*

*John Tourtellotte had great affection for Mankato. He gave \$8000 to the city to build a hospital to take care of the sick poor. It was a three-story structure of Mankato stone, built out of what we used to call the "stone-prairie." It was located at 1400 Fourth Avenue, between Maxwell and Spruce Streets and between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Outside the city limits, there was no running water or sewerage system. Built in 1888, it began working a year later. It did not succeed well, and the city fathers and hospital trustees called for help from the Sister of the Sorrowful Mother [in] Marshfield, Wisconsin.*

*Four sisters came, and contracted to run the hospital for \$1000 a year. Later, two more Sisters came. In 1898, the city renewed the contract with the sisters. They bought the Willard home on North Sixth Street and were operating it as a hospital while still serving Tourtellotte. They did this for five years, but in 1903 gave up Tourtellotte and it was returned to the heirs. It had been condemned for not meeting hospital standards and was dis-mantled in 1905.*

*In 1906, when Immanuel Hospital was built, some of the construction materials from the Tourtellotte building was used for the new hospital. This is the story of Mankato's first hospital and the generous man, Tourtellotte, who gave it to Mankato he had great affection for. His name should be remembered in our local history.*

*Anna M. Wiecking, Mankato Minn.  
February, 1971 hospital.*

*Mr. Lester Johnson furnished the information on the Tourtellotte family in Connecticut and in Minneapolis.*

**If you have any further information please send it to: TMHSAA PO Box 437, No. Grosvenordale, CT 06255. We now have an archive office!!**

## **A Tourtellotte Legend Inducted Into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame**

### **GEORGE DARGATI LISTED AMONG THE GAME'S VERY BEST**

BY: J. Lindley TMHS '74  
October 17, 2009

On October 9, 2009, before a packed house ceremony held at the Mohegan Sun, George Dargati, Tourtellotte Memorial High School class of 1950, was inducted into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame. Dargati, a Tourtellotte legend, led the Tourtellotte Tigers to two of their seven State Championships in 1949 and 1950. He finished the 1950 season as one of the State's all-time high school scorers.

While at Tourtellotte, George amassed more than 1200 points, scoring 528 points his senior year, leading the highly successful Tiger squad. He was a major contributor to Tourtellotte's 1950 undefeated 28-0 season. Tourtellotte's first undefeated season was in 1927 when his long-time mentor and coach, Jim Canty was a player. These two undefeated feats still rank among the very best high school basketball seasons ever in CIAC history.

Dargati's high school basketball career culminated during several outstanding 1950 CIAC State Championship games where he led all state tournament scorers with 74 tallies. During the quarter-final game, Tourtellotte found themselves behind a very tenacious Suffield High School, 28-26 at the half time mark. During the second half, Dargati rallied the Tigers and led them with 27 points and a 46-40 victory, allowing them to advance in the tournament. The Tigers went on to defeat Farmington 59-31 in the semi-finals and eventually the six-time State Championship powerhouse, Ellsworth High School, 40-26, for their 28<sup>th</sup> straight win and a State Championship title. Basketball enthusiasts from all over New England began to sit up and take notice of the small school in Northeast Connecticut. The Tigers went on to win the 1951 season making them the second team in state history to go three State Championships in a row. Tourtellotte's three-in-a-row record still ranks among the top in

Connecticut basketball for consecutive State Championship wins.

After high school, George attended prep school and was offered a basketball scholarship at the University of Connecticut, where he played for one year. But, the beat of the military drums and civil service beckoned and he enlisted in the United States Army in 1954. During his Army days, George continued to play the game where his skills continued to improve. He was honorably discharged in 1956.

Upon returning from overseas, George had the opportunity to play basketball for Division I, University of Dayton, located in Dayton Ohio, and the New York Giants baseball team. He put both offers aside and attended the Willimantic Teacher's College (now Eastern Connecticut State University), located in Willimantic, Connecticut where he played, and excelled at both basketball and baseball. To this day, with more than 1200 points and a 24.5 average, he remains that school's 11<sup>th</sup> highest scorer and their single season point average leader at 25.8. His exploits on the Willimantic court also earned him All-New England status twice and the nickname "Jet," because of his lightning-like speed. His athletic feats on the baseball diamond were no less spectacular. He had a .354 college career batting average and one year led his team in three batting categories to include batting average, RBI's, and home runs.

In 1957, he gave the home-town Tourtellotte Tigers a show they would never forget during the annual Thanksgiving Tourtellotte Alumni basketball game. During this game, George led the Alumni squad with 25 points with many feeling he could have easily scored fifty. Many years later, one member of the 1957 Tourtellotte high school basketball team stated, "He was simply the best basketball player I have ever seen."

After college, Dargati married his wife Betty and they had three children, Jim, Jen and Kaileen. He taught for 35 years in the Vernon Public School System. Where this author is certain, he positively affected the lives of many of Connecticut's youth as both teacher and mentor.

At 77 years old, George still gives to the game he loves so much by coaching with his New England Prep School Coach of the Year son, Jim Dargati at Loomis Chafee Preparatory School

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located in Windsor, Connecticut.

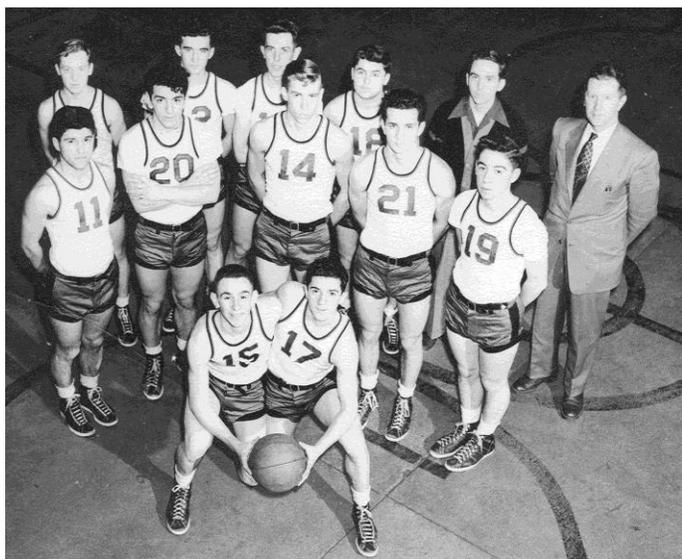
Word also has it that he is also heavily involved with developing the athletic talent of the next generation of Dargati "Jets" by helping grandchildren, Ryan, Michael, and Allie Colgan, J.P. and Drew Dargati, and Kaitlyn and Kenzie Wood. Like any proud grandfather, George feels any one of them could easily pick up where he left off, and based on the gene pool from which they came, it would be hard to disagree.

The New England Hall of Fame, located in North Kingston, Rhode Island has recognized some of the game's very best. Dargati joins a long list of New England superstars to include Bob Cousy, Dave Gavitt, Tommy Heinsohn, Calvin Murphy, Ernie DiGregorio and his former high school coach and mentor, Tourtellotte's own, Jim Canty.



*Pictured left:  
George  
Dargati '50  
during the  
2009 TMHSAA  
banquet.*

*Below:  
George, No. 17,  
with his 1950  
Tourtellotte  
Memorial High  
School State  
Championship  
team.*



## **Come see the newly renovated Tourtellotte Memorial Room!**

For appointments, call Joe Lindley at  
860-928-5527 or Email at  
joelindley119@hotmail.com

## **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

*Initial membership due at time of application, yearly  
renewals due January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year*

*Regular Membership..... \$15.00  
Senior Citizens (65 and older)..... \$5.00  
Graduating Class..... Free*

### **hilltopper Staff**

*Editor: Kris Blanchard '87'*

*Staff Members: Jim Sali '51' - Gladys Tucker '52' - Jane  
Ellison '61' - Eileen Deary '77' - Sandy Becker '79' -  
Rachael Johnston '75' Alex Kirkland '08'  
Archives: Gladys Tucker '52' and Rita Rohr '56*

***If you would like to contribute short stories to the  
hilltopper please contact Kris Blanchard at  
jkblanchard87@charter.net***

## **JOIN THE TEAM!**

### **WE ARE LOOKING FOR**

- Webmaster
- Art and history researchers
- Part time Memorial Room curators
- History and art enthusiasts
- Newsletter writers and editors
- Athletic Hall of Fame Committee
- Tourtellotte Committee (Memorial Room)

## **DUES ARE DUE – January 1st**

**Make Checks Payable to:  
TMHSAA, PO Box 437  
No. Grosvenordale, CT 06255**

*Initial membership due at time of application,  
yearly renewals due January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year*

*Regular Membership..... \$15.00  
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Graduating Class..... Free*

Tourtellotte Memorial High School Alumni Office  
PO Box 437  
North Grosvenordale, CT 06255

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED  
PLEASE SEND US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO:  
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