



## The Last Great Place

# Welcome Home, Matt

Michael Capuzzo

Like Rip Van Winkle coming down off a forested Pennsylvania ridge, I panicked when I reached the ultra-modern Baltimore-Washington International Airport. I didn't have my ticket! "Those are all online now," the man said flatly as a young woman held her I-phone against a scanner and boarded the flight to Houston ahead of me. As I headed out on a book tour promoting *The Murder Room*, it appeared the world had warped into another dimension in the years I spent writing in the mountains.

Now I'm sitting in a Houston hotel room as I write this, done with Baltimore and New York City, bound for Phoenix at dawn, Philadelphia the next day and finally home to Wellsboro before trips to Boston, New

Haven, and Seattle. I'm eager to return to the land where internet is the fate of a brown trout, a web is monitored overwhelmingly in the dew-lit dawn by spiders, and the tweeting and twittering is done by birds. Nothing is more striking in the brave new digital world than sophisticated urban man reduced to technological tweets, blips, squawks, and semi-literate grunts like a nattering, nervous, reverse-evolution Neanderthal. Turns out the brain moving too fast as well as too slow misses what really matters.

What matters to Mountain Home and its readers is story, the kind of story that sticks in the gut whether tapped into an email or onto a stone tablet. Storytelling is in danger of becoming a lost art, which makes my introduction of our new managing editor, Matt Connor, ever more significant to our readers and precious to me and Teresa.

Matt, 45, is a master storyteller, author, journalist, bon-vivant, imminent cancer survivor, and friend. He collects vintage cocktail glasses, and makes a mean Martini and Manhattan. But mostly he tells stories with flare and talent and heart few possess. Of course, you know that if you've been reading these pages, where Matt has written pieces on restaurants, a comeback-from-dead Chevy dealer, award-

winning stories on Presidential fishermen and lost post-World War II era pilots.

What makes a storyteller as good as Matt Connor? He comes by his talent honestly and with hard work.

Matt writes the popular history column for the Lock Haven *Express*. His lovely "Peek at the Past" pieces will find book form one of these days.

He's the author of a nonfiction Amazon bestselling book, *Watering Hole: The Colorful History of Booze, Sex and Death at a New Jersey Tavern*, a classic work of Jerseyana.

He has written for national magazines, was hired by billionaire Malcolm Forbes to be editor-in-chief of Forbes' corporate in-house magazine, and won more writing awards than he can easily remember, as well as the prestigious Rebecca Gross Award for Outstanding Achievements in the Field of Journalism, presented by his alma mater Lock Haven University.

These are substantial and tangible achievements, but Matt works from the intangible secret of all great writers. Tennessee Williams put it best: "The heart is an instrument." One meant to be used.

Matt, filled with ability, energy, and gusto for life, uses his with style and skill on every story.

We're lucky to have him lending his talents to Mountain Home, a storyteller's home, his natural habitat.

Welcome home, Matt. 🏠

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