



Welcome to Main Street!

Wo sich Stinktier und Stachelschwein gute Nacht sagen, da ist die alte Ordnung der ländlichen Gesellschaft noch intakt. Es gibt sie also auch heute noch, die guten Dinge. medium US

Main Street, U.S.A. No, not the one in the Disney theme parks: I'm talking here about the real thing — in many small towns throughout the U.S. Of course, it's far more than just the street running through the center of town. It's a way of thinking, a sense of community where people know their neighbors, understand town politics, and are willing to help each other out whenever it's needed.

In many places, this way of life is now a distant memory, having gone the way of ice-cream parlors, single-screen movie theaters, and mom-and-pop stores. In those unfortunate towns

road steep and curvy enough to make drivers wonder whether they should actually make the trip. Main Street in Hague has one general store, three churches, a gift shop, and a coffee shop. Anything you need beyond that — like a tank of gas, a doctor, a haircut, or, for most people, a job — well, you'll have to go elsewhere. But most people who live here wouldn't dream of giving up this life. So, let's take a closer look at the village, which is far from the standard tourist destinations found in guidebooks.

As I write, the town is getting ready for its yearly Memorial Day parade and festivities. Celebrated on the last Monday of May, this national holiday honors all military veterans. As kids in the early 60s, if we weren't marching in the parade as part of the school band, we were walking in it as Girl or Boy Scouts, majorettes or flag bearers. Many of the adults marched as veterans, while others stood on the

side of the street, waving proudly as their son or daughter marched past.

In the 60s, people lost interest, and the parades stopped. But they started up again in 2003. Now, once again, people in town are busy decorating their floats, the volunteer firemen are polishing their trucks, and the musicians are practicing their songs. On the big day, people will gather along Main Street and talk with friends and neighbors as they wait to hear the distant beat of the drums, a sign that the parade is coming.

Naturally, the parade will make its way down Main Street with clowns walking alongside the floats, throwing candy to the crowds. The town's fire trucks will drive slowly by, sounding their sirens, delighting young and old alike. The life and drum corps and, of course, the school marching band will be there. And when the last float has passed by, the last candy thrown, everyone will walk over to the town park for an afternoon of crafts, games, music, and food — including that all-American meal, a barbecue put on by the volunteer fire department. Would anyone choose fast food at the mall over this? Indeed, life is good on Main Street, U.S.A!



"It's more than just a street in the center of town — Main Street is a way of thinking"

where malls, cinplexes, and huge chain stores have taken over, the "main-street" feeling may have been lost forever. But the good news is that Main Street, U.S.A., is still alive and well in the small towns on back roads.

One such place is Hague, Massachusetts, my hometown. "Hard to get there and harder to leave" is the best way to describe this small village with its year-round population of just under 1,000 people. The nearest interstate highway is a half hour away, over a mountain

candy ['kændi] US	Süßigkeiten, Bonbons
cinplex ['sɪnpleks] US	(Name einer Kette von Multiplex-Kino(s))
crafts [kræfts]	Kunsthandwerk
fire [faɪə]	Querpfeife
flag bearer ['flæg,berɪ]	Fahnenträger(in)
float [flaʊt]	Festwagen
majorette [ˌmeɪdʒə'ret]	bei Umzügen marschierende junge Frau in Uniform
mall [mɔ:l]	Einkaufszentrum
Memorial Day [mə'mɔ:riəl,deɪ] US	etwa: Volkstrauertag
mom-and-pop store	Tante-Emma-Laden
{mə:m ən 'pɔ:p, stɔ:r} US	
Scout: Girl ~, Boy ~ [skaʊt]	Pfadfinder(in)
steep [sti:p]	steil
volunteer firemen [vɔ:lən,tɪə 'faɪərmən]	freiwillige Feuerwehr