



CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 2: NUMBER 3 APRIL 1992

March Madness

The bad news is that no one will like the new town budget. Not parents and students at CCS, who are looking at cuts in the computer, music and art programs. Not the selectmen, who have frozen salaries and chipped away at the 5-year plan. And not the taxpayers, who could face a stiff increase despite the cuts.

The good news? There isn't any, except that Cornwall taxpayers are better off than those in most Connecticut towns, who face a greater tax burden and steeper cuts in state aid.

At its March 19 meeting, the Board of Finance began to assemble the pieces in the budget puzzle, and the following picture emerged.

Non-tax revenues are down more than \$200,000, because of cuts in state aid and lower interest income. This alone would translate into a tax increase of 10%.

The town has undesignated funds and surplus of about \$1,700,000 (including \$650,000 excess school bond money and \$340,000 from Rumsey insurance). The board felt it would use about \$375,000 of this to shore up revenues.

The board asked the school board for a "final" budget of \$1,710,632 (an increase

of about 8%). This plan would cut the computer program for primary grades and some music and art instruction, but it would keep the new math and library programs.

The selectmen were asked to come back with a budget of \$1,859,430 (an increase of about 14%, most of it going for capital projects).

Residents could face a property tax increase in the neighborhood of 15% at these levels, and it seems likely that there will be further cuts and tinkering with the budget at the board's next meeting on April 2.

In other business, the board recommended to a town meeting the transfer of \$107,000 from surplus to complete work on Great Hill and Dibble Hill roads. It also accepted the resignation of Pat Bramley as clerk and appointed Lisa Lansing as her replacement. — Ed Ferman

MBC Report

The Municipal Building Committee met on March 12 with architect Ken MacLean to begin work on the feasibility study for town office space.

The committee then discussed a letter from the Board of Selectmen which outlined fiscal difficulties facing the town,

including a revenue reduction of \$200,000. They proposed to eliminate the \$100,000 line item to cap or demolish Rumsey Hall from the budget, and to apply the monies from the Rumsey insurance and school addition to highway construction instead of a new town hall. Reasons cited were that road and bridge repair could not be deferred and that the need for a new town office had lessened.

The committee decided to proceed with the feasibility study, to request funds to stabilize Rumsey until the study is completed, and to recommend to the Board of Finance that the Rumsey insurance money be reserved for the town library, town office, Rumsey Hall and Rumsey gym. The committee felt that the gym should have priority: if it were brought up to code the town would have a meeting room, plus the use of the other large room for town functions. This move would allow the library to expand into the present town hall. — Rita Quinn

Under the Gun — Again

Over the ten years of its existence the HVRHS Alternative School has had to defend itself annually at budget time. At the March 16 meeting of the High School Board

(continued on page 2)

APRIL 1992

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	 NM 3 FQ 10 FM 17 LQ 24		1 APRIL FOOL'S DAY	2 Bd. of Finance 7:30pm Town Hall	3	4 Folk music concert 3pm Cornubia Hall (p.4)
5 Agricultural Advisory Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse World Religions: Justice & Suffering, 11:15 UCC	6  Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Hall or Town Off. Nuclear-free Zone Comm. St. Peter's 7:30pm	7 Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Off. Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall Show of Ellen Moon masks, Cornwall Lib.	8 Children's basket weaving 3-4pm CCS and on the 9th (p.4) Spaghetti dinner 6pm CCS (p.4)	9 Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm CCS Library Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC Town Meeting LOCIF transfer 8pm Town Hall	10 Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall	11 Kent Singers, 8pm Kent School Chapel (p.4) Adult basket weaving, 1-4pm Firehouse (p.4)
12 PALM SUNDAY Justice and Suffering (cont.) 11:15 UCC Kent Singers, 3pm Kent School Chapel (p.4)	13 Plan. & Zoning 8pm Town Hall  7pm Town Hall or Town Office	14 Hous. Riv. Comm. CCS Lib. 7:30pm	15 Income Tax Due Rep. Town Comm. meeting 7:30pm Town Hall	16 Bd. of Finance 7:30pm Town Hall	17 GOOD FRIDAY	18 PASSOVER Poetry reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner Easter egg hunt, 10am sharp. Village Green (p.4)
19 EASTER	20  7pm Town Hall or Town Office HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm HS Library Nuclear-free Zone Comm. St. Peter's 7:30pm	21 2nd Astaire film 7:30pm CCS Lib. (p.4)	22 Dr. Ronald Smith talk on 1989 tornadoes, 7:30pm Litchfield Hist. Soc.	23	24 Bd. of Finance public hearing on budget, 7:30pm Town Hall	25
26 Rituals and Community 11:15 UCC	27  Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Hall or Town Off. Z.B. of Appeals* 7:30pm Town Hall	28	29	30		

*Check time and place at Town Office.

(continued from page 1)

of Education, Bill DeVoti and Mary Ann Cormier, administrators and faculty of Alternative Ed, presented a slide show followed by a question-and-answer session to update the board on their program.

The Region I Alternative School serves 10 to 12 students who have the potential for success, but have gotten off the track. They have either become withdrawn or are becoming disciplinary problems. When removed from the scene of their failure and placed in an informal and experiential school without walls, these students soon begin to develop the confidence to cope and the desire to learn. Along with their academic studies, they perform community services, intern in careers that interest them (they call this "shadowing"), and experience the camaraderie and confidence-building of such outdoor activities as spelunking, hiking, canoeing and rock climbing.

The most persuasive argument for continuing the Alternative School in its present form and location — at Trinity Camp — was provided by a group of Alternative Ed students. One after another affirmed the positive role the Alternative School had played in changing their attitudes and in improving their prospects for a successful life. Many said they would have dropped out of school had it not been for the Alternative School. Most had graduated from HVRHS or expected to. (Three out of four Alternative Ed students either graduate or pass their high school equivalency test.) All expressed a deep affection for Bill DeVoti and his assistant, Mary Ann Cormier.

— Scoville Soule

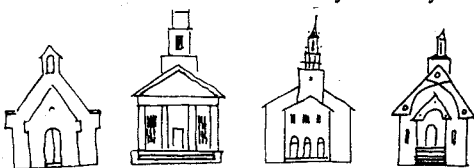


P & Z Business

At its March 9 meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission dealt quickly with the few routine applications having to do with sheds and barns.

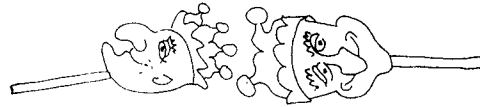
Then the commission adjourned from its regular meeting and went into a planning session with its consultant, Tom McGowan. Such sessions are held periodically to incorporate into the existing regulations concepts that were recommended in the 1987 Town Plan revisions. The purpose is to allow more flexibility in the granting of special permits and to accommodate different types of uses while maintaining definite limitations. Cornwall, with its mixed rural characteristics and no true business center, is unique and should have regulations appropriate to its uniqueness.

Later in the week attorney Tom Byrne



informed P&Z that the Appellate Court had decided to hear the appeal by Cole, Redington, et al., of the ruling by the Superior Court in Litchfield, which had dismissed their complaint against the commission's revised sawmill amendment.

— Ginny Potter



Town Street Deal?

Plans for affordable housing on Town Street have been put on hold until mid-May. The postponement was agreed to by the Cornwall Housing Corporation to accommodate neighboring landowners who have complained that the projected single-family house would impair the quiet rural atmosphere of the area.

The landowners had offered to make a cash contribution to CHC that would permit the corporation to buy an affordable-housing site at another location, provided CHC would drop its plans for the one-and-a-half-acre lot on Town Street it has said it would offer to a qualified moderate-income family wishing to build a house there.

At its regular monthly meeting on March 12, CHC rejected this proposal, citing the difficulty of finding another fully equivalent and available site even if it had the money to buy it. The CHC board unanimously agreed, however, that if the landowners themselves could come up promptly with such a site, CHC would consider it as an alternative to the Town Street property given to CHC by Ella Clark as an affordable-housing site. Accordingly, although the corporation has already completed the necessary engineering studies and drawn up a site plan for the property, it agreed to put off asking for a go-ahead from Planning and Zoning until after CHC's May meeting.

— Spencer Klaw



That's a Howl

I saw my first Cornwall black bear five years ago crossing the road at the top of Roberts Hill, but Cream Hill coyotes of an evening have been competing for my attention with the honking of Canada geese for 20 seasons at least. If you have heard a Cream Hill coyote howl, you have heard a sound from our pioneer past.

The coyotes live on Cream Hill — somewhere — denned up in a pack or two, in-breeding since the first individuals migrated in from out west decades ago. Often splitting the night with their cries to set my own dog uneasy, they seem otherwise harmless to their neighbors. I did once find the carcass of a fawn on Yelping Hill I thought the coyotes might have done for, and once I encountered a patrol of five coyotes loping

down the center of Town Street, headed in the general direction of Thalia Scoville's geese. (I pity any coyote that might think to mess with them!) Actually, coyotes, long-legged, scruffy critters, look worse neighbors than they evidently are and, personally, I find their music sweet, at least as sweet as the bears and lions who make hardly any sound at all.

— Earl Brecher



Quick Fix

Citizens packed the Town Hall on March 6 for a seemingly routine town meeting called to allocate \$230 to pay election workers in the presidential primary, and \$2000 to help cover the Planning and Zoning Commission's legal costs in defending itself against two lawsuits. Both suits challenge P & Z decisions on sawmill operations in Cornwall. Legal costs so far have amounted to more than \$10,000.

The crowd had apparently turned out on a drizzly night to show support for P & Z and for local sawmill operators, present and prospective, when word got around that there would be an attempt to prevent P & Z from getting funds needed to pay its lawyer.

At the meeting, the two requests for money were presented by Ralph Gold, each was moved, seconded, and approved without a murmur of opposition. The whole performance lasted only slightly longer than it takes to read this report.

— Barbara Klaw



Welcome

Caleb Carl Nelson
to Caren and Eric Nelson

Kayla Marie Robinson
to Melissa and Gregory Robinson

Ashlee Lyn Ostrander
to Karen and David Ostrander

Robert Matthew Downs
to Donna and Arthur Downs

Goodbye to Friends

Frank E. Calhoun
Marie N. Martin
Henry R. Sandy

Congratulations

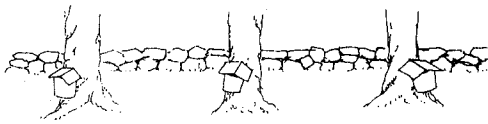
Eileen Marie Leader to Joseph Robert Carr

Land Transfers

James N. Ravlin to Raymond J. Leppard, land on Grange Hill Rd.

Estate of Margaret Bourne Hemingway to Erica C. and Hector P. Prud'homme, 31 acres on Town St.

Estate of Margaret Bourne Hemingway to Barbara I. and Joseph H. Ellis, house and land on Town St.

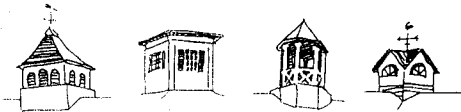


Brush Cut

A check with the First Selectman's office reveals the following about the brush the town crew is cutting along Cornwall's roads:

The work is being done under the supervision of Tree Warden George Brown and Gene Ingvertsen for the purpose of improving drainage from the roads, removing growth that could impede clean-up following heavy storms — and to make the roads look better. George marks trees too large for the town crew to remove and these jobs have been bid out to professional tree service companies. George has also marked trees that are to be left to replace old or diseased trees. Most brush is chipped on site. Landowners may take logs cut in front of their houses. Any wood left unclaimed for about a week will be collected and deposited behind the town garage, where it is free to anyone who wants it. The job will continue for a long time because Cornwall has some 60 miles of internal roadways.

— Earl Brecher



Recycling and Trash Update

Plastic containers (A new item, but only with number 1 or 2 in triangle pictured below): Please wash and remove caps.

Paper products: 3 separate categories. 1. newspapers; 2. magazines, stationery, catalogs; 3. corrugated board. Brown bags, waste paper, cereal boxes and other light cardboard (gray board) go in the dumpster with other unrecyclable waste.

Tree stumps: Call Gene Ingvertsen (672-6230 — at work, 672-0040 — home) Monday through Friday (best between 7 and 7:30 a.m.). He will arrange for you to dump. Charge is \$50 per stump.

Brush: Call Gene (see above) for arrangements. Charge is \$25 for a pick-up load, \$50 for a dump-truck load.

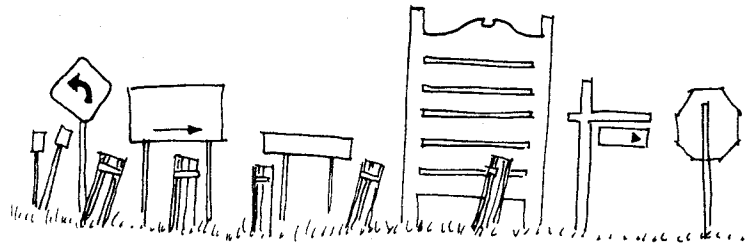
Demolition waste: Minor amounts — one pick-up load per month — can be brought in for \$10, \$15 or \$20 each, depending on truck size. Major amounts, you provide dumpster.

If you have questions, call Jayne Ridgway (672-4959) or Sanitary Transfer Station (672-6230).

— The Editors



Letters to the Chronicle



TAIL WAGS DOG

Thanks to Becky Williams for her explanation of the organization of the Region I Board of Education and the Regional Services Committee (RSC). However, I believe her article in the March Chronicle does not reveal how things are actually working at the high school or Regional Schools Services Center.

She asserts that the RSC "acts solely in an advisory capacity to the Region I Board ... and has no authority to do anything except pass on its recommendations to the Region I Board for action." On the other hand, a recent chairperson of the Region I Board has said, "If the RSC, which we created, approves some policy, budget, or program, what grounds could we on the Region I Board have to disapprove such policy, budget, or program?" Principal Jack Mahoney had it right when he stated in 1990 that though the RSC has little authority, "Its influence is substantial."

It appears to me that the board has abrogated its supervisory functions over the RSC. Whenever has the board failed to give automatic approval to the RSC's annual, ever-increasing budgets, including those that are more generous to RSC-paid personnel than to its teachers? When a high school budget fails in a referendum, has the board ever asked, let alone directed, the RSC to share part of the cut taken to gain voter approval?

Doesn't the board, instead of assuming its properly dominant role in Region I education, usually defer to the RSC, the superintendent and his staff? The Region I Board appears to have become the advisory body of its own subcommittee, the RSC, rather than the commanding educational authority in the region.

— Larry Gates

SINGLE RING CEREMONY

Cornwall citizens are accustomed to, and appreciative of, the volunteers who fight their fires and help them after accidents and during illnesses. I have been helped by both firefighters and emergency medical personnel. But a couple of weeks ago I was assisted by Freddie Bate III in a way I hadn't anticipated. I mentioned to him that the second knuckle on my ring finger had become so enlarged that I couldn't get my wedding band off, and I thought it would have to be cut. He said he could do it. We went to the firehouse where he searched the ambulance and came up with an intriguing instrument. It was a hook-shaped shield that slipped under the ring with a tiny circular saw attached to it. With a few hand-turns of the saw, Freddie cut through the ring, leaving me free to get it enlarged and patched.

Not all emergencies are matters of life and death, but convenience helps, too.

— Margaret Bevans

JUST PLAIN CORNWALL

I would like to think that Cornwall is such a unique place that there is no need for a sign like the one newly erected near the post office announcing the presence of the churches, library, Marvelwood and the town offices. In practicality, and to save the postmistress endless directional questions, we should thank the anonymous erector of the sign. I have only one plea: the sign should read just plain CORNWALL as commonly used for road maps, post office, etc., rather than CORNWALL PLAIN.

— Jill Bryant

IT AIN'T LIKE IT'S GONNA BE

With the addition of Whoopi and Ivan to the list of Cornwall celebrities, the purchase of the Mohawk Ski Area by Arnold Palmer should come as no surprise. Arnie plans no changes in the winter activities, but is making plans to introduce the new sport of alpine golf during the warmer months. He aims to capitalize on the popularity of golf combined with a growing interest in mountain climbing.

The 700-yard par-12 uphill holes will challenge the heartiest golfer. The descent can be expedited by hang gliders that will be provided. The Planning and Zoning Commission will have its hands full with the prospect of these new activities, but it will pale by comparison to the changes to the Marvelwood School just acquired by Madonna.

Happy April 1. — Dave Cadwell

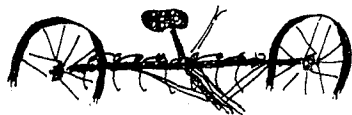
NOW FOR SOME GOOD NEWS

Cornwall and its inhabitants are facing tough financial times. This is reflected in the large percentage of tax delinquencies. A reduction in revenue, level tax base, and increasing costs have added pressure to the town's budget process.

Fortunately, people are volunteering to help get things done without great expense. Jeff Fox has painted the inside of the town highway garage for free. The fire department, with the help of townspeople, is campaigning to raise the \$80,000 needed for a new ambulance, instead of relying on tax dollars.

The Board of Selectmen is particularly grateful to the people who helped us create a new office on the Town Hall stage. Peter Russ, with the eager assistance of Pat Quinn and Dan Lazar, kept a careful eye on construction. Phil Hart donated paint. It was applied with great skill by Don and Jan Bracken. Bill Hurlburt gave native pine for trim boards. Also, the Housatonic Valley Rug Shop volunteered the installation of carpet.

— Gordon Ridgway



It Ain't Like It Used to Be - II

In the period before automobiles became common many residents of Cornwall Village kept horses, cows, chickens and other animals. (It seems to run to dogs, cats and llamas nowadays.) According to Starr's history of Cornwall, Seneca Slocum, who lived at 9 Pine Street in the early 19th century, "...is remembered as keeping wagons, sleds, etc., in the road, almost filling it, and letting his cattle also run in it."

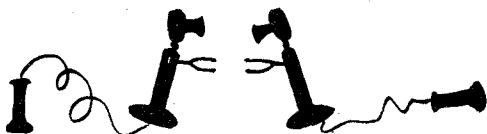
On a larger scale was the Calhouns' Coltsfoot Farm, whose big dairy barn was — and still is — on Jewell Street opposite their house, now Marvelwood's main building. The farm was subsequently operated by the Laigles until about 1986.

Smithies were of course a necessity in the 19th century, and there were two on Pine Street, one operated by the Wilcox family at No. 3, now a vacant lot, the other by Job Simmons also on Pine.

With the automobile came garages. Paul Chamberlain, Sr., operated a repair garage and sold gas in the barn behind his house at 10 Pine Street, now Dorothy Heininger's home. In the late 1920s he moved his operations to what is now Gisela Lichtenberger's on the corner of Pine and Route 4. Bruce Rundlett's B & R Motors on Route 4 opposite the dump was built by Lester Benedict around 1930, later became Cobleigh's, then Bouteiller's. Whiting Wilcox sold gas until the 1930s at 18 Pine Street, and John Richter did the same in the 1920s at 15 Pine, now Herb Whitman's house.

As summer visitors began appearing from the cities, boarding houses opened up to accommodate them. The 1854 map of the village shows Payne's Tavern at 11 Pine; on the 1874 map it becomes Payne's Boarding House. The Rumsey Hall building served as a summer boarding house called the "Beers House" from 1866 to 1884 and again for two summers in the 1950s. Delia Catlin took in boarders at 18 Pine in the 1920s.

Until 1953, when Cornwall finally got dial phones (it was the last town in the state to do so), the telephone exchange was located at 14 Pine Street. Long-time



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residents can still remember calling the operator to report a fire (she rang the firebell) and under less dramatic circumstances simply to get the correct time. She was also known, on occasion, to tell callers what movies were playing at nearby movie houses.

Dr. Wilmarth Bradford Walker practiced medicine in what is now the Lyons' house at 19 Pine from 1923 to 1977.

And lastly, as is only fitting, until about 1930 we had an undertaker in Charles Marsh, who made wooden coffins in the barn behind his house at 9 Pine Street, keeping the hearse next door in what is now the Historical Society. (Cont. from Jan.) — *The Editors based on Michael Gannett's notes*

Going, Going, Gone

An auction held on March 22 at Marvelwood School to raise funds for the Cornwall Child Center brought out more than a hundred Cornwall citizens who, prompted by the cheerful cajoling and haranguing of auctioneers Larry Gates and Dave Cadwell, spent \$9,475 for the benefit of the Center.

More than 120 objects and services had been donated for the auction, ranging from a whole pig — butchered, wrapped, and frozen — to a fully installed sliding glass door. Big-ticket items proved to be Marc Simont's promised sketch of whatever the winner wanted sketched (which went for \$350) and Julia Scott and Joan Edler's donation of a perennial border which they will design, supply with plants and manure, and plant (\$375).

Board president Teddy Bury explained that the money being raised was needed both for day-to-day operations and to build a permanent home for the center. Since it started, in 1975, the center has been housed temporarily in the UCC. The selectmen have offered a possible site in Gannett Park, on a leasehold basis, which is now being considered. Teddy thanked the many workers, donors, and buyers who had made the fundraiser such a success. — *Barbara Klaw*



Events & Announcements

Playground Report: As we go to press, an anonymous donor has issued an exciting challenge. He/she will give \$10,000 toward rebuilding the school playground if the town can come up with an equal amount.

On April 8 at 6 p.m. the Playground Committee will kick off its fund-raising efforts with a spaghetti dinner at CCS. Tickets

are \$6 for adults, \$3 for children, and there's a bargain family rate of \$15.



Folk Concert: Chacabuco, a quintet, will perform folk music from the Americas at a benefit concert organized by International Planned Parenthood at Cornubia Hall, Sat., April 4 at 3 p.m. Tickets \$10 at the door.



Park and Rec News: Easter activities will include lessons in basket weaving by JoAnn Catsos. On April 11 from 1-4 p.m. at the West Cornwall Firehouse she will hold classes for adults who will learn to make an 18-inch-high Victorian Easter basket. The cost is \$18.00 per student.

The annual Easter egg hunt, for preschoolers to 5th graders, will be held on Saturday, April 18, at 10 a.m. sharp on the Cornwall Village green. There will be a jellybean guessing contest, and rumor has it that the Cornwall Easter Bunny may pay a surprise visit.

On April 21 at 7:30 p.m. John Miller will present his second of three documentaries on Fred Astaire at the CCS library.



The Kent Singers will be performing Bach's St. Mathew Passion in the Kent School Chapel on Saturday April 11 at 8 p.m. and on Sunday April 12 at 3 p.m. For tickets at \$12.50 apiece call John Laporta, Susan Fox, Marie Prentice or Julia Scott.



Piano 4-hands: Anne Chamberlain and Kari Miller will give a benefit concert on Sunday, May 3 at 5 p.m. at Cornubia Hall for Habitat for Humanity. Tickets at \$10 are available at Baird's, Cadwell's, and through Paul Baren, 672-6637.



Tax Forms Available: The Cornwall Library has most current specialized Federal tax forms; the pages can be copied as needed. Both libraries and the three post offices have standard Federal forms and all Connecticut forms.

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