

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 3: NUMBER 2 APRIL 1993

The 1993-94 Low-Fat Budget

The Board of Finance came to its March 11 meeting with selectmen carrying sharp instruments and ready to slice fat, but found themselves disarmed by a budget that called for a 7% decrease in spending. The savings came mainly because of lower capital expenditures, e.g., \$125,000 for bridge and road repair, compared with \$200,000 last year.

But even the operating budget showed a small decrease, partly reflecting a decrease in school bond interest, but mainly because of tight estimating and just saying no to increases.

The finance board had few problems with this budget, and some of these involved fleshing out line items that seemed too skinny, e.g., the \$3,000 allowed for P&Z legal expenses, which seemed low given the current court cases. The board also seemed inclined to give the selectmen a 3% salary increase instead of the zero increase they presented for the second year in a row.

The March 18 session with the Board of Education was not exactly a bloodbath either. The school board came in asking an increase of less than 1%. The only serious question from the Board of Finance was on the rise in administrative salaries, an item

that is one layer removed from the Cornwall budget. One board member offered minor quibbles over pennies in a few line items, but it soon became apparent that this was a budget even Scrooge could love, and the Financeers embraced it without changes and canceled its April 8 follow-up meeting.

Despite the overall decrease in the expense budget of about 3.8%, an increase in your tax bill is still possible and even likely. This is because the Board of Finance beefed up revenues last year by taking a more than usual amount out of savings in order to pay for road and bridge repair and keep the mill rate down. This year the board plans to use less from savings and return to its policy of gradually reducing surplus to a level of 10% of the budget. (The total budget this year will be about \$3,407,810.) The result will be a major decrease in the revenue side of the budget.

It's early to predict what the effect on your taxes might be, especially in a year complicated by the revaluation. But the lean expense budgets should mean a very modest hit for most taxpayers. — *Ed Ferman*

raised at last year's premier event. The auction was held on March 21 in the Marvelwood dining hall, and brings the Child Center's building fund within \$20,000 of its \$100,000 goal, according to President Teddy Bury.

About 100 bidders braved the snowy day to attend the event which was the culmination of months of planning and work by the Center's board of directors and parents.

The auction, divided into two parts, included both a silent and a live auction. Wine, punch, beer, and succulent things to eat were served while bidders browsed among an array of tempting goods and services offered in the silent part of the auction. Then auctioneers Dave Cadwell and John Miller cajoled bids from the crowd on an equal number of items brought to the live auction block.

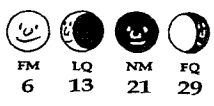

A few of the many offerings that tempted bidders' competitive instincts were: a day's tree work from Root Tree Service; a custom-designed perennial border created by Joan Edler, Julia Scott, and Brian O'Neil; a made-to-order portrait by Marc Simont; Debra Tyler's newborn calf, and one half of a home-grown pig.

About two weeks before the auction
(continued on page 2)

Going, Going, Gone!

This year's Cornwall Child Center auction raised \$10,400, even more than the sum

APRIL 1993

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>April is the time to make appointments for Elderly Health Screening on May 11 (p.4)</p> <p>WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SERVICES provides help and shelter to victims of domestic violence. Call our 24-hour hotline for help and/or information. 824-1080.</p>				<p>1 Board of Finance 7:30pm Town Hall</p> <p>Every Thursday: Sr. Citizen lunch & shopping trip</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3 Park & Rec gymnastics start 11am, every Sat. Goshen Center School (p.4)</p>
<p>4 PALM SUNDAY Daylight saving begins. Set clocks ahead Sat. night.</p>	<p>5 8pm Town Hall</p>	<p>6 PASSOVER Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall Agri. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS</p>	<p>7 West Cornwall Merchants Ass'n. 10am Cadwell's Corner</p>	<p>8 Board of Ed. 4pm CCS Library Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC† Sr. Citizen trip</p>	<p>9 GOOD FRIDAY School closes for spring vacation</p>	<p>10 Easter egg hunt 10am Town Green (p.4) P.T.O. bake sale 8:30am-noon (p.4) Poetry Reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner Gymnastics</p>
<p>11 EASTER </p>	<p>12 P&Z 8pm Town Hall Paintings by David Bean, Cornwall Lib.</p>	<p>13 Hous. Riv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS Library</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 Taxes due Sr. Citizen trip</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Fishing season opens (p.4) Gymnastics</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>19 School reopens HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm HS Library 7:30-8:30 Town Hall Del Eads & Mary Ann O'Sullivan (p.4)</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 Board of Finance 7:30pm CCS Library Sr. Citizen trip</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Gymnastics</p>
<p>25</p>	<p>26 Z.B. of Appeals 8pm Town Hall Conservation Comm. 7:30pm Town Office</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 Copies of proposed budget available Town Hall</p>	<p>29 Spring concert band & chorus 1:30 & 7:30 pm at CCS Sr. Citizen trip</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>MAY 1 Deadline for college scholarship applications (p.4)</p>

(continued from page 1)

was held, the selectmen and CCC President Bury signed a 99-year lease for two acres of land in Gannett Park on which the Center will start building its permanent home. Former CCC board member Margaret Cooley brought a bottle of champagne to the signing to celebrate the happy occasion. Architect Connie Gordon will shepherd the special permit through P&Z's April meeting, so that site work, a well, and septic system can start this spring.

Currently the Center serves 42 children aged three to seven. Enrollment is at an all-time high and space at the UCC Parish House, which has housed the Center to date, is tight. When the Center has its own home, it plans to apply for an infant-care license in order to serve the community better.

— Cheryl Evans



Back Then, It Seemed So Right!

Two empty Rumsey buildings on the one hand; town offices and library bursting at the seams and a Child Center without a home on the other. A marriage made in heaven? . . . In your dreams.

Among the factors complicating this "perfect fit": conflicting opinions on the condition of the Rumsey building; different slants on the actual need for more town-office space; a gaggle of controversial architectural plans; an incensed library contingent; a Child Center with ideas of its own; and, on top of all this, an ill-afforded \$1.6 to \$1.8 million price tag for renovation or rebuilding . . . What a mess!

At a recent referendum, Cornwall voters finally called the whole marriage off.

The *Chronicle* interviewed First Selectman Gordon Ridgway to get his on-the-scene views of the situation:

Chronicle: How do you interpret the two to one "no" vote on the proposed linkage of Rumsey and the town offices?

Gordon: I think the people felt the town office need not be that much larger than now. Nor did they want to commit to another municipal bonding. In truth, our studies of the existing town halls in surrounding towns demonstrated to us that larger buildings don't always mean more offices. What they *do* mean is a disproportionate amount of non-office space in relation to functional office space. Larger is by no means better when it comes to small-town town offices.

Chronicle: So where does Cornwall go from here?

Gordon: The selectmen are budgeting \$10,000 to weatherproof Rumsey and start bringing both Wise buildings up to fire, safety, and handicapped-accessible code. We are budgeting another \$5,000 to study our office needs and to finance the next referendum, which will be based on fulfilling these needs.

Chronicle: Assuming fulfilling these needs involves an expansion of the present town office building, what kind of money will we be talking about? And where will it come from?

Gordon: My guess would be around \$100,000. We have access to that amount from the unused portion of the school bond. As you remember, the school renovation was brought in under budget — fortunately.

Chronicle: Will the first selectman's office remain where it is?

Gordon: This question will be part of our study. But what some people don't realize is that this Calhoun Building we are in now was originally given for the purpose of town offices as well as a library. Up until 1940 the selectman's office was on the second floor of this building and the large room, then as now, was devoted to town meetings.

Chronicle: Has any individual or group shown a serious interest in utilizing and financing the Rumsey building?

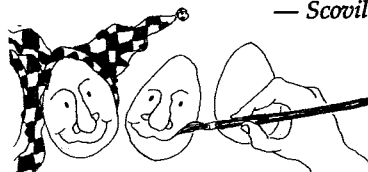
Gordon: There are a lot of ideas out there. Cornwall never lacks for ideas. But the final outcome of what Rumsey will be used for is unknown. No private moneys have come forward as yet.

Chronicle: If we were to fulfill today's needs for office space, do you foresee a need for yet more space ten years down the road?

Gordon: No. Perhaps there will be more permanent office personnel replacing today's part-timers, but this won't necessarily require more space. In fact, I see the state moving to centralize some of the functions now handled by the towns, such as welfare, for instance. Even if our town were to triple in size, I don't see us needing any more office space than we need now.

Chronicle Postscript (read to organ music): And what of statuesque Rumsey? Is she indeed just too much building for modern man to handle? Or will she find success and happiness with a mysterious stranger, that rare entrepreneur with taste and imagination who knows how to treat a classic beauty? . . . Stay tuned.

— Scoville Soulé

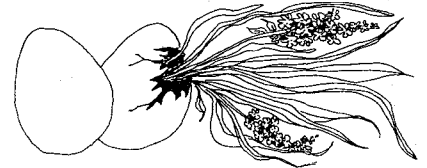


Library Trustees Unmoved

Trustees of the Cornwall Library Association — at a meeting on March 11 — voted unanimously for the library to stay where it is. They voted after reviewing terms of

the original trust set up by John E. Calhoun in 1908. The trust gave the big north room to the town for municipal use and the south room "forever as a library." The library currently also uses three walls of the north room for its fiction collection. There had been talk in the aftermath of the Rumsey vote that the library might move to the Rumsey gym. The trustees agreed that is out of the question. They will uphold the terms of the Calhoun trust. There will be no move.

— John Miller



Welcome

Genevieve Cutler Terrall
to Elizabeth and James Terrall

Daniel Mark Marino
to Joy and Mark Marino

Tucker Jackman Augusta
to Toni and Michael Augusta

Good-bye to a Friend

Angeline J. Pool

Land Transfers

John Priano and Frank Maresca to Society for Savings, land on Great Hill and Great Hollow Roads.

Est. of Flora B. Brown to Anne Hummel, house on Swift's Bridge Road.

Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. to Allyn and Anita Hurlburt, house on Grange Hall Road.

Animals at School

On March 10 and 12 there was a "Carnival of the Animals" produced by all 147 CCS students under the supervision of teachers Cindy Jerram (art), Linda Hoidalén (music), and Jo Loi (physical education). This collaborative event presented Camille Saint-Saens' music and Ogden Nash's poetry, which the eighth grade recited, while the students represented through movement and costume many animals from fossils to elephants, birds to apes — a grand variety.

— Ginny Potter

Cornwall Board of Education

This month we are sorry to report that Albert M. Clark resigned from the Cornwall Board of Education for reasons of health. Albert served on the board for almost ten years. He endowed us with his integrity and sense of steadfast responsibility to values. Even under fire, he remained a gentleman. His presence and humor broadened our perspective and provided an anchor of stability. Indeed, he will be sorely missed. Thank you for your service, Albert, from the board, the school, and the whole town of Cornwall.

— Lynn Cheney

Conservation Trust News

Now that The Cornwall Conservation Trust has received tax-exempt status from the IRS, it is expanding its work.

The trust is now ready to offer professional planning services to citizens of the town who are making decisions about the future of their land. Available without charge are a consultation with a professional land planner, a site visit with the land planner, and a conceptual map with planning options based on the owner's objectives and in compliance with P&Z regulations. This land-planning service will offer landowners options that achieve their financial objectives and yet are sensitive to the area's rural character.

The trust recently appointed the undersigned to work with adjacent towns, other Cornwall organizations, planners, prospective donors, and others to make this new service an active and effective part of the trust.

Recently the trust has also:

1. accepted 88 acres of land on Cream Hill which will be permanently secure from development;
2. received a visual easement to Coltsfoot Valley;
3. joined with neighboring towns to help establish the Shepaug Greenway, linking thousands of acres of open space and extensive trail systems; and
4. increased its membership to 90 members.

— Anne & John Zinsser

Special Applications for P&Z

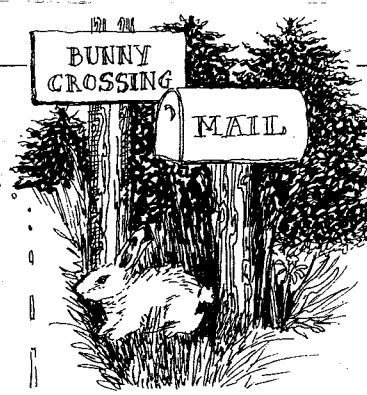
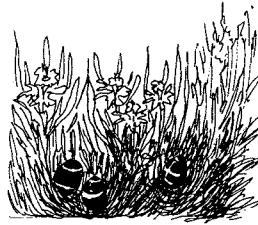
At its March meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted to renew the permit of Jeffrey and Eileen Yates to allow change of use from Ingvertsen's Automotive to a gas sales/convenience store. Renovation has already begun.

The commission also scheduled public hearings on April 12 at 8 p.m. on the following special-permit applications: 1) the town to use part of Gannett Park for a new Child Center building; 2) Arthur and John Dutton to subdivide 115 acres on Town Street and to construct a private street; and 3) Rocky River Gravel to continue operations at their Route 7 site.

In the case of Cole et al vs. the Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission, P&Z Attorney Thomas Byrne writes that "The Appellate Court has reversed the decision of the Superior Court on the basis that the Superior Court erred in finding that the plaintiffs did not have standing to appeal the decision of the Commission." The case has been sent back to the Superior Court where it will be decided on its merits. A trial date has not yet been set to determine the legality of the new sawmill regulations.

Due to a slowdown in land-use inquiries, P&Z's regular office hours will now be 9:30-noon on Mondays. The clerk may be there until 3, but it would be wise to call ahead (672-4957). — Ken Keskinen

Letters to the Chronicle



BEING PUT THROUGH THE MILL

As this month brings news concerning the ongoing "Sawmill Saga," it's important to understand the true reasons for its inception. This issue has reached the magnitude it has, not for the benefit of any particular party but because it strikes a chord loud and clear that rings out social injustice.

Cornwall on its own has chosen not to be oblivious to the social needs of its people. It has supported affordable housing, child-care needs, education, and now opportunities for business/employment.

The recent judgment on the sawmill case will now open the way to the examination of the true merits of this case, merits that for too long have been masked by the opposition's use of legal jargon and testimony that reeks with deception. What is at jeopardy here is the very basis of town democracy. — Karen Stevens

Editors' Note: Last month's railroad story brought in several letters. We'd like to print every word, but space is limited.

LINREALISTIC PROJECTIONS

I am a resident of West Cornwall who lives near the railroad line. Hanlon's freight train goes by at night and returns in the early morning hours. The train passes by slowly and makes a lot of noise.

No train could travel this line at 50 miles per hour. The track snakes through woods and by the river. There are several crossings. There are no safety lights or signals, just the train's whistle as it approaches. Where does Hanlon believe the train could travel safely at 50 mph?

As for upgrading the line, Hanlon says he can do this for about \$50,000 per mile. That means a \$2,500,000 bill. How many daily commuters to New York are there in this area anyway? Weekend commuters no doubt will love the idea of passenger train service. Sunday evenings they can drive over from Norfolk or Litchfield, park their cars at the station, and then travel into the city. These days the parking lot at Dover Plains, N.Y., is always full, packed with cars belonging to weekend householders. Does Mr. Hanlon want the same for us? — Judy Parker

STRAIGHT ANSWERS NEEDED

Something is weird if the guy never gives a straight answer to why the trains have to run at night.

We the taxpayers have contributed \$5 million to this guy for his private profit, so he should accommodate us, pure and simple. The truck track-cleaner has no warning signal and

comes racing down the track on no schedule; this is going to be a disaster someday. The poisons they spray on the tracks to keep the weeds out can't be good for us or our water. Finally, the claim of Mr. H. that they carried "weak" hydrochloric acid only sometimes fills me with dread. There is no such thing as weak hydrochloric acid. That is like saying they are carrying a little atomic bomb.

— Janice Bracken (and Don)

TODAY'S ROBBER BARONS

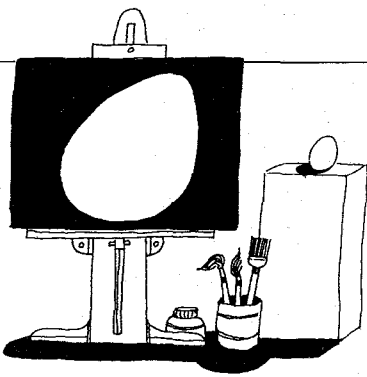
Those of us in West Cornwall whose property is adjacent to the railroad are jarred bolt upright in bed by the blasts from the engineer in the wee hours of the morn. The first time it happened I was surprised, the second time I was upset — our two-year-old does not sleep through this — and the third time in five nights that the train rumbled and wailed past the house between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m., I was angry.

The railroad of yesteryear that provided freight and passenger service on a regular basis did so for a profit, certainly to the public good. This railroad serves only itself, and as I understand it, at great expense to the taxpayer. I am not against railroads, and I am for progress. The 19th century robber-baron attitude of the present management of this railroad, however, gives railroads a bad name and is certainly not progress. — Brian Kavanagh

LOVE THOSE TRAINS!

I love those trains! I could justify it by arguing their historical significance, or the tax-subsidized roads and trucking industry, or their economic value, but I won't. I will defend the Housatonic Railroad because of the interest they have sparked for our family. Trains are now our favorite mode of transportation, railroad memorabilia grace our home, train books fill our bookshelves, and Ryan dreams of being an engineer. The workers have always shown us great courtesy as they repaired the tracks in front of our house, and have shown consideration by blowing their whistle to warn my children not to be crossing the tracks.

So could I dare complain about nightly whistles for this business that is trying to succeed during these economic times, just because it's in my front yard? I am glad they are running, and with all the children and tourists in West Cornwall, I am glad they run at night. And this past blizzard weekend, with roads and airports closed, the train came through! — Rita G. Quinn



Fales Watercolors at Library

Edward Fales has graced the Cornwall Free Library with his exhibition, "This Beautiful New England." He creates a sense of place and natural beauty. At the same time, he warns about encroaching development that threatens the Northeast's environment. "The Hudson at Albany" expresses this tension; above the river and its tree-lined shore, towering buildings stand ominously close.

Fales is most at home near the water, with boats and their masts and sails; rocks and trees and waves at the shoreline; light and shadow and sun's reflection on water. Don't miss the superb coloring of "Low Tide, Corea, Maine," displayed in the children's room. — *Alfred Bredenberg*

Habitat Update

With spring about to break, Habitat for Humanity of Northwest Connecticut expects to start shortly its project on Route 7 opposite Kugeman Village — a two-bedroom house for Treasa Pattison and her two small daughters. Treasa has lived in Cornwall but now lives in Great Barrington and works in Sharon for Women's Emergency Services. Because of site limitations, only a two-bedroom house can be built. The architect for the house is Connie Gordon of Responsive Designs, Cornwall Bridge. Jim Whiteside will be the construction coordinator after Denny Frost, a member of the building committee, prepares the site. Habitat is reviewing possible other sites in Canaan, Salisbury, and Norfolk.

The new board of directors for Habitat includes three from Cornwall: Paul Baren, v.p., Ella Clark, family selection, and Jim Prentice, building committee. Volunteers interested should call John Pogue at 435-9626. — *Paul Baren*



Money Needed

Just a reminder of some of the Cornwall organizations you are planning to contribute to (or just have?). While you have your checkbook out, don't forget . . .

- The Cornwall Child Center
- The Cornwall Free Library
- The Hughes Memorial Library
- The Cornwall Fire Department
- Extras for Children
- The Cornwall Chronicle

Grand List Completed

The 1992 grand list, reflecting the revised assessments of Cornwall property, more than doubles the 1991 list to a new total of \$153,542,517. The ten highest assessments, still subject to modification by the Board of Tax Review, are as follows:

Cornwall Castle Hills, \$2,633,990; Ivan Lendl, \$2,053,750; Yelping Hill Association, \$2,037,420; Bernard Chaus, \$1,837,200; Dark Entry Forest, \$1,693,010; Roy Walzer, \$990,850; Anne Hubbard, \$801,330; Stony Batter Farm LP, \$628,570; Mohawk Mountain Ski Area, \$606,410; and Naneen Bunnell, \$544,030. — *Bob Potter*



Events & Announcements

Park & Rec Plans: The Easter egg hunt will take place April 10 at 10 a.m. on the village green. Preschool through grade four children are invited to bring their baskets and sharp eyes to the hunt.

Youth baseball is being organized. Anyone who wishes to play or coach should call Mark Pastre (672-0179). A six-week gymnastics program instructed by Jean Jacquier will start April 3 at Goshen Center School. Registration required; fee is \$25.

Bake Sale: Cornwall bakers unite to put clay in a new CCS oven! Cornwall Consolidated School PTO is sponsoring an Easter bake sale on Saturday, April 10, 8:30 a.m.-noon. Proceeds will complete financing for the installation of a kiln in the CCS art department. Delectable desserts will be available in two locations: West Cornwall, across from Yutzler's, and Cornwall Bridge, near Baird's. Please your palate and support the art department with our tarts, tortes, pies, cookies and cakes. Mmmmm.

Selectmen's Announcements: The selectmen would like to thank all those who helped, directly and indirectly, during the storm of March 13-14. The town crew worked 33 straight hours and private contractors also helped out. Citizen cooperation in keeping cars off and away from the

roads was much better than during the December storm.

All interested persons are invited to discuss local and state issues with Senator Del Eads and Representative Mary Ann O'Sullivan at the selectmen's meeting on April 19, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Girl Scout Notes: Please continue to save cans and bottles; the last collection date will be in May. Cookies (1,848 boxes ordered!) are being delivered. If you missed out, extras can be requested from Carol Lugar (672-6890). The Northwestern Connecticut Girl Scout Council in Torrington needs donations of both time and money because of cuts in United Way funding. This local council serves a higher percentage of girls than any in the country on one of the smallest budgets.

Computer Bulletin Board: Joe Giangarra, a member of the Danbury Area Computer Society, is looking into starting a chapter in the Northwest Corner. Any computer users interested in participating in a user group can contact him at 672-6024.

High School Seniors: Students graduating from any public or private high school may apply for financial help for further education from the Woman's Society Scholarship Fund. Applications may be obtained from the guidance office at HVRHS or from Thalia H. Scoville (672-6288). Deadline for return is May 1, 1993.

Youth Fishing: The Cornwall Conservation Commission and a volunteer group are busy getting Mill Brook in Gannett Park set up as a youth fishing area. With the blessing of the selectmen, the brook will be stocked with brook trout twice this year, and fishing will be limited to Cornwall children under 16. Fish are being purchased with funds donated by interested people. Contributions may be made to Steve Hedden, Sue Williamson, or George Brown. Fishing season opens April 17.

Elderly Health Screening: Cornwall residents 60 and over are offered a wide range of medical tests on Tuesday, May 11, at the West Cornwall Firehouse. The fee is \$18, or \$19 with PAP test. To schedule a May appointment or receive further information call Jill Gibbons, at 672-2603.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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