



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 3: NUMBER 7 AUGUST 1993



Mine Mountain Heroism

It's 600 feet from the Housatonic to the top of Mine Mountain, east of the river three miles south of West Cornwall. It's a steep, rocky climb, with outcroppings of ledge and with a tangle of trees blown down during the tornado of '89.

The forest fire on top of the mountain was first reported on July 4, its cause not determined but presumed to be a campfire that spread in the grass, peat moss, and roots made tinder by a prolonged hot, dry spell. Cornwall's volunteer fire company, directed by Chief Gary Hepprich, was soon augmented by firefighters from nearby towns. Firefighters brought in chain saws to cut containment areas around the mountain, working on dangerous terrain. In 90-degree temperatures, firefighters carried 50-pound packs of hose up the mountain, ultimately linking nearly three miles of hose with pumps at the river. One firefighter broke his arm and many had minor injuries. Others suffered from smoke inhalation and the exhaustion of working near a fire intensified by the summer heat.

Foresters from the State Department of Environmental Protection came in to support local crews on July 6, and the fire was believed to be contained. However,

on the following Saturday the fire flared up again, and strong, dry winds caused dense smoke that was detected as far away as Massachusetts. Again the crews responded with chain saws and water pumped from the river. Other town volunteers carried drinking water up the mountain to thirsty firefighters. Firefighters, relieved by other crews, came down the mountain to discover quantities of food and refreshments delivered by their Cornwall neighbors.

On Tuesday, the 13th, the fire was considered to be contained, although town officials and firefighters kept a watchful eye on the more than 100 acres that were still smoldering on Mine Mountain.

Dave Williamson, selectman, who was in the midst of the action, spoke appreciatively of the support that came from the townspeople, comparing it to the efforts of the town at the time of the tornado: "When we need help from the community, the people are always there." The sentiment was reinforced by First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, who praised the firefighters for their quick response and their untiring efforts under unusually strenuous and dangerous conditions. — Ken Keskinen

Opukahai Returns Home

The remains of Henry Opukahai (Anglicized as Obookiah), the Hawaiian student at Cornwall's Foreign Mission School who died here in 1818, have been disinterred from the Cornwall Cemetery at the request of a Hawaiian association of collateral descendants. The remains will be reinterred on August 15 at Kona, on the island of Hawaii, following a week-long series of services at Hawaiian Congregational churches. Opukahai, though he died before he could return to Hawaii following his conversion, is widely considered the Islands' first Christian.

The exhumation was performed July 12-13 by a team led by Connecticut's State Archeologist, Dr. Nicholas F. Bellantoni of UConn. The remains were remarkably well preserved. The disintegrated coffin was found to have had a glass window over the head; also, the coffin's cover had been decorated with brass tacks forming the shape of a heart which surrounded the initials "H.O." followed by "AE 26." The monument, which was completely disassembled for the removal, is being restored to its former appearance, surmounted by the original slab with the epitaph, at the family association's expense.

(continued on page 2)

AUGUST 1993

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Last day to pay Cornwall taxes without penalty	2 ☙☙☙ Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall	3 Park & Rec 7:30 Town Office Cornwall Hist. Soc. items 9:30-noon (p.4) Agric. Adv. Co. 7:30 W. Corn. Firehouse Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall	4 W. Cornwall Merchants Assn. 10am Cadwell's	5	6	7 Cornwall Hist. Soc. items 10am-1pm (p.4) 14 St. Bridget's Fair 9am-3pm (p.4) Corn. Hist. Soc. old photos 10 to 1 (p.4) Algrant Show 10 to 5 Marvelwood (p.4) Coltsfoot Chor. 6:30 Rumsey Gym (p.4) Roger the Jester 7pm Cornubia Hall Poetry Reading 8pm Cadwell's
8	9 P & Z 8:00pm Town Hall	10 Dem. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall *?*	11 Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall *?*	12 Children's Party Peter Rabbit's 100th Birthday! Library 10:30am Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC†	13 Rose Algrant Art Show opening, Marvelwood 4-8pm (p.4) Roger the Jester Cornubia Hall 7pm	21 Corn. Hist. Soc. old photos, 10 to 1 (p.4) Historic Districts talk & slide show 8pm Town Hall (p.4)
15 Rose Algrant Art Show, Marvelwood 10-5pm (p.4)	16 Cornwall Lib. Art Show, Howard Stone, artist ☙☙☙ Selectmen 8pm Town Hall	17 Cornwall Hist. Soc. old photos, 9:30am-noon (p.4) Agric. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm W. Corn. Firehouse	18	19 Bd. of Ed. 4pm CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30pm Town Hall	20	28 Cornwall Hist. Soc. old photos, 10 to 1 (p.4) Agri. Fair, Village Green, 2 to 9pm (see insert)
22 Park & Rec trip to Action Park (p.4) John Zinsser talk at Cornwall Library 4pm	23 ZBA 8:00pm Town Hall	24 Cornwall Hist. Soc. old photos, 9:30am-noon (p.4)	25	26	27	
29	30	31 Cornwall Hist. Soc. old photos, 9:30am-noon (p.4)	Please send in calendar items and announcements on the 16th or before			

*Check time and place at Town Office. † United Church of Christ *?* Check with chairman

(continued from page 1)

A memorial service at the United Church in Cornwall Village, held on July 25 just prior to the departure of the remains from Connecticut and attended by, among others, Hawaiian delegations from the Islands and New Jersey, was part of the scheduled ceremonies. — *Michael Gannett*



P&Z Listens

The barking of dogs at the Little Guild shelter continues to be a matter of concern to neighbor Johan Winsser. He wrote in a June letter to the Planning and Zoning Commission that "the dogs bark loudly, so loudly and frequently that my wife and I can hear them from inside our house with our windows closed." He included a "Barking Dog Log" listing the sounds of barking heard between 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., when the dogs are required to be inside. "The barking," he stated, "is more than a nuisance; . . . it has thoroughly compromised our ability to enjoy our home."

As a result of this most recent complaint, P&Z Chairman Ginny Potter indicated in a letter to Judy Bekasi, president of the Little Guild, that the commission could, if necessary, "vote to suspend the Guild's special permit for violation of the conditions under which it was granted."

Mr. Winsser's letter and other communications were discussed at the commission meeting on July 12. In attendance in addition to Mr. Winsser were Mrs. Bekasi and other members of the board of the Little Guild. The board emphasized its willingness to meet the requirements for sound control established in 1988. An acoustic consultant was hired last fall to analyze the situation, and his report showed that noise from the shelter is below decibel standards set by the Torrington Area Health District. However, to further baffle the barking, he recommended insulating the walls and coverings of the outside dog runs and adding air conditioning so that the kennel windows could be closed. Tom Avenia, Guild board member, added that music is played for the dogs, with Bach having the most calming effect. The shelter manager, Rhea Hoch, stated that the staff complies with the "quiet hours" schedule.

Other townspeople commented that neighbors' dogs are part of our life, along with cows, cars, and planes. It was acknowledged that one's responses to noise of any sort are highly subjective and, therefore, difficult to evaluate.

After hearing the various concerns,

the commission agreed to delay any action until the Guild board has a chance to comply with the recommended sound control measures, and until commission members personally determine the extent, volume, and annoyance factor of the barking dogs.

— *Ginny Potter*

Wrong-Side Rattler

Maggie Cooley and Joyce Hart discovered a timber rattlesnake, more than four feet long and boasting seven rattles at the end of its tail. It had been crossing Route 43 one mile north of Cornubia Hall.

Connecticut folklore is very clear on this matter: "There are no rattlers in Connecticut east of the Housatonic River." Clearly, this snake was off limits. Clearly, too, it was dead — which proves once again that it's a bad idea to mess with folklore.

Maggie has photographs of the corpse.

— *Scoville Soule*

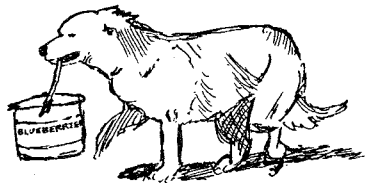
Racers Off With a Bang

The Fourth of July activities got off with a bang at 10:30 a.m. with a five-mile road race sponsored by Extras For Kids. A pistol shot pierced the air and more than 50 runners bolted down Pine Street on a course that took them through the flats of Valley Road, up the daunting challenge of Everest Hill Road, then continuing on Great Hollow Road to the downhill terrain of Essex Hill Road and back to Cornwall Plain. Onlookers cheered as winner David Dickinson of Bantam crossed the finish line in 31:07 minutes, followed by David Landau and Ian Kennedy, both of Sharon. Paula Brunetto of Cornwall was the first woman to finish, with a time of 32:52, followed by Betsy Tanner of Cornwall and Kathy Marchant of Lakeville.

The well-attended race raised approximately \$500 for an Extras For Kids endowment, which will fund a broad range of activities for Cornwall children and help make it possible for any child to participate in programs regardless of financial means.

Immediately following the race, Park & Rec sponsored activities for the younger set, including a footrace — won by Sam Jones and Amanda Stevens — sack races, three-legged races, egg tosses, and other games. The afternoon was lazied away in true Fourth of July fashion with a picnic on the green.

— *Robin Freyberg*



Sorry We Missed . . .

* This year's VFW Citizenship Award was presented to William A. Dinneen at the Memorial Day ceremonies by Joseph Lush, Jr.

* Dean Potter was valedictorian of the Class of 1993 at HVRHS.

Goodbye to a Friend

Margaret Bevans died on July 14. She was the backbone of the *Chronicle*, shepherding every comma into the right place and every issue to the right post office or address.

Along with Tom, she was a tireless enforcer of the Strunk/White rule, "Omit needless words," and she would have sharply brushed off the idea of devoting this space to her. But we can't let her go without saying how much we loved her and will miss her.

— *The Editors*

Welcome

Jared James Nelson to
Eric and Caren Hamel Nelson

Owen Stephen Monagan to
Jamie and David Monagan

Tyler Keith Gordon to
Connie and Doug Gordon

Congratulations

Cheryl Hopf to Jeff Cass

Land Transfers

Frank H. and Geraldine E. Bailey to
Peter W. and Sandra E. Ripley, house on
Jewell Street.

Estate of Ruth G. Kelley to Anna M.
Timell, house on Rumsey Circle.

Barbara S. Raives to Marie W. Olko,
house on Dibble Hill Road.

Ronald B. Washburn to Hugh I. Hunt,
trustee, house on Bunker Hill Road.

Estate of Henry S. Dinneen to John E.
and Bianca F. LaPorta, house on Popple
Swamp Road.

David G. and Nancy M. Griggs to
William L. and Nancy G. Berry et al, house
on Cream Hill Lake.



CHC Rental Program Shapes Up

Those interested in renting apartments in Kugeman Village will find brochures at the Town Office in late August. Application forms will be available in September. Those who wish to receive application forms should call Community Housing Management at 1-239-2539, or write to CHM at 165 Clintonville Road, North Haven, Conn. 06473.

Kugeman Village will have seven one-bedroom units (with two being handicapped-accessible), seven two-bedroom units, and four three-bedroom units. Sixteen apartments will be two-story units with basements. Each apartment will have an electric range, refrigerator, hot-water baseboard heat, and connections for telephone, cable TV, and air conditioning.

The units are available to persons without regard to race, gender, ancestry, color,



Letters to the Chronicle

1940S TOWN OFFICES

The excellent article in the June issue by Bob Potter set me to thinking back to the early 40s. Mrs. May Wilcox was the town clerk and kept some of the town records in her home.

On her death, Florence Whitcomb became town clerk, and, with the help of B.S. Wilford, the first selectman, Dr. W. B. Walker, and Katie Walker, moved the town records into the new Town Office. This was the first time that town records were collected and stored in one place. Probate records also found a home in the town vault.

Records were collected from several private homes. Florence and Katie were asked to collect the records from the Wilcox home. The records came from dresser drawers and from under rugs, sofa cushions, and bed mattresses.

Regular hours for the Town Office were introduced at this time, and the office was always open on Friday evenings for the convenience of the people in the service.

The feeling grew that the records should be indexed, and that project was started at that time.

— Edwin H. Whitcomb

AESOP REVISITED

Four blindfolded wise men were asked to describe an elephant which had been brought to them.

"How odd!" said the first, grabbing the tail. "An animal built like a rope!"

"Surely we have a tree-like creature," said the second, with his arms around a leg.

"This beast feels like a house," the third said as he laid hands on the vast flanks.

"A flying snake! And a big one at that," the fourth exclaimed, trying not to be swept off his feet by the trunk.

On the evening of June 25, at the Town Hall, five modern wise persons attempted to describe another beast, the elusive "Optimum Health Care Reform" chimera.

The first wise man, an expert on insurance, said, "OHC Reform can only come with free enterprise. Everybody does his thing and we all benefit." Then he added, "One thing Optimum Reform isn't is government interference, with its waste and inefficiency!"

"Optimum Health Care Reform?" mused the first legislator. "I wish there were a simple answer to that one. If any of you have some ideas, please, please let me know."

"Reform is already happening," the hospital administrator said. "Not here in Connecticut, to be sure; but in other states. A lot of exciting things are taking place out there: managed competition, market reform, and the like."

"It drives me crazy," said the second legislator. "Insurance pays for operations, radiation, chemotherapy — the works. But it won't pay for medical exams that could make some of these expensive procedures unnecessary. Preventative medicine is key."

"The patient!" the doctor stated forcefully. "Get rid of him and his unreasonable demands and you'll see costs go down. We already give the best medical care in the world. We just have to ration it wisely."

A sixth wise man, too poor to carry health insurance, was unwilling to attend for fear of falling unaffordably ill from the germs of a crowded hall. He sent word that his version of Optimum Health Care Reform was "any system other than the one we have."

— Scoville Soulé

P.S. The writer admits to some quasi-quotes and oversimplifications; but these are the prerogative of the fable teller. He would also like to sincerely thank the Republican Town Committee for arranging this health care forum in the pursuit of solutions to a most important and difficult problem.

AGAIN, THANKS

In early July Cornwall mobilized to fight the fire on Mine Mountain [see story page 1]. It was a dangerous fire due to its size, the heat, wind, and exhausting terrain. All 55 members of the Fire Department played a role. Townspeople helped lug equipment to fight the fire, and a large mountain of food was donated and served.

It was tough work, and the fire was controlled because of a lot of sacrifice. The town is, of course, lucky to have people willing to drop everything and to do what has to be done. We are fortunate to live in a place where there is still a strong sense of community that inspires such deeds. Thanks to one and all again.

— Gordon Ridgway

SIGNING OFF

Natasha Eilenberg (July) said I've maligned the signs because I'm behind the times, but she is wrong.

Regarding the historical rectitude of the Big Sign, I, too, am in fact well aware of the Plainians' 18th-century origins and I actually love their quaint ways. I particularly admire the way they decided to reject all modern goods that might be brought in by outside delivery men, who rely on recognized names on maps to find places.

Regarding the Little Sign, though, I still question whether the Plainians are in keeping with the ideals of the Founding Fathers on this one, which is why I bother to beat this half-dead horse up Route 4 again this month. If the "Nuclear Free Zone" sign is justified because it voices a town declaration, then shouldn't the articles of the Constitution festoon the Interstates, and shouldn't every state and town border be plastered with its laws? Or are signage declarations only meant to display certain hand-picked declarations favored by a zealous few?

Is that fair to the rest of the population who are forced to live under the particular group's banner indefinitely?

Seems like a precedent-setting mess to me. There are also some problems with the flow of reality past that sign. Route 4 is a state road governed by state, not town law, and for good reason. I, too, want no nuclear power plant in Cornwall. But what chaos to think that every 800-house town should suddenly usurp the authority of state and federal regulators to provide for the safe transportation of low-level nuclear waste, which happens to be indispensable to the treatment of cancer, brain imaging, and diagnosis of coronary artery disease.

There is also the curious matter of enforcement for a town whose only lawman is the Animal Warden. Was Rick Stone apprised of his potential responsibility for interceding trucking with preemptive roadblocks? Or is Gordon Ridgway supposed to call in the state police to enforce a Cornwall law that rejects state law?

I applaud the desire of keeping Cornwall "nuclear-power-plant free." But the Plain's signs do not say that, and they look more vain than plain.

— David Monagan

In the matter of the town's lawpersons, we note that the town has ten justices of the peace who are anxious to serve the community, but have little to do but commit marriages (few) and quell riots (none yet).

— The Editors

religion, handicaps, or marital status. Selection of residents will be based on application forms, family interviews, credit checks, and contacts with references. Acceptance will be limited to those with family incomes below the median for Litchfield County. For example, the income for a family of four cannot exceed \$47,700. Apartments are assigned according to family

size and composition, with pets not being permitted.

Rental payments will cover water, refuse collection, maintenance of grounds and buildings, and snow removal. Heat and electricity will be individually monitored and paid for by the occupants. Rentals will begin at \$356 for a one-bedroom unit, \$381 for a two-bedroom unit, and

\$410 for a three-bedroom unit, increasing according to income up to 30% of the renter's income, whichever figure is greater. It is expected that rental assistance for those in need will be available from the Connecticut Department of Housing and/or from local sources. Rental figures will also be adjusted monthly when there are changes in family income. — Ken Keskinen



Cornwall Dog Days

June was dog registration month, and an inspection of the town clerk's dog license records uncovered these essential facts:

Total registered dogs: 201 (73 male, 128 female)

Most popular breeds (aside from the ubiquitous "mixed"):

- Black labs - 18
- Australian shepherds - 14
- Yellow labs - 12
- German shepherds - 9
- Golden retrievers - 7

Oldest dogs were "Happy," a beagle residing on Scoville Road, "L.D.," a shepherd mix of River Road, and "Mindy," a poodle of Popple Swamp Road, all 17 years old but puppies at heart.

The *Chronicle* could find no discernible pattern in dog names. There were almost 200 different names, the only obvious repeats being "Jake" and "Biscuit."

License No. 1 went to "Thunder," who hangs out in Cornwall Hollow and is a breed so exotic it would put you to shame if you have a dog as common as a black lab named Jake. No. 1 always goes to the town clerk or, as in this case, her assistant. "Saves arguments," said Barbara Dakin.

If you haven't registered your dog, you're late, so get over to the town clerk's office ASAP. — Ed Ferman



Trip to the "Moon"

On July 7 a bus filled to capacity departed West Cornwall for the Richard Rodgers Theatre in New York. Passengers were served an elegant gourmet box supper en route to the hit Broadway show *Fool Moon* starring David Shiner and Bill Irwin. The audience left heat wave and cares at the door and surrendered delightedly to the comic antics of Shiner and Irwin. The benefit raised approximately \$2,500 for Extras For Kids. — Robin Freyberg

Keep in Touch

The *Chronicle* loves to get mail. We'd much rather receive 50 \$5.00 checks than five \$50 ones. (Don't think we don't like the fifties, though.) And when you send a contribution, let us know what you like or don't like about the *Chronicle* or anything else in town. Keep in touch.

A \$10 contribution will get the *Chronicle* mailed to an out-of-town address. Other contributions welcome.

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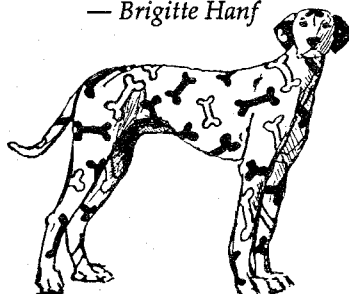
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Botanicals at Library

In her studies of plants, Elizabeth Smith Haas carries on a long tradition of botanical illustration, of which the oldest surviving example, a copy of the herbal *De Materia Medica*, dates back to A.D. 512. The first naturalistic representations of plants appeared in illuminated manuscripts and in details of religious paintings such as Van Eyck's Ghent altarpiece and, later, in Durer's meticulous descriptions. Today, Margaret Stones and W. Keble Martin in England are among the best known botanical artists, along with Cornwall's own T. Merrill Prentice.

Ms. Haas studied at the Bartlett Arboretum but specializes in wild flowers. She has a strong sense for design in her arrangements of root, stem, leaf, flower, and fruit in all their specific anatomical detail. Especially striking are her tender Coltsfoot and a vivid Connecticut Yankee Lily. At the Cornwall Library until August 14.

— Brigitte Hanf



Events & Announcements

Historical Society Exhibits: Due to popular demand, the exhibit of seldom-seen items from the society's vault will be held over until Saturday, August 7.

Starting on Saturday, August 14, there will be an exhibit of old photos of Cornwall: Cream Hill Lake scenes, people who helped make Cornwall what it is today, and pictures of places that no longer exist.

Please note the new hours starting August 7: Tuesdays, 9:30 to 12 noon; Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Wanted: Driver or drivers to pick up persons who cannot drive and bring them to Cornwall churches Sunday mornings. Contact Paul Baren, 672-6637.

21st Annual Country Fair will be held at St. Bridget's Church in Cornwall Bridge on Saturday, August 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., rain or shine. There will be home-canned and baked goods and a refreshment stand with many delicious offerings. Call 927-3365 or 868-7902 for dealer reservations for sale space.

Algrant Show: Cornwall's artists will once again be on exhibit in the Friends of Rose Algrant Art Show. This year's show opens on Friday, August 13, from 4-8 p.m. and continues on August 14-15 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Marvelwood student lounge.

A Cornwall tradition for over 30 years, the show will have more than 60 painters, sculptors, photographers, and craftspersons. Profits after expenses will be donated to the Rose Algrant Scholarship Fund at Rumsey Hall School. "Madame," as Rose was referred to, taught French at Rumsey for over 40 years.

Coltsfoot Chorus Concert: The second annual Coltsfoot Chorus Concert will take place on Saturday, August 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Rumsey Gym. Supper afterwards at 7:30 p.m. Bring your own picnic. Program includes motets, madrigals, spirituals, and Brahms, as well as compositions by two Cornwall composers. Singers are: Susan Fox, Joan Hinchman, Nora Horan, John King, Lisa Lansing, John LaPorta, Tim and Marie Prentice, Beth Samuels, Julia Scott, Jim Whiteside, and Greg Zabielski.

Historic Districts for Cornwall? Laura Clarke, director of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, will offer a talk and a slide show on that subject in general, and on the role of local historic districts in particular. The presentation, sponsored by the Cornwall Association, will take place at 8:00 p.m., August 21 (not August 20), at the Town Hall.

Action Park: Park & Rec has planned a trip to Action Park, in McAfee, New Jersey, on Sunday, August 22. The bus will leave Cornwall at 7:00 a.m. and arrive at the park at 10:00. The park features over 75 of the wildest and wettest rides and attractions ever imagined. Cost is \$32.75 for adults and \$28.75 for youths. Call Joan Thitchener before August 7 at 672-6531 for more information and reservations.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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