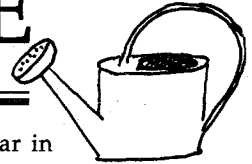


CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 5 : NUMBER 7 AUGUST 1995



Who Are We?

Newcomers to Cornwall might well ask: Who are the people who make up the town? Where do they come from? And (the big question), do "old-timers" run the town?

To begin with, the answer to the last question is, of course, no. Cornwall is no longer led by an insider group from old families such as the three "old Romans" described by Lewis Gannett in his book *Cream Hill*.

Who are those old families, or the oldest of the old families?

Cornwall has always been characterized by people moving out and others moving in. Old names disappear even though descendants with other surnames remain. The surnames of nearly all the 18th-century settlers were gone by 1900, except for the few families who today are still on their land—the Hurlburts (from 1748), the Scovilles (1754), the Golds (1755), the Harts (1764), the Calhouns (1792), and the Clarks (1794).

When was it that people born in Cornwall ceased to predominate in town government and in the town's commercial business?

The changeover was a long time in the making. To some extent it matched the decline in agricultural employment and therefore in the population. For a time, in the 19th

century, Cornwall had light industry that brought in new workers, some foreign-born (mostly Irish and German). West Cornwall had three scissors factories, and Cornwall Bridge had an iron furnace; at the same time, more and more farms were put up for sale. Between 1850 and 1920 the population fell by 60 percent. Even today our full-time residents number fewer than they did 200 years ago.

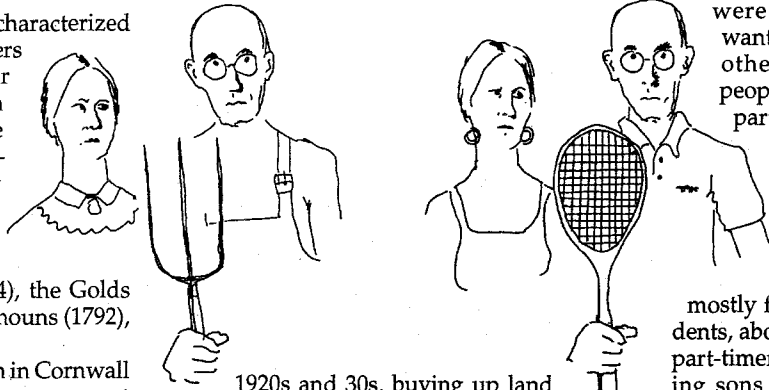
The town began getting summer residents, mostly boarders, in the latter part of the 19th century. Many more came in the

20 family names appear in both lists. Furthermore, even as early as 1900, 25 percent of town landowners were non-residents. In 1950 that figure was 28 percent. By 1990 it was nearly 40 percent. From 1950 to 1975, 175 landowners' surnames (30 percent) disappeared from the Grand List, and 375 new ones were added. The biggest non-resident property owner is the State of Connecticut, which controls more than 20 percent of Cornwall.

By the late 40s, native-born residents were outnumbered by others who wanted "a place in the country." Those others were, and are, not all "city people." Although more than half of the part-timers claim New York as home, nearly 40 percent are from other towns in Connecticut, and about five percent are from other states. However, in time, many of those vacation homes will become permanent residences,

mostly for retirees. Indeed, of current residents, about 10 percent (over 100) were once part-timers, and about 30 of those are returning sons and daughters of one-time residents. Those figures will no doubt increase in the coming years. Young people who grew up in Cornwall find that it is a good place to raise a family—a belief shared by other

(continued on page 2)



1920s and 30s, buying up land and old farmhouses. That influx continues.

The Grand Lists reflect those changes. In comparing the Grand List at the turn of the century with that of 1990, one finds that only

AUGUST 1995

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<i>Note: Deadline for September Events & Announcements and Calendar listings is August 15.</i>		1 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall* Agric. Advis. Comm. 7:30 P.M. W. Cornwall Firehouse	2 W. Cornwall Merchants Ass'n 10 A.M. Cadwell's "Reach for the Stars" Reading Program 7-7:30 P.M. Library	3	4 Judy Gafney Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	5
6 Soccer 10:30 A.M. HVRHS GNATS Softball 6 P.M. Hubbard Field	7 Bd. of Selectmen 8 P.M. Town Hall Review of Ski Area 5 Year Plan (p.4)	8 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	9 "Reach for the Stars" Reading Program 7-7:30 P.M. Library	10 Cornwall Housing Corp. 4:30 P.M. Kugeman Village	11 Judy Gafney Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Opening, Rose Algrant Art Show 4-8 P.M. Marvelwood School Student Lounge & Dining Hall (p.4)	12 Rose Algrant Art Show 10-5 P.M. Marvelwood (p.4)
13 Rose Algrant Art Show 10-5 P.M. Marvelwood (p.4) Poetry Reading 8 P.M. Cadwell's	14 Art Show 8/14-9/9 Library, Anne Zinsser, watercolors P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	15 Agric. Advis. Comm. 7:30 P.M. W. Cornwall Firehouse	16 "Reach for the Stars" Reading Program 7-7:30 P.M. Library	17 April Stevens' <i>Angel, Angel</i> 8 P.M. Library (p.4)	18 Judy Gafney Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	19 St. Bridget's Fair 9 A.M.-3 P.M. (p.4) Cornwall Assn. 4 P.M. Nants-Chubb house, 65 Johnson Road
20	21 Bd. of Selectmen 8 P.M. Town Hall	22	23 Susan B. Anthony Open House 6-8 P.M. Cadwell's and S.B.A. Office (p.4) "Reach for the Stars" Reading Program 7-7:30 P.M. Library	24	25 Children's Party, Cornwall Library, 10 A.M. (p.4)	26 Agricultural Fair (see insert)
27 Coltsfoot Chorus 5:30 P.M. Rumsey gym (p.4)	28 ZBA 8 P.M. Town Office*	29 Kindergarten orientation and bus ride, 10 A.M., CCS (p.4)	30	31	September 1 Registration for Cornwall Child Center 10 A.M. to noon at CCC (p.4)	 3 10 17 25

*Check time and place at Town Office

(continued from page 1)

young families moving to Cornwall.

So who now runs the town?

The answer to that is—we all do.

Of the slightly more than 100 names listed in the Town Report as serving on town boards and commissions, about half have come to town in the last 50 years, and about 20 percent of the names are of people who were once part-timers. Although the Fire Department is not listed in the Report, it has on its roster the names of 55 men and women. More than half of those stalwarts have come to Cornwall since 1950. As one might expect, retirees are well represented in all such organizations.

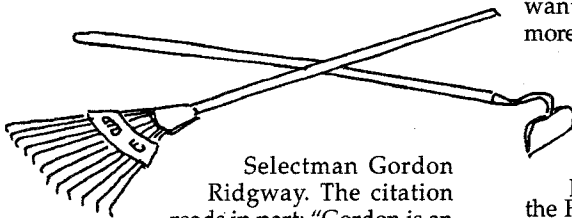
Yes, Calhouns, Golds, Harts, Hurlburts, and Scovilles still appear on those lists; and, although the Clark name no longer appears, centenarian Harriet Clark remains an unofficial town resource—and treasure.

So, to conclude our profile, we can say that only a minority of us were actually born in the area, that fewer than five percent of us can trace our Cornwall roots back beyond 1900, and that Cornwall continues to be a changing place even as it cherishes its traditions. However, none of that can stop any of us from claiming, with considerable pride, that we are all Cornwallians.

—Michael Gannett and Ken Keskinen

Honors for Our CEO

C.O.S.T., the statewide Council of Small Towns, decided this year to honor a small town CEO annually with a special award. The first recipient was Cornwall's First



Selectman Gordon Ridgway. The citation reads in part: "Gordon is an outstanding and dedicated small town leader, who possesses a unique grass-roots style of leadership. This past legislative session, Gordon took it upon himself to fight for mandate reform and 911 funding, and to serve as a volunteer C.O.S.T. [state] budget watchdog for our towns. Gordon's hands-on style illustrates that a small town official can make a difference!"

—Doc Simont

Changes for Cornwall Plains

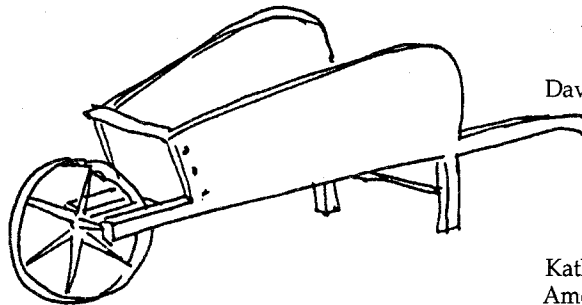
The Planning and Zoning Commission will continue to discuss and explain policies that it is revising to cover the possible change of use for the Marvelwood School and Rumsey buildings in Cornwall Plains. There will be a public hearing on P&Z's proposed Town Plan amendment, and a draft regulation based on the newly recommended plan will also be given a public hearing. The application procedure and the types of conditions and requirements will be defined and possible categories of use will be mentioned. Since this village is the home of our local government and library and the town green,

all the Cornwalls have a concern about Cornwall Plains' future. P&Z welcomes comment in the coming weeks and at the hearing to be held at 8 P.M. on August 14 at the Town Hall.

—Ginny Potter

It's A Cruel World Out Here

One recent sunny day, coming out on the porch, I saw from the corner of my eye a large brown bath towel hurtling soundlessly



through the air. It landed on an unblossomed bed of lilies not three feet from me; but when I looked back to see who had thrown it, there was no one there. Checking out the towel more closely I caught sight of a round, implacable eye staring at me. We watched each other, motionless; then the towel-with-eye gathered itself together and lumbered off; low flying into the air with a wriggling chipmunk in its talons.

I'll never know what the towel was, flying directly away from me as it did. An owl in-somniac? An outsized hawk? All I can say for sure about this episode is that if I ever wanted to be a chipmunk, I don't any more.

—Scoville D. Soulé

Library's 125th Birthday Bash

Did you ever give a 125th birthday party and nobody came? That's what the Friends of the Cornwall Library were fearing on July 15 as the eggs fried on the pavement and records were broken for heat and humidity.

The village simmered in the afternoon sun but, even so, more than 200 supporters of the Library celebrated at a (mercifully tented) reception, hosted by Anne and Paul Baren, at the Library. The lemonade was soaked up in less than 30 minutes, followed by other drinkables and all the food.

The reception followed a program of readings at UCC by Sue Fox, Bob Terrall, Phyllis Nauts, and Tom Walker. Representative Andrew Roraback presented a proclamation from the Connecticut General Assembly hailing the anniversary. The program concluded with the Coltsfoot Chorus singing two Stephen Foster songs popular when the Library was first opened in 1869.

A parade of children, carrying cutouts of their favorite storybook characters, swept through the church and led everyone to the Library for the reception and exhibits about the Library's history. The parade organizer was Danielle Mailer.

Funds raised for the event will allow the

Library trustees to check off two or three items from their wish list. —Lisa Lansing

Welcome

Hannah Elizabeth to Marion and Robin Paton

Good-bye to A Friend

Joseph Lincoln Peschko, Jr.

Congratulations

Alex Prud'homme & Sarah Buffum

Russell Murdock & Wendy Kent

David E. Harmon & Mary Ellen Diskavich

Land Transfers

Richard A. Furniss, Jr., to Kenneth O'Hara, house and 7.4 acres at 90 Cornwall Hollow Road for \$144,000.

Kathleen McGusty Agate to C. Rinker and Amelia D. Buck, house and 15.9 acres at 56 Essex Hill Road for \$330,000.

A Town Well Painted

Fortunately for area artists, this year's Paint the Town to benefit the Cornwall Child Center allowed a 30-day period of grace before the July 15 exhibition and silent auction.

Cornwall was cooking in the 90s on deadline day, which might otherwise have yielded only underwater river and lake scenes if—as in other years—the artists had had to do their paintings on the day of the auction. But the Covered Bridge again won easily as most popular subject. Watercolor was the medium of choice. Drawings and paintings ranged in expression from the phosphorescent shimmer of midsummer night (Michael Gellatly) to the scalding burn of high noon (Larry Pool).

Local artists contributed 40 paintings and the silent auction of their work yielded \$2,800, of which more than 40 percent went to the Child Center. There was also a live auction, held on the Green on Lower River Road in West Cornwall, at which an etching by Robert Parker was knocked down for \$600. Proceeds of this sale went to the West Cornwall Merchants Association, which sponsors this yearly event, to help cover expenses of the daylong jazz festival that was part of this year's Paint the Town celebration.

—Brigitte Hanf

New CCS Gym?

At a meeting on July 11, attended by about 20 people, Board of Education member David Samson urged Cornwallians to recognize the need for a larger gymnasium at the Cornwall Consolidated School. Samson, who is also a member of the school's PTA, emphasized that "we are not here to cause any conflict with the present Marvelwood issue," but merely to convince people of the need to include a larger gym in the town's long-range planning.

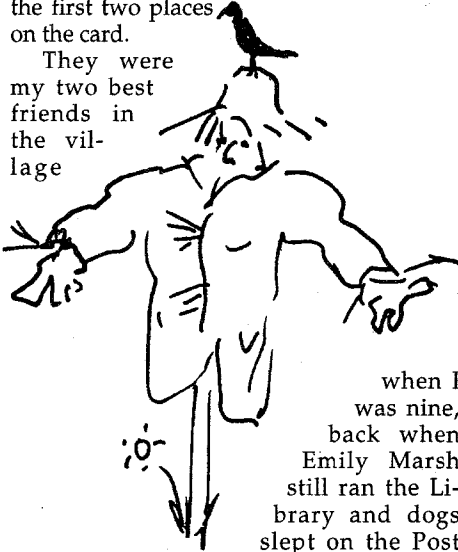
The present gym's dimensions are 58 x 36.2 feet, which is about one-fourth the size of a standard basketball court. As well as presenting a safety hazard to children who are running fast in its confined space, CCS parent Ben Gray pointed out, the gym is so small

that parents who come to see their children in plays and ceremonies can't all fit into the room. Finding space for such a larger gym, which would take up most of the present parking lot, and the enormous expense—estimated by the Cornwall Association's president Will Calhoun at nearly a million dollars—are among the problems that need to be confronted in the town's future planning, Samson urged.
—Barbara Klaw

The Girls of Summer

Pulling an old lending card from a copy of *The Puritan Twins* in the Library last weekend brought me face to face with summer, 1951. Sally Foote and Libby MacLeod had signed the first two places on the card.

They were my two best friends in the village



when I was nine, back when Emily Marsh still ran the Library and dogs slept on the Post

Office porch by the Town Hall. When it was really hot, we sat on the porch steps with the dogs, looked at our books, and waited for something to happen. If we were lucky Dr. Brad Walker might erupt from his driveway in his huge black car and roar off to the hospital in Torrington.

But usually we were on the move. We swam in the farm brook behind Calhoun's barn (the water was a lovely yellow-brown). We walked up past the Cathedral Pines and down a secret way to the Forester's Pool. Sally and I loved a mucky little pond we found behind Ben Gray's house because it was full of frogs and smells.

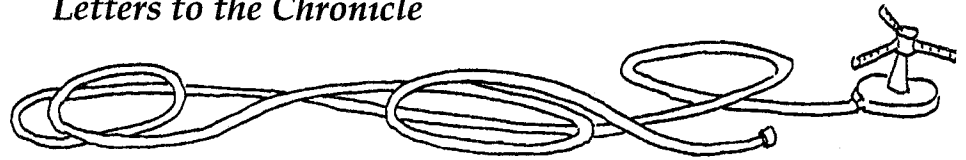
We dug for treasure, we dug in the green-scummed pond, we built unsafe tree houses and fell out of them. We never played with dolls. We attacked other children, who fought back, with showers of hard little green apples.

This geography of the village has been made fiction by the passage of time and tornado. But the feeling of those absorbing long summer days is still strong. Three little girls playing alone, muddy to the knees and carrying pails of muck. Not a grown up anywhere that I can recall except the useful ones who were willing to drive us to the lake.

Libby died in a sledding accident when she was 12; Sally lives in North Carolina; and I live here. I've looked but I can't find any trace of that wonderful mucky pond.

—Lisa Lansing

Letters to the Chronicle



THE JOYS OF HOSTING

When the opportunity came to host Special Olympics athletes, I could not wait to volunteer. Over the years I had become increasingly aware of the problems of mental retardation.

I was accepted as a host, and fortunately our bedrooms used by Marvelwood students had the required fire escapes. At that first meeting for Cornwall volunteers I found that Vera and Bill Dinneen would do the driving for my athletes, and that Matt Collins would work as interpreter. I could not have been a host without their invaluable help.

When my three women from the volleyball team arrived, after voyaging from Turkmenistan for 48 hours, they all greeted the dog with cries of joy. We had been warned to keep pets away, but they loved the old dog. Inside of five minutes, one girl asked—in sign language—for a broom and swept both upstairs and downstairs three times! They asked to use my tape player and soon the house was filled with Russian popular music. They were horrified at my offering to do their laundry, but were fascinated by the washing machine.

The last night, we had a potluck dinner party for all guests and hosts. Lydia Wolf loaned her expertise, and the coach provided a delicious rice dish.

My guests left the rooms neat, the beds carefully made. After the closing events at Mohawk, tears flowed as freely as at graduation. Gifts and hugs were exchanged, and all the Cornwall volunteers waved until the buses for New Haven were out of sight. What a wonderful experience of "hands across the sea"! —Polly Calhoun

GRATEFULLY...

On behalf of the Cornwall Host Town Committee for Special Olympics we would like to say thank you to everyone who made our committee's efforts in hosting 62 athletes and coaches from Turkmenistan a huge success. Without your help and kind donations this very special event would never have happened.

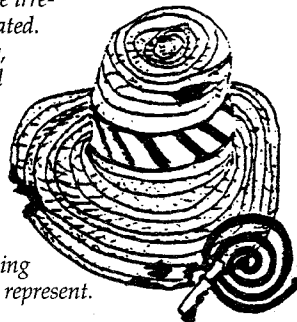
—Bill and Vera Dinneen

BUGS

Over here on the West Bank, we don't really live in Cornwall. We have no say in the disposition of Rumsey Hall or Marvelwood, for instance, except to be irresponsibly opinionated.

But telephonically, post-officially, and bug-wise, we belong.

Yep—our bugs are your bugs, and over the years I have acquired some coping skills which I here represent.



Adelaide Gay's bug hat, for instance, works pretty well (see illustration). Keep the Raid bug coil in the front, and turn it before it starts to burn the brim.

These bugs, assuming the highest part of your anatomy to be your head, will form a cloud around a fist held up in the air, and will avoid the downcast face. When you see a lawn full of people making the fascist salute with one hand, holding a drink in the other, and hanging their heads, you may recognize a Cornwall cocktail party. You may also cozy up to someone taller than you to use as a decoy.

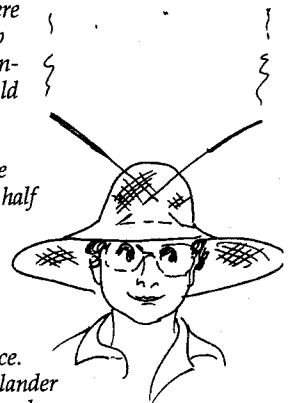
Or just follow Den Frost's example: ignore 'em.
—Susan Fox

MORE BUGS: A PUNK SOLUTION

Loved your article on the black flies. Here is a good way to keep them off while gardening: Take a beat-up old straw hat. Stick two punk sticks in, light them, and you can be outside for at least a half hour before the flies come back. This works pretty well except that some people think you're contacting outer space.

—Lilly Hollander

P.S. Just don't let them burn all the way down!



MIGHTY BIRDS

"Flickers Destroy Protective Coat of Shuttle's Rocket Booster. Flight Delayed for at Least Eight Days"—The New York Times, June, 1995.

Flickers out of liquor
Seek rocket fuel for booze;
Peck quick and ever quicker
To make the fuel tank ooze.

They rip the soft gray coating
Of a shuttle's readied booster
With beaks of gleeful gloating
That NASA's staff aren't use-ta.

When planners of this mission
Found bird damage was so bad,
They canceled flight permission
And kept the shuttle on its pad.

(Perhaps these birds, within their rights,
Curtailing excess space-bound flights,
Can save tax dollars for our pockets
Instead of funding flames for rockets.)

—Larry Pool

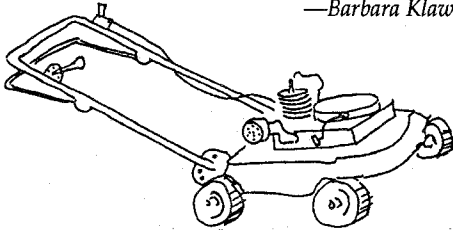
Affordable Progress

Another member of the Cornwall Housing Corporation's "Parcel Program" has been given the go-ahead from P&Z to build her home. Laurie Doss will build on her lot at the south end of Valley Road, a gift from the Calhoun family to the Corporation.

Sally O'Shaughnessy will be moving into her Pierce Lane home this summer. Debra Tyler and Michael DeGreenia have already had their housewarmings. Two more sites on Pierce Lane await construction.
—Ken Keskinen

Big Day for Rummage

Cornwall's annual rummage sale, held on July 22, was bigger and better than ever this year, requiring a second tent to display all the goodies. Entry tickets Nos. 1 and 2 were held by Bob and Mary Jane Coons of Harwinton, who captured the first place in line by arriving at the Parish House at 6:45 A.M. They have been the first-comers for several years now. Cilla Mauro and Thalia Scoville ably led the 80-plus volunteers who worked on the sale, which took in a whopping \$13,087.16 for UCC Woman's Society causes.
—Barbara Klaw



Sister Act at Library

The Cornwall Library is host right now to an excellent collection of sculptures, paintings, and photographs. Alice Gross Fish (sculptor) and Irene Gross Berzon (painter and photographer) are exhibiting examples of their award-winning works for the next few weeks.

Alice has produced some exceptional sculptures, working mostly with the human figure. Take special note of the graceful "A Minor Adjustment," displayed in the children's room.

Irene's offerings include some striking landscapes, such as "Spring" and "Along the Housatonic." She shows a sense of humor in her photographs, especially in "Musical—Cornwall Landfill."
—Alfred Bredenberg

Thank You

For your generous response to last month's letter. So far we've received checks and warm comments from 102 readers. If you've been meaning to send a contribution but haven't yet done so, let this be a reminder.

Yes, I want the Chronicle to continue.

Here is my tax-deductible contribution of: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/St/Zip _____

\$10 will get the Chronicle mailed out of town.

Events & Announcements

School Days, School Days: CCS will open for the 1995-96 school year on Tuesday, September 5. The first day will be a full session from 8:40 A.M. to 2:55 P.M. Kindergarten classes will be held in the morning from 8:40 to 11:15, and in the afternoon from 12:20 to 2:55. Letters will be mailed to all families in Cornwall giving pertinent opening-day information including transportation routes and a school calendar for the year.

Beginning Monday, August 21, the school office will be open from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. for the convenience of parents who have questions and for the registration of new pupils. Kindergarten orientation and bus ride will take place on Tuesday, August 29, at 10 A.M.

St. Bridget's 23rd Annual Country Fair will be held August 19, 9 A.M. to 3 P.M., rain or shine. Vendor space is available for \$15, with advance payment due by August 11. To reserve a space please call St. Bridget's rectory, 672-6515.

Items needed for the fair are jewelry, tools, toys, food for the bake sale, white elephant items, working appliances, and clothing in good condition.

Children's Party at the Library: On Friday, August 25, at 10 A.M. there will be fun, entertainment, and refreshments at the Library for all children who have participated in "Reach for the Stars" and story hours with Judy Gafney.

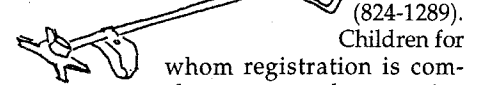
The Rose Algrant Art Show: The annual Friends of Rose Algrant Art Show will take place August 11-13 at the Marvelwood School student lounge and dining hall. The opening will be Friday, August 11, from 4 to 8 P.M. Saturday and Sunday hours will be 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. The profits will be donated to the Cornwall Library Association in honor of its 125th anniversary. A local tradition for over 30 years, the show will exhibit work of Cornwall painters, sculptors, photographers, and craftspersons, and will occupy two floors of one of the Marvelwood buildings being considered for town use.



Ski Area Plan: The Board of Selectmen's meeting on August 7, 8 P.M., Town Hall, will include a review of the five-year plan for Mohawk Mountain Ski Area. Residents wishing to see the plan can contact the First Selectman's office at 672-4959 or attend the meeting.

Author April Stevens will read selections from her first novel, *Angel, Angel*, at the Cornwall Library on Thursday, August 17, at 8 P.M., and discuss the process of writing. The book was published by Viking in February, 1995, and received excellent reviews in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. April, who lives in both Cornwall and New York, does much of her writing at her home on Valley Road. Her talk is sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library. Everyone invited.

Fall Registration for the Cornwall Child Center will be September 1, 10 A.M. to noon, at the Center. For information during the summer, call director Pam Brehm



(824-1289). Children for whom registration is complete may attend on opening morning, September 5. The staff will be available after 1 P.M. that day for anyone who was unable to pre-register.

Coltsfoot Concert: The fourth annual Coltsfoot Chorus Concert will take place on Sunday, August 27, at 5:30 P.M. at the Rumsey gym. Supper afterwards at 6:30 P.M.—bring your own picnic. Program includes blues, madrigals, Bartok, spirituals, golden oldies, etc. Singers are Beth Samuels, John LaPorta, Tim and Marie Prentice, Susan Fox, Nora Horan, Mark Brooks, Julia Scott, Lisa Lansing, Greg Zabielski, and Jim Whiteside.

Susan B. Anthony Open House: There will be information, refreshments, and entertainment for grown-ups and kids at the Susan B. Anthony Project open house on Wednesday, August 23, from 6 to 8 P.M. The event will take place at Cadwell's Corner and at the Susan B. Anthony office over the West Cornwall Post Office. Admission is free. Call Hendon Chubb at 672-6607 or the Project office at 672-3291 if you'd like to help with the preparations. The Susan B. Anthony Project works to promote the independence of women and the safety of all victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

ILLUSTRATIONS Tim Prentice
plus two by letter writers

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