



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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CCS Under the Microscope

Cornwall hit the headlines last month when *The Hartford Courant* published an analysis of the health of local educational systems and listed our town third on a state-wide list of "schools grappling with change." The story came at a time when Cornwall is examining educational needs as Region One seeks a new superintendent.

According to Ben Barnes of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), which wrote the report the *Courant* was analyzing, Cornwall's place on the list of schools in trouble, ahead of Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport, is due to statistics rather than facts. The Cornwall Consolidated School experienced a 10 percent drop in Mastery Test scores over the past four years, a number which would be earthshaking if it described Hartford's thousands of kids. But 10 percent among 200 CCS students could reflect a dozen kids having a bad day, Barnes suggested.

Barnes also said that disciplined, small increases in Cornwall's education budget also worked against the town because this meant to the statisticians that Cornwall was not putting money into its schools at the same rate as other towns.

"Cornwall is clearly not a place where education is on the ropes," Barnes concluded in a recent interview.

Region One as a whole, however, did not fare at all well in the CCM report, and this broader trend may be more significant for Cornwall in the long run. The class of 1996 dropout rate was 13 percent and the number of graduates going on to any kind of higher education was right at the bottom of the state rankings, at 57 percent.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway said in a statement prepared for the December 18 Board of Education meeting that the new Region One superintendent will have to address the big gap between inputs, chiefly a per-student cost of more than \$10,750 (at the top of the state rankings) and outputs like the dropout and higher education statistics, both in the cellar.

Ridgway said the CCM report, however misleading statistically, hints at a future that Cornwall needs to prepare for. Changes in the population mix at CCS indicate that the school is changing. The number of students receiving special education is growing as enrollment goes up. Federal Chapter I funds, which support remedial education for CCS children, have increased 42 percent over last year.

More students evidently mean more needs, Ridgway said. So we are "grappling with change" after all, even if the changes are not exactly the ones identified by *The Hartford Courant*.
—Lisa Lansing Simont

"Where's That *#!%*# Plow?"

As usual, falling snow brings some rising tempers. With the first snows of the season come the first complaints about the plowing of town roads. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway feels that people might be more understanding and patient if they knew the problems involved and the procedures now in place to cope with winter's worst.

Weather forecasts are routinely monitored, and the call to plow is made jointly by Ridgway and Don Reid, foreman of the town crew. The town plows 60 miles of roads. Little of this road surface is contiguous. The usual pattern is up a road to a turnaround, then back the other side. Then often along a state highway with raised plow to the next town dead-end road. In a normal snowfall, even if no trees or cars block the way, the initial pass takes several hours. Usually a second complete pass is required to plow all the way back to the road edge, to make room for the next snow.

The town is divided into five sections. Foreman Reid operates the Town Street-Cornwall Hollow plow, with John Malahan taking West Cornwall and the Cream Hill area. Steve Clarke has Cornwall Bridge, and Jim Vanicky East Cornwall. Gary Heany with a smaller plow tackles narrow, steep roads in the central and southern parts of town. In a

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JANUARY 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2	3
4 Scott Cady Talk on the Middle East 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4)	5 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Skating Salisbury School Rink 7:30-8:30 P.M.	6 Repub. Town Comm. 7 P.M. CCS Gym (Snow Date 1/13) Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. Town Office	7 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall Cub Scout Parents Meeting 7 P.M. UCC Day Room	8 Ski Wee Registration 2-4 P.M. CCS (p.4)	9 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library (p.4) Park & Rec. Game Night 7-9 P.M. W. Cornwall Firehouse	10 Poetry Slam 4 P.M. Library (p.4)
11 Lecture by Ellen Doubleday on Education in a Prison Setting 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4)	12 Cornwall Library Exhibit of Tributes to Hildreth Daniel through 2/14 (p.4) P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	13 Town Democratic Party Caucus 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4) Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	14 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall CCS PTA, 7 P.M. CCS Library	15 Deadline for February Chronicle copy Cornwall Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	16 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	17 Cornwall Association 4 P.M. Town Hall
18 Lecture by Rev. Gordon Bates on Prison Guards, Victims, and Offenders 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4)	19 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	20 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	21 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall Region One Board of Education 7 P.M. HVRHS Library	22	23 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	24
25	26 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Office	27	28 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall Corn. Vol. Fire Department 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	29	30 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Cub Scout Pack 15 Pinewood Derby 7 P.M. CCS	31

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moderate snow the crew is allowed to take a break in the middle of the night and return at 5 A.M. But in a heavy snow those plows grind away all night long. And private contractors with special equipment are on call for the deepest snows.

Several times a winter a common complaint reaches the Selectmen's Office: "It's been hours and hours, and there's *still* snow on my road." This may be intentional. If the forecast is for freezing rain and glare-ice conditions, a snow cover is deliberately left to provide at least a little traction for vehicles that must be on the road.

Gordon Ridgway urges all of us to be patient. We should also remember that the town uses less sand and salt than the state, so slower speeds are advised on local roads. Watch for school buses and fuel-delivery trucks in the narrow space between those banks of snow. Remember that sooner or later a snow plow is always on the way. And for real fire or medical emergencies, a four-wheel-drive truck with sand is kept waiting and ready.

—Bob Potter



One Man's Meat

The six-foot-six pony-tailed hunter in Carhart coveralls was a little punchy; he'd been in the woods on Cream Hill since dawn and had already brought in a 150-pound doe. Now it was dark at the deer check station, except for the floodlight on the corner of T-Bow's convenience store (on Route 7 in Falls Village) shining down on the scale. Laurie Fortin, the four-foot-ten technician from the Department of Environmental Protection, helped the hunter lift his second kill, a fawn, out of his van and into the light. Curls of steam rose from the bloody gutted abdomen.

"What's he weigh?" the guy asked.

"Fifty-one pounds," said Laurie.

"The smaller they are, the harder they are to hit," said the guy, joining in the laughter of the hunters in line behind him. The line kept growing. It was opening day of deer season, and snow on the ground provided excellent hunting conditions.

Laurie cranked open the deer's mouth with a looped piece of re-bar. "You want to mount this head? No? Mind if I cut the cheek?" She slit about two inches back from the corner of the mouth with her pen knife and then, by the beam of her flashlight, counted its four teeth. "Born in the spring. He'll make for tender eating, not like that old doe."

"Yeah. I figure she'll be pretty good sausage, though," the hunter said. He and Laurie slung the fawn gently back into his van, and she was ready for the next deer.

DEP surveys provide information on age, condition, and population of deer and are useful in deer management, as are numbers from road kill reports. (An abundance of road

kills in Fairfield County, for example, led to the offering there of a third deer tag, unique in Connecticut.) Analysis of the average diameter of yearling antlers is a particularly good indicator of the overall health of the state herd; studies have also been done on ticks and brain worm. Animal teeth have traditionally been used in paleontological and biological research; the rings in the slice of a canine from a coyote, bobcat, fisher, otter, or mink can be counted, like the age rings of a tree, as can a pre-molar from a live black bear. But even without a microscope one can get a general idea of a deer's age by counting its teeth: fawns, fewer than six; yearlings, six white teeth; adults, six but brown with dentine.

Connecticut's current deer herd is estimated at a minimum of 55,000, fewer than the total number of hunting permits issued (61,000, six times the 1975 total). Cornwall's deer harvest averages 125 a season—higher than Canaan, Falls Village, and Goshen, but less than half the total in Salisbury and Sharon. (Bridgeport and Hartford each average one deer.) This season as of mid-December, T-Bow's, which is paid \$2 a deer, had processed 320 tags, only 10 percent of which were from Cornwall.

Behind the crowd of hunters around the scale at T-Bow's, behind the graceful long-legged bodies in the parking lot, our hunter came out of the convenience store with a bag of groceries. He waved good night. "It's sure been a long day. Time for supper at the Goshen Motel. Ritz crackers, peanut butter, and Chef Boyardee, here we come!"

—Ella Clark

911 Number, Please!

At the selectmen's request, Fred Bate, Sr., and Ralph Scoville have completed their survey of all 98 roads and lanes in Cornwall for proper posting of 911 numbers. By law, assigned numbers must be at least three inches high and clearly visible from the road.

Fred and Ralph found 953 buildings in compliance, with 238 numbers either missing, incorrect, or otherwise faulty (numbers posted 20 feet up in a tree, etc.). The town now plans to send everyone not in compliance a form to be filled out and returned when 911 numbers are correctly displayed. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway wants to publicly thank Fred and Ralph for their careful work on this project, and to urge everyone to comply with the law as soon as possible. The town is authorized to impose fines of from \$10 to \$100 on persistent slackers.

In an emergency, help can arrive faster when your number is visible. If you are unsure of your number, call the Selectmen's Office (672-4959), or call the Assessor's Office (672-2703) in case of new construction.—Bob Potter

Housing News—Lots of It

After serving more than three years as the first administrator of Kugeman Village, Anne Baren has chosen to retire. At a ceremony attended by the Cornwall Housing Corporation board and residents of the Village on December 11, Anne was praised for her administrative skills and caring ap-

proach to the task of establishing the Village as a friendly and attractive place for families, singles, and the elderly.

Replacing Anne is Patricia Redmond, who has had experience at Community Housing Management in New Milford. A resident of Sharon, Pat will manage both Kugeman Village and Templeton Farms in Kent.

Kugeman Village is fully occupied with a waiting list. Those who anticipate moving to the Village should apply well in advance. Information and applications may be obtained by calling 672-4439.

Excavation is under way on Pierce Lane to develop a homesite for another Cornwall family. Two other parcels are awaiting homes, one on Pierce Lane and one on Valley Road. Those interested in such opportunities are asked to call Ken Keskinen (672-6486) for more information and application forms.

The CHC board continues to study how the housing needs of the elderly can be met, either through accessory apartments added on to existing dwellings or such options as group living in some of Cornwall's large houses. The board is also considering ways it can help families make necessary repairs and improvements on older dwellings in the town.

The CHC board meets on the second Thursday of every other month at 4:30 P.M. at Kugeman Village. The next meeting is scheduled for February 12. Visitors are welcome.

—Ken Keskinen



Welcome

Alexis Christine Parent to Jennifer Parmalee and Peter Earl Parent

Asa Lane to Merida Prud'homme and Barry Lane

Good-Bye to a Friend

William Van Alstyne

Congratulations

Matthew Alexis Borque to Kelly Jean Gallo

Land Transfers

Coltsfoot Farm Ltd. Partnership to Trevor H. and Lee Ganshaw, 11.5 acres at Everest Hill and Valley Roads for \$66,000.

Mr. Madwon to Roger Jackson, Parcel 5 on Route 7 for \$75,000.

Gerard W. and Patricia M. Smith to Donald and Margaret Treimann, house and land on College Street for \$475,000.

BankBoston to Bruce Witik, Lot 3, 16 acres on Great Hollow Road for \$8,000.

Unsung Cornwall Champions

Six big, beautiful tan Belgian horses help out during the haying season in West Cornwall.

Owned and trained by the Dolans on Cherry Hill Road, their main mission is to compete for prizes six times a year in shows locally and in other states, where they pull, singly or in various team formations, antique two- or four-wheeled carts or wagons restored by Richard Dolan to mint condition.

The horses have to be reshod five times a summer by Richard after he has trimmed their hooves with a hacksaw. Each horse is given a shampoo by Gail Dolan immediately before a show, and dried with old bath towels. Manes and tails have to be neatly tied with ribbons, harness polished, and the manure finished by painting each of the 24 hooves black.

A large van carries the six horses, a two-wheeled cart and a wagon, harness, hay, feed, and Cornwall water for one of the horses that refuses even to sip "foreign" water. All four Dolans participate in these elaborate preparations—including Melissa, aged 17, and Ricky, 16.

At the Topsfield (Massachusetts) Fair this past season, Melissa was first of 15 entries, and Gail was fourth of 15, while Richard, driving the six horses—in one or another combination—was awarded two firsts and two seconds.

—Larry Pool

Paramedic Proposal

Dutchess County Ambulance, a private service, has approached Cornwall's volunteer ambulance squad with a proposal to provide paramedic-level service. Its vehicle, a four-wheel-drive "fly car," would respond automatically to four types of emergencies: heart attack, gunshot trauma, difficulty breathing, or unresponsiveness. It is possible that Dutchess, responding from Millerton, might arrive at northern and western areas of town more quickly than our current paramedic intercepts, Champion Ambulance and LifeStar. Dutchess promises "soft billing," meaning that patients without insurance would be approached, but not pressed, for payment.

If the squad decides the service will be useful, the selectmen will probably hold a town meeting to ask for comment on the proposal.

—Earl Brecher



Dump Mess—Whose Lapse?

Cornwall will soon be faced with bills totaling over \$7,000 for a transfer station permit which either lapsed or never existed in the first place. This is the story:

In the late 1980s, town dumps (or "landfills") were closed out, to be converted to "transfer stations." Cornwall complied with the regulations, paid for the necessary engi-

Letters to the Chronicle



DRIVERS NEEDED

FISH volunteer drivers have been doing a fine job taking neighbors to medical appointments and on errands but we could use a few more drivers. If you could do this occasionally please give me a call at 672-6261. Your services will be greatly appreciated!

—Marie Prentice

EARLY ANSWERING MACHINES

Bob Potter's recent article on old Cornwall party lines brought two memories to mind. The first was the built-in answering service a party line might provide. In our case, when we were out, we asked my grandmother (ring 1) to answer our phone (ring 2), and take messages. Sometimes, she even answered a caller's questions on the spot.

The second service was the baby-sitter help line the operator might provide. When I was old enough to take care of my younger siblings, but still uncomfortable about being left in charge, my mother would say, "Don't worry; just pick up the phone and ask for me." In the meantime, she had asked the operator to connect the call to the phone

of the people whom she and Dad were visiting.

It's comforting to know that technology still can't match the human touch.

—Charlie Gold

SUCH A DEAL!

On November 15, despite inclement weather, about two dozen folks turned out at Cornubia Hall to hear singer/songwriter David Rovics. He entertained with warmth and humor, singing songs of railroads, bicycles, and lost love. The music elicited dancing kids and singing-along elders.

This event was sponsored by Cornwall Park and Rec., and this grateful listener hopes that it marks just the beginning of such musical events. At the bargain price of five dollars for adults and free admission for kids, it was cheaper than a night at the movies and much closer to home. It also offered the opportunity to meet the singer, greet neighbors, sip cider and munch oatmeal cookies. Such a deal!

I hope that any such future events bring out many more Cornwallians. It's a good chance to support the efforts of Park and Rec. and have some good community-oriented fun!

—Cynthia Kirk

neering studies, then constructed the new system and in 1991 applied for a transfer station permit. The years passed...and suddenly in late November 1997 the town was billed \$950 for outstanding Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) operating fees dating from 1991. Apparently the town's original 1991 application had never been received?/acknowledged?/approved? by the state. Moreover, the town received, through the state Attorney General's Office, a non-appealable court order to submit a proper transfer station application within 90 days. A Manchester engineering firm has been engaged to do the necessary field studies, blueprints, area map, maintenance specifications, and specialized paperwork, all at a cost of \$6,800.

Whose lapse was it? The town engineer has a record indicating that a DEP consent order was issued in 1993, but no trace of such an order can be found in the Cornwall files. The DEP suggests that the town might have confused receipt of a "construction permit" with receipt of an "operating permit" six years ago.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway regrets that the state cannot now come out and inspect our transfer station, certify that it is in compliance, and get on with the trash of public business. But such retroactive approval is not state policy. However, the \$7,000-plus cost does have a lucky offset: Cornwall's "tipping (disposal of trash) fees" to the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority have been reduced 20 percent. Within a year, this should almost recover the unexpected cost of the lapsed permit.

—Bob Potter



Those RR Crossing Gates

It looks very much as though West Cornwall will get automatically operated railroad crossing gates, judging by the lack of opposition expresses at the legally mandated hearing recently held by the Department of Transportation at the Town Hall.

Only 12 people attended the hearing, and three of them were reporters. One attendee questioned the legality of the railroad itself, but others appeared to be in favor of the installation of the gates on West Cornwall's single-line rail crossing.

The cost estimate for the installation and associated work is \$455,000, to be funded by the federal government. Preliminary plans will be completed in six or seven months.

—Stephen Senzer

Selectmen Resolve

At a December meeting, Cornwall's Board of Selectmen spoke out as individuals when asked for priorities to be addressed during their two-year terms of office. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway initiated the discus-

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sion by pointing out that the selectmen too often get entrapped by emergencies and bogged down by boring routines.

Selectman Jack Preston was all business. "We've got to do something for business," he said, "and I don't know exactly how we separate the town government from business." Preston went on to describe his reaction, on early winter evenings, at seeing so many West Cornwall establishments dark and empty. In Cornwall Bridge, a whole business complex is empty. "Something has to happen here. There are potential jobs for young people. There are conveniences that townspeople want and need right now. And this town can't go on forever relying on only homeowners for taxes."

Selectman Earl Brecher spoke of establishing a procedure that might settle controversies at an early stage, before they "split the town." A town-sponsored mediation board, he suggested, might do the trick. Earl referred to the recent two-year struggle over a gravel business in Cornwall Bridge, a controversy that started as a dispute between two neighbors, then escalated into a multiple-lawsuit, endless-P&Z-meeting conflict. According to Brecher, these "neighbor-to-neighbor problems don't happen very often. But if they could go to impartial people to solve, so much the better."

First Selectman Ridgway's priority was to "get a better program going for seniors." What's needed right now? A lunch program? A senior center? The first step is to find out what is really needed. "We're going to reactivate the Committee on Aging," Gordon stated, "which hasn't been active in the last several years." Suggestions can be mailed to the selectmen; a survey is scheduled for an issue of the *Cornwall Chronicle*.

All three selectmen agree on two other priorities: 1) the successful conclusion of negotiations with the Cornwall Library Association; and 2) renovation of the Town Hall to meet anticipated needs. —Bob Potter



Stock Tip

Did you know that we (sort of) predicted the bull market in this space? (March 1995) For 1998 we see the Dow going to 9,000 and urge you to buy railroads and hotels, especially if they're located on Boardwalk or Park Place. For this advice, maybe you could swing a few dollars our way? Happy New Year!

Events & Announcements

Assessment Review: Forms to request a hearing by the Board of Assessment Appeals are available from the Town Clerk or the Assessor. Hearings will be scheduled for March 3, 4, 6, and 7. Property owners who cannot appear in person may designate an agent to represent them by completing a notarized authorization form. All forms are due in the Town Office by February 20. Please call Phyllis Wojan at 672-6141 for further information.

Rehabilitation in Connecticut Prisons: During January and early February, three programs on aspects of treatment/correction in Connecticut prisons will be held at the United Church of Christ, all on Sundays at 11:30 A.M. On January 11, Cornwall resident Ellen Doubleday, Assistant Principal at the Cheshire Correctional Institution, will talk on *Providing Education in a Prison Setting*. On January 18, the Reverend Gordon Bates, former Executive Director of the Connecticut Prison Association, will speak on *Guards, Victims, and Offenders: Mission Possibilities*. On February 1, John Perry, Sharon resident and a trainer with the Alternatives to Violence Project, will describe the work of AVP and show a documentary video. Call the church office, 672-6840, or Peg Keskinen, 672-6486, for more information.

The Cornwall Democratic Party will hold a caucus on January 13 at 7:30 P.M. at the Town Hall for the election of members of the Democratic Town Committee. All Cornwall registered Democratic voters are eligible to vote and are urged to attend.

The Bridge Kids' Press, the publishing center at Cornwall Consolidated School, is now in its second year. It is a place where children can transform their writing and stories into printed and bound books.

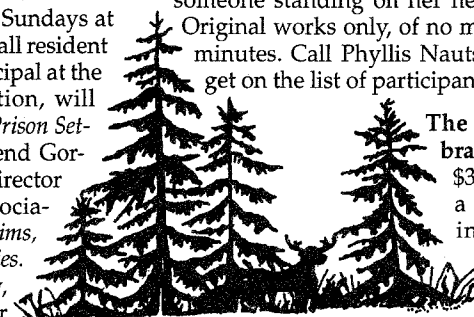
Volunteers are needed to work with the young authors to edit, proofread, type, and bind their books. Typing and binding can be done at home. If you are interested in helping with any of these tasks, call CCS at 672-6617 and leave a message for Joyce Samson.

Calling All E-Mailers: John Miller and Doc Simont are about to compile an e-mail address book for Cornwall. Anyone interested in being included please send your e-mail address to jlm186@ct1.nai.net soon.

Children's Library Programs: The winter story hour series for preschoolers will begin on Friday, January 9 at 10 A.M., and will include stories, poems, and songs about animals and where they live. Snacks will be provided.

Student of the Year: Elyse Piker, a CCS eighth-grader, is this year's recipient of a Region One Superintendent's Award as Cornwall's "outstanding student of the year." "Elyse is a natural leader having the unique ability to work with everyone," said Principal William Oros. "Her presence is strongly felt at CCS."

Poetry Slam #3! Cornwall's third annual Poetry Slam is coming up on January 10, at 4 P.M. at the Library. Declaim, emote, sing, dance, or juggle your latest creations in poetry or prose. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library, who welcome all ages and all types of performance (we might have someone standing on her head this year!). Original works only, of no more than three minutes. Call Phyllis Nauts (672-6608) to get on the list of participants.



The Cornwall Library is richer by \$3,800, thanks to a benefit showing of Adam Van Doren's film, *James Thurber's*

Life and Hard Times, on November 28. The premiere of Adam's documentary was sponsored by Friends of the Cornwall Library.

Celebrating Hildreth: At the Cornwall Library from January 12 to February 14 there will be an exhibit of tributes to Hildreth Daniel celebrating 25 years of art shows at the Library.

Update on the Middle East: On Sunday, January 4, at 11:30 A.M. at the United Church of Christ, Scott Cady will share observations and show slides of his recent trip to the West Bank. While there, he met with people of all faiths and persuasions. Coffee will be served in the Day Room preceding the program. Everyone welcome.

Ski Wee Registration for children in T to third grades will take place Thursday, January 8, from 2 to 4 P.M. at CCS. Sponsored by Park and Rec., the program will begin Thursday, January 15. Appeal is made for volunteers to assist. Please call Sharon Sawicki, 672-2975, to volunteer or for more information.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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