



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 8 : NUMBER 6 JULY 1998



Gearing Up for The Vote

By now the result of the June 27 referendum is known; here's what led up to the vote.

Although information meetings on May 15 and June 5 and a Town Meeting June 13 provided plenty of opportunity for people to learn about the referendum and the proposed solution to the space problems of the library and town offices, only a rather small number of people attended the first two.

The most wide-ranging discussions took place on June 13 when over 50 residents heard that the selectmen were in favor of the proposal, that \$400,000 remained of unspent bond funds which have to be spent within the next five years for something similar to what they were raised for, that the present library is only one-third the size it should be for a town this size, that everyone is cramped and crowded in the present town offices, and that this project to improve both town office and library spaces is on the boards and ready to be implemented now. We will still have money left to help pay for other projects, such as a larger gym at CCS, which many residents have long felt was badly needed. Brian Kavanagh, chair of the PTA Gymnasium Committee, spoke of the efforts by committee members to bring the need for a larger gym to the attention of the community. Ralph Gold responded that their "voices

have been heard and the project is further down the road than it has been in a long, long time." Jim Terrall, a member of both the school board and the Library Building Committee, speaking as a taxpayer, said the referendum was a middle-of-the-road solution that takes care of two problems pretty well. Phil Hart, also a school board member, emphasized the fact that the town offices/library and the gym are two separate projects, and that turning down the current proposal would not get the new gym.

In the meantime, the Library trustees and committees have been busy. They interviewed six architects during the first week of June and have narrowed down the field to two, with a final selection to be made the first week in July. The Building Committee, headed by Jim Terrall and consisting of Pat Blakey, Jill Bryant, Ella Clark, Charlie Gold, Phyllis Nauts, Ginny Potter, and Scoville Soulé, is meeting frequently, with public meeting times to be posted at the Library. Other committees are working on program, policy, long-range planning, and by-laws.

John Calhoun and Lynn Cheney resigned from the Library Board in early June, and Jill Bryant and Tom Bechtle have been appointed to fill out their terms until the annual meeting this summer. More next month!

—Anne Baren

What's That New Building?

Many of us have been wondering what was about to happen in the small building that was slowly being constructed on the Cornwall Bridge side of the big bridge over the Housatonic. Puzzle no more. The building has been constructed by an existing Cornwall business, that of Gary Heaney and his son Steve, who constitute the Cornwall Bridge Granite Company. The Heaneys have also taken over the canoe rental establishment under the bridge, where they will do most of their stone-carving work. The new building next to the bridge will be used as a display room for their work, which runs the gamut of stone carving from fountains to tombstones.

—John Leich

Speedy Government

In an amiable Town Meeting on May 22, about 30 Cornwallians unanimously approved the town budget for 1999. The whole process, including electing a moderator, took about 12 minutes.

The total sum approved is \$3,990,729, up \$206,482 from 1998. Of the total sum, 65 percent is allocated for education, 26 percent for the selectmen's budget, and nine percent for capital expenses. This budget increase will require a rise in the mill rate of about one-half a mill, to 18.75.

(continued on page 2)

JULY 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		Cornwall Library Art Show, Works by CCS Students, continuing through 7/25.	1 Art Show, Marjorie Fales Nat. Iron Bank, through July (p.4) Stretch Exercise Class 5-6:15 P.M. Town Hall Cub Scout Parents Meeting 7 P.M. UCC Day Room Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.2)	2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY July Fest 10 A.M.-2 P.M. Cornwall Town Green (p.3) Cornwall Hist. Society Exhibit of Lighting Devices Opens, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. (p.4)
5 Hedgerows Art Show Robert Andrew Parker (p.4) Soccer every Sunday 6-8 P.M. at HVRHS 	6 Stretch Exercise Class 9-10 A.M. Town Hall  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	7 Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall *	8 Stretch Exercise Class 5-6:15 P.M. Town Hall Middle Readers Program 6:45 P.M. Library (p.4)	9	10 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	11
12 	13 Stretch Exercise Class 9-10 A.M. Town Hall P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	14 Republican Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib.	15 Deadline for August Chronicle Copy Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall Middle Readers Program 6:45 P.M. Library (p.4) Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.2)	16 Agric. Advis. Comm. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	17 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Park & Rec. Dance 8-11:30 P.M. CHLA	18 Rummage Sale 9 A.M.-4 P.M. UCC Parish House and Monroe-Bodkin (p.4) Cornwall Assoc. 4 P.M. Town Hall Extras For Kids Benefit 4 P.M. Gannett Garden 328 River Rd. (p.4)
19 	20 Stretch Exercise Class 9-10 A.M. Town Hall Bag Sale 9-Noon UCC Parish House (p.4)	21  Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall Democratic Caucus 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	22 Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall Middle Readers Program 6:45 P.M. Library (p.4)	23 Library Board of Trustees Quarterly Meeting 4:30 P.M. Library	24 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	25
26 	27 Cornwall Lib. Art Show, Montgomery Hare through 8/29 (p.4) Stretch Exercise Class 9-10 A.M. Town Hall ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall *	28	29 Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall Middle Readers Program 6:45 P.M. Library (p.4) Cornwall Fire Dept. 8 P.M. West Cornwall Firehouse	30	31 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	Six-Week Free Diabetes Education Course, Town Hall, 10-Noon Tuesdays starting August 18. Call Anne Hummel 672-2325.

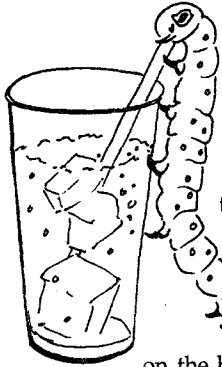
* Check at Town Office

(continued from page 1)

The only other business of the evening was a motion to extend the term of office of our Region One Board of Education representative from three years to four years, as mandated by the state. Again, the motion was presented, discussed and approved in record time—under ten minutes.

In less than half an hour, people were on their way home.

—Barbara Klaw



Generous Hartford

One very interesting aspect of the budget that was approved on May 22 is the substantial increase in state formula grants, i.e., grants from state surpluses which are apportioned to the towns

on the basis of specified criteria. For example, the education grant has been increased by \$1,307 over the previous year's grant. Transportation (roads, etc.) has been increased by \$33,766, the compensation for non-taxable land by \$13,455, and from Casino funds by \$5,641. Also, it should be noted that the town had an accumulated general fund surplus in the amount of \$930,523 as of July 1, 1997, which monies may be used for expenditures under the town's revenue budget, and of which \$87,500 has already been earmarked for a new fire truck.

The folks at Town Hall think that the unusual generosity on the part of Hartford is somehow related to the upcoming elections this fall and may not recur in the near future.

—John Leich

The Greening of Cornwall

For readers baffled by recent "Green Party" notices on the *Chronicle* calendar, here's the scoop: The Northwest Chapter of the Connecticut Green Party now meets in the Town Hall under the leadership of Tom Sevigny of Canton, co-chair of both the Connecticut organization and of the nationwide Association of State Green Parties, which boasts affiliates in 20-odd states. (In private life, he works as a police dispatcher in Farmington while pursuing a master's degree in history at Trinity College.)

The Northwest Chapter was organized a couple of years ago and, according to Sevigny, includes close to 80 members, in towns from Canaan to Kent (eight of them in Cornwall), who are involved in a host of economic, social, and environmental issues. Right now, their main focus of attention is the ongoing struggle between the General Electric Company and the federal Environmental Protection Agency, which early last month gave the company a clear-cut choice: either to clean up a two-mile stretch of the PCB-polluted Housatonic River adjoining GE's transformer plant in Pittsfield, or to be placed on the Superfund National Priority List. In that case, the EPA would tackle the

\$40 million cleanup job itself and send the bill to GE.

To Tom Sevigny and the Connecticut Greens, this move may open a "window of opportunity" for other communities damaged by GE's industrial waste, an opinion shared (with cautious optimism) by many in our town who are directly concerned with the health and well-being of the Housatonic. "At last things are happening up there," comments Lynn Fowler, Cornwall's representative on the Housatonic River Commission. "Some boulders are beginning to move. We are following the situation very closely." And from Jane Baker, communications director for the Housatonic Valley Association: "If a negotiated settlement is not reached, we strongly support the Superfund designation for GE. It's still not safe to eat the fish here and it will be many years before our soil is free of PCBs, but at least action up-river will prevent problems of this kind from happening in the future."

—Jean Leich

Memorial Day Memories

Because it is a signal to start summer, Memorial Day weekend is especially sensitive to weather. This year, Sunday delivered marquee weather. The Fire Department's Seventh Annual Covered Bridge Dance, held on May 24, offered clear skies and stars, which shone on a crowd reckoned among the largest ever to attend the dance. These throngs rocked and rolled to music by Timerider, a Northwest Corner group featuring Elvis impersonator Mike Ciulla.

By 9 next morning it was beginning to cloud up. In his annual Memorial Day service, Charles Gold conducted about 35 people around the North Cornwall Cemetery, commenting on the graves of veterans from the Revolution to Vietnam. As usual, members of the group decorated each grave. A moving aspect of this occasion is the reading of names on the graves, from the earliest to the more recent, that still resonate in Cornwall: Coggswell, Hart, Root, Aichele, Griggs, Scoville, Gold—to mention a few.

By 10 o'clock, rain was threatening. But it held off for the Seamen's Memorial Service, a brief ceremony near the Covered Bridge. Following a prayer for men lost at sea, two members of a seven-man color guard fired a three-volley salute. A wreath was thrown into the Housatonic from the bridge. Taps was sounded.

By 11, rain was soaking the parade moving past the green. Rainwater also smudged speakers' notes and soaked their unprotected heads and shoulders.

Winfield Wilson, an HVRHS student, read the Gettysburg Address. State Representative Andrew Roraback, the main speaker, paid tribute to the fallen in all America's wars, and read accounts of the lives of three local veterans from T. S. Gold's *History of Cornwall*. Master of Ceremonies Skip Lush presented the annual VFW Citizenship Award to Jerry and Pat Blakey for their many devoted years of service to a multitude of town boards and committees and

other activities. Following a benediction, the playing of taps by Patrick Dinneen, Brian Lynn, and Daniel Hammond signaled the end of the ceremonies.

The rain that dampened the speakers cleared up half way through the Carnival at the United Church of Christ, hosted by the church and the Cornwall Child Center. And the sun actually shone on such highlights as the frog jumping competition and the Men's Best Legs Contest. So although the crowd had been thinned by the showers, the traditions of the day continued.

—Adam Fischer, Charles Osborne, Ginny Potter

Land Transfers

Lawrence R. and Pamela W. Lewis to William E. and Alison M. Schweizer, house and 5 acres on Dibble Hill Road for \$200,000.

James B. and Robin Freyberg to Richard Schlesinger, house and 1.5 acres at 118 Town Street for \$475,000.

Patricia B. Butler to Peter J. and Susan P. Bernard, 4.5 acres on Cream Hill Road for \$30,000.

Joan Ann Finley to Fred's Place LLC, house and .40 acre off Route 128 for \$85,000.

Cecilia C. and Philip C. Stevens to William S. Calhoun, 18.3 acres on Everest Hill Road for \$100,000.

Coltsfoot Farm Ltd. Partnership to Robert T. E. Lansing, Lot 4, 19.9 acres on Valley Road for \$150,000.



Let It Rot!

The only mystique about composting is this: Why isn't everyone doing it?

In the old days, trash went out the back door to "set and rot."

It's time to do it again. The state Department of Environmental Protection urges us to fling

food waste (NO MEATS) onto home compost piles and thereby help to reduce trucking and handling costs at the dump by up to 21 percent.

A fenced or boxed area, approximately bathtub-sized and screen-covered to be critter-proof, works for most households. Heave eggshells, coffee grounds, yard/garden waste, hair clippings, feathers, leaves, manure (NO PET POOP), wood-fire ashes, and bouquets-gone-by. When the spirit moves you, pitchfork it over; the more the spirit moves you, the quicker the yield of Black Gold for gardens that costs four dollars a bag to buy.

Covered buckets are good for kitchen storage, or purchase one-and-a-half-gallon bags for 41 to 67 cents apiece, depending on the quantity ordered, by calling the Bio-dynamic Farm and Garden Association at (800) 516-7797. These bags decompose on an active compost pile and do away with the job of cleaning up a bucket.

But all we really need in order to begin composting is a desire to do things the old way in this waste-weary world. That will make one-fifth less solid waste to drive to Hartford.

—Lib Tobin Terrall, Recycling Coordinator



Events & Announcements

Educational Awards: The following eight high school seniors received awards totaling \$11,700 from the Woman's Society Educational Fund: Adam Augustyn (UConn), Matthew Budge (UConn), Chandra Casteel (SUNY at Cobleskill), Melissa Dolan (SUNY at Delhi), Jacob Gingert (Emory University), Kelly O'Connor (Endicott College), Davina Piker (Wellesley), and Janna Kenniston (University of Arizona). To all the graduates—go with our prayers for your success in whatever path you choose. Godspeed!

Park & Rec.'s July Fest: Join us on the Cornwall Green on Saturday, July 4, from 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. We'll begin with the Patriot Bike Parade, with prizes for the most patriotic, most original, and most creative bikes. New this year, and following the bike parade, a Children's Book Parade is being sponsored by our Library (see separate notice). As ever, we will have games on the green, our Watermelon Seed-Spitting Contest, VFW food, summer tunes, and Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department's glorious "water curtain" to cool us down at the end. Ain't it great to be American? See you there!

Life After High School, Corrected: Kate Sandmeyer graduated from Taft (not Rumsey Hall) and Heather Scott will go to Northwest Community College where she plans to major in English.

The Cornwall Agricultural Fair will be held September 19 on the Village Green next to the Town Hall. The Fair Committee members want to remind all you gardeners now that they will be looking for entries in the various vegetable and flower judging contests. Also, farm-related artwork and photography will be judged in the Library. Cow-Chip Bingo, craft, and machinery displays, and, of course, the farm animals will once more be featured attractions. Don't forget to mark your calendars and keep reading the *Chronicle* for further Fair updates.

Cornwall Yellow Pages: The Cornwall Association publishes a directory of Cornwall businesses and of services provided by Cornwall residents. The directory is currently being updated. If you would like to be included or your listing needs updating, please call Richard Griggs at 672-6208. Information must be in by September 1.

Letters to the Chronicle

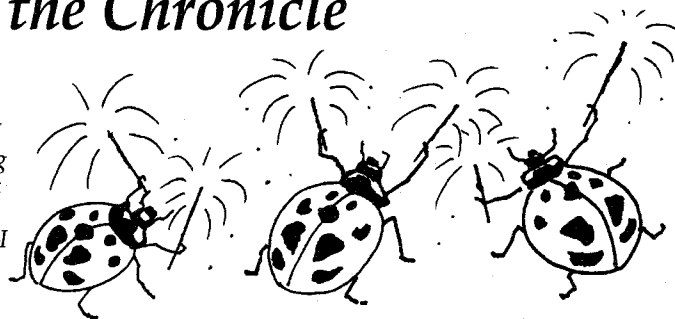
PENNIES FROM HEAVEN

The other day, rummaging around in the back of my sock drawer—a dimly lit region into which I rarely venture—I came across an unusual object. It was a thin, coppery, irregularly shaped disk, about the size of a nickel, and at once I recognized what it was. It was a penny that had been placed on the railroad tracks down by the West Cornwall station by one of our children and flattened by the wheels of the Friday afternoon train from New York.

In those days, just after World War II, I was, like a number of other Cornwallians then and now, a summer weekend commuter, living a bachelor life in New York five days a week and coming to Cornwall to join our wives and children for the weekends. We often took the train. On Fridays we had a choice of two trains: the regular 5:25 and a 4:25 train that ran only on Fridays. Those who had jobs important enough so that they could leave their offices whenever they liked, along with those (like me) whose jobs were so unimportant that no one cared or even noticed if we left early, caught the 4:25. There were obviously a great many people in these two categories, because if you were slow in getting to Grand Central you might not find a seat, and have to stand.

The first hour and a half—the trip to West Cornwall took three hours—was unexciting, but at Danbury things changed drastically for the better. There was a 15 or 20 minute lay-over at Danbury to allow the electric engine which had pulled us up from New York to be replaced by a great hissing and clanking steam locomotive. While this was taking place, many of the passengers who were going on to destinations like West Cornwall or Canaan or Stockbridge or Pittsfield (which was the end of the line) headed across the station plaza for a bar where they could get a beer. Among the regulars were Bob Beers and Tom Bevans and the train's conductor. After ten minutes or so this functionary looked at his gold pocket watch, rose to his feet, wiped the foam from his lips with the back of his hand (do I really remember this detail or am I making it up?) and started back to his train. The faint-hearted among us followed close on his heels, but some of us, confident that the train would not be leaving right away, lingered awhile, savoring the thrill of living dangerously. Once, to my great pride and satisfaction, I swung up onto the steps of the train just as it started on its way.

What followed was the best part of the trip. You could now spot Cornwall friends to chat



with, or stretch out on two seats (the train was quite sparsely populated at this point), and take a nap. Once Tom Bevans, with no accompanying friend to poke him, slept right through West Cornwall and had to be retrieved at Canaan. Our homecoming excitement—mine, at any rate—soared as we reached Kent and rode along the banks of our beautiful Housatonic, with the late afternoon sun slanting in across the river, or with the silvery river already shrouded in early twilight. There was always a throng at the station—children (if it was a warm evening some of them would be in pajamas) and wives. The children would spot us through the train windows and wait to hug us as we came down the steps, usually following their mothers' admonitions that it was poor form to ask us what presents we had brought them in our briefcases until we were off the train.

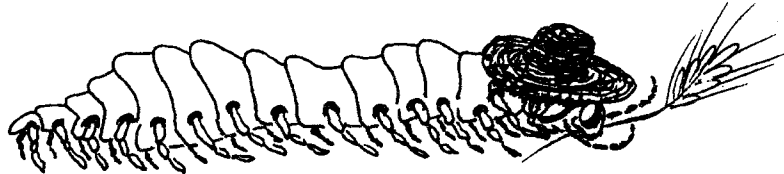
When the train huffed and puffed slowly away from the station, the children excitedly searched for the pennies they had placed on the tracks. Often the pennies had simply been knocked off the track, without the desired flattening. But sometimes, as my sock-drawer discovery reminded me, the transformation was successful. When the pennies (flattened or intact) had been retrieved, and as the train whistled faintly in the distance as it crossed and recrossed River Road, we got in the car and went home for martinis and the distribution of presents—not necessarily in that order.

—Spencer Klaw

THANKS, CLEANER-UPPERS

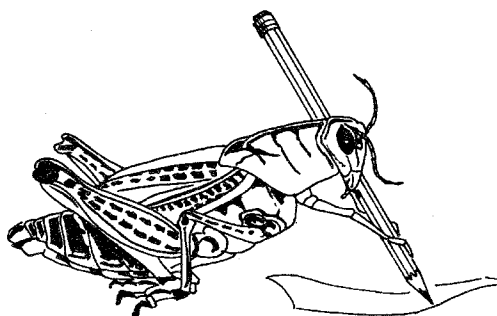
In last month's *Chronicle* I was generously given credit for heading up this year's Spring Cleanup. Many other Cornwallians weren't mentioned. In particular I'd like to thank the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department for making our day a safe one, my fellow Park and Recreation and Cornwall Association members for their sharp eyes and enthusiasm on the roadsides, and the merchants and businesses of Cornwall for their support and the refreshments and fabulous prizes donated for the "Garbage Awards." If you missed the good times, come out next spring and help us double the participation and the fun! Thank you to those who came, and see you next time.

—Deirdre Fischer



Tax Breaks For (Some) Elderly: Cornwall renters who were 65 or older by December 31, 1997, or who are receiving Social Security disability benefits may be eligible for a grant from the State of Connecticut. As outlined by Tax Assessor Barbara Johnson, some of the requirements are: the applicant must have resided in Connecticut for any one-year period prior to filing; income, including Social Security, may not exceed \$23,100 for singles or \$28,300 if married; and five percent of qualifying income may not exceed 35 percent of total rent and utility payments. If this calculation seems impossibly difficult, Barbara Johnson will make it for you. The application forms and additional information are available at the Assessor's Office on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9 to 12, and Wednesday afternoon 1 to 4:30. Application must be filed by September 15, 1998.

Check the upcoming August issue of the *Chronicle* for further information about tax relief for veterans and senior landowners who are living on limited incomes.



Cornwall Extras for Kids will hold its annual garden tour (\$15 per person) on Saturday, July 18 (rain date Sunday, July 19), from 4 to 6 P.M. at Katherine and Michael Gannett's splendid and extensive grounds at 328 River Road (call 672-4817 to see if it's raining). The usual delectable hors d'oeuvres and libations and the snazzy supporters of Extras will all be there. Come join us and smell the lilies!

Lighting Devices: An exhibition of lamps, candlesticks, and other forms of illumination from 1800 to 1900 will open at the Cornwall Historical Society on Saturday, July 4, and remain on view through July 28. Hours are Saturdays 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. and Tuesdays 9 A.M. to noon.

Emoticons

They're those little faces you make with your computer keyboard: :-), which is how moneybags looks when we don't receive enough donations to meet our monthly expenses. So let's make him look more like this :-), OK? Many thanks.

Child Center Openings: There are still some places available at the Cornwall Child Center's first summer camp for children from three through kindergarten. For information call Pam or Laura at 672-6989.

Cornwall's Rummage Sale, sponsored by the Woman's Society, will take place in and near the UCC Parish House and the Monroe-Bodkin building (clothing) on Saturday, July 18.

Contributions to the sale may be made at the Parish House, July 1 through 15. Please pack books in small boxes and cover items to protect them from rain. All items should be clean and in working condition. No TVs, mattresses, or large appliances can be accepted. Any questions? Call Cilla Mauro (672-6969) or Thalia Scoville (672-6288).

For the sale, please bring change and bills of small denominations. Outside tables with assorted merchandise plus furniture and clothes will go on sale at 9 A.M. Bake sale, too. Numbers will be given to early arrivals to insure everyone an orderly and safe lineup at the doors of the Parish House, which open at 10 A.M. The VFW will serve coffee and doughnuts and lunch. Doors close at 4 P.M.

On Monday, July 20, there will be a Bag Sale from 9 to noon. Most of the proceeds benefit the Woman's Society Educational Fund.

Need Help? Jill Gibbons, Cornwall's Municipal Agent on Aging as well as Social Services Administrator, is a fine source for information about what's available in our area in the way of transportation, financial assistance, information about health insurance, medical care, legal services, in-home services, and other benefit programs. The recently revived Committee on Aging thought of producing a booklet listing all the available resources and programs for area residents but discovered that the Northwest Center for Health and Family Services is doing just that and hopes to have its directory ready this fall.

The committee hopes to help on other areas of need but in the meantime, Jill has information at her fingertips—so if you have questions or need to know where to go for help, call her at 672-2603.

Art in Cornwall: During the month of July, Marjorie Fales will be showing watercolors of flowers and landscapes in oil at the National Iron Bank. At the Cornwall Library, the show of works by CCS students will continue until July 25. From July 27 to August 29,

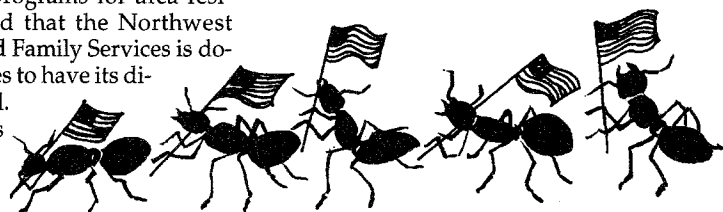
the Library will exhibit poems written and illustrated by the late Montgomery Hare. At Hedgerows in West Cornwall there will be an exhibit of paintings and drawings by Robert Andrew Parker, beginning July 5.

A Children's Book Parade will be held on July 4 on the Village Green after the bike parade. Come as a character (Little Red Riding Hood) or as a book (*Green Eggs and Ham*). For details, pick up a flier at CCS or the Library, or call Joyce Samson at 672-0616 or Jill Bryant at 672-6358.

Democratic Caucus: The Democratic Town Committee announces that a caucus will be held on July 21 in the Town Hall at 7:30 P.M. to nominate candidates for Registrar of Voters and Judge of Probate in the November elections. A regular committee meeting will also be held. All registered Democratic voters are invited to attend.

Attention Swimmers! Hammond Beach will have swimming lanes set up for lap swimming Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 3:30 to 6 P.M. during July and August. For information call Jane Prentice, 672-6101.

Children's Library Programs: "What do you like to do?" is the theme for the summer. Stories, poems, songs, and activities about painting, gardening, traveling, eating, and what have you will take place Wednesday evenings at 6:45 beginning July 8 for middle readers (ages 6-8 or so) and Friday, July 10 at 10 A.M. for preschoolers. Or, children can read on their own, come to the Library, and, for every book they have read, attempt to wrest a jealously guarded treasure from a library wall.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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