



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 1: NUMBER 4 MAY 1991



New Budget Calls For 23% Tax Increase

If Cornwall voters approve the proposed 1991-92 budget, it will mean a new tax rate of 31.5 mills, a 23% hike over the current 25.5 mill rate.

The total expense budget approved by the Board of Finance was \$3,300,025.00, a 12.7% increase over last year. The school portion is \$1,565,679.00, up 8%, and the general government portion is \$1,370,990, a 2.2% decrease.

The fact that spending was kept down in the general government and education categories was more than offset by a drop in revenues (mainly state grants and interest income) and a large increase in capital expenses, from \$75,624 in 1990-91 to \$363,356 in the proposed new budget. The major new capital expenses are \$55,000 for a highway vehicle and \$230,000 to begin a road reconstruction program. These items have forced the mill rate up by 23%.

Residents will vote on the budget at a town meeting on May 10.

At its April 18 meeting, the Finance Board also recommended formation of a committee to explore new revenue sources beyond the property tax.

Two budget transfers were approved.


\$4800 was transferred from contingency to Treasurer's expenses, partially to pay for training of the new deputy treasurer, Lisa Lansing, who will replace Pat Bramley in July. \$5,000 was transferred from insurance to public assistance. Cornwall now has three residents receiving public assistance. - Ed Ferman


Board of Selectmen

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen on April 15 disposed of a long and largely routine agenda. There were fireworks, however, when First Selectman Dick Dakin proposed asking the Board of Finance to approve budget transfers to cover overspending that had occurred in the road and welfare accounts. Selectman Gordon Ridgway pointed out that Dick had told the Board of Finance less than a month earlier that there would be no more commitment of town funds without their prior approval. Dick explained how the overruns had come about and pointed out the difficulty of getting accurate figures until the new computer system is fully installed, but Gordon did not appear to be satisfied. As the other selectman, Steve Hedden, was not present, and Gordon was not ready to

support Dick's proposal, action was deferred. The underlying issue is that the Board of Finance, whose approval is required before the selectmen can spend money in excess of what is in the Town Budget for a given line, have been making it increasingly clear that they are unhappy with the selectmen's frequent requests for retroactive approval. - Hendon Chubb


News Highlights

 Ski jumper Web Wilson, 18, the son of Mark and Pam Wilson of West Cornwall, placed second in the U.S. Junior Olympic competition held recently in Anchorage, Alaska. Wilson, a freshman at the University of Vermont, won three silver medals competing as a member of the Salisbury Winter Sports Association.


 Eleven students from Cornwall Consolidated School brought home honors from the National History Day contest in Torrington. The three skits prepared by the students examined issues raised by the Salem witch trials, child labor laws and the debate on abortion. The Cornwall eleven brought home a third prize from the event, sponsored annually by the Connecticut Historical Society.

MAY 1991


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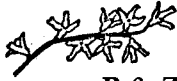

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| Memorial Day parade begins at 11 a. m. |  LQ 5 NM 12 FQ 18 FM 26 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 Water wheel see page 4 |
| We welcome items for the calendar. | | | | | | Barbershop songs HVRHS 8pm, see p. 4 |
| 5 Canoe cruise see page 4 Grumbling Gryphons show see p.4 | 6 Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Off. | 7 Vote on HVRHS budget 12-8pm Town Hall Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall | 8 | 9 Polly & Frank Calhoun's 60th Anniversary Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall | 10 Town meeting budget vote 8:00pm CCS | 11 |
| 12 MOTHER'S DAY | 13 Plan. & Zoning 7:30pm Town Hall Nuclear Free Zone meeting 7:30pm St. Peter's | 14 Dem. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall | 15 | 16 Bd. of Finance 8pm Town Hall | 17 Bd. of Ed. 4:30pm CCS Library | 18 Whitewater races see page 4 |
| 19 | 20 Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall | 21 | 22 | 23 CCS open house 6:30-9pm see page 4 Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall | 24 Habitat meeting First Church 8pm see page 4 | 25 Belle Becker library exhibit closes Poetry reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner |
| 26 | 27 MEMORIAL DAY Hooked rug show Hist. Soc. see p.4 Nuclear Free Zone meeting 7:30pm St. Peter's | 28 Deborah Gelerter art show opens at Library Z.B. of Appeals 8pm Town Hall (if necessary) ↓ Conserv. Comm. 7:30pm Town Off. | 29 Elderly Health screening W. Cornwall Fire house, see page 4 | 30 | 31 | |

(continued from page 1)

 Town Treasurer Raymond A. Fontaine has announced the appointment of Lisa Lansing Gwirtzman to the post of Deputy Treasurer. Patricia Bramley, who has served in the position for the past six years, has resigned. She will retain her position as clerk of the Board of Finance.

Following a transition period, the new appointment will be effective July 1.

 Cornwall property owners who are disabled or 65 years or older may be eligible for property tax credit provided their income meets levels established by the state. Those receiving veterans' exemptions may also be eligible for additional reductions in property tax provided they meet the income requirements. Further information and applications for the tax relief are available from the Town Assessor. The deadline for filing in time for the July tax bills is May 15.

 
**P & Z Hears Plans
For Pierce Lane Subdivision**

The Planning and Zoning Commission on April 6 heard the Cornwall Housing Corporation's proposal for an affordable lot subdivision on Pierce Lane.

CHC member Gordon Ridgway, Atty. Peter Ebersol and Engineer Pat Hackett presented the application to the Commission. The need for affordable single-dwelling lots was explained. Legal covenants to maintain affordability and to regulate the development were outlined and the soil and topography of the 11-acre parcel were shown to be suitable for the smaller-than-normal lots proposed. Neighbors raised questions about driveway safety, retaining trees as buffers and legal points regarding continued affordability.

A final decision to approve the proposal was continued until May 13.

Also on the May agenda is an amendment to the zoning regulations providing for Planned Conservation Zones. The amendment will permit an applicant to group dwellings and other structures on suitable land in exchange for maintaining 50% of "buildable" acreage as open space.

Although the number of houses permitted would be the same as a regular subdivision, more open land, rural views and farmland would result from allowing buildings to be clustered. The Commission feels that this approach would benefit people with more than 10 acres who are considering future development.

- Ginny Potter



Land For Lease - Cheap!

The Cornwall Housing Corporation is moving ahead with its plans to acquire

parcels of land to lease to prospective home builders. Questionnaires for those interested in applying for such parcels have been made available at the Cornwall Town Office, at Cadwell's Corner, and at the Package Store in Cornwall Bridge.

A model of Kugeman Village is on display in the library. - Ken Keskinen


High School Budget

On Tuesday, May 7, Cornwall will vote on the 1991-92 HVRHS budget between noon and 8 p.m. at the Town Hall. The regional Board of Education has approved a gross budget which increases expenditure 3.2% over last year. The net budget figure, which subtracts direct state aid from the expenditure total, is \$4,765,137. This dollar figure is 4.5% over the previous year and assumes that expected state subsidies will be awarded.

According to HVRHS Board of Education representative Bob Potter, the budget involved many "tough decisions" reflecting decreasing state support for education in "wealthy towns." A top priority in preparation of the budget was "minimal disruption of the educational process," he said.

- Lisa Lansing

Tree Trimming

Tree trimming crews from CL&P will soon be asking for permission to clear branches that could interfere with power lines.

By statute the town Tree Warden is the final decision-maker on town road trees. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to do a pleasing job of pruning due to the placement of poles and trees. If you need a third opinion on tree work on town roads, leave a message at the Selectmen's office.

- George F. Brown, Tree Warden



Medical Maze Solvers Needed

AARP needs volunteers to help older citizens through the medical insurance maze by assisting with processing doctor and hospital bills, preparing Medicare appeals, explaining hospital rights and Medicare benefits, reviewing Medicare supplemental insurance, exploring Medicaid eligibility and weighing long-term care options. Volunteers will attend a three day training session to learn about Medicare law and regulations. Anyone interested should contact me at 672-2703 on Mondays 9:30 to 4:30 and on Wednesdays and Fridays 9:30 to 1:00.

- Jill Gibbons

Good-bye to Friends

Howard M. Thompson
Melissa Clark

Marriages

Earl M. Semmelrock to Sarah Hemenway



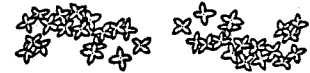
**Hey Donder! Hey Blitzen!
You're Late!**

Yes, Virginia, there is a "250th Anniversary-of-Congregationalists-in-Cornwall" Committee and it is printing a book to prove it. Publication is scheduled for May.

You'll read about a minister locked out of his church on Thanksgiving Day; of how "Puffalo", a combination of molasses, water, spices and rum figured into building a church; how Hawaiian dignitaries and a Vietnamese family interacted with our Cornwall Congregations; and whether it is better to be a sheep or a goat. But mostly you will read about your local religious heritage and the interesting people who created it. And yes, there will be pictures.

Help us now by reserving copies (Contact Peg Becker, Doris Cross, Scoville Soulé, Jan Tenney or Cilla Mauro). And if you would like to be a Santa Claus patron, a check to this committee would help save us from pawning the sleigh.

- Scoville Soulé



News from the Land Fill

The closure plan for the land fill is well underway. Pat Hackett, engineer for the town, has prepared plans that have been approved by the D.E.P. for putting the land fill to rest.

The work will consist of grading to a proper slope, covering with 18 inches of impervious soil, topping with six inches of top soil, and seeding with a permanent grass mix. A small area of the land fill will be kept open for emergency use.

Soon a box will be provided for construction material and bulky waste. This material, just like the mixed solid waste, will be shipped out of town. If all this sounds like \$\$\$\$, it is.

Figures for 1990 waste are as follows: household waste, 450 tons; glass for recycling, 80 tons; scrap paper, 78 tons; cardboard, 78 tons; auto batteries, 97; waste oil, 300 gallons, and scrap metal (including food cans), 86.6 tons. Approximately 40% of our waste is recycled.

- George F. Brown, Recycling Coordinator



Bats 'n Gnats



The season everyone in Cornwall dreads so much is upon us - the season of bugs that plague our summers. Bugs are having a field day with no predators except birds. But birds are not very effective. They don't fly at night. And night is the time when bugs are at their most savage.

Is there an answer for us? Yes, there is. Bats.

Bats are probably the most misunderstood and maligned creatures on earth. For years Americans have maintained a mindless bias against bats, all because of

ignorance. Bats are not flying mice, despite Johann Strauss's opera *Die Fledermaus*. They have their own order, Chiroptera, which means "winged hand."

Bats fly at night and their diet is insects. Bats consume insects at a most extraordinary rate: 600 mosquitoes in an hour. That's one bat. Imagine what a colony of bats can do! There is a bat colony in Texas that eats 250,000 pounds of insects in a single night. Can you beat that with your spray can and bug zapper?

Bats are warm-blooded animals, the only mammals that fly. They have highly developed sonar. They emit a high-pitched sound, generally inaudible to humans, and listen for the echo. Interpreting the pitch and intensity of the echo, the bat zeros in on its prey. They don't make a point of tangling in your hair. If they swoop around your head they are just chasing insects.

Bats are gentle, intelligent, beneficial, and harmless. One's chances of being bitten by a rabid bat are insignificant.

There are 39 species of bats in the U.S., all doing their voracious best to gobble up the bugs that bug us in the summer. How do we attract bats? By having bat houses. If everyone in Cornwall had a bat house, the bug menace would vanish to something approaching zero.

Bats are exceptionally clean little animals. Anyone who has a bat colony should rejoice. A friend in Sharon has bats that roost under her porch. She has no bugs.

You can write BAT Conservation International, P.O. Box 162603, Austin, Texas 78716 (Tel: (512) 327-9721) and they will send you plans with complete details so you can make your own bat houses.

- Herbert S. Whitman



The Green Corner



Attention tornado victims: If you lost important trees near your house in the 1989 tornado, we may be able to help you replace them.

The Cornwall Village Improvement Society, whose job it is to care for trees and lawns in the village only, has generously given some surplus money to the town to help tornado victims outside its jurisdiction. We have been asked by First Selectman Richard Dakin to locate the people with the worst damage and allot funds accordingly.

We can't help you if we don't know who you are.

If you think you may qualify, please call Richard Dakin's office, 672-4959, and leave your name, telephone number and address as soon as possible. We can then proceed with the very difficult job of allotting these limited funds.

- The Cornwall Tree Committee



Letters to the Chronicle



VOTE YES AGAIN

Two years ago, on a certain nail-biting evening in mid-May, I was sitting next to a silent telephone, waiting for it to ring. Linda Marks, chairman of the HVRHS Board of Education, had offered to call me from the high school office just as soon as the results of the budget referendum were known.

The phone didn't ring till nearly eight-thirty. When it did, Linda's voice was drowned out by a chorus of cheers and general hilarity in the background.

"I gather we passed the budget," I stammered.

"No," Linda corrected me, "we didn't pass the budget. Cornwall passed the budget!"

Then she told me that the other five towns had phoned in by eight-fifteen. The budget was losing by forty-some votes. To pass in the region, it would not only have to win in Cornwall, but have to win big. And it did! The large yes vote in Cornwall turned the whole referendum around.

I appeal to Cornwall voters to take the time on May 7 to vote for the Board-recommended budget showing gross increase of only 3.2%. This is a regional vote, not just a Cornwall vote. Last year there were more yes votes in Cornwall than in any other town except populous Salisbury.

What might happen if the high school budget loses? Let's learn a lesson from Litchfield and some other nearby towns. Last year the budget lost in Litchfield by a single vote, 580 to 581. In Litchfield and some other towns, the Boards had no choice but to come back to the voters with truly teacher-cutting budgets. But when that happens, some of the yes votes become no votes; some people think the revised total is too low. A kind of descending spiral continues referendum after referendum. Last year Litchfield finally ended with a tiny increase, 1% I believe. Seven high school teaching positions were eliminated.

This cannot be allowed to happen to the students at HVRHS.

Please vote yes on May 7.

-Bob Potter

THE TRADE GOES ON

Phil Hart's article reminded me that twenty-five years ago his father, Whit Hart, introduced our son Gordon to the wonders of maple sap collecting. Whit picked Gordon up after school at the corner of Cream Hill and Cherry Hill Roads in a Dodge pick-up loaded with buckets.

Now Phil Hart is continuing his family's syruping, and Gordon is starting a new family tradition.

- Bruce Ridgway

GETTING OUT THE WORD

The Cornwall Chronicle is beginning to make its mark. Twice during the Selectmen's meeting people said they would get word out by putting something in this paper. The Chronicle aims to get facts and opinion to the Cornwall community so that people can know what is going on and make informed choices about public issues. I hope there are more comments in letters.

- Hendon Chubb

GOOD TIMES THERE . . .

Here in Florida my memories go back to Cream Hill Road where as a teenager I used to ricochet down the hills in a model A Ford to go swimming in the lake, the wonderful house belonging to Irita Van Doren where I spent many happy hours, the delightful company of the three Van Doren sisters, and the wonderful times I had when we were all young.

Happily, we still keep in touch, and the Chronicle, while it is definitely of the "now" and the future, helps those of us who are away in the hinterlands remember the old carefree and happy times. - Peter Kite Smith, Florida

WHY SOFT HATS OR CAPS?

It was with great pleasure that I received my first two issues of the Chronicle all the way out here on the "other coast." As a semi-native of Cornwall (bred, not born), it was that true taste of home and small-town life that I miss living in a large city. Which brings me to my next point. Should you in the future find the need for a west coast correspondent do feel free to call on me. I've found an amazing degree of difference between the people of the west and those of the eastern half of our fair country.

One other thing: a California friend of mine wants to know why, as noted in the February issue, "soft hats or caps" are required at the public skating rink. I am afraid I could come up with no acceptable answer for him, and since I fear he will write this off as a repressive New England rule, uncomprehensible to "free spirit" native Californians, I would love to one-up him with a damn good sensible answer.

- Emily Ferman, San Francisco

YANKEE FRUGALITY

Not only is the First Selectman's trailer an example of Yankee frugality (at seventeen cents an hour), but, on close examination, one finds that the trailer has subtle esthetic values that satisfy the discriminating observer. I don't have time now to give you all my thoughts on this fascinating building but will complete them in the next issue. - T.M. Haywitz, C.I.A.

Rumsey Update

The Municipal Building Committee recommended to the Board of Selectmen that Rumsey Hall be the site of the new town hall, as plans to adjoin the town office and the library do not appear feasible to them.

They also recommended that asbestos be removed from Rumsey (this would have to be done whether Rumsey is renovated or taken down) as well as from the gymnasium and the library, and that a licensed engineer then be hired to assess the structural integrity of Rumsey.

At the Committee's request the Board of Selectmen have written a letter terminating the services of Mr. McAlister, the former architect. When accomplished this will free the Committee to hire someone to plan a new building, which they have been unable to do for the past month because of legal entanglements. - Rita Quinn



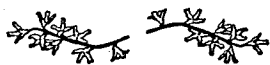
Habitat Homebuilders Organize

Habitat for Humanity, the worldwide housing group made famous by former President Jimmy Carter, has organized a chapter in the Northwest Corner to help working people who can't afford homes to become homeowners.

The group will hold an information meeting in the Day Room at the First Church on Friday, May 24 at 8 p.m. Cornwall residents Paul Baren and Jim Whiteside are members of the board of the local Habitat. Other towns involved are Sharon, Salisbury, Falls Village and Canaan.

Habitat for Humanity celebrates its 15th anniversary this year. Since its start, the group has built 10,000 housing units in the U.S. and overseas. The goal for 1991 alone is 4,000 units.

According to Baren, the local group is looking for a property, with or without a house, to purchase and turn into a new home. The work will be done by volunteers. -The Editors



More Letters, Please!

The *Chronicle* is mailed free to all residents of Cornwall. If you would like us to mail a monthly copy to an out-of-town address, we'd be happy to do so for a \$10 contribution, per address, per year. Send contribution to:

CORNWALL CHRONICLE
P.O. Box 246
West Cornwall, CT 06796

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CITY/ST/ZIP _____

Events & Announcements

Water Wheel: After nearly 100 years, the water wheel at the Van Doren farm in Cornwall Hollow is mended and ready to function - to grind corn and grain using water power from a brook.

The restoration was accomplished by Adam Van Doren and millwright Donald Perham working weekends over a period of two years.

Those interested may see a demonstration at 3 p.m. on May 4th.

Barbershop Songs: The Spring Harmony Musicals, an old-fashioned Barbershop variety show, will appear at the High School Saturday, May 4, at 8 p.m., featuring the Housatonic Barbershop Chorus and "Party Fare," an all-girl quartet from the Sweet Adelines. A German oompah band will lead the audience in some rounds of "Schnitzelbank."

Tickets: \$8 - \$6 for seniors and students - at the door or from Doug Carlson or Jack Forster.

Open House: The newly renovated Cornwall Consolidated School will open its doors Thursday, May 23 to offer the public an opportunity to view the new wing and other changes to the school building. The open house will be between 6:30 and 9 p.m. A short ceremony will be held to thank the architect and the contractor. The contributions of three teachers who are leaving at the end of the school year will also be honored.

A highlight of the opening will be the School Science Fair, on display during the Open House.

Any Hooked Rugs? The Cornwall Historical Society is planning an exhibit of hooked rugs beginning Memorial Day, May 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the society's house on Pine St. If you have a rug you wish to exhibit please notify Harriet L. Clark, 69 Clark Rd.

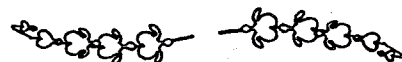
Health Screening: The Town of Cornwall and the Elderly Health Screening Service are offering a Health Screening on Wed., May 29 at the West Cornwall Firehouse. This service is available to Cornwall residents age 60 or over. The E.H.S. is a mobile health screening and education program offering a wide range of tests aimed at early detection of diseases and promotion of good health habits. Suggested donation is \$18. For more information or to sched-

ule an appointment call Jill Gibbons at the Town Office (672-2703) on Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings. The next proposed E.H.S. date is Oct. 20.

Grumbling Gryphons: "The Ghost Net", an environmental sea story for children will be presented by The Grumbling Gryphons, Leslie Elias, Director, at HVRHS on Sun. May 5 at 3 p.m. For ticket info. call 672-0286.

Canoeing Cruise: A canoeing cruise will take place on the Housatonic on Sunday, May 5 at 11 a.m. The cruise begins near Rtes. 4 and 7 in Cornwall Bridge and runs for 10 miles. The event is free. Call Dan Pelletier (237-2474) for more information.

Whitewater Championships: The annual open Housatonic Whitewater Championships for canoes and kayaks will be held Saturday, May 18. The race will start at the CL&P Hydroelectric plant below Great Falls and run for 10 miles to Housatonic Meadows State Park in Cornwall. Registration is from 9-10:30 a.m. at the start; the race begins at 11 a.m. The fee is \$8 per entrant. Call W.R. Tingley (364-5321) for information.



Report on Trees

At the 101st annual meeting of the Village Improvement Society on April 21st it was reported that 111 trees were planted in the village in 1990. Expenses for trees, clean-up, pruning, maintenance and legal fees for Mar. 1, 1990 to Mar. 30, 1991 totalled \$53,454.01. Nine new trees will be planted this spring, and all trees planted last year will be fed. Some street trees still showing tornado damage will be pruned. Remaining funds will be kept to add to, replace, or prune trees as needed.

It was agreed that the town picnic, with hayrides and dancing on the green, will again be held in August. - Joan Edler

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