

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 4: NUMBER 4 MAY 1994



Sawmill Win for P&Z

The Planning & Zoning Commission has won a major victory in the long-running dispute over its 1991 decision to change regulations governing sawmills in residential areas. Ruling in the commission's favor, Superior Court Judge Richard Walsh has dismissed a lawsuit brought by Toby Cole, of Cream Hill Road, and three other plaintiffs.

The suit accused P&Z of acting illegally and arbitrarily. The chief point of contention was a change in the requirement that sawmills in residential zones must be at least 500 feet from the nearest property line. The commission reduced the setback to 200 feet, while adding provisions for buffers and new restrictions on noise levels and hours of operation.

Judge Walsh, agreeing that P&Z had acted in the interest of the community, rejected the plaintiffs' argument that the rules had been changed solely to accommodate one individual — Lawrence Stevens, Jr. Stevens had been operating a sawmill on land owned by his mother, Victoria Stevens, on Cream Hill Road — a site on which there is no way to place a sawmill so as to comply with a 500-foot setback requirement.

Judge Walsh said that in view of tech-

nological advances — sawmills make less noise than they used to — the 1991 changes were within the commission's power to make. He also agreed with P&Z that making it easier to establish sawmills in residential areas was consistent with the Town Plan — one of whose purposes is "to expand the opportunity for local employment by permitting small-scale . . . business activities in residential zones under standards which assure that such activities will be compatible with the surrounding residential uses."

The tangled sawmill litigation has cost Cornwall \$23,029 in legal fees and related expenses. Cole said he and the other plaintiffs planned to appeal the court's decision. — *Spencer Klaw*

Proposed 1995 Town Budget

On April 21 the Board of Finance voted five to one to present to the town a budget for 1995 of \$3,608,034 and to cover this amount with \$695,400 in non-tax revenues, \$50,000 from Bond Proceeds, \$25,000 from Cash Surplus, and a tax levy of \$2,837,634. The town budget includes the Board of Education budget of \$1,796,023. In an effort to keep any tax increase to a minimum, BOF had requested that BOE reduce its \$1,816,125 budget by \$35,000.

However, BOF agreed to BOE's proposed reduction of \$20,102, which involved cutting a part-time teacher's assistant for next year's large kindergarten, and reductions in the building maintenance program, supplies, and audiovisual and computer equipment. A further \$14,900 cut would have required the elimination of the sports program and a state-recommended increase in the art/computer and music program, both of which BOE felt should be retained. — *Celia Senzer*

New Gannett Book Out

If you're not already a Cornwall history buff, an hour spent with Michael R. Gannett's new book, *Town Meeting Minutes: 1740-1875*, will certainly make you one.

And it will be a short hour. The 326-page book is fascinating. Starting to read the old minutes, one plunges into the reality of history in a way that offers insights no summary or modern appraisal could provide. The reader enters a Cornwall where taxes were paid in "wheat, rye, indian corn, flax, wool or money," and expenses figured in pence, shillings, and pounds. Concerns ranged from hiring and supporting a town minister to fixing the annual bounty on rattlesnake tails.

It was a very WASPish world, seem-

MAY 1994

(continued on page 2)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Child Center Auction: silent auction 1:30pm live auction 3:00pm raffle drawing 4:30pm Mohawk Ski Lodge	2 ††† Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall Park & Rec.	3 Region 1 Ed. Budget Referendum 12-8pm Town Hall Agric. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse 7:30pm Town Office Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall*	4 W. Corn. Merchants Assn. 10am Cadwell's NWCT Econ. Program 7:30pm Mohawk Ski Lodge (p.4)	5	6 Children's Story Hour 10:30am every Friday at Cornwall Library (p.4)	7 Rumsey Art Contest winner & ceremony 12 noon Cornwall Lib. (p.2)
8 MOTHER'S DAY	9 Cornwall Lib. art exhibit: "Cornwall Chronicle prints" (see below) P & Z 8pm Town Hall	10 Kindergarten Registr. 9-11am CCS (p.4) Hous. Riv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS Lib. Dem. Town Comm. 7:30pm TH (Groark to speak, p.3) Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm Moh. Ski Lodge (p.3)	11 CCS PTO 7pm CCS Lib. Kindergarten Registr. 9-11am CCS (p.4)	12 Kindergarten Registr. 9-11am CCS (p.4) Corn. Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC†	13	14 Poetry Reading 8pm Cadwell's
15 Intro. to Health Care Reform" 11:30am UCC† (p.4) Friends of Cornwall Lib. 4pm Town Hall (p.4)	16 ††† Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7pm HS Lib.	17	18	19 Bd. of Ed. 5pm CCS Lib. Bd. of Finance 7:30pm CCS Lib.	20 Town Meeting* 7:30pm CCS (to vote on budget) followed by Board of Finance meeting (to set mill rate)*	21 Plant Swap 10am CCS
22 "Health Care Reform Options" 11:30am UCC† (p.4)	23 ZBA 8pm Town Hall*	24	25	26	27	28
29 Covered Bridge Dance 6-11pm W. Cornwall (p.4)	30 MEMORIAL DAY Schedule of activities on p.4	31	Remember the important vote on May 3 on the combined High School, Pupil Services, and Central Office Administration budget.			

LQ 2
 NM 10
 FQ 18
 FM 25

Exhibit of signed prints, one from each issue of the
Chronicle. Your choice for a deductible contribution of
\$20 each, half to the Library and half to the Chronicle.

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

(continued from page 1)

ingly peopled only by men with those wonderful old names: Birdseye Clark and Ebenezer Birdseye, Noah Rogers and Silas Dibble, Zelotes Sanders and Consider Tanner. Indeed, the only woman's name I recall seeing in my perusal was in an item concerning the care and keeping of an indigent widow.

Throughout the early years the town voted on matters of "national" importance: the Revolutionary War (yea), the Articles of Confederation (yea), and the administrations of Washington (yea), Adams (yea), and Jefferson (nay). Also of interest are the many things that did *not* happen. In 1751 the town put what pressure it could on the general assembly to name Cornwall the county seat of what was soon to become "Litchfield" — not "Cornwall" — County. Later the town supported a massive project to build a canal paralleling the Housatonic from Long Island Sound to Stockbridge. And the book contains those puzzling tidbits that appeal to the gossip in all of us. One wonders, for instance, about the full story behind a special town meeting on February 18, 1788, called expressly "to rid the town of one Benjamin Marble, an impotent person belonging to the town of Salisbury now residing in . . . Cornwall."

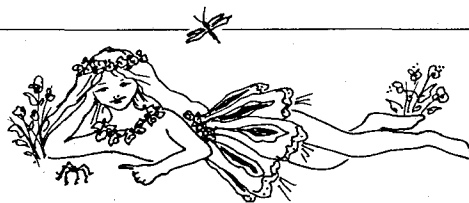
Fortunately, Gannett's 15 pages of well-researched notes clear up many such mysteries. The book also contains a subject index and an exhaustive index listing every name. Gannett has also provided a useful glossary, so that the reader can learn the exact duties of such long-time town functionaries as the Key Keeper (always capitalized), Hayward, and Tythingman.

"This has been a multi-year project for me," Michael Gannett said recently, "my winter work for a long time now." Credit is certainly due to Gannett for deciphering the ancient and faded handwriting in old records, for typing each of the minutes, and for seeing the volume through publication. Just released by the Cornwall Historical Society, the book (in a sturdy plastic-ring binding) can be seen at the Library and purchased for \$15 there and at the Society's Pine Street headquarters.

— Bob Potter

Demise of HB 5684

House Bill 5684, the proposed act to establish state-directed regionalization and control of local planning, has apparently breathed its last — at least for this year. The demise of 5684 came in the legislature's Environmental Committee. A principal reason for the bill's defeat was the loud



voice of protest from Cornwall and other Northwest Corner towns.

Actually, even before the Environmental Committee's action, the state's Land Use Planning Task Force had removed two of the bill's most onerous sections: requiring state certification of a town's plan as a prerequisite for receiving priority in funding, and empowering a regional planning agency to issue permits for local development. However, the state's thrust toward overriding local P&Z regulations remained the theme of the bill.

Cornwall officials are pleased with this result, and will be alert if a similar "from the top down" land-use bill is proposed.

— Ginny Potter

Window of Opportunity

Fifty-eight proposals for a new mural for the attic window of Rumsey Hall are on display at the Cornwall Library. The designs express as many points of view as are held about the building, from comedy to tragedy. One design acknowledges the dilemma by proposing a giant mirror.

Visitors to the Library will be able to cast a vote for their favorite design until noon on Saturday, May 7, at which time the judges will announce the winner in a brief ceremony.

— Tim Prentice

A Cornwall Welcome

Thanks to the generosity of many people in town, the Refugee Resettlement Committee is on its way to welcoming a refugee family to Cornwall, probably quite soon. Some funds have been raised through individual donations and by the two benefit concerts by the Backwoods Jazz Trio in April. An apartment in West Cornwall will be the family's first U.S. home, and local summer employment has been offered. Still needed are: furniture and other household items (call Joan Edler, 672-6789), money (call Jill Gibbons, 672-0033), and offers of transportation (call Treasa Pattison, 672-4453). For more info, call the U.C.C. office, 672-6840.

— Peg Keskinen

Let There Be Light

Should the town be in the lighting business? On April 18 residents and merchants of West Cornwall took this problem to the Board of Selectmen. Because of the bureaucratic maze the state statutes require lighting districts to negotiate, the West Cornwall district has been legally terminated. Unless some other plan of operation is worked out, the lights will be dark on July 1.

There have been lights in the village since 1932, when the railroad was active and paid for most of them. More recently, the 17 lights have been

paid for by the district set up to assess property owners for the cost. Without the legal district, payment can be made by individuals, each paying for a light nearby, or by having the selectmen add a line item to the town budget.

The prospect of taxpayers supporting the lights in West Cornwall, and — to be equitable — in Cornwall Bridge and Cornwall Plain as well, caused wide differences of opinion. Some felt that since all citizens use the village centers, the town should pay. Others said everyone should not have to pay for lights that shine on relatively few. There was agreement that public safety could be a real concern.

The selectmen will weigh the town's obligation, since nothing in the statutes requires a local government to provide lights. The selectmen's 1994-95 budget has been set for a 1% increase; to hold the numbers down, cuts have been made in all areas including public safety. Gordon Ridgway pointed to Cornwall Bridge as a working example of how lights can be privately funded.

— Ginny Potter

Goodbye to a Friend

Gustav Haller

Congratulations

Stephen William Strawson to
Kathy Lee Van Wagner

Jennifer Cooley to Donald Hanks

Land Transfers

Priscilla Foote Dickson to Dominique Lasseur and Catherine Tatge, house and 14+ acres on Furnace Brook Road for \$435,000.

Home at Last

The Grapes of Wrath aged to a valuable vintage recently for the Cornwall Library. On April 10 Jeannette Rohatyn of New York City mailed a library copy of John Steinbeck's popular novel back to Cornwall, explaining that she had found the 20-years-overdue book while remodeling her youngest son's bedroom.

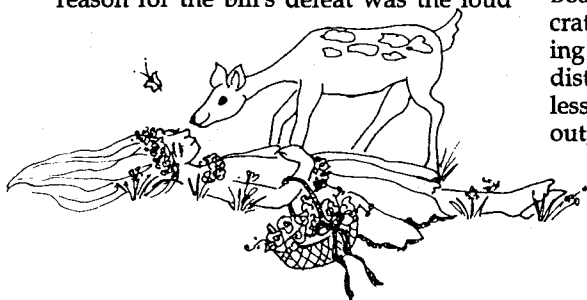
"We have never been Cornwall residents," Ms. Rohatyn wrote, "but my three boys were good friends of the Zabriskies and Boillots and periodically visited them for skiing weekends and the like . . . Though I imagine the statute of limitations has run out, I would like to do something and so enclose a check for \$100."

And she didn't even know of the Library's "Conscience Box" for overdue books. Wow!

— Bob Potter

Kugeman Village Filling Up

As of the Ides of April, 13 of 18 units at Kugeman Village had been assigned, with families and individuals settled in or getting ready to do so. Applications were being processed to assign residents to the remaining units.





Letters to the Chronicle



Of the 13 early occupants (including single folk, families, and retirees), nine either live, work, or have family in Cornwall. The others hail from Sharon and Kent.

Some work remains to be done. Site grading is to be completed in May, with sodding, seeding, and planting of trees and shrubs to follow. Outdoor light fixtures will be changed, and the poles shortened. A 10,000-gallon underground water storage tank is to be installed for firefighting purposes. A fenced-in community garden area is also in the plans, along with the play area for children.

Anne Baren of Cornwall Bridge has been hired by Community Housing Management as administrator of the Village, and Peter Selino of Sharon as superintendent. Those wishing more information about Kugeman Village may call 672-4439 or write to 19 Kugeman Village, Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754.

Dedication ceremonies are planned for Wednesday, June 8, at 11 a.m.

— Ken Keskinen

Republicans Elect, Select

At the Cornwall Republican Town Committee meeting on April 12, David Harmon was elected Treasurer, to replace Robert Beers, who has served faithfully for many years. Edwin Whitcomb was elected a new member of the committee. Two HVRHS students, Heidi Hedden and Melissa Borggreve, were selected for the Intern Program, to go to Washington, D.C., July 25-30. Next meeting: May 10, 7:30 p.m., Mohawk Ski Area.

— Ruth Ohmen

Groark Speaking in Cornwall

Lieutenant Governor Eunice Groark will be a guest speaker at the Democratic Town Committee meeting at 7:30, on Tues., May 10, at the Town Hall. Democrats and everybody else are invited to come hear the ACP candidate who is hoping to succeed Lowell Weicker as Governor.— John Miller

The Great Open Spaces

On April 6, the Cornwall Conservation Trust sponsored a talk by Jim Gibbons of the UConn Extension Service. His topic was "Conserving Open Spaces," which he sees, not in the traditional way as "nothing between two somethings," but as an essential element in a constructive approach to land-use planning. The conservation and scenic values of open spaces are clear, and it has also been shown that farms, forests, and raw land cost towns 34 cents in services for every tax dollar collected, while developed-land services costs are about \$1.15 for the same tax dollar.

The yearly decrease in farmland and wetlands is rapid, and most of the for-

SPRING FEVER

*The welcome equinox of spring
Sez tennis now is just the thing.
So grimly grab your bat and ball
Alert to lob and ace and let,
To crush some soul across the net.
But let ye not one sec forget
The starting score is LOVE: Love-all.*

— Alfred Lord Tennysanyone

(Otherwise known as Lord Larry of Pool, we suspect — The Editors.)

MEMORIAL DAY MEMORY

*Yes, I was in Cornwall Hollow on
Memorial Day 1900. I remember the day well,
94 years ago. Our whole family was there. The
boys, being boys, were able to go around where
they pleased. We four girls had to sit close to
Mama, in a shady place. I remember there were
crowds of people, and horses and carriages
hitched at almost every fence post along the
roads. A man on a fenced-in platform seemed
very angry as he shouted and hit his fists
together. I didn't think much of him. After he
stopped yelling, Papa came to our group and
asked Mama to come with him to shake hands
with this man, who was the Governor. Mama
was very shy and said she wasn't dressed well
enough. Papa got very red in his face and
snatched up Esther, who was very beautiful
with her long curls and white dress. He started
toward the man within the fence but, if Esther
was to shake hands with the Governor, I
wanted to be there too, and started after Papa.
Mama caught my apron and held me back, so I
didn't get to shake hands with the Governor.
Mama gave me an egg sandwich and a drink of
cold lemonade from the dipper in a ten-gallon
milk can. I didn't care any longer about the
Governor, who had yelled and pounded his
fists.*

— Harriet Clark

THOSE DANGEROUS CURVES

*This is a letter about Route 4. I know that
sounds a little boring, but please be careful on
the turns after Benjamin Farm, all the way to*

*Cornwall Bridge. Both directions are dangerous
as heck. In March the LifeStar helicopter
picked up a person who crashed. This winter
there were two accidents on this road. A
couple of years ago a person died on this road.
Is it the curves? Are they banked the wrong
way? Is it the sand? Is it not swept off
properly? Are the posted speed limits too fast?
Drive carefully; the next victim could be you
or someone you love. If you don't like that
prospect then let the State Highway Depart-
ment know in writing. They'll do a traffic
study. I know this summer they plan to fix the
crumbling cement bank-retaining wall on the
curves. Maybe, since they'll be there, they can
fix the bad curves and change the speed limits!
Write Richard Bates, and he will forward the
letters directly to Steve Martinson, the traffic
engineer for our neck of the woods at the
district office in Thomaston. Bates' address is:
Field Supervisor State Garage, 24 Bunker Hill
Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796, Phone 672-
6671.*

— Janice Bracken

ALL IN THE FAMILY

*This is to let you know that I had
absolutely nothing to do with the fine article
attributed to me in your April issue on the
housewarming for the new Habitat house. The
article's author is a very close friend of mine,
Jean F. Leich, who is fully responsible for its
content.*

— John F. Leich

MORE DRIVERS NEEDED

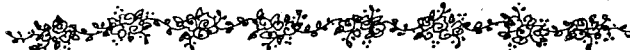
*If you can spare time now and then to
take a Cornwall neighbor to the doctor or to do
an errand, FISH needs your help. Our current
drivers are working overtime. Please call me at
672-6261 if you want to volunteer.*

— Marie Prentice, FISHhead

DEAR CONSERVATION COMMISSION:

*Thank you for all your hard work and
time for letting us fish in Mill Brook. We had
a lot of fun fishing there. I was so excited when
I caught my first fish. Thank you so much.*

— Meagan and Jamie Pastre



ested 60 percent of the state is in private hands, in parcels of under ten acres, held by owners whose average age is 61. Because of budget constraints, there is not much help to be hoped for from the state or the federal government. More alarming is that times of depression are difficult ones for land preservation, and that a backlash, such as the "Wise Use" movement (composed of those notoriously wise groups, developers and lawyers) has begun to wrestle planning and zoning commissions to the mat.

Gibbons recommended that conserving open spaces be seen as a local effort, with cooperation between planning boards and town officials sharing common goals. A good town plan is the starting point; its

advisory recommendations can be translated into forward-looking regulations by P&Z. Factual material to back up such regulations can be supplied by mapping and inventorying town resources, both natural and esthetic. In this way, desirable open space can be identified, and officials will have something to lean on when asking developers for the open space set-aside encouraged by state statute.

The talk gave rise to many questions and provided much food for thought. It took place in the CCS library under children's conservation posters reading "Save Our Stuff," and concluded with excellent food for stomachs, especially Anne Zinsser's cookies.

— Maggie Cooley and John Leich



Events & Announcements

Memorial Day Schedule: As usual in Cornwall, Memorial Day — Monday, May 30 — offers activities from the deservedly solemn to the forgivably frivolous:

• 9:15 a.m. The day begins with a traditional observance at the North Cornwall Cemetery led by Charles Gold. Participants often bring flowers — wild or cultivated — to decorate the graves.

• 10 a.m. Seamen's Memorial Service at the Covered Bridge in West Cornwall.

• 11 a.m. The annual parade and ceremony at the Cornwall Village Green. The parade will form on Hubbard Field at 10:30 a.m. All veterans are invited to march, and uniforms are not required. In case of rain, the program will be held in the CCS gym.

• 11 a.m.-2 p.m. The Cornwall Historical Society on Pine Street will feature an exhibit of old games and doll houses.

• 12 noon: The annual Memorial Day Carnival on the grounds of the UCC will start right after the program on the Green. Hosted by the church and the Cornwall Child Center, the carnival will provide entertainment, games, and food for all. Proceeds will add to the Child Centers scholarship fund and benefit children through a variety of church donations.

Summer Session: The Cornwall Child Center plans to hold a morning program for five weeks in the CCS art room. Contact Director Pat Brehm to register (672-6989).

CCC Progressing: With the end of winter, the construction of the Cornwall Child Center's new building is moving ahead. A successful auction, volunteer work, donated materials, generous contributions — all are greatly appreciated. This will actually be a community-built center for our children.



Sweeps Winners: There were 43 entries, and the winners are: first prize (framed Chronicle art) — Bob & Ginny Potter, Town Street; second prize (bound volume of the Chronicle) — Lydia Lansing, Bartlett, NH; third prize (dinner for two at Cadwell's) — Sarah Jenny, Paris, France (transportation not included). Congratulations to the lucky winners! Don't forget: The Chronicle always needs your support.

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

CORNWALL CHRONICLE, INC. 143 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY/ST/ZIP _____

Library Friends Forming: Friends of the Cornwall Library will launch itself on Sunday, May 15, at 4 p.m. as a Library support group. The organizing meeting will be in the Town Hall/Library. All 106 people who signed up to become members are urged to come. Everyone else with an interest in helping the Library is also urged to attend and become a member. A slate of officers will be presented for a vote, and articles of association and bylaws will be voted on. The Board of the new organization will want to hear all ideas for ways the Friends might support the Library.

Puzzled about Health Care Reform? Gain information by joining two classes, "Introduction to Health Care Reform" and "Health Care Reform Options," at UCC at 11:30 a.m. on Sundays, May 15 and 22. At the introductory class on May 15, a videotape titled "Too Soon to Compromise" (part of a resource packet called "Ethical Choices: Reforming the Health Care System") will be shown and discussed. Jean King, Executive Director of CT Interfaith Housing and Human Services Corporation, will be the speaker on May 22. She will explain proposals, legislation, and issues, and will answer questions. All are welcome at either or both classes. For more information, call 672-6840.

Kindergarten Registration for the 1994-95 school year will be held on May 10, 11, and 12, from 9 to 11 a.m. Any child turning five on or before December 31, 1994, is eligible. Parents should call the CCS office at 672-6617 to schedule a time for their child to visit the kindergarten room and meet Mrs. Darleene Wadhams, the teacher. Please bring a copy of your child's birth certificate and official immunization record.

Hold That Rummage: Rummage sale items left too early on the Parish House steps have been a problem in the past. Please do not bring contributions to the Parish House before July 1. If absolutely necessary call Polly Calhoun (672-6205) or Priscilla Mauro (672-6969) to arrange delivery for emergency storing. No TVs or appliances will be accepted without prior approval from Thalia Scoville (672-6288) or Priscilla Mauro. In July donations of clean clothing, books, toys, linens, pictures, jewelry, nearly-new gifts, kitchen ware, furniture, etc., will be most appreciated. The annual sale will take place on July 30.

Story Hour: The Cornwall Library will host a weekly story hour for young children on Fridays at 10:30 a.m. This is a



cooperative event, with parents signing up to read and lead a short activity.

Plant Swap: A plant swap will be held again this year on Saturday, May 21, at 10 a.m. in the CCS parking lot. Bring along the perennials you don't need. Trade them with your friends. Go home with some loot in your boot. It's free, and it's fun. Call Jamie Monagan (672-4815) or Cheryl Evans (672-0094) with questions.

The Regional Economy will be the subject of a program presented by the Northwestern Connecticut Economic Development Committee at Mohawk Ski Lodge on Wednesday, May 4, at 7:30 p.m. Mount Auburn Associates will give an overview of the region's Economic Plan. The public is invited to learn about the use of grant funds and other matters.

Covered Bridge Dance: On Sunday, May 29, the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department will sponsor the third annual Bridge Dance at the West Cornwall Covered Bridge — rain or shine. Proceeds will fund equipment and training for the firefighters.

The Cactus Rose Band will play country music for dancing from 6 to 11 p.m. The band will be in a new location on Lower River Road, freeing both the bridge and the street for dancing. Food will be served beginning at 5 p.m., and will include hot roast beef sandwiches.

Parking on the west (Sharon) side of the river will be at the NU parking lot north of the bridge, and on the east side at CCS and the Firehouse area. Shuttle buses will run between the parking areas and the bridge throughout the evening.

Advance tickets are \$5 for adults (\$7 at the gate) and \$4 for youths (\$5 at the gate). Children under 10 admitted free, with an adult. For ticket information call 672-4373.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

ILLUSTRATIONS Pat Spaulding MAY EDITORS

Anne Baren Ginny & Bob Potter

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Anne Baren Ginny & Bob Potter

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