



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 7 : NUMBER 4 MAY 1997



The Towers Are Coming

About fifty people from area towns crowded into the meeting room at the Goshen Town Hall on Saturday, April 5, for a workshop on Regulating Telecommunications Facilities.

Larry Woods, of SPRINT PCS (Personal Communication Services), extolled the power and effectiveness of digital systems for business, personal, and municipal uses. With SPRINT portable phones, we can have clear and instant service to everywhere—with caller ID to boot. However, PCS will require more towers, monopoles, and a variety of antennas. To the concern that this system, like others, could become obsolete, Woods said, "It will not happen."

Ken Baldwin, attorney, reminded the group that federal law mandates such systems, and that any challenges would go to the FCC or federal courts. Towns may declare moratoria as they develop regulations, "but they can't stall," he said. Antennas may be placed on existing buildings, but the industry has no pre-emptive rights to claim private property. Furthermore, he said, concern about harmful effects of radiation is "no legal reason for denial."

Tom McGowan, planning consultant for area towns (including Cornwall) stressed the need for a cooperative "area approach" to

the issue. Planners must consider such matters as site selection, maintenance, tower size and uses, emissions testing, and the removal of structures and landscape restoration.

Joel Rinebold, of the Connecticut Siting Council, reported that "this is an industry we want to help." Representative Andrew Roraback shared details of sHB 6019, "An Act Reducing the Proliferation of Telecommunications Towers," which requires that the Council "balance the need for a facility and the environmental harm it will cause."

Cornwall's selectmen have been following the process closely. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway says, "It's hard to react when you don't know what you're reacting to." Questions about the number of communications companies competing for business (and for space on the towers) have no specific answers as yet. Health and the environment seem to be secondary issues. Regulation costs may be the town's burden. "It is," concludes Gordon, "a major land-use issue for the town and the region."

Selectman Earl Brecher worries that "competition may splinter the market and cause failures, with infrastructure left behind, like abandoned railroad track." He pointed out that siting towers on hills will require access roads, more utility poles, fencing, and the like. Who, then, would be re-

sponsible for maintenance and restoration if necessary?

Bill Lyon, chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, believes that the issue is too complex for towns to deal with. Establishing and maintaining such facilities, he says, should be done on a regional basis or by the state through the existing Siting Council.

Cornwallians should be aware of two coming meetings that deal with this issue, both on a regional and local basis. The first is an Environmental Tower-Siting Conference sponsored by the Berkshire-Litchfield Environmental Council and the Housatonic Valley Association to be held on May 10 in Lecture Hall 133 at HVRHS from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Then, on May 12, at 8 P.M. in the Town Hall, Cornwall's P&Z Commission is holding a hearing on an amendment to the town zoning regulations regarding wireless communication facilities.

—Ken Keskinen

Library/Town Talks, Cont'd

On April 3 the task force gathering information about space and costs for town offices and the Library heard the good news from Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Gold that the town has \$450,000 left from the school bonds fund. This money can only be used for capital projects and approval for use of the money would have to come at a town meet-

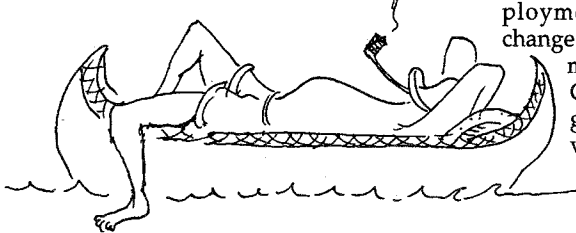
(continued on page 2)

MAY 1997

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 May Corn. Br. Nat'l Iron Bank Art Show Danielle Mailer Library/Town Offices Study Committee 4 P.M. Town Hall (p.1)	2 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	3 John Scott on Disarming Iraq 5 P.M. Cornwall Library
4 Afternoon of Jazz, Folk & Gospel 4:30 P.M. UCC (p.4) Music Series: Sandy & Caroline Paton 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4)	5 Bd. of Selectmen 8 P.M. Town Hall	6 Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. Town Office Inland Wet. 8 P.M. Town Hall	7 Cub Scout Parent Meeting 7 P.M. UCC Day Room All Wednesdays: Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Lutheran Church Stretch Exercise Class 5:30-6:30 P.M. Town Hall	8	9 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	10 Environmental Tower-Siting Conference 9 A.M.-1 P.M. Rm. 133 HVRHS Falls Village (p.1) Kent Singers 8 P.M. Trinity Church, Torrington (p.4)
11 MOTHER'S DAY Music Series: Anne Chamberlain 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4) Kent Singers 4 P.M. St. Andrew's Church, Kent (p.4)	12 Art Show, Ellen Moon and David Colbert 5/12-6/14 Library P&Z Meeting and Public Hearing on Telecommunications Towers 8 P.M. Town Hall (p.1)	13 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Dem. Town Committee 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Rep. Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS	14 Tai Chi Chuan Demonstration 6:30 P.M. CCS Gym CCS PTA 7 P.M. CCS Library	15 Deadline for June Chronicle copy Library/Town Offices Study Committee 4 P.M. Town Hall Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib.	16 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Coffee House for High Schoolers 7:30-10 P.M. UCC Parish House	17 Plant Swap 10 A.M. CCS Parking Lot (p.4) River Races 11 A.M. (p.3) Cornwall Association 4 P.M. Town Hall
18 Covered Bridge Slalom Race 9 A.M. (p.3) Music Series: Bill Lauf 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4) Cornwall Assoc. Clean-Up Cornwall Br. 1-4 P.M. (p.4)	19 Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Library	20 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall Public Information Session on W. Corn. RR Crossing 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	21	22 Preschoolers Celebrate Spring 10 A.M. Hughes Library (p.4)	23 Town Meeting on Budget 8 P.M. CCS Gym	24
25 Covered Bridge Dance 5 P.M. Food, 7 P.M. Music (p.4)	26 MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED Memorial Day Schedule (p.4)	27 ZBA 8 P.M. Town Office	28 Cornwall Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	29 Library/Town Offices Study Committee 4 P.M. Town Hall	30 MEMORIAL DAY	31

(continued from page 1)

ing. There are no federal or state funds available to the town to move, while there might be some for the Library. On April 17, when architect Norman Baier presented three remodeling and building schemes for the Library in its present location and one for a move to Monroe-Bodkin, he said that the Library might be eligible for up to one-third of the cost of construction from state library construction funds. Estimated costs for the four plans were \$541,200 to \$854,100 for staying in the present building and \$480,760 for the Monroe-Bodkin scheme. Jim Terrall, who had 1995 Town Hall cost estimates, and Baier both stressed that their figures at this stage were based on study plans, not construction and engineering design plans, and therefore should be used only for comparison purposes. Terrall said that, working with First Selectman Ridgway, he would refigure his Town Hall estimates, which would undoubtedly be higher after two years. Ridgway asked the Library trustees to select one of the three plans for staying in the present building before the next meeting on May 1 so that the committee can review four sets of plans and costs—two plans for each entity, one for staying and one for moving. —Anne Baren



Our Land—Who Owns It?

In a previous edition of the *Chronicle* (August 1995), we published a story about the town's inhabitants, past and present. Continuing our search for a definitive portrait of Cornwall, here is a look at the town's land and its landowners.

Cornwall contains 48.6 square miles (or 30,000 acres). The State of Connecticut owns the largest single share of that landscape, more than 6,000 acres scattered about the town. Not that the state has been greedy. In the 18th century, it sold land to encourage settlement. In this century, with farmers leaving, the state began to buy back the land (much of it at \$6 an acre), and to accept gifts of land. Since the 1920s the state has had to compete with people buying property for second (or retirement) homes. Although the state owns only 6.7 percent of all the land in the state, it owns 21.2 percent of Cornwall. However, Connecticut owns a smaller proportion of land than its neighboring states, and is ranked 50th in the nation in state-owned land per resident.

The Grand List, with its more than 1,200 entries, yields information about how parcel size relates to ownership. Fifty percent of landowners have parcels of five acres or less. Twenty percent have parcels of five to 15 acres. Ten percent have parcels of 15 to 30 acres. Twelve percent have 30- to 100-acre parcels, and three percent have parcels of

from 100 to 200 acres. In this last group is the Town of Cornwall, with slightly more than 100 acres.

There are larger parcels. Second place in acreage (after the state) goes to the Dark Entry Forest Association with its 700 acres. Rounding out the top seven are the Hollenbeck Club (500-plus acres), Litchfield Partners (470), Cream Hill Farm (430), Trinity Episcopal Center (428), and the Yelping Hill Association (395).

Of the approximately 125 landowners who have the larger parcels (30 acres or more), about 30 percent are non-residents. Another 20 percent are weekenders or summer folk. Fifty percent are full-time residents.

Land owned by private conservation groups totals slightly more than 260 acres. Another 5,000 acres are given tax relief by virtue of being registered as "forest land."

About 2,300 acres (7.5 percent of the town's acreage) are used for farming and related activities. The farms include seven livestock farms, four dairy farms, and two vegetable farms. Other acres registered as "farm land" are used for hay fields and pastures.

All things considered, it seems clear that Cornwall is mostly a rural-residential area, with space for a variety of land uses and employment opportunities without much change in our town's landscape. These are matters that the Planning and Zoning Commission, along with citizen groups, will continue to study as it develops the new Town Plan.

—Ken Keskinen and David Grossman

Storms 2, Cornwall 0

Our April 1 storm took everyone by surprise but not for long. Some 18 dedicated volunteers manned the fire stations for 24 hours straight. During the first night of the storm state trucks and CL&P repair crews started getting trapped early in the evening as trees fell and boxed them in. Meanwhile, the town road crew, Denny Frost, and Don Hedden, assisted by a group of volunteers, worked to clear town roads for fire trucks and the ambulance.

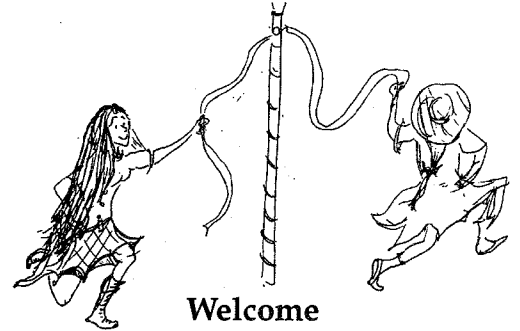
Red Cross cots were set up at the West Cornwall Firehouse, where two families and one individual camped out for the duration. On Wednesday, the day after the storm, about 80 elderly, sick, and single people were either called or visited, an effort led by Jayne Ridgway and Hunt Williams, Cornwall's director of emergency preparedness.

Just as it happened in the last big storm, everyone in town lost power. In fact there was a total loss of power in Cornwall, Goshen, and Sharon, due to a downed feeder line in a swamp in Litchfield.

The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department responded to four mutual-aid fire calls from Kent and one call (a chimney fire) in Cornwall Plains. The Kent calls were for situations Kent could not respond to because trees across Route 7 blocked their equipment.

Everyone is reminded to stock up on water, food, camp stoves, and lights so that we are prepared for future storms. But surely spring is here and...

WRONG! On April 18, right at our press deadline, we got dumped on again, and as before, with wet, heavy, branch-breaking snow and ice. Perhaps NOW we can say, surely spring is here and... —John Zinsser



Welcome

Eamon Kelan Murphy-Saunders to Karen Anne Murphy and Francis X. Saunders, Jr.

Emma Boulton Resor to Catherine Scott and James Resor

Ian Macdonell Ridgway to Jayne and Gordon Ridgway

Good-bye to Friends

Mary C. Beers

Martin Gold

Marion G. Kesl

Glorie Anne Kosciusko

Jose A. M. Prentice

Robert Redington

Congratulations

Brandy Burns to Kyle Caranci

Land Transfers

James D. Sedwick to James Waters, Jr., 16.8 acres on Whitcomb Hill Road for \$68,000.

Hellen Gazagnaire to Robin Freyberg, house and land at 110 Pierce Lane for \$200,000.

Janine M. H. Selendy to Philippe Z. Selendy and Jennifer M. Hooper, 10.3 acres on Town Street for \$125,000.

Albert M. Clark to State of Connecticut, 26.5 acres at Clark and Great Hill Roads for no consideration.

Hanky-Panky in the Hollow

Unlike the reputable reporters of today's *Cornwall Chronicle*, two respected early Cornwall historians, the Reverends Timothy



Stone and Edward C. Starr, found the story of Solomon Johnson of Cornwall Hollow a challenge to their strait-laced views of how Cornwall's important people should be presented.

Both Stone and Starr report that the last news of Solomon was when he was reported missing at the Battle of Bennington in 1777. Was he to be presumed a Revolutionary War hero of some kind?

Still another Cornwall Hollow historian wrote that Solomon left home to see a lawyer and never was seen again.

Solomon's wife Eleanor (of the Popple Swamp Road Pierces) eventually supposed him dead, and in 1788 became the second wife of Heman Swift, one of Washington's colonels, now a major general in the State Militia. Eleanor died two years after the wedding.

However, Solomon's mother never gave up on him. In her will, written in 1796, she left Solomon five pounds to be paid if he ever returned to Cornwall.

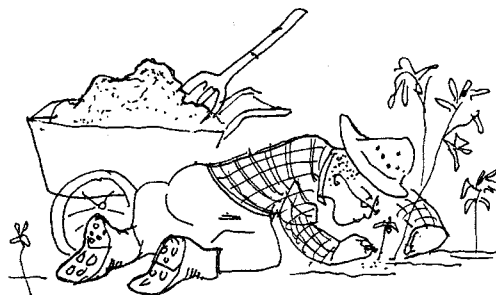
Sure enough, he returned. Litchfield Probate Court records reveal that Solomon collected the money, and vanished again.

So, why had he disappeared in the first place? Finally, the Johnson family records buried in the Historical Society revealed the scandal that caused Solomon to leave Cornwall in the 1770s and stay away so long:

"When the Baptists came to Cornwall Solomon attended their services. He soon became a Baptist preacher and a revival thronged his house, he neglected his business, debts accumulated, his wife felt overburdened, and it soon came out that he was breaking the 7th Commandment with one of his 'converts.'"

In short, long before Solomon collected his inheritance, all of Cornwall must have known he was still alive, and that he was an adulterer, his wife a bigamist, and the esteemed General Swift illegally married. However, from the beginning, the revisionist town chroniclers clammed up in order not to embarrass the general and the Pierce family.

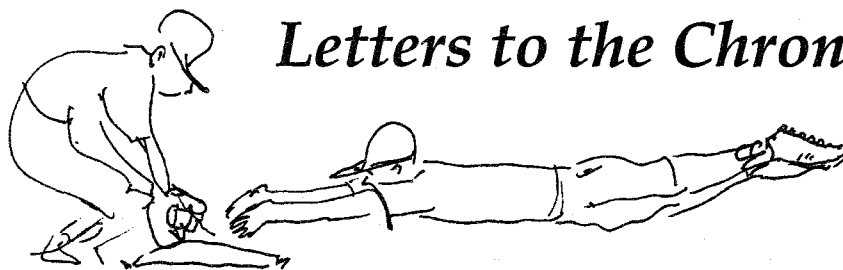
General Swift had the last historical word; he married twice more, before dying in 1814 in his house on Kent Road (now owned by the Housatonic Valley Association) just north of Swift's Bridge Road. —Michael R. Gannett



Gravel Mining: Dust Settles

A year ago the question seized hold of the agenda of the Planning & Zoning Commission like a stubborn bulldog: should gravel excavation be allowed in Cornwall?

Following P&Z's April 14 meeting, the question persists—even though the commis-



Letters to the Chronicle

THOSE TOWN TAXES

Newly obtained data from the state legislature's Office of Fiscal Analysis confirm something many Cornwall residents already know too well: town taxes can be a lot heavier burden for lower-income households.

The information comes from the answers given by a sample of nearly 200 Cornwall households to two Census questions: what was your income in 1989, and how much did you pay in real property taxes that year? The group that answered accounted for about one household in three among the town's year-round residents, a substantial sample.

What the data show is that for the half of all Cornwall households below the median income level (about \$39,000 in 1989) it took between three and 19 percent of total annual income to pay their property taxes, with most of these below-median households having to use at least four percent of their incomes to pay town taxes. By contrast, most resident households with above-median incomes only had to use two percent or less of their incomes to pay their property taxes.

The above figures are for 1989, but if you want to reckon where your own household stands, divide your 1996 real property tax bill by the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) figure on your 1996 Federal income tax return. Then, multiply the result by 100 to turn it into a percentage. If the result is two percent or less, you're in pretty well-off company. If it comes to more than five percent, you're probably right to be concerned about future town budgets.

—David A. Grossman

WATERY WORKOUTS

For exercise-minded Cornwallians who are not enthusiastic about jogging, walking, or running, a wonderful opportunity exists in our area. The Torrington branch of the YMCA, at 259 Prospect Street, offers an excellent variety (depending on one's fitness level) of Aquacize Classes for adults and seniors.

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings the classes are held in the large pool for adults and seniors. Tuesday and Thursday mornings classes are held in the small pool for seniors only.

One does not have to be a member of the YMCA to participate. There is a modest daily fee. For further information, call the YMCA at 489-3133.

—Kitty Ridgway

CORNWALL CHRONICLE, JR.

If indeed "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," then the Chronicle can proudly point to the Cornwall Chronicle, Jr. which was published once again by the CCS sixth grade.

There are good articles on the town budget, the population explosion at CCS, "Understanding Your Parents," sports, cartoons, a crossword puzzle (complete with answers), and a letters column, among other lively items. Congratulations, sixth grade, on a great job; and welcome, editors and reporters, to the Fourth Estate.

—John Zinsser

Editors' Note: While we welcome letters from our readers, the Chronicle, like most other publications, does not publish anonymous communications.

sion, voting on FSB Associates' latest gravel-mining application, unanimously granted its approval. At the same meeting, following a public hearing, the commission approved a nine-month moratorium on further industrial or commercial applications in the industrial/residential zone in which FSB Associates' property is located. The commissioners did that to permit the ultimate resolution of the gravel excavation issue in the revised Town Plan, due later this year.

As the decisions were taken, the meeting room, so often a scene of emotional confrontation, was quiet. Though many of the mining project's erstwhile opponents were there, their lawyers were absent. Perhaps the calm flowed from the logic of the commission's actions: as P&Z Chairman Bill Lyon said at the March meeting, "If we believe mining shouldn't be allowed in this zone, we can deal with that later. But our regulations right now do allow it."

—Charles Osborne

Events & Announcements

River Races: The 27th annual Housatonic Down-River Race will take place on Saturday, May 17, at 11 A.M. The race starts in Falls Village opposite the hydro plant and ends at Housatonic Meadows in Cornwall Bridge. Entry fees will benefit Project Troubador and the Housatonic Youth Service Bureau. Registration is at the start, 9-10:30 A.M., on the day of the race and is open to recreational and experienced racers alike. Most racers will be passing under the Covered Bridge between 11:45 and 12:30. For more information, call Bill Tingley, 364-5321.

The Covered Bridge Slalom Race will be held on Sunday, May 18, at 9 A.M. in West Cornwall. Advance registration is required. For information or to register, call Barbara Kingsborough at (914) 241-9138. Entry blanks are also available at Clarke Outdoors, 672-6365.

Covered Bridge Dance: On Sunday, May 25, rain or shine, the Fire Department will sponsor the sixth annual Bridge Dance in West Cornwall. Proceeds will fund equipment and training for firefighters.

The Silver Wings band will play from 7 to 11 P.M. Food will be served from 5 o'clock on through the evening.

Parking on the west (Sharon) side of the river will be at the Northeast Utilities lot north of the bridge, and on the east side at the Firehouse and CCS. Shuttle buses will run from parking areas to the festivities starting at 5. Please—no pets.

Advance tickets are \$5 for adults, \$4 for 10- to 16-year-olds (\$7 and \$5 at the gate). Kids under 10 are free with an adult. For more information call 672-4373.

Music for the Journey, a series of three tuneful events to be held at UCC, will take place on Sundays, May 4, May 11, and May 18 at 11:30 A.M. On May 4, folk musicians Sandy and Caroline Paton of Sharon will offer *Music that Reflects the Human Spirit*, a program of songs that reflect the lives and feelings of people throughout our history. On May 11, Cornwall's concert pianist Anne Chamberlain will share a program built around the favorite songs, composers, and piano music of some of her friends—pieces that "touch the spirit." The final event in the series will be *Heartfelt Songs from the Northeast* by guitarist and songwriter Bill Lauf, Jr., of Warren, who will sing a "musical travelogue through New England and eastern Canada." Each program will last about an hour and everyone is welcome. Coffee in the Day Room beforehand. For more information, call the church office, 672-6840.

The Kent Singers' Spring Concert celebrates 19th century romantic song, especially the work of Johannes Brahms. Performances will be Saturday, May 10, at 8 P.M. at Trinity Church, Prospect Street, Torrington; and on Sunday, May 11, at 4 P.M. at St. Andrew's Church in Kent. Advance tickets cost \$10 apiece (youngsters under 15 are free). Tickets at the door are \$12. To order tickets call Marie Prentice at 672-6261.

Mayday

In addition to being the first day of one of Cornwall's loveliest months, it's the international radiotelephone call for help, here adapted for *Chronicle* use to signal that our bank balance is gradually sinking. We need your constant support to keep us afloat, so please send in a check if you haven't done so recently.

Celebrate Spring, preschoolers and parents, at the Hughes Library on Thursday, May 22, at 10 A.M., with a sunflower planting project, story, and snacks.

The Cornwall Association spruces up for spring! Please join your friends and neighbors in a spring clean-up, May 18 from 1 to 4 P.M. in Cornwall Bridge. Or do your own roadside and meet us at 4 for refreshments and trashy tales. For more info call Deirdre Fischer 672-2255.

Memorial Day Events will begin at 9:15 A.M., May 26, with a traditional observance at the North Cornwall Cemetery led by Charles Gold. Participants often bring flowers to decorate veterans' graves.

At 10 A.M. the Seamen's Memorial Service will take place at the Covered Bridge.

The annual parade and ceremony on the Village Green will begin at 11 A.M.

The parade will form at 10:30 on Hubbard Field. In case of rain, the program will be held in the CCS gym.

Directly following the ceremony, the Memorial Day Carnival will be held on the grounds of the United Church of Christ. Hosted by UCC and the Cornwall Child Center, the carnival will offer games, contests, entertainment, a full lunch and other edible treats.

From 10 A.M. until 1:30 P.M. the Cornwall Historical Society on Pine Street will feature an exhibit of posters and programs for Cornwall entertainment and educational events (pre-TV and pre-movies). This exhibit will continue through June. The Society is open on Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. and Tuesdays from 9:30 A.M. to noon.

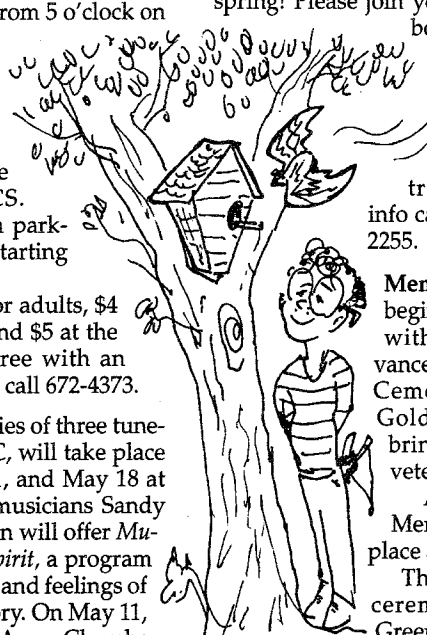
Railroad Crossing: On May 20, at 7:30 P.M. there will be a public information session at the Town Hall at which the Department of Transportation will explain its plans to upgrade the railroad crossing in West Cornwall by installing lights and safety bars.

Kenniston Chosen: The Republican Town Committee has picked Janna Kenniston as Cornwall's student representative in Washington, where she will participate in a week-long internship sponsored by Rep. Nancy Johnson.

Plant Swap: Swap 'til you drop on Saturday, May 17, at 10 A.M. in the CCS parking lot. Bring your cast-off campanulas and crowded chrysanthemums—trade them with your friends. For information call 672-0094.

An Afternoon of Jazz, Folk and Gospel will be presented at UCC on Sunday, May 4, at 4:30 P.M. On the program will be the Peter McEachern-Mario Pavone Ensemble playing jazz, Bill Lauf singing folk music accompanied by guitar, and the Austin Sisters of Philadelphia singing gospel. The concert will benefit the La Casa Project for building a house in the impoverished area of Mexico bordering California. Suggested donation for the concert is \$12 for adults, \$5 for children under 12. For more information, call Jim Whiteside, 672-6018.

The Opukaha'ia (Obookiah) Connection: Cornwallians who would like an update on the historical ties between our town and Henry Opukaha'ia's descendants in Hawaii are invited to drop in at the UCC vestibule to see a display of photos and other materials describing a recent visit by Robert and Helen Butler (Steve's parents) with Opukaha'ia's relatives in Kahikolu, Hawaii. Included are lovely pictures of Opukaha'ia's grave near the ocean and an interesting account of the warm reception given the Butlers at the Congregational Church in Kahikolu. Opukaha'ia's descendants there asked the Butlers to "pass on to Cornwall their sincere thanks for all that Cornwall has done for them."



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

ILLUSTRATIONS Adam Van Doren

MAY EDITORS

Ken & Peg Keskinen John & Anne Zinsser

JUNE EDITORS

Carla Bigelow George Kittle

DIRECTORS:

Tom Bevans PRESIDENT

Spencer Klaw VICE PRESIDENT • Barbara Klaw PUBLISHER

Edward Ferman SECRETARY • Robert Beers TREASURER

Hendon Clubb • Cheryl Evans

Audrey Ferman • Charles Osborne

Yes, I want the Chronicle to continue.
Here is my tax-deductible contribution of: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/St/Zip _____

Mail the Chronicle to the out-of-town address above: \$10.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE, INC.
143 CREAM HILL ROAD, WEST CORNWALL, CT 06796
E-MAIL: spencebarb@li.com
FAX: (860) 672-2643

Bulk Rate
Car-Rt Sort
U.S. Postage
PAID
West Cornwall, CT
Permit No. 6

CORNWALL RESIDENT