

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 2: NUMBER 6 JULY 1992



Memorial Day Weekend

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— Phil Hart

JULY 1992

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		 NM 7 FQ 14 FM 22 LQ 29	1	2	3	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY <i>July 4 Celebration (p.4)</i>
<i>A Habitat for Humanity major fund-raising event will be a tag sale on August 1 at St. Mary's Church. Judy Gafney (435-2173) will arrange to pick up donations.</i>	5 Agricultural Advisory Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse	6 Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall	7 Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall*	8	9	10 11 Poetry reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner
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19	20 Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall	21 Dem. Town Comm. 7:30 pm Town Hall 8pm caucus (p.4)	22 Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall 8pm caucus (p.4)	23 <i>Corn. Library Assoc. annual meeting Lib. Building 4pm</i>	24 Deadline for mailing voter status cards (p.4)	25 Rummage Sale UCC* 9am-2pm (p.4)
26	27 Z.B. of Appeals 8pm Town Hall* <i>Post-Rummage bag sale, 9-12 UCC* (p.4)</i>	28	29	30 Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall Architect's plans will be presented	31 Town Tax Deadline	<i>August 1 Habitat Tag Sale (see above) 10-4 St. Mary's Church Lakeville</i>

Selectmen's Shooting Ordinance

Prompted by the recent fire at the John Nuese place, the selectmen are working on a town ordinance regulating non-commercial shooting. Commercial firing ranges are already banned by zoning law. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway outlined the proposal being discussed with town counsel: The use of automatic or semi-automatic weapons and all activities other than hunting involving more than six people with non-automatic weapons would require a permit. The application would include a map and the name of a safety officer. Only 24 people could participate, and the burn official's approval and the landowner's presence are required. A town official would be allowed to enter the property, empowered to terminate the activity if the permit conditions were being violated.

Nuese says he has cancelled two war reenactments planned for this summer. The selectmen have asked Nuese to abide by the proposed ordinance pending its passage at a town meeting.

The selectmen thanked Bill and Jean Vitalis for a quilt representing the Cathedral Pines which the Vitalises bought at the Child Center fund raiser and gave to the town.

A five-year plan for the Mohawk Ski Area (available at the Town Hall) was reviewed by Cornwall's selectmen and 30 citizens. DEP sent representatives to hear comments. Sam Waterston, assured that light hoods will be tested this winter, expressed support and hope for less glare.

A two-week chip-sealing (crack-sealing) program will start July 20. Roads will be Great Hill, Wright Hill, Dibble Hill, Cream Hill, Rattlesnake, and Pierce Lane.

— *Hendon Chub & Scoville Soule*

June Fifth Town Meeting

What promised to be a short, routine special town meeting with small attendance was instead one with a nearly full house.

Marie Prentice presented a resolution calling for the town to urge Congress to reduce the military budget by 50% with the savings to be spent for human needs. The resolution passed with only two dissenting votes.

Approval of budget transfers brought up the sawmill controversy again with a motion to transfer \$2000 from general funds to defend the town in the court suit against P&Z. One citizen, Lois Redington, said that the town should not have to pay this bill; rather, those who had sought the zoning change should do so. Toby Cole added that P&Z had played "fast and loose" with the zoning regulations. Karen Stevens stated

that the P&Z ruling was in accord with the 1987 agreement between the Town Planner and P&Z to the effect that consideration always be given the needs of the citizens in relation to traditional Cornwall characteristics and occupations.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway said that the essence of democracy is a town's ability to control its own affairs rather than resort to courts and lawyers, and to support, even if it meant raising taxes, the decisions of its elected officials who make the best decisions they can. This brought a round of applause. The motion was called and approved by a large majority.

Also passed were an amended 911 ordinance that would insure the visibility of house identification numbers, and a motion to authorize the Board of Selectmen to negotiate with the Child Center a 99-year lease of three acres of Gannett Park for building a permanent home for the Center. Final approval of such a lease would be subject to town vote.

— *Jack Forster*



Housatonic River: Questions

Is the river still polluted with PCBs? Yes, said a G.E. engineer from the plant that dumped the stuff into our river. G.E. remediation research is under way. River toxicity may be declining, and sunfish and perch are probably safe enough to eat, but don't eat anything else from the river. G.E. envisions bacterial critters eating the PCBs — eventually.

Did workers spill paint and rust debris into the river last October during one of many maintenance safaris into the covered bridge? Allan Eaton of West Cornwall reported broken catchment tarps which may have contained toxic waste. A state engineer assured the commission that a vacuum truck had removed the debris prior to the break, and the debris was not hazardous. Maybe so, but please report all river safety and quality problems.

Does the Housatonic River Commission discuss visual impact on the river corridor? Yes. This delicate consideration is part of the river protection. The HRC advises P&Zs when asked. Many projects, however, while visually severe in river impact, are within P&Z regulations. A case in point is the Route 7 ridgeline development on the Salisbury-Sharon town lines. There have been many complaints about a building so environmentally insensitive to the river and surroundings. The HRC was not asked for an opinion when, perhaps, it should have been. Sharon P&Z, in a terse letter to HRC, said this house met all requirements. The debate on this continues.

— *Phil Hart*

CHC Lottery Date Changed

The CHC board decided to change the projected time of the parcel lottery from Au-

gust 15 to September 18 at 8 p.m. at the Town Hall. Those interested in the lottery may get information from the Selectmen's office or from Ken Keskinen (672-6486).

Habitat has accepted the CHC's gift of property on Route 7, and site work has begun. Questions about applying for or working on a house may be directed to 435-4747 or to Ella Clark at 672-4817.

— *Ken Keskinen*



Congratulations

Marcia Shaw to Harold Straube
Megan McGrath to Matthew Hogson

Goodbye to Friends

Rose Algrant Flora Brown

Land Transfers

Janet Ordway and Alan Eddy to Robert T. Beers, house and 6 acres on Cream Hill Rd.

Robert T. Beers to Janet Ordway, land on Cream Hill Rd.

Harvey Offenhartz to James and Geraldine Woodruff, house on Warren Hill Rd.

Gerard and Patricia Smith to Ira B. Shapiro and Jacqueline Dedell, house and buildings and 148 acres on College St.

Marion E. Vogel to Audrey Ferman, house, buildings and 12 acres on Cream Hill Rd.

P&Z Work

P&Z held a hearing on four proposed amendments to the regulations. Three were accepted: required — notice to neighbors for a special permit; not permitted — nuclear use, storage, or disposal; revised — changes in non-conforming use regulations.

However, the fourth amendment, a rewrite for clarification of the currently required standards for any special permit use, came under sharp criticism from three citizens. The commission voted to review the amendment with both consultant and attorney.

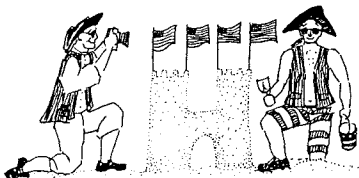
Applications from Ed Ferman for a home occupation special permit will be heard before the July meeting, and from the CHC for an affordable lot on Town Street at a hearing on Aug. 3.

On the plus side, the CCS playground plans met wholehearted approval.

— *Ginny Potter*

Marvelwood Mulls Moves

In order to meet its growing economic needs, Marvelwood School is seeking to expand its operations. "We need to have 25 more students in our school and we need better facilities in order to be competitive



and viable," reported Mark Johnson, headmaster. Staying in Cornwall has limitations imposed by the town plan, building codes, and septic system requirements. Furthermore, Johnson added, the needs of the town and those of the school's neighbors are always important factors in the school's long-range planning.

Therefore, one option being studied by a committee headed by Dean Hugh Cheney is to explore how the school might expand in Cornwall by buying more homes for dormitories and by acquiring buildings, such as the Calhoun barn on Jewell Street. The matter of tax revenues and the impact of such acquisitions on the quality of life in the community are also being considered. The committee is also studying how the school might share buildings with the town, including the Rumsey Gym and any future town hall.

Another option being studied is that of moving the school to a new site. One site under consideration is the Kent School for Girls campus, which is available for purchase. Such a move, Johnson said, would not only provide living space for 125 students, but would also permit the kind of program enrichment the school needs.

The final decision, said Hugh Cheney, must make certain that the tone of the school and its mission remain unchanged, a mission that depends strongly on having a small school in a supportive family/community environment.

"We like this town," said Mark Johnson. "We'd like to stay here forever. But we've been in this financial limbo too long, and we need to come to a decision soon." That decision is planned for July.

—Ken Keskinen

Hodgman Photographs at Library

The real subject of Charles Hodgman's photographic explorations in California and in Cornwall is the sculpture created by the forces of water and weather — patterns of solidified ambiguity. No Sierra Club calendar art this. Mr. Hodgman's images are well served by black and white. (Until July 11.)

—Brigitte Hanf

Fire Department News

The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department held its annual elections on May 27. The officers are Ronald Laigle Jr., chief; Rick Stone, assistant chief; Gary Hepprich, captain Cornwall Bridge; Ronald Laigle, captain West Cornwall; Peter Russ, captain ambulance squad; Jim Vanicky, lieutenant Cornwall Bridge; Skip Lush, lieutenant



Letters to the Chronicle



A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Finally I get it; finally it makes sense to me. I had it wrong — though I felt the opposition in the sawmill issue was extreme, I did feel that a local old-time resident got a variance that a relative newcomer like me might not have gotten.

After Town Meeting last Friday (June 5), I got a new perspective.

In '86, a plan for the future of Cornwall was made — the Town Plan. In it there are many recommendations for the town to change in ways that will enable it to retain its rural quality as well as remain a viable place to live and work. Among other recommendations, more should be done, it suggests, to provide opportunities for Cornwall citizens to have home-based enterprises.

As I understand it, as suggestions or applications come up, P&Z looks at the Town Plan recommendations and, bit by bit, strives to accommodate the plan. It seems to me that the viability of Cornwall now and in the future depends on our working toward those recommendations.

In the sawmill case, P&Z did not give a variance. Instead, it changed the regulations, carefully working out a balance, a ratio of noise and distance, that could be applied in all cases and in all neighborhoods. It was a move for the well-being of Cornwall.

— Anne Zinsser

SENATEMOBILE

I stopped in at Senator Joe Lieberman's mobile office, which had been parked in front of Jerry Blakey's shop for two Thursdays in June.

The office is a 28-foot Ford Arrow, slightly smaller than our town hall, but more posh, with couches, fridge, photocopier and cellular phone (which didn't work in Cornwall; they had to use Jerry's phone). The office is leased out of their office budget and is paid for by taxpayers.

West Cornwall; Joan Pelletier, lieutenant ambulance squad; Phil Starr, engineer Cornwall Bridge; Gene Ingvertsen, engineer West Cornwall; Dave Becker, president; Dan Lazar, vice president; Joan Pelletier, treasurer; June Starr, secretary.

The Fire Department has raised half of the \$80,000 needed for the new ambulance and hopes to raise the rest by the end of the year. The successful bridge dance may become an annual CVFD event. Thanks for your support.

— Gary Heaney

HVRHS Board Policies

A tougher policy on attendance was adopted by the Board and will be in effect starting this fall. Ten unexcused absences in a single semester will be cause for loss of credit for a given course: a grade will be given, but no credit. The definition of an excused absence has also been clarified and tightened.

Stacey Barry, a young woman from the senator's Hartford office, told me that the office had been on the road for more than two years and that Cornwall was pretty much its last stop, which figures. The office was fairly easy to drive, she said, and had only suffered one accident, skidding on an icy road and ending up in a front yard in Roxbury.

She said that about 25 Cornwall residents had come by, only one with a problem (and no small one; the fellow was building a dam and having trouble with the Army Corps of Engineers). The rest had come in to offer opinions, including our first selectman, who told her that he thought the Seawolf submarine should be scrapped. These opinions are carefully registered and sent to Washington.

I seconded the notion of sinking the Seawolf and left, thinking that I wasn't particularly taken by the idea of this office. Conventional wisdom is that Congressmen are out of touch with their constituents. But I think the problem is that they are too much in touch, and I saw the van as another effort to sniff the wind of popular opinion in order to enable the senator to get on with the main business of politicians, which is getting reelected.

Tell me I'm too cynical. — Ed Ferman

TO CORNWALL FRIENDS

We would like to invite you to join us for the third annual Tornado Party at our home at 3 Pine St. on July 11, from 4 p.m. till —?

We look forward to seeing our friends from all the Cornwalls. We will supply beverages and hot dogs. Please bring a dish to share if you wish. — Jerry and Pat Blakey

DUPLICATE, ANYONE?

If anyone is interested in joining in a Cornwall duplicate bridge group, please call Judy Gates (672-6568), Bob Terrall (364-5942), Clif Read (672-6595), or

— Jim Newman (672-6380)

A policy and procedures guide with regard to sexual harassment was introduced for the board's consideration. There was no precipitating incident (unless you count Anita and Clarence).

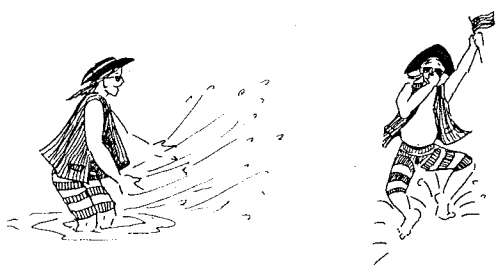
Beth Perkins of Falls Village asked the board to adopt a policy that students have the right to choose not to participate in animal dissections. This is already the unwritten policy of the science department, and the Board recommended that students be notified of their option through the Student Handbook and the course description guide.

— Becky Williams

Black Bear Looks for Home

A black bear recently sighted in Cornwall is thought to be searching for an affordable cave where he can set up his berry business. (Reactions to this in the August issue.)

— Scoville Soule





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