

# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 2: NUMBER 4 MAY 1992



## Selectmen Survive Angry April

April may have indeed been the cruelest month for three stalwart selectmen who found themselves facing at least three problems not of their own making. State support is slashed — at the same time that the state's other hand threatens to take about \$1,000,000 off the tax rolls by its Mohawk, Coltsfoot, and other land purchases. Summit National Bank goes belly up. And Haystack Cablevision renews its stand that the town is an unprofitable wasteland not worth servicing.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway reacted to what he called the state's "double whammy" with a mixture of surprise and outrage. Noting that Cornwall received the fourth largest percentage cut in educational funding of any Connecticut city or town — down to a mere \$1,814 — he stated that the town's ability to make up for the loss can only be impaired by continuing state takeovers of Cornwall land. "At a time of economic stringency," he asked, "when the state can afford only minimal maintenance at Mohawk, what sense does it make for them to add to a burden they can't even shoulder now?" The State now owns over 21% of Cornwall, with a resulting annual tax loss of about

\$150,000. Ridgway has asked for increased consultation with state officials — "so at least we know what they plan to do." It may well be that the state purchases are part of a systematic, ongoing, and even prepaid program of land acquisition to benefit state residents. For Cornwall residents, however, recent and proposed sales will mean an additional annual loss of about \$10,000 at present tax rates.

On May 9, 1991, the town purchased a \$200,000 one-year certificate of deposit from Summit National Bank in Torrington. Eleven months later, in early April 1992, banking regulators closed Summit in a takeover by American Bank of Connecticut. Deposits over \$100,000 are technically insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. The good news is that a special state law guarantees \$203,125 in May. The bad news is that the town might lose part of \$7,697, that portion of accumulated interest that was not collateralized as Cornwall money by Summit. Town Treasurer Pat Bramley will file a claim with the FDIC as the town waits in line with the bank's other creditors. The State Banking Commissioner has assured Bramley that between 60% and 100% of the \$7,697 should be recovered, but the process might take two years.

At its April 13 meeting, the Board of Selectmen voted to request the Department of Public Utility Control to make service to Cornwall a requirement for continuation of Haystack Cablevision's franchise to serve this part of the state. Since it acquired the franchise in 1979, Haystack has held that Cornwall is too sparsely settled to make service economically viable. As a result, the town is now thought to be the only one in the state with no TV cable. A recently released draft decision by the DPUC would require Haystack to bring cable to roads with at least 15 houses per mile, at the same time installing at least 15 miles of cable a year until the town is adequately wired. Meanwhile, Haystack is reportedly looking for a buyer for the Cornwall-Goshen part of its franchise. The final DPUC decision is due by early June. Oral arguments on the matter will be heard at the agency's headquarters in New Britain at 10 a.m. on May 12.

Despite these problems, however, the town's business goes on. On April 9 a lightly attended town meeting approved spending \$107,892 in accumulated state aid for road repairs. According to Ridgway, results will soon be visible on Great Hill, Dibble Hill, and other roads. The selectmen

(continued on page 2)

## MAY 1992

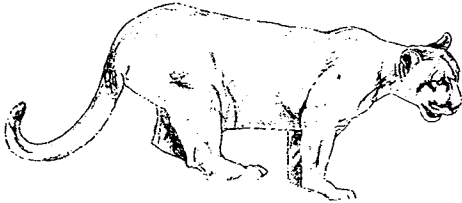
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>May 24 Merchants' Association "Covered Bridge Day" West Cornwall, all day Covered Bridge dance 7-11pm</p> <p>MEMORIAL EVENTS, May 25. For details see page 4. Observance at North Cornwall Cemetery 9:15am Seamen's Memorial Service at Covered Bridge 10am Parade and ceremony on the green 11am Carnival UCC† 12-3pm</p>			 <p>NM 2 FQ 9 FM 16 LQ 24</p>		1	2
<p>3 Agri. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse Piano concert A. Chamberlain, K. Miller 5pm Cornubia Hall Early Life Transitions, 11:15 UCC† (p.4)</p>	<p>4  Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall Reg. I Annual Mtg. 7:30 Rm. 133 HVRHS Nuclear-free Zone St. Peter's 7:30pm</p>	<p>5 Park &amp; Rec. 7:30pm Town Off. Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall Reg. I Referendum 12-8pm Town Hall</p>	<p>6 West Cornwall Merchants' Assoc. 3pm Freshfields</p>	7	8 Annual Budget & Town Meeting 8pm CCS	9 Poetry reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner
<p>10 <b>MOTHERS' DAY</b> Love &amp; Intimacy 11:15pm UCC† (p.4)</p> 	<p>11  Plan. &amp; Zoning 8pm Town Hall  8pm Town Hall S. Scott Zuckerman paintings, Corn. Lib.</p>	<p>12 Dem. Town Comm. 8:00pm Town Hall Hous. Riv. Comm. CCS Lib. 7:30pm</p>	<p>13 Republican Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall</p>	<p>14 Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC†</p>	15	16 <b>ARMED FORCES DAY</b> 
<p>17 Raising Responsible Children, 11:15am UCC† (p.4)</p>	<p>18  8pm Town Hall Z.B. of Appeals 8pm Town Hall* HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm HS Library Nuclear-free Zone St. Peter's 7:30pm</p>	19	20	<p>21 Bd. of Ed. CCS Lib. 4:30pm Bd. of Finance 7:30pm Town Hall</p>	22 Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall	23 Adult basket-weaving 10-3, Firehouse (p.4)
<p>24 See above for events</p>	<p>25 <b>MEMORIAL DAY</b> See above for events</p>	<p>26  Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall</p>	<p>27 Fred Astaire documentary, John Miller's "The Fred Astaire Songbook" CCS Lib. 8pm</p>	<p>28 PTO 7pm CCS (p.2)</p>	29	30
<p>31 Living Singly 11:15, UCC† (p.4)</p>						

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

(continued from page 1)  
are also actively following up their invitation to the Cornwall Child Center to consider building a facility on Gannett Park land. Denny Frost's equipment has bitten into the site; he pronounces it eminently buildable. A town meeting will be scheduled in the near future to answer citizen questions and concerns. If the CCC can put the money together, the idea is that the town would grant them free use of the land in some sort of long-term lease or perpetual easement.  
— Bob Potter

### The Bottom Lion

A mountain lion (ours?) was video photoed near Newtown!  
— Tom Bevans



### P & Z — Mostly Planning

There being virtually no old or new zoning business, members took meeting time to review planning concerns involving amendments to the regulations. Simple clarifications of the special permit requirements will be put to public hearing in June. More complex issues, such as home-based enterprises and water resources protection, will be discussed at planning meetings with consultant Tom McGowan and will probably come up for hearing in the summer.  
— Ginny Potter

### Making the Best of the Budget

"Life goes on." That was the apparent sense of the Board of Finance on April 2 when, chin up, it unanimously proposed a 1992-93 town budget that, with later adjustments, called for a tax increase of about 12%. The Board's stoic optimism rested — with varying degrees of comfort — on the contrast between that increase, boosting the mill rate 3 mills from the current 28.25, and a more dire earlier assessment calling for an increase of 15% (4.5 mills).

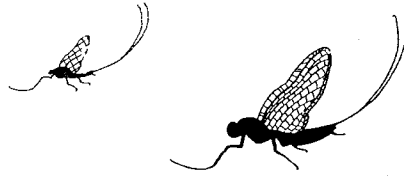
The budgetary balance sheet proposed by the Board listed expenditures of \$3,523,190. On the income side, it was recommended that \$962,897 in anticipated non-tax revenues be added to expected tax receipts of \$2,560,293.

Some 75 people attended a hearing on April 24. The general mood was frustration over the upward trend in taxes and expenditures — particularly in the area of education. The budget is to be put to a town-wide vote on May 8.

Current spending estimates for the Boards of Education and Selectmen are 6.7% and 14% higher, respectively, than their 1991-92 budgets. The 12% tax increase was made possible by pumping some of the town's savings into the current budget — to the tune \$517,000. Though drawing

down Cornwall's reserve funds worried some Finance Board members, most agreed that eventual depletion of such resources was the normal condition of most Connecticut towns; in any case, Cornwall's stated policy is to maintain a reserve equal to 10% of expenditures — to deal, for example, with tornadoes. Life goes on.

— Charles Osborne



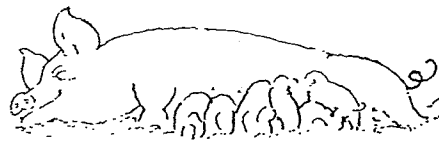
### Rumsey Hall & Gym

On April 10 the committee met with architect Ken MacLean who gave an update on his work. He has completed an amended town office space-needs program and has written to the Historic Commission for answers on two points: 1) Is Rumsey Hall's listing legitimate? and 2) What action will the state take if the town demolishes the building?

We invite all to attend our May 22 meeting in the Town Hall at 7:30 when Ken MacLean will discuss what needs to be done, and how much it will cost, to bring the Rumsey Gym up to code. The MBC recommends that the gym be used as a civic center of the town — for activities as well as for meetings, thereby making room for library expansion in the present town hall building.  
— Rita Quinn

### Cornwall Board of Education

The Board of Education approved the proposed \$1,710,627 budget for 1992-93. All three regional budgets came in under their original estimates, saving CCS's computer, art, and music programs from being cut. The board also approved a teacher retirement-incentive package, hoping to further reduce costs to the town. A positive response to the retirement offer from any eligible teacher will not be known until May 1.  
— Lynn Cheney



### Parent-Teacher Organization

The PTO playground fund is nearing the \$10,000 matching fund mark, due to the success of the *Bye Bye Birdie* benefit performance, the spaghetti dinner and raffle, the book fair, the sale of T-shirts, flowers, and baked goods, and donations! Many thanks to all who contributed to these events. We still are accepting donations!

The PTO meets at 7 p.m. every fourth Thursday at the school. Check the town bulletin boards to find out about our activities, and come join us. Our purpose is not just fund-raising.  
— Rita Quinn

### Zoners Attend Seminar

On April 11 six members from the Planning and Zoning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals spent an informative six hours listening to members of the Connecticut Bar Association's section on P&Z law.

Doc Simont, Philla Osborne, Norma Lake, Frank Kesl, Sr., Hunt Williams, Don Bardot, and Lori Welles learned about many topics: the powers and duties of land use boards, conflict of interest and predisposition, recent case laws, an update on the state Affordable Housing Act, and municipal and personal liability in the zoning and planning process.

This was the seventh year for the CBA program and, with over 200 in attendance, another success. From the name tags one could tell that many towns and cities were represented. Included in the cost of the seminar was a book entitled *Connecticut Planning and Zoning Law*, published by the CBA. We hope that we can purchase additional copies for all P&Z and ZBA members, as well as a Town Office copy for public use. The book is clearly written and informative, a great way to better understand the positions boards and individuals must take to make our planning and zoning processes fair and in accord with current state law.  
— Lori Welles

### HVRHS Senior Tops in State

The *Chronicle* may have erred in not reporting the news, but Heather Kochman erred not an inch in garnering the all-state gold medal in shot-put competition at a high school tourney in early March. Days later the HVRHS senior placed fourth in a New England match.

Heather has heaved the eight-pound projectile over 37 feet. (Just for fun, find the right round rock and do some backyard experimenting.) She now has a \$2,000 grant from Idaho State University. Miss Kochman, the town salutes you!

— Bob Potter

### Land Transfers

Kathleen McGusty Agate to Mark and Marilyn Stewart, lot and building (formerly Children's Cottage).

Litchfield Equities Group to State of Connecticut, 100.306 acres on Clark Rd.

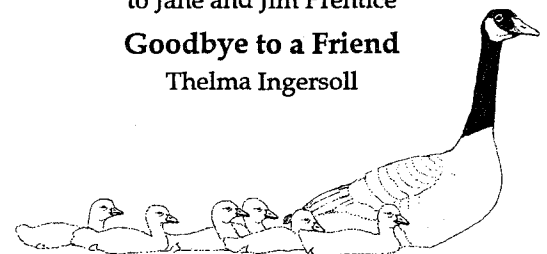
James M. and Maureen E. Hawes to Robert S., Jr., and Sally W. Cook, house and 2 acres on Great Hollow Rd.

### Welcome

Helen Spring Prentice to Jane and Jim Prentice

### Goodbye to a Friend

Thelma Ingersoll



## Region I Report

A handful of citizens, outnumbered two to one by board members and staff, attended a public hearing about the \$6.476 million Region I budget proposal on Monday, April 20. With the exception of a number of queries from Mr. William D'Alton of Kent (why are there no tennis courts or swimming pool, and didn't \$20,000 seem like quite a lot to spend on curriculum development?), there were virtually no questions and absolutely no comments. The whole process took less than half an hour.

The proposed budget, made up of three parts (RSSC, Pupil Services, and HVRHS), is, overall, 3.34% less than last year's total. Personnel cuts, as well as all-around belt tightening, make up the bulk of the difference. Modest increases in revenues and grants also add to the net cost decrease. The proposal goes to a public referendum May 5.

— Becky Williams

## Moon Masks

Enter the carnival that Ellen Moon has created at the Cornwall Free Library, and you'll find a whole spectrum of human, subhuman, superhuman, animal, worldly and unworldly characters. From such flotsam and jetsam as shells, beads, fishbones, corals, wood shavings, and wires, Ellen has fashioned the faces of the sublime and the grotesque, of humor and horror, of the familiar and the peculiar.

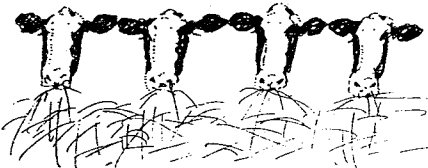
A headhunter's trophy board displays a collection of cut paper creatures. There are animal spirits in porcelain and a bejeweled Queen Bee, the rotted molars of Death, the vacuous flushed features of Bacchus. Don't miss it. It closes May 9.

— Brigitte Hanf

## P & Z Study for AAC

At the request of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, the P&Z Commission will study the state's Definition of Agriculture and also The Right to Farm Act. To give legal protection to local agriculture, these or modified versions will need to be incorporated into town regulations.

— Cilla Mauro



## Washington Interns Chosen

The Republican Town Committee will be sending Jennifer Hurlburt and Dean Potter to Washington, D.C., this summer for a week of intensive study of government operations. Over the years about 40 Cornwall students, always chosen without regard for party affiliation, have participated in the Washington Intern Program. The Committee is raising money to support the program through its bake and flower sales.

— Jack Forster



## VOTE "YES" MAY 5

To the taxpayers and voters of Cornwall: I urge you to vote in favor of accepting the Region I Budget on May 5. The Region I Board of Education has worked hard to come to you with a net budget that represents an overall decrease from last year's spending, while maintaining our commitment to educational programs, personnel, and, most of all, our students. Thank you for your support.

— Becky Williams

## FARM MEMORIES

Last summer Miss Harriet Clark reminded me that there is no publication specific to agriculture in Cornwall. Let's do something about it. Everyone is invited to search their memories, attics, photo albums, old letters and papers for any kind of material that would add interest to such a project. If you're interested, please get in touch with me at 672-6969.

— Cilla Mauro

## BACK THE BUDGET

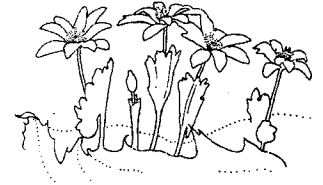
I am going to vote in favor of the budget on May 8. Nobody likes a tax rise of 3.75 mills. Unfortunately, the rise is more than accounted for by the loss of \$100,000 in state aid and an unavoidable increase of \$212,000 in things like our share of the high school budget and recycling and waste disposal costs, which between them add 3.8 mills.

In February the Board of Education and the selectmen came in with very tight budget proposals, but the Board of Finance sent them back for sharp cuts. In order to keep the mill rate increase down, the Board of Finance also decided to pay for all major capital items from capital reserve funds and to take \$155,000 from the general surplus for the town's operating expenses.

If the voters decide that the mill rate is too high, it will be cut. But it is important to look at where the cuts would come from. I doubt that the Board of Finance is prepared to take anything more from the general surplus, and deleting capital items would have no effect on the mill rate because the money would have to go back into our capital reserves and just sit there. So any cuts in the mill rate would have to come from the proposed operating budgets. The Board of Education has already said that it could save \$66,000 by eliminating all art and after-school sports, cutting back on music and physical education, abandoning the proposed improvement of math teaching, ending the computer program, and closing the school library; but the effect of all these cuts together would be only eight-tenths of a mill.

The selectmen have not spelled out what they would cut, but if, for example, they eliminated the swim program and the rest of the

## Letters to the Chronicle



Park and Rec budget, cut out the town's contributions to the Child Center and the Library, and axed the proposed spending on life support equipment for the fire department, they could save \$40,000 or about half a mill. I personally think we would be paying too high a price if we cut like this.

I've tried to cram a lot into a short letter. If anyone would like to talk to me about anything I've said, I hope they'll give me a call at 672-6607.

— Hendon Chubb

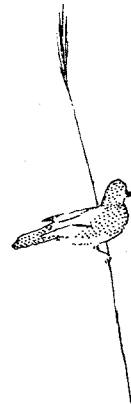
## WHAT'S IN A NAME? A LOT!

Call it "Cornwall Plain" or (if necessary) almost anything else, but not plain "Cornwall," or "Cornwall Village," names designed to confuse nearly anyone.

Don't we all live in Cornwall, but only a small portion in Cornwall (Plain, or Village)? Before that place had a post office it was called "South Cornwall," which served just fine till somebody in Washington, D.C. created this problem. Later, Connecticut's DOT sought to cure the confusion, by putting up signs pointing to "Cornwall Village"; but this is no help either, because Cornwall has several villages.

"Cornwall Plain" — an old, respectable, descriptive and distinctive name — serves again very well. Hurray for that sign painter!

— Michael Gannett



Bravo! the Chronicle! Not infrequently comical, tragical, magical, never less than exactical ipso facto fantastical. Let all then who click with me, at my age statistically two or three no less rickety, singalong with me (sickily): "Long, long may it rave 'o'er the land of the chickadee and the home of my grave."

— Monty Hare

## GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now, for the first time, we are voting on a complete "high school" budget that includes all three parts of the Regional District I educational complex: Central Office Services — \$500,000; Pupil Services — \$1,800,000; and HVRHS — \$4,200,000 (all in round numbers).

Last year the Region I budget totaled about \$6,900,000. This year it's about \$6,500,000.

I congratulate the Region I Board of Ed, and I hope Cornwall supports its new three-part budget warmly. Remember, Cornwall's share of the total is less than 10%.

— Judith Gates

Events & Announcements

Soccer Applications Ready: Park and Rec will once again host the USA Soccer School of Excellence at CCS July 13-17 from 9 a.m. till noon. Applications (deadline June 20) are available at CCS, the Town Office, or by calling Karen Stevens at 672-6065. Scholarships are available.

Basket Weaving: Joann Catsos offers a class for adults on May 23, 10-3 at the West Cornwall Firehouse. Bring a lunch. Students may make a harvest (15"x10") or pie (20"x13") basket. Cost is \$30 per student. To enroll call Karen Stevens at 672-6065 by May 20.

Health Screening: A wide range of tests will be available to residents age 60 and over on Thursday, May 14, at the West Cornwall Firehouse. The clinic is limited to ten persons; the suggested donation is \$18.00. For appointments and information, call Jill Gibbons on Mon. (672-2703).

Library Hours Change: The Cornwall Free Library will now be open on Mondays (except for federal holidays), but not on Tuesdays. The hours remain the same: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 2 to 5 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



"Fiddlesticks Alert": Volume 2 of Cornwall's own literary journal on audio tape is now available at the Cornwall Library. It contains stories by Lotte Hanf, Earl Brecher, Ken Keskinen, and Julia Scott. Volume 1 of the journal is at the Hughes Memorial Library in West Cornwall.

Child Count: CCS requests parents of children born between 1974 and 1992 who are not on the records of the school to please report names and birthdates. This count is required by the state and is used in planning at CCS and the high school. Call Sue Gingert at school (672-6617) or at home (672-0077).

Merchants Encourage Creativity: The West Cornwall Merchants' Association is sponsoring "Covered Bridge Day" on Sunday, May 24. Their purpose is to "highlight the many creative qualities of West Cornwall" through presenting craft demonstrations and performing arts entertainment. One of the activities of the day will be "Paint the Town," hosted by the Harris

Gallery for the benefit of the Fire Department. Artists are invited to paint scenes of West Cornwall on the 24th. They may begin painting at dawn, with all works to be submitted to the Gallery by 3:30 that day, where they will be exhibited and sold via silent auction during the evening from 5 to 10 p.m. Those interested may contact the Harris Gallery.

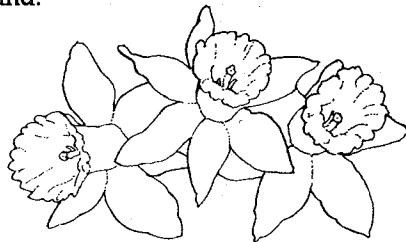
West Cornwall Merchants' Association: Interested parties are invited to attend the association's monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. at Freshfields Restaurant.



Adult Education at United Church: Family Transitions will be the subject of classes on Sundays at 11:15 beginning on May 3 and ending on June 7. The series, entitled "You Can't Say Hello Until You've Said Goodbye," will focus on four areas: Early Life Transitions, Love and Intimacy, Raising Responsible and Independent Children, and Living Singly. Discussions will be led by Jean Vitalis, Cynthia Bianchi, and Peter Hammond. All are welcome. For more information, call 672-6840.

Cakes and Flowers: The Republican Town Committee is sponsoring sales of baked goods and geraniums on May 16 at 9 a.m. at Baird's Store in Cornwall Bridge and at the Cornwall Bridge Pottery Store in West Cornwall. Geraniums (white, red, pink, or purple) are \$3 each. They may also be ordered in advance from any committee member or by calling Dick Dakin at 672-6015.

Poetry Reading: May 9 at 8 p.m. at Cadwell's Corner. Special feature will be Nick Jacobs' performance of a four-minute rap version of Hamlet — brought back by popular demand.



Memorial Day Schedule: Memorial Day activities start at 9:15 a.m., May 25 with an observance in North Cornwall Cemetery led by Charles Gold. The purpose is to honor those who have served in wartime. Participants may wish to bring flowers to decorate the graves.

At 10:00 there will be a brief Seamen's Memorial Service at the Covered Bridge. Then at 11:00 comes the annual parade and ceremony on the Cornwall Village Green (or the CCS gym in case of rain). The parade will form on Hubbard Field at 10:30. All veterans are invited to march; uniforms are not required.



Carnival Time: The annual Memorial Day Carnival will take place immediately following the program on the green. Hosted by the United Church of Christ and the Cornwall Child Center, the Carnival will provide plentiful food and enticing entertainment. The proceeds support the Child Center Scholarship Fund and other organizations that help children in need. The raffle drawing will take place at 1:30 p.m. Tickets will benefit the Center directly.

The frog jumping contest will not occur this year. Although it has been a traditional event, the large number of entrants makes the contest time too long and too cruel for both the children and the frogs. This year, look for something new!



Covered Bridge to Swing and Sway: On May 24, the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department will, rain or shine, sponsor a fundraiser dance in the Covered Bridge. Donny Sawyer and his band will provide country music for dancing from 7-11 p.m. Food and soft drinks will be served.

Free parking supervised by the police is available at CCS and the Firehouse on the West Cornwall side of the bridge, or at the Elm Tree lot on the Sharon side (1/4 mile north of the bridge, on the right). Buses will run every 15 minutes from the parking areas to the bridge.

Adults tickets are \$5 if ordered in advance, \$6 at the gate; for youths \$4 in advance, \$5 at the gate. Children of ten and under will be admitted free when accompanied by an adult. Call 672-4373 for ticket reservations and information.

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