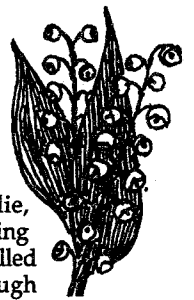


# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 8 : NUMBER 4 MAY 1998



## Our Scenic Highway

The towns of Canaan, Falls Village, Sharon, and Salisbury are applying to the state for Scenic Highway designation for the section of Route 7 that runs from Kent to Canaan. "We are joining them," said First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, "since a few miles of Route 7—from Cornwall Bridge to the Kent line—are in Cornwall."

To apply for scenic designation, the road must be at least one mile long and must have interesting scenic, historical, or cultural features, or outstanding natural resources. Gordon feels that state designation gives the town a useful tool for the future. "It's making a public statement that not only makes one eligible for federal funding, but gives leverage should the Department of Transportation come forward with plans for our roads."  
—Anne Zinsser

## Library Plans, Cont'd

At two public meetings, on April 4 and April 9, more plans for the new library began to emerge. On the about-to-be-purchased land adjacent to the present library, the Library trustees will construct a building costing approximately \$1.2 million.

At the second meeting, an agreement between the town and the Library was signed by First Selectman Gordon Ridgway and Audrey Ferman, president of the Library. As

previously reported, that agreement stipulates that the town will pay \$100,000 to renovate the present Library/Town Hall for its own use, \$250,000 to the Library for vacating the building, and \$17,000 per year for 15 years for upkeep of the new building. The Library agreed to raise \$250,000 to match the town grant.

There will be a Democratic/Republican-sponsored forum to discuss the agreement on May 15 at 7:30 P.M. in the Town Hall, and town meetings on June 5 and 13, followed by a referendum on June 27.

The Library is planning to ask the state for a grant to help construct the new building. The grant would equal one-third of the construction cost, but not more than \$500,000. The Library trustees will have to have a contract with a builder before the state will come through.  
—John Zinsser

## Popple Swamp Performers

Question: What do the models in a J. Crew spring catalogue, a Dannon yogurt commercial, an ad for Dimetapp Children's Elixir, and a commercial for the New York State Lottery have in common? Answer: they all live in Cornwall, and they are all dogs—Labrador retrievers that belong to Marion Bell. She has seven in all that share her house on Popple Swamp Road.

One of Marion's dogs, Julie, has also launched into an acting career in an upcoming movie called *Mickey Blue Eyes*, starring Hugh Grant. It's a comedy-mystery, and Marion reports that Julie has a small but "pivotal" part. She has to steal a shoe from a corpse, while Hugh Grant is yelling "No, no" at her, and then run off with it. The scene had to be shot 14 times to get it right. "But it wasn't Julie who made the mistakes," Marion says. The dog obediently ignored Grant, wasn't fazed by the lights or the camera on a moving dolly, and performed perfectly with the same enthusiasm for the 14<sup>th</sup> take that she had shown at the beginning.

Marion's dogs have been modeling and acting for about four years now, and at the moment they are "having a busy streak." They have an agent, acquired through a contact Marion made at the Kent Paint and Decorating store, which she manages. Marion has raised and trained dogs for obedience and field work for many years.

In training sessions, she uses hot dogs—thinly sliced—for rewards; she holds them in her mouth and spits them at the Labs when they have performed correctly. It is important, she explains, not to hold the treats in your hand, because then the dog will constantly look at your hands, and it must learn always to watch your face.

(continued on page 2)

## MAY 1998

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Art Show, Margarita Charleton, Nat. Iron Bank through May (p.4) Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Cub Scout Pack 15 Meeting 7 P.M. CCS	2 Free Seminar on Land Preservation Options 9 to Noon HVRHS (for more information call 672-6678)
3 Northwest Passage Concert 11:30 A.M. UCC (p.4)	4 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	5 Referendum on Reg. 1 Budgets & Bldg. Project, 6 A.M.—8 P.M. Town Hall Absentee Ballots Available from Town Clerk Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall*	6 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall Cub Scout Parents Meeting 7 P.M. UCC Day Room	7	8 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	9 Food Drive, 8 A.M. to Noon, W. Cornwall Post Office (p.4) Car Wash 10 A.M.—2 P.M. (p.4) Williamsburg Basket Class 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. CCS Art Room (p.4)
10 MOTHER'S DAY	11 P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	12	13 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall	14	15 Deadline for June Chronicle Copy Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Dems & Repubs Open Forum to discuss Town/Library Agreement 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.1)	16 Plant Swap CCS 10 A.M. (p.4) Spring Cleanup 10 to Noon, 4 Corners (p.3) Downriver Race (p.4) Cornwall Assoc. 4 P.M. Town Hall
17 Covered Bridge Slalom Race 9 A.M. (p.4) Caroline Paul, <i>Fighting Fire</i> , 4 P.M. Library (p.4)	18 Committee on Aging 4 P.M. Town Hall (p.2-3) Cornwall Lib. Art Show Peter Barrett through 6/20 (p.4)	19 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	20 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	21 Agric. Advis. Comm. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	22 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library Town Meeting to Approve Budget 8 P.M. CCS Gym	23
24 7 <sup>th</sup> Annual Bridge Dance. Food Starting 6 P.M., Music 7-11 P.M. (p.4)	25 MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED For Memorial Day Schedule See Page 4.	26 ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall*	27 Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5-6 P.M. Town Hall	28	29	30 MEMORIAL DAY Cub Scout Pack 15 Picnic 6:30 P.M. Housatonic Meadows
31						

\* Check at Town Office

(continued from page 1)

Three of her dogs so far have gone into the modeling-acting world. Lazarus, a large yellow Lab, leaps a fence on the Hi Pro dog food bags, and sits on chairs and couches in a furniture company ad. (It was hard coaxing him onto forbidden territory, Marion says.) Miki, the dog in the J. Crew catalogue, has also posed for a lot of other "print work."

Lazarus and Julie have just done a soon-to-be-released commercial for a Clairrol herbal shampoo which Marion describes as "rather risqué."

Working in movies is certainly not glamorous, Marion says. It consists mostly of endless waiting around. Nor are her dogs' new careers making her rich. In commercials and films, dogs are considered "props," and they don't get residuals or very good pay. But training them for these new and unexpected tasks is challenging, and, Marion says, "It does buy some bags of dog food." —Barbara Klaw



### Regionalism: Pro and Con

Where should the powers of governing be located? This question has been pertinent throughout history. New Englanders, who cherish the authority of the town meeting, are always wary of yielding their powers to federal, state, or regional agencies, fearing the broad application of laws that may be unjust or "just don't make sense."

Over the years, however, many of our state officials have felt that having 169 town governments is an inefficient way to run things, and that the state legislature and agencies could do a better job at less cost.

Several years ago the idea of dividing the state into regions seemed to be favored by the legislature. Plans for regional P&Z agencies, probate courts, and other services were prepared, along with stricter state mandates for landfills and open spaces. Paperwork (in triplicate) threatened to be overwhelming for the towns, but even more threatening was the challenge to the towns' traditional autonomy.

Town leaders in the state protested. Ultimately, the state backed away, but how far and for how long is uncertain.

Gordon Ridgway, recalling that time, says: "I take pride in the efforts made by the selectmen in this area to keep the present system." It's the intrusive, one-size-fits-all approach that many find objectionable. The granting of state funds based on faulty population data or on what the state decides is the "wealth" of a town could be considered misjudgment from a distance.

Regional efforts are not new. Many are worthwhile and necessary. The regional high school, for instance, begun in 1939, was one of the first efforts. Our towns now share a building inspector, and most use the services of the Torrington Area Health District. Towns are now more willing to work in concert to avoid state mandates. The Northwest Connecticut Council of Governments, estab-

lished in 1985, brings selectmen from neighboring towns together regularly. Other cooperative efforts include the Regional Planning Agency, the Housatonic Valley Association, the Housatonic River Commission, and the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Housing Council. All are local initiatives, not imposed by the state. More such groups may be formed. Ralph Gold, chairman of the Cornwall Board of Finance, wants to have regional meetings with his counterparts to share information and to get better prices on common town purchases.

Senator Dell Eads and Representative Andrew Roraback are firm in their support of "towns' rights," feeling that many agencies need local control. Probate courts, Eads says, must have the personal awareness of individual needs that town judges provide.

David Martin, recently appointed state Senior Development Manager in the Torrington area, says his role is not to bring about state control of regional activities, but to support community development projects, to find where the funds are, and then help "grease the chute." He has offices in Torrington (626-6688) and Canaan (824-0031).

Striking a balance between reasonable state demands and local implementation continues to be a challenge. "We'll continue fighting the battle," says Ridgway. "Even though things are pretty much at a standstill now, we need to be on watch."

Folks in the Northwest Corner can take pride in their leaders' concern for the "eternal vigilance" that the autonomy of their towns demands. —Ken Keskinen

### International Day at CCS

International Day is a festive celebration of other cultures which takes place every three years at CCS. On April 1, students, teachers, friends, and families came together to enjoy class presentations of dances and songs. The sponsoring teachers were Mrs. Jeran (art), Mrs. Loi (PE-dance), Mrs. Simonetti-Sphur (music), and all homeroom teachers.

The preparation was long and hard, but fun. Each class—kindergarten through eighth grade—chose a country to study. They researched the country and learned native dances and songs.

International Day was divided into two parts. In the morning, each class was split. One half stayed in their homerooms to teach "travelers" about their countries, and the other half became travelers and went to different "countries." To travel, each student had to have a passport. It was stamped at each country. Students took notes in their passports. Halfway through the morning the groups changed places.

In the afternoon, students in native dress performed their dances and songs for the public. The presentation resolved into the whole school singing *Love Can Build a Bridge*. The idea was that we are all one family of love.

The countries presented were: kindergarten, Antarctica; transition, Mexico; first grade, Japan; second grade, Australia; third

grade, Italy; fourth grade, Russia; fifth grade, Sweden; sixth grade, Brazil; seventh grade, United Kingdom; eighth grade, Haiti.

—Ellen Z. Hart, fifth grade

### Welcome

Lucas Seth Dutton  
to Seth and Karen Dutton  
Sarah and Emily Rothstein  
to Jan Grossman and Jados Rothstein  
Patricia Marian and Katherine Emily Zetkulich  
to Nancy Van Doren and Jack Zetkulich

### Good-bye to Friends

William C. Gerry  
Montgomery Hare  
Robert L. Harris  
David McClelland  
Edwin Shurtleff  
Raymond ("Bucky") Whitney

### Land Transfers

Fifty-six/Unionoreo, Inc., to Stephen H. Fitch, 25 acres on Clark Road for \$50,000.  
Empire Mortgage Ltd. Partnership VIII to Lofton P. and Ravinder Holder, house and 25 acres at 22 Whitcomb Way for \$500,000.  
Lois M. Ribicoff to ARC LLC, house and 92 acres at 233 Warren Hill Road for \$990,770 (Cornwall's portion).  
Dorothy C. Heininger to Katherine Freygang, 3.75 acres on Pine Street for \$75,000.  
Joseph C. and Julie Giangarra, by Committee to Mathew R. Collins, house and 3.75 acres on Routes 43 & 128 for \$68,000.  
Esther M. Palmer to Jerome K. Roth, house and land at 115 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for \$225,000.  
Richard S. Reid to Heidi L. and Walter J. Kearns, Jr., 5 acres on Flat Rocks Road for \$75,000.  
Stephen A. Halas to Rosaria Rummens, house and 1.57 acres on Route 7 for \$148,000 (corrected acreage).

### What Senior Citizens Want

The results are in: Forty-two people responded to the Cornwall Senior Survey 1998. In the Programs section, the top three choices were bus trips to cultural events and museums (61 percent), exercise and fitness classes (48 percent), and blood pressure clinics (38 percent). Least popular were a lunchtime meal and dancing.

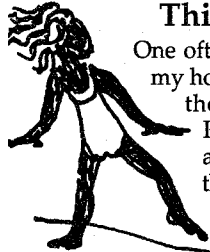
In the Issues section the voters gave top priority to low-cost senior housing (50 percent), followed by chore services and home health care with medical assistance (48 percent each), transportation and assisted living with meals and personal care (45 percent) and respite for care-givers (43 percent).



Our thanks to everyone who responded for making this a meaningful survey. Results will be sent to the appropriate local organizations. Copies of the complete survey are available at the Town Offices.

A final note: The first meeting of the Committee on Aging will take place on May 18 at 4 P.M. in the Town Hall. We have 19 volunteers, but the more the better.

—Jill E. Gibbons, Municipal Agent on Aging



### This Old House?

One often wonders, how old is my house? Might it be among the five oldest in town? Probably it is not as old as you would like to think.

Dating an old house is not easy. Although land records may

tell you that at an earlier date a "dwelling house" was standing on your property, they almost never indicate whether it was on the same spot as your house today. Even when the land records confirm the same location, the difficult question remains whether the two houses are in fact the same.

We do know that few 18<sup>th</sup> century New England houses have survived to the present. Most have fallen down, burned, or otherwise perished. If your house has more than two rooms and is higher than a single level, we can also say it has probably been altered. Studies of New England houses show that very few two-story dwellings were built in Cornwall before the Revolution—and not many more before 1800.

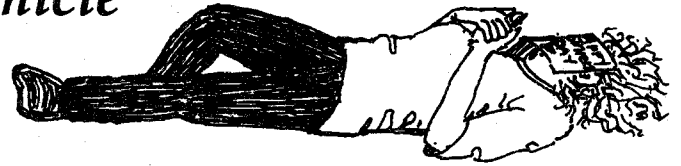
Probate records on occasion offer help. For instance, in the case of an existing Cornwall house that has two full stories, Litchfield Probate Court records show that the widow of the owner was allocated, as part of her dower right in the house, the "south front chamber & garret over...& cellar below said chamber." This suggests a single story and attic, a full story smaller than the house that stands today on that site.

Also, in the process of alteration and/or expansion, was your house rebuilt from the ground up, in effect blurring the house's age? Dendrochronologists (wood-dating experts) can sometimes verify the age of old beams, but beams can have been taken from the remains of older houses. In the case of a house with parts from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the question remains how much of that house must be of similar age in order for the structure as a whole to be regarded as 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In sum, it would be difficult to establish which five Cornwall houses are truly the oldest.

—Michael Gannett

## Letters to the Chronicle



### MONROE-BODKIN POSTSCRIPT

Since the Library announced plans to purchase land and construct a new building many people have questioned us about the negotiations for the Monroe-Bodkin Library at the former campus of the Marvelwood School. This issue was raised again at the forum on April 4 organized by the Cornwall Association.

It was apparent to us from the Library's extremely low offer and many attached conditions that our library building was not their preferred choice. Our position has always been that, if the Library wanted Monroe-Bodkin, we would make it a cost-effective solution. It is not the case that we in any way discouraged or blocked the Library from moving to our building, but rather that they made a deliberate and reasoned decision to stop negotiating and seek another solution. In the future it would be best if the Library trustees would present their new building plan in a positive way—as their decision after examining the alternatives. We wish them well.

—Rick Wolkowitz and Ben Gray

### THAT VISION THING

Most of us accept our Cornwall public buildings—library, churches, firehouses, etc.—just the way they are, familiar and comfortable to the eye. Undue satisfaction with the status quo, however, serves no town well. Where would ours be, for example, without the recently renovated school and the new Child Center?

Soon we will face an opportunity to move our town forward, to the benefit of ourselves and of the generations that will follow us. The selectmen, the Library Board of Trustees, and a number of interested citizens have come together, after months of struggle, on a proposed plan to build on the legacy of the late John Calhoun. There is a skeletal vision of how we can help our town meet the increasing governmental and intellectual demands provoked by a fast-forward, complex world, and to do so without offending our emotional ties to the past. It is a plan tailored to have a minimal impact on our property taxes.

If passed by town vote, the Library Board of Trustees will be bearing the heavy end of bringing the vision into reality and assuredly deserves our gratitude for the unselfish commitment of its members. For the most part, it is the Library board that will take on the responsibility of planning the new building and its furnishings; it is

the board that will be out there in front to raise the necessary private funds; it is the board that will be applying for state grant money; it is the board that will contract out the building construction; and ultimately it is the board that will be effecting the physical move out of the stone building into the new. Already, board members and friends have devoted much time and effort to bring us to this point, but from here on in they can't do the whole job alone, just as John Calhoun, the elder, could not have created the stone building alone. The Library board needs town support.

What can we do to participate in the selectmen/Library board vision at this point? We can study seriously their space needs, present and future, as we will come to see them. Further, we can debate the issue with our friends, voicing our support of the proposal, if we approve; citing our reasons against, if we don't. Most importantly, we can attend town hearings, scheduled for June, to exchange views. And then we can register our careful decisions by ballot at referendum time on June 27.

There are times when keeping one's opinion to oneself is laudable. This is not one of those times. Let's talk.

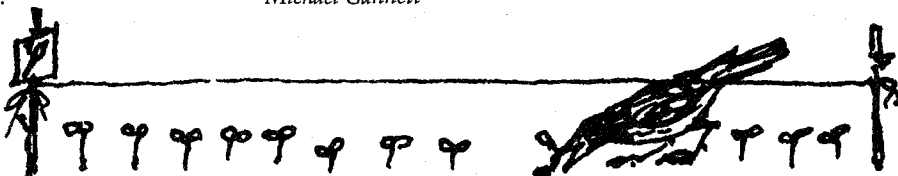
—Scoville D. Soulé

### SPRING CLEANUP

Beer cans and paper wrappers in the bushes have been catching my eyes lately in sharp contrast to spring greenery and flowers. Fortunately there is a great remedy for what ails Cornwall's roadsides: the Spring Cleanup. In the first cleanup last year, twelve volunteers picked up a respectable mountain of trash. Just imagine what we could do with more Cornwallians!

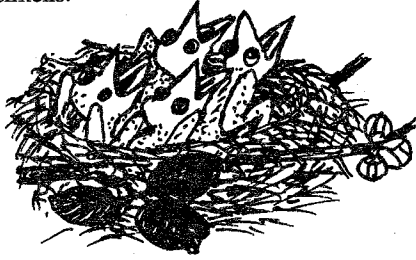
Both the Cornwall Association and Park & Rec. are sponsoring this community event on Saturday, May 16, from 10 until noon. The cleanup is supported by contributions and gifts from local merchants. This year cleanup HQ will be the Berkshire Country Store at the Four Corners, where we'll distribute gloves and trash bags and assign roadside routes so people don't pile up cleaning the same locations. The routes vary in length, so there will be one that fits you just right. Back at HQ we'll collect the bags you bring in as well as dispatch a truck for items too big for you to haul yourself. Our plan sticks mostly to the larger roads, but if you have your eye on another road to spruce up, feel free to do so and please still join us back at HQ to drop your collection and share refreshments and tales of the road. Please talk to your friends and neighbors about joining in and come out—let's make a great day of it! Call Deirdre A. Fischer at 672-1123 for more information.

—Deirdre A. Fischer



## Events & Announcements

**Meals on Wheels:** If you are 60 or over and meal preparation is a problem, Meals on Wheels may be a service you'd like to consider. The organization provides two well balanced meals per weekday (one hot, one cold); both meals are delivered to your home between 10:30 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. for a suggested donation of \$2.75 per day. No deliveries are made on weekends, holidays, or when schools are closed due to bad weather. Enrollment is through your doctor, who should call 489-2586; call the same number for further information and speak to Shannon Kelmelis.



**Memorial Day:** During the week before Memorial Day, members of VFW Post 9856 will place flags at the graves of all of Cornwall's veterans. Memorial Day itself (May 25) will be observed as follows: At 9 A.M. a service in the North Cornwall cemetery will be led by Charles Gold. Please bring flowers to decorate the graves. At 10 A.M. the Seamen's Service will be held at the Covered Bridge. The Memorial Day parade will start at 11 A.M. followed by the traditional ceremony on the Town Green. This year's speaker will be State Representative Andrew Roraback. Hosted by the Child Center and UCC, the annual Carnival—games, food, and fun—will follow on the church grounds.

**Art in Cornwall:** Margarita Charleton will exhibit paintings from her childhood at the National Iron Bank during the month of May. At the Cornwall Library, Nina and Silvia LaPorta's show will continue until May 16. From May 18 until June 20, Peter Barrett will show abstract paintings and drawings.

### Cornwall Trivia: 2

The newly redesigned *Reader's Digest* has moved the table of contents off the cover and replaced it with a photograph. Their May issue pictures which *Chronicle* subscriber and CCS graduate? (Answer below.)

The *Chronicle* has no plans for a redesign, but we will consider running your photo in a blank spot on the calendar if you send in a large enough donation. What are you waiting for?

Caroline Paul, now a fire fighter in San Francisco, catch her at the Library on May 17 (page 4).

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.

**Green Thumbs Take Notice:** The annual plant swap will take place at the CCS parking lot Saturday, May 16, at 10 A.M. Here's your chance to fill those gaps in your garden, or give away your garden's excess. Questions? Call Cheryl Evans at 672-0094.

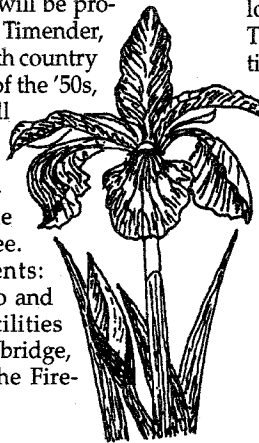
**Food Drive:** On Saturday, May 9, from 8 A.M. to noon, the West Cornwall Post Office will receive your donation for the National Rural Letter Carriers Union's food drive which, locally, will benefit OWL's Kitchen. Pick from the following: oatmeal, flour, rice, lentils, beans, pancake mix, granola, dry milk, peanut butter, cooking oil, canned meats, or canned vegetables. (If you are a West Cornwall mail-delivery customer, put your contribution in your mailbox that morning.)

**Be Good To Yourself:** Learn to relax while enjoying music, healthy stretching and becoming more fit. Join dance director Alice Sarkissian and friends from 5 to 6 P.M. on Wednesdays in the Town Hall. Good for young and old bones—and free.

**Whitewater Weekend:** The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Housatonic Downriver Race for canoes and kayaks will take place on Saturday, May 16. The races will start at 11 A.M. at Falls Village opposite the hydro plant, and end at Housatonic Meadows. The racers will pass under the Covered Bridge between 11:45 A.M. and 12:30 P.M. Registration is from 9 to 10:30 A.M. at the starting point on the day of the race, and is open to recreational and experienced racers. New this year are two professional classes co-sponsored by Northwest Lumber and Benjamin Moore Paints. For further information call Bill Tingley at 364-5321.

The Covered Bridge Slalom Race, always a favorite with spectators, will be held on Sunday, May 17, at 9 A.M. in West Cornwall. Advance registration is required. Entry blanks are available at Clarke Outdoors, 672-6365.

**The Seventh Annual Bridge Dance,** sponsored by the Fire Department, will be held on Sunday, May 24. Music will be provided from 7 to 11 P.M. by Timender, a group that will play both country music and dance music of the '50s, '60s, and '70s. Food will be served from 6 P.M. on. Prices: \$5 for adults and \$4 for kids 10-16 in advance; \$7 and \$5 at the gate; kids under 10 free. Parking arrangements: shuttle buses will run to and from the Northeast Utilities parking lot north of the bridge, and on the east from the Firehouse and CCS.



**Learn Basket Weaving** at a one-day class sponsored by Park and Rec., Saturday, May 9, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., at the CCS art room. You'll weave a classic Williamsburg basket ideal for house and garden. No experience needed. Just bring an awl or flat-headed screwdriver, an old towel, pruning shears or sharp scissors, a yardstick or tape measure, a pencil, a bag lunch, and, if possible, a jackknife and spring-style clothespins. Materials fee: \$20. Pre-registration requested, as class size is limited to 15. Call Jill Gibbons at 672-0033.

**Northwest Passage,** an a cappella singing group consisting of Celia Frost, Joan Hinchman, Trish and Ian Hochstetter, and John LaPorta will give a short free concert of spirituals and folk, popular, and classical music on May 3 at 11:30 A.M. at UCC. Refreshments will be served in the Day Room before the concert.

**Car Wash:** Bring your car or van to Northwest Lumber's lumberyard (opposite the Hitching Post motel) on May 9 between 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. and have it washed sparkling clean by a group of young people from UCC. It's a fund-raiser for the Jubilee School trip to Cornwall in June. Cars \$5, vans \$6. For more information call 672-6840.

**Firefighting:** Caroline Paul, former resident of Cornwall and CCS student, will give a talk sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library, on Sunday, May 17, at 4 P.M. at the Library. Caroline has written *Fighting Fire*, a look at her life as a San Francisco firefighter. The work is a Book-of-the-Month Club selection and will hit the bookstores May 27. Copies will be available on May 17; their sale will benefit the Library.

### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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