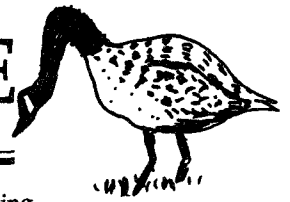




CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 6 : NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 1996



Town Top Spender on Schools, Public Works

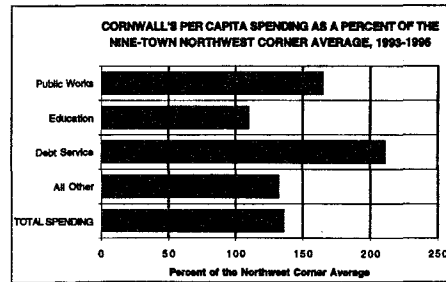
Why does Cornwall spend more per year-round resident than the eight Northwest Corner towns that surround it? That's the question raised by a recent article in *The Lakeville Journal* that cited figures gathered by the Connecticut Policy and Economic Council, a nonprofit business group based in Hartford.

Cornwall does spend more: over the three years from 1993 to 1995, Cornwall's budget averaged \$2,461 per resident, more than any of the eight adjoining towns and well above the average of \$1,811 per person in the nine-town Northwest Corner.

CPEC's figures reveal that three functions account for most of our high spending pattern. Education accounts for more of our budget than any other item, averaging \$1,194 per person from 1993 to 1995, or just under half the total. As shown on the accompanying chart, we spend about ten percent more than the nine-town average of \$1,087 per resident on our students. But Debt Service, a category where Cornwall leads the other towns by an even wider margin, is closely related to the education function, since all our town's debt is due to the bonds issued to expand the CCS building.

Cornwall is also a big spender in the Pub-

lic Works category, which includes roads and bridges as well as the resource recovery facility. Over the past three years, Cornwall spent an average of \$420 per person on Public Works, 165 percent as much as the nine-town annual average of \$255 per person. We were also the area's top spender on some smaller budget items like Planning & Zoning and General Government.



Some factors that might influence Cornwall's high rate of spending on Public Works include:

• Cornwall spends about 40 percent more per mile of local road than the average in the nine towns in the Northwest Corner. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway believes that Cornwall's many bridges and steep roads probably account for much of that. Further, he says, we've been addressing some of our accumulated road needs, something that

other towns aren't doing.

• Cornwall also has more local roads to maintain. It has 41 miles of road per 1,000 residents, more by far than any of the adjoining towns, which average only about 25 miles per 1,000. Gordon sees that as largely the result of the town's very low population density: Cornwall has only 31 residents per square mile, lowest of the nine Northwest Corner towns and less than half the area's average. —David A. Grossman

School Population Surges

Not since the early seventies has school enrollment at Cornwall Consolidated School been so high. This fall begins with 186 students as opposed to the 168 of last year.

"These new students will be well mixed throughout the grades," said CCS principal William Oros. "There is no need to worry that this influx will overload the system," he continued and explained that a part-time teacher would come in mornings to help the first and second grades in reading, language arts and math; aides would help primary teachers in the afternoon; and there would be four aides to help with Special Ed in grades K to 8 (there were two last year).

Paulette Soja, the music teacher, has resigned. As of mid-August, candidates for the job were being interviewed.

School will open September 3.

—Anne Zinsser

SEPTEMBER 1996

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 LABOR DAY School Opens September 3	3 Cornwall Child Center Opens (p.4) Agric. Advis. Comm., 7:30 P.M. W.C. Firehouse Bd. of Selectmen 8 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Office* Park & Rec. Comm. 8 P.M. Town Office*	4 W. Cornwall Merchants Assoc. 10 A.M. Cadwell's Cornwall Play Group 10-11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Lutheran Church (p.4) Jacolyn Mott, paintings to 9/14, Library (p.3)	5	6	7 C.V.F.D. Annual Firemen's Ball 7 P.M.-midnight Mohawk Ski Area (p.4)
8	9 P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	10 Republican Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	11 CCS PTA 7 P.M. CCS Library	12	13 ROSH HASHANAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN Jane Prentice Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library (p.4)	14 ROSH HASHANAH Deadline for all October Chronicle copy. Cornwall Association 4 P.M. Town Hall
15 Cornwall Golf Open (672-0295 for details)	16 Art Show Adam Van Doren, paintings & drawings 9/16-10/12 Library Bd. of Selectmen 8 P.M. Town Hall HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Library	17 Agric. Advis. Comm. 7:30 P.M. W.C. Firehouse	18	19 Bd. of Education 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	20 Jane Prentice Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library (p.4) Deadline for C.V.F.D. Birthday Calendar (p.4)	21 Tag Sale & Silent Auction St. Peter's Church 9 A.M.-4 P.M. (p.4) Bd. of Assessment Appeals 10-noon (p.4) Agricultural Fair (insert) NW Corner Quilter's Guild Show, noon-5 P.M. (p.4) Cornwall Association Annual Meeting 4 P.M. (p.4)
22 YOM KIPPUR BEGINS AT SUNDOWN	23 YOM KIPPUR ZBA 8 P.M. Town Office*	24 P&Z Planning Meeting 8 P.M. Town Hall*	25	26	27 Jane Prentice Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library (p.4)	28 Children's Clothing Swap 10 A.M.-2 P.M. UCC Parish House (p.4)
29	30					

*Check time and place at Town Office

Annals of Crime I

Dean Hammond, a former state trooper now retired from the Canaan Barracks, has been digging into old crime records in the Northwest Corner. And he's come up with some delicious dirt in Cornwall.

There is, for instance, the story of the Rev. William H. Green, a Methodist minister who moved from New York to Connecticut in 1867, along with a new young widow of a wife, reputed to be worth some money. Here he lectured on temperance and gained recognition as a spellbinding evangelist. He opened a store in West Cornwall with his brother-in-law. Mrs. Green, already weakened by tuberculosis, suffered an "attack of spasms" on the evening of May 6 and died soon after midnight. But certain people were suspicious. The body was exhumed, and a Professor Barker of Yale found firm evidence of strychnine poisoning. Green, hearing of this analysis before the law latched onto him, cut his throat with a pocket knife. Thwarted in his suicide attempt, he was brought back to health, tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged on December 4, 1868. A new trial was granted, which resulted in a hung jury, a third trial, and finally a life sentence.

Hammond also tells the old story of London Dana, accused of breaking into the general store in Cornwall Bridge. The only clue in this case was the broken-off point of a knife blade, found in a window frame from which a pane had been removed. The knife point exactly matched a broken knife found in Dana's possession. On this evidence, he was sent to Newgate Prison in Simsbury, on the site of an abandoned pre-Revolutionary mine, where he proved the most intractable of inmates. In those days the convicts made not license plates but nails. Before long Dana rebelled. He laid his right hand on the nail anvil and smashed the fingers with a hammer. Then, put to a meaningless one-handed task, he re-



mained defiant and uncooperative. At last he was placed in a damp, dark cell deep in the old copper mine, chained to a rock, fed on bread, his only furniture a straw pallet. He endured this solitary torture for a long time, but finally begged to see the light of day, repented, and went back to making nails with his mangled hand till the end of his term.

According to Hammond, records were scanty in the old days, and many of these are lost to time. What we find today are tantalizing tidbits. Consider a tombstone recorded in Starr's *History of Cornwall*: "In Memory of

Benjamin son to Peter and Elisabeth Mawwehew, he died Sept. 2, 1790, AE 4." Starr adds, "Near the old Harrison place in Johnson Hollow an Indian wigwam was burned while the parents were absent, and Judge Harrison always insisted that two children perished. This was probably the one, and the occasion."

Furthermore, says Hammond, it was probably relatively easy to pull off a murder before 1900, and some crimes went undetected. The State Police Department had not yet been formed. Local matters were handled by part-time town constables, and in possible homicides, the town coroner. Only if the coroner demanded an investigation was one made. What records there are indicate that between 1730 and 1900, more than 100 people suffered so-called accidental deaths—many by drowning or "killed by the cars," or railroad. How many victims were simply thrown in the water? How many were bashed in the head, roughed up, and dumped by the tracks? No one will ever know.

But the 19th-century constables did have one advantage. "Ninety-nine point nine percent of crime in Cornwall was committed by Cornwall people," Hammond believes. The local constables knew the town well, and knew who the troublemakers were. All this changed with the coming of the automobile after 1910. "Auto bandits" from the cities burglarized Cornwall homes, sometimes pursued by the police as they sped for the New York State line. Fortunately for justice, that line was often ignored and extradition niceties forgotten. But that gets us into other stories...

—Bob Potter

Gizmo Guesswork

The trick at the Historical Society's tool exhibit is to guess the names—or at least divine the use—of about half a dozen assorted implements set aside as a special challenge. What the dickens would you do, for instance, with a gizmo that looks like a pygmy's crutch? How would you employ a shaped wooden piece that looks like an archer's bow or a yoke for bearing buckets (but is too rigid to be a bow and too small to be a yoke)? Then there is the little machine with a crank, a hidden spring, many gears, a flywheelish bobbinlike affair and a wheel that looks like a power takeoff on a Lilliputian tractor? (You can make this machine run by finding and activating a certain cleverly concealed lever.)

Even the experts who put together the exhibit don't have the answers to all these questions—which involve tools that are mostly old.

For those who wish to explore such mysteries, the exhibit will be open through September 21. Hours are 9:30 to noon on Tuesdays, 10 to 1 P.M. on Saturdays. During the Agricultural Fair, the exhibit will be open from noon to 4 P.M.

—Charles Osborne

Welcome

Michael Benjamin and Rebecca Lynn Brown to Christine and Alexander Brown
Hazel Martin to Heather Abrams and Brad Martin

Good-bye to Friends

John A. Malahan
Dr. Parker Vanamee

Congratulations

Peter Caruso to Gale Waldron



Land Transfers

Ella L. Clark to Carla M. Whiteside, 3.002 acres on Town Street for \$15,000.

Ralph I. and Thalia H. Scoville to Jeffrey & Bernetta Rosati, house and 3.0 acres on Town Street for \$250,000.

Elsa Ernst to Thomas P. Baird, house and land at 49 Kent Road for \$140,000.

Dorothy C. Heininger to Katherine Freygang, house and 0.81 acres on Pine Street for \$232,100.

Allan Neal and Katherine H. Denenberg to Andrew and France B. Choa, house and about 20 acres on Town Street for \$307,000.

Julia Devlin to Ann W. Marshall and Michael A. Hanke, house and 6.18 acres, 105 Cream Hill Road, \$120,000.

New Offices for Calhoun?

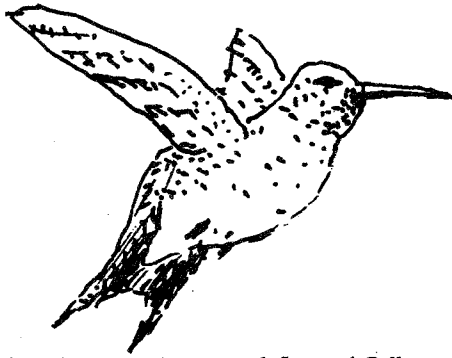
When it bought the Marvelwood School's land and buildings in Cornwall Plains, Cornwall Limited Liability Corporation acquired five structures on the main campus and six homes on individual lots in the village.

With regard to the campus, CLLC obtained P&Z approval for subdivision into four lots. One major building is now on each of these lots. The fifth campus structure, the former business office which lies between Calhoun and the Dining Hall, straddles a lot line and will be removed.

Of these four, the Miller Dorm was sold to Tom Hubbard, who is dismantling it. The classroom/library building has been offered at cost to the Cornwall Library and to the town. Meanwhile CLLC has arranged with Park and Rec. to maintain the attached tennis courts and make them available for play.

With regard to Calhoun, CLLC is applying to P&Z for the special permits required for office use. A preliminary discussion was held at the P&Z meeting on August 12 on what this special permit application and site plan should include and how they might be structured to show both immediate uses and those hoped for in the future.

Two prospective office tenants have been



found to rent the ground floor of Calhoun: Lifelike Birds, owned by Madeline Dahl, currently located in Railroad Square, West Cornwall and Mary Sams, who plans to open a Cornwall branch of her NY antiques consulting business. No manufacturing or retail is involved in either activity. Further offices on the second floor are possible. The third floor will remain residential.

Of the six homes, only one remains unsold. On another, sale is pending, and four have been sold, one to the Cornwall Housing Corp. for affordable housing.

—Hanna Grossman

Record Rosie Show

The 37th Annual Friends of Rose Algrant Art Show, held last month, had record-breaking sales of \$10,800. Of the 45 artists exhibiting, 23 had sales. Commissions, plus fees and contributions, less expenses and set-asides, resulted in a \$1,800 gift by the committee to the Dan Gracey Fund.

Mott Exhibits Oriental Artwork

The Cornwall Free Library is hosting an exhibition of paintings and scratchboards by Jacolyn Mott, on display through September 14. Mott shows fine mastery of Chinese watercolor, especially in *Emperor's Peonies* and *Oriental Lily*. Her scratchboards are quite a contrast to the Oriental pieces—evidence of great versatility. *Fantasy Fountain* is an excellent example, in which fantastical mythical beings pour water upon an ocean below.

Best of all are Mott's black-and-white sumi-e ink paintings, including *In the High Country* (a landscape) and *Maine Coast* (a seascape).

—Alfred Bredenberg

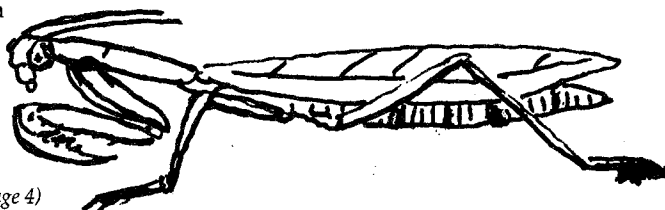
It's the Law

Again this month, a Cornwall ambulance crew, responding to a "911" medical emergency, was delayed in locating its patient by the absence of a house number. In some cases—fortunately, not this one—those minutes could mean the difference between life and death.

Each home and business is required to prominently display its number, in numerals at least three inches high, in a conspicuous location. This can be near the entrance to a driveway or along the front of the property where it is readily visible from the road.

The Cornwall Volunteer

(continued on page 4)



Letters to the Chronicle

PIGEON ON THE GRASS, ALAS

Generally I have not been too worried about the northward urban pressure along Route 7. However, one day early in August, an hour after I had enjoyed a Great Blue Heron stalking around on my lawn, I looked out and saw a Rock Dove, a.k.a. pigeon, in the same place. Now I am starting to worry. Was he a spy? An advance man? I hope he doesn't report back on the scattering of sunflower seeds.

—Hanna Grossman

CHORAL MUSIC FAN

Because I can't carry a tune, I have great admiration for anyone who can. So it was wonderful to listen to the Northwest Passage and Coltsfoot Chorus sing on July 21. But I was sad there were empty seats in the North Cornwall Church. The music was wonderful and we are so lucky to have so much musical talent here...they deserve an SRO attendance.

—Judy Bronner

THE PEQUIGNOT KISS

In July, my daughter Alexandra, the activist and Baywatch babe, flew to England to promote several British charities. During the visit, she appeared on a "silly" (her word) talk show called The Big Breakfast. The guests all perform in some way and her task was to be blindfolded and asked to identify three men who kissed her. She correctly guessed the first two but was stumped by the third. It turned out to be Bob Pequignot, the Don Juan of the fifth grade, who had given Alexandra her first kiss somewhere at CCS.

Alexandra had let this information about her and Bob slip on another show. The Big Breakfast found out and decided to give her a surprise; Bob and his girlfriend got a free trip to England.

So, CCS girls, be careful who you kiss; it might catch up with you years later and become public knowledge.

—Sarah Paul

AUNT SARAH'S DIARY

These items are from my Aunt Sarah's diary which I recently found in the attic. I thought Chronicle readers might be interested in what was going on in 1868.

My Aunt Sarah was daughter of Sheldon and Melisa Cook Clark who lived in East Cornwall. Sarah was teaching at the District 16 School, East Cornwall.

"Friday, April 24. Mary Keith, Mother and I have been quilting today. We put a quilt on this morning and finished quilting and took it off before dark.

"Tuesday, April 28. Father, Willie and Andrew have been down to the plains today. Father has been buying about 100 sheep. Uncle Nelson has been to dinner. He brought me a firebush to set out.

"Wednesday, April 29. Father, Willie, Mr. and Mrs. Keith and myself have been down to the plain to a concert.

"Monday, May 4. I began school today. Have quite a pleasant school although it is small—only 9 scholars.

"Saturday, May 30. James K. went with other soldiers in Cornwall to strew flowers on the graves of soldiers who died or were killed in the war. They met at Cornwall Plain then on to Cornwall Hollow, North Cornwall, Cornwall Plains and Cornwall Bridge.

"June 4. There is a tin peddler here tonight to stay. He has a violin with him and we have had some music.

"Wednesday, June 24. Mr. Keith has been over to Warren selling meat."

—Harriet Clark

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Many thanks and kudos to the Park & Rec. Commission, who ran the Glorious Fourth games on the green and organized the music. But it should be kept in mind that the event is co-sponsored by the Cornwall Drug & Alcohol Prevention Council.

In 1995, the CDAPC annual Families First picnic was combined with Park and Rec.'s Fourth of July event to create the current July Fest.

Organized to generate team spirit and friendly competition between the Cornwalls, the Cornwall Cup intergenerational softball games, now in their fourth year, were sponsored by the CDAPC. West Cornwall will proudly display the trophy this year at the Hughes Memorial Library; special thanks to team captains Mark Pastre, Lynn Cheney, and Ben Hammond.

Members of the Cornwall Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council are Gordon Ridgway, Bill Oros, Ben Hammond, Karen Stevens, Anna Timmell, Julia Scott, Cynthia Bianchi, Margaret Bardot, Jill Gibbons, Alicia North, and Ray Augustyn. Please call on us if you want to volunteer, or have any questions or suggestions.

—Jill Gibbons

BLANK VERSES FOR THE TOWN LIBRARY COMPUTER

Blank verses—Ah, what joy they bring!
To me they mean just virgin pages
Completely white, completely blank
No theme to sing
No muse to thank
No words at all one's thoughts to sway,
A joy to folks of all the ages.
Blank verses.
Yet what might they say?

They'd say "Eftsoon, afore ye swoon
Undo your too-tight corset laces,
Cast off your spats by light of moon,
Then smile with cheerful happy faces
And sign that slip that's white and blank
Save for the title of your bank.

—Larry Pool

(continued from page 3)

Fire Department again asks homeowners to be certain their house numbers are prominently displayed. Residents who need assistance should contact the Selectmen's Office at 672-4959.

—William B. Winters

Events & Announcements

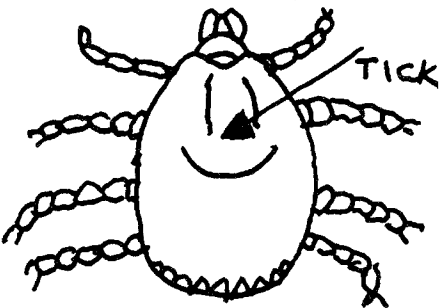
Cornwall Association Conclave: The Cornwall Association will hold its 11th annual meeting at the West Cornwall Firehouse at 4 P.M., Saturday, September 21. Everyone is welcome. Following custom, a short business meeting will be followed by refreshments. The Cornwall Association award will be given jointly this year—to Dave Becker of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department and Ken Keskinen of the Cornwall Housing Corporation. The Association will also donate \$200 to each of the organizations the award recipients represent.

The Association board will hold a regular monthly meeting at 4 P.M. on Saturday, September 14, at the Town Hall. All are welcome.

Cornwall Free Library Preschool Story Hour: Jane Prentice will be the reader, song leader and general organizer of fun for the popular Friday morning program for our youngest library users. The sessions are at 10 A.M.; check *Chronicle* calendar for schedule or call the Library, 672-6874.

- **Computer:** Our new computer will be up and running by the first week in September and all are welcome to browse the CD-ROM collection; Internet link-up is coming soon.

- **Book Sale:** Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, this year's sale will be held the weekend of October 12 at the Library Building. Please contact Ella Clark, 672-4817 or call the Library if you have books to donate.



Many Thanks

To all who responded to last month's appeal with donations and words of support (including a poem!). If you've been meaning to send a check and haven't quite gotten around to it, why not do it today?

Board of Assessment Appeals will meet on Saturday, September 21 from 10 A.M. to noon in the Town Office. Persons who wish to appeal a motor vehicle assessment should come at this time. No appointment is needed and an application can be filled out at the time of the appeal. Persons with very recent vehicle ownership changes may also come at this time to assure that these are properly recorded.

The UCC Women's Society awarded scholarship gifts this year to four students, all from H.V.R.H.S.: Caroline Calhoun, Colby College; Sandra Geyselaers, Wheaton College; Zachary Tyler, the University of Maine; Matthew Wolf, St. Johns College.

CCC Registration: The Cornwall Child Center will open Tuesday, September 3. Children for whom registration is complete may attend on opening morning. The staff will be available after 1 P.M. for registration or information. Visitors are welcome. The phone number is 672-6989.

Cornwall Play Group begins September 4, 10 A.M.—11:30 A.M., St. Peter's Lutheran Church Fellowship Room. Group meets Wednesday mornings except school holidays. Pre-schoolers, infants, nannies, grandparents and dads welcome, as well as moms. For more information, call 672-6101.

A Children's Clothing Swap will take place at UCC Parish House Saturday, September 28, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. Bring no more than one trash bag full of children's winter clothing, shoes, boots and outerwear to swap. No drop-offs, please. For information, call Jane Prentice, 672-6101.

The CVFD Community Birthday Calendar, 1997 edition, can be ordered for \$5.00 from CVFD, P.O. Box 131, Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754, or at Baird's General Store, Berkshire Country Store, Cadwell's Corner or Hedgerows Market. You may include names and dates for up to six birthday listings.

Deadline for ordering is September 20; calendars will be available in early December. Please include \$1.00 for postage if you want your calendar mailed. Advertising space is also offered; call Caren Nelson (672-6865) for information.

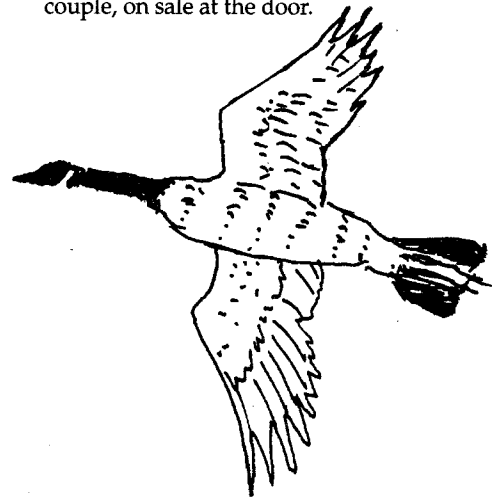
St. Peter's Lutheran Church will hold its first annual tag sale and silent auction on Saturday, September 21 from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. Items available at the sale range from furniture, curtains, kitchen gear, clothes and jewelry to rugs, exercise equipment, stereos and books. The silent auction offers such enticements as the reupholstering of a chair, a year's worth of desserts-of-the-month, gift certificates and vacation getaways.

The Northwest Corner Quilter's Guild will hold its third annual quilt show on Saturday, September 21 from noon to 5 P.M. in the sanctuary of the United Church of Christ. The show will include all types of quilts, old and new.

For information, call Jill Gibbons (672-0033) or Corinne Levy (672-6377). If you have a quilt to show, please call or drop it off between 9 A.M. and 11 A.M. on the 21st.

Cornwall Biographers: The Taconic Learning Center's fall term, beginning September 10, will offer a program billed as *Lives and More Lives: The Biographer's Art*. Classes will feature three Cornwall writers: Spencer Klaw, leading discussion of his book *Without Sin: The Life and Death of the Oneida Colony* on October 8 and 15; Ken Keskinen on Doris Kearns's *Lyndon B. Johnson and the American Dream*, November 12 and 29; and Charles Osborne on November 26 and December 3 about his *Jubal: The Life and Times of General Jubal A. Early, CSA, Defender of the Lost Cause*. For information about the series, call 435-2922.

Annual Ball: The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department will hold its ball at Mohawk on September 7. Hors d'oeuvres and drinks (BYOB) from 7-8 P.M.; music—by Rock n' Roll Heaven—and dancing from 8 to midnight. A door prize will be awarded for the best costume in the ball's theme, the ambience of the '50s and '60s. Tickets are \$20 per couple, on sale at the door.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Here is my tax-deductible contribution of: \$ _____

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