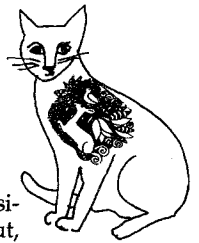




CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 11 : NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 2001



Voters Nix CCS Project

The final tally:

- 416 to continue the Cornwall Consolidated School building project;
- 451 to "terminate and discontinue."

The August 11 vote followed a month of public meetings, private discussions, general mailings, telephone blitzes, Internet invective, and letters to local editors. The vote reversed a December 2 referendum that narrowly approved a \$4,715,000 spending plan put forward by the CCS Building Committee after months of study. About \$280,000 has already been spent or committed—money which may or may not contribute to whatever future plans develop.

The strength of the "silent majority" to halt the project in its tracks surprised many people. At selectmen's meetings on July 10 and 16, and at a Town Meeting on July 28, almost all the speakers—and apparently most of those present—favored continuation. The Building Committee distributed an attractive four-page flier. A well-organized Friends of CCS sent mailings endorsed by 24 people. In contrast, the fragmented opposition was barely heard at public meetings and sent out only two brief mailings, one from Cornwall Friends for Fair Taxation, the other anonymous.

Of course numbers—and the difficulty of projecting them into the future—figured prominently in the debate. Both friends and

foes of the plan tended to seize upon numbers they liked the best. For instance, some voters put little faith in a Board of Finance estimate of a 34.4 percent tax increase over five years (including the building project) because previous numbers they had seen ranged from 18.5 to 50 percent. Such estimates always involve uncertainties and unknowns, like the number of CCS students in another five or ten years. Thirty years ago, no one predicted that the school population would plummet from 200 to 79. Yet this is exactly what happened.

This time around, the state Department of Education projects a 35 percent decline at CCS, from 197 to 128, over the next ten years. Supporters of the building plan cited gross inaccuracies in past state predictions to declare the numbers worthless. Furthermore, they maintained that school building needs are driven as much by program as population. For instance, a gym that meets both state and common-sense standards costs the same whether used by 150, 200, or 250 students at different times in the week.

Both Annie Kosciusko and Phil Hart, co-chairs of the Building Committee, were disappointed, but immediately expressed their willingness to continue looking at other options to solve problems that still demand solution. They appealed for honest and civil communication involving as many people as

possible. One trouble with a silent majority, they pointed out, is that silence does not facilitate the kind of open give-and-take that must precede any sensible step into the future.

Biffie Dahl Estabrook, prominent in the drive to halt the project, would agree with most of the above paragraph. She, too, thinks that it's time to start another search for solutions that must be found. "The town now needs to move in a positive direction," she said. "The trouble is, we've got ourselves into an awkward box. It's time to think outside the box. It's time to reframe some of the questions."

So it's not quite back to square one. According to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, the present CCS Building Committee might continue in an altered form or be technically replaced by a new committee overlapping the old one. Both procedures are legally possible. Gordon hopes the selectmen can be given the time necessary to assess the diversity of opinion in Cornwall before deciding on the best framework for future action. He is confident the town will eventually come together on the issue, but for now the selectmen continue to pursue "that elusive common ground."

—Bob Potter

The Star is Back

The sculptured metal star—properly known as a stellated isohedron—that mysteriously

(continued on page 2)

SEPTEMBER 2001

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3 LABOR DAY Last Weekday at Hammond Beach (p.4)	4 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall	5 Play Group 10-11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church (p.4) Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6	7	8
9	10 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Day Room Park and Rec. 7 P.M. Town Office P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	11 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	12 Play Group 10-11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church (p.4) Cell Tower Meeting 7:00 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	13	14	15 Deadline: October Chronicle Copy Agricultural Fair Noon-3 P.M. Cow Chip Raffle (p.4)
16 Cornwall Library Annual Meeting 4 P.M. Library Michael Pollan, Speaker (p.4)	17 Republican Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	18 ROSH HASHANAH Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	19 Play Group 10-11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church (p.4)	20 Bd. of Education 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	21 Preschool Story Hour 10-11 A.M. Cornwall Library	22 Cornwall Association 9:30 A.M. Town Hall
23	24 Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS ZBA 8 p.m. Town Hall*	25	26 Play Group 10-11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church (p.4) Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	27 YOM KIPPUR	28 Preschool Story Hour 10-11 A.M. Cornwall Library Friends of Cornwall Library Annual Meeting 7:30 P.M. Library (p.4) VFW District Meeting 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	29
30						

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

appeared on the green at Cornwall Bridge several years ago just as mysteriously disappeared not long after. Now, at the request of the Association of Businesses in Cornwall, it's back in place, to the pleasure of local fans.

Thanks to its creator, Jim Young of Cornwall Bridge, those who work in the businesses around the intersection of Routes 7 and 4 have something to look at other than whizzing cars, ignored stop signs, and colliding trucks. This shimmering star is now fitted with an alarm (provided by Jim Graham and Jerry Kelly of Northwest Alarm). The businesses around the green pay for mowing it. Now, if the question of liability insurance (e.g., in case someone should fall on the star and get hurt) can be resolved so that the Department of Transportation can issue a permit, the star should be here to stay. And then it might be joined by works of other sculptors. Will this embellishment serve to slow down traffic around the green? Will it become the nucleus of a new artistic center? Stay tuned.

—Martha Loutfi

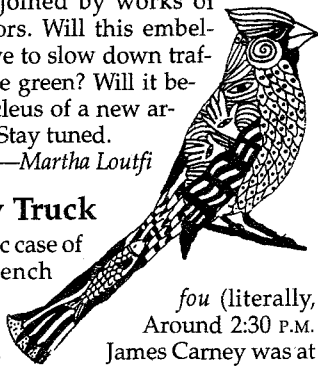
A Crazy Truck

It was a classic case of what the French call a *camion* crazy truck).

On July 31, James Carney was at the wheel of a 14-ton tractor-trailer traveling on Route 128 and carrying 46,000 pounds of asphalt destined for a town paving job next to the video store in West Cornwall. All was well until the rig burned out its brakes on the steep downhill curve leading into the village. As the truck rounded the turn, it accelerated and tipped briefly. Balance was recovered, but Carney could see the Covered Bridge ahead—and a car directly in front of him that he was overtaking. To avoid crushing the car and wrecking the bridge, Carney threaded the needle between The Wandering Moose restaurant and the traffic island on River Road, steered through a screen of shrubbery onto the property just south of the bridge, and, missing the house, sailed off the bank into the river. Somehow the rig remained upright. No asphalt spilled into the water, though some truck fuel did spill, to be recovered by local and state hazardous material crews.

Carney was unhurt; so were the occupants of the car, which subsequently drove on over the untouched bridge, a national historic landmark built in 1864.

The absence of cataclysmic damage, injury, or death from this rapid sequence of events is astonishing. Great credit belongs to Carney, who kept his nerve and used his head. He was lucky to escape injury. Great good luck also attended Russ Sawicki, manager and chef of The Wandering Moose. He had happened to close earlier than usual after lunch, and all the cars were gone from in front of the restaurant when the runaway truck roared through the parking area.



fou (literally, Around 2:30 P.M.

James Carney was at

Ahna and Jeff Petersen, owners of the property Carney hurtled through en route to the river, feel especially lucky. They are parents of a two-year-old son, Noah, who could well have been playing in the yard when the big truck arrived. Though the Petersens, part time residents, have spent many weeks this summer in their historic house by the river, they were absent on July 31.

The Petersens also feel lucky to have had the Cornwall Fire Department around—mostly to help control leakage of hazardous substances such as truck fuel. "They deserve special credit," said Ahna Petersen. The Petersens felt fortunate in their neighbors, who informed them of the accident, and moved their lawn furniture out of the way of efforts to retrieve the truck. "The people were so comforting," said Mrs. Petersen. "I was impressed with their goodness."

—Charles Osborne

Dumping: A Primer

A garbage compactor has been installed and the area between the Transfer Station building and the compactor newly paved. Paine Hauling, which has been carting away our recyclables, is now also removing the compacted garbage to Torrington.

In case you are wondering about mixing magazines in with newspapers for your trips to the dump, this is only part of the great simplification of recycling that has taken place over the past year. According to Recycling Coordinator Lib Tobin Terrall, newspapers, catalogues, magazines, and small-size corrugated cardboard should all be collected in brown paper bags and are slated eventually to become tissues.

Office paper and other better grades of paper, along with flattened non-corrugated cardboard boxes, go into the big bin at the front of the dump building. Paper with staples, paper clips, even spiral-bound notebooks can go in there too. The Connecticut Resource Recovery Association (CRRRA) has ways of removing the metal before reusing the paper.

All forms of kitchen and food containers—except redeemables—glass, plastic (numbers 1 and 2 only), aluminum, tin, and other metal can be commingled in the bins at the left of the building, but please remove container caps first. CRRRA puts it all together on a conveyer belt, blows the plastic in one direction and uses magnets and hand pickers to separate the metals. The remaining glass is then crushed.

Two new items can now be recycled—CDs and inkjet cartridges. They get stowed under the table by the container bin.

—Hanna Grossman

Democrats Name Slate

Cornwall Democrats held their nominating caucus on July 24 with Gordon Ridgway and Earl Brecher again heading the party slate, hoping for another term as First Selectman and Selectman, respectively. The rest of the ticket is as follows: John Green, Treasurer; Helen Migliacci, Tax Collector; Cheryl Evans, Town Clerk; David Grossman and Tom Bechtle, Board of Finance 4-year terms,

and Michael Gannett, 2-year term; Martha Loutfi, Board of Finance alternate; Phil Hart and Becky Hurlburt, Board of Education; Steve Senzer and David Colbert, Planning and Zoning; Nan Frost, Board of Assessment Appeals; Ann Schillinger and Hanna Grossman, Zoning Board of Appeals; and Skip Kosciusko and Josh Perlstein, Park and Rec.

—John Miller

Welcome

Ariana Jasmine Mainville
to Amanda Roepke and Ross Mainville

Good-bye to a Friend

Helen Blake Smith

Congratulations

Jenny Rebecca Goodfriend
to Brett John Piotrowski

Katherine Pawlowski to Michael Soulé

Land Transfers

Marie W. Olko to Salvatore and Christine Lenzo, house and 19.3 acres on Dibble Hill Road for \$685,000.

Heirs of Samuel R. Scoville to James C. Stemm, 23 acres on Tarradiddle Mountain for \$13,000.

Marilyn P. Janowski to Marilyn J. Artushenia, Lot 1B, Mohawk Mountain Road for \$150,000.

Valliere Ann Van Alstyne et al. to State of Connecticut, 185 acres on Route 45 for \$387,200.

Denis and Barbara Jo Curtiss to Carl Raymond D'Alvia and Jacqueline Marie Saccoccio, house and land on Route 128 for \$143,000.

Panta Properties, Inc., to Richard G. and Bianca Langner Griggs, commercial property on Route 128 for \$280,000.



Honors for Arthur

Under a green and white tent held up by several dozen poles, about 100 people gathered for a party on a very humid Sunday afternoon in August to honor the man who was the benevolent king of the Cornwall dump for 26 years. Arthur Brean, cane in hand, his eyes shaded by sunglasses, sat for the festivities with his fellow honoree and dump assistant, Don Hain, while another assistant, Lib Tobin Terrall, presided at a leaning lectern on the uneven grass of the Town Green. All manner of good eats and soft drinks were enjoyed, in-

cluding a nifty brie torte covered with fresh berries by Sue Kochman, and a platter of tiny chocolate-dipped cream puffs by Frankie Reece that disappeared faster than you could say "Cornwall Transfer Station," which is the formal name for the town dump.

Art smiled and frequently kibitzed while a parade of admirers sang his praises with a combination of friendly kidding and warmth, all of it captured on video by Dominique Lasseur. There was even an Olympic touch to the ceremony when 10-year-old Kevin Hubbard walked briskly around the perimeter of the tent, lighted sparkler in hand, while Jane Prentice played the theme from the film *Chariots of Fire* on her violin.

Let me now end this exclusive *Chronicle* coverage of the Brean farewell party with a stanza from the pen of Jerry Blakey, delivered at the festivities by the author himself: "We went to the dump in our cars, trucks, and vans, With a mix of paper, garbage, and paint cans, But now we are met by Art at the gate. He informs us the time has come to separate."
—John Miller



The Essent Deal

Concerned, like so many others in the region, about the sale of Sharon Hospital to the Essent Corporation, Cornwall's three selectmen have added their official voices to those of state officials and ordinary citizens questioning the transaction.

On August 6, the selectmen wrote to Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and Raymond Gorman, Commissioner of Health Care Access. The letter emphasized the importance of Sharon Hospital to the region. "Our safety net," said the letter, "would disappear if the hospital closed." What happens, the town officials wondered, if Essent decides to sell the hospital? What future role will the hospital's endowment play? Are the two state officials, whose approval is necessary for the sale to go through, willing "to assure us of future staffing levels?"

At a late August meeting in Sharon where the question of financial responsibility got another airing, Assistant Attorney General Eliot Prescott asked, if another of Essent's hospitals got into trouble, could Sharon be looked at for collateral? Answer: Yes. Prescott also wondered whether, after 18 months of Essent ownership, services might be cut if the operation were not economically

(continued on page 4)

Letters to the Chronicle

IN APPRECIATION

Despite the impassioned rhetoric on both sides of the Cornwall school expansion issue, there is one thing we can all agree on: the remarkable accomplishment of the School Building Committee. After two years of unremitting meetings it succeeded in hammering out a viable plan on a difficult site that satisfied the inherent space problems; the "must haves" of the disparate members themselves; and finally, the Cornwall voting majority as well.

When the voters changed their minds eight months later, largely on the grounds of affordability, disappointed committee members may have thought that their all-out efforts had, in the end, come to naught. But that is not the case at all. Something good is bound to come out of their body of work. Exactly what that something will be, only a crystal ball can reveal at this point. In the meantime we can only hope that the members of the now-experienced committee will be the nucleus of a new committee when Cornwall revisits our school's persisting needs.
—Scoville Soulé

WON'T HAVE TO KISS A COW

I would like to personally thank all those who worked so hard to save the CCS addition project. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. No one can fault your efforts for they were sincere, constant, decent, and deserving of our gratitude.

To those who tell anyone who will listen that it can be built for \$1.5 to \$1.7 million, I really sometimes feel like saying, "Have at it! You complete the project including the well-designed building, parking, septic system, site work, etc., all the things we had to include for \$1.7 million and I'll do the Dance of the Seven Veils on the Village Green at high noon. And kiss a cow!" After nearly fifty years as a professional architectural designer and construction manager, I'm telling you flat out that you'll never have to endure my dancing.
—Jane Giddens-Jones

MYSTERY PLANE

For the past several months, a large aircraft has been flying through town at such low levels that the ground shakes and the noise is deafening. I spoke with Jim Gabriel (former Popple Swamp Road resident) of the Federal Aviation Administration Flight Standards District Office (860-654-1000). To my surprise, Jim indicated the plane was most likely a military aircraft on a training mission in this area. Lt. Col. Diggett of the United States Air Force 106th Rescue Group stationed at West Hampton Beach, New York (631-288-7408), confirmed this.

He explained that his personnel regularly fly the aircraft at 500 feet through Litchfield County on "low-level maneuvers" as this relates to heat-seeking missile training. The plane only appears to be flying at treetop level. He said if a plane that large was flying that low, roof shingles would be ripped off.

The Lt. Col. readily agreed to bring the air-



craft up to the 1,000-foot level, which was observed the following day. He would like to hear from residents if the new height continues to create a nuisance.
—Allen G. Herkimer, III

ANOTHER SQUEAKER

The August vote is in and about four percent of that vote has stopped the CCS building project. Just about the same percentage that approved the project last December. It seems ironic that regardless of the number of voters who vote less than 5 percent decide what is to be done in Cornwall. I personally was disappointed to see the nearly \$300,000 of Cornwall taxpayers' money and hundreds of man hours spent all for naught. Before we try to start again, some real consideration should be given to what the town wants, needs, and is willing to spend.
—Roger L. Kane

BOOKS FOR GHANAIA CHILDREN

I am sure that many of you have received a letter from the Ghana Fund, explaining our latest effort to build six houses for the children of the Christ Faith Foster Home in Accra. An earlier effort was refurbishing the existing library for educational and other purposes. Thus far, the Christ Faith Foster Home has been educating 300 children with no books. So, I am once again appealing to all of you, not for money, but for books. In order to make the best library possible for the children, we need many books of all different types and levels of difficulty. The books can be new or used. If you have any questions, or if you would like me to pick up your donated books, please call 672-4296. Thank you.
—Heather Dinneen

WE LOVED YOU, CORNUBIA

Among the many contributions Roxana Hammond made to Cornwall was to give us Cornubia Hall—the grand dame of Cornwall Hollow—which became a popular forum for a wide variety of functions and celebrations: exhibitions, yoga sessions, sketch groups, square dances, concerts of chamber music, jazz, Andean folk music, recitals of singers, and instrumentalists. There were also memorial services, anniversaries, and wedding receptions.

The loss of our forum doesn't mean the people of Cornwall will cease to be fun-loving, creative, and caring; it just means that we're going to miss Cornubia very much.
—Marc Simont

THANKING THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department for coming to our assistance on June 10. Without your quick response and immediate assessment of the gravity of our situation, my husband Jerry would most certainly have died before reaching the hospital.

You and all the members of the Fire Department provide an invaluable service to our community. We are very fortunate that you contribute so generously of your time and talents in the service of your neighbors.
—Robin and Jerry Graham

(continued from page 3)

healthy. The response of W. Hudson Connery, Essent's CEO: cutting services would be legal. But "as a practical matter—with the medical staff and others, the risk I'd be taking on their wrath—no. After putting in \$25 million, I don't envision doing anything like that."

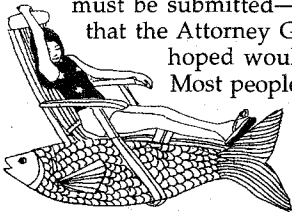
Matters of money and medicine at Sharon Hospital itself are the dominant worries. But almost as serious are concerns about the proposed connection with St. Francis Hospital, a Catholic facility in Hartford. Such worries inspired a Northwest Corner petition signed by many Cornwallians, addressed to Blumenthal and Gorman asking for written assurance that a full range of reproductive and end-of-life services would still be available at Sharon.

Meanwhile, the procedure leading to approval or denial of the sale faces its next deadline on September 15. This is the date by which all documents requested by the state

must be submitted—a requirement that the Attorney General said he hoped would be satisfied.

Most people in this region surely join him in that hope.

—John Zinsser



Events & Announcements

Friends of the Library Annual Meeting: Friday, September 28, at 7:30 P.M. at Town Hall. After a short business meeting, Anne Zinsser will speak about *The Joys of Self Publishing* and show a short film.

House Tour 2001: Once again members of the Cornwall community have graciously agreed to open their homes to the public for the benefit of Prime Time House, the Northwest Corner's only rehabilitation clubhouse for people recovering from mental illness. This year's event will be held on Saturday, October 6, from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. Tim Prentice and the benefit committee have lined up six homes—Colonial to Contemporary—and are in need of room volunteers. There are morning and afternoon shifts. Volunteers may visit each house as guests. If you are interested in volunteering, please call Amy Cady at 672-0233.

Cooling Off

Close votes on big projects are getting to be a tradition in Cornwall. As we move on to the next phase, remember to keep cool and keep informed, which we'll help you to do as long as we have your essential (and we hope unanimous) support. And in this case, you can vote with your checkbook.

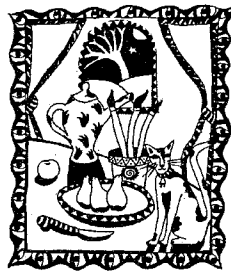
Mohawk's Five-Year Plan: This year's review of the five-year plan for Mohawk Mountain Ski Area will take place at the Town Hall at 7:30 P.M. on Tuesday, September 4. Current projects include renovation of the deck and lighting for the Upper Ledges and Pinnacle trails. Also scheduled for Year One (2001) are repair and renovation of the summit stone tower. Proposals for Year Two (2002) include a "handle tow" for beginner kids. One project for Year Three (2003) is improvement and expansion of the beginner area. For the more distant future, planners are looking at a cross-country ski course equipped with artificial snow.

Cornwall Community Network. There's a new place on the net for the residents of Cornwall to express their opinions. Visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cornwall_community_network and you'll be able to sign up to exchange views with others in Cornwall. If you have trouble signing in with Yahoo, press "Reply" as Yahoo is checking your address.

Friends of the Library Book Sale will be held at the Town Hall/Library on October 6 and 7. Please leave your donations of books, videos, tapes, and CDs at the Library any time between now and October 3. The Friends also need volunteers to help with the sale. Please call Anne Baren at 672-6637.

Park and Rec. Soccer: Cornwall is experiencing a soccer boom. Our top team is a member of the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association, and there are so many eager participants in the program that Park and Rec. is desperate for 12 coaches, assistant coaches, and just plain helpers. Volunteers should call Polly Tobin at 672-6911. Home school and private school students should call 672-2975.

Cornwall Play Group begins September 5 and meets every Wednesday during the school year. We gather in the basement of St. Peter's Church in Cornwall Village at 10 A.M. Babies, toddlers, and preschool-age children are welcome when accompanied by a parent or a care-giver. Come with your ideas for playgroup so we can plan fall activities such as crafts, music, and field trips. Any questions? Call Emilie Pryor at 672-4226.



Art in Cornwall: On Saturday, September 1, from 4 to 6 P.M. there will be a reception at the Library for Jano Fairservis whose show, featuring watercolors of exotic flowers, will continue through the end of September. Harry Colley will exhibit photographs at the National Iron Bank during September.

Hot Art Show: Many viewers braved the muggy heat to attend the Rose Algrant show, where exhibitors sold \$8,000 worth of art. Thanks to the generosity of Mohawk Ski Area and Cornwall Package Store, expenses

were minimal. Several exhibitors contributed all their proceeds, allowing the show's sponsors to donate about \$2,500 to the Clifton Read Rental Assistance Fund of the Cornwall Housing Corporation.

Hammond Beach will be open, with life-guards on hand, only on weekends after Labor Day Monday through the third weekend in September.

Cell Towers in Cornwall? If you're concerned about the location of cell towers in Cornwall—on Popple Swamp Road or elsewhere—come to the next informal meeting on the question, Wednesday, September 12, at the Town Hall at 7 P.M. Contact person: Bianca LaPorta, 672-0089.

Ag Fair: The annual Cornwall Agricultural Fair will take place on Saturday, September 15, from noon to 3 P.M. on the Village Green. Bring vegetables and flowers to be judged. There will be cider pressing, corn grinding and shelling, farm machine demonstrations, and the famous Cornwall Cow Chip Bingo.

The Cornwall Library Association's Annual Meeting: Sunday, September 16, at 4 P.M. in the Library. After a short business meeting and the election of new trustees, Michael Pollan, trustee and author, will speak about his new book, *The Botany of Desire*. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing. Proceeds will benefit the Library's endowment. All are welcome.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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

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