



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 20 : NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 2010



## Cell Tower Approved

On October 21 the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) unanimously voted to approve Verizon Wireless' application to construct a 110-foot cell tower off Popple Swamp Road on land owned by Ralph Gulliver.

Some members of CSC showed an interest in moving the location to Matt Collins' property, which is 300 feet higher, but for unknown reasons this never came to pass. Verizon and CSC refuse to disclose the rent, but reliable sources tell us that it is about \$1,500 a month.

Although there was a fair amount of opposition to this project in town, hearings were sparsely attended and there were few complaints about visibility, environmental effects or scenic and historic values. Instead, protests mainly centered on the fairness of CSC's hearings and the perceived bias of its chairman. In the end, these had no effect on the council's decision. Neither did the very critical brief filed by Town Attorney Perley Grimes asking that the application be denied.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway said he was surprised that CSC ignored the brief, though not by its decision. "They're mostly interested in filling in coverage holes, and their review process doesn't

sweat the details as much as I'd like." However there is no intent to file any appeal or lawsuit.

Before construction begins, CSC must approve a Development and Management Plan, to include a site plan, a certified A-2 survey and provisions for independent environmental inspections. The town will have an opportunity for input on the plan. Verizon representative Ken Baldwin told us, "No hard start date has been established, but the earliest Verizon could start work would be May 16. Construction normally takes two or three months." Cost of construction is estimated to be \$995,000.

The new tower will provide cellular coverage to an additional 10 square miles of Cornwall, including Cornwall Village and good parts of routes 4, 7, 125 and 128, although not as far as Cornwall Bridge or West Cornwall. —Ed Ferman

## Rumsey Hall: 1848-2010

The long-running drama that was Rumsey Hall came to an end at exactly 11:32 A.M. on Monday, October 25.

And it brought the house down.

Star of the show was a humongous Hitachi machine owned by the contractor, R.V. Noad Construction of Goshen. (Odd as

it sounds, the building was demolished by a "construction" company, torn down by what is properly called an "excavator.") With a 10-foot-high cab and moving around on 15-foot tracks, the Hitachi featured an elbowed arm that ended in a grapple claw able to reach the very top of the building.

First, the three-story fire escape was lifted off, up and away – just a spider web challenge for the huge excavator. Then the grapple attacked the rear wall and when that fell, the interior. Onlookers' eyes shifted from the giant claw to Vinnie Noad, seated calmly at the controls. And Vinnie's control was amazing. The machine that could knock down a building could also grasp single sections of iron pipe and set them in a pile aside. Cheers went up when the gentle jaws closed with lapidary precision on a second-floor bathtub, then set it down well out of the way for future sale.

The rest of the drama was all down, down, down. Periodically, Jim Vanicky and other firefighters doused the rubble with arching streams of water to settle the dust. When the building's core was gutted, the front fell in such a way that Bill Hurlburt, in a short pause, managed to rush in and pull Cindy Kirk's sunflowers, which had long graced the pediment, from the wreckage.

(continued on page 2)

## DECEMBER 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball,</b> 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Wednesdays: Tai Chi,</b> 6–9 pm CCS; <b>Karate</b> 6:30–7:30 pm CCS <b>Women's Basketball,</b> 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Sundays: Meditation,</b> 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672–0229			<b>1</b> ♦ PTA Book Fair 8:30 am–5:30 pm CCS	<b>2</b> ♦ PTA Book Fair 8:30 am–8:30 pm CCS	<b>3</b> ♦ PTA Book Fair 8:30 am–5:30 pm CCS	<b>4</b> ♦ Christmas Fair 9:30 am–2 pm UCC ♦ Reading & Collage Family Program 11 am–12:30 pm Library Child Center Benefit Wine Tasting 5–8 pm RRSquare Cafe ♦ Community Contra Dance 7–9:30 pm Town Hall
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> NEW ♦ Reg. One Bd of Ed 6 pm HVRHS ♦ Park & Rec 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Ag Commission 7:30 pm Town Office	<b>7</b> ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> ♦ Cornwall Association 9 am UCC Day Room ♦ Poet Dolores Hayden 4 pm Library
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> ♦ Blood Pressure Screening Noon–1 pm UCC	<b>14</b> ♦ P & Z Public Hearing 7 pm Library ♦ Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 pm CCS Library	<b>15</b> ♦ Deadline: <b>February Chronicle Copy</b>	<b>16</b> ♦ Bd of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> ♦ Christmas Caroling in Village 6 pm Town Hall ♦ Annual Community Christmas Pageant 7:30 pm UCC
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> FULL ♦ Red Cross Blood Drive 1:30–6:15 pm UCC Parish House ♦ Bd. of Education 4 pm CCS Library ♦ Bd of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> ♦ CCS closes for holidays 1 pm	<b>24</b> ♦ Library closed ♦ Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols 5 & 8 pm NCMH	<b>25</b> ♦ Library closed
<b>26</b> ♦ Candlelight Reading of <i>Thirteen Clocks</i> 4 pm NCMH	<b>27</b> ♦ ZBA* 7:30 Town Hall	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> ♦ Cornwall Volunteer Fire Dept. 8 pm W.C. Firehouse	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Jan 1</b> ♦ New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast 9 am–noon UCC Parish House

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

## The Warm Bottom

My six-year-old visiting granddaughter brought her clothes to my room to dress in the morning. On went a pair of underpants, six square inches of flowery cotton; a pair of jeans; and a T-shirt emblazoned with the warning I'M HOT. The entire dressing process took three minutes.

Rather too many years ago, when my sister and I were her age, we lived under the dictates of Dr. Holt's *Care and Feeding of Children*. He advocated the warm bottom. So, when the November winds swept up Cream Hill, our winter underwear appeared and was placed on chairs beside our beds. In the morning chill we began at the top of the heap and worked our way down.

First we pulled over our heads a long sleeved cotton undershirt, three buttons at the neck. Then came the Ferris waist, a vest-like garment hung along the bottom with rows of bone buttons, some on tapes. To this armament we attached in the following order: a pair of long underpants of the same heavy cotton, then a wool flannel petticoat over which we hauled bloomers that matched the stiffly starched dress that was to cover our bulging selves. Often another petticoat, white cotton embroidered along the bottom, added a touch of elegance to those bloomers. Then came the hand-knit stockings worked painfully over the long johns and up over the knees. High shoes, buttoned or laced (we alternated each year), were guaranteed to create a scratchy condition that was only relieved each night when we restored circulation by rubbing our lacerated ankles. The dresses that covered this sartorial munificence could barely be buttoned around our buried waistlines.

My granddaughter doesn't know the meaning of that T-shirt message. WE WERE HOT.

—City Lansing (1994)



(continued from page 1)

Then came the east wing – down. The Hitachi turned around and faced the west wing, which stood for a few minutes on buckling knees before the grapple claw felled it with a feathery touch.

Almost immediately, Vinnie Noad began to break up the debris – pounding, lifting, dropping, repiling. Subcontractor Bill Hurlburt, using a slightly smaller excavator, began to fill the first of what would turn out to be 29 dumpsters. By the following Monday, the last of the rubble had been hauled to Torrington, to be loaded onto boxcars headed for points west. Bill was left to smooth the site, fill the cellar hole and cover the old Rumsey footprint with six inches of topsoil ready for seeding.

A few incidentals: The antique claw-footed bathtub was sold to a Jewell Street

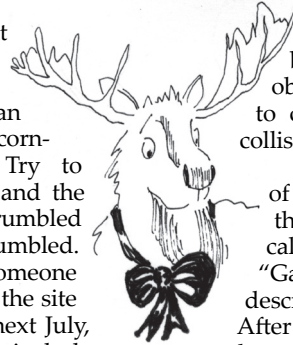


neighbor. The cut stones in the foundation went to neighbor Greg Randall, for a price. Cindy Kirk's prize-winning sunflowers were returned to the artist. The front door was presented to the family of Louis Schutte, legendary headmaster of Rumsey Hall. And several mementos were squirreled away by people who remembered Rumsey in its happier days. For instance, items from a handsome fireplace mantle to a few bricks went to the "new" Rumsey Hall, now located in Washington Depot.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway believes that expenses should be well within the \$50,000 allotted at a Town Meeting on October 1. The town expects to recover the money from building owner Drew Hingson. A lien for all costs will probably be placed on the property, "payable immediately, or appropriate legal action will be taken."

Of course the event was a great photo-op. Anne Baren's remarkable shots can be viewed on the [cornwallct.org](http://cornwallct.org) website. Try to imagine the sounds and the smells as the Hitachi rumbled and the timbers tumbled. Then try to imagine someone mowing the lawn on the site some hot afternoon next July, when the Greek Revival that was Rumsey Hall has morphed into memories.

—Bob Potter



## Some Election Numbers

In the recent midterm elections, an impressive 73 percent of Cornwall voters turned out and followed the statewide pattern. All the winners also won in Cornwall, although uniformly by wider margins than their candidates' performance in both region and state.

Successful Democrats scored winning percentages from 61 to a high of 75 (Roberta Willis and Chris Murphy).

Cornwall's 409 registered Democrats and 209 registered Republicans are balanced by 409 unaffiliated voters, so outcomes aren't easily predictable. It might seem as though many of the unaffiliated are, in fact, closet Dems, but Foley and McMahon both had more fans than all registered Republicans, and the highest tally in town went to Republican Andrew Roraback, who got a staggering 91 percent of votes cast. Even though no Democrat ran against Roraback, Cornwall voters would appear to have actually read their ballots and voted for individuals over party, especially in the most local races.

Still closer to home, the winner among soups provided at the UCC Parish House to benefit the Cornwall Food and Fuel Bank baffled all punditry. At my table were

impassioned backers of each of the many offerings, and to retain editorial impartiality, I nobly sampled, and can unequivocally endorse, the full slate. —Maggie Cooley

## Get Behind a Tree!

The Saturday after Election Day the Cornwall Conservation Trust held its annual meeting (brief, fortunately) and then its president, Hector Prud'homme, introduced Andrew M. LaBonte of the DEP who told people all kinds of things about moose in Connecticut.

There used to be moose hereabouts, but they disappeared many decades ago due to overhunting and loss of habitat. Of late they've begun returning to the state and there are now perhaps 80-odd moose in Connecticut. Hartland claims to be the moose capital of the state, but they wander into much of the Northwest Corner.

They can be dangerous. If you see a moose, LaBonte suggested, you should move slowly and get behind a tree or some other large object. Moose can also be dangerous to cars; there have been moose-car collisions, even in Cornwall.

LaBonte showed quite a few slides of moose and I have to say that they're ugly-looking beasts. Moose calves are not in the least bit cute. "Gawky" would be the best way to describe them.

After the talk I had the opportunity to play around with a moose caller that was lying on a table in the back. Wouldn't it be fun to have moose around our house? I almost slipped the caller into my pocket and made off with it...

—Hendon Chubb

## Good-bye to Friends

"Demi" John C. Calhoun, Jr.

## Land Transfers

Kathleen Tracy O'Flinn to Douglas S.T. Green and Kathryn R.H. Green, two parcels of land (3.515 acres and 9.333 acres) with buildings thereon, at 344 Cream Hill Road for \$1,320,000.

Brae Group, Inc. to William J. Slepoy, two parcels of land (10 acres and 25.744 acres) with improvements thereon at 22 and 35 Pritchard Road for \$850,000.

## Celebrating a Milestone

The Cornwall Woman's Society has been keeping pretty good records for the past 60-odd years, so it was confident in calling this past July's annual Rummage Sale the 64<sup>th</sup>. But then Thalia Scoville, a member for more than 45 years, remembered that the Woman's Society had been in existence long before she joined.

How old *is* the Woman's Society? A search through old records tucked away in an attic revealed that the first Rummage Sale, held in 1925, was also the inaugural year of the Woman's Society, making 2010 its 85<sup>th</sup>. A lot of water has passed under the



# Letters to the Chronicle

Covered Bridge since then. Started by Polly Calhoun and Katie Walker, the Woman's Society has seen many evolutions. When Thalia joined in the 1960s, the group was larger and more active. "We followed Robert's Rules of Order and met twice a month." In addition to the Rummage Sale, the women made clothes for international groups, stuffed pillows for local nursing homes, held bake sales and a Christmas Fair. "We did a lot more and our reach was more global."

Today, the Society concentrates mainly on the Rummage Sale, a three-day event of massive proportions whose reputation is legendary. People are drawn from as far away as California, and buyers start to line up long before the 9 A.M. opening, early birds arriving at 5:30 A.M. to collect their entry numbers.

For this annual event, the Woman's Society relies heavily on a dedicated group of volunteers. Ann Schillinger, who has worked at the sale for more than 50 years, has noticed that "the stock" has changed over the years. "We no longer see pipes and pipe racks or pink poufy hair rollers."

While student grants are the main focus of the Society's fundraising, it also supports 17 area organizations, makes donations to victims of worldwide disasters, helps stock the Food Bank and works to enrich the lives of sick and homebound community members.

The women of the Cornwall Woman's Society go about their mission without fuss or fanfare. With a membership of 19 and an average age of 75, this is a group of women who pack a powerful punch. And, as they recently discovered, they have been punching for a long time – 85 years is a milestone worth celebrating.

—Brenda Underwood



## Library Looking Ahead

At an October meeting of the Library Steering Committee about 20 folks heard a Needs Assessment Report Summary, the final document of the Clemow Consulting Group, which over nine months had held interviews and focus groups with Cornwallians to learn what they thought of the Library.

It was no surprise that high marks were given in several categories: customer service, art shows, programs, classes, and importantly, a place both to relax in comfort and to get the news of neighbors.

The role of the Library as a community center for adults and especially for teens and tweens seemed an area where respondents wanted more: study, games, and book groups; meet-the-author events; creative, exercise, and technology classes; music, readings, and art events; and more up-to-date computers.

**CORNWALL HOUSING CORP. CONCERN**  
 CHC is again asking P&Z to change its zoning rules to accommodate their plans. The fact is that most Cornwall residents will be excluded from the proposed Section 202 housing because the annual income limit is less than \$31,000; the limit at Templeton Farms, the senior housing in Kent, is \$50,600 and even in Canaan, at Wangum Village, the income limit is \$41,000. Since most of Cornwall's elderly will never even qualify for the housing in Cornwall Bridge, this must be why CHC pledged, in their HUD proposal, to aggressively market this project to populations outside of Cornwall!

The P&Z Board will hear CHC's request on December 14 at 7 P.M. The proposed change would impact not just the Cornwall Bridge

There was much discussion of the increasing role of technology in our world, and, therefore, in the Library. Books have been the standard for generations; now "books" can be had in small personal devices. Of course, much depends on the reader, the purpose and subject matter at hand, but keeping pace with technology was seen as critical.

The steering committee expressed the difficulty of choosing the programming and then finding the money for it. Cooperation with other civic groups could attract both participants and funding. It was agreed that the Library's focus needs to be directed toward the benefit of as many as possible, as a "front porch" social place and as an informational source. The Library can serve as a connector: a way citizens connect with each other, and as individuals connect with textual content.

—Ginny Potter

## A Fisherman's Tale

There's a very specific feeling you get when you lose something you care about. It's a mixture of hopelessness and self blame and it can really spoil your day. That's exactly how I felt last month.

I had spent a crisp Sunday fishing in Cornwall. It was a day trip I had meant to take for months, but something always popped up that prevented me from packing up my fishing gear and taking the drive from Brooklyn, N.Y. It didn't really matter that I missed the peak fall foliage by a few weeks. Neither did it matter that the fishing was lousy; as a relative beginner, fishing for me is usually not as productive as it is meditative, peaceful, and absolutely necessary as an antidote to what is my normal state of city chaos. It was a great day.

It was such a great day, in fact, that I lost track of time. After fishing one beautiful

project, but since it would apply to the whole town there is much to be considered – especially the potential impact on the Rumsey Hall property.  
 —Joanne Wojtusiak



## THE SUNFLOWERS

Has it really been 16 years since I painted the mural of sunflowers for Rumsey Hall? Well, Rumsey Hall is no longer, but I'm happy to report the sunflower mural is currently residing on the porch at 33 Lake Road. It has cer-

tainly faded over the years. I thought about touching it up, but no, let it show the years and the weather. My partner, Charlie Grivas, plans to build a frame for the mural and the sunflowers will have a new life here!  
 —Cindy Kirk

but unproductive stretch of the river, I realized I had far exceeded the time I had meant to fish. I brushed the gunk off my waders, organized my flies, changed into dry clothes, stuffed my gear into the car and hit the road. It wasn't until I reached home that I realized my fishing rod and reel weren't there. In my manic rush, I had left them behind.

I spent the evening mourning the loss of my gear, and, in darker moments, the hobby I was really starting to like. There was no way someone would find my gear in a leaf-strewn dirt pull off.

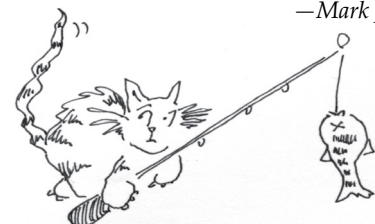
I slept on the problem and decided that it couldn't hurt to post an ad and reach out to local publications. I e-mailed the editors of the *Cornwall Chronicle* for advice, and almost immediately, Brenda Underwood replied. She didn't just agree to keep an ear out. She was determined to find my gear, and within minutes, she succeeded. It was soon carefully packed and on a USPS truck bound for Brooklyn.

It occurred to me later that this rod itself originally came to me out of another act of Cornwall kindness. Last spring I went on a guided fishing trip with Rob Nicholas. During the trip, a freak accident sent the tip section of my rod floating down the Housatonic. Rob felt so terrible that he made sure I didn't leave Cornwall without a full rod, giving me one from his personal collection.

I'm grateful the virtues of honesty, friendliness and helpfulness that make small towns so great still thrive in Cornwall.

The fish, however, might not be.

—Mark J. Norman



## Musing on Mice

Mice, like the poor, are always with us, and just as wars on poverty never quite succeed, neither do wars on mice. We persevere, nonetheless. I provide peanut butter in my Victor snap traps, but the mice have learned how to eat it without getting caught. More successful is the Ketch-All, a contraption that flips the curious mouse into an antechamber. Last winter I opened my Ketch-All to find five pairs of beady eyes looking up at me. I closed the lid, put the trap in the car and drove a mile or so to a likely woodland where I let the mice go. (I

was careful to walk backwards in the snow to mystify the building's owner.)

Although mouse poop on the counter and pistachios in the washing machine inflow pipe (twice diagnosed by Bill Dinneen) are a nuisance, the critters can do more serious damage.

When my truck's brakes failed, it was only after a great deal of downshifting and application of emergency brake that I could stop, roaring into a roadside garage. Mice had chewed through the brake hose.

I asked my neighbors for mouse solutions. Bee Simont swears by an ultrasonic repellent, but Susan Gingert has one "right on the counter, and there are mouse turds next to it every morning." Susan Fox sprayed her cellar walls with ammonia three months ago and her mice still haven't reappeared.

Of course there is always the cat, and cats I used to have, though they weren't always good mousers. Dave Cadwell sings the praises of his mouse policeman rescue cat Catticus Finch who has dispatched all his mice, including the half-dozen Mouse Welcoming Committee who greeted Dave his first morning on Yelping Hill. "There's nothing like a good cat," says Dave. "Catticus is my guy."

The success of the Hav-a-Hart depends

## To People Who Live Away

If you see a red dot on your mailing label it is not a Christmas message. It's a signal that you need to send us \$15 to extend your subscription. We hope you do. Also, please consider the *Chronicle* as a nice holiday gift for absent pals who miss Cornwall.

on steely nerves. Anne Chamberlain (whose car burned to a frazzle, most probably because of a mouse nest in the engine) tells me that Lotte Hanf once brought her Hav-a-Harted mouse to the Mohawk Forest, but it was snowing. The mouse shivered and did not leave the trap. So Lotte brought it home and put it back in the attic.

On the other hand, we have Emily Marsh, Cornwall librarian from 1920 to 1962, who lived in the Historical Society building and trapped mice in the attic. As Bee Simont told me, the trap did not always "make a clean kill," and the kind Miss Marsh hated this, so she kept a pail of water handy in which to put mice out of their misery. But when nights were very cold and she heard the snap of trap and subsequent scuffle of injured mouse, she'd gently warm the water in the deadly bucket before the drowning. —Ella Clark

## Cornwall Briefs

- **Town Crew Foreman** Rick Stone has resigned and the Board of Selectmen expects to name a replacement by January. The position has been posted and those interested can inquire at the Selectmen's Office at 672-4959. Anyone with road concerns can call that office or the garage at 672-6230.

- **The Food and Fuel Bank** has a balance of \$5,000 after spending \$25,000 this past year helping Cornwall citizens with such items as heating, utilities, groceries and medical expenses. Jill Gibbons, program administrator, says donations are the mainstay of the program and are particularly welcome this time of year.

- **NPR in Cornwall:** If you're a chronic listener to National Public Radio (NPR), here's some good news. WHDD-FM (91.9) in Sharon is building a new tower that will allow its signal to reach 97 percent of Cornwall. —John Miller

## Events & Announcements

**Holiday Traditions at UCC:** The Christmas Fair is Saturday, December 4, from 9:30 A.M. to 2 P.M. Crafts, hot lunch, gift food basket raffle at 1:45 P.M., wreaths and more.

Christmas Pageant is Saturday, December 18, at 7:30 P.M. Snow date, December 19, at 5 P.M. Refreshments follow. Call Jane Prentice, 672-6101, by December 15 to be an angel or shepherd.

Christmas Eve candlelight services, "Lessons and Carols" at 5 and 8 P.M., will be at the North Cornwall Meeting House.

The annual New Year's Day pancake

breakfast is Saturday, from 9 A.M. to noon, at the UCC Parish House to benefit the Cornwall UCC building project in April at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

**Library News:** Saturday, December 4, Gannett Christmas cards will be sold at the UCC Christmas Fair. At the Library, from 11 A.M. to 12:30 P.M., Valorie Fischer will read from the new children's book she illustrated, *The Fantastic 5 & 10 (cent) Store: A Rebus Adventure*. Collage making will follow. For family and children five years and up. Call for a reservation; 672-6874.

Saturday, December 11, at 4 P.M., Cornwall poet Dolores Hayden will read and discuss poetry from her new collection *Nymph, Dun and Spinner*.

Sunday, December 26, Boxing Day, at 4 P.M., James Thurber's *Thirteen Clocks* will be read by Tom Walker at the North Cornwall Meeting House.

**A Contra Dance** will be held Saturday, December 4, from 7 to 9:30 P.M. at the Town Hall. Bill Fischer will call.

**Christmas Caroling:** On Saturday, December 18, members of St. Bridget Church will gather on the Village Green in front of the Town Hall at 6 P.M. for an hour of Christmas caroling through the village. All are welcome to join in this holiday tradition.

**Red Cross Blood Drive** will be held Tuesday, December 21, from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Call 1-800-RED CROSS for an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome.

**Calendar Editor Anne Baren** is retiring, having kept us present and on time for Cornwall events for 16 years. Erin Hedden has volunteered to take on the position and will work with Anne this month for January notices. Her address is in the masthead.

## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

### DECEMBER ISSUE

Cindy Kirk, Illustrations  
Maggie Cooley & Cheryl Evans, Editors

### JANUARY ISSUE

Ginny and Bob Potter, Editors  
gnbpotter@optonline.net

MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein

CALENDAR EDITOR Erin Hedden

mom917@sbcbglobal.net

CIRCULATION Nan and John Bevans,

Lucy and Jack Kling

### DIRECTORS

Lisa L. Simont PRESIDENT • John Miller VICE PRESIDENT  
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