



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 2: NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 1992



How's It Going, Gordon?

In a recent interview First Selectman Gordon Ridgway says he hasn't yet had time for a real honeymoon with his wife, Jayne, but he is enjoying a honeymoon period in his new job. "It's a lot of work," says Gordon, "but people are acting complimentary, telling us when we do things right, so it's an upbeat thing so far." He feels the new Selectmen have been handling things pretty well, working together without partisanship, but he is aware that there are some tough problems ahead when they tackle the new budget.

He said that he was hearing more about individual problems related to the recession, that some people have been out of work for many months and are anxious about spending and taxes. They are telling him to be tight-fisted on the budget.

He had not anticipated that a part of his job would be to try to prevent the State Legislature from cutting aid to local towns. The Legislature is discussing drastic cuts, and he is meeting regularly with Selectmen from neighboring towns in order to organize opposition to the cuts. He says he enjoys these meetings because there is a

cooperative spirit — "we are all in the same boat."

He says that he and the other Selectmen are all working very hard. They are meeting about twice a week and all three are holding down their other jobs as well.

— Marie Prentice

School Budget Pressure Down?

They laid off an English teacher at Cornwall Consolidated School and students in the upper three classes are now getting up to an hour less English instruction a week. In spite of this, the Board of Education budget for the current year went up \$115,976, or 8% over 1990-1991. What can we expect this time round? Last year some people felt they didn't have enough information. We'd like to share some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that the increase next year should be a lot less. Last year enrollment of Cornwall students at HVRHS jumped 32%, leading to a rise of over 25% in high school tuition costs. This year enrollment is up only 13.5%; if other towns' enrollments go up enough, Cornwall's share of the high school budget could even

decrease. Last year teachers' salaries were up more than 8%; this year the rise is just over 3%. Also, last year the state made us take on another school bus; no big new expenses are expected in the current year.

The bad news is that we can expect almost no state Educational Cost Sharing money. Three years ago, the state decided to concentrate its cost-sharing in the towns with the smallest resources and the greatest problems. Grants for the richer towns, in Region One (that means all towns except Canaan and North Canaan,) were supposed to be frozen at no less than the current level, which in Cornwall's case was \$52,907. Then in the current state budget crisis they decided they couldn't keep this commitment, so aid to the richer towns was cut, based on students' mastery scores. In last year's budget we anticipated a grant of \$54,339 but we only received \$24,832, which works out to \$139 a student. This compares with \$1,417,963 or \$2544 a student in North Canaan, \$1008 a student in Canaan, and \$514 a student in Kent. Kent gets more money than Cornwall largely because its students don't score as well. The silver lining to this cloud is that

(continued on page 2)

FEBRUARY 1992

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
The Board of Tax Review will meet on the 10th, 11th, & 15th at the Town Offices. See times after symbol Ⓕ below. You can just go, or call 672-2709 for an appointments. Ⓕ Adult volleyball every Tuesday 7:30-9:30pm CCS Help us get the calendar right. Please call by the 20th about upcoming events or meeting changes. Ⓕ Ice skating every Monday at Salisbury School indoor rink 7-8pm. \$1 per person, children 5 years and under free. Soft hats required.						 NM 3, FQ 11, FM 18, LQ 25	1
2 GROUNDHOG DAY Agricultural Advisory Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse	3 Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Hall	4 Ⓕ Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Off. Inland Wetlands* 7:30pm Town Hall	5	6	7	8 Poetry reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner	
9 Plan. & Zoning 7:30pm Town Hall	10 5 to 7 Ⓕ Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Office CPR training (first class) 7:30-10pm Firehouse (p.4)	11 11 to 4 Ⓕ Ⓕ Paintings by Hellen & Jean Gazagnaire Cornwall Library Hous. Riv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS Lib.	12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY	13 Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm First Church	14 VALENTINE'S DAY Valentine's Day dance 8-11pm CCS (p.4)	15 10 to 1 Ⓕ Book signing & discussion of teenage pregnancy 2-4pm HCMH Lakeville (p.4)	
16	17 PRESIDENTS' DAY Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Hall	18 Ⓕ Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Hall HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm HS Library	19	20 Board of Ed. 7:30pm CCS Library (p.1) Bd. of Finance 7:30pm Town Hall	21	22 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY	
23	24 Bd. of Selectmen 7pm Town Hall Z.B. of Appeals* 7:30pm Town Hall	25 Ⓕ	26	27 Cornwall Chronicle Assoc. meeting 4:30pm Town Hall (p.4)	28	29	

*Check time and place at Town Office.

(continued from page 1)

Cornwall is getting so little already that in the likely event that they cut us further, it isn't going to have much of an impact.

Fortunately, Cornwall's cost per student has been under control recently. The last big jump in cost per student was in 1989. Since then it has averaged less than inflation.

'85-6	'86-7	'87-8	'88-9	'89-90	'90-1	'91-2
COST PER STUDENT AT CONSOLIDATED						
\$4477	\$4765	\$5845	\$7055	\$6719	\$6951	\$7156
COST PER ALL STUDENTS AT CCS & HVRHS TUITION*						
\$4625	\$5728	\$6596	\$7373	\$8118	\$8098	\$8463

*Includes regional pupil and administrative services, some of which benefit CCS students but are out of our local control.

Some people are saying that with a rise in CCS enrollment from 111 three years ago to 143 currently we need to begin thinking about adding to teaching staff. Others feel that in the current hard times we should hold the line. The Board of Education wants to answer questions and hear people's opinions at their February 20 meeting. If you have questions and can get them in to the school or one of the Board members by the 19th, they'll have the answers ready at the meeting.

— *Hendon Chubb*



HVRHS: The Facts, Please

First of all, let's get the facts straight. The Cornwall Board of Education is elected by Cornwall voters to serve as an agent of the Connecticut State Board of Education and is legally mandated to provide education for all children in Cornwall aged 3-21 (or completion of high school, whichever comes first). Theoretically, given the varied curricula required to provide an adequate education at a secondary level, it is not economically feasible to do that. So, the Cornwall Board of Education has chosen to pay tuition for our high-school-age children and send them to HVRHS. A contract could be made with Torrington or New Milford or wherever, but Cornwall has chosen to contract with HVRHS. It is also a legal mandate that the Cornwall school district must have a Superintendent of Schools and must have a Director of Special Studies. Again for practical and cost-saving reasons the Cornwall board has chosen to contract for those services through HVRHS.

The Cornwall Board of Education is not relieved of its responsibilities for secondary-school-age children in this town just by virtue of contracting with HVRHS. It is the Board's responsibility to keep tabs on the provider to be sure that we are getting what we want for our children. To

that end, the Cornwall Board appoints a representative to the HVRHS Board of Education. That representative answers to, represents, and takes direction from the Cornwall Board of Education.

As the recently appointed representative of the Cornwall Board of Education to the HVRHS Board of Education, one of my crusades is to clear up misunderstandings about how the system works and who does what and why it's done that way. In my next article I'll be explaining the workings of the HVRHS Board of Education. I welcome questions and can be reached at 672-6216.

— *Becky Williams*

Busy Selectmen

The Selectmen continue a busy every-Monday-at-7 p.m. schedule. The McLean contract is ready for signature; the First Selectman's office will soon be ready for painting. On a negative note, a letter from State Budget Director Cibes warned us not to assume state aid to us would remain level — it has been 10% of our town budget. The Selectmen are to attend a legislative breakfast to lobby on this.

Cost figures are being collected for marketing recyclables CRRA won't take, alone and jointly with other towns. It will take burnable bulky waste.

The Selectmen and Road Foreman have updated the 1987 Road Survey by personal inspection and are setting priorities. Because a total possible cost of some \$2,000,000 is prohibitive, a 3-year program of maximum miles treated by the least costly method is being considered.

CHC Receives Gift of Two Home Sites

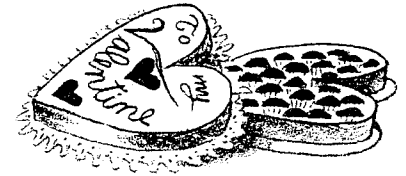
Through the generosity of Anne and Tom Hubbard, the Cornwall Housing Corporation has received the gift of two parcels of land to be included in the affordable housing program. The adjoining two-acre parcels are located on Route 7 opposite the Kugeman Village site. One of the parcels has a two-bedroom home ready for occupancy. The other parcel, the former Mergian home, will require extensive renovation.

The corporation expects to have the parcels utilized as soon as the leasehold conditions are drawn up. It is hoped that the leasehold agreements will be completed within the next two months. At that time the Pierce Lane parcels will also be made available for prospective homeowners.

Discussion with Town Street residents has continued concerning the parcel offered to the corporation. Final action will be taken at an upcoming meeting.

Because of delays created by the change of state administration, the Department of Housing is now expected to give final approval for Kugeman Village this spring, with construction to follow during the summer.

— *Ken Keskinen*



Welcome

Alexander Hunter Caffee
to Donna and Mark Caffee

Shelby Elizabeth Baird
to Lori and K.C. Baird

Congratulations

Amy Lynch and Gregory Matthew Marsan

Joanne McMillan and Anton Kuskin

Land Transfers

Steve M. & Leith Speiden Foote to Cornwall Housing Corporation, 5 lots on Pierce Lane.

Albert C. Waller to Edward J. Piszek, property on Everett Hill.

DeWitt B., Jr. & Elaine V. Boyce to Robert V. Re, land on Rt. 7.

Patrick H. Griffin to Jack W. Richmond, house & land on Sharon Goshen Turnpike.

Gerard W. & Patricia M. Smith to Ira B. Shapiro & Jacqueline Dedell, land on Seeley Road.

P & Z — Sawmills & Skating

As you may know, the Superior Court dismissed the appeal against the sawmill amendment, which, while reducing the setback, added more specific requirements. However, the plaintiffs have appealed this decision to the Appellate Court. That ruling and any decision on the suits filed against the Stevens' mill special permit will be months away. The P&Z meeting also approved a special permit application for a home occupation (sculpture) by Tim Prentice [about time! *The Eds.*] and for the Town of Cornwall to establish a skating rink behind the West Cornwall Firehouse.

— *Ginny Potter*

Appeal Denied

At a special meeting Jan. 9, the Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously denied an appeal by David Epperson to establish an antique shop in a prohibited zone. The following reasons were given: 1. The alleged hardship, that the house and lot pre-existed the 1-acre zoning, was self-inflicted, since the applicant was only a prospective buyer, and no evidence suggested the property was unmarketable as residential property. Nor was hardship found in the location of the lot close to land zoned differently, since to allow this would mean to place the integrity of zoning at risk along any zone boundary. 2. No uniqueness of situation was found, as many parcels and buildings predate zoning and/or lie along

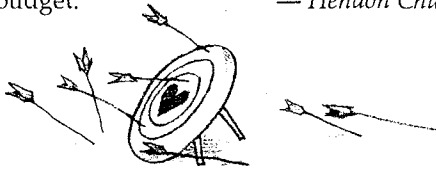
zone boundaries. To allow the creation of a nonconforming use on no strong ground would establish a dangerous precedent. 3. The character of the neighborhood would be altered by the introduction of a commercial use into a residential neighborhood.

— Phyllis Nauts

Rumsey Gym

In response to a request from Park and Rec., Gordon Ridgway and building inspector Bill Jencks went over Rumsey Gym to see what work would be needed to make it usable for things like dances and kids' events. They found it wouldn't cost much to bring it up to code, but it would be expensive to insulate. It was decided to hold off on any decisions until the Building Committee recommendations are received in the late spring. At that time it might be possible to do some work under the current budget.

— Hendon Chubb



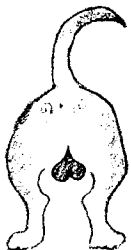
The Mighty Hoose

The Housatonic River Commission, with representatives from seven towns, monitors all activities affecting the river, assesses potential problems, and designs guidelines for river protection. Monthly meetings! Conferences! Homework! Busy members assembling the whole picture needed to define what can be done to keep modern pressure from spoiling a beautiful river, our Housatonic.

1992 Projects and Issues: 1. GE's mandate to clean up PCB contamination. 2. Public relations and safety values of Housatonic Riversignage, cost, placement. 3. Visual impact of new construction and TV dishes. 4. Illegal dumping of material and hazardous waste in New Milford. 5. Acts producing erosion and siltation. 6. Construction and placement guidelines for new docks. 7. Meeting with railroad representatives to determine their plans for growth, track upkeep, and accidents. 8. Hinsdale, Massachusetts, proposal for a major dump site by a Florida developer shows little concern for the environment, reservoir or water drainage to the Housatonic. 9. Department of Environmental Protection river enforcement and budget cuts.

The HRC will play a role in Jacob's Pillow's plan to use the Housatonic as its theme for 1992. With members George Brown and Phil Hart already practicing a few dance steps, we were sorry to hear that George is retiring from HRC. Not Hollywood, but other roles in town government call.

— Cilla Mauro, HRC Clerk



Letters to the Chronicle



VISIT TO NICARAGUA

Over the Christmas holidays I went to Nicaragua with a delegation from the Capitol Regional Conference of Churches. I was both a translator and unofficial ambassador from Cornwall — many thanks to those who contributed generously to the fundraising!

We visited Ocotal, a small town both blessed and distressed. I could see the distress when I visited the hospital, especially in the shortages of essentials such as oxygen, and also in talks to the daycare center director who is facing budget cuts. The blessing is apparent in the spirit of a courageous people who persevere with community projects in spite of very scant resources.

Here in Cornwall the community spirit is also alive and well. Despite differences in climate, language, food, customs and standard of living, the towns of Ocotal and Cornwall have much in common. Thank God!

— Carey McDonald

FROM THE LION'S MOUTH

Let me introduce myself to that shrinking number of you who have not yet seen me in the wild. The zoological types long ago Latinized me *Felis concolor*. More commonly I'm called cougar, puma, catamount, but the name I prefer is mountain lion. It has a powerful ring to it, don't you think?

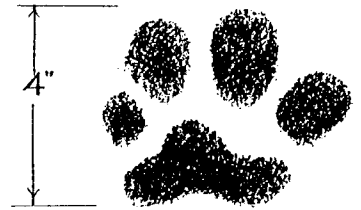
Anyway, why am I writing? Simple. We are here. Not a whole lot of us. But enough for several solid family groupings. So the Chronicle doesn't have to ask someone at Sharon Audubon if we're around. We ARE around. In your January issue Joseph Ellis reported sighting a ML near the Kent Greenhouse two years ago on a Friday night in November. That was me, Joe. It was getting close to Thanksgiving and we frequently get our turkeys in those cornfields on either side of Rt. 7. Less white meat and a little gamey but tastier than woodchuck or possum.

More now on your letters. Lisa Lansing saw a ML this past spring. Well, I saw Lisa too, framed in her kitchen window, tawny looking in a kind of ratty bathrobe. Come on Lisa, new house — new bathrobe!

A few more comments. We do have a sort of "eerie nighttime scream." Hey, it gets scary in the woods at night, the shadows and the tall trees squeaking in the wind. Sometimes makes me jump.

Judy Parker wrote that she saw an adult ML with a "big kitten" crossing Rt. 128 just west of 4/43. That adult is a special friend of mine and, Judy, you ought to see that kitten now. We had named him "Dick" last summer but what with your local elections in November we recently gave him a more politically correct name, "Gordon."

One more thing, I love the Chronicle and especially the ML Letters. Keep them coming, and maybe I'll drop you another line.



IT'S A BIG JOB

A Board of Roads would help Cornwall. Our extensive road problems are being attacked with a will. The selectmen, road foreman, and crew, plus help from Ralph Gold and Hendon Chubb, are off to a good start. Still, they can use all the help they can get, now and in the years ahead.

Our roads, through Cornwall's rocky hills, are no easy problem. They suffer from neglect and some from bad design. Bigger trucks and more traffic have not helped and the wear and tear they impose will increase. All this, and bridges to replace or not to replace.

Decisions abound. There are choices of methods and materials to renew foundations and surfaces and drainage — what to do first and what can wait. The planning of a maintenance program will include examining costs and new methods that might be tried. And there will be the evaluation of work done and methods used.

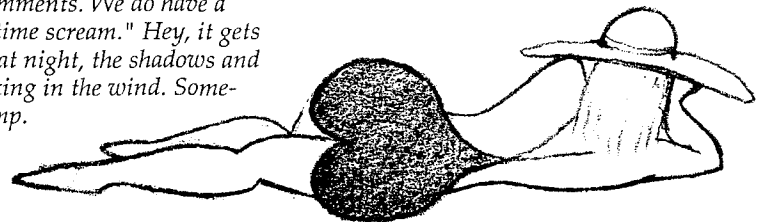
We spend more on roads than on anything except education. How to allocate our limited resources, both money and time, deserves all the effort we can assemble. So I hope the selectmen will appoint a Board of Roads any minute now.

— Tom Bevans

THANKS FROM HABITAT

Thanks to all the Cornwall and other supporters of Habitat for Humanity who on January 18th helped celebrate the proposed gift of property from the Cornwall Housing Corporation. Special thanks to David and Alice Cadwell who provided Cadwell's Corner and their help; Anne Chamberlain and John Miller for delightful "house" music; and all those who expressed interest and support for affordable housing.

— Paul Baren



More Republican Members

An enthusiastic GOP caucus on January 14 elected ten new Town Committee members: Don Hedden, Gerry Kenniston, Maureen Donahue, Joan Thitchener, Peter Russ, Bill Hurlburt, Susan Simons, K.C. Baird, Lisa Cruse and Hunt Williams, enlarging the committee to 25 members.

— Jack Forster

Happy Birthday to Us

Tom Bevans first brought up the idea of a monthly Cornwall paper in 1990. The reaction was along the lines of: "Nice idea, Tom, but not very likely. Where are you going to find the money, the volunteers?" Tom wouldn't let the idea go, and he convinced The Democratic and Republican Town Committees and The Cornwall Association to finance the first three issues.

Tom and Ed Ferman edited the first (Feb. 1991) issue. They were joined by Lisa Lansing and George Kittle for the next three issues. Other editors signed on, and each issue now has one or two new people joining an experienced hand.

The editors choose writers to cover town meetings and other functions. Other writers offer feature stories such as sugar making or lion sightings.

The calendar is an important part of the *Chronicle*. Every item must be collected and checked, requiring as many as 35 phone calls each month.

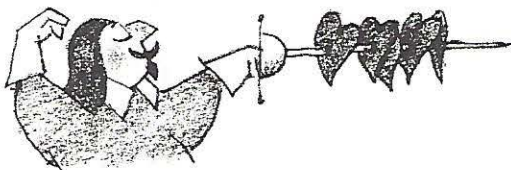
We have two meetings each month around someone's dining table: the first to plan the paper, the second to organize the material that's been submitted. Then Tom lays out the paper, including the previously acquired illustrations for the month.

Now it's off to the printer (the first of three or four trips) with the typed manuscripts and layout. Proofs are read and corrected, and last-minute items are inserted.

We get finished copies from the printer and scramble to divide about 1000 of them into Post Office-specified packages for delivery to all Cornwall residents. Then we paste labels on some 170 copies for out-of-town addresses, a growing list of subscribers in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, California, Massachusetts, Florida, Washington, D.C., and even Paris.

This issue marks the paper's first anniversary, not bad for an unlikely idea. The volunteers and the money were found; we thank you all and ask you to renew your commitment in 1992. A birthday check wouldn't hurt.

—Margaret Bevans & Ed Ferman



Cady Out, Miller In

The Jan. 14 Democratic Caucus very regretfully accepted Scott Cady's resignation as Chair and thanked him for doing a superb job in his year-and-a-half in office. The new officers, all elected unanimously, are John Miller, Chair; Lisa Lansing, Vice Chair; Rita Quinn, Secretary, with Judy Gates as backup; and Margaret Tully, who continues as Treasurer. Current members of the Town Committee were all reelected, with the exception of Susan Bate Williamson, who resigned after many years of extraordinary service in many capacities. Ann Peterson was elected to replace her.

— Phyllis Nauts

The Woman's Society

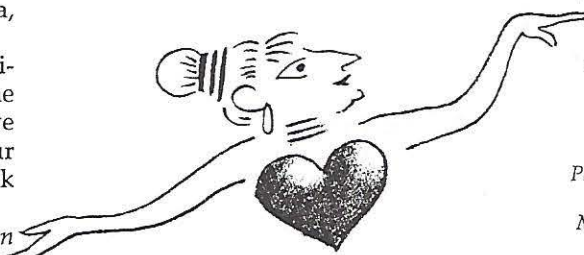
For 68 years the Woman's Society of the United Church of Christ, Cornwall, has faithfully followed the Biblical injunction, "Let your light so shine," with a remarkable record of clothing and gifts of money sent to many good causes in the U.S. and around the world.

The Society takes great pride in awarding scholarship funds for college and other educational programs to Cornwall boys and girls who demonstrate fine scholastic records, motivated character and financial need. Church membership is not required, only residence in Cornwall.

The Society is truly a community organization in which all women are most welcome to join. For newcomers it is a splendid way to make new friends and for those who have belonged for many years a way to preserve old friendships and forge new ones.

Two fairs, the Christmas Sale and the famous Rummage Sale, are the source, along with gifts to the Memorial Fund, of money which is carefully and thoughtfully given to a long list of charities. The Society is deeply grateful for the army of helpers who make these sales possible; it is at those times that the community spirit really shines out.

— Helen W. Tennant



Events & Announcements

CPR Training: The EMR squad is offering a course in CPR at the West Cornwall Firehouse, Monday evenings February 10 through March 2 from 7:30 to 10:00. The fee is \$10. Take the course. CPR saves lives!



Needed: Items for Auction: Intriguing items including both goods and services are needed for an auction to benefit the Cornwall Child Center. The auction, which will be held on Sunday, March 22, will raise funds for a permanent home for the center. Contributions for a live or silent auction are welcome. Please contact Jean Vitalis, 672-6880.



Scholarships: Applications for scholarships from the Woman's Society of the United Church of Christ, Cornwall, may be picked up from Thalia Scoville or at HVRHS. The applications are due by May.



Valentine's Day Dance: Friday, Feb. 14, 8-11 p.m. at the Cornwall Consolidated School. Music from the 40s to the 90s, "swing to fling to everything!" for adults of all ages.

Bring your date,
Bring your mate,
Or ... await your fate!

Sponsored by Cornwall's Park & Rec. Admission: \$3.



Discussion of Teenage Pregnancy: On Feb. 15 from 2-4 p.m. at the Housatonic Center for Mental Health in Lakeville. Joelle Sander of Cornwall & NY, author of "Before Their Time," will sign books and lead the discussion. Area professionals will participate. Call 435-2529 by Feb. 14 if you plan to attend. Free.



Chronicle Meeting: The Cornwall Chronicle Association will hold its annual meeting on Feb. 27 at 4:30 p.m. at the Town Hall, in order to become incorporated. Everyone who has donated to the Association is entitled to vote.

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