



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 3: NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 1993



## Hurrah for CCS

In this year's Mastery Tests for elementary school pupils, CCS scores were higher than those of any other town in the state.

Although obviously delighted with the students' performance, School Principal William Oros said, half seriously, "It's tough being at the top. We have no place to go but down."

The tests, a Connecticut educational tool that has been used to monitor the progress of fourth, sixth, and eighth grade students since 1985, set state mastery goals in language arts, reading, and mathematics, and also set standards below which students are judged to need remedial help. In no subject area did CCS students dip into the remedial-help category, and all fourth and sixth graders matched or exceeded the state mastery goals in all three subjects. One hundred percent of the eighth grade pupils also met the math goal, 93% of them were at or above the reading goal — but only 38% topped the goal for writing.

"Our teachers are discussing how to be more effective in teaching writing," Mr. Oros said. "In some ways the tests are a nuisance, but they do provide us with a reality check."

CCS has ranked highest in the state for three years now, but never before have the scores been so high. "Next year the format of the tests is going to change," Mr. Oros said. "No more multiple-choice questions, no filling in blanks. It will be interesting to see how the new approach will affect our scores."  
— Barbara Klaw

## Selectmen on Cadwell's Menu

On Jan. 11 the selectmen held a breakfast meeting at Cadwell's. They said it was to encourage citizen participation, but maybe they were looking to have some fun, too. The selectmen work hard, but they would be the first to admit that their meetings are not usually very exciting. Earlier in the month, for example, their agenda included fuel tanks, transfer of an easement, and the minutiae of voting in the Rumsey referendum. Often as not, the only people present at their meetings are reporters.

Well, there were lots of people at Cadwell's. Some of the folks hadn't heard about the meeting and were there for a coffee and an English muffin on their way to work. They looked a little puzzled when Hector Prud'homme got up and asked Gordon Ridgway a series of intelligent

questions about issues affecting the town, but they didn't seem to mind. They may even have been impressed as Gordon talked about the need to be thoughtful about priorities when the town's resources are limited.

Things got lively when Dave Cadwell asked why the Housatonic Railroad runs whistling freight trains through West Cornwall between 2:00 and 4:00 every morning. If this is an example of their judgment, he wondered whether we could trust them on other issues like shipping toxic materials. Given that they're a taxpayer-supported operation, are they accountable to us taxpayers? Or to anyone? Some people argued that the railroad has to run at night because they're fixing the tracks during the day; others questioned whether it needs to be at two in the morning. Rita Quinn said you have to make allowances when people are trying to run a business. The railroad goes right by her front yard, and she wasn't going to speak for her husband but she and her children love it. They sometimes get up at 2:00 a.m. just to enjoy the whistling. Someone asked Pat Quinn what he thought; he said he was going to keep his mouth shut.  
— Hendon Chubb

# FEBRUARY 1993

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Great Child Care auction coming up on March 21!	<b>1</b> 7pm Town Hall Skating every Mon. 7-8pm Salisbury School \$1 donation	<b>2</b> Agri. Adv. Comm. (slide show) 7:30pm CCS Inland Wetlands 7:30pm Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Office	<b>3</b> West Cornwall Merchants Ass'n 10am Cadwell's Corner	<b>4</b> Bd. of Ed./PTO 7:30pm CCS Lib. Every Thursday: Sr. Citizen lunch & shopping trip (p.4)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Town Meeting Rumsey debate 7:30pm CCS (p.2)
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Floating Selectmen's meeting 8am* P&Z 7:30pm Town Hall Skating 7-8pm	<b>9</b> Hous. Riv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS Library	<b>10</b> Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm CCS Library	<b>11</b> Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC* Sr. Citizen trip (p.4)	<b>12</b> LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY	<b>13</b> Registration for new voters 9am-noon Town Office (p.4) Poetry Reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner
<b>14</b> VALENTINE'S DAY	<b>15</b> PRESIDENTS' DAY Skating 7-8pm Conservation Comm. 7:30pm Town Office*	<b>16</b> 7pm Town Hall	<b>17</b> David Orrell's paintings Cornwall Library	<b>18</b> Board of Ed. 4pm CCS Library Board of Finance 8pm CCS Library Sr. Citizen Trip (p.4)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Rumsey vote noon-8pm Town Hall (see pp. 2 & 4)
<b>21</b> Concert for Habitat 3pm Norfolk Public Library (p.4)	<b>22</b> WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY Skating 7-8pm HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm HS Library Z.B. of Appeals 7:30pm Town Hall (if necessary)*	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Sr. Citizen trip (p.4)	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	TOWN MEETINGS: There will be another town meeting to vote on the granting of a lease on land in Gannett Park to the Child Center.* Town meetings are often scheduled too late to be put on the Chronicle calendar. They are announced a minimum of five days in advance in the Torrington Register, and notices are posted in the Town Office, the three Post Offices, and Baird's and Yutzler's.					 FM 6 LQ 13 NM 21

\*Check time and place at Town Office. † United Church of Christ

## Bizarre Request

Town Clerk Barbara Dakin has received a request for information on obtaining a permit to disinter Henry Opukahaia (known in Cornwall by the anglicized name Obookiah). A Hawaiian committee, headed by a person claiming to be a collateral descendant of the deceased, is interested in returning his remains to the Islands. Henry Obookiah died here of typhus in 1818 and his grave is in the older part of the Cornwall Cemetery on Route 4, near Cornwall Village.

Obookiah came to the United States as a young lad in 1809 under somewhat obscure circumstances, and later was found weeping on the steps of Yale College because he had no hope of obtaining an education. His situation evoked widespread sympathy, and had a part in leading the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to establish the Foreign Mission School, which it placed in Cornwall in 1817, to educate "heathen" lads so they could carry the Christian faith back to their homelands. Several Hawaiians in addition to Obookiah were students at the school. Its largest group were American Indians, two of whom married Cornwall girls, creating an uproar largely responsible for closing the school in 1826. The interest in Obookiah and the school also contributed to sending the first American missionaries to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) in 1819.

Though Obookiah did not live to return to his homeland, he is regarded by many as Hawaii's first Christian and as an important symbol of the bridge between the Islands' native culture and Christianity. For decades people from Hawaii, both individuals and groups, have come to Cornwall to visit and decorate his grave and hold memorial services. Some years ago the Hawaiian legislature authorized a historic marker to decorate Obookiah's gravesite. Except on ceremonial occasions, the brightly colored and unusual marker is kept at the Cornwall Historical Society, lest it be stolen from the grave's isolated location.

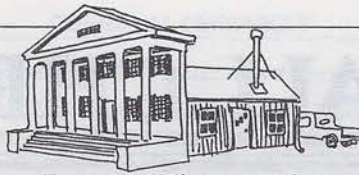
— Michael Gannett

## P & Z: Housing & Sawmill

At its regular January meeting the commission approved a zoning permit for the Cornwall Housing Corporation to construct the Kugeman Village multi-family housing, the final okay in a voluminous stack of requirements.

Reporting on old business, the chairman read from the Superior Court decision on the appeal taken against the special permit to allow a sawmill to be operated by Larry Stevens. The judge determined that the clarifications added to the site plan after the close of the hearing were new evidence, and she remanded the case to the commission for another hearing. However, the attorney for the applicant conveyed the intention to reapply at the February meeting.

— Ginny Potter



## Rumsey Time Again

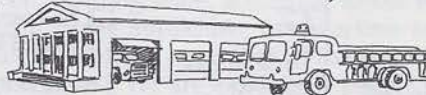
Rita Quinn, chairman of the Municipal Building Committee, speaking to a town meeting, put it very honestly: "We were hoping that it would jump out at us ... that this is the way to go," she said, "But it just hasn't happened."

Quinn was speaking about her committee's months and months of hard work ... about the feasibility study it had commissioned ... about needed town office space ... and what role if any Rumsey Hall might take in this Cornwellian dram. What Quinn meant by the remark was that her committee was unable to come up with a specific recommendation. And so, she and finance chairman Ralph Gold and architect Ken MacLean spent almost three hours dispensing information about options, about financing these options by increased taxes, and then tried to answer questions solicited by the good-humored moderator, Peter Hammond.

The meeting, which took place at the CCS gymnasium, on Friday evening, Jan. 20, attracted about 150 people. Using a series of slides, MacLean described renovating Rumsey, minus its back wing, for town offices. Cost: \$1.823 million. Razing Rumsey and building a new town office on its site. Cost: \$1.679 million. Renovating the Rumsey gym with some office space and a large meeting room, \$361 thousand.

Saturday, Feb. 6, we will gather once again in the CCS gym to debate all this information. Two weeks later, on Saturday, Feb. 20, we vote. What exactly we vote on could be rather tricky. As the *Chronicle* went to press it appeared that the voting machine would ask us to cast a "yes" or "no" vote on both renovating Rumsey and on a new town office replacing Rumsey. If one of the "yes" groups comes out on top that's it. But if the "no" votes carry the day, it's back to the drawing board for Quinn, MacLean & Co. and Rumsey Agonistes goes on.

— John Miller



## Squirrels, Squirrels Everywhere

The astonishing number of gray squirrels we've been seeing this fall and winter — skittering all over our bird feeders, scampering around trees and lawns, and squashed on the roads — are the result of the summer of 1991 and the winter that followed, according to Doug Radziewicz, the animal expert at the Sharon Audubon Center.

Summer 1991 produced a bonanza crop of acorns, which fell in a thick carpet under each oak tree, and the winter of 1991-1992 was mild. The squirrels prospered and, as is their custom, each family

produced two litters of babies.

Any environment, according to Radziewicz, will eventually reach its "carrying capacity" — all the animals the habitat can support — after which there is typically a population "crash." Should this winter be a cold one, and because the 1992 acorn crop was sparse, such a crash might be on its way in our area now. We won't know for another year.

— Barbara Klaw

## Sybil Perry's Library Show

Judging by Sybil Perry's lengthy resumé she's done a lot in little time, a small sampling of which is on exhibit at Cornwall Free Library. These works on paper are mostly in watercolors which are like veils, filmy, smoky colors trailing across and through each other to evolve into some portraits. "It was the colors that would make me want to paint — colors in skin on the body, the reflections of a shirt on a chin," the artist says. There are studies in charcoal, pastel, and gouache and a robust early black-and-white linoleum print portrait. At the desk is a pocket-sized reproduction of a large painting called "Age With Dignity," not exhibited here; what a pity our exhibition space is so limited. Until Feb. 13.

— Brigitte Hanf

## Welcome

Aaron Emil Zandy to  
Robin and Ronald Zandy

## Congratulations

Jamie Gold Longhi to Dawn L. Wastin  
Fred J. Bate, Jr. to Mary A. Sheldon

## Goodbye to Friends

Dr. Alice Elizabeth Moore

Henry S. Dinneen

## Land Transfers

Mary Elizabeth Davidson to Barbara Wolff, 5.93 acres on Warren Hill Road.

Paul K. and Marianne M. Kaestle to Lawrence G. Katen and Philip Rinaldi, house on Popple Swamp Road.

Marion E. Vogel to Melissa Lee Andrews, land on Cream Hill and Rattlesnake Roads.

## The Popcorn Man

After Craig Behn, who had left Connecticut as a young man to pursue a career in chemistry, moved back in 1988 to the family homestead in Cornwall Bridge, it wasn't long before he began showing up at events and meetings bearing huge bags of popcorn to give out, a practice which soon earned him the nickname "The Popcorn Man." Curious to learn how this started, I dropped in on him recently for a chat and a demonstration of his popping operation.

Over the machine-gun din of the popper — a West Bend "Stir Crazy" his sister-in-law gave him that stirs as it pops and makes about four-to-six quarts per pop-

ping — he told me that it all began over 30 years ago in East Greenbank, N.Y., near Albany, when he was working at the Sterling Winthrop Research Institute. He was helping a neighbor girl with her school penicillin project one night, and after they finished, it seemed like a good idea to make some popcorn for her and his wife and son and daughter. That was the beginning. Soon he was bringing popcorn to birthday parties and other events. And when he retired to Cornwall he brought his popper with him. He started dropping off bags of popcorn for the ladies at the bank, the people at the Rug Shop and the Post Office. He gave out popcorn at P&Z meetings, and to weary Election Day workers.

"I bring some to the Extend-A-Care when I go to visit the Yutzler brothers," he said, pouring another cup of IGA Yellow into the Stir Crazy, "and to the Charlotte Hungerford therapy department, and to Sue Wick's Thursday night vespers, and to certain people, like Dodie Clarke Wolfe and her kids down the hill. Recently I took some to the fourth grade for their tea." On Memorial Day he sold his popcorn — but that was to benefit the church.

Craig has never bothered to figure out how much all this popping costs him, but he guesses it's "probably quite a lot. Maybe it's stupid, but then there are a lot of people who pay huge greens fees to hit a golf ball around a course for a few hours." He buys his popcorn at the Kent IGA in packets of six four-pound bags, at a slight discount. He figures he pops about 12 pounds a week. "Four pounds will make ten poppings, and I sometimes do 20 to 30 poppings at a time, which takes me two to three hours," he said, transferring popped corn into one-gallon plastic bags and ten-gallon sacks, excluding the "old maids," or unpopped kernels. "That's not a very nice term, I guess, but I can't feature calling them 'spinsters'."

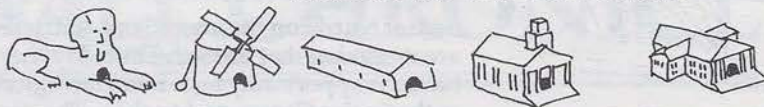
As the popping progressed, I learned that the ancient Chinese knew all about popcorn (no surprise), that people in Colonial times ate it like cereal (it figures), and that it's the moisture inside the kernel that makes it pop when heated. Apparently the casing is airtight, because Craig told me that some 4000-year-old Aztec popcorn was found to be still poppable.

"Of course," he says, "not everyone likes popcorn. Some say it sticks in their teeth. And some feel they shouldn't eat it. But it's low in fat; I don't put butter on it."

Craig acknowledges his popcorn operation has escalated since the death of his wife a year and a half ago. "I miss her a lot, and this helps substitute for the things we did together. Maybe this is sort of a nut type project, like Johnny Applesseed going around scattering seeds, but as a result there are an awful lot of orchards out there."

And an awful lot of contented popcorn munchers around here. — *George Kittle*

## Letters to the Chronicle



### LET'S DO BETTER

*While I sincerely hope that this doesn't begin another Salisbury Massacre, I simply have to express my dismay at the design of the proposed new Rumsey Hall (if, indeed, the sketch in the December Chronicle is accurate). Surely, with all the creative talent we enjoy in Cornwall we can direct the architect to offer us a building with some architectural integrity.*

*The design seems to be a compromise at best. Why not do either of two things: tear down the existing structure and rebuild it as an exact duplicate, thereby avoiding all controversy; or start from scratch and enter the 21st century with a building that reflects new thinking, yet keeps Cornwall in mind.*

*History offers us many examples of mediocrity built out of compromise and politics. We can certainly rise above that trap, especially with a million-plus budget.*

— *Dick Frank*

### BIG BIRD

*According to the Chinese, Jan. 23 marks the beginning of the Year of the Cockerel. Here on Cream Hill our New Year has been marked by the constant presence of a Great Blue Heron. In fact, he/she has been in residence since last summer.*

*It is the first time I've seen a heron winter over, so I consulted a local birder who said, "Obviously a young bird who does not know the format." (Panic!) The local Audubon chap was more reassuring: "The bird will do fine, as long as the water remains ice-free. The fish move more slowly so are easy prey. If it gets too cold it will go south." (Whew!)*

*I hope the water stays ice-free and the fish are plentiful so that our heron stays put. Happy Chinese New Year!*

— *Julia Scott*

### AUDIOMETER FUND

*I would like to thank the generous folks who attended the second anniversary of poetry reading at Cadwell's Corner on Jan. 9. Their generosity was evident in the \$327 that was donated toward acquisition of an audiometer which is not in the CCS budget. With previous donations, the total collected is now \$875. Since the cost of the instrument is \$3,000, \$2,125 remains to be raised.*

*An audiometer is a tool that will measure not only the hearing ability of the children in our school, but also, through tympanometry, the effects of fluid in the middle ear. Children who have frequent ear infections usually experience decreased hearing and discrimination of sounds during the years when they are first acquiring language and then learning to read. It is therefore very important to monitor children's middle-ear function so that prompt medical help may be given when needed. Early attention to these problems saves taxpayers' dollars down the line.*

*Since we are now well on our way toward our goal, please consider what you can donate to the better hearing health of our children. Checks, which will be gratefully received, should be payable to the CCS Activity Fund, c/o CCS, and sent to my attention.*

— *Martha Bruehl, R.N., School Nurse*

### ALL GOD'S CREATURES

*In spring, summer, and fall we set Havaheart traps in attic and cellar. We eliminate mice and moles regularly until it gets very cold or until snow covers the ground. We can't imagine that they would find food or shelter outdoors then.*

*Recently I forgot to close one of the traps and found a mouse in it. It appeared to be dead. I was about to bury it in the garbage can when its tail twitched. I opened the trap, put it on the floor near a likely corner for a mouse house, and it walked out.*

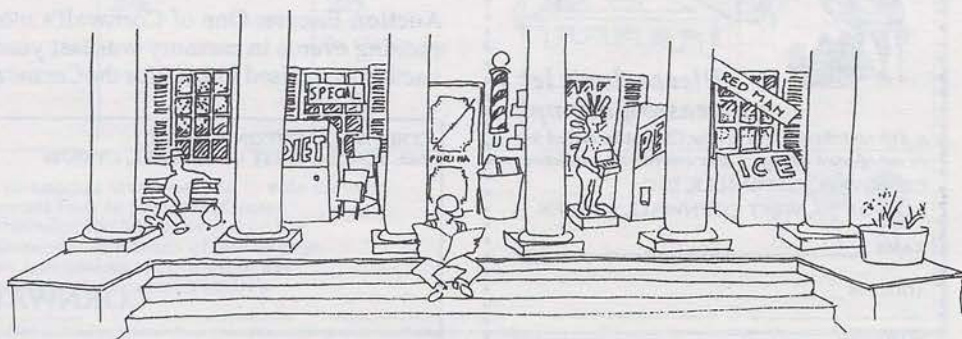
*It is still in our cellar. I can tell by the holes in the apples stored there. It is welcome to stay until the first thaw or even until early spring.*

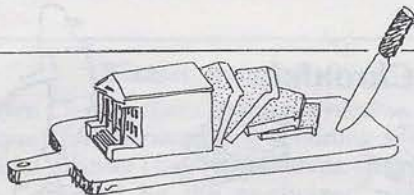
— *Lotte Hanf*

### CALLING ON YOU

*Yes, Litchfield Cellular has an ugly steel tower planned for Cornwall. Yes, there are ways to fight it. And yes, if concerned people present clear evidence, convincing evidence, that the tower should not be built or should be alternately sited, the Siting Council will listen. While we await the details of the tower application, let's organize as have other towns faced with this problem. Do you have a little time, expertise, persuasive abilities? Please call me for details and meeting plans at 672-0247.*

— *Phil Hart*





### When We Vote on Rumsey

When the question of what to do or what not to do about Rumsey Hall/Town Office space finally comes to a vote, that vote — by voting machine — will take place on Saturday, Feb. 20, from noon to 8 p.m. at the Town Hall.

All registered voters in Cornwall are eligible to vote. If you are not registered there will be a special voter registration session on Saturday, Feb. 13, from 9 a.m. till noon at the Town Office.

Also eligible to vote (on Feb. 20 and at town meetings) are Cornwall property owners who are U.S. citizens 18 years of age or older. They must bring some proof (birth certificate, naturalization papers, passport, voter registration card from elsewhere) to the town clerk either in advance or on the day of the vote or town meeting.

Does this mean that every non-registered person in a household is eligible to vote? The answer is NO. If, for example, the house and property and family car are all in one person's name, then the others, even those over 18, cannot vote. If you are unregistered, you must own property valued at over \$1,000 to be eligible to vote.

Finally, the question of absentee voting: Yes, applications for absentee ballots are available from the town clerk. The ballots will be available beginning on Sunday, Feb. 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

— John Miller

### Local History

As part of a unit on their hometown, CCS fourth graders have visited sites in Cornwall, listened to speakers, drawn maps, written articles, and concluded their study by interviewing long-time residents.

On Jan. 8, the children held a tea for the people who took part in the project. They held small group discussions on what they had learned, shared stories they remembered, and listened to stories from the people they interviewed. After sharing poetry they had specially written for their guests, the children served cakes and tea to their new friends. A good home-baked time was had by all.

— Cathy Pfeffer



**Please don't let our treasury dry up!**

A \$10 contribution will get the Chronicle mailed to an out-of-town address. Other contributions welcome.  
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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/ST/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

### Events and Announcements

**Senior Nutrition Program:** Senior citizens are reminded that on each Thursday they have the opportunity to go into Torrington to the Senior Center, and to shop. The van starts picking up about 10 a.m. and will come to your home. You will arrive in Torrington in time for lunch at the Senior Center, then go to a local grocery store to shop. Cost per person is \$1.60 for your lunch and \$1.00 for the round-trip ride. You will then be brought back home, usually before 4 p.m. For more information, you can contact Paul at 489-2211 or the Center at 482-4151.



**Board of Ed. Update:** At the board's January meeting, Principal William Oros announced an increase in the Special Education Project staffing for CCS. There will now be a full-time resource-room teacher and full-time assistant. The board also set Feb. 4 (CCS Library, 7:30 p.m.) for a meeting with the PTO to discuss budget priorities. Board Chair Cheney urged parents to attend.

**for Habitat:** A concert for voice, oboe, and piano benefiting Habitat for Humanity will take place on Sunday, Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. in the Norfolk public library. Laura Frank, soprano, Judith Dansker, oboeist, and our own Anne Chamberlain, pianist, will play music by Bach, Vaughan Williams, Mozart, Strauss, and Debussy. For information about tickets call Paul Baren at 672-6637.

**Helpers Needed:** The Northwest Corner Chore Service is a new resource whose workers help elderly and handicapped people by doing household jobs, yard maintenance, shopping, cooking, and minor home repairs — and by providing companionship. Payment for this service is on a sliding scale, according to the income of the applicants, but workers are paid \$9 an hour regardless of the amount contributed. We are looking for people to serve in the towns of Cornwall, Sharon, Falls Village, and Canaan. Please call Ella Clark at 364-1003 if you are interested.

**Auction Encore:** One of Cornwall's most exciting events in memory was last year's auction that raised \$10,000 for the Cornwall

Child Center. Several hundred high-stakes check writers crowded into the Marvelwood dining hall to bid on a fabulous variety of goods and services. In fact, the biggest moneymaker of the lot was garden-planning services offered by Joan Edler and Julia Scott. The CCC's second annual affair is coming up in late March and board members, staff, and parents will be out this month soliciting donations of goods and services for the auction. If they don't catch you, please call Teddy Bury (672-6344) or a CCC board member.

**Ski Lights Review:** The Board of Selectmen will meet this month with Dept. of Environmental Protection officials and Mohawk Mountain management to review the effectiveness of the light shades now in use at the ski area. This meeting is part of the ongoing review process between the town, Mohawk, and the state which was initiated at the time of the implementation of night skiing. The meeting will be open to the public. Call selectmen's office (672-4959) for date and time.

**Collection Report:** The Jan. 9 returnable-can-and-bottle collection for the fund-raising drive of Junior Girl Scout Troop #33 yielded a whopping total of approximately 7,000 cans and bottles. Expressing her appreciation to the people who donated so generously, Vera Dinneen announced that the next collection will be on March 13. The money is being raised for a trip to Hershey, Pa., in June.

**For the Record:** Park and Rec. will be starting an album which will consist of photos of Park and Rec. events (past and present) along with information about the commission. This album will be kept at the Town Hall. At this time the commission is asking anyone who has pictures they'd like to donate to contact Karen Stevens at 672-6065 or drop them off at the Town Office. This will be an ongoing project — so keep clicking away. Thanks to Ralph Gold for this great idea.



### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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