

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 13 : NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 2003



Transfer Station Wins Award

Few of us have failed to note the substantial art collection emerging at the Cornwall Transfer Station. Now four days out of seven we can admire the wonders our community exudes, thanks to the discerning choices made by Fred Bate III (Manager) and Stephen O'Neil (Recycling Coordinator). Our spirits are soothed as we unload all manner of stuff.

Cloaked behind all that art is an award-winning operation. Our neat dump has just been cited as one of the best in the State of Connecticut. This creative team has earned Cornwall the DEP 2002 Achievement Award for its "Outstanding Municipal Recycling Program." (Look at the plaque in the window next time you pass through.) One of the aims of the CT DEP in recognizing exceptional performance is that they "serve as models—so other Connecticut cities and towns can replicate their recycling success."

The factors taken into account include rate of household and business participation, technical guidance provided to users, enforcement of the state requirements, policy on composting, and special programs to recycle items other than those mandated by the state. In this last category, our dump chan-

nels brass, bronze, copper and aluminum; reserves Styrofoam packaging "peanuts" for distribution to retail outlets for reuse; collects labels from Campbell products for the benefit of a children's home in Cromwell, CT; collects eyeglasses for distribution to charitable organizations; salvages bicycles for Explorer Scouts to distribute to the needy; and, right on site, recycles used books.

There is certainly credit to be shared: With the Town, for recruiting two talented managers committed to an efficient but also aesthetically pleasing and socially conscious operation; with the residents of Cornwall who, however begrudgingly at times, have yielded to the tutelage of the managers; and with the state, for taking recycling seriously and rewarding exceptional results. So, thanks and cheers enough to go around. Bravo!

—Martha Loufii

Taking a Stand

In public protests reminiscent of the days of the Vietnam War, citizens have taken to the streets of cities across the country. So, too, in Washington, D.C., and Cornwall.

Among the nearly half million protestors in Washington, D.C., on the weekend of January 18, were nine Cornwall folks mingling with fellow Americans of various ages and backgrounds, including veterans of past

wars, moving shoulder to shoulder on the wide avenues in the freezing cold, all seeking humane and legal limits on the administration's preparations for war. It was a colorful gathering, reported the attenders, with friendly energy—and with numbers too large for reporters to ignore and the administration to dismiss.

The Cornwall marchers were Dody Clarke, Rachel Gall, Sarah Calhoun, Donna Murphy, Josh and Calvin Perlstein, Lib Tobin, Clea and Lynn Fowler.

Here in Cornwall, each Saturday from 2 to 3 P.M., a group gathers on the Cornwall Bridge green in a Vigil for Peace, holding signs and waving at passersby, urging them also to protest the impending war in Iraq, and to challenge the nation's leaders to seek peaceful solutions to the conflicts that face the nation.

Anne Chamberlain established the peace vigil in November. She says that "as part of the worldwide peace movement, I stand against the dangerous and deadly policies of my country which do not reflect the values and beliefs of so many citizens." Anne recently presented to the Cornwall Board of Selectmen a "Petition for Peace" for the town's approval. For that purpose, the selectmen

(continued on page 2)

FEBRUARY 2003

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Peace Vigil Every Saturday 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green Park & Rec. Family Skating 1:30-2:30 P.M. Salisbury School (p.4) Special Meeting on Iraq 7:30 P.M. CCS Gym (p.4)
2	3 Park and Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	4 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30-8 P.M. UCC Day Room Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	5 Play Group Every Wednesday 10-11:30 A.M. UCC Parish House	6 Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15-2:15 P.M. UCC Day Room	7 Pre-School-K Story Hour Every Friday 10-11 A.M. Cornwall Library Game Night Every Friday 7-9 P.M. W. C. Firehouse (p.4)	8 Cornwall Association 9:30 A.M. Cornwall Lib. M. R. Charlotte's Web Bus @ CCS 1:15 P.M. (p.4) 8 th Grade Pasta Dinner 5:30 & 7 P.M. UCC Parish House (p.4)
9	 10 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	11 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY Forum on CCS Principal Search 7 P.M. CCS (p.4)	13	14 VALENTINE'S DAY	15 Deadline: March Chronicle Copy Library Valentine's Day Event 3:30 P.M. (p.4)
16 Family Storytelling Show 4 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	 17 PRESIDENTS' DAY CCS Winter Recess	18 CCS Winter Recess Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS	19	20 Assessment Appeals Applications Due (p.4) Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	21	22 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY Library Friends Prose Reading, 4 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)
23	 24 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	25	26 Cornwall Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	27	28	

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now plan a meeting of townspeople at the school on Saturday, February 1, at 7:30 P.M.

To the question—"Why are you standing there, participating in the vigil?"—the answers vary. However, in general the group feels that President Bush and his advisors pursue their own interests while saying the war is to fight "evil"—a war that will harm or kill innocent people.

Individuals in the vigil are clear about their reasons.

Dave Colbert, who questions our foreign policy, says that "we should strengthen the United Nations instead of undermining it."

Lynn Fowler needs "to do something to connect with people who care strongly about peace." Her daughter Clea feels that she is "not alone in my opposition when I join friends in the vigil."

So, does all that standing and waving in the chilly afternoon make a difference?

The people in the vigil are pleased to get a lot of honks, waves, and V-signs from the many people who drive by. Those who give a thumbs-down sign or who stare stonily ahead as they speed away are few, perhaps one in ten at the most. Moreover, as Tom Walker says, "One has to bear witness doggedly. We need to hope, and not become cynical."

At the January 11 vigil, a man driving a van saw the group with its signs. He slowed, then stopped and rolled down his window. "I want to thank you all for being out here," he declared. "My wife and I were just wondering if anyone is paying attention to what is going on. Seeing you all out here has changed my thinking and made my day."

—Ken Keskinen

Teacher Contract

CCS teacher compensation continues to be by far the town's largest single expense item. The most recent contract, ratified by the school Faculty Association and the Board of Education, is the result of hard work and compromise by both parties. For the fiscal year 2003–2004, teachers at Step One (entry level, or B.A. degree) will earn \$30,339 a year, and those at Masters Maximum (all teachers are required by law to attain the masters level) \$60,043.

These modest raises, up 2.12 percent for each of the next three years, show recognition of the fact that Cornwall's teacher salaries are among the lowest in Region One, which itself is in the bottom 10 percent statewide. It is a given that teachers connect competitive salary schedules with student test scores, and that when good teachers leave, students suffer.

Cornwall ranks thirteenth in per capita wealth among 169 Connecticut towns, based on the adjusted equalized net grand list. [Cornwall ranks 115th in the list when median income is counted by state statisticians.—Publishers]. According to Bob

Namnoum of the Connecticut Education Association, our entry level salaries are 166th out of Connecticut's 169 towns, and Masters Maximum salaries are 155th.

Nonetheless, Barbara Gold of the CCS Board of Education feels that the raises show progress. "We continue to work to balance our desire to pay teachers appropriately with the fiscal realities of the town's budget constraints. We both compromised."

—Ella Clark

Reason For Alarm?

Recent newspaper alerts notwithstanding, state reimbursement for the CCS renovation project is not in danger, at least not yet. We are lucky that the first vote approving the school extension, in December 2000, enabled the project to be included on the list of approved school projects in the fiscal year 2000–01, and that the town approved the full amount for the revised project in October 2002.

If we had been just a wee bit later, getting on the list after June 30, 2001, or approving the full amount after December 31, 2002, we would be subject to the delays now envisioned in state reimbursement. In addition the state is proposing a reduction in the reimbursement rate for school construction projects of 10 percent (i.e., 5–7 percent instead of 15–17 percent). Perhaps the long process has left us rather lucky. Whew!

But on the revenue side not all is well. The state already cut aid to towns and municipalities by 5.1 percent in November 2002. Of course, that was not such a big deal for Cornwall: the loss amounts to \$752 in fiscal year 2002–03.

What's on the horizon, however, is more serious. Governor John Rowland's mid-year cuts in aid to municipalities for the current year mean a further reduction of \$50,185 in what Cornwall will receive from now through June.

The biggest hit will be in help for road work. We also lose some of the casino revenue and state payments in lieu of taxes on state land. For education cost-sharing (ECS) it is a modest \$3,170 because, as Gordon Ridgway observed, "they can't take away what they don't give us." Many towns are facing big cuts in ECS.

With the state's budget shortfall for FY 2003–04 looming at three times that of this fiscal year there is every reason to be vigilant.

On the expenditure side, there is plenty of pressure too. The winter has so far shown signs of meeting or surpassing the demands of 2000–01, when the town had less than a record snowfall but an awful lot of storms (29, according to the *Chronicle* of May 2001). WKZE had already noted 14 snowy days as of early January this year, and sanding bills are coming in too. The financial crises at the state and federal levels—to say nothing of the household—mean that there are likely to be significant indirect costs to our community as well. If grants in support of the social services many of us need at one time or another are cut, we may be called on to pitch in a bit

more, or suffer. Women's Support Services, the Northwest Corner Chore Service and a good many other organizations are invaluable for maintaining a viable community and quality of life.

And yes, changes in voting procedures may even come around to hurt us before long. Replacing lever machines statewide with electronic voting systems has been proposed but no funds have been appropriated in support of that shift. That is one of many subjects to be taken up at the meeting of the Council of Small Towns in Hartford at the end of January. All our selectmen will be there, to raise this along with many other concerns.

So, there are a great many unwelcome reasons to be especially attentive to developments outside our town limits.

—Martha Loufi

Welcome

Constantin Alexander Kotchoubey to Alexander André Kotchoubey and Anna Alexandra Huchberger

Good-bye to Friends

Peter Hollander

Marjorie Odell

Land Transfers

Joseph W. and Daniel W. Algrant to Frances Brandon-Farrow, 5.57 acres on Town Street for \$34,000.

Kenneth E. and Margaret P. Keskinen to Frances Brandon-Farrow, 7.83 acres on Town Street for \$59,000.

Thomas J. and Meredith A. Brokaw to Paul L. Cornell, Jr., Trustee, 4.37 acres on Pierce Lane for \$150,000.

Alice and Ronald S. Borodenko to Cindy and Raymond Fenyes, house and 1 acre at 4 Hickory Lane, for \$220,000.



How It All Began

"What should we call it?" was the question Tom Bevans asked Ed Ferman on a winter day a little over twelve years ago. Ed had two thoughts: either call it *Inside Cornwall* or the *Cornwall Chronicle*. And you, dear readers, know the outcome. I mention this because we have reached Volume 13, Number 1. It is the beginning of the *Chronicle's* 13th year. Amazing, I call it.

Tommy, who was not happy with the quality of coverage in *The Lakeville Journal*, asked me one day what I thought of the idea of starting our own monthly newspaper. My reaction was—great idea but who's got the time to do it? Well, you have to know that when Tommy got a good idea in his head, something he considered worthy, *nothing* could stop him.

He went to a meeting of the Democratic Town Committee with a mockup of the calen-

dar. (It would become the centerpiece of the front page.) The Dems pledged \$300 in start-up money, and the Repubs and the Cornwall Association contributed another \$600.

What came next was a dummy test issue that looked very much the way the *Chronicle* looks today and a month later, February 1991, the *Chronicle* was in business with volume 1, number 1. Tommy did the design and layout and Margaret Bevans the editing and proofreading.

A lot of us wrote for the *Chronicle* in the early years but the editing mainstays included Ed Ferman, Lisa Simont, Ken Keskinen, George Kittle, Bob Potter, and, of course, Bobby and Spencer Klaw. The Klaws took over running the shop after Margaret's death and when Tommy became incapacitated.

There have been a lot of contributors but Bobby and Spencer became the heart and soul of the enterprise.

I mentioned that Tommy did the layout in the early years. In recent years it has been done by the publishers and Jeff Zaslow, proprietor of The Graphic Details in Sharon.

We are a fortunate community to have so many writers in our midst, but let's not forget the Cornwall artists who have contributed wonderful drawings each month. Here's something I didn't know: twice and only twice have photographs appeared in the *Chronicle*: a small headshot of Joan Thitchener in Volume 3, Number 10, because she had been left out of a political insert the month before; and an old photo of the late Monty Hare presenting a rented elephant as a birthday present to the late Polly Calhoun. (Polly, we're told, then mounted the pachyderm and rode it around the village.)

And finally, I close with a reminder that once before, a long time ago, we had a community newspaper. It was called *The Cornwall Star*. It lasted two years, 1880 and 1881, and then disappeared. It is now 2003 and we are going strong. Long may the *Chronicle* live.

—John Miller

Town Hall Changes

The First Selectman's Office and the Finance Department will move into new space in the old library sometime this month, another step in the restoration of the Town Hall.

Since the mid-1980s, the first selectman and his secretary have occupied any available space large enough to accommodate them. Least comfortable was 1990, the year spent in a trailer parked beside the Town Office building. Since 1991 Gordon Ridgway and Joyce Hart have been shoehorned into the stage area of the Town Hall.

When the latest move happens this month, the Town Hall will again be available for theatrical presentations as well as lectures and receptions.

Kay Fenn remembers that during the 1940s townspeople gathered for cabaret evenings. They sat around little tables, enjoyed wine and cheeses and watched the song and dance on the stage.

One mystery persists: Whatever happened to the stage curtain when the stage be-

Letters to the Chronicle

WHITE CHRISTMAS

This Christmas, when most of us were still enjoying the holiday, our highway department was wrestling a major winter storm. They won. An all-night effort left the roads open despite a coating of 1 1/2 feet of snow. The next day the ambulance was able to respond to an important call in a remote part of town. This was the most significant of the 14 snow events we have had so far this season.

Thanks to all who work to keep winter at bay in Cornwall and to all who respond to our emergencies in all weather conditions.

—Gordon Ridgway

FEBRUARY 1: MEETING OF THE PEOPLE

I see the meeting as an opportunity to discuss the issue of Iraq with people in the Town of Cornwall. I hope we will decide to let the President as well as Congress know that we are opposed to U.S. unilateral military action. Rather, that we want the U.S. to work with the United Nations towards a peaceful, diplomatic solution to the problem. I hope there is a big turnout so that we can have a true representation of the community's feeling on this issue.

—Anne Zinsser

DEADLY INTERSECTION

Walking west up Route 128 from the red blinker recently, I was witness to a near accident at the intersection with Todd Hill Road. This is surely one of the most dangerous intersections in Cornwall.

As I walked into the crossing along Route 128 I saw a woman driving a light-colored sedan approach on Todd Hill Road. She stopped and looked both ways. Beginning a right turn onto Route 128, she did not see, as I did, a pickup truck barreling eastward toward her. It appeared the truck driver didn't see the car, which was masked by



poor line of sight at that spot. I waved my arms at the truck and it slowed. Crisis averted.

Not because of me, even though I was in the middle of the potential crash scene and could see both vehicles. A few more m.p.h. on the truck, a few seconds difference in relative timing, and the result could have been fatal. I know of at least one death at this intersection.

There is a sign at the top of Todd Hill Road barring a left turn, which is more dangerous because the driver is a target in a crash. The sign prohibiting a left turn should in any case be larger and more obvious, and duplicated on Todd Hill Road well before the intersection comes up.

But serious consideration should be given to reducing the speed limit to 30 m.p.h. eastbound on Route 128, starting 200 feet west of Todd Hill Road and continuing to the stop at the four corners.

—Charles Osborne

ACTIVE SCOUTS

The Cub Scouts (and their den leader, Bethany Thompson) gathered 200 food items for the Cornwall food pantry in December. This past month we all had a great sleepover at the Boston Museum of Science. If your son is now in kindergarten and if you're interested in learning more about the program and our activities, please contact me at 672-4419.

—Dominique Lasseur

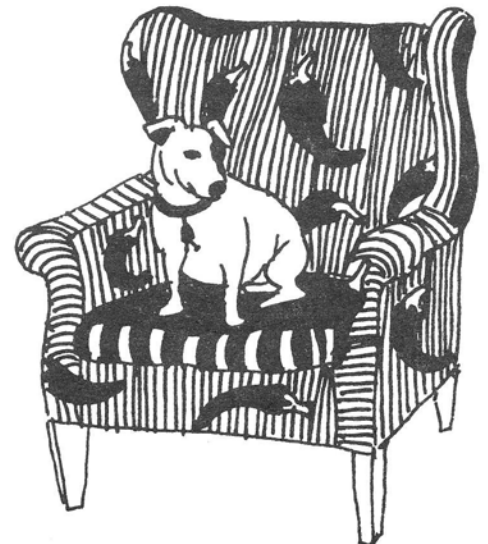
came the First Selectmen's Office? Gordon thinks it might have been stored over in the basement of the Rumsey gym. After that?

—Lisa Lansing Simont

Transfer Station Accident

A collision at the Cornwall Transfer Station January 11 sent Susan Costanzi of Flat Rocks Road to the hospital with an injured arm. Cornwall EMTs responded after Ms. Costanzi's Jeep was shoved by a piece of Transfer Station equipment, pinning her arm to the side of a large waste container. The Board of Selectmen and the Transfer Station staff, in consultation with the town's insurer, CIRMA, are in the process of developing a safety plan for dump operations.

—Doc Simont



Events & Announcements

A Special Meeting on Iraq: The Board of Selectmen has called a meeting for Saturday, February 1, 7:30 P.M. at CCS for the people of the Town of Cornwall to discuss Iraq and related issues. A petition, signed by 85 Cornwall residents, was received January 6, calling for a Town Meeting to consider a resolution opposing pre-emptive military action against Iraq by the United States. Since such a meeting would exceed powers accorded to towns in Connecticut, a decision was made to call a meeting of the people of Cornwall. All — and all viewpoints — are welcome.

Skating: Free skating will be sponsored by Park & Recreation at the Salisbury School Rink on Saturday, February 1 from 1:30 to 2:30 P.M. All Cornwall residents are welcome. Hot chocolate and donuts will be served. Anyone who skates must wear a soft hat.

The Cornwall Free Library is planning an exhibit for March and April of bookmarks. Everyone is welcome to loan their favorites — old ribbons, English leather souvenirs, pressed flowers, old Popsicle sticks — anything goes. Written comments or explanations are welcome for use in the exhibit. Please submit entries in an envelope with name and address by February 19 at the circulation desk at the Library. Anonymity is okay, but not encouraged. Questions? Call 672-2659.

Charlotte's Web, a play for all ages, will be performed in Waterbury on Saturday, February 8. Cornwall Park & Recreation is providing a bus which will leave the CCS parking lot at 1:15 P.M. and should return about 5:15 P.M. The cost is \$10 per person. Availability is limited. Call Bethany Thompson to reserve tickets at 672-6058.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Free Library, Shaun MacDavid's show of oil paintings of people, still-lives and landscapes will continue through February 15. Beginning February 17, Ken MacLean, the architect of the new library building, will show photographs and models of some of his other architectural projects. At the National Iron Bank, Robert Andrew Parker will exhibit works in watercolor and pencil during February.

12-Year-Old

The *Chronicle* is 12 years old with this issue (see John Miller's story), and if you feel the urge to send a birthday gift, cash would be perfectly appropriate (see coupon).

Corndance Storytelling: It's time to start composing your short films (max 10 minutes) for showing at the Second Annual Corndance Film Festival, Sunday, May 18. This year the focus will be on storytelling through motion pictures. Contact Lib Tobin, 672-2407.

Family Game Nights, sponsored by Cornwall Park & Recreation, will be held on Fridays, February 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 7 to 9 P.M. at the West Cornwall Firehouse. All are welcome to bring their favorite card or board games to share. Free pizza and beverages will be provided. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Cornwall Visits the Jubilee School in Philadelphia Sunday, April 6, through Wednesday, April 9. 25 person limit. Please call Carla Whiteside (672-6018) or Nita Colgate (672-6797) by March 15.



Pasta Dinner: The CCS eighth grade is hosting a pasta dinner on Saturday, February 8 at the UCC Parish House, to fund their class trip. It will feature pastas from different regions of Italy with pesto, bolognese, alfredo and marinara sauces plus salads, garlic bread and delicious desserts. There will be two seatings: 5:30 and 7:00 P.M. Adults \$10, children \$5.

Prose in the Afternoon: Phyllis Nauts and the Friends of the Cornwall Library will host an afternoon of prose on February 22, 4 P.M. at the Town Hall. Featured will be writers Earl Brecher, Anna Dolan, Elizabeth England, Donna Murphy, Bee Simont and April Stevens reading selections from their work. A \$5 fee benefits the Library. Kids free. Refreshments. Call the Library for information: 672-6874.

Selection of a New Principal: The PTA, in conjunction with the Board of Education and the Region I Superintendent's Office, invites the Cornwall community to a forum on Wednesday, February 12 at 7 P.M. at CCS. Participants will discuss the process by which a new principal is chosen and will be given the opportunity to ask questions and contribute ideas on what attributes we would all like to see in a new principal. This is an opportunity to help guide the selection committee which will have members from the Board of Education, CCS and the community. The PTA will serve refreshments.

Property Tax Appeals: Application forms for the Board of Assessment Appeals hearings to be held March 5 to 8 are now available from the Town Clerk or the Assessor's Office. They must be filed at the Town Office — not just postmarked — by February 20. Applicants will be notified of their hearings by mail or phone. For further information, call the Town Clerk at 672-2709.

Family Storytelling Show: The Cornwall Free Library will present award-winning storyteller and musician Mary Jo Maichack on Sunday, February 16, at 4 P.M. Combining folktales, songs, comedy and story theater, Ms. Maichack's show, "Books are Celebrations," is perfect for preschool-grade 3, although older kids and adults will enjoy it too. Mary Jo has performed to rave reviews in schools, libraries and storytelling festivals throughout New England for the past 13 years. Free; donations welcome.

The Friends of the Cornwall Library invite all to come and celebrate St. Valentine's Day Plus One on Saturday, February 15, at the Library. We'll begin with some tasty homemade desserts and some love songs by Anne Chamberlain and John Miller, followed by a nifty romantic comedy called *My Favorite Wife* (circa 1940) starring Cary Grant and Irene Dunne. It all starts at 3:30. There will be a \$10 fee to benefit the Library. Kids are free. The film is 88 minutes long, so you should be back home by 6 P.M.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Yes, I want the *Chronicle* to continue.

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

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Please mail the *Chronicle* to the out-of-town address above; a \$10 contribution will be appreciated.

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