



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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The Rumsey Beat

On Monday evening, Dec. 7, a patient and articulate gentleman named Jack Shanahan came to town at the invitation of the Board of Selectmen. Shanahan, director of the Connecticut Historical Commission, came here to explain, firstly, how Rumsey Hall got on the National Register of Historic Places and, secondly, how this might interfere with any action the town votes to take regarding either razing it or renovating it as a "new" town hall.

We found out, for example, that when Rumsey went on the register in 1990 there was no one at the hearing representing the owner, the Town of Cornwall. Rumsey is one of six Cornwall structures on the National Registry, the others being the Cream Hill Agricultural School (soon to be moved to Kent), the covered bridge, the Cornwall Bridge railroad station, the General Sedgwick house, and a shelter on the Appalachian Trail.

We also learned from Mr. Shanahan that nothing is set in stone regarding Rumsey Hall. For instance, there is no outright prohibition against demolition to make way for a new town hall on the site. There is likewise nothing to prevent the town from renovating the structure for use

as a town hall. That might also include taking off the back section, which was added about 45 years after the original construction in 1848.

Mr. Shanahan said he hoped the town would keep the state commission informed of any plans regarding Rumsey and that we would make every "reasonable" effort to preserve it. He also indicated that if the town decided that renovating was too expensive and impractical and wanted instead to raze it and build a new town hall with an area-friendly design, the Historical Commission would likely have no objection, and might even support the town if someone tried to block the action in court.

The *Lakeville Journal* said a "crowd" had gathered at Town Hall to hear Mr. Shanahan. I counted about 30 people, including four members of the press. Hardly a "crowd" even in Cornwall.

I walked away from the sessions with the feeling that Cornwall's Rumsey options were still very much open to the wishes of the town. — John Miller

Rita Quinn said that the project costs had finally shaken out as follows: \$1,813,000 for a modified Rumsey renovation (North wing removed), \$1,679,000 for a new building on the Rumsey site, and \$361,000 for the gym.

Lisa Lansing then presented some figures and charts comparing the budget impact of the alternatives. The board chewed on these for a couple of hours. It was eventually decided to simply present the facts at the Jan. 22 informational meeting and to hold any opinion or recommendation for the subsequent meetings. — Ed Ferman

Decisions, Decisions!

Architect Ken MacLean's feasibility study for the Rumsey Hall site will be presented to a town informational meeting on Jan. 22. The Municipal Building Committee hired MacLean to investigate two options for town office space: a renovated Rumsey and a new building. The purpose of the study was to explore the two options architecturally, financially, and legally — and to provide the necessary information for making a decision. The study is definitely a first stage; drawings to be displayed on Jan. 22 are preliminary, not final.

(continued on page 2)

Choices to Chew On

The entire Dec. 17 meeting was spent discussing the financial impact of the various Rumsey alternatives.

JANUARY 1993

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>The deadline for sending letters and announcements to the Chronicle is usually the 17th of the month, but holidays and weekends may make it vary by a few days — as early as the 15th in some cases. Earlier is better!</p>						
					1	2
3	4 7pm Town Hall Skating every Mon. 7-8pm Salisbury School \$1 donation Paintings by Sybil M. Perry Cornwall Library	5 Agricultural Adv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS Inland Wetlands 7:30pm Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Office	6 West Cornwall Merchants Ass'n 10am Cadwell's Corner	7 Municipal Building Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall	8	9 Poetry Reading 8pm Cadwell's Corner (see letter p.3) 1st Collection date for bottles & cans (p.4)
10	11 7-8pm P & Z 7:30pm Town Hall 11 8am Cadwell's Corner	12 Hous. Riv. Comm. 7:30pm CCS Lib.	13 Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm CCS Lib.	14 Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC†	15	16
17	18 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S BIRTHDAY (Observed) Skating 7-8pm	19 7pm Town Hall	20 Parenting Seminar 7-8:30pm Lucy & Lily's Bookstop, Cornwall Bridge (p.4)	21 Bd. of Ed. 4pm CCS Lib. Bd. of Finance 7:30pm CCS Lib.	22 Info. meeting Mun. Bldg. Comm. 8pm CCS	23
24	25 Skating 7-8pm	26	27	28	29	30
31						

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

(continued from page 1)

The material to be shown and discussed is a tool that will enable the town to decide whether to renovate Rumsey, demolish it for a new building, or do nothing. If applicable, a second decision will be whether to start construction now or wait.

How the town will actually make these decisions will be a major topic on Jan. 22; there may need to be more than one vote to make all necessary decisions. In any case, the informational meeting will lead to a formal town meeting to be adjourned to a referendum.

— Rita Quinn

Maturity

Once life's little ills distressed me
When life's little ills were few
And one fly in the ointment
Put me in a dreadful stew,
But experience hath taught me
The infrequent good to prize:
I rejoice to find some ointment
In my little jar of flies.

— Anonymous



The Great Nor'easter of '92

The snows of yesteryear returned with a vengeance on Dec. 11 and 12. The same freak storm that caused massive flooding and damage in New York City and New Jersey zapped Cornwall on Friday with a nasty mixture of snow, sleet, and rain, changing over to snow by Saturday. Higher elevations got all snow both days. Total accumulation in the Village was eight to ten inches, but higher elevations got two feet or more. Near hurricane-force winds plastered the wet snow to trees and houses, caused deep drifts, and knocked down trees and power lines. Many were without power and/or snowed in for two days or more. Sue Kochman was snowed out, unable to return to her Dudleytown home for three days. Those with wood stoves kept pretty warm; others made do with their cook stoves, or got out their old Kero-Sun heaters. Some used gas generators to pump water — until they ran out of gas; then they melted snow. Luckily, temperatures stayed relatively mild.

For shut-ins there wasn't much to do. John Miller made bread and read *JFK*. Polly Calhoun made bourbon balls and read *Truman*. Anne Chamberlain "slept a lot." People checked up on each other by phone. The road crew responded to the emer-

gency by working 20 hours on Friday, 18 on Saturday, and 10 and a half on Sunday. In addition, six private contractors were hired to help out. Abandoned cars and downed live wires complicated the job. On Cream Hill, Rick Stone used a payloader to clear the road from drifts too deep and heavy for plows. Larry Stevens Jr. used his log skidder to open up John Bevans's driveway, and then Larry's mother Vickie followed him up, doing the detail work with her plow. Some roads were not plowed until Sunday afternoon. Firefighters were kept busy responding to calls for help, such as one where some people were nearly asphyxiated by their gas generator, which they had moved into their house. Yelping Hill caretaker Earl Brecher had to wade through deep drifts to check on houses beyond the reach of David Hall's plow.

By Sunday the 13th the storm was over, though plows were still working long hours digging out driveways. The wind dropped. There was a nice silence. The sun came out. Sue Kochman was back with her family. Kids sledged, dogs plunged into drifts and nosed up snow. Nick Jacobs and Leslie Elias, the last to get power back, finally saw the light at 3 a.m. Monday morning.

As Phil Hart put it, "This is the way people remember winters being, whether they were or not." And it wasn't even winter yet.

— George Kittle

Library Expands

Over the years the Cornwall Library has grown in number of books but not in shelf space. Mysteries were moved into the hall several years ago. Still there wasn't room. Now the fiction, or most of it (A to S), has been moved into the Town Hall meeting room, where books now line three walls, adding the sort of warmth to the space that only books can.

"It was a lot of work," said Cornwall Library Association President Kay Fenn, "but we had a tremendous crew. Everybody is delighted with the results. It really looks so dressed up. The bookcases came from the school's old library, when they renovated. We hope to be able to put in more bookcases and finish the job, then maybe put in a small table and some chairs and a reading lamp. We also have plans for the old room, such as making more reading space near the fireplace."

— George Kittle

CAAC Makes Plans

The Cornwall Agricultural Advisory Committee met in December to plan its activities for 1993. Topping the list was the Agricultural Fair, to be held again in late summer. Serious planning for the fair will begin in March.

The committee again hopes to continue the elective, hands-on educational programs done in conjunction with CCS teachers that was such a success last year,

possibly expanding the programs to include grownups in classroom activities and farm tours.

Because preservation of good farming land is obviously important in keeping agriculture viable in Cornwall, the committee hopes to work with various agencies and boards in learning the ins and outs of development rights buyouts, easement donation programs, and various land preservation tactics.

— Ed Kenniston

Rx for Rabies

Cornwall's first case of rabies in a family pet was reported to the Town Office in mid-December. The afflicted dog, which lives in West Cornwall, will have to undergo treatment and isolation for three months.

Vaccinating a pet is no guarantee against infection, according to Dr. Skiff Kane, Cornwall Bridge veterinarian. A dog or cat that has been in a fight with a wild animal should be taken to a vet, who may administer a booster and advise lengthy home quarantine. If signs of a fight include saliva on the pet's fur, don't touch — even to bandage an injury; saliva is a powerful transmitter of rabies.

Local vets can answer questions about rabies, of course. So can the Canine Control Office of the Agriculture Department (1-566-5924) and the Wildlife Division of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection (1-566-4683).

— Lisa Lansing

Good-bye to a Friend

Katherine Nash

Where to Put the Cars?

The West Cornwall Merchants Association is studying the feasibility of providing additional parking to alleviate congestion during the peak tourist season. One possibility is a parcel of land owned by Northeast Utilities south of Hughes Library. A recent newspaper article implied that this grassy area across from several houses was in danger of being paved over, but several members of WCMA refuted this.

"No one's thinking in terms of asphalt and white stripes," said Dave Cadwell. "I'd like to aim for the area across from Ian Ingersoll's shop where bushes and trees would obscure the cars."

Todd Piker added: "While we're always on the alert for additional parking, parking is just one of the possibilities. The first thing to do is to come up with a plan. I don't think you need to worry about there being a parking lot there anytime soon."

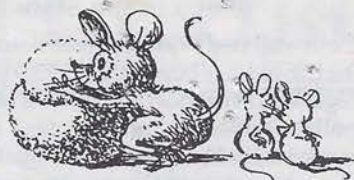
The association plans to discuss the matter at future meetings.

— George Kittle





Letters to the Chronicle



BEYOND THE CALL

Cornwall came through storm Beth in good shape due to the hard work of many people. Firstly, the Highway Department worked 48 hours during the three days of the storm. Plowing snow on our hills during a blizzard is dangerous and tiring work. They repeatedly went way beyond the call. Secondly, local contractors and farmers used their equipment to help keep the roads open under equally risky conditions. Thirdly, on Friday night the Fire Department set up an emergency shelter and manned roadblocks to keep motorists out of the dozen power lines and trees that were across roads. It is not easy to leave your family during such an emergency. Lastly, many friends and neighbors helped each other and people they didn't know in every way imaginable.

There are ways we can all be better prepared for the next storm. Winter weather has to be taken seriously. Power outages, lack of heat, and no transportation are to be anticipated. There were a dozen cars stranded on town roads, which unnecessarily hampered road clearing. I saw motorists try to drive over downed power lines despite warning signs. Two people were overcome by fumes from an emergency generator, which can also be dangerous. Common sense and patience are important in these situations. Thanks to all of you who helped out. Plan now for the next storm. — Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman

LET'S HEAR IT FOR POETRY

Saturday, Jan. 9, at 8 p.m. marks the second anniversary of poetry at Cadwell's Corner. It has been our pleasure to host readings of every sort, including regular offerings of "The News from 06796" from Bob Terrall, prose from "The Penny Saver" from Nick Jacobs, and musical delights from Anne Chamberlain and John Miller.

This particular night we plan to pass the hat to buy an audiometer for the school, something Nurse Martha Bruehl needs for screening and as a diagnostic tool. And what better way to celebrate healthy hearing than poetry? Refreshments will be served, and all are welcome. Please come.

— Dave and Alice Cadwell

THIRD PARTY SYMPATHY VOTES

Cornwall may have only six enrolled ACP members, but I do not think that John Miller draws the right conclusions from this in his article in your December issue on "How We Voted." John says that 154 of the 504 votes for Chris Dodd were cast on the ACP line, and about the same number of votes for Dan Dwyer. This means that not only the six ACP members voted for Dodd and Dwyer as ACP candidates rather than as Democrats, but

that nearly 150 more ACP sympathizers wanted to be identified as such as well. It is rather an insult to Cornwall voters' intelligence to presume that ACP sympathizers voted for Dodd and Dwyer simply because they first saw their names on ACP's top line on the voting machine. Surely we can all read better than that. I am certain that the other five Cornwall ACP members and myself are glad to have this public manifestation of support for our principles!

— John Foster Leich

A CREAM HILL LAKE MONSTER?

Random reports of animal sightings (bears, catamounts, bats, coyotes, etc.) in and about Cornwall seem to bespeak the need for an inquiring association to organize the growing body of research. A cogent argument for such a society is the likelihood that future sightings might challenge local scientists in ways heretofore undreamt of.

These thoughts surfaced with recent news reports of a great orm, or vertebrate worm, akin to the Loch Ness monster, reported to reside in Canada's Lake Okanagan. Dubbed Ogopogo, this large serpentine creature is a marine cryptid (hidden animal) alleged to belong to what researchers are calling "a distinct . . . species of presently indeterminate class." Like its possible relative Nessie, Ogopogo is remarkably elusive and has never been more than vaguely glimpsed.

Members of a prospective Cornwall Cryptid Sighting Sodality, when not tracking down bear scat and bobcat spoor, could begin to investigate the possibility that an orm — naturally much smaller than its Canadian or Scots kin — might be hiding among the fronds deep in Cream Hill Lake. Naming this creature could be a challenge: Ogopogo comes from native legend; Nessie is a kind of British endearment. "Creamie" seems demeaning, somehow. Any ideas? — Charles Osborne

THANKS TO FAIR HELPERS

On behalf of the Cornwall Agricultural Advisory Committee I would like to take a moment to thank all those who helped bring off our first Agricultural Fair, held last August. The use of tents from Marvelwood, Northwest Lumber, and Paul Trudeau & Sons helped relieve anxiety about the weather, which looked uncertain all week. The financial help and sage advice offered by the Cornwall Grange was invaluable in helping us take our first small step in the fair business. As always the "can do" spirit of the people of Cornwall was the foundation of the event. To all the exhibitors, judges, friends, and family who did all the running around, a heartfelt thank you, and see you at next summer's fair.

— Ed Kenniston

NEW SPACE PROGRAM

The quotes from Gordon Ridgway and Lisa Lansing in the December Chronicle suggest that the work force is all happily housed in the present Town Office. I'm checking in with an emphatic NOT.

Ever since Dick Dakin and Dorothy Bouteiller volunteered for life in the drafty trailer, it is true that the selectmen and the treasurer have had adequate room. The rehab of the stage area has made this a handsome and permanent office and has restored necessary parking space.

For the rest of us, rooms are either too small or are laid out so that concentration and privacy are difficult; some rooms serve as hallways for others. There is a regular stable of non-regular workers who enrich this mixture, and let's not forget the public, whom we encourage to swarm into the phone booth with us. In my experience, the office is often an awkward and distracting work place where it is hard to perform efficiently and cheerfully.

I agree with Gordon and Lisa that we don't need umptillion square feet for the foreseeable future. I also think that the challenge of finding office space and the question of what to do with Rumsey Hall are two wholly unconnected issues. Some constituency or other has had a violent objection to each plan linking the two, and after all these years it just doesn't seem like such a winning scheme, does it?

The most sensible suggestion I've heard would ask the library to consider the unthinkable and to leave its traditional home altogether, taking over Rumsey gym in its entirety. There it would have gobs of room and could create a self-contained facility, not one cobbled together from bits and pieces of grudgingly shared space. The town would take over the Town Hall, keeping its conveniently located meeting room and spreading out into the present library for additional offices.

The best thing about this proposal is that — unlike all the others — It Could Happen In Our Lifetime. It is unrealistic to ask Town Office workers for comment on the Rumsey Hall/New Building options (presumably the reason none of us was selected for the Municipal Building Committee), since by the time anything that size gets decided on and funded we'll be flapping through the ether.

— Maggie Cooley



BAT STUDY NEEDS YOUR HELP!

If you have a bat house (don't laugh — many people in Cornwall do), Donna Hensley of Bat Conservation International in Texas wants to hear from you. She's doing a scientific study of what works and doesn't work when it comes to attracting bats. So even if your bat house has never had a tenant, call me at 672-6607 and I'll pass your name along to her, or you can call her yourself at (512) 327-9721. In either case she'll call you back at her expense and talk to you about your experiences. — Hendon Chubb



Kugeman Dig

On Monday, Dec. 14, about 50 people gathered in the snow to take part in the groundbreaking ceremony that marked the beginning of the construction of Kugeman Village.

After acknowledging the contributions of the many people who have worked for more than six years to make the project a reality, Ken Keskinen, Cornwall Housing Corp. chairman, introduced Henry Scherer, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Housing. Mr. Scherer commended the town and the CHC for their dedication and perseverance. Following the acknowledgments, all present were invited to seize one of the nine golden shovels provided for the ceremony and to leave the first shovelfuls of earth into a wheelbarrow.

The six-building complex, which will have 18 apartments, is expected to be ready for occupancy next fall. Floor plans and drawings of Kugeman Village will be available soon for viewing in the Town Office.

On Dec. 15, the long-awaited land-parcel lottery took place in the Town Hall. Eight applicants selected sealed envelopes to determine the order in which they would choose among the seven available parcels. After viewing the sites, the members of the group will reconvene in January to make final choices of the parcels on which they would like to build their homes. Construction is to begin within two years, with occupancy within five. Meanwhile, the CHC will be meeting with the applicants to help work out details of financing, planning, and leasehold agreements. The eighth applicant will head the list for future available parcels. All subsequent applicants will be placed on a waiting list in the order in which their applications are received.

— Ken Keskinen

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Tops in the State

Cornwall tied with Avon in voter turnout for the November election: 93.9 percent of registered voters in both towns went to the polls. State-wide turnout also posted a record with 83.9 percent of registered voters — 64 percent of the voting-age population — casting their votes. Though turnout across the nation rose in November compared to previous totals, the Cornwall/Avon figures — and those for Connecticut as a whole — top the national average by a whopping ten percentage points.

— Charles Osborne

\$20,000 Building Boost

The Cornwall Child Center has received an anonymous gift of \$20,000 to go toward a new and permanent home. The donor has also expressed interest in matching whatever funds are raised in the future through other efforts.

In recent weeks the Child Center has appointed a building committee to start planning for a new building if the lease of a new site in Gannett Park meets with town approval. This generous donation will greatly expand the existing building fund and will stimulate future fund-raising for the permanent home the center needs.

— Ginny Potter



Fresher Fields

Freshfields restaurant has a new manager — and a new look. George Daniels (no relation to Jack) has redone the menu (but kept the chef), lowered the prices, and brought back the upstairs bar with a limited menu (burgers, hearty soups, pizza), where one can play backgammon, read the paper, or nurse a cappuccino or a beer or a glass of wine without being rushed. "We'll also have live jazz and art on the walls, both by local artists," Daniels says. Sound like the old Deck? It's no accident, he points out: "The upstairs will be called 'Upstairs at The Deck'".

"I want the tourists, of course," Daniels adds, "but I also want it to be a place where local people can come and relax, or have

dinner and walk out with some change in their pockets.

"For now we'll be open for lunch and dinner Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. If all goes well, I'd like to expand that to Thursday."

— George Kittle

Events & Announcements

Winter Rules: Remember to park your cars at least six feet away from town roads so the crew can plow. In effect through March. Also, skiers and sledders please stay off roads!

First Aid Course: CCS Nurse Martha Bruehl will give an eight-hour Red Cross and CPR course at the school sometime this month. Anyone interested should call her at 672-6373.

Scout Trip: Jan. 9 is the first of three collection dates for returnable bottles and cans collected to help raise money for the Junior Girl Scout trip to Hershey, Pa., in June. Bottles and cans may be dropped off at the West Cornwall Firehouse from 9 to 1, or call Troop #53 Leader Vera Dineen at 672-6740 to arrange a pickup at your house. Thank you!

"Positive Discipline": This will be the subject of the first of a proposed evening Parenting Series, to be given by Dee Goolsby, MSW, at Lucy & Lily's Bookstop, 22 Kent Road, Cornwall Bridge, Jan. 20 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Suggested donation: \$8. Call 672-2483 to reserve seats.

Child Center Auction: With the new year here, the Cornwall Child Center is planning its second auction, to be held Sun., March 21, in the Marvelwood dining hall. Save the date and join in the fun, as again we auction off Cornwall's wonderful "goods and services." All contributions gratefully received. Please call 672-6344.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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