



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 10 : NUMBER 12 JANUARY 2001



## Horses By Air

Rumors have been circulating around town lately about activity at the former Clark farm in East Cornwall at the end of Clark Road. The new owners, C&D Farms (Carlos and Diane Dominguez), will be setting up a horsebreeding operation, and they are making changes to the property to accommodate their herd of Frisians, which are Mrs. Dominguez's pets. As the *Chronicle* went to press the old Clark farmhouse was being taken down to make way for a modern horse barn, and a later demolition of the two old barns nearby was also planned. Applications have been filed by C&D with both the Inland Wetlands and the Planning and Zoning Commissions—the first for siting the barn and the second for closing the road to the public. (See November *Chronicle*.)

According to Peter Ebersol, the Dominguezes' attorney, the couple will be bringing up about 30 black Frisian horses (not 50, as rumored) by air—a common way to transport livestock for long distances. They decided to move their animals permanently from Florida when they found they were ingesting sand with their grass. Frisians are classic Dutch horses bred for carriage work and for dressage and are somewhat flighty by temperament. They are taller than the average horse and require much larger stalls, so the design of the new barn must ac-

commodate this need. Their excitability is one reason that the Dominguezes wish to close Clark Road to the public and to horseback riders.

In the deed of sale of the Clark homestead, nine open fields on the hill opposite Mohawk Mountain were included, and the old walls bounding these lots have been removed to create the single big, open field that the horses will need. Stone walls can be dangerous for horses, as they may try to climb across them, and some weeds growing in the underbrush around those walls were not safe for browsing. C&D worked with the county's agricultural extension agent to preserve the safe weeds, Ebersol said, when they cleared away the walls.

The barn will be constructed of stone and slate and will be between 30,000 and 35,000 square feet overall, according to Ebersol. Whatever team of workers puts up the building will be drawn from this area, not imported. The precise location of the new barn depends on whether the town agrees in the end to close Clark Road as the old buildings are within the right of way which was laid down for the public road after they were built. Therefore, if the road remains open to that point, the new barn must be set farther back. But there will still be enough level ground there to build it on, according to Gor-

don Ridgway, and construction, if approved by Inland Wetlands and if the footprint is accepted by P&Z, can go ahead regardless of the town's decision on changing the status of the road.  
—Ann Schillinger

## Tower Builders Win Case


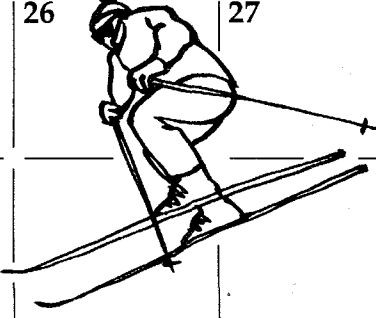
A November ruling by the U.S. District Court will disappoint people opposed to the proliferation of cell-phone towers on hilltop and ridge.

Although implications of the decision are not yet completely understood, the situation appears to be this: A new generation of cell-phone technology, provided in this area mainly by Sprint Personal Communications Services (PCS), uses a digital bandwidth previously under control of local zoning boards. Because the PCS system is virtually line-of-sight transmission, more towers—and/or higher towers—are needed than with the older analog technology. Sprint, not wanting to dicker and deal with the 169 separate towns, went to federal court to get complete control of tower locations placed in the hands of the Connecticut Siting Council. Sprint won the case.

According to Planning and Zoning Chairman Rick Lynn, "There has definitely been an authority shift from our local board to the Siting Council. We can assume some loss of

(continued on page 2)

## JANUARY 2001

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Pancake Breakfast 9 A.M.-1 P.M. UCC Parish House. Benefit La Casa Project (p.4)	2 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Office* Park and Rec. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	3 CCS Reopens Play Group, Every Wed. 10-11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church Soup and Video, Noon, Every Wed., UCC Day Room Agriculture Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	4 School Building Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS	5	6
7	8 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	9 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	10 Board of Friends of the Library, 1 P.M., Library	11	12	13
14	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY Deadline: February <i>Chronicle</i> Copy	16 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall School Building Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	17 Film: <i>Kind Hearts &amp; Coronets</i> , 7:30 P.M. Library (p.4)	18 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	19	20 Cornwall Association 9 A.M. UCC Day Room
21 	22 Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	23 P&Z Planning Meeting 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	24 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	25	26 	27
28	29	30	31 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Last Day to Pay Property Tax (p.4)			

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

local control." But how much? Are Cornwall's 15 pages of tower regulations headed for the paper shredder?

Answers to such questions appear to rest entirely with the Siting Council. A recent letter from its chairman to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway promises that the Council will make every attempt to secure local input and assure what legal protection is possible. Both Ridgway and Lynn have worked comfortably with the Council in the past, and both hope that Cornwall's voice will continue to be heard. —Bob Potter



### A Victory and Its Fruits

Frazzled, perhaps, by uncertainty in the national election, some Cornwall referendum watchers viewed the 275 to 253 vote favoring the expansion of CCS as a squeaker. With a four percent margin, it was certainly no landslide.

But however narrow its triumph, the renovation plan has been firmly set on its course. On completion, the school's altered face will have a new gym as its salient feature. Other improvements: a new music room; a multi-purpose room available for community use as well as school doings; a science lab; toilets; and a sprinkler system.

The narrowness of the referendum result troubled many of those aware of the costs. The total expense, \$4.7 million, will be offset by only 16 percent in state reimbursements; local taxpayers will disburse \$3.9 million to repay the bond issue. With other tax obligations—such as the town's share of renovations at HVRHS—the Board of Finance estimates there will be an overall tax increase of 18.5 percent over the initial five-year payment period.

To carry the work forward into the design and construction phases, the School Building Committee that came up with the victorious plan has reconvened. At its first meeting, held within days of the vote, the committee renewed its connection with Friar Associates, the architectural firm that helped develop the plan. The group also accepted the resignation of James Terrall; Co-Chair Phil Hart said the committee was looking for a replacement with Terrall's construction skills.

Hart said the goal is a design plan for submission to the state within six months. Ground would be broken in the fall. In the meantime the committee will meet twice monthly. They will probe such large issues as

parking. They will weigh choices—and their impact on cost: wood or composition floors? A fixed stage or a moveable one? Another option, pointed out by committee member Alec Frost, is a retractable partition for the new gym, allowing two large community events simultaneously.

Whatever the school's needs, Cornwall is clearly unaccustomed to big-ticket projects like this. The school renovation venture of 1989 offers little positive guidance in 2000. Selectman Earl Brecher, an original opponent of the current plan who became a supporter, advised the committee to remember the closeness of the decision. "Just because the vote was successful doesn't mean we can set aside the concerns of the [opposing] two hundred fifty." —Charles Osborne

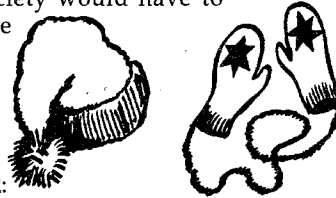
### The Future of Our Past

As Cornwall's history lengthens and deepens, the Cornwall Historical Society has more and more opportunity to make history. "The possibilities are almost endless," according to Society President Jim Gold.

Long term, the plan is to expand, so that the present little building on Pine Street can become something more than a crowded, damp, archival storage bin. "We have a wealth of material here," says Jim, "now known only by a very few. We want to make our collection accessible to more people, especially school children, with close-up and hands-on demonstrations of what Cornwall was like in past years."

Example 1: The Society has recently secured permission from Richard Hart, the current owner, to transfer the blacksmith's forge of William "Grandpa" Oliver from a corner of a West Cornwall barn to Historical Society premises. (Oliver's sturdy and creative ironwork still graces many a Cornwall home and hearth, not to mention the North Cornwall Church.) Jim envisions a "workable but not a working forge," which could be fired up on occasion for demonstrations. To replicate the forge and its historical surroundings, however, the Society would have to build some kind of a structure behind its current headquarters.

Example 2: Jim is amazed at the "erudition and sophistication" of nineteenth-century Cornwallians, as shown by a collection of materials proving that lively life existed long before TV. Back in the last century, one could buy for 25 cents (later reaching \$1.35) a six-month season ticket to a regular—Friday or Saturday night—variety program featuring out-of-town speakers on a variety of subjects, banjo players, singers, dance troops, birdcall imitators, what have you. The Grange Hall and other locations welcomed full and eager audiences. Today, the CHS has a huge collection of posters, programs, etc. illustrating this aspect of our past. But again, where to display them? —Bob Potter



### Good-bye to Friends

Roland S. Fenn

Alma Mott

Josephine Ann Newman

Christopher Parise

### Welcome

Harley Joyce to Debbie and Richard Hageman

Roxana Grace to Rebecca and William Hurlburt

### Congratulations

Vincent A. Merola III to Michelle Milton

Christopher Barrett to Wendy Moore

### Land Transfers

Carol Ann Kilbey to Arnold

H. and Nilda Perez Leichtman, 19 acres and house at 19 Whitcomb Way for \$525,000.

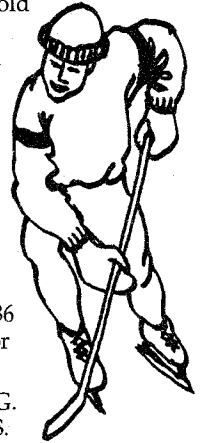
Damien Oskwarek to Ryan K. Clark and Deborah L. Buxton, 3 acres on Kent Road for \$25,000.

Rosemary B. Farrell to John and Joanne Scully, 86 Popple Swamp Road for \$185,000.

John A. and Charlotte G. Frost, Alec C. and Nan S. Frost, Peter I. and Luciana P. Frost to Nevton and Louise Dunn, 29 acres on Todd Hill Road for \$154,500.

John A. and Charlotte G. Frost to Richard E. Decherd and Sally McGoldrick, 5 School Street for \$255,000.

Jeffrey A. Wasserman and Anne C. Newburg to Livia Corredor and David K. Duffee, 6 Valley Road for \$755,000.



### Snow and Its Plowmen

Denny Frost has been plowing snow for 40 years. "I guess I'll do it forever," says Denny. "It's sort of fun. When you plow that road to the top of Agag on Coltsfoot, you break open a path and plow up through and see the snow roll back—it's like being in your own kind of world."

Dealing with snow in Cornwall is not always this romantic, though the land and its weather create a world of drama and variety. "Coming down off Great Hill where there's four inches of snow," says Donnie Reid, Town Crew foreman, "you look across and see the snow line. And there'll be no snow at all down in the Village."

"Temperature often fluctuates from fifteen below to fifty above within just a couple of days," says Jim Vanicky, who, with Steve Clark, Jack Malahan, and Donnie, is on the Town Crew. Jim relishes the job and its challenges. "We like the blizzards, not the little snowstorms. Blizzards keep you awake. You have to stay with it or you lose the road."

Back-up drivers for the big storms are Denny, Rick Stone, Gordon Ridgway, Bobby Whitford, and volunteer Jack Preston. "It's all work," says Jack. "Town roads are steep and narrow; there's no place to push the snow. And we don't have the trucks or the time or the money that the state does."

Here's Donnie Reid's logbook for December 1992:

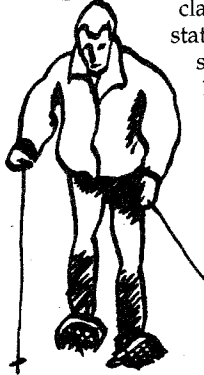
12/3: Plow snow 3-5". Hilltops had more than the Village. 12/6: Jim and Donnie pushing back drifts. Work in shop welding, sheared pin, build tire chains, work on waterways. 12/11: Everybody plowed snow. 12/12 (Saturday): Worked 'til 11 P.M. East Cornwall about 24" plus and drifting; Cream Hill, South Road & Flat Rocks closed. 12" in the valleys, 30" on the hills and wind 40-60 m.p.h.

Before and after these entries, the men clean up trees, maintain chain saws and vehicles, wash out the sander, pile sand, mix salt, haul sand, patch fenders, hand letter a new truck, stand ready for the next call.

It's tough work, and hazardous. Rick "got broken tooth from hammer breaking apart plow blades," Donnie's logbook records. Steve had to be taken to the hospital when he "hit left hand with mason hammer." And once, while clearing sides of the road in February, the crew "caught hell for cutting maple limbs on trees that were tapped." Thirty-hour stretches are not uncommon. When Ella Grasso shut down the state in the blizzard of 1978, Donnie worked 37 1/2 hours straight.

Many people, including Denny and Jack ("Maybe it's because I was shorter then," says Jack) feel that there's a lot less snow now than there was up through the '60s. In the '70s, Denny recalls, "We had 30 inches in 24 hours, when Bill Washburn and I had to blast through with a bulldozer to open the road, and then clear it with a truck." But statistics do not show snowfall accumulations to have gone down significantly. In fact, we had 155 1/2 inches in 1996-97, and the current average for northwestern Connecticut has been in the upper 90s.

Winter may still throw us a curve. Most severe snowstorms have been in early February because the warm moist air of the usual January thaw clashes with colder air. The state's worst modern snowstorm was in February, 1934, and the blizzard of '88 was in March. So watch out. —Ella Clark



### Kids Helping Kids

Cooper Oznowicz, seventh grader at CCS, is proud of the success of his toy drive. He feels

## Letters to the Chronicle

### OUR STURDY VOTING MACHINES

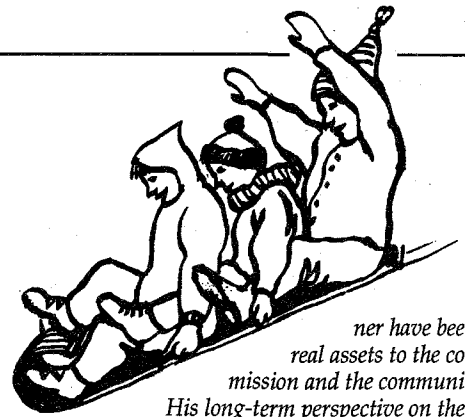
In light of the voting machine disaster in Florida—the chads and dimples—the Secretary of the State of Connecticut has suggested that the "lever machines" we use statewide be replaced with a computerized system. The changeover, should it be done, would be financed from the state's budget surplus, and a new system could be in place by 2002. While the Secretary notes that our current machines function well, accurately recording all votes cast without operating glitches, and are tamper-proof, she also notes that our lever machines are old and are no longer manufactured, and that spare parts are difficult to find. It is true that these machines have not been manufactured since the 1980s, but in my 15 years experience as a voting-machine mechanic and inspector, it is not true that spare parts and repair personnel are at a premium when needed.

Both Bill Dinneen and I work with these machines. Over the years we have had only three problems that I recall. I had to replace the electrical plugs on two machines so that the lights would work. I had to call for service last year to have a machine put back on its sprocket so that it could be raised and lowered. A number of years ago I got a technician in to replace a column of counters because one was sticking. That has been everything that has gone wrong in the last 15 years. Cornwall has even been able to purchase a "new" reconditioned machine—the number of voters in town had increased and we needed the additional unit.

Our old machines still work swell. When they break they can be repaired. The Secretary of the State is suggesting a computerized touch-pad system like an ATM. How many times, I ask you, has an ATM machine refused your bank card and left you strapped for needed cash? I say don't fix what ain't broke, and anyway our old voting machines can be fixed in the unlikely event that they do break—no matter what the Secretary thinks! —Earl Brecher

### THANKS, DENNY

Next time you see him, tell him thanks. After more than 20 years of service on Cornwall's Planning and Zoning Commission, Denny Frost has stepped down from this position with his recent move to Sharon. His common sense approach to problem solving, keen sense of fairness, and easy-going man-



ner have been real assets to the commission and the community. His long-term perspective on the growth and development of Cornwall has been particularly valuable over the years. Thanks, Denny, for your many years of service. —Cornwall P&Z

### KUDOS FOR OUR ENTREPRENEURS

It is proverbial here to say that Cornwall is special. But it may be useful to examine that idea more closely. One reason for this special quality is that businesses here, being small, depend on individuals—which makes them fragile, but also means that they are pretty good at meeting our diverse needs.

Having had the privilege of looking after the Wish House for a couple of weeks while its owner was traveling gave me a different perspective on business in Cornwall. It was fascinating to see how people reacted to the shop. Regulars have a good idea where to look for their clothes or housewares or gifts. But a good percentage of the people who came in for the first time were literally stunned. They just did not expect to find something so different. Many, and not only the young, just had fun. To see some well into their second half-century writing on an ephemeral "Zen" board and a boy and a girl pinning shimmering butterflies in each other's hair and laughing was worth a day's work.

Without entering the debate on the economic development of Cornwall, one can see that there are synergies from having a mixture of offerings (e.g., one woman said she was in the area because she loved the way she could get her hair cut in Cornwall). Yet the commercial tax base here is thin, as is the market. The businesses depend on hard work by those dedicated entrepreneurs who try to make a living catering to our peculiarities, in the process contributing something essential to maintaining Cornwall's special character.

So this letter is to celebrate the presence of these distinctive services in our midst. Gentle as my brief experience was, seeing commercial life from the other side can help one understand both the hard work that goes into maintaining our businesses and what makes them so unusual. —Martha Scoville Loutfi

that it's a great message when kids get involved in community giving. He wants this to be an annual project, to "reach high" and double the number of toys next year. He will try to get businesses and corporations to make donations as well.

His boxes in schools and businesses in the Northwest Corner collected 300 toys, and further, \$290 with which he purchased more

toys. He, his mother, who donated wrapping paper, and about 15 of his classmates took the toys to the Youth Services Bureau in Torrington where they wrapped the presents for local distribution. The most difficult to wrap, Cooper says, was a large Kermit doll. The biggest was a toy guitar. Most popular seemed to be jewelry, basketballs, and sports cards. —Ginny Potter

## For the Love of the Games

Park and Rec. programs that teach our youngest players soccer, basketball, and baseball are expanding in response to a surge of interest. In 1995, a two-week soccer camp was offered; in '96 pickup games started; and by this fall close to 100 kids filled every field for a full-fledged six- to eight-week soccer program, a scenario to be repeated in the spring. The Town is on the verge of joining the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association to compete with regional teams.

In basketball Park and Rec.'s fifth to sixth grade boys' team is practicing for participation in the Northwest League, and the fifth to sixth grade girls are looking at a ten- to 12-game season of their own. Park and Rec. hopes to offer some court time to the seven- to ten-year-olds in January, if coaches can be found.

As for baseball, the numbers have nearly quadrupled, jumping from 30-some players when Mark Pastre started the program in the early '90s, to more than 116 participants in recent years. Instructional baseball for first and second graders was added in 1994, and Tee-ball for K and first graders in 1995. The two Little League teams (nine- to 13-year-olds) have brought Cornwall into the championships, and Park and Rec. would like to see a Babe Ruth program for older players on a regulation field.

Park and Rec. could never have accomplished this amazing growth without dedicated coaches, assistants, and team parents. But last season's coaches could have used some help; more of you are needed! Check the website or call the Park and Rec. office (672-4070) for game schedules so you can get out to the games and support your young athletes.

—Deirdre Fischer



2001

It's the first true year of the third millennium and the tenth amazing year of the *Chronicle's* publication. We hope it is a happy year for all you loyal readers, who keep us going with your generous contributions....



## Events & Announcements

**January Is Tax Month:** Tax Collector Helen Migliacci reminds all property owners that the second installment of property taxes, for which no notice is sent, is due and payable January 1, and that January 31 is the final day for payment without a penalty.

**Success Stories:** The Friends of the Cornwall Library report that the renowned Talent Show netted \$5,359 toward the operating account for the Library—\$2,550 came from patrons and benefactors, \$2,809 from ticket sales.

The UCC Christmas Fair raised a record-breaking \$3,700 for the UCC according to Carla Whiteside, chairman of the event.

Chris Gyorsok, responsible for the raffle that benefited the UCC Capital Campaign by raising more than \$1,500, listed the following winners: Quilt—Jean Vitalis; Danielle Mailer's print—S. Coté; cord of wood—Zeke Hermann.

**Kind Hearts and Coronets** will be shown at the Cornwall Library on Wednesday, January 17, at 7:30 P.M. The 1950 British dark comedy introduced the great Alec Guinness to American movie audiences. The plot involves the ninth in line to become a duke (Dennis Price), who sets out to eliminate the eight ahead of him. All eight are played by Guinness. Free, as usual.

**New Year's Pancake Breakfast:** Jerry Blakey and Company will be pancake-ready from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. on January 1, the first day (technically) of the new millennium. Come to the UCC Parish House and start with juice, then pour Cornwall's maple syrup on buttermilk pancakes, nibble bits of sausage, sip coffee, and relax into overstuffed fellowship. If you're a calorie counter, just tell your conscience that all donations will provide building materials for the La Casa Project.

**Town Help Wanted:** The Board of Selectmen wishes to thank two town workers who have recently resigned their positions: Jane Prentice as Beach Director, and Brian Leonard as Director of Park and Rec. Anyone interested in either of these jobs should contact the Selectmen's Office. Also, the town will be hiring transfer station workers and lifeguards in the not-too-distant future.

**Share Your E-mail Address:** You can now list your E-mail address on the Cornwall website ([www.cornwallct.org](http://www.cornwallct.org)). The page is restricted to the people who are listed on it; you have to use a password to get in. To be listed, E-mail your request to Lazlo at [lazlo@esslink.com](mailto:lazlo@esslink.com).

**The Skating Rink** at the West Cornwall Firehouse is now open daily from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M., weather permitting. Please observe parking regulations. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and a waiver concerning personal injury must be signed before going on the ice. (Waiver forms are being sent home by CCS and will be available in a rink-side box.) Hockey players are to wear regulation protective equipment. Others must wear head gear—helmets encouraged but not absolutely required.

**Art in Cornwall:** At the Cornwall Library, Lynn Fowler's show of paintings will continue through January 20. Opening January 22 will be an exhibit of bodyscapes by Erica Prud'homme. At the National Iron Bank Hilary Johnson of Washington, Connecticut, will be showing animal portraits during the month of January.

**Eagles Return:** On Friday, December 6, while running on River Road, Don Heiny spotted an immature bald eagle soaring over the river. Hours later Art Gingert saw an adult male in the same general area. The turn of the year has brought the eagles back to our part of the Housatonic.

**Cornwallians to Teach:** Beginning January 22, the Taconic Learning Center (TLC) is offering three courses by Cornwallians. John Leich will teach two of them—advanced French and a course in U.S. Foreign Policy, *Great Decisions 2001*. Phyllis Wojan will teach a course in Evolutionary Genetics. Seven other TLC offerings will include courses on opera, *Physics and Reality*, and *Literary Themes from the Bible*. For complete schedule and registration information, call 435-2922.



## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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