



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Dress Rehearsal

The November ice storm that so harshly introduced winter to the Northwest Corner dealt less damage and frustration to Cornwall than to neighbors like Litchfield and Goshen.

Still, the weather outbreak here was severe enough. At one point, 12 roads, including some state roads, were blocked. Severed state roads are unusual, according to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway. As of Sunday night (November 17), 978 Cornwall homes were without power—86 percent of all C.L.&P. customers; three days later, 37 percent were still in the dark.

Unlike Goshen's leaders, who face \$172,000 in costs for the cleanup, Ridgway can take the long view. He feels we should be looking for alternative sources of energy and light. He looks for integration of shelters and emergency services in the renovated Consolidated School Building. Sizing up the winter ahead, he thinks the November storm "a good dress rehearsal." —Charles Osborne

The Ultimate Game

"Coed. All skill levels. Rain or shine." This is from the website upa.org, where you can link to "Pick-up Games," then to "Connecticut," then "Cornwall."

Over 40, like me? So you've been missing the most energized free-wheeling fun the

Barbara Klaw

Bobby Klaw died December 14 at the age of 82. She was the publisher of the *Chronicle*, a complicated job that boiled down to making sure that every issue was accurate, fair and on time. To do all this without ruffling the feathers of the volunteer writers, editors, and artists required her special mix of patience, tact, and self-assurance, plus a long list of other qualities that Bobby also had but would delete if we included them. She would probably think that this good-bye is too long, but for us it's too short and too soon.

town has encountered in years. Any self-respecting youthful Cornwallian like Tyler Cheney or Dan Simons or Jack Anstine or Jim LaPorta or Anna Wynn knows the significance of Sundays at 3 P.M., from spring to late fall and beyond. We're talking Ultimate Frisbee here, of course. Hubbard Field. A little like football: two end zones, run, and pass. Even in the snow sometimes.

"This was our sixth summer, officially," Phill West explains. "Six and counting at Hubbard Field." (Veteran player Slade Begley says some of the gang have been playing for ten.) "It began elsewhere, word-

of-mouth," says Phill. "Now we might have to move to Foote Field if we get any larger. We could have two squads there. We're actually thinking about it."

"A casual game," the website page reads. Think frisbee, after all. Think Cornwall. No one would mistake Ultimate for tackle football. But for those involved it isn't mini-golf, either.

"Casual...but all-out," Phill admits. "Friendly but competitive. We play till we're past exhausted."

Slade smiled when I asked him. "Yes, people have occasionally gotten hurt. A little."

Our Cornwall group challenged an organized Hotchkiss team year before last. They played Marvelwood. And travelled up to Pittsfield for a game last summer. "Played pretty well up there considering we're just a pick-up team," says Phill.

Players come and go, week to week and year to year. Slade and Phill agree on the stalwarts, those mentioned above plus "all the Cheneys," the Calhoun girls, Caroline and Sarah, Danielle Bartholomew, the late Phil Jones, his brother, Pete, Scott Barrows, others, from eight to as many as 24 on a given day. Players come down from Lakeville and over from Litchfield sometimes. Mostly, though, this is homegrown stuff.

"Look, in the winter there's skiing, if

(continued on page 2)

JANUARY 2003

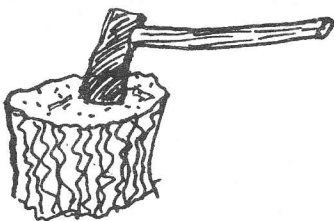
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast 9 A.M.-1 P.M. UCC Parish House	2 CCS Reopens Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15-2:15 P.M. St. Peter's Church	3	4 Cornwall Assoc. 9:30 A.M. Cornwall Lib. M. R. Hotshot Basketball Contest 10 A.M. CCS Gym (p.4) Family Ice Skating 1:30 P.M. Salisbury School (p.4) Peace Vigil 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green
5	6 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Park and Rec. 7 P.M. CCS	7 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30-8 P.M. UCC Day Room Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	8 Play Group Every Wednesday 10-11:30 A.M. UCC Parish House	9	10	11 Peace Vigil 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green Cornwall Women Tell How It Was 3 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)
12 Shaun MacDavid Reception 3 P.M. Library (p.4)	13 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library M. R. (p.4)	14 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	15 Deadline: February Chronicle Copy	16 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	17	18 Peace Vigil 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green
19	20 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY CCS Closed	21 CCS Closed: Teacher Workshop Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS	22 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	23 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	24 Pre-School-K Story Hour 10-11 A.M. Cornwall Library	25 Peace Vigil 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green Julia Butterfly Hill: Tree Sitting 4 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)
26	27 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	28	29 Cornwall Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	30	31 Pre-School-K Story Hour 10-11 A.M. Cornwall Library	Peace Vigil 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

you're into that," Phill says. "In the summer...? Well, there's hiking. We used to have softball. But now..."

All Cornwallians welcome. No excuses now, kids. Break out your cleats and dream of spring.
—Sandy Neubauer



The North Cornwall Church

Old buildings often have stories to tell. Stand for a few silent moments in front of our Town Hall (1908): the stones speak with practiced dignity. Just down the street, Rumsey Hall (1848) tells its story through tears. Next door, the United Church of Christ (1841) speaks in a dozen busy voices. But perhaps the most interesting story is also the oldest, that of the North Cornwall Church (1826).

Today, a building costing millions (as has been estimated for this one), would certainly start with an architect. Not so in the 1820s. In those days, professional church builders handed you a plan-and-picture book, then asked for a payment to get started. In this case, a church builder named Hiram Vaile had in 1824 finished a church in Sharon (long since burned down). The North Cornwall faithful took one look and said, in effect, yes! we want one just like that.

And that they got. But not without trouble. First came a long hassle about where the church would be located. At least three of the leading members wanted to donate the land. The squabble continued for almost two years; many people resigned in a separatist movement. At length all agreed to let a judge from the Litchfield Court decide the matter, and the site was determined to be the Noah Rogers corner where the building now stands.

A contract was signed with Hiram Vaile (\$2,500) and work began. Imported laborers were boarded in local homes at the prevailing rate, \$1.00 per week. Much of the labor, perhaps most, was done by local volunteers. Each of the eight interior pillars (not Greek Revival fakes but structurally necessary) was donated by a North Cornwall proprietor who vied with his neighbors to haul in the largest, longest, and straightest log by oxen. These timbers were then barked, shaped, and fluted, and the Corinthian capitals carved, by hand. When the church was completed late in 1826, it looked, except for the chimney, rear windows, and ramp, pretty much as it appears today.

So much for the outside. Let's look at the inside. The original window sashes, pegged together, are still in place. So is most of the glass (about 900 panes), wavy and quaint today but in 1826 imported from England as the best available. Back then, when one walked into the sanctuary, the pews faced toward you (perhaps to embarrass latecomers), and the pulpit was on the east wall, raised so high that

the preacher could turn around and shake hands with the choirmaster, whose singers sat on the raised platforms still in place. Also, the 1826 church had a uniform balcony ("gallery," then called) of polished wood running around all four sides of the huge room.

Over the years, the church has gone through cycles of neglect and then rejuvenation. The major improvement came in 1926, when the Samuel Scoville Associates, composed of both locals and "summer people," banded together to raise the funds necessary to restore and restructure the church for its centennial. Today, walking into the building and sitting down, one does not see a bare back wall. The Associates can be thanked for the present "recessed" pulpit, the "minister's room" on one side and the organ alcove on the other, all the wrought-iron candle holders made by "Grandpa" Oliver, and the high Palladian window behind the pulpit. Today one looks up and through this window to see a large maple tree. In 1926, that just-planted tree could not be seen. Someone painted green leaves on the window, signs of hope to come.

Lined up on the walls of the rear balcony, there are photos of 18 past ministers encased in oval frames, ranging from Walter Smith (1826) to Peter Hammond (2002). To stand there, silently, looking at these, is also to hear voices, stories.... We can't be sure of what they say. But time will tell, and time is on their side.
—Bob Potter

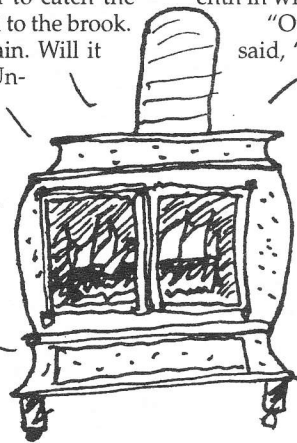
Larry's Beavers

It is just like Cornwallians to take a lively, almost proprietary interest in Larry Van Valkenburgh's beaver pond.

Last year, the beavers succeeded in building a dam that clogged the culvert, flooding Rattlesnake Road. Cars splashed from one side to the other. Walkers like me were saved from wet feet when Jim Vanicky moved large boulders along the side of the road for us to hop on. And little boys tried to catch the fish that swam across the road to the brook.

Now the pond is high again. Will it once more flood the road? Unlikely. Larry has a plan, but he must wait until spring to implement it. He wants to keep the water level high enough so that the beavers can survive the winter. All fall they have been busy carrying in their forepaws loads of mud and material to plaster the interlocked twigs of the lodge. When the cold comes, the lodge freezes solid, keeping the water inside and their body temperature warm.

Meanwhile, Larry has purchased the necessary supplies, some of which you see on the side of the road near the dam. Sometime in March, he'll remove the top of the dam to lower the water level. Then he'll get to work installing a remarkable system endorsed by The Fund for Animals. We'll all be there to cheer him on!
—Carla Bigelow



Welcome

Aubrey Jean Johnson to Diana and Brian Johnson

Good-bye to Friends

Joseph Choiniere
Barbara Klaw

Land Transfers

Elizabeth P. Beers to Rose A. and Anthony A. Frith, house and 1 acre on Kent Road for \$140,000.
Susan E. Reinhardt to Tracy F. Hewat, house and 10 acres on Johnson Road for \$850,000.
Donald William and Margaret M. Treimann to John D. and Catherine C. McMahon, house and 5.093 acres on College Street for \$776,000.
Richard H. and Carol G. McCusker to William E. and Virginia H. Brecher, house and 3.045 acres on Scoville Road for \$369,000.
Arthur C. and John K. M. Dutton to Jonathan M. and Victoria Estern Jadow, 61.895 acres on Town Street for \$396,128.

A Visit to HVRHS

Of the 586 students at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, 64 (11 percent) are from Cornwall. Recently I spent a morning at the school in the company of the Assistant Superintendent, Patricia Chamberlain. She was eager to share the results of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, known as CAPT, administered last May to all tenth grade students in Connecticut. "We are well above the state average in all areas. More important is the improvement shown over 2001 CAPT scores, with a 13.9 percent increase in science, a 19.7 percent in reading, and a 5.4 percent increase in math," she explained.

In addition to the state ranking, HVRHS is more specifically ranked in relation to nine high schools with essentially the same district characteristics (income, education, occupation, poverty, family structure, home language, and enrollment). Here, the news is mixed. We ranked third in math and reading comprehension, fourth in science, and seventh in writing.

"Over four years," Ms. Chamberlain said, "two thirds of the material offered are core courses every student must take to graduate: four full years of English, three years each of math and social studies, two years of science, a total of six courses each semester."

As we headed out for a tour of the new Agricultural Education Building, Ms. Chamberlain told me about an innovative, year-long program called "Exploring Life Skills" that introduces all freshmen to skills and career opportunities in areas such as graphic communications, horticulture, mechanics, computers, and natural resources. Each course is three weeks long, a total of nine courses in the year.

The Ag Ed Building is a wonder of modern technology, with a fully equipped biotechnology lab, animal, aquaculture, and hydroponics labs, greenhouse, hi-tech com-

puter lab, and a capacious computer library. The courses offered here are open to all students and are designed to provide education and training in many areas of natural resources, agricultural science, and technology.

I asked two sophomores from Cornwall, Ellen Hart and Evan Bardot, what they thought of the required freshman Life Skills courses. Ellen Hart, who is enrolled in honors classes this year, liked the "hands on" aspects of the three-week courses. Her three favorites: Animal Science, Forestry and Greenhouse Management, and Ag Ed Mechanics. Evan Bardot is also taking honors courses. He had two favorites, Introductory Metal Technology and Wood Technology. This year he is pursuing his interest in Metal Technology by taking a two-semester course.

Last year 50 percent of the graduates went on to four-year colleges, 26 percent went on to other forms of higher education and the remaining 24 percent found employment or entered the military.

It's apparent that HVRHS tries to serve the needs of all its students from the six small towns in the Northwest Corner by offering a diverse curriculum that challenges individual abilities and talents. Test scores matter, and teachers are hard at work helping their students to do better.

—Carla Bigelow



The Country Garden

"Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year. For gardening begins in January, begins with the dream."

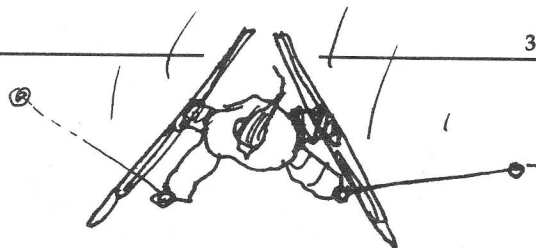
—Josephine Nuese

To new arrivals eager to make their homes and gardens in the Northwest Corner in the 1960s, the *Lakeville Journal* column "The Country Garden" seemed a godsend. Each week Josephine Nuese, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardener, served cheery advice on what to plant and how to take care of it.

Josephine Nuese lived in Cornwall with her husband Bob and son John for upwards of three decades until her death in the '70s. Bob ran a used bookstore near their home on Johnson Road.

I was a weekender in Cornwall about the same time. As a book publisher with Charles Scribner's Sons, I noticed how my wife Coby, a mad gardener, devoured each new column. I passed them on to my colleague at Scribners, Elinor Parker, author of 16 books and an eager knitter and gardener. She wrote

Letters to the Chronicle



LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Small shifts in emphasis are often harbingers of larger things to come. In the last few months our First Selectman, Gordon Ridgway, has been speaking out in the Chronicle, making statements on official matters in signed articles (the Town Hall renovation, the transfer station) and occasionally expressing his personal views in letters (encouraging the CCS reconstruction project and the preservation of farmlands and open spaces).

In speaking out so openly Gordon is demonstrating the leadership we want, and in choosing the Chronicle as his bully pulpit he is acknowledging the very important role your journal plays in the life of the town.

Compliments to both Gordon and the Chronicle in keeping us well informed.

—Hector Prud'homme

CONTRARY CORNWALL

John Miller's article in the last Chronicle on our town's independent bent in the November election concluded that "Cornwall doesn't march to anyone's drumbeat but our own." This reminded me of something else I had read recently, these words by Samuel Scoville, Jr., in 1926:

"You will remember that when the towns of Connecticut voted in 1785 (sic) as to whether they should join the United States, three towns, Cornwall, Norfolk, and Sharon, voted against the proposal on the ground that they did not care to surrender their independence. Cornwall, however, made it clear that she was perfectly willing to cooperate with the union of the states, which if she had her way would now be known as United States of America and Cornwall."

Read into this what you want.

—Bob Potter

THE TALENT SHOW

The fifth annual Talent Show was another happy and fruitful event for Cornwall and the Cornwall Library.

Thanks to a total of 33 generous and community-minded performers and nearly 300 attendees, the show raised a total of \$6,507 for the Library. These funds will keep our new library open and

available as a resource for everyone in Cornwall.

One of the beautiful things about the show is its ability to bring together both amateur and professional talent for an evening of unique entertainment. Everyone in the Talent Show is a star for the night and everyone in the audience a hero!

We'd like to recognize the following performers whose names were omitted from the program. Leslie Elias's menagerie including Skip Hunt (coyote) and Nick Jacobs (little bird) and the Politically Incorrect Quartet accomplices Roxana Laughlin (koto player), Tom Walker (sound) and Jonah Whiteside (curtain boy).

We extend many thanks to Catherine Tatge and Dominique Lasseur for filming the show for our archives.

Of course, we are especially grateful to our benefactors and patrons for making the show a financial success for the Library.

—Alexa Venturini, President
The Friends of the Library

FILE OF LIFE

Just a reminder that the recent fundraising letter from Cornwall's Volunteer Fire Department included a form called the "File of Life" with space for the important health information about members of each household. It was accompanied by a magnetic folder that attaches to your fridge.

Please fill out this form. It is there for your welfare and as a vital aid to EMS personnel who could be called to your home for a medical emergency. Thanks.

—John Miller, Secretary, CVFD

A HEARTFELT HURRAH

The Cornwall Conservation Trust congratulates and thanks the Cornwall community for its generous participation in our success at raising 97 percent of the \$695,000 needed to buy most of Cherry Hill Farm from the Hart family. By mid-December, an amazing 235 donors had made pledges towards this goal, and we are close enough to it to sign the purchase contract.

—Maggie Cooley, President,
Cornwall Conservation Trust

to Josephine Nuese expressing her interest, and a meeting in Cornwall was soon arranged.

By the time the cucumber sandwiches were served by a radiant Josephine, it was discovered that a New Jersey Judge Parker, Elinor's uncle, was related to Josephine. Before parting that day, the two cousins were well on their way to publishing a book. *The Country Garden* appeared in 1970. The acknowledgements named among others Ann and Stewart Hoskins, publishers of the *Lakeville Journal*; photographers Dody

Prentice and Gene Trudeau, and illustrator Timmy Foster.

The volume was a "how-to," but unlike most in that category, it instructed in language full of wit and eloquence. In a passage about using wood ashes to stimulate the lawn in March, the author warns of "personal problems."

"Wood ashes are feather light," she points out, and "can be distributed about your person" by a slight "puff of air." To protect clothes and hair she recommends wearing an old rain coat and a shower cap;



to keep the ashes out of the nasal passages, "you might want to add a towel draped yashmak-fashion over the nose and mouth and fastened atop the head with a safety pin. This ensemble is especially fetching if you wear glasses."

Elinor Parker wrote, "This book is for those happy people who own small to moderately large properties in or near real country ... The author believes that ease of maintenance is of main importance, that one should have time to enjoy a garden as well as work in it..."

The Country Garden is out of print, but is available at the Cornwall Free Library. Used copies of the hardcover edition are to be found at Alibris.com (\$4.67); Amazon.com has paperback copies for \$3.50.

—Jacek Galazka

Cyber-Waste

At a time when a major ecological trend is recycling and the most dramatic communications phenomenon is the computer, the two have had little connection. Among the hardest things in the world to recycle are computers and their peripherals—printers, keyboards, monitors, and the like.

No more—at least in the Northwest Corner towns of Cornwall and Salisbury. At this moment, a trailer parked at the Salisbury transfer station is filling with discarded computer gear brought there by local citizens. By agreement between the two towns, the trailer—when deemed full enough of Salisbury's cyber-leavings—will swing down to the Cornwall dump.

People who have registered ahead with the First Selectman's Office (672-4959) will be informed; their castoffs, at a cost of 20 cents per pound, will fill the trailer to capacity. Where the cargo goes after that is unclear. Some stuff will be revived and given

A Toast

As you lift a glass to the New Year, please accept our toast of thanks for your support and wishes for a happy and peaceful 2003.

away or sold cheaply. Whatever, my six-year-old printer, deceased in 2000, will surely vacate my dining room floor and maybe find a decent grave—or occupation—somewhere else. —Charles Osborne

(The state Department of Environmental Protection has honored Cornwall's transfer station as one of the top ten dumps in Connecticut. The reason: attention to detail—e.g., collecting discarded eyeglasses for distribution to the needy. —The Editors).

Events & Announcements

Adventures in Tree Sitting: At the age of 23, Julia Butterfly Hill climbed into a 300-foot sequoia in California and lived there for two years as a protest against clear-cutting. See the documentary at the Cornwall Library, Saturday, January 25 at 4 P.M. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library.

A Hotshots Basketball Contest will be hosted by Park & Rec. on Saturday, January 4 at 10 A.M. at the CCS gym. Open to boys and girls ages 9 to 15. Call Bethany Thompson at 672-6058.

Family Ice Skating at the Salisbury School is available through Park & Rec. on Saturday, January 4 from 1:30 to 2:30 P.M. All Cornwall residents are welcome. The event is free and refreshments will be served. All who skate *must* wear hats.

The Democratic Town Committee will hold a regular meeting on Monday, January 13 at 7:30 P.M. at the Library Meeting Room. Jim Maloney is scheduled to attend to discuss the election and his plans for the future.

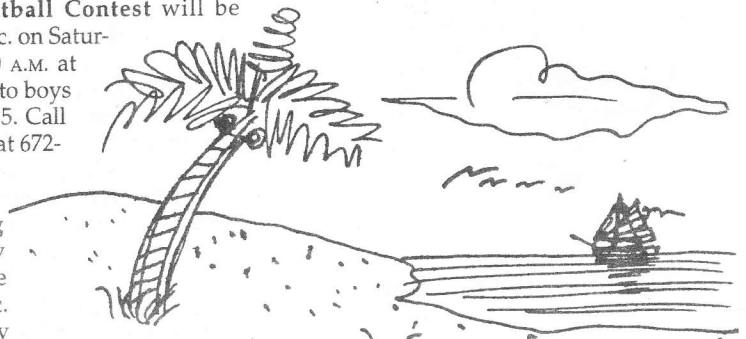
New Town Office Hours: Beginning January 1, the town offices will be closed for lunch between noon and 1 P.M.

A Look Back: Six Cornwall women whose memories stretch back into the early decades of the 20th century will share their recollections at the Cornwall Library on Saturday, January 11 at 3 P.M. The event is sponsored by Friends of the Cornwall Library.

Cornwall Teacher: Beginning the week of January 20, the Taconic Learning Center will offer two courses by John Leich: Italian (Tuesdays) and *Great Decisions 2003* (Thursdays). For a complete schedule of these and other courses, call 435-2922.

The Young People's Theatre production of *Charlotte's Web* will take place on Saturday, February 8. Park & Rec. will sponsor a bus trip to the show, which is especially for children. The cost is \$10 per person (bus and theater ticket), and availability is limited. For reservations, call Bethany Thompson at 672-6058.

Art in Cornwall: Don Bracken's show of paintings made in his studio at the World Trade Center will continue at the Cornwall Library through January 4. Beginning January 6, Shaun MacDavid will show her light-filled oil paintings of people, still lifes, and landscapes. There will be a reception for the artist at the Library on Sunday, January 12 at 3 P.M. At the National Iron Bank, Hugh Dunlavy will exhibit works in watercolor and pencil during January.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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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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