



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 4: NUMBER 6 JULY 1994



## Low Key Budget Session

The budget fireworks popping in other towns and on the Region 1 front were notable by their absence at a June 3 town meeting at CCS. A 56-18 vote spelled passage of a \$3.58 million 1994-95 town budget, 2.4 percent larger than its predecessor. The mill rate was set at 17.25. To figure your tax, multiply property value (\$200,000, say) by .01725. Your tax: \$3,450.

— Charles Osborne

## Chronicle Budget — HELP!

See story on page four, column one.

## From Cuba With Hope

On Wednesday, June 8, political refugees Humberto and Sara Ane arrived at Bradley Airport, straight from Cuba. Margarita Charlton and Jill Gibbons were there to meet them and bring them to their new apartment in West Cornwall village. The United Church of Christ, Congregational, sponsored their immigration to the United States under an umbrella program of the Interfaith Refugee Ministry. The Anes came with their two younger children, Estrella, nine, and Alicia, seven. Left behind were two grown sons.

Persons over 21 years old are forbidden to leave the country unless they are

"undesirables" as are the elder Anes. In the 1970s, Humberto spent two years in prison for counterrevolutionary activities.

Upon release, Humberto studied at night and earned credentials as a technician working with meteorological measuring devices. He is also an expert car mechanic. Sara has an engineering degree. Recently she has worked on various important government tasks involving climate, soil conditions, and water supply.

In Cuba, Estrella and Alicia were in third and first grades, respectively. They love school and can't wait to go to school here. Both girls are busy learning English from new Cornwall friends. They are determined to bespeaking the language when they enter CCS in the fall.

Asked about their expectations, Sara and Humberto speaking in Spanish and almost in unison, said, "First and foremost, we are willing to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to give our children a home of their own, clothing and enough food. We also want to be able to save a little and send money to our family back in Cuba."

How do the Anes feel in their new surroundings? "Wonderful," says a beaming Humberto, with a shy smile at his daring use of an English word. "The town

is so beautiful and the people so caring that I feel I am dreaming." Humberto continues, opening big eyes of disbelief. "We also feel overwhelmed with all this freedom. We can leave our house whenever we want, without the fear of being watched constantly, without having to give anybody an explanation of our actions or whereabouts. Our children are amazed to see milk on the table. Estrella has not had milk from the age of seven. We want to learn English soon, so that we can properly thank all the kind people in this town." — Paula Wiske

## New Career for a Pumper

Does an old fire truck ever die? Not always. In Cornwall at least, it can be given away — to do service for another town.

On May 15, representatives from the Tri-Village Fire Association of West Topsham, Vermont, came to Cornwall to receive our 1957 International pumper. On average, a fire truck has a 30-year life expectancy. This vehicle, however, has received such good maintenance by volunteer engineer Phil Starr that it can continue on active duty.

Generally when fire trucks get old, their usable parts are converted to some other use, or they are passed along intact to

(continued on page 2)

# JULY 1994

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Women's Emergency Services is launching a new women's support group. For further information, call 824-1491 or 824-1080.				Every Sunday GNATS Softball 6:00pm Hubbard Field	1	2
3 July 4 Picnic (see above)  Cornwall Historical Society exhibit: dollhouses 1-4pm	4 FOURTH OF JULY Rain date for July 4 picnic  Cornwall Historical Society exhibit: dollhouses 12-4pm	5 Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Office  Agric. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse	6 W. Cornwall Merchants Assoc. 10am Cadwell's	7 The Boys Club 10am Cadwell's	8	9
10 Cornwall Historical Society exhibit: dollhouses 1-4pm  Tornado Party 5pm, 3 Pine St. (p.3)	11 Cornwall Lib. art exhibit: paintings, Ira Barkoff P & Z 8pm Town Hall	12 Hous. River Comm. 7:30pm CCS Lib. Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm Mohawk Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall*	13	14	15	16 Cornwall Conservation Trust 5-7pm Firehouse (p.4)  Extras for Kids benefit 5-7pm (p.4) No. 87 Rte. 128
17 Cornwall Historical Society exhibit: dollhouses 1-4pm	18 Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall	19 Agric. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse	20	21	22	23
24 Cornwall Hist. Soc. exhibit: dollhouses 1-4pm	25 ZBA 8pm Town Hall*	26 Dem. Town Comm. caucus 7:30pm Town Hall (p.4)	27	28 Cornwall Library annual meeting 4pm	29 Grumbling Gryphons summer camp performance "The Ghost Net" 7:30pm CCS Info? 672-0286	30 UCC† Rummage Sale 10am-2pm Parish House
31 Sedgwick Monument dedication 2pm (p.4) Corn. Hist. Soc. dollhouses 1-4pm						

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

(continued from page 1)

a needy community. Fire Chief Gary Hepprich decided that this pumper deserved to be placed where it would be used. He first investigated the flood-damaged towns along the Mississippi. The need may have been there, but Hepprich didn't find it.

Inquiries in Vermont came up with Topsham, whose fire department covers about the same area as Cornwall. Topsham, near Barre, has a population of 1,000, but the firefighters get only \$5,000 a year from the town. The chief wrote that they have two fire stations but only one pumper, a 1964 converted oil truck. They would be more than grateful to buy Cornwall's pumper for \$1.

Bearing maple syrup as a gift, Topsham's firefighters came to accept their "new" truck. After a three-hour training session and an exchange of fire stories, the Vermont volunteers drove the pumper north to start its extended life.

— Ginny Potter

### Four Strikes and Counting

The Region 1 school budget suffered its fourth defeat in the referendum June 16. The vote was 941 nays to 838 yeas. Cornwall maintained its opposition — 156 to 105 — joining all the other towns in the region except Sharon and Salisbury. A fifth vote was to be held June 30. — Charles Osborne

### Memorial Day Notebook

It was one of the nicer days — weather appropriate to a Norman Rockwell magazine cover, but with a breeze gusty enough to blow your hat off. We started at the beginning:

9:15 a.m. North Cornwall Cemetery. Charlie Gold invited 25 participants to decorate, with spring flowers, the graves of some 45 veterans. (The observance, it may be remembered, started as Decoration Day, in the post-Civil War South.) There are blooms for Cogswell, Root, Hart, Griggs, Aichele — among other familiar Cornwall surnames borne by deceased veterans of our less recent wars. No one here from Korea, Vietnam or the Gulf — yet. We note a man named William Shakespeare, and a woman — the only female veteran here — named Sally Goedeke.

10:00 a.m. Seamen's Memorial Service, West Cornwall. The proceedings are memorably brief and self-contained: a formation of seven men, two (Doc Simont and Fred Bate III) still able to squeeze into traditional gob uniforms. After a prayer near the Covered Bridge in memory of men lost at sea, three volleys crash in salute. Skip Lush throws a wreath from the Bridge into the Housatonic.

11:00 a.m. Annual parade and ceremonies. These unfold much as usual, but the weather gives everything an exhilarat-

ing sun-dappled freshness. V.F.W. Post No. 9856 awards plaques for good citizenship to Bob and Jean Bailey, for succoring the mentally retarded here at home; and to Lydia Wolf, for an astonishing range of good works both at home and abroad.

Maggie Cooley, delivering the address, is eloquent in drawing cogent lessons on tolerance and diversity from distant scenes of wars past and present. Taps is played.

12 noon. Then, from the Carnival scene next door come lively melodies from the cakewalk, a combination of maypole dancing and musical chairs with a cake as prize. Three dollars worth of tickets (for Child Center Frost Memorial Scholarship Fund and Church School charities) buy admission for the young in spirit to virtually everything here — tetherball, the fish pond, the lollipop tree, the fire truck ride.

Finally, but not least, puffs of wind blow the aroma of grilled burgers and hot dogs to expectant nostrils, reminding the celebrants that it is way past time to get outside of some lunch.

— Charles Osborne



### What's All the Yelp About?

Many people have wondered about the remote area in North Cornwall known as Yelping Hill. What is Yelping Hill? Who were the yelpers whose yelps gave it its name?

One old story says that a family named Johnson once farmed the area . . . the whole family were deafmutes . . . their efforts to communicate were loud, unclear, and otherworldly . . . and the area became known as Yelping Hill.

Ed Canby, who was a young boy when his family built one of the first houses on Yelping Hill, has some recollections. Soon after World War I, seven families, most of them from New Haven and New York, started dreaming of a new kind of vacation spot, accessible for car and far from the summer hotels in the Catskills or Adirondacks that their elders visited by rail.

One weekend in 1920, Henry Seidel Canby, then editor of the "Literary Review" of the *New York Post*, and his wife were guests of Carl and Irita Van Doren. The Canbys took a walk, and paused across from the Scoville farm where a sign said "Unsafe for Autos." Continuing on, they came to an old farm, abandoned for years, and last inhabited by one "Woodchuck" Scoville. The Canbys were charmed, and bravely bought the farm for \$15 an acre. The rest of the families — the MacCrackens, Kunkels, Trowbridges, Dodds, Smiths, and Ruth Adams — made several expeditions to the property in winter and spring (aided by Bill Bierce with ox team), and Yelping

Hill Association was incorporated. George Crosby began the buildings, designed mostly by Ruth Adams, and in 1922 the families moved in.

At first the Yelping Hill members were considered eccentric, to say the least. Rumor said that it was a "free love colony." It wasn't until the members joined the Cream Hill Lake Association and began hosting Saturday teas that they began to be accepted as normal human beings.

But how did the name Yelping Hill come about? When the summer colony was founded, it was ancient and already legendary. Deafmutes making odd noises? Foxes barking? A resident family named Yelpin — minus the "g"? No one knows for sure.

— Sumner Ireland

### Winning Scholars

Poise, presentation, personality — all emerged loud and clear from the mid-May interviews of six high school seniors who qualified for UCC Woman's Society's college scholarship assistance. This financial aid program derives 75 percent of its funds from the Rummage Sale and the Christmas Fair.

Winners from HVRHS: Jason Harmon, University of Connecticut, engineering; Michael Kesl, University of Maine, elementary education; Amanda Roepke, Agnes Scott College, physical therapy; Patricia Rummens, Western Connecticut State University, languages; Jessica Gelerter, Clark University, psychiatry.

From Hotchkiss School: Brooke Eberline, Emory University, international law.

To these — and all other — seniors, we wish great success and joy.

— Thalia H. Scoville

### Goodbye to Friends

Margaret I. Soltis  
Joseph Matyas, Jr.

### Congratulations

Daniel Algrant to Elise Pettus

### Launching Library Friends

Newly minted, the Friends of the Cornwall Library got started May 15, when a turnout of 28 people organized and elected officers: Lisa Lansing, president; Ella Clark, vice-president; Marie Prentice, secretary; Susan Gingert, treasurer. Board members at large are Jeremy Brecher, Spencer Klaw and John Zinsser.

The group discussed activities the Friends might pursue to help the Library. The Friday morning children's reading program found new helpers. With the guidance of Librarian Ginny Potter, programs for grownups, a book sale in late August, and administrative tasks were also discussed.

Phyllis Nauts, a Library trustee, described how the idea of a Friends group emerged among the trustees as a means of



building the Library's resources and its support within the community.

At a subsequent meeting, now planned for August, the Friends will vote on by-laws and hear reports on organizational progress. Anyone is welcome to be a Friend of the Library. Volunteers are eagerly sought. For more information, please call Lisa Lansing (672-2659) or any other Friends board member. — Lisa Lansing

### Jubilee in Cornwall

A presentation of songs and stories by children from Cornwall and the Jubilee School in West Philadelphia was the highlight of the picnic held at UCC on the evening of June 15. Cornwall children brought everyone up to date on Connecticut history, including a wonderful rap quintet about Obookiah; the Jubilee children spoke of their concerns about drugs and violence in their neighborhoods and what could be done about them. Forty Jubilee children, teachers, and parents visited Cornwall for the week. — Anne Baren

### Lights for Safety

Vehicles making the night run down the steep hill, around the sharp bend, over the railroad tracks and the one-lane bridge in West Cornwall won't have to do it in the pitch dark. Costs were too high for local businesses and residents to keep street lights burning on Route 128 and stretches of River Road. No money for lights shone down from the town budget. To the rescue came the State Department of Transportation, which feared darkness as a traffic hazard, and agreed to pay for the lighting. — Charles Osborne

### Home at Last

Eight laborious, frustrating, painstaking years after it was conceived, the completed Kugeman Village was officially dedicated on June 8 before an appreciative audience of about 60 people. As workmen were completing the landscaping, Cornwall Housing Corporation chairman Kenneth Keskinen introduced the many people from Cornwall and neighboring towns, as well as state officials, who had participated in creating Cornwall's 18 new units of affordable housing.

The project had originally been conceived in 1986 by Patsy Van Doren, who was then first selectman, Keskinen explained. Van Doren spoke, recalling that the problems had seemed virtually "insurmountable," and might have remained so but for a generous gift from Lois and William Kugeman. The donation enabled the town to buy the Route 7 site.

The principal speaker was Connecticut Housing Commissioner Henry S. Scherer, Jr., who put aside his prepared speech, saying it would be ironic for him to lecture Cornwall about afford-

## Letters to the Chronicle

### BELLS AND FIRECRACKERS

*My recollections of July 4 celebrations begin when we Clark children were very young, during the late 1890s. We looked forward to the day because we each had our own bunch of firecrackers, big and little, suitable for our ages. Each of us hoped to be the first to run out the side door to fire off a cracker on the step stones. The one who beat us to it was usually our mother, who hoarded firecrackers from year to year in a tin box on the pantry shelf and surprised us with the first bang.*

*Early in the day, after the cows had had their early morning milking, our father helped the boys (I had two older brothers) pack gunpowder into a 50-pound hollow weight and fix a long fuse to it which, when lit, set off a cannon-like roar! Later in the day, when they went up to the night pastures with the cows, the boys could hear the church bells from Cornwall or Warren or Goshen ringing to proclaim the Fourth of July.*

*Times have changed and somehow no one can be trusted to celebrate with firecrackers and bonfires and illuminations at home. Laws have been passed trying to keep us safe and unhurt. Now, my mother could be put in jail for keeping leftover firecrackers in a tin box on the pantry shelf.*

*Some years we had community picnics at the Perkins's grove, a delightful wooded spot between Great Hill Road and College Street. Sometimes we climbed part of Mohawk Mountain behind our farmhouse to see the sky illuminated by fireworks from Waterbury and Torrington.*

*Once, in my teens, I went to a Winchester slumber party at Emily Bronson's on July thirds. All the girls of Winchester took blankets and slept on the Bronson porch. The boys prowled about trying to tease us girls, but no one would have thought of firing off a firecracker before midnight, July 4. At the stroke of midnight, the boys, who had begged a key to the church, began ringing the bell in the belfry. I had been asleep but awoke thinking the sound very sweet and cheerful. At daybreak, we girls dressed and climbed into the belfry and took our turn ringing the bell. I learned that it is no easy thing to ring a church bell properly.*

*In June, 1963, the U.S. Senate passed a resolution saying that the signing of the Declaration of Independence should be observed each year by the ringing of bells throughout the United States on the afternoon of July 4. In 1964, Eric Hatch and Eric Sloan started a campaign in Connecticut to celebrate*

able housing. Rather, he said, "I come here to salute you for the example you have set."

State Senator Dell Eads, Representative Mary Ann O'Sullivan, and First Selectman Gordon Ridgway all spoke briefly, and one of the new tenants, Sue Wick, joined Anne Chamberlain in a celebratory song.

Keskinen said that 12 of the units are now occupied and that the other six would



*July 4 by ringing bells for two minutes at two o'clock in the afternoon. I did my share of pressuring for the observance in Cornwall. That year, church bells rang and groups of people stood by roadsides and rang bells.*

*Recently I have had to be content just to watch on TV the ringing of the Liberty Bell at the Old Capitol in Hartford. One toll is struck for each year in the Union. Our generation has seen patriotism go out of style. Perhaps the ringing bells can remind our children how necessary a love of history is to prepare us for good citizenship.* — Harriet Clark

### BRIDGE DANCE THANK YOU

*On behalf of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department, I would like to thank all the residents and businesses in town who helped to make the Bridge Dance on May 29 such a success. If I tried to list everybody in this letter, you would have to add two pages to this issue. For now, let's just thank all the business owners for their assistance because we hit just about everybody up for something, goods or services, and they all came through with flying colors. A special thanks to all who baked goodies to sell at Cadwell's for dessert.*

*If anyone has any ideas on how we could improve things in future, drop us a note at P.O. Box 131, Cornwall Bridge. We're always open to suggestions. Again, thanks to all of you and we hope to see you at next year's dance.* — Dave Becker, President, CVFD

### LAST TORNADO BASH

*It has been five years since a tornado passed through Cornwall, leveling many of the town's lovely trees but not dampening the spirit of the people, whom we dearly love. And so it seems an appropriate time to hold our last Tornado Party at 3 Pine Street, Sunday, July 10, beginning around 5 p.m.*

*We have enjoyed our yearly picnics and hope that you all will join us for a time of music, food, and good conversation to celebrate life and the many blessings we have in this special place. (We will provide beverages and hot dogs if you will bring a casserole, salad, or dessert.)* — Jerry and Pat Blakey

be soon. Preparing to unveil an identifying plaque, he said that it had been difficult to settle on an official name for the community because other donors had joined the Kugemans in making gifts. If they were all properly thanked, Keskinen said the name would have to be something most unwieldy like

"Hubblumenclarkkugehoun."

— Barbara Klaw



**Marc's Marks**

Yet again Cornwall's political culture scene is enriched by Marc Simont's inimitable contributions. Currently to be seen at the Library is a sampling of his political satires, "Cartoons to the Editor," published periodically by *The Lakeville Journal* ever since the Eisenhower era. Down the years hardly a public figure has been spared. Nixon, Kissinger, Reagan, Thatcher, Bush, Perot, to name a few, are all unerringly skewered on the point of Marc's puckish pen. Clinton chatting up Reagan, "Who does your hair?" Kaffiyeh-ed Arab to Hasidic Jew, "You look silly"; Jew to Arab, "Look who's talking."

Signed copies of the drawings will be for sale, proceeds to benefit the Library. Until July 9. — *Brigitte Hanf*

**P&Z Doings**

At its regular meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission approved four deck/porches, thus confirming the annual optimism of outdoor summer enjoyment. Also approved was a new house for Debra Tyler on her Pierce Lane CHC affordable lot. Jim and Jane Prentice received a special permit to build a contractor's shop-and-storage facility. A resubdivision of four lots was approved for Naneen Bunnell.

The commission also voted to hold a public hearing before the regular August meeting on a proposed revision of regulations. The change will cancel two-year terms on special permits for bed and breakfast use, permanent sawmills for limited use, and major home businesses.

In legal proceedings, Toby Cole et al. had challenged the current two-year restriction, which members agreed was not worth defending in court. The time limits were seen as unnecessary.

— *Ginny Potter*



**Chronicle Budget — HELP!**

The *Chronicle's* bank account is perilously low. Right now, we don't have enough to print the next issue.

The *Chronicle's* financial statement is very simple.

Our only expenses are the approximately \$400 per month it costs to print and mail each issue.

Our only revenues are the contributions you send.

Yes, I want the Chronicle to continue. Here's my tax-deductible contribution of \$

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/ST/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\$10 will get the Chronicle mailed out of town.

**Events & Announcements**

**Bus to Torrington:** Northwestern Connecticut Transit District offers bus service Thursdays and Fridays from your house in Cornwall to Torrington. Basically for the elderly and disabled, but available to all. Call Paul Tyrell, 489-2580 for details.

**Activities at the Library:** Story Hour and Reading Program participants are wanted! Details at the Library, or phone 672-6874.

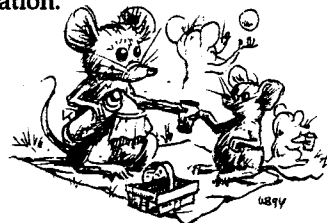
**Grants for Seniors:** Renters who were 65 or older on December 31, 1993, or who are receiving Social Security disability benefits, may be in line for a grant from the State of Connecticut.

Some of the requirements: applicant must have lived in Connecticut for one year before filing; income, including Social Security, may not exceed \$20,700 if single, \$25,400 if married; 5 percent of qualifying income must not exceed 35 percent of total rent and utility expenses.

Application forms and additional information are available at the assessor's office Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9-12, Wednesdays 1 p.m.-4:30. Application must be made by September 15.

**Preserve Land, Save Taxes:** Everyone is welcome at a West Cornwall Firehouse meeting on Saturday, July 16, 5-7 p.m., sponsored by the Cornwall Conservation Trust. Speakers will be Bill Morrill, Lakeville lawyer and conservationist, and Starling Childs, Norfolk land planner. They will lead a discussion about how best to preserve our Cornwall land and save taxes while doing it. Refreshments will be served following the meeting, after which Land Trust members will elect officers for the coming year.

**Extras for Kids:** Save Saturday, July 16, for a wine and hors d'oeuvres fund-raising party at the spectacular gardens of Tom Bechtle and John Green. Hours are 5-7 p.m., with Sunday, July 17, as a rain date. Generous response to the latest appeal means that funds are available for summer programs (soccer, piano, arts, riding, you name it). Call Scott Cady, 672-0143, for an application.



**Refurbished Memorial:** The Sedgwick Monument will be rededicated on Sunday, July 31, at 2 p.m., rain or shine. The occasion will celebrate the installation of three replacement bronze reliefs on the pedestal of the howitzer, and restoration of the large bronze portrait of Major General John Sedgwick, damaged when other reliefs were vandalized some years ago. Cornwall sculptor Neil Estern modeled the replacements after the originals.



General Sedgwick, who was born and raised in Cornwall Hollow and is buried in the cemetery near the monument, was the highest ranking Union soldier killed in battle during the Civil War. At his death, he was commander of the Sixth Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

The ceremonies will include an address by Sam Waterston of Cornwall, and participation by the Litchfield First Artillery Regiment. There will also be an exhibit of Sedgwick memorabilia in Cornubia Hall, next door to the monument. The site is at the intersection of Route 43 and Hautboy Hill Road, opposite the cemetery. To relieve traffic congestion, cars should be parked in the space immediately south of Cornubia Hall.

**Dem. Caucus Call:** Cornwall Democratic Chair John Miller announces a party caucus to be held on Tuesday, July 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall. The purpose is to nominate candidates for the offices of Judge of Probate and Registrar of Voters.

**Rummage 1994:** UCC will hold its annual Rummage Sale on Saturday, July 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Items offered will include baked goods, clean clothing, books, toys, linens, nearly-new gifts, pictures, jewelry, a "Tiffany" table, and much more. Merchandise on outside tables and in the Rumsey Gym (furniture and clothing) will go on sale at 9 a.m. Lunch will be catered by the V.F.W. There will be a \$1 bag sale Monday, August 1.

**CORNWALL CHRONICLE**

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