



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 11 : NUMBER 6 JULY 2001



## The Ultimate Retreat

Although no one would characterize Cornwall as the area's most costly town, we are for the moment home of the highest-priced residential sale ever recorded in Litchfield County.

After being on the market for several years, the property known as Hidden Valley Castle recently sold for \$5,925,000. Described as "the ultimate retreat" by the realtors who handled the sale, the 15-room Bavarian-style stone castle sits at the end of a mile-long driveway off Valley Road. It was built in the 1920s by William Martin, a professor of surgery at Columbia University's medical school, and was subsequently owned by the Livingston and Ripley families and Saul Steinberg.

The 330-acre compound includes a stone gatehouse and barn, a ten-car garage, and a helipad. The whole shebang is assessed at \$2.2 million and will pay an annual real estate tax of \$46,300, the fourth highest in town (after Ivan Lendl, CL&P, and Yelping Hill).

The listing broker (who also sold Whoopi Goldberg's house) was Seymour Surnow, based in Washington Depot, and he patiently answered a few of the *Chronicle's* questions:

*Cornwall Chronicle:* Did the fact that the home is located in the town of Cornwall figure into the sale?

Seymour Surnow: Buyers of such properties don't distinguish much among the differ-

ent towns, except that low property taxes in this area of Connecticut are a plus. They are fulfilling a fantasy, and it could be anywhere. The important thing here was the extraordinary setting and the privacy offered by the location.

CC: Will they use the helipad?

SS: Yes, that was one attraction.

CC: Who are the new owners?

SS: They don't want that made public.

CC: Would I recognize their name?

SS: No, they're not movie stars or celebrities.

CC: Do they know about the bugs?

SS: It wasn't an issue. I consider them part of Cornwall's excellent population mix.

—Ed Ferman

## Region Budget Fails Again

On Wednesday, June 13, Cornwall voters again led the six towns in Region One in rejecting a proposed budget. Although the \$10,130,359 spending plan failed region-wide by only three votes, Cornwall's negative vote was a decisive 130 to 80. In fact, Cornwall cast more "no" votes than any other town, even the larger communities of Salisbury, North Canaan, and Kent.

After a second vote on May 24, the Region One Board of Education had cut administrative raises from the 4 percent range to 2.5 percent, resulting in a reduction of \$8,935. Al-

though this may have satisfied some voters concerned with administrative competence and compensation, others noted that the total reduction was less than 1/10 of 1 percent.

The vote is an interesting reversal of recent history. Ten and 20 years ago, the town often provided a huge "yes" vote, overcoming region-wide apathy and negativism. Why this change in sentiment? Perhaps the different reasons given can be related to the increasing enrollment at Cornwall Consolidated School, and the controversial \$4.7 million CCS building project that was narrowly approved by voters on December 2. Moreover, since HVRHS assessments are made on a per-pupil basis, high school costs soar as increasing numbers of 8th graders head for Falls Village. Then too, the high school board recently rejected a plan that offered more regional input into its financial planning, and has yet to act on a "benchmark" study showing that comparable communities in the state can educate students for 20 percent less.

All may not agree, but all should be able to understand why taxpayers already notified of a 50 percent increase over the next five years are rapidly changing the town's unanimous image.

—Bob Potter

## Engine Summer

If you like to watch big machines dig holes, head for Cornwall Village, which hasn't seen

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# JULY 2001

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 July Fest 11:30 A.M.—2 P.M. Town Green (p.4)	2 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	3 Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5 School Building Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	6 Exhibit of Furniture by Jean Bouteiller, Opening 5-7 P.M. Cornwall Historical Soc. (p.4)	7 Cornwall Arts Collection Opening 5-7 P.M. Railroad Square
8	9 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	10 Region One Budget Referendum noon-8 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	11 Friends of Cornwall Library 1 P.M. Library <i>The Wright Stuff</i> 7-8 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	12	13 Stories, Crafts, and Music for Ages 3-6 10:30-11:30 A.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	14 Deadline: August <i>Chronicle Copy</i> Rummage Sale 8:30 A.M.—2:30 P.M. UCC & Mohawk (p.4)
15 Rummage Sale 1/2 Price 1:30-5:30 P.M. UCC & Mohawk (p.4)	16 Rummage \$2 Bag Sale 9 A.M.—NOON UCC & Mohawk (p.4)	17 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall School Building Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Republican Town Caucus 8 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	18 <i>All About Kites</i> 7-8 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	19 Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	20 Stories, Crafts, and Music for Ages 3-6 10:30-11:30 A.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	21
22	23 ZBA 8 p.m. Town Hall*	24 Democratic Town Caucus 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	25 <i>Green Party</i> 7:30 p.m. Town Hall Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 p.m. W. C. Firehouse	26 <i>The World of Owls</i> 7-8 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	27 Stories, Crafts, and Music for Ages 3-6, 10:30-11:30 A.M. Cornwall Library (p.4) Film about Harold Ross and <i>The New Yorker</i> "Top Hat and Tales" 8:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	28
29	30	31 LAST DAY TO PAY TOWN TAXES				

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

so much heavy equipment since July 1989 when it was a federal disaster area. This occasion is a far happier one, the culmination of a lot of hard work and a prodigious amount of fund-raising.

On June 11, Library President Lisa Simont looked out the Town Office window at a John Deere bulldozer and said, "To see that thing ready to roll and the stakes marking the site is a great fulfillment of a goal that hardly seemed real three years ago."

The next day work started on the footings and foundation for the new 6,500-square-foot library building. "The dramatic event will be the delivery and assembly of the timber frame, which will be a little like an old-fashioned barn raising," said Dan Sexton of Casle Corporation, the project manager. That will happen in early August, and the siding and metal roof will be done by mid-September. The building is scheduled for completion by year's end.

The price tag for the new building and site work is \$1.1 million. That's significantly less than original estimates, and it's almost exactly the amount raised from individuals and businesses. Additional funds are earmarked for furniture, expansion of the collection, and the all-important endowment. "I never dreamed that we'd get such a wide range of gifts and so many extremely large ones," said Simont.

Meanwhile, around the corner and a week or so later, the big yellow machines pawed at the ground for a 3,500-square-foot addition to the Cornwall Village Meeting House of the United Church of Christ. "It's the first major change to the building since the addition of the organ loft in 1924," said Charlie Gold, chairman of the building committee.

The two-story addition to the back of the church will include a new entrance, two new offices, a choir room, a large classroom, handicapped-accessible bathrooms, and a chair lift. The project will be done in two phases, with a weather-tight shell to be completed by October and interior work to be done next summer.

The addition is part of an overall plan for maintenance and renovation of the church's buildings. Bathrooms in the Parish House will be gutted and renovated; the Cornwall Village Meeting House will be re-roofed and painted, and considerable painting and structural repair was done last winter at the North Cornwall Meeting House.

Gold, who also led the fund-raising effort, said, "The total cost of the master plan is estimated to be \$900,000, and so far we have pledged for \$625,000. It's a wonderful level of support that will let us complete the first phase of the plan."

—Ed Ferman

## Cornwall Volunteers Honored

Public Service Awards were given by Connecticut Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz on May 15 in New Britain to public officials in the Sixth Congressional District who have served their communities for 25 years or more. Ms. Bysiewicz said that "local governments work because people are willing to give up the most precious commodity they have—their time." Congresswoman Nancy Johnson also spoke. Special Sixth District honors were given to three volunteers, including Cornwall's Frederick Bate, Jr.

Other Cornwallians honored were: Frank Bailey, Frederick J. Bate III, Gerald B. Blakey, Gordon E. Cavanaugh, Richard B. Dakin, William A. Dinneen, Sr., Asa B. Goddard, D. Stevenson Hedden, G. Charles Hepprich, Ronald P. Laigle, Sr., Joseph C. Lush, Jr., John J. O'Donnell, John W. Preston, Roger Scius, Howard L. Stone, Richard L. Stone, Robert G. Whitford, David E. Williamson, and Rudy Zabransky. Thank you all—Cornwall is proud of you and grateful for your service.

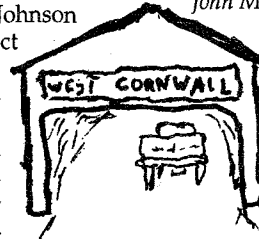
—Norma Lake

## His Lips Were Sealed

June was to be the last month for Art Brean as CEO/maitre d' of the Cornwall Transfer Station, known by almost all of us as the dump. That nice man with the pleasing smile was retiring after 24 years on the job. I arrived at the dump around the noon hour on Tuesday, June 5, pen and yellow note pad in hand and full of conceit, to interview Art, sometimes called Arthur, for the *Chronicle*. I say "conceit" for I had saved this plum assignment for myself as the July co-editor of the *Chronicle*, thinking nothing less than winning some journalism prize for a dazzling story about the man and his soon-to-be-former domain. I even had a headline picked out for my interview: "Secrets of the Dump Revealed." Art would tell me such delicious tidbits as the favored wines of Cornwall—perhaps sensitive but nutty-tasting merlots from the Napa Valley? Were there still scotch drinkers in town or had vodka become the favored booze? Were the new varieties of flavored gins catching on? Other things too: caf or decaf? *Reader's Digest* or *The New Yorker*? Balsamic or apple cider vinegar? Perhaps the brand names of the most popular varieties of dog and cat foods, cooking oils, ketchups. Most popular detergents. This could lead to a David Grossman special study comparing dump discards of Cornwall with Sharon and Kent and then with the state as a whole. How about a book—*Art (Brean) at the Dump* with illustrations by Marc Simont? I had been warned that Art didn't give interviews ("he won't talk") but hoped my dimpled smile and professional edge would do the trick. "Art," said I, smiling, "I understand this is your last month and I wondered if I could sit with you in your truck for ten minutes?" "They pay me to do this job and that's what I do," said Art, shaking his head slowly but confidently. "I don't do interviews." I was

horrified. No interview. No dump secrets revealed. No Pulitzer! I slunk back to my car and drove off. We'll miss Art and I suppose most of us will respect him for not giving away some of our not-so-dirty secrets to a no-longer cocky, crack reporter for this monthly newspaper. Arthur, in spite of your rejection, I'm going to miss you. We're all going to miss you a lot (see Letters, page 3). —

John Miller



P.S.— Oh yes, almost forgot. The new leader of the dump is Fred Bate III with the title Transfer Station Operator. His assistants, called attendants, are veteran Lib Terrall, the Recycling Coordinator, and new man Henry Dickinson.

## Welcome

Owen Brewster Algrant to Elise Pettus and Daniel Algrant

Ava Augusta to Elise and Drew Hingson  
Caroline Emily to Irene and Allyn H. Hurlburt

## Congratulations

Ramona Baker to Collin Culbreth

## Land Transfers

Cornwall Castle LTD to FCCP LLC, buildings and 330 acres off Valley Road for \$5,925,000.

Susan J. Bohlin to Alfred S. and Sharon L. Dietzel, house and land at 256 Dibble Hill Road for \$550,000.

Marion K. Pallocat to Ginger M. and Donald Betti, 8 acres on Cornwall Hollow Road for \$35,000.

James A. Newman to Jerome and Cynthia Cohen-Congress, 283 acres and buildings at 192 River Road for \$2,500,000.

Lawrence Klatzkin to Paul Graham Woolmington, land and buildings at 79 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for \$975,000.

## Good Eggs

Imagine Marc Simont's surprise when, at the opening of his Cornwall retrospective on May 26 at the Hughes Memorial Library, Librarian Estelle Stetson handed him the first ever Good Egg Award. "It's the most personal gift West Cornwall could have given me," Marc said. "What an honor!"

The award is indeed unique. Partly embedded in a block of polished wood about the size of a small hard-cover book is a marble egg canted at a delicate angle, above which is a plaque that says: "GOOD EGG AWARD" and another that says "IN APPRECIATION/MARC SIMONT/THE HUGHES MEMORIAL LIBRARY." I admired it so much that I went to see the Stetsons to learn how they came up with the idea.

"We wanted to show our appreciation of what he's done here for over half a century," said Estelle. "Of course we couldn't give him something factory made; that would have been unsuitable. When I found that egg at



the Sharon Bargain Barn I thought, 'Maybe we could do something with this.'"

"It just sort of evolved," explained Bob Stetson. "Estelle decided that since the show was at the Library, we should mount the egg on something shaped like a book. I happened to have a fine piece of spalt maple that Johnny O'Donnell had given me. [Spalt, Bob explained, describes a special kind of decay.] Spalting makes for interesting patterns, particularly in maple. I cut out a block, split it in half on a bandsaw, and glued it together edge to edge. I did a lot of sanding and finishing before gouging out the hole for the egg and gluing it in." Bob added, "Estelle dreams up things to do and I have to do them. I enjoy converting an idea into something that people can touch."

"Amen," says Marc. —Ella Clark

### Memo on Memorial Day

When, after a week of rain, the skies cleared (sort of), people eager to leave their houses turned out in droves for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual CVFD Bridge Dance on Sunday night, May 27. Though it started raining about 9 P.M. most stayed, ate, and danced to the music of John Camp and his Timeriders until 11 P.M. The dance netted between \$8,000 and \$9,000, earmarked for a new defibrillator.

At 9:15 A.M. on Monday at the North Cornwall Cemetery, Charles Gold, as his ancestors had done before him, led a group of adults and children as they placed flowers on the graves of veterans of wars dating back to the Revolution.



At 10 A.M. a small group gathered at the flagpole in West Cornwall for the Seamen's Memorial Service. Pastor Scott Cady prayed for those who had lost their lives at sea, and Skip Lush tossed a wreath from a window in the Covered Bridge. It bobbed about in the swift current as it was carried downstream. There followed a rifle salute, and taps played by Maggie Cady.

In the Village, under fair skies, throngs lined both sides of Pine Street awaiting the parade, which began promptly at 11 A.M. as scouts, baseball teams, kids on bikes, veterans, dogs, and assorted fire and rescue trucks passed by to the martial strains of the CCS Band and the applause of onlookers. Master of Ceremonies Ralph Gold presented the annual VFW Citizenship Award, a tradition begun just 50 years ago, to Selectman Wm. Earl Brecher for his years of work with young people and for "being always there for anyone in need." This year's address was given by Donald Hart, who gave a brief history of Memorial Day and the wars this country has fought.

Following the Memorial Day observance many adjourned to the new library site for a groundbreaking ceremony. After brief comments by Lisa Lansing Simont and Gordon Ridgway (holding 2-year-old Rebecca Rose), Library trustees and staff, yellow hard hats in place, dug into the sometimes unyielding ground. Several others, including kids, also

## Letters to the Chronicle

GIDDENS-JONES V. INGERSOLL

*My word! All this time...since November 1999...when I thought I was attending CCS Building Committee meetings, I was dreaming. The other members were there, we held endless discussions, but, somehow, I totally missed the "headlong rush for the finish line with no regard for the costs involved." [See Ingersoll letter in June issue.] What a dope! However, I am definitely wide awake when we revisit issues and debate them and I can assure you we do that vigorously, frequently, and sometimes, ad nauseam.*

*Ian Ingersoll may have dozed, too, because the multi-purpose room is nowhere near the size of the existing gym and never has been; indeed, it is not half that. Furthermore, to suggest that taking money from the current school budgets has ever been a consideration is utter nonsense and denigrates our sincere efforts to hold costs down.*

*Resigning from the committee was certainly Ian's prerogative, but to brand the other members irresponsible is not only astonishingly arrogant but completely untrue. I, for one, deeply resent the implication that we are so callous, so feckless that we are not diligently searching for cost-effective solutions to knotty problems and to even hint that we would entertain spending more money than approved is ludicrous. Instead of criticizing, perhaps Ian should have remained on the committee and fought for his opinions in an open and positive manner.* —Jane Giddens-Jones

### VIEW TAX? PARENT TAX?

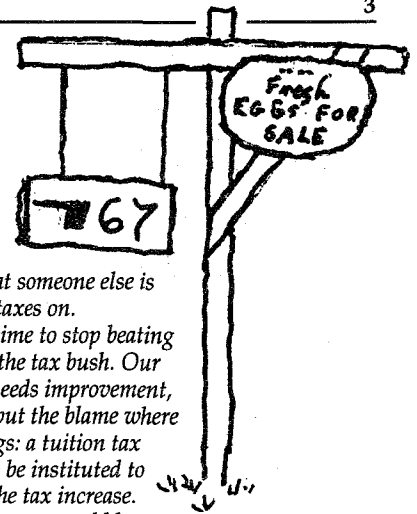
*Talk of taxing views! Isn't that a can of worms we would rather not open? Not only will you have to decide how to tax them, then watch out for the litigation when the town issues a building permit and finds that it obstructs the*

*view that someone else is paying taxes on.*

*It's time to stop beating around the tax bush. Our school needs improvement, so let's put the blame where it belongs: a tuition tax needs to be instituted to defray the tax increase. A tuition tax would be easily measurable by the school age children in the home with exclusions for those who have their children in private schools. It is self-limiting in that once you have no school-age children the tax no longer applies. Granted it can't solve all of the deficit, but it's time for all of us who voted for the school improvements to put our money where our vote is.* —Theresa Elliott

### THANK YOU, ART AND DON

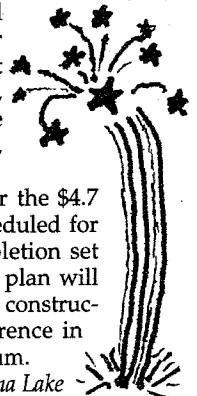
*For many years Art Brean has gone well beyond his job description of transfer station operator. He has presided over the evolution of the dump to transfer recycling station to community focal point. With the right combination of humor and firmness he has gotten us to comply with ever-changing waste-disposal regulations. Few towns have been as lucky as Cornwall to have such a dependable person working for them. The good news is Art has announced that he will be available as a consultant. Don Hain, Art's able assistant is also going into semi-retirement. On behalf of all Cornwall residents I say thanks to Art and Don for jobs well done.* —Gordon Ridgway



### Later Start for CCS Project

At a May 31 meeting of the CCS Building Committee, co-chair Phil Hart announced that construction on the new addition was not going to start on time. The delays centered around the challenges of surveying the site during a winter when the snow never stopped, preparing all the necessary documents for governmental review, and trying to come up with a good parking plan. Co-chair Anne Kosciusko said that even with the extra time, the committee would have to "work carefully, quickly, and stay on our toes."

The groundbreaking for the \$4.7 million project is now scheduled for February 2002, with completion set for August 2003. The new plan will allow two full summers for construction, thus holding interference in the school year to a minimum.



—George Kittle

—Norma Lake

## Events & Announcements

**The July Fest** will take place on Sunday, July 1, from 11:30 A.M. to 2 P.M. on the Town Green. The annual bike parade will begin at 11:30 A.M. The Fest will feature games, contests, prizes, and a free concert. Picnicking is encouraged and Park and Rec. will provide watermelons and beverages.

**Children's Summer Reading:** Fasten your seat belts as Cornwall kids "Take Flight with Books!" The Library's Summer Reading Program takes off on July 11 at 7 P.M. with *The Wright Stuff*, an interactive presentation of the history and science of flight by the Science Center of Connecticut. Other evening programs will explore live birds, kites, butterflies, and juggling. Pick up a schedule at the Library. Ages five and up.

For younger kids, Friday morning Story Hour with crafts, games, and music will run from July 13 to August 10 at 10:30 A.M.

Keep track of your reading with a book log, available at the Library. The more you read or are read to, the better your chances for prizes. And as the new library building takes shape, you'll be earning a dollar towards it for each book read as part of our matching sponsor program.

**The Rummage Sale** run annually by the Woman's Society will take place on Saturday, July 14, at both the Mohawk Ski Lodge and the UCC Parish House. The Ski Lodge will house the music, books, linens, clothing, sewing goods, the boutique, and items for small children. It will open at 8:30 A.M. The Parish House and environs will sell antiques, art, toys and games, appliances, furniture, tools, china and glass, and outdoor goods. The outdoor stuff goes on sale at 9 A.M. and the Parish House opens an hour later.

On Sunday, July 15, a half-price sale takes place at both sites from 1:30 to 5 P.M. Then there's Monday, July 16: a two-dollar bag sale and further reduced prices from 9 A.M. to noon.

You can bring your contributions to the sale to Mohawk or the Parish House through July 11 from 9 A.M. until noon. For more information, consult the June *Chronicle* insert or call Cilla Mauro (672-6969) or Thalia Scoville (672-6288).

## A Bone for Newshounds

Summer is no picnic for our pack of volunteer journalists. The Cornwall website's black-fly count is rising exponentially, and there's the heat, the ticks.... But look, our job is to beat the brush for news and we'll get it done. All we ask is that you send in an occasional check so that the suits can print and mail the stuff we sniff out.

**A Taxing Time:** Tax bills will arrive July 1 and must be paid by July 31 to avoid any penalty, according to Tax Collector Helen Migliacci.

**Jean D. Bouteiller, Furniture Maker:** An exhibit of her reproductions and original furniture will be on display at the Cornwall Historical Society on Pine Street starting July 6 with an opening reception from 5 to 7 P.M. The show will run through August 4. The pieces on display will include reproductions of Queen Anne and Chippendale side chairs, a tilt-top candle stand, several period tables, a candle box, and an original, dovetailed painted chest. The exhibit will be open Tuesdays, 1 to 3 P.M., and Saturdays, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.

**A Republican Caucus** will be held on Tuesday, July 17, at 8 P.M. at the Town Hall to endorse candidates for next November's local elections. All registered Republicans are welcome and encouraged to attend.

**Art in Cornwall:** Molly Hinchman Guerin's first solo show of fine watercolors continues at the Cornwall Library until July 21. Beginning July 23, David Colbert will show photographs of people and landscapes at the Library. His show will continue through August 25. At the National Iron Bank, July's artist of the month will be Emily Buchanan. She will exhibit oil paintings of the Cornwall area. The Marc Simont retrospective will continue at the Hughes Memorial Library through July 8.

**Adam Van Doren** will present and discuss his new documentary film, *Top Hat and Tales: Harold Ross and the Making of The New Yorker*, at the Cornwall Library on Friday evening, July 27. Coffee and dessert will be served at 8:30 P.M., followed by the showing of the film at 9 P.M. Admission \$10. Proceeds will benefit the Cornwall Library.

**The Democratic Town Committee** will hold a meeting and caucus on July 24 at the Town Hall at 7:30 P.M. The caucus is to nominate candidates for the municipal elections in November. All registered Democrats are invited and encouraged to attend.

**Chore Help Wanted:** The Northwest Corner Chore Service (NCCS) needs workers to help the folks at home with odd jobs—house cleaning, gardening, errands. We pay \$10.25 an hour and 30 cents a mile. No experience necessary—just intelligence, sensitivity, humor, and a good work ethic. Eighteen Cornwallians used NCCS this fiscal year, and got services worth over \$12,000. Help your neighbors and get paid for it! Call Ella Clark at 364-1003.

**Rural Transit's Dial-a-Ride** provides door-to-door transportation to Cornwall residents of any age every Thursday and Friday. On Friday the bus can make stops at your request at local stores to shop or take you to your medical appointment. One way fares are minimal and range from 75 cents for students to \$1 for adults. The elderly ride free on a donation basis. Prior day reservations are required.

An inter-regional service is also available to Hartford, New Haven, etc. Medical appointments still take priority but visits to museums and other places of interest are usually accommodated, especially if a group trip has been organized. To find out more about this useful service, pick up a flyer at the Cornwall Library, the Town Clerk's office, or call Northwestern Connecticut Transit District at 489-2535 or 824-7067.

**The PTA's CHOICES Enrichment Program** will sponsor a day trip on August 21 (rain date August 23) to Lake Compounce. Everyone is welcome. The cost for a day's admission is \$14.50 and there will be a 10 percent discount on food and souvenirs. For information, call David Samson at 672-0616.

**Cornwall Intern:** The Cornwall Republican Town Committee is pleased to announce that Karen Heaney represented Cornwall in Washington, D.C., June 24 to 29, as part of the intern program *Week on Washington*. The Connecticut Republicans sponsor this program, which involves high school juniors and seniors in the inner workings of the government. Karen will be a senior at HVRHS this fall.

**The Friends of Rose Algrant** will present their 40<sup>th</sup> annual exhibition of Cornwall artists and craftsmen August 3 to 5 at the Mohawk Ski Lodge. The opening will be on Friday from 5 to 8 P.M. and the show will continue Saturday and Sunday from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. The show includes paintings, sculpture, photography, collage, pottery, and weaving. After expenses, all commissions from sales will go to the UCC Parish House Renovation Fund.



## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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