



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 13 : NUMBER 2 MARCH 2003



A-Plus

Good things have been happening at Cornwall Consolidated School. Recent reports show that Mastery Test scores are improving. Librarian Ginny Snowden tells us that although no one factor can be cited, teachers "enthusiastically" began a professional development program last year called Differentiated Instruction in which teachers analyze Mastery Test results as well as student strengths and weaknesses to improve teaching.

CCS is also pleased that 14 teachers now have new laptop computers, thanks to a federal grant written by the technology committee "on our own time this summer," according to Suzanne Barber, technology coordinator. "We wanted to make technology friendlier for teachers. Now they bring the laptops home and use them all the time." The new computers can do "all sorts of neat things including showing DVDs. Just this week, first and fifth graders were able to watch a NASA IMAX film about space."

Yet another success: The seventh grade won the Connecticut Educational Media Award, given by the state's school librarians. For their project, the CCS students read and discuss books via e-mail with seventh graders from The Curiale School in Bridgeport. Ginny Snowden writes, "The project centers around the Newbery-winning novel *Bud Not*

Chronicle Online

You can now read the *Chronicle* on www.cornwallct.org, Cornwall's website. Click on "What's New" or the *Chronicle* button on the index and there it is, exactly as it appears in print, pictures and all. But please don't forget: Your donation is more important than ever, to cover the additional cost of the electronic edition, as well as the cost of producing and mailing the print edition, on which most of us depend. So send us your tax-deductible gift as soon as possible.

Buddy. Students go on to read other multicultural books and try to answer the question, "How does who you are, and the circumstances you were born into, affect your dreams and choices in life?"

This cooperative effort also won a \$500 Creativity Award from the Follett software company, which will be used by both Cornwall and Bridgeport librarians to buy more books. The latest honor won by the project is a \$1,700 grant from SNET, which will be used, writes Snowden, "to buy video conferencing equipment so we can actually see and hear each other as well as write.

"The students meet in person twice. A

few months from now, the kids will meet and give book talks for each other. We'll have a nice lunch and our guest speaker will be Emmy Award-winning screenwriter Dennis Waddington. The project is being used as a model around the state." —Ella Clark

Smallpox Now and Then

In late January all first selectmen from the Northwest Corner were summoned to the Torrington Area Health District office. There, they were told of plans for the voluntary vaccination of the entire population of Cornwall and other towns in the Region One School District in the event of a biological attack involving smallpox.

Planning for large-scale smallpox vaccination began shortly after September 11. Plan A, which consists of vaccinating first the military, then health workers, then first responders such as firemen and EMT personnel, is currently underway. (Sharon hospital employees get their shots in March.) Plan B is a contingency approach to vaccinating the entire population of some 12,000 people, within a week if necessary. According to Gordon Ridgway, this plan would require "a couple hundred" people, including but not exclusively EMT people who had received vaccinations already, to set up an emergency clinic to publicize and administer the inocu-

(continued on page 2)

MARCH 2003

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Peace Vigil Every Saturday 2-3 P.M. Cornwall Bridge Green
2	3 Park and Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	4 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30-8 P.M. UCC Day Room Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	5 Play Group Every Wednesday 10-11:30 A.M. UCC Parish House	6 Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15-2:15 P.M. UCC Day Room	7 Pre-School-K Story Hour Every Friday 10-11 A.M. Cornwall Library Family Game Night 7-9 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Invention Convention 1:15-3 P.M. CCS (p.4)	8 Cornwall Swim Day (p.4) Corndance Film Workshop 4 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)
9	10 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	11 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	12	13 Bd. of Ed. and Bd. of Finance Budget Meeting 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	14	15 Deadline: April Chronicle Copy Cornwall Association 9:30 A.M. Cornwall Lib. M. R. Chris Hopkins 10:30 A.M. (p.3) Cornwall Swim Day (p.4) Poetry Slam 4 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)
16	17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Cornwall Lib. M. R.	18	19	20 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall 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	21 SPRING BEGINS	22 Cornwall Swim Day (p.4) Images of India 4 P.M. Cornwall Lib. M. R. (p.4) Ghana Fund Dinner 5-7 P.M. UCC Parish House (p.4)
23	24 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	25 	26 Cornwall Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	27	28	29 Mohawk Trail Spring Cleaning (p.4) Cornwall Swim Day (p.4) Invasive Species Forum 1:30-3:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)
30	31					

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

lations to the general public. Public health officials originally thought of including Cornwall within a much larger vaccination area but Northwest Corner selectmen successfully appealed to make the vaccination area coincide with the school district.

Plan A vaccinations of health and emergency personnel, like those of Plan B, are voluntary, and participation in many parts of the country to date has been spotty, even though the vaccination is no different from what most adults over 30 already know from their childhood. Many of those reluctant to be vaccinated speak of unresolved questions about liability in case of secondary infections and the increased susceptibility of portions of the population. There is also widespread skepticism about mixed-message "terror alerts" from Washington.

Cornwall, like most New England towns, has had its own history with smallpox. The inscriptions on the half-dozen gravestones behind the North Cornwall Church that date from around 1800, informally known as "the smallpox cemetery," attest to the disease's fearsome effects. Before that date the pox had already wiped out most of the original Native American population along the Housatonic, leaving it open for white (and some Mohican) re-settlement. Cotton Mather, who is credited with being the first learned American to have preached the virtues of vaccination, is one of the progenitors of the



Ridgway family line. He apparently learned about the inoculation method from his slave Onesimus, who remembered self-infection with the pus from smallpox sores as an African folk remedy.

The last time Cornwall saw smallpox vaccinations for the general public was in the 1970s, when Dr. W. Bradford Walker would come to the elementary school and prick the boys in the arm and girls in the leg (so the scar wouldn't show). "No swimming for two weeks" was the main concern of most children then. Yet if we're tempted to think about the past as a golden era of innocence, it might be well to remember how some of us once stocked up fallout shelters and hid under our desks during classroom drills for a nuclear attack.

—Paul De Angelis

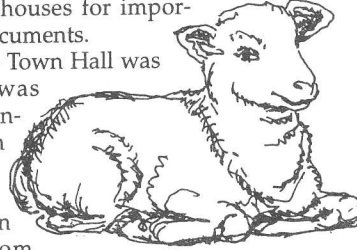
New Life for Old Space

On January 23 First Selectman Gordon Ridgway and secretary Joyce Hart moved into their offices in the Town Hall. The opening up of the spacious old room with its overhanging balcony gives new preeminence to "Dutch" Yutzler's large painting of West Cornwall blacksmith Grandpa Oliver and to the room's grandiose, non-working

fireplace. Oliver was a farrier who later turned to decorative ironwork. As for the girl in the picture—that's Betsy Hart Logan, a cousin of Phil Hart, who now lives on the West Coast.

Though the chestnut bookshelves in the new office and upstairs on the catwalk will no longer serve as the library bookshelves for which they were originally built in 1908, the two old vaults will soon return to their function as storehouses for important town documents.

When the Town Hall was built, it was hoped that income from renting the theater in the town meeting room



would be large enough to make the hall financially self-sustaining. Although no one thinks of making money on it any longer, the theater will be ready to re-open for presentations of all kinds within a few months. Meanwhile, Gordon and Joyce encourage everyone in town to stop by and have a look at their new digs.

—Paul De Angelis

Thumbs Down on Attack

A resolution initiated by Anne Chamberlain expressing "opposition to preemptive military action against Iraq" and urging our government to work through the United Nations to "obtain [Iraq's] compliance" was discussed and voted on at a meeting of townspeople on February 1.

After some passionate expressions, mostly of frustration over present policy, the resolution was endorsed 146 to 2. Although the town itself has no jurisdiction in national affairs, First Selectman Gordon Ridgway was careful to explain, the result of the vote and the minutes of the meeting would be sent to our congressional delegation and to the president.

—Scoville Soulé

Salamanders in the Snow

Joseph Markow, naturalist of the Audubon Center in Sharon, told me that the first amphibians, wood frogs and spotted salamanders, will appear in late March. Mostly active at night, they migrate from one habitat—the uplands in which they live—to their second habitat—the wetlands where they breed. They may go as much as a half mile without feeding to find vernal pools in the woods. The advantage: No fish will eat them or their offspring. The danger: The pools may dry up too quickly, as they did last year.

Though temperatures should be above 40 degrees, wood frogs and spotted salamanders may even travel across snow—at great risk. They are in danger of freezing since they can't regulate body temperature internally and they are more visible to predators on snow. While some predators are held at bay by the poisonous substance covering the amphibians' skin, others know how to skillfully suck them empty, leaving the shell of skin behind.

—Elisabeth Kaestner

Principal Search Forum

A small group of parents, Board of Education and Search Committee members, and school staff met on February 12 with Region One Superintendent John O'Brien and Assistant Superintendent Patricia Chamberlain to discuss the principal search underway in Cornwall.

After Dr. O'Brien had outlined the search process, attendees were asked for their input, which will be considered when interviewing the candidates. Under "things we like" were the "care, dedication, and availability" of our teachers, the "open door" policy at the school, and the opportunity for professional development of the staff. Under "changes to consider" were better communication from the principal, a more positive leadership style, a more even approach to discipline, program development in PE and the arts, along with more challenge for our top students.

O'Brien hopes the process will be completed by the end of April. Persons who couldn't attend and have some responses of their own may contact the superintendent or Ms. Chamberlain at Region One.

—Brian Kavanagh

Welcome

Natalie Anna Nestler
to Jennifer van Wyck and Peter Nestler

Land Transfer

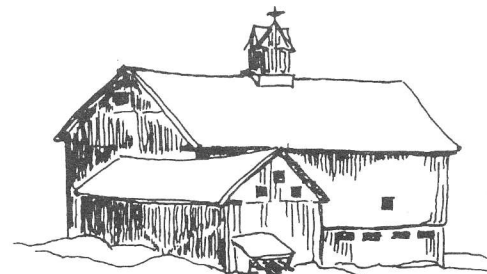
Paul and Elizabeth C. Giamatti to David Cowan and Valorie A. Fisher, house and 2.96 acres at 228 Kent Road for \$507,500.

Ralph Scoville on Ice

During a recent snowy afternoon at his home, Ralph Scoville was generous to tell me about his past. "In those days, winters were longer and colder, and there was more snow. I remember one winter when it was minus twenty degrees for one whole week." But there were also some winters when it was not cold enough towards the end to really fill up the Ice House.

The Ice House in West Cornwall was across from the station—and across from Cochran's meat market, which needed ice to last throughout the summer. The above-ground structure had walls built from 2x6 planks, and it stored around a thousand cakes of ice, each about a foot and a half by two feet. The ice was packed in tight layers, leaving about six inches from the wall to later be filled with sawdust. Spaces between chunks of ice were filled in with small pieces so that all the ice was touching. At the end, the ice was topped with sawdust.

The water near the current town beach at



Cream Hill Lake froze first, and that's where the ice was harvested in early winter. Townspeople would drill holes in the ice and score it off in straight lines. A horse would then pull a saw with big teeth along the lines to make the cuts. If the ice was thicker than eight inches, the rest had to be hand cut by chisel. The end near the current Lake Association froze later and was cut last. "We had hooks to grab the ice and to pull it up; there were also ice tongs to grab it. Then we loaded the pieces upright on the sleigh so more would fit."

Ralph explained that the ice from the river, called "anchor ice," was much heavier than the ice from the lake, which would float. "One of the ice cutters was an old man. He was deaf whenever you asked him something, but when you said 'son of a bitch' he would suddenly turn around and hear you. Once he was coming up the hill with a load of ice, and one piece after the other slipped off his sleigh, but he didn't notice. He arrived with just the piece he was sitting on—what a job to clear the road of all that ice."

—Elisabeth Kaestner

Save Our Cows

Does last year's barn fire mean the last of the cream at Cream Hill Farm? All its milking cows are gone. "With the price of milk at its lowest in 25 years," says Jim Kennedy, whose cows they were, "it isn't worth staying in the business."



Other dairy farmers in Cornwall echo his sentiments. Ken Gladding, at the Lorch Farm in Cornwall Bridge, bought six of Jim's cows "because I had extra silage. But I may not continue to keep them. It costs us at least \$14 to produce a hundredweight of milk, and all we get is \$11 to \$12. I'm going to try hay; that's where the money is. We have more horses than cows now in Litchfield County." (Connecticut's dairy herds are down from 800 in 1973 to 200 today.) Buddy Hurlburt, who milks 62 cows, is just back from his family's first-in-three-years Florida vacation. "We've had to go into pork and beef where we have control over the price. We sell hay and maple syrup too. We have to make changes to sustain ourselves."

Ralph and Fred Scoville have about 43 milkers. "These low prices," says Ralph, "eliminate the mom and pop farms. We are competing with the huge industrial farms in the West."

The only dairy farmers turning a profit—or at least staying in the black—these days, are those who have gone into specialty markets. Local Farm's Debra Tyler sells raw milk from her six Jerseys directly to the consumer. "I love what I do," she says. "I didn't want to be big, ever. My income is low, intentionally, and my expenses are low; I own no land, don't drive a car." She is in fact getting even smaller; she has been breeding her cows to

THANK YOU, GENEROUS DONORS

Several generous donations that help Cornwall people in different ways have been received in memory of Ed Baird, who himself had helped so many people in his lifetime. Those who knew Ed saw that he was gruff on the outside but had a heart of gold. He helped others in a quiet, behind-the-scenes manner, without a lot of fanfare. In his memory these donations will continue to do the same.

—Jill Gibbons
Social Services Director

NUDE BEACH

Last week on the very day of my 82nd birthday, I was astonished to see a brand new bumper sticker firmly affixed to the rear bumper of my car. It reads as follows: CORNWALL NUDE BEACH, 2003, on two lines. The numerals 0020



Letters to the Chronicle

are on a third line.

At the dump I conferred with my old friend FJB III about this new sticker.

Someone had put one on his pickup while he'd been parked at the Moose. It was put on crookedly, unlike mine, and his had 0028 on it instead of 0020. He of course claims that he knows nothing whatsoever about it. I might add this is unlike the "Cornwall Transfer Station," whatever, that was put on my car and blew away the same day!

Meanwhile, I have had a number of inquiries from interested persons who want to know where they can obtain a sticker like mine, and become annoyed when I tell them I have no idea where it came from. But they're certainly people with a sense of humor.

Perhaps this letter to the Chronicle will shed some light on the situation. —Ann Peterson

miniature Jerseys and the result will be a good small family cow.

Observers like Michael Pollan stress that in order for dairy farmers to be less dependent on commodity issues, they need, like Tyler, to investigate other ways of operating, including the production of value-added products such as cheese. If they turned to cheese making, "the cows could get off corn and silage, go dry for three months over the winter—and the farmers could take a vacation," says Pollan.

Such change is difficult and expensive, however, and—unlike rural states like New York—the State of Connecticut has not been particularly helpful. Gabe Moquin, head of the Dairy Division at the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, says, "We've had seminars on cheese making, but there's very little capital improvement money for farms because it wouldn't create a big increase in jobs. By the way, we've lost five more dairy farms since the first of the year."

Many see organic farming as the long-range solution. Martha Loutfi, economist, writes, "For me, the real issue is industrial cow-raising and milk production. If one were to ban hormones, ban antibiotics except when animals are sick, and cap the subsidies so enormous farms couldn't take in the overwhelming share of aid, then small farmers would have a fair chance." This is already happening at some dairy operations in nearby Columbia County, where "artisan" cheesemakers buy milk from farmers at good prices. One such artisan, Joe Popovitch, "can hardly keep up with the mozzarella market." Chris Hopkins and others who believe in

community-supported agriculture feel that local people must invest time and money to keep Cornwall's farms going. "Buy locally. Maybe create a facility where we could make cheese, butter, crème fraiche. Our town has saved Hart Farm; what a great example we would set if we did this too!"

—Ella Clark

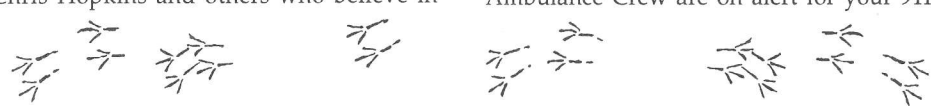
[Hopkins will be speaking about this issue at the March 15 Cornwall Association meeting. —Editors]

No One Cares?

You say you live alone and your kids don't call or write? And your friends answer "who?" when you phone? And the cat won't stay on your lap?

Well. Look up, Friend! You're in Cornwall, you count! Perhaps one day this winter there was a knock at your door and your selectman—or a member of your church or synagogue—was outside to make sure you had heat and food and a shoveled walk. Or you got a call from Joyce in the First Selectman's Office (672-4959) keeping tabs on you.

You need a helping hand? There's Jill Gibbons, Social Services Director (672-2603) in the Town Office on Mondays, with canned food on every shelf and access to a variety of assistance programs. And if some household task is beyond you, there's Ella Clark's Chore Service (364-1003; payment adjusted to client income). Do you need transportation for medical or food-supply reasons? Call Joan Edler of F.I.S.H. (672-6789) for available drivers. Emergency responders? Our extraordinary Volunteer Fire Department and licensed Ambulance Crew are on alert for your 911



call 24 hours a day. Or if you have one of Jack Forster's (672-6117) Health Watch units, just press a button on your pendant and a chain of responders is put into motion.

Your social life is in the dumps, you say? Sit in on the impromptu daily coffee klatches on Baird's front porch once the weather warms up, or at the tables of the Wandering Moose. Then there's the welcome-all Woman's Society, featuring games, tea, fellowship, and good works, Cilla Mauro on gavel. (Phone Betty Silbert at 672-6959 for details.) And don't pass up Anne Baren's calendar of Cornwall doings in this publication.

So get out into the warmth of Cornwall, Lonesome. Who needs that ungrateful cat?

—*Scoville Soule*



Events & Announcements

Cornwall Library Online: Now Cornwallians and people world-wide can access the Cornwall Free Library by viewing the new website at www.biblio.org/cornwall. Hosted by the Library's automation provider, the site includes pages of user information, a calendar with program details, and links to not only Cornwall's catalog but also reQuest, the general catalog of all the automated Connecticut libraries. A link to and from www.cornwallct.org is available. Call the Library (672-6874) if you need help with the site or if you have suggestions for its improvement.

The Ghana Fund, a not-for-profit organization that works to help children at the Christ Faith Foster Home in Accra, Ghana, is hosting an all-you-can-eat soup and bread dinner on Saturday, March 22, at the UCC Parish House from 5 to 7 P.M. A variety of soups will be made by Sue Kochman at Soup Du Jour in West Cornwall. There will also be plenty of information about what your generous donations have done in the past four years. Suggested donation: \$7 adults, \$5 children. Questions? Call Heather Dinneen at 671-1187.

Invention Convention: On March 7, all CCS fifth to eighth graders will be using their scientific knowledge, creativity, and ingenuity to present their inventions to the community. Judging will take place during the day and winners will be announced before the end of the school day. Come between 1:15 and 3 P.M. to judge for yourself! Winners go on to compete at the state Invention Convention.

Corndance Film Festival & Workshop: The Second Annual Corndance Film Festival is coming May 18. But first come for a How-To-Shoot-Your-Own-Short-Film workshop with Sanjiban Sellev, local filmmaker for over 20 years and finalist in 19 film festivals. Enjoy a fun-packed evening and learn first-hand how one filmmaker builds high drama in celluloid on Saturday, March 8, at 4 P.M. in the Town Hall. Adults \$5, students \$3, and children under 12 free. Afterwards, get those cameras rolling and stories flowing for the Festival. Call 672-2407 or 672-6896 for information and watch the *Chronicle* for more details.

Annual Poetry Slam: Come and read your poems—or listen to your talented neighbors read theirs—on Saturday, March 15, at 4 P.M. at the Town Hall. The free event is sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library who, as always, appreciate your donations. Call Phyllis Nauts, 672-6608, if you'd like to read. Refreshments afterwards.

A Cornwall Invasive Species Forum will be held at the Town Hall on Saturday, March 29, from 1:30 to 3:30 P.M. Presenters are Dr. Charlotte Pyle, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (invasive species); Dr. Erik Kiviat, Professor of Environmental Studies, Bard College (purple loosestrife); Tim Abbott, Nature Conservancy (barberry); Pete Piccone, DEP wildlife biologist (native species reintroduction); and Betsy Corrigan, Northwest Conservation District (giant hogweed). Audience Q&A in the second hour. Sally Spillane of WKZE's *People Are Talking* will moderate. An invasive species informational display will be at the Cornwall Library in March. Sponsored by the Cornwall Association. Questions? Call 672-0283.

Cornwall Swim Days: Park & Rec. is sponsoring four Saturdays in March at the Torrington YMCA. Open to any Cornwall resident, free of charge, but there's an overall limit of 25. If you're interested call Bethany Thompson, 672-6058, to sign up.

Images of India: On Saturday, March 22 at 4 P.M. in the Cornwall Library, Jane Prentice will present a travelog of her family's recent trip to India. Free event sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library. Donations welcome. Call Jane Prentice, 672-6101, for information.

Mohawk Trail Spring Cleaning on Saturday, March 29, to remove blowdowns and do basic erosion control work. No experience required. Bring water (required), food if desired, work gloves if you have them. Tools supplied. Heavy rain cancels. Meet 9 A.M. at hiker parking lot on Route 4 along Furnace Brook. For information, call Kim Herkimer, 672-0083.

The Cornwall Child Center Benefit Auction will be held on Sunday afternoon, April 27, at the Mohawk Ski Lodge. Silent auction at 1:30 and live auction at 3 P.M. Anyone who has items, services, or ideas to contribute please contact Mary Kay Elwell (672-4302) or Jean Vitalis (672-6880). Deadline date for inclusion in the catalog is Monday, March 31.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, Ken MacLean's show of photographs and models of his architectural work will continue through the month of March. At the National Iron Bank, Robert Andrew Parker's exhibit of works in watercolor and pencil will also continue through March.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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