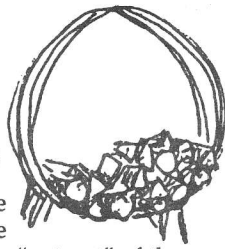


CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 14 : NUMBER 2 MARCH 2004



Deep Freeze

In January the temperature stayed below freezing. No records were set, yet the winter presented a series of challenges to the worker bees who kept the hive of Cornwall buzzing and warm.

The weather's turn for the wintry pressed the town's sand pile, but not the resolve of the plow drivers to send the white and/or clear stuff into the bushes. Highway foreman Don Reid reported a salt shortage due to the unusual levels of ice blocking seaports. Tradesmen were on the move in early January repairing the aftermath of under-heated pipes throughout the region. The winter heating budget of the CCS gym project was also burst by Old Man Winter. Casle Corporation's Project Manager Paul Duran stated simply, "The weather hasn't done us any favors." Meanwhile, inside the building the first graders were learning about the planets and varying temperatures. During one frigid day, a student was overheard claiming, "It's colder here than on Mars!"

On the positive side of the ledger, Mohawk Mountain Ski Area, the town's major employer and winter entertainment, recovered from a warm start in December. Manager Steve Hedden reported being amazed at the crowds skiing in extremely cold conditions. Further, Dave Cadwell reported standing-room-only at the Pine Lodge res-

taurant on the weekends.

Cornwall's timber harvesters were also busy, taking advantage of the well-frozen ground to skid logs from remote places. "Excellent conditions," reported Larry Stevens. Said Jay Wolfe, "The colder the better. The trees are like big frozen icicles that don't bend. When they fall, the side branches pop off making less work."

Overall, it was a good New England winter. Who needs Florida?

—Jayne & Gordon Ridgway

No Child Left Behind?

Underfunded mandates, different performance levels for accountability from state to state, implications for special education student testing, unknown costs, concerns about the law's flexibility, failure to acknowledge differences between rural and urban realities...these were some of the concerns raised by over 80 people attending a forum held February 11 at Housatonic Valley Regional High School to discuss the federal No Child Left Behind law. Panelists included State Representatives George Wilber and Roberta Willis; State Senator Andrew Roraback; State Board of Education Chair Craig Toensing; Fran Rabinowitz, a state Associate Commissioner of Education; and Dr. Danuda Thibodeau from Education Connection.

In addressing what the consequences would be should a district choose to "opt out" of the law, Toensing stated that there would be a loss of Title I funds at the federal level. At the state level, since the state sets standards to meet the federal requirements, a district which chose to ignore those standards would be breaking the law, would also be asking its administrators to break the law, and could ultimately face the loss of all state education funds.

In reflecting on answers to other questions, Region One Superintendent Dr. John O'Brien was encouraged by the ongoing negotiation between state and federal officials regarding adjustments to the law. Furthermore, the audience was reassured that, in fact, the requirements should not cause increases in local education budgets. For instance, Cornwall is already administering the "off-year tests" which are now required; all of our teachers meet the "highly qualified" standards; and we have no subgroups with at least 40 children who could require special programs beyond those we already offer. Another reassurance was that a "Confidence Band" adjustment, based partly on the size of the population tested, is included in the formula for determining Adequate Yearly Progress. On the other hand, there were no answers to questions concerning the

(continued on page 2)

MARCH 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	2 Democratic Primary 6 A.M.—8 P.M. Town Hall Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30—8 P.M. UCC Day Room Jam Session Every Tuesday 7:30 P.M. Town Hall or Library Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	3 Play Group Every Wed. 10—11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC Stretch Class Every Wed. 5:30—6:30 P.M. Town Hall Hot Chocolate Hour 3—4 P.M. Library	4 Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15—2:15 P.M. UCC Day Room	5 Preschool-K Story Hour Every Friday 10—11 A.M. Library	6 Chess Club Every Saturday 9:30—11 A.M. Library Castle Building Workshop 11 A.M.—12:30 P.M. Library (p.4)
7	8 Blood Pressure Screening 3—4 P.M. UCC Parish House	9 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	10 Hot Chocolate Hour 3—4 P.M. Library	11 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Ed./Bd. of Fin. Budget Meeting 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	12	13 American Girls Club 11:30 A.M. Library
14	15 Deadline: April Chronicle Copy Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Dem. Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	16	17 St. PATRICK'S DAY Hot Chocolate Hour 3—4 P.M. Library	18 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall VFW Post 9856 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	19	20 SPRING BEGINS Junior Book Club 11 A.M.—Noon Library The Press and Iraq 4 P.M. Library (p.4)
21	22 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	23	24 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	25	26	27 Thomas the Tank Club 11:30 A.M. Library Northwest Conservation District Forum 1—3 P.M. Town Hall (p.3)
28	29	30	31 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse			Friday, April 2 Cornwall Child Center Open House 9—11:30 A.M. (p.4)

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

necessity for and value of standardized testing, questions which have been "in the air" since the first student filled in a bubble with a No. 2 pencil.

By the end of the evening, after questions had been asked, concerns raised, information and awareness provided, participants agreed that an important dialogue had begun.

—Barbara Gold



Cornwall and Casinos

On January 29, the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) reversed a preliminary decision by giving legal recognition to the Schaghticoke Tribal Nation, headquartered in Derby. The decision makes the tribe, some 300-strong, eligible for benefits regarding health, housing, and education. More to the point, it gives the Indians the right to apply for a casino on a 400-acre reservation in Kent.

When asked how all this might affect neighboring Cornwall, First Selectman Gordon Ridgway first spoke of his hope that we base our opinions on the facts as they develop, not on wild rumors and unfounded speculation.

"Still," Gordon continued, "we can't rule out the worst-case scenario at this point. Towns near the two Indian casinos in the southeastern part of the state have experienced a decline in the general quality of life, along with an increase in crime, traffic, and a lot of other problems. For instance, the Schaghticoke are claiming an additional 2,000-plus acres in Kent, which would give them control of a significant section of the Housatonic. People with an interest in the river are—and should be—concerned. Also, the Indian claims include a big chunk of Kent School. Since some of our townspeople work at the school or send their kids there, anything that affects Kent School affects Cornwall."

Gordon went on to outline the problems towns may have with federally recognized tribes. Legally, reservation land is held in a federal trust, with operating rights granted to a tribe on a "sovereign-nation" basis. Tribal members are exempt from such things as local zoning and building regulations, and pay no town property taxes. Moreover, when difficulties arise, a town cannot deal directly with the tribe, but must conduct negotiations through the federal government. This means that decisions are often made with little local input.

An appeal is certain. Although the Town of Cornwall will not be directly involved in the process—only an "interested party"—Gordon cites three possible grounds: 1) Did the BIA follow correct procedures in the reversal? (Four Connecticut congressional representatives have requested an investiga-

tion.) 2) Did former BIA members improperly influence the decision? 3) Did the BIA act properly in combining all Schaghticoke factions in a single ruling? (A smaller group living on reservation lands in Kent is often at odds with the Tribal Nation. This is true also of a third faction, the Cogswell branch of the tribe, which has old ties to Cornwall.)

If the recognition decision is upheld (and historically the BIA rarely reverses itself at this level), that will not mean the end of litigation. Appeals would probably continue for years concerning what the tribe can or cannot do with its newly granted status. And of course, much of the focus would be on the little word *casino*.

Few informed observers believe that a costly 23-year struggle for tribal recognition would have occurred but for a glittering casino at the end of the road. Would it be built in Kent? Only possibly. Although an easy drive from New York City, Kent is hardly a metropolitan area. Tribal attorney Thomas Van Lenten has outlined a more probable procedure: According to the 1971 Land Settlement Act, a tribe can surrender its land claims in exchange for other property rights elsewhere. Thus the Schaghticoke might lay claim to certain properties—in Kent or in other towns—then trade these off for the right to build a casino in a place like Waterbury or Bridgeport.

Although Governor John Rowland and Attorney General Richard Blumenthal are outspoken in their opposition to a third Connecticut casino (the latter calls the BIA "out of control, lawless, arbitrary, and capricious"), the future is uncertain. A host of legal issues remain to be resolved. Questions abound. The stakes are high.

—Bob Potter

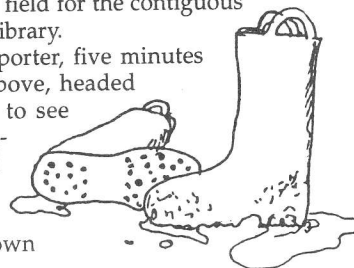
Town Eyes River Parcel

An attractive three-acre piece of riverside land in West Cornwall will reportedly soon be up for sale, and Cornwall's selectmen are more than mildly interested.

Located on Lower River Road just south of the Hughes Memorial Library, the land, owned for years by the Connecticut Light and Power Company, must be offered to the town on a right-of-first-refusal basis. All of its present informal uses would continue under town ownership, and there would be other advantages. These include, according to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, the following:

- Probably the largest piece of open land in West Cornwall on which kids can play.
- Easy access to the Housatonic for watercraft enthusiasts, and ample parking.
- A possible septic field for the contiguous Hughes Memorial Library.

This ignorant reporter, five minutes after hearing the above, headed for West Cornwall to see for himself. A well-worn path led through some snow, across the open space and down



to the riverside launching area. Stand there and gasp. Above, to the north, is a covered bridge that no postcard company could ever capture. Below, to the south, a scenic bend in the river elbows the eye upward toward a granite tower topped by pines.

I don't canoe, kayak, or even inner tube. But what a great place for a picnic.

—Bob Potter

Welcome

Claudia Dorsen LeDuc to
Caroline Dorsen and Alex LeDuc

Land Transfers

Cornwall Housing Corporation to Cynthia Kirk and Charles Grivas, 1.1 acre on Lake Road, no consideration.

Joseph McKenna to Lawrence Cohen, property at 410 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for \$235,000.

Correction: For misspelling his name in the February issue, the *Chronicle* apologizes to Allyn H. Hurlburt, III.

Tap, Tap, Tap For That Sweet Sap

The most visible sign of spring in Cornwall is still the sap bucket with its song of ping and plup. As the sweet bird of spring migrates from south to north, Cornwall boils with sugar fever in a season which affords freezing nights and thawing days.

But spring is fickle. Sugar season can begin as early as February 9 or as late as March 6 or 7. Cornwall distinguishes itself with so many sugar makers—10 to 12—that the ritual of tap, collect, boil, and share is a tradition well preserved.

All indicators point to a productive syrup season: abundant water last summer, heavy foliage, frigid winter, spring struggling to find a foothold. But seasons are notoriously unpredictable, and if spring arrives as a green wave, the sugar season ends early as the sugar maple, *Acer Saccharum*, buds out and the sap turns "buddy."

The most frequently asked question about making maple syrup is, "How much sap does it take to make a quart of syrup?" That depends on the sweetness of the sap. The norm against which sap is judged sweet or not-so-sweet is 40 to one (40 quarts of sap to one quart of syrup). In 10 gallons of sap, one milk can, there is one quart of syrup floating around if you can just find it. This is referred to as two and one-half percent—an average across maple trees of different ages, conditions, and genetics. At three percent you would boil down 33 quarts of sap for a quart of syrup. The same fuel and effort would yield a quart of syrup from 25 quarts of sap at a very sweet four percent.

Sweetness can be measured with a handheld gadget called a spectrometer. Red maple at one to two percent is not worth tapping. Some seasons are sweeter. My records show Cornwall sweet in 2001, less so in 2002, and sweet again in 2003. The dogged effort and sometimes gritty conditions are dim memories compared to the marvel of

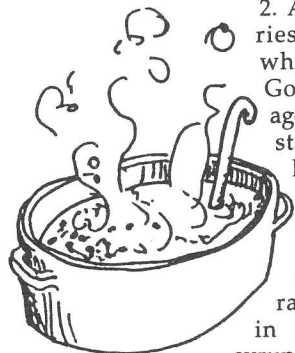
syrup from nature's bounty, fire and sweet steam in the sugarhouse, and the joy of holding hands with both winter and spring.

For answers to other questions about making maple syrup, see the attendant piece by Elizabeth Ridgway. —Phil Hart

Sap Rap

I interviewed six of Cornwall's maple syrup makers: Steve Hedden, Hunt Williams, Emily Whitford, Phil Hart, Bob Potter, and my dad, Gordon Ridgway. I asked them three questions:

1. What are your predictions for the upcoming season? Steve: Best ever. Hunt: Average and up. Emily: Early. Bob: 50 quarts. Gordon: A lot of work.



2. Any funny stories or incidents while syruping?

Gordon: 15 years ago when Gordon started syruping he had his pan outside. He came back home from dinner to find a raccoon bathing in the pan. The syrup was good that year. He has since moved the pan inside and has told the raccoon to go bathe in the brook. Bob: He was making syrup when he let the syrup overcook. There was black on the bottom of the pan and it smelled like caramel cooking. Phil: Phil had a very good tree and one day it did not have any sap in the bucket. It happened continuously. He checked to see if there was a leak and there wasn't. There was still no sap in the bucket, so he switched buckets. Still no sap. One day he came to check the bucket and found a pony drinking from it. Emily: Her dog Mac helps her collect sap. Hunt: Once his son, Peter, was collecting sap and by accident he dumped some sap in his boot.

3. Why do you make maple syrup? Bob: It is something to do outside in March. Emily: For presents to give away. Gordon: His kids won't let him stop. Hunt: His stepson wanted the experience. Steve: He has always done it. Phil: He uses it a lot.

—Elizabeth Ridgway

Cornwall's Dwindling Dairies

The last time Cornwall's cow population was as low as it is today, little George Washington's cherry tree was alive and well.

Cornwall has been a dairy town since its Colonial beginnings. By the time of its first anniversary, there were 52 bovine residents. Salted butter and cheese were the products back then—less spoilage. But all that was swept away in the 1840s when the Housatonic Railroad was extended from New Milford. Now milk was the name of the game, cooled in icehouses until a wagon could tote it to the station. By 1899, a thousand gallons a day, hand milked by members of Cornwall's Dairymen's League and Dairy

Letters to the Chronicle

AN ADDENDUM

Last month, Emilie Pryor's interview article with Dr. Fitz was not printed in its entirety. I think the following "icing on the cake" deserves to be included:

"To get a sense of how Dr. Kathleen Fitzgibbons is perceived by others, I decided to ask a random sampling of students, teachers, CCS staff, and parents to give one word or short phrase that best described her. The following is exactly what I heard:

"Fantastic, joyful, accepting of others, nice, awesome, jubilant, cool, thoughtful, very kind and caring, empathetic, radiant, uplifting, understanding, ray of sunshine, terrific, intuitive, approachable, fun, charismatic in a simple way, incredibly capable, caring, pleasant, fair, inspiring, and—we are so lucky to have her! (—Emilie Pryor)"

Cheers!

—Becky Hurlburt

LETTER FROM RALPH

I would like to tell you about our Cornwall EMTs. On February 3 at 8:45 A.M. when I started feeling bad, Thalia called 911, and in a matter of five minutes Phill West was at the door. And then the rest were right there, zoom!—Hunt Williams, Connie Hedden, Joyce Hart, Skip Kosciusko, Dave Cadwell, and Gordon Ridgway. I think it was seven of them. They packed me up and got me into the ambulance. I remember going through the covered bridge—

Club, sloshed its way down toward Bridgeport in refrigerated cars.

But history and geography have dictated that Cornwall should be a town of small, independent farms that could scarcely compete with the giant dairy operations to the west. There is an old saying to the effect that, "Wise dogs don't make it hard for the milkman to come in the yard." But, tough competition has led many of our local dairy farmers to abandon a 365-day, dawn-to-dusk occupation which is scarcely profitable.

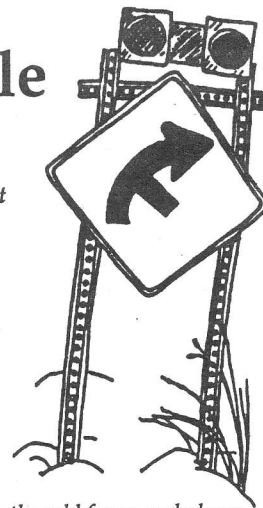
The fire which gutted the Golds' milking shed led to the dispersion of that herd, only 20 still remaining at the Hurlburts' Hautboy Hill Farm. On February 1, a large part of the 400-gallon-a-day Hurlburt herd was auctioned, going not to the slaughterhouse but to other dairies. Currently the only other sizable herd is the Scovilles', with 40 or 50 cows.

But Buddy and Irene Hurlburt think they have a plan to make their small dairy farm profitable. If they can get a smaller storage tank and bottle-capper up and running on schedule, March should see a pasteurization and bottling plant installed in the barn Grandfather Hurlburt built in the 1930s. They're optimistic that, besides the family's own farm stand, many local stores will stock

pretty rough, felt like a washboard. At the hospital, Dr. Zelman told me I was having a heart attack, and that I'd have a ride to Hartford in the whirllybird. I was excited at the prospect, but no such luck. Too many clouds. So I had to wait half an hour in the cold for an ambulance from the professionals at Dutchess Medical, driven by a young woman. She was nice, but a little too cautious for an acute cardiac situation—no lights or sirens, stopped at every stop sign. And when we got to Saint Francis Hospital, she drove to the discharge area, not the entrance. Thalia and our daughter Gracie—with a stop on the way—got there the same time I did.

The doctor told me he didn't know if I'd make it, but I'm home now, doing fine. Thalia would particularly like to thank Joyce Hart for her care. She gave Thalia a shoulder to cry on, drove her to Sharon Hospital, and waited with her until Gracie arrived. I hope the ambulance crew continues to have the luck they had with me. I have to say, that crew was right on the money. Seems to me that the so-called professionals weren't as professional as the volunteers. Thank you.

—Ralph Scoville



their bottled blend of Holstein and Jersey milk which they are confident will outclass the more nondescript product sold by the giant corporations.

The new endeavor will put them in the company of, but hopefully not in competition with, Debra Tyler, whose raw milk business has thrived for many years.

—Matt Collins

Annual Spring Forum

The Cornwall Association and the Cornwall Conservation Trust are sponsoring a program called *The Northwest Conservation District: A Treasure in our Midst*, on Saturday, March 27, from 1 to 3 P.M. at the Town Hall.

Arising from the settling dust of the 1930s, conservation districts were formed to provide a means for people to solve local resource conservation problems. Our own Northwest Conservation District (NCD) continues to serve local towns and residents by providing a wide variety of educational programs including open space and farmland preservation, protection of drinking water quality, and wildlife habitat. Cornwall, like other towns it serves, supports the NCD in our annual budget.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Whether you are a casual gardener, full-fledged farmer, private landowner, or municipal entity, this presentation will provide invaluable information in a community-based approach to our shared concerns.

There is no charge for this event and everyone is welcome. Refreshments served. For further information call Judy Herkimer at 672-6867.

— Judy Herkimer



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Monday to Friday

9 A.M. to noon Saturday

The Color of Money

It's green of course, and the *Chronicle's* treasury could use an injection. After a long winter, we all need a look at some green, and we remind you that at 1:49 A.M. on March 20, the sun will be setting at the South Pole and rising at the North Pole; that means Spring!

Events & Announcements

The Press and Iraq: On Saturday, March 20, at 4 P.M. at the Cornwall Free Library, there will be a panel discussion about the news media's coverage of the war in Iraq with Spencer Klaw, Michael Massing, and Laurence Zuckerman. All three are former editors at *Columbia Journalism Review*. Massing is author of an article in the February 26 issue of the *New York Review of Books* examining the press's performance leading up to the war. He was also at Central Command headquarters in Qatar during the fighting. Zuckerman is a former *New York Times* reporter. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, the event is free, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Art in Cornwall: In March, the Cornwall Library will feature "A Digital Journey 1629–2004," an exhibit about a meeting (so to speak) between John Parkinson, renowned English 17th century botanist, and Rudi Wolff, 21st century artist and designer.

At the National Iron Bank, artist of the month will be Brendan O'Connell, who will be showing abstract oil paintings.

Camelot in Cornwall: Budding architects and wannabe knights and princesses are invited to the Cornwall Library for a Castle-Building Workshop on Saturday, March 6, from 11 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Using cardboard boxes, tubes, paper, and paint, participants will each create a royal fortress. Bring scissors and an assortment of empty boxes and cylinders (milk, cereal, snack bars, tea, oatmeal, toilet paper, etc.) for turrets, towers, and walls. Sign up by calling the Library at 672-6874. Ages six and up; parents welcome. Free.

Child Center Auction: Save the date—May 1—for the Cornwall Child Center Auction. To donate items please call Emilie Pryor, 672-4226, by March 29.

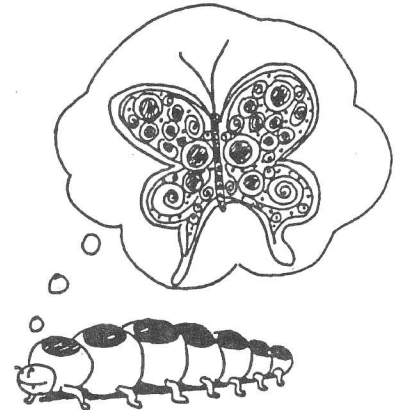
Cookie Sales: March is Girl Scout Cookie Sale Month. Don't panic if you did not order your Thin Mints. Cookies are still available by calling Vera Dinneen, 672-6470.

Six Free Bend and Stretch Programs will be offered at the UCC Wednesday mornings, starting April 7, by Visiting Nurse and Home Care Northwest (VNA). Such exercise, says the VNA, is "close to being a magic formula for a happier, healthier aging process"—and it's fun. Pre-registration is required, and you're encouraged to sign up early to ensure that the program will be held. Call the VNA at 567-6000 by March 30, at the very latest.

Cornwall Child Center: There will be an Open House on Friday, April 2, from 9 to 11:30 A.M. Parents and children are invited to come and find out about the school year and summer programs available at the Child Center, 8 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall (across the road from Cornwall Consolidated School).

Seventh Annual Poetry Slam: Come read your poems or listen to your talented neighbors read theirs at the Library on Saturday, April 3, at 4 P.M. The free event is sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library, who welcome your donations and provide food and drink. Call Phyllis Nauts at 672-6608 if you'd like to read.

Beach Director, Lifeguards Needed: Beach Director Jane Prentice has announced her wish to resign, and the selectmen are now accepting applications for a replacement. Also, a limited number of new lifeguards will be needed at the town's Hammond Beach. Since these positions require training and certification, candidates are reminded that the time for decision and action is **now**, not a few days before the end of school when a summer job suddenly becomes a priority. To make application or for further information, call the Selectmen's Office, 672-4959.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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