

VOLUME 12: NUMBER 4 MAY 2002

ilding Committee Named

On April 18, the Board of Selectmen nominated Susan Hatcher, William Hurlburt, Alec Frost, John LaPorta, Thalia Scoville, and James Terrall to the School Building Committee.

The town referendum on May 11 will answer the question: Shall we appoint this committee and authorize it to spend \$25,000 from unexpended bond proceeds to prepare plans for improvements to Cornwall Consolidated School?

For those unable to vote in person, absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk's Office Monday to Thursday, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. and also on Saturday, May 4, from 9 to 11 A.M. —John Leich

Information Please!

Among various items discussed at the 9 A.M. Board of Selectmen's meeting on April 2 was a brief statement by Gordon Ridgway that turned out to be something of a sleeper. He informed those present that Judy Herkimer had brought a Freedom of Information (FOI) complaint against the board, that the FOI Commission had appointed an ombudsman to resolve the case, and that a hearing date had been set. In response, the selectmen had authorized Town Attorney Perley Grimes to represent them.

As it turned out, Judy Herkimer, a resident of Cornwall Bridge, had brought her

complaint to the attention of the FOIC some weeks earlier, in a letter of February 14 that described the following chain of events:

On February 4, at 7:20 P.M., Judy and her husband, Allen, arrived at the Town Hall to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Allen had previously thrown his hat in the ring as a candidate for the position of alternate on the Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Agency (a post since filled by Ann Treimann), and his wife had been informed by the First Selectman's Office that this position would be on the agenda that evening.

On arrival at the Town Hall, however, the Herkimers and a few other interested citizens found no sign of a selectmen's meeting in progress. On telephoning the First Selectman's Office the following day, Judy Herkimer was told that a change of venue notice had been posted on the Cornwall website but that due to an oversight no notice of change in venue had been placed at the Town Hall. She also was informed that the wetlands issue had not been on the agenda after all.

As it later transpired, the Board of Selectmen had adjourned the meeting to CCS after a brief preliminary session at the Town Hall with members of the Park and Recreation Commission. A notable subject considered

that evening was the town effort to clean up two polluted sites in Cornwall Bridge formerly owned by the Neoweld Company. On learning of this discussion from articles later published in the local press, the Herkimers

were doubly disappointed not to have been notified of the change in venue since both are actively involved in environmental issues.

After an initial hearing in Hartford on April 3 before the Freedom of Information Commission, Judy Herkimer rested her case on the claim that her FOI rights as a citizen had been denied by the Board of Selectmen, which had changed the place and agenda of a regularly scheduled meeting without adequate public notice. The legal mills grind slowly in this process and it may be several months before a final ruling is made on Judy Herkimer's claim. —Jean F. Leich

Ready When You Are, C. B.

"C. B.," in this case, refers not to Mr. DeMille, but to Cornwall Bridge, to say nothing of the rest of Cornwall. The first Corndance Film Festival, brainchild of Lib Tobin and Donna Murphy, packed the Town Hall to SRO on Sunday, April 7, with devotees of the silver screen. Latecomers were turned away.

Fifteen hopefuls shelled out a \$9.99 entry fee to parade their creations before an audi-(continued on page 2)

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	2		1 Play Group 10–11:30 a.m. St. Peter's Church	2 Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15– 2:15 p.m. UCC Day Room	3	Rotary Meeting: Rep. Nancy Johnson 8:15 A.M. Cornwall Inn May 11 Referendum Ballots (p.1) available 9–11 A.M. Town Office
5	Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 p.m. Town Hall	7 Region One Budget Referendum Noon—8 p.m. Town Hall (p.4) Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30–8 p.m. UCC Day Room Inland Wetlands 8 p.m. Town Hall	8 Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church	9	10	11 Rotary Meeting: Dr. Jared Zelman 8:15 A.M. Cornwall Inn Spring Nature Walk 8:30– 10 A.M. Gold Road (p.4) Cornwall Association 9:30 A.M. UCC Day Room Referendum Vote on School
12 MOTHER'S DAY Book Brigade 2 P.M. Cornwall Library (p.4)	13 Cornwall Library Closed (p.4) Blood Pressure Screening 3–4 P.M. UCC Day Room P&Z 8 P.M. Town Hall	14 Wellness Screening UCC Parish House (p.4) Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	15 Deadline: June Chronicle Copy Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church	16 Bd. of Selectmen 9 Am. Town Hall Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	Annual Budget Town Meeting 7:30 P.M. CCS Gym (p.3)	Bldg. Comm. Noon—8 p.m. Town Hall (p.1) 18 Rotary Meeting: 8:15 A.M. Cornwall Inn Spring Cleanup 9 A.M.—Noon (p.4) Hazardous Waste Day, HVRHS (p.4)
19	Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS	21 Republican Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	22 Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church New Cornwall Library Opens 12:30 P.M. (p.4) Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	23	24 Historical Society Annual Meeting 4 P.M. Town Hall	Rotary Meeting: 8:15 a.m. Cornwall Inn Book Signing Historical Society 10 a.mNoon (p.4)
Bridge Dance 5:30–11 P.M. (p.3)	27 Memorial Day (observed) For Memorial Day Events See Page 4	28 ZBA 8:30 P.M. Town Hall*	Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. St. Peter's Church Cornwall Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	30	31	

(continued from page 1)

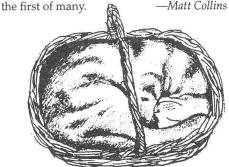
ence which gave a warm reception to all. If the quality of the video projector was not quite up to Hollywood standards, the enthusiasm and imagination of the filmmakers left little to be desired.

Judges Dominique Lasseur, Catherine Tatge, Josh Perlstein, Anna Dolan, Donna Murphy, and Lib Tobin gave the nod for Best Comedy to Low Life, by April Stevens, which nosed out Dominique Lasseur's entry. A foreign film (Winsted), Say Cheese, by Steven Silvester, in which roving cameras gang up on a filmmaker, won the Best Suspense category. Corey Fontana's 1979 took the Best Drama award.

Steve McQueen's *Blob* was not nearly so chilling as a clump of string which swallowed cars and people in Pat Griffin's *String Driven Thing*. It lassoed the prize for Best Animated Film. The Creative Genius Award went to Ms. Good's seventh-grade art class for their series of mock commercials touting such useful items as a flit can for offing teachers.

Winners raked in a "Corny" trophy and a hefty \$30.00 prize, but many wonderful films went unlauded, including Diana Fishman's beautiful glimpses of life in Niger (rhymes with beware not tiger); Dog Days, from a group of Lakeville Journal staff members, a heart-rending exposé on the plight which confronts an aging greyhound whose race is run; and Dog Gone It, which purported to be a canine-produced film made entirely without human intervention, but is generally believed to have come from the camera of Kate Norkin and Frank James Galterio.

Tobin and Murphy deserve the town's thanks for a wonderful festival, hopefully



Greenest Thumb

The biennial Science Fair at CCS went off on April 5 with its usual panache. With much encouragement from science teacher Lynn Meehan, all 96 students from grades five through eight submitted projects ranging from a study of water quality in Candlewood Lake to another on the onset of abstract thinking in early childhood.

Choosing the winners was not easy. The nine judges had to be on the lookout for outstanding examples of scientific thought, ability to design and carry through an experiment, and creativity of ideas and materials used.

The Grand Prize winner was Hannah Colbert, who also won first place for the sixth grade. Her entry was a comparison of plants grown from seed in a biosphere (in this case,

a sealed-up fish tank) to those grown more naturally in soil-filled pots. Her conclusion? "Plants do not grow better in biospheres," she said firmly, "though mine might have done better if my fish tank wasn't so small. But the ones grown in regular pots did better. Notably."

Other prize-winners were: Fifth Grade—Jackie Underwood, Paris Costello, Christina Gugel, Emily Thaler; Sixth Grade—Jonathan Coe, Sarah Freedman, Aaron Dwyer; Seventh Grade—Nina LaPorta, Charlotte Buck, Tyra Lindholm, Dan Simons; Eighth Grade—Byron Clohessy, Lindsey Stone, Samantha Rudes, Emilie Gold.

—Jean F. Leich

An Even Grander List

The new Grand List of taxable private property in Cornwall as of October 2001 has now been made public. It shows that gross property values have increased from \$183,943,400 in 2000 to \$213,572,220 in 2001, or by 16 percent.

Your own tax bill will be determined by the new assessment you received and the new mill rate, which will be set after the Annual Budget Town Meeting on May 17. For example, if the new mill rate is 19 and your net assessment is \$200,000, your tax is 200,000 x .019, or \$3,800.

—John Leich

A Diamond is Forever

...unless it's got three bases and a home plate, in which case it requires constant TLC. This according to CCS Girls' Softball Team coach Tricia Collins is what her field hadn't been getting.

But after an inspection by First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, the mighty forces of the Cornwall Town Crew swung into action in the person of Jim Vanicky, who brought his backhoe to smooth the field during spring vacation. Ruts and potholes have disappeared and the base paths and home-plate area have a fresh covering of sand. A proper pitcher's mound now rises in the infield. A field of dreams? Not yet, but there is hope of a complete reseeding during the summer lull. The quality of their practice field notwithstanding, the Cornwall girls managed to vanquish the vaunted Salisbury team 18-9 —Matt Collins on April 11.

Good-Bye to Friends

William Seth Covington Arliss Suttles Dianna Mosher Farha

Welcome

Lilianna Beatrice Krug to Liz Van Doren and Ken Krug

Land Transfers

John S. Smyth and Arthur A. Baker to Pierce K. Kearney and Sara E. Cousins, 17.2 acres on River Road for \$155,000.

Dolinsky Realty Corp. to SCASCO Inc., three parcels of land and buildings thereon, on River Road South for \$150,000.

Henry G. Labalme and Jean McMullin to



Robert J. and Joan McGuire, three parcels of land totaling 43.43 acres on Cream Hill Road for \$375,000.

Anne C. Zinsser to Russell J. and Sharon Sawicki, .152 acres and buildings thereon, Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for \$232,000.

Estate of Gerda Wallach to Jacqueline Dedell and Ira Shapiro, 3.6 acres on Routes 125 and 128 for \$55,000.

Lewis G. and Sara L. Cole to Graham and Brenda Underwood, 225 Dibble Hill Road for \$410,000.

Marie J. Kluge to Jacqueline Dedell and Ira Shapiro, 3.44 acres on Routes 125 and 128 for \$65,000.

Deborah W. Clarke to John Burr Wolfe, .4 acre with building on Popple Swamp Road for \$35,000.

Foster S. White and Cynthia W. Nau to Pierce Lane Farm LLC, property and buildings on Pierce Lane for \$1,100,000.

Regina A. Gerbi, Trustee, to Brian Billings, two parcels of land on Day Road for \$125,000.

Michael M. and Martha W. Nesbitt to Angela K. Dorn, house and three acres on Town Street for \$322,500.

Condos for Kestrels

If you've wondered about the large "bluebird boxes" that have shown up in prominent Cornwall trees during the early spring, I can tell you that they are destined as homes (we hope) for American kestrels. Also called sparrowhawks, killyhawks, or windhovers (in the UK), these smallest of North American falcons are colorful, fast-flying open country raptors which dine on meadow mice, grasshoppers, and some small birds. They are currently a Species of Special Concern in Connecticut, their numbers having declined precipitously as farmland continues to become forest (or subdivision) across our state, and dead American elms with abandoned woodpecker holes or natural nesting cavities have fallen or been cut

Eleven state-of-the-science kestrel condos have been placed in prime habitat by members of the informal Cornwall Birding Group. Much appreciation is due Northwest Lumber & Hardware for generously donating construction materials. Thanks also to landowners at Hedgerows Farm, Maple Glen Farm, C&D Farms, the Coltsfoot Valley Association, Local Farm and elsewhere for the privilege of working with wildlife on their properties.

So, give a look for a hovering kestrel, hanging over a windy meadow like a grenadier kite, and enjoy these uncommon raptors while they are with us until autumn. We'll let you know whether the new kestrel digs worked any magic or not!

—Art Gingert

Play Space Placed

With a unanimous vote of approval at its regular meeting of April 8, the Planning and Zoning Commission brought to an end a lengthy search for an available site on which to locate a community recreation area. For some years, the Park and Recreation Commission fielded complaints from irate locals demanding to know why the town did not provide its residents with a public play space. "My usual response," comments Park and Rec. Chair Dierdre Fischer, "was that Cornwall had no town property suitable for that purpose."

Then, in February of 2001 came word of a \$15,000 bequest to the town by the late Mary Schieffelin for "recreational purposes," and the long-delayed play space project began to gather community support. Early last summer, the Cornwall Child Center was approached by Alphonse Fletcher, the new owner of the Castle, with the offer of an outsized piece of playground equipment that had been installed on his property by a previous owner. This behemoth, known as a playscape, was a redwood structure approximately 50 feet square and boasting towers at all four corners. The Child Center offered to split the various components of the playscape with Park and Rec. and also suggested a parcel of land for recreational use between the Town Hall and the new Library.

That plan changed last March when an alternative site was made available by Thomas and Anne Hubbard, whose tennis courts in Cornwall Village are leased and maintained by the town. The new space covers 120 by 20 feet, twice the length of the first site proposed, and is located south of the courts on Pine Street. It will be leased to the town on a renewable, cost-free basis, and if all goes according to plan the new park should be open for business in late summer, attractively landscaped and furnished with benches, picnic tables, and a number of activity centers designed to appeal both to toddlers and to the kindergarten set.

Meanwhile, the playscape lies dismantled, rather like a neatly arranged collection of dinosaur bones, on property owned by contractor John A. Frost, who removed it from the Castle grounds last fall. After exhaustive studies led by Bethany Thompson, the new Park and Rec., director, it has become clear that the effort of bringing this relic of a more-lenient era up to today's stringent safety codes would not justify the expense involved. As of this

writing, the playscape's future remains to be decided. "But who knows?" quipped Denny Frost. "Maybe I'll reconstruct the thing myself!"

—Jean F. Leich

Letters to the Chronicle

BOE URGES "YES" VOTE

The Cornwall Board of Education urges you to approve the establishment of a building committee with an operating budget of \$25,000 in the referendum to be held May 11.

The school's needs have been thoughtfully determined and documented. They are immediate and are based on program, not population. Should anyone wish to review those needs, the video donated by Tatge-Lasseur Productions is available at the Library. Also, Principal Peter Coope would welcome the chance to explain in person on Friday, May 3, to anyone who calls the school; or you can contact any member of the board.

In the March referendum, voters supported (by a wide margin) renovation as the way to address this problem. But until a committee works with an architect, there is no way to know the final configuration or the cost of that renovation. Please support improved facilities at CCS and vote "yes" on May 11.

—Barbara Gold, Chair; Philip Hart, Rebecca Hurlburt, Scoville Soulé, Catherine Tatge, James Terrall

CATHEDRAL PINE TOWERS

While visiting the Philadelphia area recently I noted what looked like a transplanted Cathedral Pine towering over an array of lower-height trees. To my surprise, it was in fact an attempt to disguise a microwave communications tower-and a pretty good job it was. My first thought was that such a disguise might be a good idea for towers in the Cornwall area. My second was that maybe some creative Cornwallian had come up with a tourism promotion for our community. And third, I thought this was just the kind of word play characteristic of so many in Cornwall, creating "Cathedral Pine Towers" to mock the names given to the many apartments and condominiums being built in the East Coast megalopolis.

-Mike MacCracken

ECONOMICAL GYM

They don't call it a steel gym, but Harwinton's Consolidated School has built a "prefabricated structure" of steel on a concrete slab. \$400,000 bought the complete 108-foot by 52-foot unit, including bathrooms, a phys.-ed. office, lighting, plumbing (with a pump grinder septic system) and a choice of exterior finish on the gray clapboard siding. Bleachers, I was told, are easily available. It would fit just fine into the Cornwall landscape and meet the stated needs of the town's children and adults. Must we spend millions to build a gym and stage that is 110 feet by 74 feet?

—Josie Whitney

PULLING TOGETHER

The PTA would like to thank everyone for their hard work and participation in the process of improving our school's facilities. There is little doubt in most of our minds that we need to upgrade our school.

Now that a direction has been chosen, we hope that everyone can come together and support a building committee, as a plan for our school is created. Now is the time that we all need to pull together to bring this project to completion. The future of our community's children depends on us.

—David Samson President, PTA

VOTING REMINDER

If you want the CCS building project to go forward, it is very important to vote for the building committee and funding on May 11. If you do not want this project to move ahead, the May 11 referendum will be an opportunity to say "no" to spending any money on the proposed school improvements.

The vote last August to stop the previous school project produced a total voter turnout of better than 800, a very heavy vote for Cornwall. We, as voters and taxpayers, have already wasted \$263,000 on this school business. On May 11, we need another very heavy turnout to decide if this project can now march forward with deep and solid support.

-Wm. Earl Brecher

Events & Announcements

The Annual Budget Town Meeting will be held on May 17 at 7:30 P.M. at CCS. The Board of Finance will propose a total school and town budget of \$4,834,762, a 5.2 percent increase over last year. This includes \$180,000 for CCS expansion.

The Region One budget referendum is May 7, noon to 8 P.M. at the Town Hall.

Covered Bridge Dance: The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department will be hosting its eleventh annual dance in West Cornwall on May 26. Proceeds will be used for training and equipment expenses. This year's band, Timerider, with a mixed bag of rock and country, will be performing from 7 to 11 P.M. Food and refreshments will be available from 5:30 P.M. Admission at the gate is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Discount tickets can be purchased on preceding days at area businesses. Parking is free at lots located half a mile north on Route 7 and one mile east on Route 128. Free shuttle buses will run from the lots to the dance, as the bridge and approaches will be closed to all traffic from 5 P.M. until midnight. No pets or unattended children, please.

Memorial Day Observances will be held on May 27 as follows: 9 A.M. service in the North Cornwall Cemetery, where all are welcome to bring flowers; 10 A.M. Seamen's Service at the Covered Bridge; 11 A.M. Memorial Day Parade and ceremonies on the Town Green. The traditional UCC/Cornwall Child Center carnival will follow on the church grounds.



News from Park and Rec.: Anyone who still has a baseball uniform from last year please return it to CCS or the Town Hall ASAP. They are badly needed and expensive to replace.

Saturday, May 18, is the annual Spring Cleanup. Volunteers meet at the Town Green, 9 A.M. to noon. Contact Debbie Morehouse at 672-0736 or Bethany Thompson at 672-6058.

Donations are needed to help purchase play equipment, landscaping, fencing, picnic tables, and other items to make the town playground a reality. Call Bethany Thompson (672-6058) for more information.

Art in Cornwall: At the Wish House, on May 25, 5 to 7 P.M., Danielle Mailer opens an exhibit of small paintings. The National Iron Bank will show landscapes and still life paintings of Treasa Pattison during the month of May.

60-Plus Wellness Screening: Tuesday, May 14, at the UCC Parish House. The screening is performed by nurse practitioners and offers a wide range of tests including hearing, vision, glaucoma, blood and stool tests, electrocardiogram, blood pressure, urinalysis, pap/pelvic/breast exam, prostate check, height, weight, and health history. The suggested donation is \$25. There are only ten spaces available, and an appointment is necessary. Call Jill Gibbons at 672-2693.

Drought

The Chronicle's reservoir of cash seems to be sinking faster than the water table this spring. We need all you rainmakers to sprinkle us with donations so that we can keep on covering the news from Cornwall.

Sold Out in January, Cornwall in Pictures—A Visual Reminiscence 1868-1941 has been reprinted. Published by the Cornwall Historical Society, the book has a hardcover cloth binding and 224 pages, with text by Jeremy Brecher. He will be on hand to sign copies of the book at the Historical Society from 10 A.M. to noon Saturday, May 25. You can bring your copy of the original printing or buy a new volume from the second. Meantime, the book is available in Northwest Corner bookstores and retail outlets for \$25, or call Charles Osborne (672-6296) or Maureen Prentice (672-0135) to order a copy.

Thinking Ahead: There are so many things going on in Cornwall that it is a pity when two wonderful events are scheduled at the same time. Events can be listed months in advance on the calendar of the Cornwall website (www.cornwallct.org), where you can look ahead to see what's already there. Please contact Anne Baren, 672-6637, fax 672-0175, pbaren@snet.net, with the name and date of your event.

Book Brigade at the Library: On Sunday, May 12, starting at 2 P.M., a line of Cornwallians will form to move the 1,600-book mystery collection from the shelves of the "old" Library to the new building. The books will go one at a time from hand to hand and stream to their new location. At least 100 folks will be needed to reach between the buildings; many hands make light work! Refreshments will be provided. Untimely rain would cancel the event.

The bulk of the books in the collection will be moved professionally during the following week when the Library will be closed. May 22 will find the doors of the new Library open. On June 3, the automated system will be activated: people can bring or pick up their new borrower library cards (or request them) and become acquainted with the computer catalog. The dedication of the

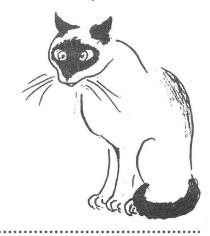
new library building will be mid-day on June 15. Everyone is invited to this official opening celebration. Hazardous Waste: There will be a hazardous waste collection on May 18 at the Housatonic Valley Regional High School. Please call the Selectmen's Office (672-4959) for an appointment for the exact time of your

HVA Tag Sale: The Housatonic Valley Association is collecting items for Great Stuff, Too, a tag sale to be held Sunday, June 2, in Kent, including furniture, dishes and china, artwork, books, musical instruments, and more. To request a donation pick-up from your home or to help with the event call HVA at

Spring Nature Walk: Join Carla Bigelow and Celia Senzer on Saturday, May 11, at 8:30 A.M. for an hour-and-a-half walk to look for and identify the many signs of spring in the woods and small ponds along Gold Road. Birds, wildflowers, mosses, ground covers, budding trees, frogs, and more. Children welcome! No rain date. Call 672-0283 or 672-6898 for more information and to reserve a place. Sponsored by Park and Rec.

Golf Tournament: Visiting Nurses Association Northwest is hosting its third annual golf tournament at Torrington Country Club June 3 with a 12:30 P.M. tee off. The entry fee is \$150 which includes lunch and dinner. Contact Nell Nicholas at 672-4457 for more information.

Casting Call: Sunday, June 2 from 2 to 6 P.M. at the UCC for Thornton Wilder's play Our Town, to be performed in October. Open to all adults and children; first preference to Cornwall residents. Further information will be posted when available on the Cornwall website or call Chris Gyorsok at 672-2715.



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