

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 13: NUMBER 4 MAY 2003

The Making of the Principal

The hunt for a new principal to lead CCS is now over, and Dr. Kathleen Fitzgibbons, from the state of Maine, will take up the job in August. With experience also as a teacher and librarian, Dr. Fitzgibbons has spent over 20 years as the principal of elementary schools in New England.

Her appointment followed many months of work by the search committee. I asked Becky Hurlburt, a member of the committee, to explain the selection process, which she did over lunch at a local eatery, while Roxy Hurlburt (class of 2015) flirted shamelessly with Fred Bate (class of 1961). Another committee member, Philip Hart (class of 1952), helped refine this account.

The screening committee consisted of representatives from both teaching and non-certified CCS staff, the community, the school board and the PTA, with the school board chairman and the Region One superintendent serving ex-officio.

An initial public meeting had elicited those professional and personal qualities sought by the committee in their charge to review the candidate pool for the Board of Education. An appeal from the superintendent's office yielded over 20 applicants, but some of these lacked the correct certifications.

Committee members trekked up to Falls

Village to read through the resumes of those 14 candidates with the required qualifications, then met and voted to interview the preferred seven. After these interviews, three candidates were recommended to the board. One took another job, and then there were two. The finalists were interviewed by the full board, which selected one and so informed the superintendent's office for its approval or veto. (Historically, the choice of the board prevails.) The process did not depend entirely on interviews and resumes; once the search committee decided which names to submit to the BOE, much networking by the office of the superintendent took place to substantiate the blinding glow shining from the references of the candidates.

This labor-intensive process has produced a winner, and we'll have more on Dr. Fitzgibbons in an upcoming issue. —*Maggie Cooley*

Cornwall's Boys in Blue

The streets of Baghdad echo to the bootsteps of no Cornwall soldier, which is in stark contrast to our town's heavy contribution in a grimmer war a century and a half ago.

Of the 243 Cornwall boys who mostly volunteered (very few were drafted) to fight the "Rebellion" of the southern states, ten had been killed in action by war's end in April 1865. Another nine had died of

wounds, raising town deaths from enemy ac-

tion to just under eight percent for the entire four-year struggle, a staggering loss, but an enviable record in a conflict which saw one Minnesota regiment lose 82 percent of its men in a single action. The last Cornwall soldier to lay down his life for the Union was probably James Van Buren, a 14-year-old drummer boy cut down by a cannonball at Winchester VA in the fall of 1864.

Typically for Civil War days, Cornwall's battlefield casualties were slightly exceeded by the death toll from disease—20. Two of our townsmen died in southern prison camps, and a Private William Slover drowned in the Potomac. Thirty-seven soldiers recovered from wounds. Twelve returned from prison camps. All in all, around 37 percent of our enlistees were killed, wounded or captured. (U.S. casualties in Iraq seem to be running at slightly over one-tenth of a percent.)

If you enlisted from Cornwall, the odds were heavily in favor of your winding up in the same outfit as the drummer boy and the drowning victim, the enigmatic Captain Edward Gold's G Company, Second Heavy Artillery, Connecticut Volunteers. This would have landed you in a whole host of minor skirmishes and two of the war's nastiest bloodlettings: Cedar Creek and Cold Harbor.

(continued on page 2)

MAY 2003

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
7				Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15-2:15 P.M. UCC Day Room	Pre-School–K Story Hour Every Friday 10–11 A.M. Cornwall Library	3 Peace Vigil Every Saturday 2–3 p.m. Cornwall Bridge Green Annual Spring Bird Walk (p.4) Child Safety Fair 9 A.MNoon CCS (p.4)
4	Park and Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Bd. of Selectmen The 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30–8 P.M. UCC Day Room Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall Region One Budget Referendum Noon–8 P.M. Town Hall	Play Group Every Wednesday 10-11:30 A.M. UCC Parish House	8	9	10 Cornwall Assoc. 9:30 a.m. Cornwall Lib. M. R.
11 MOTHER'S DAY	Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	14	Honor Control of the Control of the Control 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	Annual Budget Town Meeting 7:30 p.m. CCS Gym (p.2)	17 ARMED FORCES DAY
18 Corndance Film Festival 4 P.M. CCS Gym (p.4)	Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 p.m. HVRHS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 p.m. Cornwall Lib. M. R. (p.4)	20	21	Day Bd. of Selectmen B A.M. Town Hall Cornwall Library Bd. of Trustees 4:30 P.M. Cornwall Library M. R.	23	24 Cornwall Library Benefit Manhattan String Quartet 7 P.M. Music Mountain
Bridge Dance 5:30–11 P.M. West Cornwall (p.4)	26 Memorial Day Observed For Memorial Day Events See Page 4	ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall*	28 Cornwall Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	29	30	Hazardous Waste Collection 9 A.M.— 1 P.M. Falls Village (p.4)

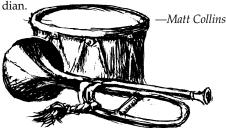
(continued from page 1)

You might also have stood to attention as Robert E. Lee rode through the ranks of the "Second Heavies" on his way to surrender to General Grant at Appomatox Courthouse.

Unlike the cosmopolitan force that swept over Iraq, you would have gone to war surrounded by the boys you grew up with and with whom you shared a similar background. You might not, however, have had quite so much in common as three Cornwall artillerymen, tentmates, two of whom had allegedly been married at various times to the same three women. The third had less in common. He had only been married to two of the women.

The highest ranking soldier from our town was, of course, West Point graduate Major General John Sedgwick, whose monument dominates Cornwall Hollow. The hero of Antietam, Gettysburg, and other battles was felled by a rebel sharpshooter near Spottsylvania on May 2, 1864, when, in a show of bravado, he stood up to show his men they were out of the enemy's range, purportedly vowing, "they could not hit an elephant at this distance."

As the reader's finger slides down the yellowed pages showing the muster roll of the regiments, it pauses at other names that have a familiar ring in today's Cornwall: Soulé, Pierce, Odell, North, Hotchkiss, Vaill, Potter, Cochrane, Nodine, Dibble, Hart, Scoville, Nickerson, Roraback. But these links contrast with sharp dissimilarities to the modern town. Six Cornwall residents served in the 29th Infantry, a "colored" regiment, and at least one was an American In-



West Cornwall Market, at Last

"I hope to have it open and running before the end of May," said K.C. Baird. It will be called the "West Cornwall Market" and located in the building best remembered as Yutlzers'.

The elder of the brothers Baird, with wife Lori, will operate the much-anticipated market. If it hadn't been for "water problems," the market would already be in its third or fourth month. K.C. said the store will be much like Baird's Market in Cornwall Bridge, with deli, fresh meat and poultry, groceries, lots of fresh produce, much of it local in the warm months, and newspapers. (Just think of the gas money saved by Eddie Bigelow and Jerry Doolittle driving to get their daily NY Times fix.)

There will also be scooped ice cream (which I must avoid at all cost) and, eventually, beer. But not 99 varieties. The upstairs will have paper goods, gifts and cards; also a few tables to sit at and eat a deli sandwich.

K.C. acknowledged that he was taking a financial risk. "We have enough good restaurants in Cornwall," he said. "The town needs a grocery store in West Cornwall just like it used to have. I think it will help revitalize the village having a market open every day." That's seven days a week: 6 A.M.—7 P.M. Monday—Thursday, 8 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 5 P.M. Sunday. "I'm willing to take the risk," K. C. said. Sounds reasonable. —*John Miller*

The Gold Standard

The *Chronicle* (CC) talked with long-time Board of Finance Chairman Ralph Gold (RG) to find out what will happen to our property taxes when this year's budget is finished.

CC: Begin by telling us what our current mill rate is – and what exactly is a mill, anyhow?

RG: One mill is 1/1000 of a dollar. A tax rate of 19 mills, which is our current rate, means a tax of \$19 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

CC: So if your house is assessed at \$200,000, your tax is 200 times 19?

RG: Right, \$3,800.

CC: I gather your main problem this year is on the revenue side of the budget?

RG: We have only three main sources of revenues: state grants, interest income, and property taxes. The state has made substantial reductions in grants; cuts of almost \$100,000. Interest income is also down.

CC: On the expense side, how does the school budget look this year?

RG: They've asked for a total of \$3.1 million, a 4.5 percent increase, but we've asked them to cut that back by about one percent. The school board has very little wiggle room because a large portion of their budget is the salary contract (38 percent) and the Region One budget (37 percent).

CC: Does the school expansion affect this budget? RG: Only slightly, because in each of the past two years, we had \$180,000 in the budget for this project, and we expect the bond payment to be only about \$20,000 more than this.

CC: When will that bond issue happen?

RG: We don't have firm numbers for the project yet, but we expect to go to bond sometime this fall. If interest rates start moving up, we'll try to move more quickly.

CC: How about the selectmen's budget?

RG: The selectmen asked for about \$1.2 million, a 3.7 percent increase, and we asked for a slight cut in this as well. The school board and the selectmen have worked very hard on hold-the-line budgets this year. There isn't much that's inflationary or inflammatory.

CC: Any big capital projects in the budget?

RG: The request is for a total of \$330,000, most of which is \$130,000 for road improvements and \$120,000 for a new highway loader to replace one that's 15 or 20 years old. We'll cut that total back a bit.

CC: How much money do we have in town savings? RG: The general fund balance, which is accumulated surpluses, is about \$900,000.

CC: Why do you need so much?

RG: Guidelines say we should have ten percent of our budget in reserves, which is about \$500,000. Also the fund is shrinking rather than growing because we're getting better at



budgeting. And finally, each year we transfer some of the savings to keep the tax increase down.

CC: How much will you use this year?

RG: Between \$100,000–\$200,000, mainly to help reduce the impact of the deep cut in state grants.

CC: Can you give an estimate of the new mill rate and the tax increase?

RG: It looks as if we'll be at 20.5 mills, an increase of just under eight percent.

CC: When do we vote on this?

RG: The public hearing is April 25, and the town meeting to approve the budget will be on May 16.

CC. Thank you Ralph.

—Ed Ferman

Good-Bye to Friends

James Thomas Flexner Vera M. Charleton

Marriages

Anne Russ to Michael Robinson Elizabeth Dzenutis to Christopher Fenn

Welcome

Annabel Li Sen Resor to Catherine Scott and Jamie Resor

Land Transfers

Cynthia Bianchi and Cornwall Housing Corporation to Susan F. Gingert, house and land at 377 Town Street for \$133,300.

> Mr. Madwom to Calvin T. Daniels, Lot #7, Applewood Lane for \$75,000.

Turning the Page

Ginny Potter, after serving the Cornwall Free Library for 28 years, first as assistant to Hildreth Daniel and then as head librarian from 1988, is retiring as of July 1. We will miss her welcoming smile and helpful ways. But we will continue to benefit from her vision that saw our overcrowded 20th century library expand into a state-of-the-art modern library in a spacious home

But now the Ginny era is coming to a close and Amy Cady, coordinator of the Library Capital Campaign for the last four years, will be stepping in as Library Director. Amy, with a background in counseling and management, currently directs Cady Associates, consultants for non-profits. Well known and active in town, she will fit into her new role comfortably. She plans to pursue a Master in Library Science degree starting in the fall. She will also have experienced Assistant Librarian/Children's Librarian, Amelia Buck, to call on. (Can you say "Amelia"?)

Amy takes over in July, after working along with Ginny in June. During May, Amy will proceed with her management of the

Library's fund-raising concert with the Manhattan String Quartet, which takes place at Music Mountain, Saturday, May 24, at 7 P.M.

—John Miller and Scoville Soulé

Our Threatened Landscape

Early spring walks through woods and along country roads in Cornwall in search of wild-flowers—what a delight to come upon a patch of the delicate Spring Beauty and Wood Anemone in the same spots we had found them last year.

But wait! What is this flowering plant growing everywhere? Pull one up and sniff it. Yes, it is garlic mustard (alliaria petiolata). Introduced from England, it grows in open habitats everywhere, crowding out native plants. Other plants non-native to our ecosystem are also spreading rapidly here and throughout New England. Many either have no known diseases or insects to provide control or are difficult to eradicate.

Consider the abandoned pastures in town now made almost impenetrable by the multiflora rose and Japanese barberry. This nonnative species of barberry is everywhere, growing quickly, shading out tree seedlings in our partially logged forests. Think now of our huge old sugar maples. As pretty as the foliage of the non-native Norway maple is in fall, it grows faster, taller and produces far more seeds earlier than the sugar maple, leaving behind sugar maple saplings struggling to survive.

Should we care? Yes! The survival of a species, plant or animal, depends on maintaining a broad level of variation in the gene pool. This simply means that there has to be a certain population level in order for each species to survive. The idea, then, is not to eradicate every invasive plant—an impossible task anyway—but to try to bring those plants that are in our environment under control so they no longer menace our native plant and animal life.

This issue was the topic of the Invasive Species Forum sponsored by The Cornwall Association that took place in March. Experts from three states came together to share their knowledge with an audience of more than one hundred people.

Our state representatives, Roberta Willis and Andrew Roraback, were also present. Mindful of the huge economic costs of invasive species to our lakes, farmlands and forests, they reported on two measures in the legislature—one banning the import or sale of invasive plants in Connecticut, and an-



Letters to the Chronicle

CHICKENS ARE NOT DUMB CLUCKS

Of the egg-laying breeds, I find the Buff Orpingtons to be the most handsome and friendly. They make the best mothers. Their eggs are big, brown, and beautiful.

Among the laying breeds, theirs is the most tender and best-tasting meat.

Our most memorable Buff
Orpington was the wily
"henigrade" Lucky Clucky who turned
out to be quite a sociable hen. She'd join
me in the stable while I was milking the cows,
entertaining me with stories of quiet clucks and
cackles. I'd offer her milk in the strip cup which
she enjoyed immensely, so much so that, in time,
she came to expect and then TO DEMAND her
milk treat. If for some reason I wasn't paying

attention and the strip cup was out of her reach, she'd edge in beside me and the cow and crane her neck and study the cow, first with one eye, then the other. Suddenly she'd jump up and peck the belly of the cow, and then repeat the action until I finally gave her some milk in the strip cup.

Yes, a smart critter, just like folks.
—Deb Tyler

CHECK YOUR ADDRESS SIGN
The Fire Department would like to

remind you that many 911 street address signs need to be reposted after this year's severe winter. Also, please keep in mind that 911 is only for emergency help; it is not intended for power restoration calls nor as a general information number. Such calls sometimes clog the line when needed.

—Gordon Ridgway

other creating a Council to address the issue of invasive plants in the state.

A variety of free publications are available in the library, ranging from lists of native plants sold in nurseries to specific descriptions of common invasive plants, native and non-native, with suggestions for removing them.

On June 4, Betsy Corrigan, Co-Chair of the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group, will lead an invasive plant identification walk in Cornwall. For more information, call 672-0283 or 672-0083. —Carla Bigelow

Checking the Chickens II

My official Cornwall chicken count began with the Harts' 28 birds: one Buff Orpington, four Brazilian mix, eight Auracana, two Barred Rock, two black Sex Links, nine Rhode Island Reds, and two "gray unknowns"—all range chickens that not only eat pests like caterpillars and slugs but also provide tasty meat and healthful eggs with orange yolks—unlike the pallid eggs from chicken "factories."

The Ridgway farm has a section of its cattle barn devoted to chickens: one Rhode Island Red, six Buff Orpingtons, two White Leghorns, and six speckled Barred Rocks—all free to range the area during the day, but the prospect of grain and safety brings them back in the evening, guided by their strutting cock-of-the-walk rooster.

Jeff Fox's spacious yard off Route 128 has for eight years provided a natural range for his flock of Leghorns, Rhode Island Reds, and one rooster, all housed in a relatively new and secure coop with four good-sized nesting boxes. Like most good farmers, Jeff talks to his critters, concerned about their mental health as well as their egg production.

Lynn Fowler also chats with her birds, talking politics mostly, she says, "to keep them from being too broody." For nearly 30 years she has been raising chickens in West Cornwall. They range in the woods during

the day. Her two dozen chickens are blends of breeds and provide eight to 12 eggs a day.

Dody Clarke's farm by the river in Cornwall Bridge includes two Auracanas, one Buff Orpington, and five exotic chickens with ancestors in Brazil—Chico, Pinky, Rosa, Branca, and Blondie. Naming chickens can make them seem part of the family. Dody recalls a time when one eight-year-old hen had molted. Her father took the nude bird into the warm living room where they sat side by side and watched television, he feeding grapes to the hen.

Cheryl Evans gave her chicken count as "eight and dwindling": one Rhode Island Red rooster, and his Auracana harem of seven in a pen where a rusted chassis of a four-wheeled trailer serves as an occasional roost. At the Prentices on Todd Hill Road, 21 mixed-breeds stroll the grounds. Ella Clark and Grzegorz Oracz, Town Street neighbors, have created a safe habitat for 30 hens. Their healthful and soft-hued eggs are delivered to our door. The Morehouse family on Hollenbeck has a state-of-the-art chicken house with 21 birds. Deb Tyler has 27 birds, the Dinneens have begun with four hens—and who knows what other flocks are being created.

However, the most colorful congregation of fowl is at Cobble Close Farm. Amanda Perkins, who has kept chickens for 20 years, now tends Barred Rocks, Auracanas, Minorcas, Leghorns, Dominiques and Rhode Island Reds who share a generous-sized coop and a 40 by 50-foot pen with a flock of white pigeons, several peacocks, and other exotic fowls—impossible to count with any accuracy in the strutting fluttering flurry of feathers—a memorable sight indeed.

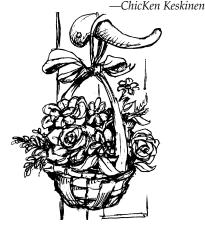
The biggest henneries are those at the Hurlburts and at Stony Batter Farm. The Hurlburts will soon have 200 Bard Rocks providing eggs—on sale at the farm or in Goshen. Scott Belter of Stony Batter Farm (continued on page 4)

says he has 150 range "girls" (Bard Rocks and Rhode Island Reds) that provide up to 100 eggs a day.

Counting chickens is not an exact science; indeed, it can be chaos. Chickens hatch, grow, lay eggs, die "natural" deaths, become meals for hawks or coons, or are beheaded, defeathered, and frozen for future feasts—all at unknown times. However, in spite of flocks in flux, what have I now determined to be Cornwall's unofficial "chicken count"? (Drum Roll, please)—Rumblerumble rat-a-tat-a-tat THUMP!

The number is549! That's about one-fourth of a chicken for each Cornwallian.

Fare enough! Make mine a drumstick.



Events & Announcements

Second Annual Corndance Film Festival: Beg, borrow or pilfer a camera and tell us a story in moving pictures for this event, a celebration of the art of the short film (10 minutes max). Leave your film at the Cornwall Library by May 10, with the \$9.99 entry fee, a SASE and a phone number so we can contact you. Hints: edit brutally, be sure each shot moves the story; keep it simple and plot your film with a storyboard diagramming each shot. This makes in-camera edits easier, per Ann Moore-Villano, guest editor at the recent Corndance Workshop. The Festival, held in coordination with Park and Rec., is Sunday, May 18, 4 P.M., at the CCS gym. Adults \$5, kids 12 and under \$3, squirts and seniors free. Proceeds benefit the Cornwall Conservation Trust. For information call Lib and Donna at 672-2407.

The Two Percent Solution

The average American gives two percent of his income to charity. So you might want to check your tax return to make sure you are at least at that level. And if not, the coupon below gives you an opportunity to correct the situation. Thank you!

Child Safety Fair, sponsored by Cornwall Cadette Troop 63, will be held at CCS from 9 A.M. to noon on Saturday, May 3. The Fair will include child fingerprinting by CT State Troopers from the Canaan Barracks (for parents to keep for their own records) and Home Safety and Stranger Danger taught by the Cadettes. For more information, please call Tracy at 672-6015, or Patience at 672-0609.

Covered Bridge Dance: The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department will host its twelfth annual family dance in West Cornwall on May 25. Proceeds will be used for The Gary Hepprich Scholarship Fund for the children of department members. This year's band, Timerider, will be playing rock and country music 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 \$6 for children. Children under ten, accompanied by an adult, are free. Discount tickets can be purchased in advance 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.

Summer Enrichment Program for children ages 3-6 will be held at the Child Center Monday - Thursday, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., July 7 to July 31. The program explores Cornwall's rich environment of farms, birds, animals, and streams. There will be hiking, games, crafts, songs, stories, dramatics, puppetry, enrichment in the arts, and field trips and swimming. For more information call Pamela Brehm at 672-6989.

The Fifth Annual Spring Bird Walk, sponsored by Park and Rec., will be on Saturday, May 3, 7 to 9:30 A.M., led by naturalist/photographer Art Gingert. Bring binoculars and wear waterproof boots. Beginning birders are welcome. We will park at the end of River Road (Sharon side) and bird along the Housatonic River on the Stanley Works property. Rain date, Sunday, May 4. Questions? Call 672-0283.

The Cornwall Website has posted application forms for zoning permits, appeals to ZBA, applications to Inland Wetlands, and open burning permits. Instructions are included for all forms. Residents can print out the form from the website, fill it out, and take it to the appropriate town office. Save a trip just to get the form. The forms will be found in the Regulations section of cornwallct.org.

The Democratic Town Committee will meet at 7:30 P.M. on May 19 at the Library. All registered Democrats are invited. The committee would particularly like to hear from any Democrat interested in becoming a candidate for a town office in the November elections.

Memorial Day Observances will be held on May 26 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; 10:30 A.M. marchers assemble at Hubbard Field for the 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.

Hazardous Waste: There will be a hazardous waste collection between 9 A.M. and 1 P.M. on Saturday, May 31 at the Falls Village Garage. Propane tanks will be accepted, and you can exchange your old mercury thermometers for digital versions. Sorry, no electronics this time. Please call the Selectmen's Office (672-4959) for an appointment.

Region One Budget Referendum is May 6, noon to 8 P.M. at the Town Hall.

Art in Cornwall: The Cornwall Library will host the Fifth (almost) Annual Show of CCS Student Work. The show will open May 5 and continue through the end of the month. At the National Iron Bank, Jane Manley's exhibit of still life paintings will continue through May.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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