ORNWALL CHRONICLE

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NOVEMBER 1996

Election Day '96

Next Tuesday-the 5th-is Election Day and the polls will be open at Town Hall from 6 A.M. until 8 P.M. Voters will make choices between the Clinton-Gore (D) and Dole-Kemp (R) slates and five other tickets: Phillips & Zdonczyk (Concerned Citizens), Nader & LaDuke (Green), Browne & Jorgensen (Libertarian), Hagelin & Tompkins (Natural Law), and Perot & Choate (Reform).

Other contests are between Nancy Johnson (R) and Charlotte Koskoff (D) for State Senate, and Andrew Roraback (R) and Mary Ann O'Sullivan (D) for State Assembly. Koskoff and O'Sullivan also appear on the A Connecticut Party line.

The only local contest, which isn't really a "contest," is for Registrar of Voters. Each party has one, Republican Lisa Cruse and Democrat Jayne Ridgway, so both will be reelected. Keep an eye out for one question at the top of the ballot which asks for a Yes or No on an amendment to the State Constitution that would provide certain rights to the victims of crimes. —John Miller

No Gift Horses for Cornwall

"Government handouts," "state mandates," "It's your money"—these phrases resonate powerfully in the taxpayer's ear, and would do so even if this weren't an election year.

Cornwall's selectmen, none running for office in 1996, reminded us of these taxpayer motifs recently when, in a move that might have puzzled some, they turned down state offers that were worth a fair amount of money. One proposed repair of a dilapidated-looking retaining wall on Route 4. The other presented Cornwall with a free computer, software included; the state only asked that the town load its voter registration files into the gift computer. Cornwall's machine, in turn, was to hook into a central computerized voter list in Hartford that would exchange voter information with other town computers statewide. The payoff: a new era of efficiency and a potent weapon against electoral fraud.

Why would anyone spurn such largesse? Usually, it seems, the state just removes money from the towns while vouchsafing less and less in return. But this time the state was saying (or apparently saying), here are two terrific deals for your town: we give you a free road repair job with one hand and a free pass to the info-superhighway with the other. Enjoy!

In saying "no, thanks," the selectmen asserted that both projects are a waste of the taxpayers' money. The road repair would cost \$1.5 million, and is essentially unnecessary. "It would be nice to do," said Selectman Jack Preston, who spent many a year working on state highways, "but it's a matter of esthetics. Nothing bad will happen if it comes down. And if it does, the bank can be graded out." There

would be no need, he said, for the wall the state contemplates to replace the concrete cribbing now in place.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway regards the state's priorities as badly skewed. "The state," he said, "basically hogs this money," which it controls as collector of the gas tax, "for its own road projects instead of supporting ours. And it's not just highways. Our biggest concern is that money is not being spent where it should be spent." On education, for instance.

The same aversion to waste governed the computer's rejection: it isn't needed—at least for now-by the town. Both Cornwall voter registrars, Democrat Jayne Ridgway and Republican Lisa Cruse, agree that it might well be good for larger towns, and Cruse feels it is probably coming to Cornwall some day. In the meantime, keeping the voter lists on a local computer costs just \$200 a year. The state machine would cost the town nothing (at least initially), but the state's cost, for hard-

(continued on page 2)



(continued from page 1) ware and software, approaches \$14,000 per machine.

Somehow, it doesn't come as a surprise that the town's stiff-arm to these upscale state projects may prove of little long-lasting significance. Connecticut's Department of Transportation may erect its wall on Route 4 anyway. Many towns have accepted the computer; if 60 percent of Connecticut's 169 towns sign on, the holdouts may well be required to go along.

—Charles Osborne



Attention: Delinquent Dogs

What do Casper, Jed, Sadie, Vincent, and Kato have in common? They are all members of a pack of Cornwall canines whose owners have not yet registered them for 1996. Poor pooches would hang their heads to know they've made the 1996 Delinquent Dog List posted at the Town Office. So if you happen to know the owners of Sammy, Ginger, Twinkle, or Timber, ask them to spring their hounds from the doghouse by updating rabies vaccines and buying them a license.

Or maybe you know if Speckles, Lucky, Wolfy, Bridget, or Stella left town; tell me and I'll take them off the list, and they can bowwowt gracefully. Otherwise, the next scratch at the door may not be Hooch or Gizmo, Little Bit or Foxy, but the Animal Control Officer with his big fine pad in hand.

—Cheryl Evans, Town Clerk [Editors' note: It is now the law that cats must be vaccinated, too. Fine for non-compliance (for dogs as well as cats): \$121.]

After the Fall

As we write, the hills blossom with yellows, russets, oranges—and occasional reds. But by November 1, Chronicle time, only the more subdued and tenacious hangers-on—primarily oak and beech leaves—will be rustling in the forest. Here's Art Gingert, traveling naturalist and photographer, to tell us about the origins and effects of those colors.

—Ella Clark

"The yellow is caused by plant pigments called xanthophylls (like bananas, lemons, goldfinch feathers), and the orange by carotene. These colors are inherent in the leaves, and are unmasked only when the strong green of the chlorophyll, which provides food for the plant, dies back. Red—anthocyanin—in leaves is actually generated towards the end of the growing season when nights

are about 40 degrees and the leaves are in full sun during the day. That's why you find a sugar maple that has reddish outer edges from crown to base, while the inside is yellow. Virginia creeper is a prime example of the effect of anthocyanins; so are dogwood, ash, and, of course, the red of swamp maple, acer rubrum.

"A saturated year is one where the reds predominate. The leaf-peepers and the bus tour operators want to see the deepest, most intense blazing colors. For the most part the leaves in northern Vermont and the White Mountains were below par this year, and the tourists and photographers were very disappointed. But it's turning into a pretty decent color show down here.

"The wonderful show of autumn colors is limited to only a few areas of the world: the north central and northeastern United

States, and Japan and China, partly because we all have a great variety of deciduous trees, shrubs, and vines in temperate zones.

"Why do we get so excited by the fall colors? Well, we're very visual mammals, so it's a powerful thing to have the stimulation of this wide and

varied palette. We get outside, commune with nature, and make some sort of connection—recreational, aesthetic, or spiritual. Look at this photograph, for example, this red maple in the wind. Here it is, brilliant red against the yellow greens behind it; and photographed in the rain, too, when all the colors were saturated. It was sensuous, luminous, intense as a candle."

A Plea For Parcels

The Cornwall Housing Corporation's "Parcel Program" is looking for more land parcels. Of its nine parcels, six already have homes and three more will have houses within a year. However, more young families are seeking lots for their own homes. The CHC has tentative offers of land from individuals and associations. More are needed.

The Department of Environmental Protection has indicated its willingness to swap some of its accessible and buildable state land with the CHC in exchange for interior parcels that abut existing state forests. Several Cornwall landowners are already making plans for such transfers. Others who have "deep land" that might be transferred to the state in such swaps are urged to get in touch with Ken Keskinen (672-6486).

Kugeman Village, which has a waiting list, continues to make changes to improve the quality of community life. Back "stoops" have been enlarged into decks. Three hundred daffodil bulbs were planted in October. Pine trees, a gift of Bee Simont, will be planted along the road to provide additional screening. More trees are planned for spring planting.

Further information about Kugeman Village or the parcel program is available by calling Anne Baren, Kugeman Village administrator, at 672-4439.

-Ken Keskinen

Welcome

Spencer Hazen Boyum to Alexes Hazen and David Boyum Clifford Edward Oppenheimer to Edward and Colleen Oppenheimer

Good-bye to Friends

Anthony Charlton
Diantha F. Deery
Louis H. Schutte
Jonathan Armstrong Scoville

Congratulations

Charles Melcher to Jessica Brachman

Land Transfers

William H. and Virginia Sullivan to Duncan R. Hannah and Megan Wilson, house and land on Lower River Road for \$164,000.

Craig and Lynn M. Norton to Barrett R. Wiltsie and Shirley Terry, house and land on Kent Road for \$110,000.

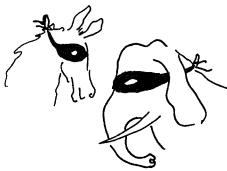
Philip S. Bishop to Frank M. Ferrari, Jr., and Elizabeth Ferrari, house and 4 acres on Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for \$137,000.

Dime Savings Bank of New York to Matthew J. Hladik, house and 5.71 acres at 186 Great Hollow Road for \$110,000.

Coltsfoot Farm Ltd. Partnership to Mary Ann Coll Family Trust, 7 acres on Valley Road for \$105,000.

Audrey Morris Zerbe et al. to Richard K. and Gail H. Dolan, 3 acres on Cherry Hill Road for \$40,000.

Helen Gazagnaire to Lisa Lansing, 2 acres on Pierce Lane for \$7,297.50.



Rocker on the Green

A 12-foot-tall Shaker rocking chair weighing half a ton, the work of Cornwall cabinetmaker Ian Ingersoll, has appeared on the green in Cornwall Bridge. But unlike the steel star placed on the green by its anonymous creator and then stolen by an anonymous thief, the rocker was put in place by its talented creator, who hopes to have it bursting with morning glory vines by next summer. The chair was commissioned as a public sculpture and was on display at the Katonah (NY) Museum of Art this past summer. When the Katonah show closed, Ian decided to "store" the rocker on the green. He said he was undecided whether to leave it there or eventually send it for display at M.I.T.

—John Miller

Calming Choppy Waters

Here's an update on the fisherman-boater controversy over use of Cornwall's section of the Housatonic River. The Connecticut Light and Power Company, operator of the Falls Village dam, has proposed a new water release schedule. It is designed, says CL&P, to protect the interests of the trout and fishermen and to allow boating on the river. The proposal has been sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the agency that licenses dams.

CL&P decided to adopt the Air Water Model recommended by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and backed by both the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) and the local River Commission. The model will be used to keep summertime water temperature at or under 75 degrees. The company will also adopt DEP's recommendations for summer monitoring and for a more flexible release schedule to increase boating opportunities in the fall.

During this year's cool, wet summer, there was plenty of water to release. In fact, some days the dam operators let the river flow unhindered. The boaters liked that, while some fishermen complained about too much water. I can only assume the fish sided with the boaters.

By the way, CL&P has filed a formal notice requesting relicensing of all its facilities on the Housatonic, and people are invited to file public comments with the HVA.



Framing the Moment

Cynthia Fee Matthews, an HVRHS senior, is exhibiting a variety of finely composed photographs at the Cornwall Library. Good art photography is more than just taking pretty pictures. It's assertively seeking the right offbeat moment to put a frame around and turn into an image.

Not just an image of a bather at the base of Kent Falls, but that bather seen through a mat of trees and branches and limbs. Not just the familiar exterior of the Guggenheim, but its ceiling shot from below.

How imaginative to take a series of face shots and to mix them up jigsaw fashion—just to think of it—or to be willing to follow an idea off on a tangent to a new perspective.

—Alfred Bredenberg

Notes of A Wimpy Walker

I'm sitting at my word processor with sore feet and hamstrings. I've caught my breath but my ribs are still on the tender side. It is 9:11 A.M. and I've just come back from a vigorous one-hour walk. There were six of us:

Letters to the Chronicle

NEW PAD FOR PRINCESS

Princess has been moved to the Sharon Audubon Center. Although she has her fans, to some people her over-friendly behavior was a nuisance. With winter approaching, her chances for survival were slim without the protection of other crows; crows huddle together for warmth in the cold. Since Princess had identified herself with humans, she won't be accepted into the crow world.

At the Audubon Center, she occupies the center cage in their main room. We've visited her several times, and been allowed to go into the cage with her. She's got toys to keep her occupied—pencils, a bell, and a stuffed puffin (for company?). At times she is moved to a larger cage outdoors. She will be taken outdoors tethered with leather straps. Apparently they are trying to get her used to the Audubon Center as her home, so that she can be let go to fly around freely, and be able to be called back by a whistle.

Although Princess does appear content there, this is not the best life for a crow. The best would be a life free with her own kind, not best friends with and at the mercy of humans. It was our mistake to take her in and attempt to raise her ourselves—we should have turned her over to professionals immediately upon finding her.

-Annie Kosciusko

PLAIN(S) TRUTHS

The answer to Alden W. Hart's question in his October Chronicle letter, prompted by the quotation Harriet Clark made in her letter about a May 30, 1868 entry in her Aunt Sarah's diary, is that "Plain" and "Plains" are the same place with just one cemetery. That Aunt Sarah in a single sentence referred twice to that place but used two different spellings undoubtedly indicates that the group decorating Civil War graves was there twice that day, and reflects ambivalence about the name of the place.

Alexa Venturini and her dogs Skye and Ghillie, Danielle Mailer and her dog Rosie, and me, leashless. What was he doing there? you might ask. Well, I'd heard that there were groups of Cornwall women who did early morning walks on various roads in town and thought it might lead to a feature for the Chronicle. Danielle had warned me when I called to make a date: "We walk fast." Nevertheless, after a hot shower at 7:15 I showed up at the Mailer-Moschen house near the northern end of Popple Swamp at 7:57 and we were off at 8 sharp. The plan, it was explained, was to walk north to Pierce Lane and then on to where Pierce meets Dibble Hill, and then back. But fast because Alexa had to be back by 9 sharp. The only compromising on this hike would be for the dogs: if they smelled something really great on the side of the road, a pause would be OK. Otherwise it was move along swiftly.

Everything was fine at first. I sort of kept up, thanks to the dogs. And I even felt encouraged as we headed up the last leg of Pierce Lane, but as we hit that 90 degree turn





say, the area that originally was known as "Plain," as our

land records make clear, in later years became known by many as "Plains." But not by everyone: for instance, as a child I knew it as "the Plain," and still tend to call it "Cornwall Plain," as I dare say some others also do.

As Beth Currie once told us in a Memorial Day address, the national practice of decorating veterans' graves began with Civil War dead, in 1868—the year Aunt Sarah described.

-Michael R. Gannett

WHAT BRIAN SAW

Late one recent Sunday afternoon, driving south on Route 4 with my family just after the Route 128 intersection, I saw what I believed to be a coyote in the field to our right just below the Ballyhack. I slowed down, then stopped on the side of the road and backed up a little to get a view unobstructed by some roadside brush.

On closer examination I could see that this animal was bigger, particularly in shoulder breadth, and darker in coloring (dark grey on top) than coyotes I have seen in the area. She was holding Sunday dinner in her mouth, a victim about the size of a turkey or groundhog, and appeared capable of carrying off much larger prey. On reflection I concluded that this was a wolf or coydog cross between a wolf and a coyote.

In an instant the animal turned and looked directly at us, standing in the tall grass with quarry clenched firmly in her jaws, as if posing for a Rousseau portrait. Then she trotted off carelessly toward the woods. The beast, of course, did not utter a word. Had she spoken, I think she would have said: "En garde!"

—Brian Christaldi

something happened to my legs. Even though my chest was pounding, it was my legs that betrayed me. I can't blame it on three hours of tennis the day before. Tennis was easy compared to this. The women and the dogs started to pull away and by the time I reached the top of Pierce Lane they were nowhere in sight.

I had carefully let Danielle know that I was of a certain age (Medicare & Social Security) so she would not think I was just another out-of-shape 30-year-old. No sir, I had a legitimate excuse for lagging seriously behind. Well, I finally made it just about to Lisa Lansing and Doc Simont's house as the women and dogs were coming back, and now it would still be fast but wonderfully downhill. We're zipping along and I ask if their husbands ever join the morning hike. Not often, I'm told. Will Calhoun once in a while and Michael Moschen, ever in superb shape, rarely. "Women," said Danielle, "do it for their hips. Men want something elselike a mountain top with a view." I just

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3) wanted to sit down and have a cup of tea.

Now the question: will I do this again? Oh yes. But the view will be less important than the pitch of the roads. Less steep. And one other thing: I'm just guessing that maybe the Cream Hill walkers like Barb Gold, Celia Senzer, Audrey Ferman, Cindy Robbins, and Pat Thibault do it, like me, more for the view than for their hips. I hope so! —John Miller

Fall, Fair, Fun

There is an easy rhythm to the annual coming and going of the Cornwall Agricultural Fair. Volunteers appear and tents go up, under the direction of Agricultural Advisory Commission organizers Chris Hopkins, Ed Whitcomb, and Priscilla Mauro. Quilters decorate the church sanctuary with a dazzling display. The exhibit tent overflows with flowers, food, and vegetables—Cornwall's best.

So it was for Cornwall's fourth annual Ag Fair on September 21: there was the old equipment hit-and-missing, the grinding of corn and making of feed under the scrutiny of John Welles and Jim Prentice. Dan Cain squeezed apples and handed out freebie juice. Larry and Jason Stevens sawed wood on the portable mill. Exuberant kids buried themselves in the Village Green hay pile. There was basket-making, spinning, cheese-making, candle-making, tree-tapping, and craft displays. Girl Scouts Ellen Hart, Helen Hare, and Sophie Austin sold candy; Boy Scouts sold bat houses; Colin Gold and Freddie Scoville, along with the entire CCS eighth grade class, sold T-shirts designed by Scott Zuckerman to benefit the class-trip fund.

Steve Heaney's Ayrshire cow Cindy made a \$300 deposit on behalf of Andrew Hingson in the cow chip bingo game. She was both quick and accurate. CVFD netted \$1031.

When VFW Post #9856 ran out of hot dogs and hamburgers, Fred Bate asked if there were any unwanted animals in the livestock tent. Not a chance. So they all survived—the Stony Batter goats and Shetland sheep, the Cherry Hill sheep, Amanda Perkins's horses, and Katy Segalla's cows.

In the food tent, judges were enthusiastic about their work. Judge Dean Potter confessed that when he tasted Barbara Farnsworth's French country bread he nearly dropped his score sheet.

Of those six bales of hay the kids played in—about two were left, and four went home in their hair.

—Phil Hart



Girl Scout Tea Party: Cornwall Cadette Girl Scout Troop 126 invites all Cornwall senior citizens to join them for tea on Sunday, November 17 from 3 to 5 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Entertainment will be provided. Contact Julie Cavanaugh (672-0201) by Friday, November 15, if you plan to attend.

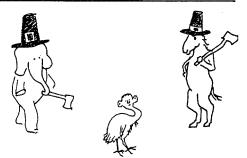
Sculptor Neil Estern will talk about the bronze statues of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt (and FDR's dog Fala) that he is creating as part of the FDR Memorial to be erected on the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C., in May, 1997. Estern's talk (with slides) is sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library, and will be given at the Library at 4 P.M. on Saturday, November 30. Everybody welcome.

Early Childhood Screening continues to be held at CCS each month, offered by Regional School District One. It is open to all three-and four-year-olds. Each child is assessed as to motor skills, language, cognitive skills, and social development. If your child has turned three and you are interested in this service, call Martha Bruehl at 672-2939 to schedule an appointment.

Cornwall Library Book Sale: Indefatigable (volunteer) Friends of the Cornwall Library donated, hauled, sorted, boxed, unboxed, sorted, sold, and then reboxed hundreds of pounds of books for the Columbus Day weekend Book Sale, which made \$1,182.40.

Brecher Lecture: Jeremy Brecher will discuss the impact of the global economy on the environment and the community when he delivers the second annual Donald T. Warner Environmental Lecture on Friday, November 1, at 7:30 P.M. at the HVRHS auditorium. The event is sponsored by the Berkshire Litchfield Environmental Council (BLEC) and the Coalition for Peace and Justice. Jeremy's most recent book is Global Village or Global Pillage.

Cornwall Consolidated's PTA is launching another fruit sale with a variety of oranges, grapefruit, and lemons, plus apples and pears. David Samson, who's in charge of the fund-raising program, said the fruit would be purchased in bulk and then made available here for less than retail prices. Orders will be taken in advance and you can find out all about it by calling David at 672-6797.



Reds, Whites & Champagnes: It's that time of year again—the wine-tasting fund raiser for Cornwall Extras for Kids—to be held on Saturday, November 16, from 5 to 7 P.M., at the Tavern at the Inn, on Route 7 next door to Kugeman Village. There will be some music and a variety of wines and champagne to wash down delicious hors d'oeuvres. The price is \$20 per person.

Pianist and Computer Helpers Needed: The CCS Volunteer Program is looking for a pianist to accompany Glee Club rehearsals on Tuesdays from 12:45 to 1:25 p.m., and for more help in the computer room at varying times. You needn't be Liberace or Gates—basic skills are fine.

Please contact Volunteer Program coordinators Diane Goldstein (672-6405) or Jamie Monagan (672-4815) if you're interested.

Bat Houses from Cornwall Cub Scouts: Pack 15 is selling bat houses as a fund raiser. Looking for a simple holiday gift? Consider a bat house. Bats love to eat those bugs. Call Karen Stevens, 672-3455, to order.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: Due to the increase in enrollment (184 students), this year's parent conferences have been extended for a day. They will take place at CCS on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, November 12, 13, and 14. School will be dismissed at 1 P.M. on those days.

Park & Rec.'s Game Night! Get away from the TV and come play with your friends and neighbors. The gaming will be for all ages at the West Cornwall Firehouse, 7 to 9 P.M. on Thursday, November 14. Seniors and others needing a ride call Deirdre Fischer at 672-2255. Thank you, CVFD!

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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