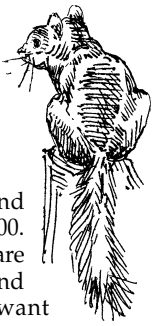


CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 13 : NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 2003



New Principal For CCS

Dr. Kathleen Fitzgibbons, the new principal at Cornwall Consolidated School, has been in the field for 31 years, 21 of them as a principal, and taught every grade level from kindergarten through college. We talked to her while she was still in Bangor, Maine, finishing up an M.A. in divinity.

What are her thoughts about CCS? Well, for starters, she'll visit every class daily, read to every class before Christmas, meet and ride the buses, and get to know every kid in the school. (She's done this in schools with over 700 students, so CCS should be a breeze!) Her job, as she sees it, is to listen to everybody—kids, teachers, and parents—so she can get a good sense of what the school's all about.

Parents will have a chance to meet her, and visit their child's classroom, at the annual Back to School Nights, all held at 6 P.M. at CCS. Wednesday, September 3, is scheduled for grades one through four; Thursday, September 4, for grades five through eight; and Tuesday, September 9, for kindergarten. Cornwall citizens who do not have children at the school can meet Dr. Fitzgibbons on Thursday, September 11, at 7:30 P.M. at Town Hall.

School opened on August 27 with an enrollment of 159 students, down from 172 last year.
—Phyllis Nauts

Real Estate Prices Soar

Have you noticed some very large numbers under "Land Transfers" recently? We took a closer look and can confirm that Cornwall's rugged terrain, clouds of black flies, and isolation no longer suffice to keep us from the rising tide of real estate prices.

An analysis of sales from January 2002 through June 2003 shows a median house price of \$450,000, up from \$351,000 in 2001. This is close to regional housing heavyweights such as Boston (\$416,000) and Westchester (\$570,000), but far below wealthy towns such as Greenwich (\$995,000).

What does \$450,000 get you in Cornwall? The median sale in this period was a 2,500-square-foot antique Italianate on one acre in Cornwall Village. The highest priced sale was \$3,000,000 for a home on eight acres on Cobble Hill (which rises above the intersection of Routes 128 and 125).

Land prices are also increasing, from an average per acre price of \$8,379 in 2001 to \$12,150 in 2002-03. The range here is huge, from \$2,600 an acre for 75 acres on Cream Hill Road (nice land but required an expensive bridge to access) to \$34,000 an acre for a 4.5-acre meadow on Pierce Lane with long views.

Cornwall realtor Nick Bruehl said that the market remains strong and inventory low.


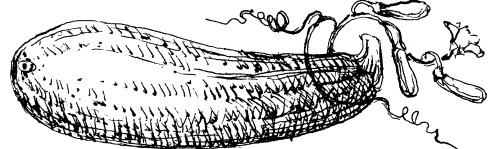
"Prices are going up steadily, and nothing is available under \$200,000. Seventy-five percent of my clients are New Yorkers looking for weekend homes, and of course they all want older homes on quiet roads."

The surge in values has been largely fueled by low mortgage interest rates, which soften the impact of the high prices. Still, housing in Cornwall may now be beyond the reach of many. What are the options if present prices are too much for you? You could go to the successful affordable housing program run by the Cornwall Housing Corporation. The problem is that there is a long waiting list for the rentals in Kugeman Village and the homes in the parcel program. "We're way ahead of other towns in the area, but the need is now greater," said CHC President Maggie Cooley. "And as real estate values rise, we become more dependent on getting new parcels as gifts."

Your other option may simply be to be patient. No one we talked to believes there is such a thing as a real estate bubble in this area. But assessor Barbara Johnson reminded us that you have to go back only to the early 1990s to see a very different market, with falling prices and attractive homes that took forever to sell. It's certainly possible and even likely that the market will again turn down (especially if we spread the word about the

(continued on page 2)

SEPTEMBER 2003

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 LABOR DAY Hammond Beach Closes 7 P.M.	2 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30-8 P.M. UCC Day Room Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	3 Play Group Every Wednesday 10-11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC Parish House Stretch Class Every Wednesday 5:30-6:30 P.M. Town Hall Back to School, 6 P.M. CCS (p.1)	4 Back to School 6 P.M. CCS (p.1)	5 Town Meeting 7:30 P.M. CCS Gym (p.2)	6 Soccer Registration 9-11 A.M. Town Hall (p.4) Child I.D. Program 10 A.M.-2 P.M. Town Hall (p.4) Return of the American Elm 4 P.M. Library M. R. (p.4)
7	8 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library	9 Back to School 6 P.M. CCS (p.1) Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	10	11 Principal's Reception 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.1)	12 Cornwall Association 7:30 P.M. Library M. R. Family Contradance 7-9 P.M. CCS Gym (p.4)	13 Casting Call for Town Hall Players Noon, Library Creating an Accessory Apartment 4 P.M. Library (p.4)
14	15 <i>Deadline: October Chronicle Copy</i> Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library M. R. P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	16	17	18 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	19	20 Motor Vehicle Assessment Appeals 9:30 A.M.-Noon Town Clerk's Office (p.4) Agricultural Fair Noon-4 P.M. (see insert)
21	22 Cornwall Library Annual Meeting, Followed by Trustees Meeting 4:30 P.M. Library	23 AUTUMN BEGINS 	24 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	25	26 ROSH HASHANAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN	27 Welcome to Newcomers 4 P.M. Library M. R. (p.4) Bottle Drive 9-11 A.M. Town Green (p.4)
28	29 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	30				

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

high incidence of crime and Lyme disease). And if all else fails, you can always move to Syracuse, where the median home price remains under \$100,000. —Ed Ferman

Meeting on Spending Proposals

A Town Meeting will be held on Friday, September 5 at 7:30 P.M. in the CCS gym to consider authorization of the following proposals:

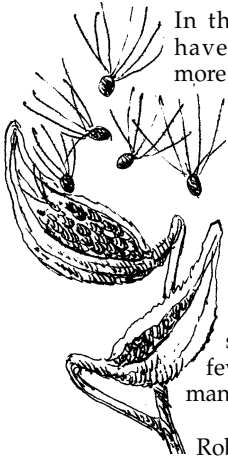
- Spending \$120,000 to purchase two parcels of land, one of them an inaccessible interior parcel, near Foote Fields, to make room for parking and a possible baseball field; grants and a donation will reduce the town's cost to \$30,000.
- Selling the interior parcel to a nearby property owner for \$20,000.

The town has a binder on the purchase of both pieces from relatives of the Foote family. "It's a complicated real estate deal," said First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, "and a detailed explanation will be provided at this important meeting."

Other proposals to be voted on are:

- Selling a half acre of non-buildable land, forfeited for non-payment of taxes, to an abutting land owner.
- Spending \$22,000 (the town's cost to be \$12,000 after a state grant) on an emergency generator for the new wing of CCS.
- Transferring the balance of the unexpended proceeds of the 1989 bond issue, about \$8,000, to the budget for fixing up the Town Hall and the town offices. —Hendon Chubb

Mountain Lions in Cornwall?



In the past month there have been two or three more reported sightings of mountain lions in Cornwall. Wildlife scientists unanimously reject the notion of mountain lions anywhere in Connecticut. But many, many sensible people have reported sightings over the past few years. How can so many people be wrong?

As UConn Professor Robert M. Thorson puts

it, "The case for the presence of these large, tawny, long-tailed cats in Connecticut comes from sane, experienced individuals with little to gain but hope for a wilder world." We all hope for a wilder world; we all want to believe. But reported sightings aren't proof. Think Loch Ness Monster. In areas where there are mountain lions, scientists expect to see mountain lions as road kill, deer carcasses with associated mountain lion DNA, and above all, tracks. But as Professor Thorson points out, last winter "December, January, February, and even March gave us weekly doses of powdery fresh snowfall. Conditions were near-perfect for detecting cougar tracks. Yet none were reported.... With a territorial range of up to 70 square

miles, there should have been millions of claw-free cougar prints in the snow."

The last documented mountain lion in New England was shot in Vermont in 1881. Reports of mountain lions in Cornwall began to circulate ten or at the most 20 years ago. Since the female mountain lion has a range of at least ten square miles and the male 40 or more, and since it would take quite a few lions to maintain a sustainable breeding population, it is reasonable to ask why there haven't been continuing reports over the years. You can't prove there are no mountain lions in Cornwall, but then you can't prove there are no mastodons either. You can never prove that something doesn't exist.

I personally suspect that the skeptics are right, but I still cling to the hope that there are mountain lions here. And last winter I thought I might have a chance to prove it. Early one morning, at the bottom of the meadow that runs north from our house, I saw what could be a large catlike animal just slipping behind a slight rise. I put a coat over my thin clothes, forced boots onto my bare feet and ran in the 20-degree cold to where the tracks would be. Alas, no tracks: there had been a thaw the day before and the snow had crusted over. I'm hoping that someday someone (perhaps even me) will prove that there are mountain lions in Cornwall. But I'm not holding my breath. —Hendon Chubb

Three Hats in The Ring

With the Green Party's nomination of Ken Keskinen in August, there are now three candidates for the two selectmen slots in November's election. Earlier, the Republicans nominated incumbent K. C. Baird, and the Democrats nominated Skip Kosciusko to replace retiring Selectman Earl Brecher. Incumbent First Selectman Gordon Ridgway is unopposed.

Although there are two selectmen on the Board of Selectmen, you can only vote for one candidate. The two top vote-getters will serve with Ridgway on the next Board.

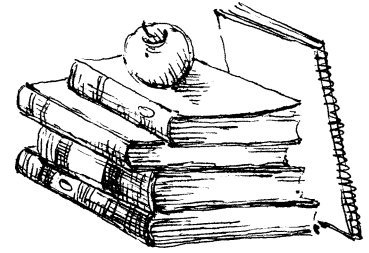
—The Editors

CCS Project Back on Track

With summer 2003 dripping towards being one of the wettest on record, it is ironic that the CCS renovation project got stuck in Hartford over a question of flood management.

In order to get state funding, the project had to pass reviews of fire and building codes, public health, and handicapped access. Then in July the state began questioning whether the parking lot might contribute to flooding on the Housatonic. Although the town had been told in April that this was "not a big deal," the approval process came to a halt until Senator Andrew Roraback intervened and helped get the final approval. In spite of the delay, the project went out to bid in mid-August with bids due August 28, and work should start in early September. The project manager, Casle Corporation, says that in spite of the delay the revised construction schedule is "manageable."

—Gordon Ridgway



Welcome

Madeline Melia Robbins to Luke and Taeryn Robbins
Sarita Gudelia Oyanadel to
Maurice and Sarah Oyanadel

Congratulations

Whitney Townsend Old to Alexander James
Cockburn Scott

Land Transfers

Barbara Cantoni and Bruce Hayden to Donna K. Murphy, house and land at 211 Great Hill Road for \$262,500.

Kathy G. Berkman to Guy M. and Angela J. Ule, house and 3.2 acres at 141 Popple Swamp Road for \$625,000.

Jacqueline Dedell and Ira B. Shapiro to Candyland Farms LLC, Cornwall portion of 246 College Street for \$1,000,000.

Emily S. Buchanan to Frederick H. and Sarah V. Patzman, house and 10 acres at 56 Hall Road for \$585,000.

John E. Forster to Paul T. and Elisabeth Kaestner De Angelis, house and 3 acres at 273 Town Street for \$410,000.

Summer Safari at the Library

Kids went ape over reading this summer at the Cornwall Library's Reading Safari. Reading logs were kept and a raffle ticket awarded for every three books read. Hannah Colbert topped the reading tally with 27 tickets; Arnon Fischer and Isaac Dwyer followed with 11 and ten. Eleven prizes, donated by local merchants, were distributed to lucky winners of the drawing.

Between "Wild Wednesdays" and Friday morning story hours, over 100 Cornwall children participated in the six-week program. Special events featured an African storyteller, the *Magic Tree House* author, drumming with a master drummer, a live animal exhibition, Adinkra block printing on cloth, and Anansi stories presented by the Grumbling Gryphons. Younger children listened to stories about Africa each week and tried various crafts—stringing beads for necklaces, making Kufi hats, weaving paper wall hangings, stamping fabric, and making shakerees (shakers). A potluck African feast with many delicious and unusual dishes was the final event of our Safari. —Amy Buck

Swim Team: Strong Showing

Cornwall swimmers won 18 blue ribbons at the League Championships held in Lakeville on August 6. The team, made up of 42 full-time, part-time, and summer resident children, celebrated its strong showing with a picnic at Cream Hill Lake Association on August 12. Coaches Marina Kotchoubey, Dan Hammond, and Luke Root awarded medals to each child after swim team members and

their parents returned from the annual end-of-the-season swim across the lake.

Under the guidance of Jane Prentice at Hammond Beach and Eileen Rogers at CHLA, the team practiced five times a week in July, alternating between the two beaches. And their practice paid off: the age 11 to 12 mixed medley relay team of Nick Dzenutis, Caroline Kosciusko, Molly Packard, and Kayla Robinson took first place, and individual firsts went to Michael Brunelli, Erica Kavanagh, Liz Kavanagh, Mary Kate Kosciusko, Caroline Kosciusko, Molly Packard, Hilary Rogers, and Sam Van Doren. Alexandra Duffee and Nick Dzenutis were named most improved swimmers.

Any young swimmers interested in joining the team next year should contact Jane Prentice.

—Sally Van Doren

Gordon Tells All

The Cornwall Association held its annual meeting on August 9. About 35 of the 289 members actually showed up that sticky Saturday afternoon, and were treated to Gordon Ridgway's 2nd Annual State of the Town Address, plus several reports about the Association's community efforts.

The first selectman stressed how much more complicated town business is these days. There are more state mandates, fiscal challenges as citizens feel the stresses in the economy, and less volunteering as families find that both parents must work. He also reported on the CCS project, renovation of the stage, and purchase of land next to Foote

Fields (see separate stories). In response to a question, Ridgway said that the selectmen will join Connecticut Attorney General Blumenthal to fight any relaxation of clean air standards (a way of fighting the Hudson Valley cement plant).

Ridgway said that the health of Cream Hill Lake is being monitored by the Torrington Health District and that transportation is available from Geer for doctor and therapy visits.

Jane Giddens-Jones told of the committee to welcome newcomers to Cornwall (see page 4). Steve Senzer reported on the success of the Cornwall web site; Judy Herkimer reported on the Forum on Invasive Species and on the search for a viable community center. Joanne Wojtusiak displayed the new ABC/Directory of Businesses in Cornwall, and Gail Jacobson reported on Art at the Dump.

—Erica Prud'homme

In a Hidden Valley...

For quite a few people, last July's windstorm brought back memories of the tornado of July 11, 1989, when the Cathedral Pines, a grove of ancient pines and hemlocks on the slope to the east of Coltfoot Valley were leveled.

It would be difficult for anyone who never saw the Cathedral Pines to imagine

Letters to the Chronicle

MAYBE SOMEDAY

I live in West Cornwall. At least, I think I do. My mailing address says West Cornwall. My telephone number begins 672. I have lived here since 1967, since the days when you could get a huge ice cream cone at Yutzlers for a nickel. I support the Fire Department; I raise money for the Library. My kids played Little League for Cornwall and swam for the Cornwall Swim Team. And the one time we had a brush fire near my house, it was the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department who responded quickly and in force. Like I said, I live here. And yet, by a curious set of circumstances, I don't live in Cornwall at all. I am on the west side of the river. I live in Sharon. I get no services from Sharon. None. I have no connection with Sharon. I'm sure it is a very nice town, but I never go there. I don't have the occasion. And as for them coming to me, my house would have burned down by the time it took for the Sharon Fire Department to get here. I'm not a political person. I know that my own personal feelings don't amount to much when it comes to things like deciding on political boundaries. And yet it does seem to me that if a person lives in a community, gets mail there and is close enough to know the people and be part of the ongoing life, that should be as important as some arbitrary line on a map. Maybe someday all of us with Cornwall addresses will get to be legally part of Cornwall. Until then, we "on the other side" can only express our gratitude at being so generously accepted into the community.

Ruefully,

—Tom Jones

LET MY PEOPLE GO

George Bernard Shaw pointed out that the United States and Britain are two countries divided by one language. It was an observation easily understood by people who live on the wrong side of the Covered Bridge. Though it marks the border between two towns, Cornwall gets all the benefits in terms of parties, photo-ops and pride. We on the immediate Sharon side of the Housatonic should not complain. We share post offices with you, have the 672 telephone prefix and are protected by the Cornwall Volun-

teer Fire Department and EMS. We are part of greater Cornwall but not Cornwall. Still, we don't exactly enjoy our place on the map. We can socially network as long as we like—we will not have a chance to fully participate, send our kids to that jewel of a school, or apply for membership in the famous Cream Hill Lake Club. Meanwhile, we will haul our trash up to 30 miles round-trip to Salisbury, will slide up and down our steep hills in winters (the last to be plowed). Logic would dictate that we—the outcasts, the forgotten few—would come together to talk about redrawing the border, joining Cornwall in its pursuit of happiness and plead with Robert Moeller, "Let my people go."

The only thing we should know before we start is, would Cornwall's generous populace actually take us in? Will you help us?

—Juergen Kaltwa

CORNWALL—THE NON-CALIFORNIA

I was surprised that incumbents to four of the town's highest offices including first selectman received co-endorsements from the two major parties. Have the fortunate candidates received telegrams of solidarity from Kim Jong Il and Fidel? If no one is so ill-mannered as to cast a write-in vote, the candidates can honestly boast that they received the same percentage of votes cast as Saddam Hussein in his last election.

—Jim Fishman

WE NEED HELP

We are looking for a building to make into an art center to help get kids into programs so they aren't bored and lying around. Please help us! We are looking for something to rent or to use for free. There will be classes such as a Lego club and many other things. Please help us! There will be parents in the classes if we find a building. Please help: contact me at 672-0178 or 672- 2975.

—Zach Sawicki

how overwhelming they were. One of the pines was a good ten feet taller than any pine known in New England today.

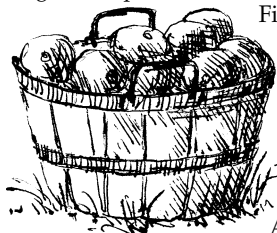
The Calhoun family had given the grove to the Nature Conservancy to protect it from destruction by humans, but nothing could protect it from the anger of the tornado. Even 14 years later, the former Cathedral Pines are mostly just a tangle of huge fallen tree trunks with young hardwoods pushing up in the gaps.

But if you go in at the badly-marked entrance on Essex Hill Road and take the blue-blazed path that leads to the right, you will pass over a ridge and go down into a small

valley. And there before you, you will see two surviving giants of the former Cathedral Pines. Each is almost 12 feet around, measured four feet above the ground. They are more than 100 feet high, perhaps a lot more. On the slope a little to the north are several other trees almost as large. They survived in this valley because the ridge above broke the force of the wind.

Seek out this hidden valley. If you knew the Cathedral Pines in their glory, it will bring back memories. And whether or not you knew them then, the trees that have survived will fill you with awe.

—Hendon Chubb



Acting, Anyone?

The call is out for everyone interested in getting involved in Cornwall's new theatrical group, the Town Hall Players. Its first production, of three one-act plays, is scheduled for November 7 and 8, and casting call for the plays is September 13, noon, at the Library.

Where will these plays be put on, you ask? Those of us who are old enough remember the old Town Hall stage (yours truly did a cancan there in her teens), and I'm glad to report that it is being restored to its former glory. The town has set aside enough money to restore the stage and buy a curtain, and is getting estimates on lighting and rewiring costs. Teviot Fairservis generously donated a Berkey Colortran lighting system. If you want to act, or help with costumes, props, lighting, or publicity, please call Molly Hinchman (672-6229) or Fred Thaler (672-0052), the co-chairs of the new group. —Phyllis Nauts

"Pictures" and More

The Cornwall Historical Society has received a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History for its publication of *Cornwall in Pictures*.

John Demos, American history professor at Yale, in supporting the CHS application, described the book as an "absolutely stunning work of local history...that evokes 'place' to a quite unique degree of depth and beauty."

Jeremy Brecher, Joe Freedman, Alec Frost, Michael R. Gannett, Jim Gold, Charles Osborne, Jeff Zaslow, and Maureen Prentice all had a hand in producing the book.

Two additional items of good news for the CHS: The Connecticut Humanities Council, (which provided CHS with a grant for CIP) has recently approved a new grant (\$4,502) to fund a strategic planning project. The months-long process is now underway; it will identify the community's perceptions and expectations of CHS, evaluate the building and its collection, and examine the organizational structure. The outcome will be a plan for CHS which will maintain the momentum created by CIP.

And, The Rose Algrant Art Show honored CHS as the recipient of its 2003 award, which this year came to \$2,500. —The Editors

Autumn Breezes

It's been a slow summer for donations, no doubt because the humidity has made us all a bit torpid. Can we help energize you with these words from John Updike?

"The breezes taste / Of apple peel, / The air is full / of smells to feel. /

Ripe fruit, old footballs, / Burning brush, / New books, erasers, / Chalk, and such."

To your checkbooks!



Events & Announcements

Accessory Apartments: the Cornwall Housing Corporation is sponsoring a talk on Saturday, September 13 at 4 P.M., at the Cornwall Free Library by city planner Patrick Hare on the benefits and challenges of installing an accessory apartment in your home. Accessory apartments provide benefits to homeowners and add to the stock of affordable housing in town.

Child Identification Program: Saturday, September 6, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the Town Hall, sponsored by the Freemasons, the Connecticut Dental Association, and the state police. They will take pictures, DNA, dental impressions, and fingerprints.

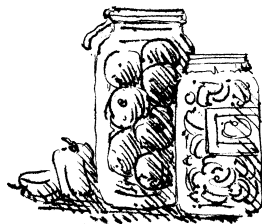
Elm Watch: At the Friends of the Library Annual Meeting on Saturday, September 6 at 4 P.M., photographer Tom Zetterstrom will give a talk and slide presentation on "The Return of the American Elm: Its Decline and Renaissance in the New England Townscape." The event is free and all are welcome.

Seeking a Grant? You can search on-line for foundations, charitable trusts, and other grant makers. Amy Cady at the Cornwall Free Library will show you how to use the new on-line search program.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will meet in the Town Clerk's Office from 9:30 A.M. to noon on Saturday, September 20 to hear appeals on motor vehicle assessments.

A Correction: Justine Ingersoll graduated from Loomis-Chaffee, not Miss Porter's as we reported in our July issue.

Welcome Newcomers: The Cornwall Association is holding a reception for new residents in Cornwall to explore and share with old timers some of the joys and issues of living in Cornwall. Saturday, September 27 from 4 to 6 P.M. at the Cornwall Library.



Bottle Drive: On Saturday, September 27 from 9 to 11 A.M., Den 4 of the Cornwall Cub Scouts will be holding a bottle and can drive on the Town Green. Support the Cubs by bringing them your returnables.

Final Soccer Registration will be Saturday, September 6 from 9 to 11 A.M. at the Town Hall. Cost is \$30 per child or \$45 per family.

A Family Contradance sponsored by Park and Rec. will be held on Friday, September 12 from 7 to 9 P.M. in the CCS gym. Music by Heart's Ease, refreshments. Free.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Arts Collection, there will be an opening on September 13, from 5 to 7 P.M., of a show featuring photographs of flowers by Charles Hodgman and paintings of colonial Mexico by Charles Towhill.

At the Cornwall Library, Tom Zetterstrom will be exhibiting his expressive photographs of trees during the month of September. In the glass case Ted Heinz's collection of minerals of Connecticut and the Northeast will be on view during September and October.

At the National Iron Bank, Harry Colley will be exhibiting landscape photographs during the month of September.

At the Cornwall Historical Society, there is a show of works by Angeline and Larry Pool. The exhibit will run through September 20. Hours: Wednesday, 1 to 3 P.M., Saturday, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.

The Cornwall Free Library Book Sale will be held on October 11 and 12. If you have books in good condition to donate to the sale, bring them to the Library. Anyone interested in helping out for the sale can call Norma Lake at 672-6228.

Absentee Ballot Applications are now available at the Town Clerk's office to eligible voters who want to vote in the municipal election held November 4, but can't make it to the polls. Ballots for the election will be available October 3.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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Phyllis Nauts and Hendon Chubb, Editors
Edward and Audrey Ferman, Publishers

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