Library Summit
In a special meeting on December 3 the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Trustees of the Cornwall Library Association will address the need for more space for both the Library and town offices. The meeting follows from the Library trustees’ expressed preference for staying in their present building, and will consider the feasibility of on-site renovation and expansion. No doubt other options will be brought up, such as a move to Monroe Bodkin, the former Marvelwood library/classroom building (see Letters, p.3). The meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. in the CCS gym, and is open to the public.

—George Kittle

Wolves, Coyotes, Coydogs
It’s a lovely thought, and an easy mistake, but sorry folks, those wolf and coydog sightings around town are most likely coyote sightings.

I’ve just gotten off the phone with Scott Smith, a wildlife biologist (and coyote expert) for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and he filled me in.

First of all, coydogs haven’t been around this area since the mid-’70s, when female coyotes started expanding their range and wound up here without any males in tow. Having no choice among their own species, they mated with male domestic dogs, producing what were called coydog pups. Soon enough, however, male coyotes arrived and, given a choice, coyotes mate only with their own kind. The few coydogs that were produced didn’t survive well, as, interestingly, they were born with domestic dog reproductive systems, causing them to bear pups during winter months. Most of these coydog pups were unable to survive the cold.

A wolf sighting would be just as unlikely as a coydog, according to Smith. The nearest wolves are in Ontario, Canada, and Minnesota. Although there is talk of reintroducing them to the Adirondacks, wolves aren’t expanding their natural territory southward. In any case, they would not easily survive in an area like Cornwall because they are not resourceful in dealing with humans, whereas coyotes adapt well to populated areas.

To the eye, at least as far as coloring goes, a mistake between the two species might be easy to make. Both vary from red to gray to all black. The similarity ends there, however. Coyotes generally weigh 35-40 pounds (though Smith has seen one weighing 50 pounds), whereas wolves weigh in on the average at 100 pounds. Coyotes also keep their tails down when running. Wolves hold them straight out.

In sum, when in doubt, think coyote.

—April Stevens

Gravel Mining: Stay Tuned

"Why are we here?" asked Leonard Blum, attorney for songwriter James Taylor and Kent Road resident Peter Stiglin. His question was not rhetorical; he referred to a renewal of FSB Associates’ efforts to obtain Planning & Zoning sanction for mining gravel on the Strobel property along Kent Road in Cornwall Bridge.

Many of those at the November 12 public hearing also wondered why the mining issue has surfaced again. As they saw it, the matter had already been settled.

In June, the commission rejected an application from FSB, partly because it felt the application lacked wording requiring a fairly tight FSB mine operation, with strict time limits and oversight provisions. Also a factor was a barrage of voluminous and eloquent objections to the project from neighbors along Kent Road. These ranged from warnings about traffic dangers—heavily laden trucks entering Kent Road—to health concerns (airborne dust), to worries about falling property values. Following rejection of the

DECEMBER 1996

(continued on page 2)
application, the Strobes filed an appeal from Lithfield Superior Court.

Many of the same people who had been on hand in June were prepared once again to air their objections. They were present in November because the Strobes, seeking a possible settlement, had brought forward a document, called a "stipulation for judgment," amending the original application. The document offered a compromise: P&Z would accept the stipulation, which stated many of the terms and conditions deemed absent from the original application. P&Z would end its legal action, and mining would proceed.

When the commission had dutifully listened one more time to objections to any mining on the FSB site from the many in opposition—and to two in favor—it heard from attorney Blum. Assailing the stipulation, which he said "changed nothing in the application," he dropped his bombshell: if the commission voted to accept the stipulation, he would file a petition to join the legal action as an "intervenor," representing not only Taylor and Stiglin, but a number of other Strobel neighbors.

A stipulation only works if all the parties agree to it. By intervening (with court approval), Blum would create a whole new party emphatically not in agreement—one, moreover, that might initiate brand-new litigation.

After discussion, the commission saw this pretty clearly. Obviously, accepting the stipulation would not have the desired effect:

"Intervenor," he dropped his bombshell: if the commission voted to accept the stipulation, he would file a petition to join the legal action as an "intervenor," representing not only Taylor and Stiglin, but a number of other Strobel neighbors.

A stipulation only works if all the parties agree to it. By intervening (with court approval), Blum would create a whole new party emphatically not in agreement—one, moreover, that might initiate brand-new litigation.

After discussion, the commission saw this pretty clearly. Obviously, accepting the stipulation would not have the desired effect: settlement of the legal action. A motion to reject the stipulation, duly seconded, was unanimously carried, and the latest episode in the mining story came to a close. It may have been significant that the whole proceeding—hearing, discussion, and vote—took a mere two-and-a-quarter hours. But the larger drama may be far from over.

—Charles Osborne

MacMillan, the source of the trouble was a tripped circuit breaker that prevented water from being pumped into the boiler, causing it to superheat. Why a low-water safety switch failed to operate is still a question, but the automatic smoke alarms certainly prevented much greater damage.

Very early on October 30 at 199 Cream Hill Road in the home of the Haddons family, a chimney fire swept into an internal wall by way of an old wood-stove port. In this case, too, Chief David Williamson was first on the scene (it was, as it turned out, the house his mother was born in), and he summoned Goshen and Falls Village. In what is being called "a good save," damage from fire and water was kept remarkably low, especially since smoke alarms weren't in operation.

State regulations, in place since 1994, specify smoke alarms (hard-wired to electrical power with battery backups) on each floor and in each bedroom of all new constructions and renovations. For those of us with simple battery-powered alarms, the lesson seems clear enough: make sure your smoke alarms work by replacing batteries every year. Those whose homes are without any alarms should call Fire Marshal MacMillan (364-5758) for advice.

—Sandy Neubauer

More Mean Than Median

Cornwall gets little state aid because its median mean income is very high, despite the fact that its median income is quite low. The mean is the average income, calculated by dividing the total income received by all residents by the number of residents. The median is the midpoint—that is, the income level that half of all households receive less than, and the other half more.

On a mean basis, Cornwall ranks extremely high. It is the 13th wealthiest town in the state. In the Northwest Corner, only Salisbury and Sharon rank higher. However, the picture for median household income is sharply different. On this score, Cornwall ranked 134th out of 169 towns in the state, putting it in the lowest 25 percent of all Connecticut towns.

Cornwall's high mean income figure is largely due to the presence here of some very high-income households. The low median figure reflects the fact that at least half of all residents have quite modest incomes.

This sharp mean/median difference creates problems for our town. This is because the state's school-aid formula—like most other state-aid formulas—is based on mean, not median income. Thus, the aid formula treats a town like ours as if every resident were wealthy.

A measure of the way the aid formulas work to Cornwall's disadvantage can be seen in the 1995 figures for state aid per capita. Cornwall, despite ranking 134th in median income, close to North Canaan's 149th rank, got only $252 per person compared to North Canaan's $782. The difference stems from the fact that North Canaan ranked low on mean as well as median income.

—David A Grossman

Welcome

Matthew Thomas to Peter and Peggy Allen

Good-bye to a Friend

Richard Ulrich

Congratulations

Susan Vita to Robert Benedict
Michele Kelley to Nigel Lauver

Forum on Town Plan

As part of the process of updating the Town Plan as required by state law, the Planning and Zoning Commission is holding a townwide forum on Tuesday, December 5, at 7:30 p.m. at the Cornwall Consolidated School.

Following a brief presentation of the planning process and its objectives, forum participants will break into small groups to generate ideas for the revised Town Plan. They will consider such questions as the following: What kind of community do we want for ourselves and our children? How can we best use our land and resources? What procedures and regulations will be needed to help us achieve our goals?

The entire group will then reconvene to share ideas and to consider possible priorities for implementation. These ideas, along with background research and recommendations from other group meetings, will then be reviewed by the commission as it revises the Town Plan. The plan will be presented to the town for approval (or for further revision) at a hearing.

The Town Plan for Conservation and Development will set the direction for decisions and actions that will affect our future. The commission urges all to take part in its planning sessions. For more information on times and places of meetings, please call P&Z clerk Maggie Cooley at 672-4957.

—William Lyon, Chairman

Smoke Signals

Two fires were extinguished in Cornwall in recent weeks, both incidents pointing up the importance of correctly installed smoke detectors.

At 2 a.m. on Saturday morning, November 16, a smoke alarm at the Cornwall Consolidated School alerted Fire Chief David Williamson, who was promptly on the scene directing Cornwall volunteers as well as mutual-aid forces from Goshen and Falls Village. The fire was limited to the steam boiler, and smoke damage was confined to the basement. According to Fire Marshal Stanley
How We Voted
Although we still had the highest voter turn¬
out in the Northwest Corner, almost ten per¬
cent fewer Cornwall voters went to the polls in
November than in 1992, the last Presi¬
dential election year.

On Election Day we had 991 registered
voters, of whom 730 voted in person and an¬
other 105 by absentee ballot, bringing the to¬
tal to 835, or 84.3 percent. In 1992 the figure
was 93.85 percent, the highest since we be¬
gan keeping track about 25 years ago.

All the winners, including President
Clinton, carried Cornwall except Republican
Rep. Nancy Johnson, who won an eighth
term in the Sixth Congressional District by a
hair but lost here to Democrat Charlotte
Koskoff, 392 to 378. Koskoff won two other
towns in the Northwest Corner: Falls Village
(by one vote) and Norfolk.

President Clinton defeated Bob Dole in all
eight towns by 49.1 percent to 36.4 percent.

It was about the same in Cornwall: Clinton
with 49.2 percent to Dole's 32.4 percent. Ross
Perot got 9.9 percent of the vote in the seven
towns with a flat 10 percent here. Ralph
Nader got only 3.6 percent of the area total
but 7 percent in Cornwall.

In the race for the 56th Senate District,
Republican incumbent Del Eads easily won an¬
other term in her race with Democrat Harold
Hansen, but Hansen did better in Cornwall
than in other towns. Overall, Hansen won
only 40 percent of the vote, but got 47 percent
in Cornwall.

In their third contest for the 64th House
District, Republican incumbent Andrew
Roraback handily defeated Democrat Mary
Ann O'Sullivan. In their two previous races
O'Sullivan easily carried Cornwall, but this
time she lost to Roraback 455 to 339.

The totals for Registrar of Voters were 425
for Democrat Jayne Ridgway and 334 for Re¬
publican Lisa Cruse. Both were elected.

—John Miller

[Editors' note: Because a line was inadvertently
dropped, last month's pre-election story made it
appear that Nancy Johnson and Charlotte Koskoff
were running for State Senate, not for Congress,
and omitted the names of the real State Senate
candidates, Del Eads and
Harold Hansen. Our apologies to the can¬
didates—and to our readers.]

Letters to the Chronicle

TO OUR AMBULANCE SQUAD
On October 27, a beautiful sun-filled Indian
summer day, a friend and I went for a hike in the
Mohawk State Forest near my home. I go often
to the woods, and often alone, to find peace and
comfort.

Today, within minutes of an insect sting, I
was collapsed on the leaf-littered forest floor, my
blood pressure falling, unable to help myself,
trying to stay conscious. I am an RN. I knew
this was anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction,
but I could not believe this was happening, not
to me. I heard my voice, far away, telling my
friend to go, run, call 911. Tell him I need epi¬
nephrine, please, please...

Then I waited, alone. At times my eyes
opened to deeply blue sky, bright sunlight on the
few pale leaves clinging to branches high over¬
head. Each breath became an effort. A sick sweat
crawled on my face while an endless tape played
over and over in my brain, "Please get here, just
get here, get here."

Then I heard your sirens in the distance.
I heard your running feet on the dry leaves as you
rushed to help me. I felt the rush of the life-saving
epinephrine injection, heard the hiss of the oxy¬
gen mask.

And I heard your voices, some of neighbors,
some of friends. I heard your concern, felt your
care and your hands as you worked together to
lift and carry me to the ambulance. You knew
what to do. Today I was not alone. You got here.
I am a nurse. I work often, as you do, helping
others in crisis. Now I know why we do what we
do. Now I know there is no way I can thank you
for being there, for giving your time, your train¬
ning, for your care.

I can just thank you. Thank you.

—Evelyn Gelerter

THE BEAR FACTS
We on Cream Hill are accustomed to large
black critters at the roadside, but early one
evening we had a surprise encounter near the
intersection of 125 and 128 across from Pete
Hayward's hill.

Hugging a tall pine was a bear cub in what
appeared to be his "teen years." He seemed al¬
much more than we could bear; however,
Yellowstone memories kept us in check.
We remained seated, in awe, as he turned and
ambled up the hill, most likely in the direction
of his mother.

My cubs and I headed home.

—Lisa Cruse

MINT-FLAVORED TENNIS BALLS*
Though stacks of Xmas catalogues,
Forsyth, they make your mind down-bog.
Give thanks to dear old L. L. Bean
For a cheery gift that's sweet and clean.
Its for your dog on tennis court
To make him winner at this sport;
No other gift your dog enthralls,
Like six mint-flavored tennis balls.

—Larry Pool

*From the L. L. Bean Christmas catalogue, p.181.
Events & Announcements

Welcome to the 'Net: The Friends of the Cornwall Library will sponsor a series of courses introducing users to the fascinating intricacies of the Library's new computer system. Expert Al Bredenberg will be among the instructors who will guide beginners and intermediates in the use of Windows '95, in using CD-ROMs for research, and, of course, in the art of cruising the Internet. Sign-up sheets and a complete book are available at the Library. "Let us know what you want to know about the computer and we'll do our best to provide it," says Friends Board President Lisa Lansing.

Bears, Bears, Bears: Should you be afraid of them? What should you do if you meet one? What are their behavior patterns? Find out when Bob Kilham, expert on the New England black bear, gives a talk at the Cornwall Conservation Trust's annual meeting at CCS on Sunday, December 8, at 3 P.M.

Winter Rules: Remember to park your cars at least six feet from the edge of town roads, so the crew can plow. In effect through March.

The Kent Singers will set the holiday mood with two Christmas concerts: on Saturday, December 7, at 7 P.M. in St. Joseph's Chapel of the Kent School; and Sunday, December 8, at 3 P.M. in the First Congregational Church on the Green in Washington. There are six Cornwall singers in the group: Susan Fox, Honora Horan, Lisa Lansing, Marie Prentice, Ann Schillinger, and Julia Scott. For the concerts, Music Director Susan Lloyd Wiles has chosen music by Bach, Britten, and Finzi, as well as carols. The chorus and soloists will be accompanied by a small string orchestra with harp and percussion. Tickets are $10 in advance (call 672-6261) or $12 at the door. Children under 15 are free when accompanied by an adult.

Habitat Auction $$$

Approximately $25,000 was raised at the Habitat for Humanity auction held in Kent on November 2. Among artists who contributed their work were seven Cornwallians who decorated wooden frames that were sold at the event. The artists were Tim Prentice, Don Bracken, David Colbert, Michael Gellatly, Peter Busby, Kate Freygang, and Whoopi Goldberg. The money will benefit two local chapters of Habitat for Humanity.

—Barbara Klaw

Caroling and tree lighting with the Salisbury Brass and Hot Chocolate Society will take place on Sunday, December 15, at 5 P.M. in front of the Town Hall. Refreshments will be served. Dress warmly.

Aerobic classes are now being added to the list of PTA-sponsored adult classes held at CCS. They will meet Mondays and Thursdays, 6-7 P.M. The cost: $50 for ten classes, drop-ins $6, first class free. For registration and information call Elise Meneshian, 672-6001. Meanwhile, Martha Cheo's highly successful Tai Chi Chuan classes are meeting this year on Wednesday evenings from January 1 until March 15. They cost $35 per month (first class free). Call Martha at (914) 677-0304.

Fruit Sale: The PTA is expanding its annual citrus sale to include other fruits and nuts. A 15-pound box might contain tangerines, clementines, navel oranges, pink grapefruit, pears, apples, and grapes. As in the past the money raised will be used to further the PTA's goal of a new CCS gymnasium, specifically for feasibility studies, a building plan, and seed money for fund-raising. Orders must be received by December 9. Delivery date is December 16. Call David Samson at 672-6797.

A Christmas treat for the family will be offered by the Friends of the Cornwall Library on December 27 when Tom Walker repeats his popular candlelight reading at 4:30 P.M. at the North Cornwall Church. This year Tom will read "The Wild Wood" and "A Visit to Mr. Badger," from Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows. Tom is a 30-year veteran of the Living Theater. The reading is free and all comers are welcome to share the warmth of the season in this old-fashioned way.

Christmas Pageant: The annual community Christmas Pageant will take place at UCC on Saturday, December 21, at 7:30 P.M. All are invited. Refreshments afterwards at the Parish House.