Profiling the Town
About 120 high-energy citizens gathered at CCS on November 5 and 6 for a pot-luck dinner and a focused conversation about Cornwall in the 21st century. The premise of this exercise, sponsored by the Cornwall Association, was that like death and taxes, change in our Northwest Corner is a certainty beyond our control. But we can and should be selective of the shape and direction of change for ourselves and for those who will follow us. As Patrick Henry might have said if he had thought of it, “If this be change, make the most of it.” Pro-active rather than re-active.

The experienced leadership for this two-day examination of future town possibilities was the Antioch New England Institute which has provided similar services in this field to some 20 other New England towns.

Skeptics as well as enthusiasts were on hand for the two-day sessions to voice their concerns. Would this venture result in just one more committee in an over-committed world, or would some sustainable good things evolve from it? Would this forum result in second-guessing our elected boards and officials, or would it expand the base of volunteers contributing their time and enthusiasm to our town’s many activities? Would it turn out to be overly divisive or the opposite, encouraging more citizen interaction?

The general activity outline laid out by Antioch was first to “blue sky” a lot of generalized wish lists in full assembly, then to refine them in small group sessions into five specific goals in given areas—goals which were thought to be both important and attainable. The next step would be to further reduce these lists to a final five issues as voted on by the entire group. The wrap-up would be to form action groups that would commit themselves to pursuing these issues and goals on an agreed-upon time schedule. All five action groups welcome volunteers, who should call: 1) Cornwall Economic Development, Joanne Wojtusiak, 672-6646 2) Farm, Forest, and Open Space, Alicia North, 672-6845 3) Cornwall Web Site (see page 3), Ella Clark, 672-4817 4) Community Center, Nick Jacobs, 672-6574 5) Cornwall Volunteer Council, Bee Simon, 672-6144.

It was impressive to note that of the original 120 interested citizens at least 60 hung in for the fish-or-cut-bait finale. It was also noted that some of these action-committed survivors on Saturday had been among the skeptics on the day before.

Although there were many votes taken along the way as the sessions worked their way towards conclusion, no vote was necessary on three issues: 1) Appreciation for the prodigious amount of work put in by Will Calhoun and the Cornwall Association to make this event happen; 2) Gratitude for the food provided gratis by eleven Cornwall farms and area businesses to feed the participants on Saturday; and 3) Recognition of the Cornwall Chronicle as our number one source of town news and views. Standing ovations on these three precluded orderly parliamentary procedure.

Will this Community Profiling have legs here in Cornwall? There are many citizens who hope so.

—Searville D. Soule

Big Rig
Thanks to citizen generosity, plus funds from the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) coffers, there’s a new set of wheels in Cornwall. It’s big and red, and can make it up and down our steep hills in response to fire and motor vehicle accident emergencies much faster than the old truck it replaces.

After more than two and a half years of research, a team of firefighters from CVFD settled on a 2000 model year Navistar equipped with a 370 HP diesel ($206,000 for the truck alone, with no equipment or hose) (continued on page 2)
(continued from page 1)


Elections '99

When many of the top town offices were uncontested this year, 385 of Cornwall's 933 registered voters went to the polls on November 2 and produced a tie in one of the few contests on the ballot. Republican Richard Lynn won a seat on Planning and Zoning with 206 votes, but Democrat Chris Hopkins and Republican Jim Gold ended up with 165 votes each for the second open seat on P&Z.

So, three weeks later on November 23, voters had six from six in the morning until eight at night to decide between Gold and Hopkins. The winner was Chris Hopkins 165 to 77.

The special election cost approximately $1,000, mostly for the salaries of a full staff of officials mandated by the state. We had to use two Litchfield machines because ours were locked (another state mandate) in the aftermath of the November 18 referendum on the Region One bond increase. Voting machines must be locked for a two-week period after their use.

Three open seats on the Board of Education had three candidates from each party and the winners were Democratic incumbents Jim Terrall and Catherine Tagte and Republican Scoville Soule.

Uncontested winners were First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, Selectmen Earl Brecher and Jack Preston, Town Clerk Cheryl Evans, Town Treasurer Hendon Chubb, and Tax Collector Helen Migliacci.

Also unopposed were Ralph Gold and K. C. Baird for Board of Finance, Sally Hart and David Grossman as alternates for Board of Finance, Richard Bramley and Roger Kane for Board of Assessment Appeals, Hunt Williams and Joanne Wojtasik for Zoning Board of Appeals, and Valerie Hurlburt, Brian Kavanagh, Carla Bigelow, Deirdre Fischer, and Julieann Russ for Park and Rec.

The moderator for the election was Ginny Potter, who provided three pairs of drugstore magnifying eye glasses from the Library for the forgetful among us who might have left our reading glasses at home. Thanks, Ginny.

—John Miller

Ready for Y2K

“If you’re truly prepared for a Cornwall winter, you’re truly prepared for Y2K.”

That, in a nutshell, is First Selectman Gordon Ridgway’s advice to those who may be concerned about the arrival of the new millennium. Crack that nut and you find the expected advice: Have some emergency food on hand, as well as an alternative source of heat. Check radios and flashlights. Have your car serviced and snow tires mounted. Fill the tank. Be prepared for power outages.

For more than a year, both town office and school have been doing everything possible to make sure that all operating systems are Y2K compliant: heat, telephone, water...whatever. School Principal Bill Oros agrees that Cornwall will be in fine shape come December 31. At the request of the State Police, a skeleton crew of sober stalwarts will man the West Cornwall Firehouse during the witching hours to handle any emergencies that might arise. —Bob Potter

Welcome

Lillian Mabry Rogers Horan to Julie Begin and Daniel Horan
Elizabeth Chrisra to Christine and Stephen Sander
Hailey Morgan to David and Dorothy Sprowles
Paul Elliott to Cyndi and Peter Van Doren
Eleanor Esther Zuckerman to Alice Gottesman and Laurence Zuckerman

Good-bye to Friends

Eugene Beeman
Calvin Dodd MacCracken

Land Transfers

Thomas J. Hubbard to Cornwall Limited Liability Co., Lot 4, house and 1.18 acres on Jewell and Pine Streets for $550,000.

Cornwall Limited Liability Co. to Thomas J. Hubbard, Lot 2, building and 1.88 acres on Pine Street for $550,000.

Roger Jackson to Donald C. Clarke, Jr., and Virginia L. Gray-Clarke, house and land at 5 Applewood Lane for $390,000.

Gertrude C. Tripp to Frederick P. and Fay A. O'Brien, house and land at 28 Bunker Hill Road for $178,500.

Beneficial Mfg. Co. to Verne Henshall, house and land at 7 Tarradiddle Lane for $126,000.

Cornwall Properties Inc. to Constance D. and Jonathan W. Old III, Lot 2, 18.61 acres with barn on Jewell Street for $310,000.

Teachers, Town Sign Contract

CCS teacher compensation—by far the town’s largest single expense item—was settled October 21, with the ratification by the school Faculty Association and the Board of Education of an agreement that will increase the town’s teacher-salary line item by four percent in each of the next three years. This does not mean, however, that all teachers—or any single teacher—will be getting a four percent raise every year. Junior teachers who are moving up the 13-step pay scale will get automatic increments that will absorb most of the annual four percent overall increase during the first two years of the contract. Not until the third and final year will most of the new money go for across-the-board increases for teachers. In addition, the teachers for the first time will share the cost of their health insurance, paying three percent of the premium the first year, seven percent the second, and eight percent the third.

Under the present contract, the typical beginning teacher starts at $26,941 and reaches the top of the scale at $52,961 after 12 years of service.

—Bob Potter
Letters to the Chronicle

FOREST BESIEGED
Speaking on behalf of the Dark Entry Forest (DEF) Association, I regret deeply that we have been forced to post "No Trespassing At Any Time" signs at all entrances into the forest, and to ask the town to prohibit parking on roads that give access to DEF property.

As responsible owners of this preserve, we feel we must curb the increasing numbers of thrill seekers who intrude into our forest, especially on weekends and late at night. They have camped, lit fires, littered, and vandalized houses. We are grateful to the Town, the State police, and Department of Environmental Protection agents for helping us to address this problem. We hope eventually to allow residents of Cornwall to bike in and enjoy our forest as they have in the past, and we ask your help in achieving this goal.

On Halloween eve, more than 100 carloads of people, many of them teenagers from distant towns, with cases of beer and camping equipment, were turned away at the Dark Entry and Dudleytown Road entrances. A final note: the next day, at the top of Bald Mountain Road, DEF agents issued eleven citations at $77 each.
—Jean Leich on behalf of DEF directors

HAT IN HAND
During Cornwall's 7th consecutive Agricultural Fair, a letter I signed was circulated explaining the prospects for the Community Profile to be held on November 5 and 6. I mistakenly included Lib Tomin Terrill's name on the Steering Committee. For this oversight, born of my enthusiasm and not of malice, I sincerely apologize.
—Will Calhoun

THANK YOU, CVFD
On October 26, the barn that's been in our family for over 50 years burned down. Only three families have owned this property since it was built in the mid-18th century: the Johnsons, for whom our road was named, the McCreerys, and now us. Family memorabilia stored in the barn so the house can be renovated are gone.

It might have been far worse. If Jean Kears, our neighbor, hadn't smelled smoke and called 911, and if the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department hadn't come so quickly, we'd have lost the house as well. A strong wind was blowing, and the grass was on fire ten feet away.

I wish I could list everybody who helped us that day. Let me just say that Connie Hadden ran the show with amazing calm and efficiency, and that Stan MacMillan, the Fire marshal, put a jacket around my shoulders when he saw how cold I was.

Fires are ghastly. But having so many friends rush to help makes me realize, yet again, how lucky we are to live in Cornwall.
—Phyllis Naults

SCOUTS IN THE RAIN FOREST
Who would have thought that living in Cornwall would get you to sleep in the Rain Forest? Several weeks ago, I was lying down, listening to songs of birds and insects, distant thunder and other strange sounds echoing over our encampment. But there were no mosquitoes or gnats hovering around. And when I unplugged the sound system, the night was suddenly quiet.

In fact, what I was experiencing with twelve cub scouts and seven other parents was a wonderful overnight camp at the Boston Science Museum. Our two-day adventure was made possible by the generous contributions from friends and neighbors who had their cars washed at the Agricultural Fair. We learned about thunder and electricity, and we played with solar-powered cars. The Cornwall Cub Scout pack is a great place to have such adventures and we invite all children to join us. (We also need parents to help!)
—Dominique Lasseur, Cub Master

HEATHER'S HOPE
I will be returning to Ghana in February to teach English at an orphanage for four months. As the children have nothing but the clothes on their backs and each other, I hope to bring as many toys, clothes, and books as possible with me, and I am looking to you for support and donations. Shipping is very expensive so lightweight toys are preferable, (but no stuffed animals as they breed lice and germs). The children are ages two to 17, all sizes, and would appreciate any clothing. Paperback books would be preferred to lighten the cargo. Medical supplies are also desperately needed. Many people have expressed an interest in making a donation, so I have established an account at the National Iron Bank to defray the cost of shipping and to buy food and other supplies for the orphanage while I am there. Checks can be made payable to "Ghana Fund" and mailed to me at 96 Popple Swamp Road, Cornwall Bridge, 06754.

Finally, the children want to practice their English reading and writing skills and make new friends through American pen pals. If your child wants a Ghanaian pen pal, please let me know. Questions can be answered at 672-4296. Thank you in advance.
—Heather Dinneen
[Editor's note: Heather is a senior at HVRHS.]

A FAREWELL
It was with mixed emotions I found it necessary to leave the position of Postmaster of West Cornwall. The demands of the job, long hours (50 to 60 per week on a 40-per-week salary), lack of help, and health problems were making it difficult for me to keep up the pace any longer.

I requested to return to being a clerk, and I will be based in the Washington Depot Post Office. So, if you're in the area, please stop in to say hello.

I'll miss your smiling faces and sometimes not so happy faces. I may even miss some of your complaints! You have become a part of my extended family.

Thank you for letting me serve you over the past year. I'll miss you all.
—Susan B. Marino

AN AMAZING RESPONSE
On Sunday, October 24, just before noon, our family dog inexplicably attacked our four-year-old daughter, severely lacerating her face. The 911 call went out immediately with incredible results. In less than two minutes Dave Cadwell and Phill West were standing in our kitchen overseeing Erica's care. Rick Stone, Connie Hadden, and others were pulling up to the house. It took 20 minutes from the time the dispatcher received the call to get Erica into the Sharon Hospital ER and under the care of the doctors there. An amazing response.

Erica continues to mend and the prognosis is good, although she is sure to require some follow-up surgery down the line. Thanks to everyone—volunteers, friends, and neighbors who responded and helped us through a very difficult, scary time. Although we all hope we never have occasion to call on them, we're also aware of how well served we are by the emergency volunteers in town.
—Brian Karanagh

Events & Announcements

The Cornwall Website Group, one of five spin-offs from the Community Profile (see page 1), is planning to put Cornwall on line. The site could be a community bulletin board providing, for example, a running calendar of events, coverage of meetings and building projects, as well as classified and other ads.

Ralph Gold, one of the group, found the website for New Hartford (town.newhartford.ct.us) interesting; its designers are invited to the first meeting of our group, Friday, December 10, at 8 P.M. at the Town Hall.

You're invited too! Come with your input, or as editors, reporters, and e-mailers for the project. Questions? Call Ella Clark, 672-4817.

Storm Emergency Call List: The Town is now updating the call list for use during severe winter storms. In previous years a team of volunteers has phoned or checked on a number of our neighbors, and found some in need of attention. If you would like to be listed—or know of someone, young or old, who should be listed—contact Jill Gibbons, Social Services Administrator, P.O. Box 205, Cornwall, 06753, or call the Selectmen's Office, 672-4599.

The 39th Annual Christmas Bird Count, sponsored by the Housatonic Audubon Society in our area, will take place on Sunday, December 19. Anyone who would like to go birding for all or part of that day, or would be willing to record the birds at their feeders, should call Celia Senzer at 672-6898 for more information.
Tree Lighting and Caroling with the Hot Chocolate Society will take place on Sunday, December 12, at 5 P.M. in front of the Town Hall. A special guest (ho! ho! ho!) has been invited. Refreshments will be served by Park and Rec. Dress warmly.

Mohawk Into the Millennium: Mohawk Mountain Ski Area will discuss its five-year capital plan with the Board of Selectmen at 7:30 P.M. on December 6 in the Town Hall. Interested persons are encouraged to attend.

Soccer Success was enjoyed by 76 children and their coaches—Brian Kavanagh, Skip Kosciusko, Einar Lindholm, Connie Hedden, Sarah Adams, Ronnie Laigle, and Dave Hurlburt. This new program was made possible by the donation of two field goals to Park and Rec. by Ronnie Laigle.

Heating Help: There are a number of assistance programs which can help offset the cost of home heating fuel this winter. The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program is intended to help low-income households.

For example, a family of four with income up to $25,875.01 and liquid assets under $7,000 if renting (or $10,000 if homeowners) may qualify for this program. Elderly and disabled persons with slightly higher incomes are also eligible. For those who are in need, but whose income or assets are above the guidelines, there may be assistance available for these assistance programs, please call Jill Kosciusko, Einar Lindholm, Connie Hedden, Sarah Adams, Ronnie Laigle, and Dave Hurlburt.

CD to Benefit Extras for Kids: A CD of the May 22 Lieder Recital given by Beth Samuels and Carol Goodfriend to benefit Cornwall's Extras for Kids will be available just before the holiday season for purchase at local retailers or from the musicians. All profits from the sales will be donated toExtras.

Holiday Shopping Made Easy: For relatives near and far, big and small, a royal blue 100 percent cotton T-shirt with “Cornwall 2000” lettered in gold makes the perfect gift. Available for $12 in youth S, M, L, and adult M, L, XL. They are for sale from Susie Williamson at Northwest Lumber and Cheryl Evans at the Town Office, or contact any eighth-grader. Proceeds benefit CCS eighth-grade class trip.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, Sybil Perry’s exhibit of pastels and small watercolors continues through December 11. Opening December 13 at the Library will be Spirits for the New Millennium, a group show of masks. At the Wish House, there will be an opening on December 11, from 5 to 7 P.M. of Constructed Images by M. I. Cake. At the National Iron Bank, Danielle Mailer will be the artist of the month.

Winter Parking: Townspeople are reminded that parking which would interfere with snow plowing is prohibited December 1 through March 31. Vehicles must be at least six feet from the side of the road. Plowing can occur at any time and includes setback plowing in clear weather.

Holiday Fruit Sale: The CCS PTA will again be selling full or half cases of California navel oranges and pink grapefruit, as well as an incredible 13-pound box of mixed fruit and nuts. Your pleasure is guaranteed, and 25 percent of your cost is tax-deductible. Orders must be received by December 9 for a December 15 delivery date. Contact David Samson, 672-0616.

Game Night sponsored by Park and Rec. will be held on Wednesday, December 29, from 7 to 9 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Bring your favorite games or use ours. Refreshments. Call Skip Kosciusko (672-3169) if weather threatens.

Happy Y2K

The Chronicle wishes you a happy holiday season, which we hope won’t be darkened in any fashion by a Y2K problem. It occurs to us that we’ve been delinquent in offering any advice on that question, but if you’ll somehow muddle through this time, we promise to be more vigilant when Y3K rolls around. Please keep us going for the next millennium or so by continuing to send your tax-deductible donations.