The Cornwall Library Association trustees have agreed to consider constructing a new library on a site in or near Cornwall Village. The decision came after negotiations with the Cornwall Limited Liability Company (CLLC) to purchase Monroe-Bodkin, the former Marvelwood library, had been suspended.

Although a number of possible sites for a new structure are under consideration, the trustees have agreed not to identify the owners; other uncertainties, such as timing and cost, also have not been discussed publicly.

The trustees said in a news release that "a new building could be financed from a combination of fund sources. These would include compensation from the town for the Library's agreeing to move out of its present space... a grant under the State Library's construction aid program, and private contributions from a capital fund drive that is already under way."

The release went on to say, "The trustees continue to negotiate with the Board of Selectmen about the financial and other arrangements involved in moving the Library out of the structure it has jointly occupied with the town government for the past 90 years." (First Selectman Gordon Ridgway told the Board of Finance on January 22 that the selectmen and the trustees had reached a preliminary agreement on what compensation the Library should receive from the town when it moves; details were not made public.)

The decision by the Library trustees to place the Monroe-Bodkin option on a back burner came about when the trustees and CLLC could not agree on a price or on other issues raised during talks in November and December.

CLLC, noting that the Library's trustees had voted unanimously to pursue the option of a new building, said in a statement: "We have explained to the [Library] Board that we remain ready and willing to help the Library acquire our library building at an affordable cost...should the Board change its mind."

—The Editors

**Channel 13 Coming Part-Time**

WNET, New York's PBS station, is coming to Laurel Cablevision in what the company describes as "filler" programming. Beginning February 1, the station's programs will be shown periodically on Laurel's Educational Access Channel, which is 19. But there's a rub. Josh Jamison, Laurel's Area General Manager, said local programming "such as board of education meetings will always have priority over WNET programming."

Laurel carried WNET in the 1980s but eventually dropped the station because of problems with picture quality. This was due to the distance between the station's transmitter and Laurel's antenna site. Jamison said that with the cable company's upgraded fiber optic system, the old problems "should not be quite as pervasive." Certainly, a little Channel 13 is better than none.

—John Miller

**Numbers Game**

Cornwall's registrars of voters have joined those of many other Connecticut towns in defying a deadline set by the state's Jury Administrator, Richard Gayer. January 7 was the last day for the state's registrars to submit voter lists that are to be used in compiling new data bases for a statewide jury pool.

The registrars' defiance grows out of the state's insistence on obtaining Social Security numbers that had been supplied voluntarily by new voters. When registering, voters were told that the numbers would not be available outside the registrars' office. However, under a recently passed state law, the Jury Administrator is deemed entitled to demand the numbers, which would help avoid duplication of names in voter lists with those in taxpayer rolls and driver registration records; these files are also sources for the new jury rosters. (For example, someone might vote as John Doe, and pay taxes as John P. Doe, but his Social Security number would be unique.)

The balky registrars—and other citizens as well—abhor this otherwise laudably efficient mechanism. They feel that at worst it may be illegal and at best it violates standards of privacy, while arousing alarm and distrust among voters who thought their Social Security numbers were forever confidential. "It's an absolute outrage," says Cornwall voter Hendon Chubb. "It violates a promise, and will add to people's mistrust of government."

Shake this volatile mix with the fact that the actual jury list will be compiled by a private computer company under contract to the state; the resulting image is a scary hybrid of Big Brother and computer-age bucket shop, with Social Security numbers potentially available as vehicles for consumer fraud.

(continued on page 2)
It doesn't look as if the remedy for the current impasse will be a return to the old practice of compiling jury lists from names supplied by local committees. Existing laws are ambiguous or conflicting. State Representative Andrew Roraback, who feels the registrars should "hold firm in their reticence," is working on a legislative remedy. Roraback cites the brainchild of Pam Sawyer, a fellow small-town lawmaker from Bolton who proposes a compromise: just use the numbers' last four digits. That would be enough to amalgamate John Doe and John P. Doe of Town Street, but insufficient for a miscreant looking for a scam.

For some, the Big Brother angle is the most worrisome. Cornwall First Selectman Gordon Ridgway senses a deeper purpose behind the Social Security numbers issue. Washington and Hartford, Ridgway feels, are both keen to find out where people are: the Fed's search, say, for deadbeat dads; the state, perhaps, looking for ways to link income and local property taxes so as to coordinate tax relief—or tax increases. These are seemingly positive aims, though attaining them may have unintended effects on the public at large.

In any case, Ridgway says the town's registrars will stand pat on the numbers issue until some action is legally unavoidable.

—Charles Osborne

Editor's Note: As this issue went to press, Governor John Rowland, speaking to a meeting of local public officials, said the law requiring registrars to submit Social Security numbers "is just silly." He indicated, according to The Hartford Courant, that he would propose repeal to the legislature.

El Niño in Cornwall

El Niño makes me think of a Robin Hood-type character Errol Flynn might have played in a 1930s movie opposite an actress like Brenda Marshall. She starts off hating "El Niño" but soon realizes he's really a good guy on the side of all the "little" grape farmers in Northern California.

Here's my problem. Things either make me think of old movies or, more often, of food. The real El Niño has nothing at all to do with Errol Flynn or grapes. He's some SOB who warms up a lot of salt water out in the South America. Food. The real El Niño, I asked me why I didn't have anything better to do. I asked the guys (and Donna) at Hall's Garage and they said, "Spark plugs OK. Oil changes, fine. El Niño? We don't have any experience tuning up Spanish automobiles."

I checked with the town's three restaurants—Cafe Lally, Hedgerows, and the Tavern-at-the-Inn—to see if they were adjusting their menus because of El Niño. All said they were adding paella and that yellow kind of rice that goes with paella. Marc Simon said he loved paella and was distantly related to "El Niño" who, he added, looked a lot like Errol Flynn.

Town Historian Michael Gannett, who should know, said there were no El Niños among the town's early settlers. Lots of Golds though. So I asked Charlie Gold about it and he said, "Computers, Yale, marching songs, hybrid tomatoes. Can't help with El Niño."

"Things weren't working out so I called Dr. Mel, the jolly weatherman at The Hartford Courant. "What effect might El Niño have on the town of Cornwall?" I asked. "Connecticut I can help with," said Dr. Mel. "Or Wallingford, or New Haven. Middletown. Even New Hartford. Cornwall is too small. You folks will just have to take your chances. Stock up on provisions. Get some of that good yellow rice."

—John Miller

Windfall for CCS

Cornwall Consolidated School Principal Bill Oros is hopeful that a list of items on his immediate wish list can all be financed by a $34,000 reduction in the school's bill from the Regional Services Center this year.

"We usually get some money back, six or seven thousand dollars," Oros explained, "because the budget has to be figured before the amount of state and federal grant money that the region will receive is definitely known. But $34,000—that was a big surprise!"

He said the school board plans to give $10,000 to the town, and the remaining $24,000 will, he hopes, be used to:

• Replace dilapidated risers for use on the stage, or as steps to climb up onto it. The risers Oros hopes to buy are portable and collapsible, and will slide under the stage when not in use. They also have removable backs. Cost: $3,000.

• Renovate a small downstairs storage area to provide classroom space, mostly for computers. This entails installing carpeting, moving heating and lighting fixtures, and lowering the ceiling. Cost: about $6,000.

• Buy a prefabricated storage shed to house items removed from the area to be renovated. Cost: about $2,500.

• Add more work stations and hardware for the school's computer network. It is hard to figure the cost here, Oros said, because most of the wiring can be done by the school custodian and volunteers.

• Pay legal fees incurred as a result of a hiring practices complaint.

Oros had thought the school might be stuck with higher insurance costs as a result of the school's boiler fire last year. But he was happy to find that the rates will not go up.

—Barbara Klaw

Welcome

Hector Charles to Sarah and Alex Prud'homme

Elsie Mead to Emilie and Joseph Pryor

Good-bye to a Friend

Lou Calhoun Frost

Land Transfers

Timothy R. Walther to Tenvior Fairervis, house and 6 acres at Kent and Warren Hill Roads for $75,000.

Ronald A. and Theresa B. Lipkeiko to Ira B. Shapiro and Jacqueline Dedell, 23 acres on South Road for $240,000.

Neighbor Helping Neighbor

The Cornwall tradition of "being there for each other" in times of need is sometimes clouded by another need: confidentiality. A recent review of boards and committees dedicated to helping fellow Cornwallians turned up eight altruistic funds which, though active, are not as well known as they deserve to be. They all preserve the privacy of applicants:

The Wilbur A. Johnson Fund, endowed by Mr. Johnson's bequest in 1953, helps out with food, medical, and clothing bills in time of personal crisis. Contributions are welcome and applications for assistance generally go through Jill Gibbons, Social Services Administrator, 672-2603. Trustees: Polly Calhoun, Thalia Scoville, Sue Williamson.

The Sidney Kaye Fund, also endowed by its namesake, is administered by the Board of Selectmen on the advice of an appointed committee, currently Sue Williamson, Ann Gold, and Lorraine Whitney. Applicants are asked to send a letter of request to the Board of Selectmen in April. Funds are allocated in May.

The Cornwall Emergency Fund was established in 1957 to prevent a then-local family from being drowned in medical bills. Funded by private donations, it carries on to this day to assist others in like situations. Committee members include Dick Dakin, president; Ellen Lorch, treasurer, and Pat Preston, secretary. Application forms are available on request.

The Clifton Read Rental Assistance Fund is self-explanatory. Cliff was an active member of the Cornwall Housing Corporation and this fund has been established in his memory by his wife and friends. Contribu-
tions and applications may be sent to Margareret Cooley, treasurer, 672-2677.

The Northwest Corner Fuel Bank and Northwest Corner Chore Services are two regional funds with a Cornwall presence. The fuel bank helps hard-pressed residents through the winter months and the chore service sends out workers to help the elderly or sick with home maintenance problems. Those who wish to give or be helped should contact Ella Clark at 364-1003.

The Town of Cornwall Food Fund is supported by private donations, the Food Co-op, and area churches. Contributions of canned food and money are gratefully received. Call Jill Gibbons, administrator, 672-2603.

Cornwall's churches, also operating behind the scenes, are staunch neighbors as well, both spiritually and financially. Funds here are generally administered by the minister or priest.

—Souville D. Soule

Letters to the Chronicle

A.K.A. CORBAN HILL

The article in your last issue about plowing the town roads was very interesting. In it you state that Gary Heaney plows the "narrow steep roads" with a smaller truck. I am sure that must include Everest Hill, near the end of Valley Road. I cannot help but think back to when I first came to Cornwall in 1955. Clarence Blake was our First Selectman, and head of roads. At the outset of winter Clarence put an old kitchen chair at the bottom of Everest Hill (known then as Corban Hill). A large wooden sign on the chair said ROAD CLOSED and that was it for Everest Hill.

At that time there was only Gus Haller's house on that road, at the top of the hill (now owned by the Wallers). Gus could easily come and go over Great Hollow road, known then as East Street. No problem!

Needless to say, the road closure provided excellent sledding for the Cornwall youngsters.

—Ann Peterson

PARTY-LINE LISTENERS

Oh, those party telephone lines! I, too, remember them well. As the daughter of Bruce Hubbard I lived on our Cream Hill farm and, along with my siblings, listened in to the conversations on our communal telephone with no computations at all, I regret to say. The Bramans (Dave Williamson's grandparents) were on the same line along with my aunt, Rose Potter.

A person impatient to use the line was not averse to barking irritably into the telephone, "Get off the line, for Pete's sake." But eavesdroppers were in no hurry. They were getting free entertainment and picking up a load of gossip at the same time. It was a joyous era in the communications business.

—Lydia H. Wolf

CATALOG OF CATALOGS

A few years ago I met Dick Dakin at what we're supposed to call the Transfer Station. We were both dumping boxes of junk mail into the bin provided. "Catalogs, catalogs, catalogs," Dick muttered. "Bob, are you still a Chronicle editor?" I said I was. "Well," said Dick, "I've been counting the catalogs that come into our house. Since January 1. What about if I sent the Chronicle a letter about my total for the year? Would you be interested in that?" I said that sounded like a great letter.

For various reasons, Dick never sent in that letter. So I decided to do the same thing myself. I defined "catalog" narrowly—it must offer multiple products and include an order blank for mail orders. This meant that the great majority of our junk mail was not "catalogs."

During 1997, the Potter household received 347 catalogs from 134 different companies. (L.L. Bean topped the list with 20 offerings, including a 244-page tome labeled "Fall.") How the mail-order industry affords all this I don't know, since we ordered sparingly from it, at the most, only eight outfits. So who keeps these businesses going? If there are 800 households in Cornwall, well over a quarter of a million catalogs reached our Transfer Station last year.

And now (on January 8) comes a catalog of catalogs. Literally. A Denver company called Shop at Home offers "over 585 hard-to-find catalogs!" But no thanks. I don't want a temporary tattoo or a medieval gargoyles or a thong bikini or an old fashioned sausage maker. How do I order no more catalogs?

—Bob Potter

TO STOP THE FLOW

As I read the above letter, I remembered that our Town Recycling Coordinator Lib Terrall had posted on the Library bulletin board solutions to Bob's problem:

"Send your full name(s) and address(es) to Direct Marketing Association, 6 East 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017, or call the specific catalog's 1-800 number, or tear out the catalog insert and send back to discontinue mailings."

After we've done this there'll be fewer trips to the dump—and less to read over lunch. —Ginny Potter

OUR GENEROUS NEIGHBORS

As Social Services Administrator for the town I would like to thank the many individuals, businesses, and organizations which contributed so generously to brighten the holidays for some of our Cornwall neighbors. The gifts of food to the "Cornwall Cupboard" food pantry, cash donations to the Town Food Fund and the fuel bank, and the carefully selected and beautifully wrapped Christmas presents were gratefully received. The thoughtfulness of these people brought home the true spirit of the season in our beautiful Northwest Corner town.

—Jill Gibbons

Industrious P&Z

For many months the Planning and Zoning Commission has been working with Route 7 Cornwall Bridge residents to revise regulations to protect both the land and the right to make use of one's property. Last fall, after public planning sessions and a duly noticed hearing, the Town Plan was amended to recommend the elimination of the Cornwall Bridge Industrial/Residential Zone. Following another hearing, the zoning regulations were amended to change the I-R Zone to an R-3 (Residential-3 acre) Zone.

During the lengthy discussions, members recognized that economic development should continue, and that businesses had been established on Route 7 with the expectation that they could grow in the former I-R Zone. It appeared that the main goal of the zone change was to prevent new uses that could be detrimental to the underlying aquifer and at odds with the generally residential character of the neighborhood. With this in mind, planning consultant Tom McGowan has helped the commission write a zoning amendment that permits the now non-conforming Route 7 commercial uses to be expanded and changed under certain special permit requirements. This proposal is on file in the Town Office and will receive a public hearing on February 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

In the coming months the commission will carry on with rewriting the Town Plan with the aim of including, among other things, provisions to permit additional economic opportunities in Cornwall.

—Ginny Potter

Chilly Bird Count

"Cornwall," to Audubon census takers, is a very small sliver of the official bird-count circle. The slice stretches from the Housatonic to Cream Hill Road, north into the unreachable parts of Falls Village and south to the bend in the river where we hoped to find bald eagles.

Cornwall has a few really expert birders but they were all out last December 21 counting birds in some other part of the circle. This left three lesser ornithologists—Carla Bigelow, Biffy McDonough, and myself—to brave the icy cold for eight hours.

The day before my dog Murphy had spotted a great blue heron fishing in the culvert that conducts Mill Brook from one side of Rattlesnake Road to the other. So at 6:30 A.M., while halfheartedly and unsuccessfully listening for owls, I began the day by counting Saturday's great blue.

(continued on page 4)
Our most rewarding stop was at Cream Hill Farm, where we found many crows, starlings, and pigeons. There were also some well-camouflaged horned larks glinting in a large corn field and a flock of 40 or so wild turkeys doing the same. Our backyards produced red-bellied and other woodpeckers, brown creepers, and the usual assortment of chickadees, nuthatches, and finches. We spotted no eagles, goshawks, or sharp-shins that day. No robins or bluebirds either. We trudged through the snow in the state forest north of Yelping Hill, where we saw and heard...absolutely nothing.

Still, our count for the day was 31 species, not bad considering that the total for the entire area was 71.

—Celia Senzer

Events & Announcements

Assessment Appeals forms to request changes in your tax bill are due in the Town Office by Friday, February 20. Since the Town Office is closed on Fridays, hand deliveries must be in by Thursday, February 19. For those who use the mail, a postmark of February 20 will suffice, according to Board of Assessment Appeals Chair Phyllis Wojan. Hearing dates are set for March 3, 4, 6, and 7. Please call Phyllis at 672-6141 for more information.

The CCS Computer Lab will be open for community use under PTA sponsorship Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30. Word processing, Internet access, games, business applications, and other uses are all available for a $3 fee. Individual tutoring can be arranged by calling Cheryl Thibault at 672-0601.

Art in Cornwall: The tribute to Hildreth Daniel exhibition by local artists will continue at the Cornwall Library until February 14, to be followed by an exhibit of paintings and collages by Danielle Maier, ending March 14.

The National Iron Bank will show during February Jake Bell’s digital graphics and works from his Internet-based gallery.

All local artist-humorists take note that another Tim Prentice-organized caper is coming to the Library in mid-March. This time Tim is asking for designs for the tails of the proposed Connecticut quarter. Tim says he’ll send out flyers with instructions to all the artists on the Rose Algrant Show list but submissions will be welcome from anyone. Got a question? Just call Tim at 672-6726.

Cornwall E-mail: Work on the Cornwall E-mail address book is progressing. There have been 44 responses so far. Please send your E-mail address to John Miller at: jtm@ct.ib.nai.net. People who are not Cornwall residents but have 672-phone numbers and/or are serviced by the Cornwall Bridge or West Cornwall post offices are invited to participate. Also welcome are former Cornwall residents who would like to keep in touch with us.

Basket-Making Lessons can be had from two expert sources this month. On Sunday, February 8, from noon to 4 P.M. at CCS Jill Gibbons will help you make a heart-shaped basket to hold valentines. A materials fee will be charged. Rob Dellenback will teach round-reed basket making on Thursday, February 26, from 6:30 to 9 P.M. at CCS. There will be a $20 materials charge. Call Dave Samson at 672-0616 for more information on Rob’s class.

Game Night, Park & Rec.’s answer to those winter blues—a huge success last month—will be held Friday, February 6, from 7 to 9 P.M. at the West Cornwall Firehouse. Board games and family activities are available to all comers.

If You Love Love Songs, the Kent Singers are staging a Valentine’s Day Cabaret on Saturday, February 14, from 8 to 10 P.M. in the private “Cabaret” dining room at The Kent on Route 341 in Kent. Cornwall’s own Coltsfoot Chorus will perform. Along with songs both pop and classical, there will be champagne, port, and chocolate to make the occasion truly delicious. The event is one of a series of 25th anniversary celebrations the Kent Singers will host this year. Tickets for the special Valentine’s Cabaret are $35 per person, $25 of which is tax deductible. For further information call Marie Prentice at 672-6261.

David Colbert will be showing slides of a tidal pool and Isle au Haut, Maine, on Sunday, February 15, at Comumbia Hall. His presentation will begin at 6 P.M. and will be followed by a potluck supper.

The Blue and Gold Annual Awards Dinner of Scout Pack 15 will be held Friday, February 27, at 6:30 P.M. at CCS. The potluck meal will be followed by an awards celebration. Scoutmaster Jim Levy asks each family to bring a nonperishable food item to the dinner, and to each subsequent monthly meeting, so the Cubs can donate throughout the year to the Cornwall Food Pantry at the Town Office.

Fruit Sale: The CCS PTA is again taking orders for boxes of mixed fruits and nuts, or oranges and grapefruit, for delivery in early March. For information, call David Samson, 672-0616.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE, INC.
143 CREAM HILL ROAD, WEST CORNWALL, CT 06796
E-MAIL: specchub@comcast.com
FAX: (860) 672-2663

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FEBRUARY EDITORS
John Miller
Lisa and Doc Simoni
MARCH EDITORS
Lisa and Doc Simoni
Peg and Ken Keskinden

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