CCS Test Results—Good News!
The Connecticut Mastery Tests are said to be some of the most reliable in the country in determining the skill levels of students living in the computer age. And this year, for grades four, six, and eight, the results reveal marked improvement in math, reading, and writing skills.

According to Principal Bill Oros, the required skills are far more diverse than those of a generation ago. In a world where people change jobs on the average of nine times during their working lives, students must demonstrate a range of skills that help them meet and cope with such change.

The test results reflect the improved ability of students to read, write, and compute, along with effective ways. The tests also determine the communicative skills to read, write, and compute, along with effective ways of communicating effectively with others, and the ability to apply such skills to the demands of a high-tech age.

The scores, listed in the following table, reflect significant improvement, much of which can be traced to the special education provided to Cornwall students and their working lives. Students must demonstrate a range of skills that help them meet and cope with such change.

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**FEBRUARY 2000**

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health and ecological risk assessments to determine the extent of remediation needs for the Housatonic River in Connecticut.

Cornwall may share in a Connecticut Compensatory Restoration Fund ($7.5 million from GE), or it may not—if the DEP decides to use the money elsewhere.

Reaction to the consent decree in our area is mixed. Some wonder why the EPA didn't do the cleanup itself and then bill GE, the polluter. Many are angered that negotiations and the consent decree were devoid of public comment, with no hearings until the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) arranged a meeting in Kent on January 4. Public outcry has resulted in an extension of the comment period until February 23.

The HVA has endorsed the existing decree because they wish to see decontamination begun. The Housatonic River Commission and the towns are pleased about the cleanup in the Pittsfield area, but have expressed doubts about the agreement as it pertains to Connecticut. The River Commission also wants the river tested for PCBs for the next 25 years. Furthermore, the commission and the towns agree that 1) since the $7.5 million restoration fund is too small, all the dollars should be restricted to Housatonic River projects; 2) the DEP should not use such funds for its own administrative expenses; and 3) the DEP should have area representation on the Restoration Fund Committee.

While many understand the difficulties the EPA has in negotiating with GE, a powerful corporation with a record of environmental violations, they do expect their own DEP to do a better job of informing area citizens about the problems in cleaning up their river.

_—Philip Hart, Housatonic River Commission_
Letters to the Chronicle

WE NEED YOUR IDEAS

During the Community Profile meeting in early November, interest in a Community Center for Cornwall was strong. A committee was formed, and has met several times. We have considered various places, plans, and programs. Some of us have visited community centers in neighboring towns; some of us have talked with the School Gym Committee, as well as Park and Rec.

We are looking for ideas and suggestions. What would you like? Give us suggestions, concrete or fanciful. Do we need a place for morning coffee; a steam bath, billiard room, or skate board pavilion; a senior social club, film forum, or life drawing class?

Please send your ideas to Polly Tobin (672-6885 or PCtobin@icmmail.com) or to Dominique Lasser (672-4415 or dlasser@yahoo.com). And feel free to come to our next meeting at the West Cornwall Firehouse, 10 A.M., Saturday, February 12.

SUSAN FOX

GRAVELLY POSTMORTEM

The Strobel gravel bank fiasco is finally over after five years and tens of thousands of dollars of town funds and personal funds were wasted. We have restored the four-acre gravel area just as we had intended to do in the first place, when we purchased it in 1994. It is now a beautiful, fully restored grassy field overlooking the Housatonic River. The entire parcel was purchased on December 16 by the Appalachian Trail Trust and is now covered by a scenic conservation easement.

There was no pollution of the aquifer, no reduction of property values, no truck or school bus accidents, no silicosis poisoning from the dust. Did I miss anything?

During this five-year controversy and the several petitions which were signed by 160+ residents, only one person, long-time resident Art Lorch, had the courtesy and concern to come to us and say, "I heard these claims. What are you people doing?"

There is a lesson to be learned from this whole episode. Ask questions, find out the truth, and don’t just respond to pressure groups. Think of how many library books could have been purchased with the money the Planning and Zoning Commission spent on their lawyer, engineer, and town planner.

—Jackie Strobel, FSB Associates, L.L.C.

HABITAT HAND-UP

The inserted page in the January Chronicle inadvertently left out Habitat for Humanity’s need for volunteers. The purpose of Habitat for Humanity is to build housing in partnership with families who otherwise would not be able to own a home of their own—a hand-up, not a handout. Volunteers with experience in construction or carpentry are needed to build a house in Falls Village now, and a house in Salisbury this spring. Help is also needed for building committees, developing sites, selecting families, organizing volunteers, public relations, and fundraising. Call Paul Baren, 672-6637.

—Bee Siment

GRAITUDE TO GIVERS

I’m writing to express sincere thanks to the many individuals, organizations, and churches whose contributions of gifts, food, and fuel brightened the holidays for their Cornwall neighbors in need. Your thoughtfulness was truly appreciated.

—Jill Gibbons, Cornwall Social Services

HELP FOR CARE GIVERS

If you are taking care of a chronically ill, elderly, or handicapped relative, there is an ongoing group meeting in Kent which may be helpful to you.

The group is sponsored by the Greenwoods Counseling Center, a nonprofit, nonsectarian counseling referral organization. The group meets on Monday evenings in Kent to share information, and to support and encourage individuals and families who have primary caregiving responsibility for a loved one. This is often a stressful and sometimes isolating role. Making connections with others who understand and have had experiences with the challenges of care giving provides an opportunity for psychological renewal and learning specific problem-solving skills. For more information, call me at 672-6386.

—Molly Hinchman, Group Coordinator
Weather and a good crop of berries, the birds between. Because of the unseasonably warm weather, the birds have moved to Cornwall, so a spirited discussion is anticipated. The board asks that any information relevant to making a decision (e.g., maps, comparative property data, realtor appraisals, etc.) be brought to the hearing. For further information, please call the Town Office, 672-2709.

Art in Cornwall: At the National Iron Bank, the artist of the month will be Lee Rogers. At the Wish House, M. L. Cake's exhibit of "Constructed Images" will continue through February. At the Cornwall Library, the extraordinary show of masks has been held over until February 5. Beginning February 7, Susan Gallo will exhibit Spirit Sticks sculptures, gathered, bundled, wrapped, twisted, and painted in honor of the human spirit.

Child Center at Twenty-Five: People may be surprised to learn that the Cornwall Child Center is now 25 years old. From the first handful of families who started the center to today's new facility, five staff members, and 45 children, we have come a long way—which means, suddenly, that we have a history that needs to be recorded.

As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, we're planning to devote a newsletter to the Child Center's past. If you have photos, clippings, artwork, memories, or memorabilia to share, please call our historian, Ginny Potter, at 672-6191. Our editors will be contacting early Child Center alumni, their parents, and former staff for their stories.

Also, we've decided to draw on Cornwall's talent pool to design a logo for the center. Draw an image you think might represent the center and give or mail it to us at 8 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Your entries can be as simple as a footprint or a stick-figure. Anything goes. Children are encouraged to submit. There will be a ceremony to announce the winner. Thanks to all.

Game Night at the West Cornwall Firehouse, sponsored by Park and Rec., will be on Friday, February 11, from 7 to 9 P.M. Bring your own games or use ours. Refreshments. Call Skip Kosciusko (672-3169) if weather threatens or you need a ride.

Works of Art on Paper: On February 6 at 2:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library, Lilly Hollander will give an illustrated slide talk on the care, maintenance, and restoration of valuable etchings, prints, documents, and maps. Lilly, a long-time Cornwallian, is a well-known paper conservator who has recently moved her studio from New York City to Cornwall. Lilly will discuss archivally safe storage methods and proper framing, and explain the cleaning and repair of paper. Her talk will include some history of paper and printing methods. The admission fee of $10 will benefit the Cornwall Library. Sponsored by Friends of the Library.

Donate Blood: A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the UCC Parish House on Monday, February 28, 2-7 P.M. To make an appointment (suggested, but not required), call the church office (672-6840) between 9 A.M. and 1 P.M. weekdays.

Property Tax Appeals: Application forms for the Board of Assessment Appeals hearings to be held in March are available now from the town clerk or the Assessor's Office. They must be filed at the Town Office by Thursday, February 17, or postmarked by Saturday, February 19, according to state statutes. For dates and times of the March hearings, please call the Town Office. Applicants will be notified by mail or phone of their hearing time.

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