The New Site Study Group admittedly must clear several hurdles to reach its goal of a new school building on a different site, the major one being the selling of the present building. This group’s read on the town’s rejection of the original plan is that voters felt that we would not get good value for the $4.7 million that that plan was estimated to cost. This group sees the present site with its cramped real estate as a major problem now and in the future.

On January 10, in open meeting, Jim Terrall and Alec Frost of the Existing Site Study Group reviewed Alec’s simplified version of the original plan with David Sessions, president of Casle Corporation, hired by the town to make impartial cost estimates. On January 12 Nancy Calhoun, chair of the New Site Study Group, attended a Cornwall Association meeting to give a status report on the formidable amount of work done by her group and a summary of the information gathered to date. And that same afternoon the group and a summary of the information and possible future needs. —Scoville D. Soule

Rabies Rundown
That pesky rabies virus, mostly occurring in raccoons and skunks, is still around. Rabies normally runs a cycle that enters a specific geographic area and runs its course before moving on to another. It’s Mother Nature’s way of cleaning out her closets. After the last cleaning, however, the virus traveled north and rather than continuing on to somebody else’s house, made a U-turn and returned to Connecticut for another round.

Between 1991 and 2000 the state logged over 3,605 rabid raccoons, 764 skunks, 156 bats, 79 cats, 43 foxes, 38 woodchucks, 11 cattle, 7 horses, 7 dogs, 3 sheep, 1 otter, 1

(continued on page 2)
(continued from page 1)

goat, 1 deer, 1 coyote, 1 bobcat, 1 rabbit, and 1
unlucky human.

This amounts to a total of 4,720 animals
infected statewide over a ten-year span, with
452 of those cases occurring in Litchfield
County. During the year 2000 there were 273
cases reported statewide, half of those being
raccoons. Thirty-six of the total cases oc-
curred in Litchfield County. So if you do find
one of nature’s little friends that seems hurt
or confused DO NOT TOUCH! A small bite from
one of these cute little creatures could
cause some physical pain along with the pain
of having to pay large amounts of money to
your local hospital. (Even though they could
use the money these days, I don’t recom-
mand this type of donation.)

Feel free to contact Animal Control Offi-
cers Rick Stone (672-6313) or Brad Hedden
(672-2917) day or night for help with animal
problems.

—Ella Clark

Report Card for CCS

Every year at this time, the State Depart-
ment of Education provides each school dis-
tric with a Strategic School Profile, a statistical
analysis of how the district is doing in com-
parison with other cities and towns.

The profile ranks individual schools not
only against a state average but also against
an Educational Reference Group. An ERG is
simply a group of districts that share simi-
lar determinants of educational achievement:
family income, education of parents, etc. Ob-
viously, Cornwall can be meaningfully com-
pared not to Hartford or Bridgeport but only
to towns with similar demographics, such as
Salisbury or Litchfield.

Some highlights of the CCS profile follow:

Note that the information is derived from
data provided during the 2000-2001 school
year. Figures in parenthesis are ERG data for
comparative purposes:

• Percent of kindergartners who attended
  preschool or nursery school, 36.4 (81.9);
• Percent of students in special education
  programs, 18.3 (11.7);
• Percent of classrooms wired for Internet,
  100.0 (69.6);
• Average class size, four selected grades,
  16.5 (18.7);
• Number of students per teacher, 12.2
  (17.1);
• Percent of staff retained from previous
  year, 77.3 (88.0);
• Average number of teacher-absence days,
  5.8 (7.4);
• Percent of students retained in grade, 4.0
  (0.7);
• Percent of eighth graders taking high
  school level math, 61.1 (30.0);
• Percent of eighth graders taking a foreign
  language, 77.8 (58.0);
• Percent of students meeting all three State
  Mastery Test grade four, 26.3 (49.1),
  Grade six, 33.3 (57.7), Grade eight, 33.3
  (57.2);
• Cost per pupil, excluding special educa-
  tion (in Region One budget) as well as land,
  building, and debt service, $8,496 ($6,605).

After a preliminary look at this year’s
profile, Barbara Gold, incoming Chair of the
Board of Education, observed that any sta-
tistical comparisons—some higher, some
lower—must be interpreted in context:
“What are the specific goals and values of the
educational community? Of the community at
large? What is the size of the sample group?”

Barbara also pointed out that events of the
school year being profiled can affect the
numbers: “For instance, the previous two years at
CCS have been ones of transition, with three
principal changes and a higher than usual staff turn-
over—for a variety of reasons. In his second
year, after a ‘shakedown’ year, Principal Peter
Coope has begun to implement a new educa-
tional vision with a staff that brings commit-
ment, imagination, and excellence to the CCS
classrooms.”—Bob Potter

Cornwall’s Book

Cornwall in Pictures—highly praised (in The
New York Times) and a bestseller (1,050 copies
printed and all sold in two months)—will be
reprinted and available in late March for
those who missed getting their copy before
Christmas.

The four people who worked on this suc-
cess—Joe Freedman, Alec Frost, Maureen
Prentice, and Charlie Osborne—express satis-
faction that their main goals in doing the
book have been accomplished. In the words of
Michael Gannett, to whom the book is
written, ‘‘The Society did not think of it as a fundraiser; been called. Emergency personnel from four
local towns worked on this project with great
enthusiasm, and the book has been a source of
funds for the society’s annual awards banquet.’’

Sometimes we hear the question, ‘‘What does
EMS stand for?’’ Your Emergency Medical
Service, part of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire
Department (CVFD), provides several levels of
emergency medical response and care.

A total of 17 Emergency Medical Techni-
cians make up the ambulance squad. Most
are EMT-I’s, with training beyond the basic
level. Most are available all hours of every
day, all year. Some are cross-trained as both
EMTs and firefighters (and firefighters often
assist on EMT calls).

Cornwall’s Emergency Medical Service
doesn’t stop with our EMTs, for that’s only
the first level of emergency response. When
a patient’s circumstances require advanced
treatment, paramedics are called. From
southern Connecticut to New York City,
paramedics are available in minutes from
Hartford to New York City.

Good-bye to Friends

Bruce M. Ridgway
Jonas J. Solits

Land Transfers

Anita Wolkowitz to Adrian and Margaret
Selby, 5.02 acres on Whitcomb Hill Road for
$70,000.

Geoffrey Spicer to Ira and Tricia Shapiro,
5.03 acres on River Road for $105,000.

Cornwall Housing Corp. to Dudleytown
Triangle LLC, 1 acre at Valley and
Dudleytown Roads for $22,500.

Our EMTs and What They Do

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day saw our ambulance and crew called to Mohawk. Enroute, a second call came for a fallen-tree victim off Route 45. Sharon's ambulance responded to that one, with other Cornwall EMTs and firefighters. Then a third call came for a medical emergency near Cornwall Hollow. Goshen responded, with still other Cornwall personnel. With guidance from Litchfield County Dispatch (911), the three towns attended to the three emergencies with no appreciable delay.

Cornwall's EMTs and firefighters appreciate the continued support of the community. The CVFD has the benefit of up-to-date equipment and resources. Recently, several new members joined the ambulance squad. Additional firefighters and ambulance personnel are always needed and welcome.

—Huntington Williams

Editors' Note: The skiing accident referred to in the story above involved an 11-year-old Maryland girl, Emily Ehrenreich, who died in Hartford Hospital three hours after her accident. This was Mohawk's first fatality in its 55-year history.

**Letters to the Chronicle**

**SCHOOL CHALLENGES**

The New Site Study Group is faced with several challenges, two of which we are seeking help to solve.

By far the biggest hurdle is selling CCS, getting as much money as possible for the property, and, if possible, putting it onto the tax roll.

Some form of housing has a fairly expensive renovation cost. Headquarters for a small business would require fewer renovations; the building would be ideal for financial, technological, or professional offices. Sadly, there were over 30 million square feet of office space lost in New York City on September 11. Many firms are relocating or establishing branch offices. I would like to hear from people with contacts who might help us find some potential buyers.

Our second appeal is for land suitable for a new school. The committee has located 8.8 acres adjacent to Foote Fields on Route 4, and the owners are willing to talk with the town. That land is fairly level, central to most of Cornwall, and next to the playing fields the town already owns. However, other parcels might be suitable as well.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for either of these challenges, please give me a call at 672-6747.

—Nancy Calloun, Chair, New Site Study Group

**A BOON FROM THE CASTLE**

When Coltsfoot Farm was subdivided in 1992, the Calloun family gave a lot at the end of Valley Road to the Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) for its Parcel Program. This 1.5 acre triangle was won in the CHC's lottery by a teacher at Marvelwood School, and despite a lawsuit brought by the then owner of the Castle, a zoning permit was obtained.

But Marvelwood moved to Kent, and several subsequent Parcel Program candidates have turned thumbs down of the valley site, which used to be a gravel pit and is somewhat dark and difficult to use. The last rejection was at the time the Castle changed hands, and the CHC board decided to approach the new owners with the idea of selling this parcel to them or exchanging it for other more buildable land.

Before this step was taken, the Castle owners made identical overtures to the CHC, and after exploring several options, the parties agreed to a sale. The buyers have paid the appraisal value, and have capped it off with an enormously generous donation. Thus the initial gift from the Callounhs has permitted the CHC to access additional funds from still another community-minded neighbor to buy more land for the Parcel Program.

There are two morals to this tale: 1) If you have an extra few acres or excess income, please think of the CHC; 2) if you fit our financial guidelines (what renter doesn't?), and your living situation depends on your landlord's whim, and you'd like eventually to own your own house, please apply now to the Parcel Program. For information, call 672-6251. Getting on our waiting list could be your first step to a permanent home in town.

—Maggie Cooley, President, CHC

**New Director at Park and Rec.**

Cornwall's Park and Recreation Commission has a new part-time director—Bethany Lyon Thompson. A graduate of HVRHS, she went on to earn an MA in child and family services from UCONN. She works for an international adoption organization and has placed over 80 children from more than seven different countries. In 1998, Bethany settled in Cornwall with her husband, John. "We wanted to raise our children in a close-knit and supportive community," she says.

Since becoming director in October, Bethany has taken over much of the organization of the many Park and Rec. events and programs. In addition, she has begun to assemble a manual which will help the volunteers who take responsibility for the dozens of events that occur each year. She has also reduced the blizzard of paper created by the many flyers that children bring home from school each week by listing on a single page all events for two months at a time. Her newest
Endeavor is to work with the commission to introduce much needed activities for the older children of Cornwall, sixth through twelfth graders, beginning this winter and spring.

When asked why she wanted to take the position of director, Bethany replied, "I enjoy planning and organizing as well as working with families and children. This job allows me to do all of that and serve my community at the same time."

—Carla Bigelow

Money Pitch

An odd headline?

Well, "money pitch" is just what your Chronicle editors have long called the earnest but gently humorous appeal for funds that always accompanies the coupon below. This month the appeal takes on new meaning, not because we need money more than ever (we always need money more than ever), but because we now know how town monthlies (if any) are financed in neighboring communities.

Thanks to reporter David Parker of the Waterbury Republican-American, we’ve learned that the Kent selectmen have just approved a $5,000 annual grant to get such a publication started. Goshen taxpayers pony up about the same sum to keep Town Topics going. In Salisbury, a budget line item of $6,000 pays most of the cost of that town’s Sampler. The Warren Observer is published by The Webster Society, privately funded. Date-line Sharon, a single-sheet monthly, is covered by a line item in the budget.

In this mix, the Cornwall Chronicle is unique. Quirky, perhaps, but unique. It avoids the calendar-and-official-information-only character that comes with tax support. (Why waste public money pursuing a meandering moose or fussing about the symbolism of a straw man on a fence?) It is the only publication of its size supported entirely by its readers. Writers, artists, editors—all these come for free. But we do have costs—composition, printing, mailing. That’s why there’s one feature you’ll always be able to count on, the “money pitch.” Please... and thank you.

Yes, I want the Chronicle to continue.
Here is my tax-deductible contribution of: $ ___________________.
Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
City/State/Zip __________________________

Property Tax Appeals: Application forms for the Board of Assessment Appeals hearings to be held March 6 to 9 are available now from the Town Clerk or the Assessor’s Office. They must be filed at the Town Office—not just postmarked—by February 20. This year, if all available appointment slots are taken, additional hearings will be arranged March 13 to 16. Applicants will be notified by mail or phone of their hearing times. The board asks that any information relevant to making a decision (e.g., maps, comparative property data, realtor appraisals) be brought to the hearings. For further information call the Town Office, 672-2709.

Soccer Referee Course: Anyone wishing to become a certified referee can attend a course beginning February 19 and running for six consecutive Tuesdays from 6 to 9 p.m. at UCC. For information and registration call Matt Mette, 364-1400.

Peter Busby and Sandy Pettus, multimedia artists, will show slides of their work, mostly sculpture, and talk about the creative process on Saturday, February 16, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Cornwall Library. Admission, $8, Children under 12 free. Sponsored by Friends of the Cornwall Library for the benefit of the Library’s operating expenses. Tickets may be purchased at the door or reserved by calling 672-1007. Refreshments will be served.

Game Night: Bring your favorite board games to the West Cornwall Firehouse on February 15, 7 to 9 p.m., and enjoy free pizza and beverages courtesy Park and Rec.

Cornwall in 1801 by Elijah Allen has been re-published by the Cornwall Historical Society and is available for purchase ($5) at the Society and the town libraries. Originally published in 1965 and for several years now out of print, the 40-page booklet presents the notes of Elijah Allen (1748-1802) written in response to a request from Benjamin Trumbull and Noah Webster, who were writing a state history. Michael Gannett organized the writings by topic and added informative footnotes. The result is a view of the earliest period of Cornwall by a contemporary.