Heating with Yankee Crude

With oil prices peaking at nearly three dollars a gallon and no relief in sight, it seems only a matter of time before your fuel delivery will arrive in a Brinks truck. Sinking your own oil well is unlikely to help Connecticut homeowners. Pennsylvania has a lot. Even New York has a little, but the oil fairy seems to have flown past Connecticut without leaving a drop.

Several Cornwall residents, however, are fighting back with that renewable natural resource we have in abundance. Fred Scoville and Ted Larson, among others, have recently installed new, high-tech wood-burning furnaces behind their homes.

So why put your new woodburner in your backyard? It’s nearer the woodpile. No soot or ashes to coat your upholstery, and most important: no worries about chimney fires turning your nest into charred embers. Also, interior space will be at a premium, since you’ll want to hang onto your oil furnace in case you care to absent yourself for more than a couple of days.

If these units had a door with a half-moon cutout, they would pass for outhouses, were it not for the stainless chimneys protruding out of your roof. They are little, peak-roofed metal cabins built around a combustion chamber which will handle logs up to four feet long and more than a foot in diameter.

That means you can probably kiss your log splitter goodbye. According to Fred, you can throw in almost anything you can lift, seasoned or green, hardwood or soft. The boiler heats water to around 170 degrees (indicated by an LED gauge), and a pump circulates it through insulated pipes to a heat exchanger in your basement. The system is compatible with radiators or forced-air heating and will provide your hot tap water as well. Depending on the size of your pieces, you may only need to add wood two or three times a day. Maintenance is minimal.

The do-it-yourselfer should plan on spending at least six or seven thousand for the unit and a few weekends of work to install it. Then, if you have your own wood lot and don’t object to wielding a chainsaw, you’ll be sitting pretty, watching the oil truck roll past your house toward your neighbor’s.

Fred keeps his thermostat at a Suzanne 77 degrees. Ted, who sets his at 66, figures to go through about seven cords a year. An average cord of wood contains as many BTUs as 170 gallons of fuel oil, so even if you have to have your wood delivered at the current rate of $200 or more per cord, you’ll be saving 50 percent over the cost of oil. That means it will only take around six years to make up the outlay for your woodburner.

—Matt Collins

CHC Survey

In 1986 the first selectwoman of Cornwall, Patsy Van Doren, appointed a Housing Task Force to assess housing needs and to make recommendations to the town. Subsequent surveys revealed there was a clear need for more affordable housing, particularly for young families and the elderly. In 1988 the Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) was created, a non-profit corporation authorized by the state to be the official Town Community Development Housing Corporation. Today, some 20 years since the task force was appointed, Cornwall residents can look back with pride at the results—results obtained by the continued work of dedicated community members with the cooperation and assistance of town officials. Kugeman Village, an 18-unit rental complex, was built to house individuals and families. The Parcel Program was started and offers home ownership. This program boasts ten affordable single-family homes owned by Cornwall residents, with another two under construction. Further, CHC established the Clifton Read Fund in memory of an original CHC board member. The fund provides short-term rental assistance and is administered in confidence by a committee of volunteers.

Every Week This Month:
- Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 p.m. Village Meeting House; Adult Basketball, 8 p.m. CCS Gym
- Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7–9 p.m. CCS Gym
- Wednesdays: Play Group, 10 a.m. Playscape/UCC; Hot Chocolate Hour, 3:15 p.m. Library†; Stretch Class, 5 p.m. Town Hall; Mother/Daughter Workshop, 6:30 p.m. Library†
- Thursdays: Toddler Time, 1:15 p.m. Library; UCC Parish House †
- Fridays: Story Hour, 3–4 p.m. UCC Parish House
- Saturdays: Kids’ Basketball, 1–2 p.m. CCS Gym

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* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957
† Details in Events and Announcements

For additions and updating, visit www.cornwallct.org
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The date is also memorable for birthdays, like Fred Scoville’s and David Williams’s. That might have produced a special red meal of lasagna or Addie Pollard’s heart cookies, filled with raspberry or currant jelly. Barb Gold remembers both titles of a movie double feature, hoping her baby would not be born that day. Tracy Elizabeth obliged and came on February 15, 1972. That date in 1968 was memorable to Ralph Gold, who went to Vietnam and shaved his upper lip for the last time.

Cornwall held a Senior Citizens Valentine’s Dance, and high schools sometimes celebrate the holiday that way. Phill West was the only interviewee to divulge a romantic memory. Shortly after meeting Kathy Martin, he sent a Valentine bouquet to her class in Brattleboro High School. A week later he took a dozen red roses and one white for the Valentine’s Day. Since then, he has cut out and pasted. During World War II, one could even send away for a kit from Sears Roebuck. When Liz Rainville taught at CCS, she filled the showcases with lovely antique valentines.

For some, the unfairness and hurt feelings of those exchanges piqued a budding sense of sympathy for children whose pile of cards was smaller. Today all students prepare a card for each of their classmates at CCS. But some recall gathering matchmaking information by putting two check-off boxes on the back: “Do you like Debby? ___Yes ___No.”

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Local Lobbyists
Cornwall has long been a member of the Northwestern Connecticut Council of Governments (NWCCOG), a little-publicized but highly effective alliance among our nine neighboring town governments and a means for presenting a united regional voice to state government. These days it’s hard to remember that lobbying is not a bad word, but is, ideally, a useful and necessary conveyance of information and public sentiment to legislators studying the issues before them. As first selectman, Gordon Ridgway is our Cornwall representative on the legislative committee of the NWCCOG. Recently, Gordon, NWCCOG members, and other regional town officials spoke with Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz against the mandated conversion from mechanical voting machines to not-ready-for-prime-time electronic ones.

The legislative committee of the NWCCOG meets frequently in working session at our town hall, and almost as often with Representatives Willis, Wilber, and Miner and Senator Roraback at the Wandering Moose during state legislative session. The committee is currently polishing up a Legislative Priority paper for year 2006. Among the position statements they are advancing are the prohibition of “any new unfunded mandates”; increases in state funding for the preservation of open space and farmland; insuring volunteerism in small towns by freeing them from certain unnecessary and inappropriate “urban standards”; and establishing more effective affordable housing measures.

Aside from giving our group of small towns in the area a clearer collective voice in state government, the NWCCOG affords each of its member’s citizens the opportunity to have his or her individual views considered. And the Cornwall selectmen urge Cornwallians to make these views known at the Town Hall, Baird’s Two or Bramley’s Package Store Boutique. Democracy is a two-way street.

—Scoville D. Soulé

Welcome
Georgia Stryker Sperry Horan to Julie Beglin and Daniel Horan
Mary Genevieve to Melissa and Summer Ireland

Good-Bye to a Friend
Desmond Nicholson

Land Transfers
Everett A. Van Don to Henry M. Blodgett and Amy P. Zilbax, 31.636 acres on Middle Hill Road for $832,400.
William C. Gavel, Jr., to Mark E. and Susan Kent, property at 16 Burlwood Lane for $106,500.
Lawrence van Valkenburgh to Cornwall Conservation Trust Inc., a gift of 9.027 acres off Town Street.
Lawrence van Valkenburgh to Gregory and Ulla Sepphon, property at 193 Town Street for $940,000.
Joseph C. Gemenyel and Gary S. Guimian to Jeannine Raymond, property at 375 Kent Road for $442,036.
Marion Blake, Hugh D. Blake, Eliza B. Smith, Amy Whitcomb, Carol H. Knapp, Carl R. Hermann, Cathy R. Casey, and Carol McDermott to Cornwall Conservation Trust Inc., a gift of 25.3 acres off Great Hill Road.
Dermot P. and Darilyn F. Woods to Michael J. and Victoria Santini, property at 368 Kent Road for $425,000.
Etheh B. Jagotchian to Brian and Kristen Bedell, property at 15 Popple Swamp Road for $225,000.
Gregory V. and Pamela R. Frisolli to Stephan and Victoria Montiflore, property at 63 Popple Swamp Road for $790,000.
Vivian Ditsheim and Tommie Thompson to Sebastian D. Beckwith, property at 2 River Road South for $832,000.
Joshua E. Pelstein to Vivian H. Ditsheim, property at 20 Jewell Street for $227,500.

The Bard Snow Bound
An enthusiastic audience of thespians and Shakespeare devotees from Cornwall and neighboring towns gathered in the Town Hall on January 7 for “The Aweful One” and a reading of a four-part series of workshops and discussions, Speaking with Shakespeare. The workshops, created by Cornwall’s Town Hall Players and sponsored and underwritten by Park and Rec., were offered on Saturday afternoons in January. Late in June, the players will perform A Midsummer Night’s Dream on the Green, with Cornwall’s Fred Thaler as director. Auditions for the play are set to begin in April.

The idea of publicly performing Shakespeare, with his heightened 16th-century language, poetic meter, and often-styl-
ized stage movements, can be pretty intimidating to community theater. Looking forward to casting *Dream* this summer, Fred, along with Nick Jacobs, designed these four January workshops to encourage local people of all ages to put aside awe of The Bard, get excited about the fun of performing Shakespeare, and try out for roles in the coming production. Potential Town Hall Players in the audience get experience with speech and movement in an Elizabethan drama, as well as an understanding of the remarkable historical period it came from.

On January 7 Nick gave an introduction to what we know about the playwright (1564–1616), a description of his times and the risky position of the theater in the tense religious politics of the day (topics for plays were restricted by law), and his amazing use of language. Thirty-six histories, comedies, and tragedies were authored by Shakespeare alone (the audience could not come up with all the titles), and 2,000 new words have been recorded in his writings. Nick quoted some revealing personal speeches that pushed the action in the tragedies and explained their wrenching images.

According to Fred, today’s stagecraft and the structure of the play itself offer a good deal of freedom in production, and many skills will be needed in casting it. Besides 21 speaking parts, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* has three songs and a number of dances—even a chance for swordplay. That news should call forth a number of talents from among us. The Cornwall Library, by the way, contains Shakespeare’s complete works and at least 24 volumes of commentary and studies of his times, his language, plots, and plays, and finally films.

Was William Shakespeare, a glover’s son from rural Warwickshire, really the author of these poems and plays? Yes, says Nick: he was well known in the London theater, and it would have been hard to carry off a successful fraud, given the strong currents of gossip in that world. Fred agrees, pointing out that during Elizabethan times, several men of artistic genius emerged from obscure backgrounds. Among them all, Shakespeare was supreme.

—*Anne Schilling*

**Letters to the Chronicle**

**ABC UPDATE**

The Association of Businesses in Cornwall (ABC) meets on the second Monday of the month at the Cornwall Inn from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The February 13 meeting topic is “Tax Tips for Small Businesses” by member and CPA Walter Malone, who has been treasurer for the past two years. Election of new officers will be held at this meeting. Ira Shapiro has served as vice president and Priscilla Miller as president. We have been minus a secretary. The new Cornwall Book is about to go to press... writing on a few last-minute ads. In 2006 ABC members will have a wonderful new benefit. Mark and Stacy, proprietors of the Cornwall Inn, are offering a discount to all ABC members.

Our meetings are open to the public.

—*Priscilla Miller*

**KEEP ON TRUCKIN’**

I would like to thank everyone who has expressed concern about my truck hijacking and my personal well-being. Thanks also to friends and neighbors for the use of their trucks for our home and business. At this writing, four weeks later, the truck has not been recovered, and now my insurance has compensated me for the loss. In fact, I’ve just purchased a burgundy-colored plow truck as a replacement.

—*Mark and Stacy Miller*

**Budget Season Kicks Off**

As February starts, the Town of Cornwall begins the annual budget process in earnest.

What is the Town Budget? It is an estimate of spending to provide the necessary and desired services for the coming year. It is the sum of projected costs (wages, benefits, insurance, contracted services, and materials) for operating the Town Office, the highway department, the school, and a variety of additional programs.

Who creates the budget? The Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education do the initial work. The Board of Finance reviews it, and changes are suggested. Once all parties agree on the final amounts of the expenses, the Board of Finance determines a funding plan. This is primarily property tax revenue with a dash of state funding and a pinch of miscellaneous income. The budget is then presented to the voters at a public hearing and then finally, in late May, it is acted on.

Why should we care? This single document ultimately determines what the town is going to do for the coming year: what services will be provided, what programs will be funded, what major purchases will occur, and what will have to wait. For most taxpayers the first thought is, how much is this going to cost me? The second thought is often, how am I going to benefit? The third, yet perhaps most important, reflection is, does the budget provide too little or too much?

Now is the time to make your wishes and concerns known. Communicate (talk, write, email, or phone) with your elected officials and participate at meetings.

—*Ralph Gold*

**CEDT IS DUE**

Ed Ferman must have been overwhelmed by the number of people involved in this fall’s “perfect storm” of qualified candidates for the Planning and Zoning Commission. He neglected to mention that the commission also lost the talents of a very capable sitting member: Heidi Kearns. Heidi was a quick learner, a hard worker, and showed excellent judgment. The town will miss her services.

—*Doc Simont*

**Events & Announcements**

**Board of Assessment Appeals:** Any property owner who wants to appeal their Octo-ber 1, 2005, Grand List assessment must file an appeal on a prescribed form. This appeal form is available from the Town Clerk’s Office and must be delivered to the Town Clerk’s Office or postmarked by February 21, 2006. Call 672-2703 for information. Appeals to be heard in March.
At the Library:

- The Cornwall Free Library is planning a special Book Sale on Memorial Day weekend at the Library. The sale will feature rare and out-of-print books, first editions, books by Cornwall authors, and other special collectibles. If you have books in your collection that you think are appropriate for the sale, and that you would like to donate, please contact Louise Dunn at the Library, 672-6874.
- The Rev. Chris Webber will read from his new book *Beyond Beowulf* at the Library on Sunday, February 19, at 3 p.m. Webber, an Episcopal priest at All Saints Chapel in Cornwall, is the author of many books. In *Beyond Beowulf*, which Webber calls the first-ever sequel to *Beowulf*, the oldest narrative in the English language, the reader learns the fate of Beowulf’s people following his death. The book is written for readers of all ages, and Webber will have books available at the Library for purchase and signing.
- The Friends of the Library will host the first Readathon Sleepover at the Library from 7 p.m. on Saturday, February 11, to 8 a.m. on Sunday, February 12. This event is open to fourth- through sixth-graders who find three people to sponsor them ($5 per sponsor recommended). Sponsor sheets/parenstial permission forms will go home through CCS and be available at the Library. So shake out your sleeping bag, grab your toothbrush and favorite board game, and, of course, a good book (or borrow one), and come read for fun and for a good cause. A head count is needed, so please call Bridget Lynch at 672-0176 or Deirdre Fischer at 672-1123 to sign up.
- Hot Chocolate Hour will be held at the Library for third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders beginning Wednesday, February 8, at 3:15 p.m. for six weeks. After snacks, Amy Buck will read *Finn Family Moomintroll*, the classic fantasy by Tove Jansson. Students from CCS may take the bus to the Library after school; pick-up is at 4:15 p.m. Please call the Library to register: 672-6874.
- Mother/Daughter Workshops on Self-Esteem: On each of the four Wednesday nights in February, at 6:30 p.m. in the Library Meeting Room, the Housatonic Youth Service Bureau and Women’s Support Services, in collaboration with the Library, will offer films on media advertising, masking, and discussion of issues relating to teenage girls’ self-esteem. The series is open to girls with their mothers in grades six to eight from Region One schools. $10 per pair for materials.

Grant Money to Support Cornwall Programs is available through the Cornwall Foundation. The foundation announces that, through the support of the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut, it has received a 1-to-4 matching grant from the Edwards Community Endowment Project (ECEP). Donations from the community will be supplemented with an additional 25 percent contribution from the ECEP. For information on where to give or to obtain grant applications (which are due April 15, July 15, October 15, or January 15), contact David Ott at 672-6040, or visit the website at cornwallfoundation.org.

Annual Italian Dinner to support the CCS eighth-grade trip to Washington, DC, will take place on Sunday, February 26, at 3 p.m. at CCS. (See insert in this issue.)

Old-Style Life Skills Series: On Saturday, February 11, from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Debra Tyler, of Cornwall’s Local Farm, will be demonstrating how to make a family-sized batch of bread from scratch. She’ll teach participants to grind wheat, mix and knead different doughs, and form loaves.

This and future Motherhouse events will take place on the second Saturday of every month at the UCC Parish House on Bolton Hill Road. The per-family fee, including a theme-appropriate lunch, is $35. For information on additional events scheduled for March and April, or to volunteer, contact Debra Tyler at localfrm@yahoo.com.

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Art in Cornwall: From February 1 to March 18, the Cornwall Library will host a Poetry / Tapestry Wall featuring rugs by Margarito Hendon and poetry by various Cornwall-connected writers. Submissions of short poems are welcome. Contact Ellen Moon at ourmarydog@yahoo.com. In the case, the Cornwall Historical Society will exhibit photographs from its collection.

At the Outsiders Gallery, the rotating show of Connecticut artists will continue through March.

Donate Old Cell Phones to Women’s Support Services. The phones are sent to a company to be cleaned and then distributed in Third World countries. WSS gets a donation to be collected through February. Sponsored by the Cornwall Consolidated School main office or the Cornwall Free Library. They will be collected through February. Sponsored by CCS grades three, four, and five Roots and Shoots program.

Park & Rec. Will Sponsor:
- Adult basketball at the CCS gym, Mondays at 8 p.m.
- Adult volleyball at the CCS gym, Tuesdays at 7 p.m.
- Ice skating at the Hotchkiss School Schmidt Rink, Saturdays from 7 to 8 p.m. All skaters must wear a hat.
- Kids’ basketball at the CCS gym, Sundays 1 to 3 p.m.
- Family Game Night from 7 to 9 p.m. at the West Cornwall Firehouse every Friday in February. All families are invited to bring board games and play. Pizza will be provided. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Sweet Sixteen?

With this issue, the Chronicle closes Volume 15 and moves into its 16th year. That means a total of 185 issues have chronicled our town’s journey to today, the easy riding and the bumps in the road. This trip could never have happened without your generous support. Any checks we receive to sweeten the start of our 16th year will be put to good use. Our thanks.

**THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT**

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is $10 or more, we’d be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. 143 Cream Hill Rd., West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be e-mailed to the publishers at elfhill@aol.com