Of Budgets and Ball Fields

Town Hall News

The turnout for the annual budget meeting in late May has been small in recent years, and 2005 ran true to form. Less than 3 percent of those eligible were on hand to approve a $5,571,197 spending plan, a percentage increase of 7.1. Burgeoning health insurance premiums and an unavoidable high school assessment were among the factors cited for the increase. Right after the public meeting, the Board of Finance approved a mill rate boost of 0.8 for 2005-06, to 2.1 mills.

A second unanimous vote at the half-hour meeting authorized $200,000 for town purchase of about an acre adjoining the Hughes Memorial Library in West Cornwall, providing for a septic system and associated facilities, and to upgrade playing fields at CCS. The land purchase, now in negotiation with Connecticut Light & Power, will give the town the largest open area in West Cornwall, a parcel on the Housatonic good for recreation and historic preservation when funds are available. Presently funding is unavailable.

Other good news comes from regulatory bodies far beyond the borders of Cornwall. In New York State, authorities have apparently killed plans for a St. Lawrence Cement Co. plant near the Hudson River. (Did all those “Stop the Plant” signs topple this 40-story dream of a smokestack?) In Washington, DC, an appeals board has vacated an earlier Bureau of Indian Affairs decision granting tribal status to the Kent-based Schaghticoke Tribal Nation. This does not put a stop to this group’s hopes for recognition; it means only that they must reapply. “So it’s back to square one,” says First Selectman Gordon Ridgway. He notes that the recent reversal “relieved heavily on written testimony of the Cogswell family [a separate branch of the Schaghticoke tribe],” who have roots in Cornwall. Throughout this controversy, Cornwall has supported the Town of Kent, the State of Connecticut, the Northwest Council of Governments, and other groups with serious reservations about the Tribal Nation’s application.

Of course the news is never all good. The DEP has just ordered an end to burning at the landfill (Cornwall apparently being the last town in the state to light a legal fire). In the future, probably, people bringing wood to the landfill will be charged a fee, whatever it takes to transport the waste to legal disposal sites. (“Does this make sense?” Gordon asks rhetorically. “Think of all the pollution spewed out by those trucks hauling the stuff up to Chicopee, or wherever.”)

Also, the town is becoming increasingly concerned with the problems of Liane and Monte Dunn of Cornwall Bridge, faced with a staggering bill for state-ordered removal of contaminated soil from a gas station operated years ago by Liane’s father. State assistance, supposedly available, is backlogged and bound up in red tape. Gordon reports that our voices in Hartford, Roberta Willis and Andrew Roraback, are providing needed help. “Right now we’re at the beginning steps of working with our legislators to sort out these issues,” Gordon says. —Bob Potter

It Is Good To Be Alive!

Even the weather reinforced Dave Cadwell’s moving speech as hundreds gathered around town to remember and reflect upon our nation’s veterans for the 2005 Memorial Day holiday. A warm sun and gentle, gust-dispersing breeze greeted those who gathered for the first two services of the day. At 9:00, Charles Gold led those assembled at the North Cornwall Cemetery to lay flowers.

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No Rain on This Parade

Eighteen eighth graders received their diplomas on a rainy June 16 evening on the stage inside the new CCS gym.

Three prizes were awarded during the graduation ceremonies: Nicole Hamilton received the award for outstanding academic achievement; Melani Reilly received the Dottie Hermann Memorial Award; and Trevor Tuthill received the VFW Citizenship Award. In addition, PTA President Pat Bramley presented each graduate with a gift.

Freddie Scoville, who had just recently received his own diploma from the University of Connecticut, urged the graduates to be themselves and follow their career paths. Nick King spoke for the class. Pat Thibault was recognized as the class speaker. Rosemary Thurber has vivid memories of summers in Cornwall with her father. “I was around eleven or twelve. He would work late mornings and early afternoons. We were on the road most of one summer, and Thurber loved it. He became very depressed when the show finally closed.”

Correction

Last month’s story on June graduates and their plans inadvertently omitted Adeline DeAngelis. Addie graduated from Kent School on June 5 and will attend Swarthmore College. The Chronicle sincerely regrets the error.
better, you’d be mediocre!”

The afternoon ended with prolonged applause. A videotape of the proceedings is at the Cornwall Free Library. Don’t miss it!

—Carla Bigelow

Arts Alive at CCS

The performing and fine arts at CCS ended on high notes in June. Under the direction of Fred Thaler and with much help from school staff and community volunteers, CCS students sang and danced their way through The Wizard of Oz, the classic tale of conquering adversity and the triumph of good over evil. Simple but evocative sets and costumes enhanced the talents of the students who had spent weeks preparing for three performances on June 2 and 4.

On June 5, a tile mural was unveiled during a celebration of CCS alumni and the new Cornwall Fund for Excellence. Directed by art teacher Kathy Good, students, staff, and community members created tiles that are now mounted on the walls around the entry to the school; new tiles will be added regularly. During the celebration, participants enjoyed performances by the CCS jazz band and a variety of choral and instrumental soloists and ensembles.

—Barbara Gold

Cornwall Senior Survey

Of 1,500 Senior Survey forms sent out, 46 were returned, 67 percent of them by people aged 70+. Nine wanted more programs for seniors, and six said they would not like more programs.

Asked what kinds of programs they would attend, seniors most often mentioned dancing; movies, lectures, and exercise classes tied for second; and trips to museums and cultural events placed third.

Among issues to be given priority, chore services led, with transportation coming in second and low-cost senior housing and home health care tying for third. Fortunately, some of these are already in place.

Nineteen people expressed interest in serving on a Committee on Aging, and 12 signed up for the winter storm emergency call list. Additional comments varied: “Programs for seniors don’t seem necessary because current programs at the Library, school and churches are open to everyone”; “Please leave seniors alone. Don’t label us”;

“Reform property taxes.”

Complete results are available at the Town Office.

—Jill Gibbons, Social Services
Events & Announcements

Midsummer Community Picnic: Sunday, July 17, 4 to 7 P.M., at Foote Fields (parking on upper field). Local grass-fed beef burgers, hot dogs, and soft drinks will be provided by the Cornwall Association. Bring whatever else you wish to eat or to share. Come with your instruments, including your voices, for musical fun. Jointly sponsored by the Cornwall Association and Park and Rec. For more information, contact Jane Giddens-Jones, 672-2861.

CCC Summer Camp 2005: The Cornwall Child Center is offering a fun-filled summer enrichment program for children between three and six. Sessions run from 8:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. Week 1: July 5 to 8. Week 2: July 11 to 14. Week 3: July 18 to 21. Week 4: July 25 to 28. Contact Director Pam Brehm at 672-6989 for registration information.

Land Use Forum: “Opportunities in the face of change” is the theme of a question-and-answer program on land use and values scheduled for Friday, July 8, at 7:30 P.M. at the Town Hall. Is the present Town Plan adequate to handle increasing development pressure and rising real estate prices? On hand will be representatives of groups most responsible and concerned—the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Cornwall Housing Corporation, the Cornwall Land Trust—as well as the Assessor, State Senator Andrew Roraback, and others.

Junior Fire Department: Response has been positive to the CVFD’s recent unanimous vote to involve children and teens in activities that benefit both the kids and the Department. A Junior Division (ages 12 to 18) receives fairly extensive training in fire and ambulance procedures and is allowed to assist in emergencies on a restricted basis. A “Junior Junior Division” (ages 10 to 12) gets training but not actual experience. So far, most juniors are children of CVFD members, but others are needed and welcome. Contact the Selectmen’s Office for regulations and application forms.

Senior Forum: At 4 P.M. on July 7, the Board of Selectmen and the Social Services Department will host a forum in the Town Hall to follow up on problems and opportunities revealed in the recent Senior Survey. Guest speakers from organizations such as the Library and the Chore Service will address areas of interest. Also on the agenda is the function of a committee of seniors now being formed.

A Democratic Party Caucus will be held on July 25, 2005, at 7:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library meeting room to endorse Democratic candidates for town offices to be elected on November 8, and to transact other business as may be proper to come before the caucus. All enrolled Cornwall Democrats are invited to attend and participate.

A Republican caucus will be held on Tuesday, July 19, at 7:30 P.M. in the West Cornwall Firehouse. All registered Republicans are urged to attend. Questions? Call K. C. Baird at 672-6405.

Art in Cornwall: At the National Iron Bank, Ed LaPorta is exhibiting acrylic paintings and mixed media.

The Outsiders Gallery is hosting a reception on July 9 from 5 to 7 P.M. for a show entitled Summer Fun. Featured artists are Peter Brandt, Kathie Olivias, Michael Rivera, and sculptor Robert Hudson. The show runs through August 1.

Emily Buchanan and Brendan O’Connell continue to exhibit their work at the Cornwall Library through July 13.

On July 19 the Library will host a show entitled Altered Books. For this show the Library is looking for artists of all ages to transform existing books into art. The Library can supply books suitable for altering. Entries are due at the Library July 13. Fifty percent of sale proceeds will benefit the Library. For information, call Amy Buck at 672-6874.

Chamber Music: The Cream Hill Lake Association invites all music lovers to a concert at the clubhouse on Saturday, July 23, at 7:30 P.M.

The Thurber Celebration continues at the Cornwall Historical Society during open hours on Wednesdays, 1 to 4 P.M., and Saturdays, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. Other information may be found on the Society’s new website: www.cornwallhistoricalsociety.org.

July Fest: Saturday, July 2, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. Park and Rec. invites all to enjoy food, children’s road races, inflatable rides, the tanker, and more on the Town Green.

Homecoming Concert: Folk musicians Lorraine and Bennett Hammond will give a concert at the Town Hall at 3 P.M., Sunday, July 31. Lorraine, a Cornwall native, will sing songs and tell stories about the local musicians (especially Comfort Starr) she grew up with and learned from. The concert is sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library. The Hammonds encourage all to bring instruments and voices for post-concert singing.

Summer Paving: Sections of Cream Hill Road and Dibble Hill Road will be paved in July. In August, some roads in the northwest corner of town will get the oil-and-sand treatment. Be prepared for delays and some slow going.

Vehicle Stickers: The transfer station reminds us that everyone should have a transfer station sticker. If you don’t have one on your vehicle, see the attendants. And remember: recycling is required by Connecticut law. Please wash all containers and remove their tops, which go in household waste.

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