Committee Homework on Time

A study committee appointed by the Boards of Selectmen, Education, and Finance has presented its recommendations for de-crunching Cornwall Consolidated School space to the boards for their review. An informational public meeting on the report is expected in June.

Ten years ago our town added six classrooms and a library to the existing building. The problem became obvious that a diverse education in today's complex world is more and more essential. These measures were expected to last 20 years. However, few people anticipated the 34 percent growth in our student population that then took place, nor the dramatically increasing space requirements for special education. Over a fifth of our students are now in one or more special education classes. This increasing tutorial necessity translates into a need for more classrooms to accommodate small-group instruction. Further factors in the CCS space crunch are a state safety guideline that any activity in that same space. This increased necessity translates into a need for more classrooms to accommodate small-group instruction. Further factors in the CCS space crunch are a state safety guideline that any activity in that same space will be explained as well as its several recommended possibilities. -Scoville D. Soule

Postal Rave

There was a time when most small-town postal workers were residents of the town. However, in the early 70s the postal service began assigning them regionally. So today, only one of Cornwall's postal workers, Cookie DeGreenia, lives in town. Yet the other workers, with their friendly door-to-door contacts in the three post offices or on the rural routes, have become more like townsfolk than strangers. All of them have been well trained in the routines of modern postal work, with efficient computers and printers that quickly weigh mail, compute postage, print a receipt, and tongue out a ready-to-stick stamp in no time at all.

However, in the Cornwall Plains post office where former postmaster Clarence Meier's murals grace the walls, Henry O'Shaughnessy from Litchfield, 12 years a postmaster, still uses the old scales. His office is one of nine in the state that haven't been "modernized." He and Cookie handle from 1,000 to 1,500 pieces of mail each day.

The other two post offices handle many more. Susan Marino from Goshen, with ten years of service, is postmaster (no, we don't say "postmistress") in West Cornwall. She reports her mail volume by the stacked foot—100 feet weekly, with about 300 parcels to boot—enough stacked side by side to go the length of the Covered Bridge.

The Cornwall Bridge post office handles the greatest volume of mail, 10,000 letters a day, 1,500 flat pieces, and about 50 to 60 packages, says Acting Postmaster Lois McKee. As busy as all the offices are at times, the workers are friendly and helpful. They enjoy serving the variety of people who come by, with the rare exception of those who come just before lunch break or closing time with a time-consuming task. But, as Lois says, "If you expect people to be nice, (continued on page 2)
(continued from page 1)

they usually are. "No postal rage likely!

We have two rural mail carriers, Dave
Carey from Torrington, who has worked out
of West Cornwall since 1994, and Glenn
Sinkovic from Goshen, who has worked out
of Cornwall Bridge for 25 years. Glenn’s long
experience makes him an important resource
for other workers. He has 317 boxes on his
54-mile route. Dave’s 73-mile route with 355
boxes is one of the longest in the state. icy
roads create hazardous driving conditions,
and wisp nests in mailboxes can be a nui-
sance (mothballs can help). Yet even these
challenges don’t deter them from delivering
the mail on schedule.

There are regulations that box owners are
expected to meet. First, boxes are to be used
only for official mail. Second, boxes must “al-
low safe and convenient delivery by carriers
without leaving their vehicles.” This means
that shrubs and branches—and snow—
should be cleared to make a way for the ve-

cicle to get near enough to the box for the
carrier to insert mail from the car window.
The box itself is to be between 36 and 40
inches above the ground. Customers are also
urged to have someone remove their mail
when they plan to be absent.

Our three post offices serve us well—and
certainly have our stamp of approval.
—Ken Keskinen

Good Vibrations
Sometime between 1907 and 1919, the
Vedantist Swami Abhedananda and his fol-
lowers carved the words "OM TAT SAT OM
WORK IS DEVOTION SELF CONTROLL" on
a rock in the woods of North Cornwall.
The Swami, according to Starr’s History of
Cornwall, billed himself as a “Well-Known
Teacher of Higher Ethics and Spiritual Phi-
sosophy, Author and Lecturer of Interna-
tional Reputation.” He “bought a large...farm, where he established The
Ashrama’ in 1907.” He paid $2,000 to
Frank Reed for about 250 acres on
Town Street and the buildings.

Although Emerson and the Con-

doradians had prepared the way for
Indian ways of thought, non-
Christian faiths were frequently sus-
picct in New England. After all, they
were radical; a 1901 headline in the
New York Sun described Vedanta as “A
TWENTIETH CENTURY RELIGION
WITH NO SCHEME OF SALVATION,
NO NEED OF HEAVEN, NO FEAR
OF HELL.” But, wrote the Swami,
“We come not to reform, but to unite,
to bring harmony, peace and tolerance
to the world, to recognize the rights
of all men and women alike. Vedanta is
the Universal religion. It embraces
Christianity.” Well, not entirely. According to a
disciple, Sister Shivani, “The minister in
West Cornwall once asked the Swami: ‘Do
you believe in a personal God?’ ‘Yes,’ he an-
swered, ‘and in an impersonal one.’”

An aura of immorality hovered over the
hills. After all, there were more women
than men in residence, and the Swami, accord-
ing to the San Francisco Chronicle, had “dark hair,
eyes and complexion suggesting a hand-
somely chiseled piece of bronze.” Bob Potter,
whose parents later bought the farm, says
that some locals believed the women took
pupil-enlarging belladonna to increase their
consciousness. And when Yelping Hill
started in the 20s, its founder, Henry Seidel
Canby, said, “As a result of the Swami, ru-

or is going around that Yelping Hill is a
center of nudism and free love. This is a crisis
for our community.”

The Ashram, however, was more working
farm than nudist colony, and though work
was devotion, it was also difficult. The stu-

dents had to renovate two houses and out-
buildings, plant, cut wood, hay, and tend
cows, a horse, chickens, and pigs. Sister
Shivani wrote that they had “considerable
hardship. If ever Karma Yoga maintained a
school for study, such was here—sixteen
to cook for three times daily counting guests
and workers until the season’s close about No-
vember first. We learned to worship by think-
ing through our problems and our work.”

“Nonetheless,” she wrote, “I will never for-
get the strange beauty of a grove of trees
standing stark and chaste against the winter
sky, a spiritual cathedral close of nature. The
hills rang with the vibrations of a released cos-
mos, sentient and articulate. The few students
converted in precepts, and there prevailed a
constant meditation of work and silence.”

Despite much diligent work, they had a
hard time of it. The winters were long and
difficult. Money ran low. In January of 1919
the Swami sold timber rights to Sturges, Hart

& Company, and then in December of the
same year, he sold the Ashram itself.

Hatcher Hughes, the buyer, shook hands
with the Swami on the price. But soon after,
says Bob Potter, the Swami had second
thoughts. He had spoken in 1901 of the need
to "harmonize with the vibrations of the Cos-
mic Mind.” He now asked Hughes for
a “big chunk more” based on the
added value of good vibrations.
Hughes said no and the Swami
backed down, but, according to
Ranny (Hughes) Moss, he delayed
moving out for several weeks, until
the vibrations were right.

In those golden years, the
Swami attracted men and women
to his lectures beneath the trees “not
unlike the Vedic Forest schools.”

Cows, their horns garlanded with
daisies, watched soulfully over the
fence. As, indeed, they do today.
—Ella Clark

Welcome
Liam James Michael to Monique and
Christopher Allen
Ishvara Arjuna to Surya and Elisabeth
Langdon Vitalis

Good-bye to Friends
Margarethe Lisa MacNeill-White
Gertrude Marie Pohly
Richard W. Simons

Congratulations
Allyn H. Hurlburt III to Irene Fossati

Land Transfers
Peter D. Stiglin to Paul and Elizabeth C.
Giamatti, house and 2.97 acres at 228 Kent
Road for $385,000.
John K. M. and Arthur C. Dutton to Mary
Ellen Geisser, 11.35 acres on Town Street
for $90,000.
William Hurlburt to Paula J. Brunetto,
house and 7 acres at 127 Cornwall Hollow
Road for $140,000.
Estella S. Rolo to Roberta and Bonnie H.
Sheldon, 10.9 acres on River Road for
$60,000.
Cornwall Ltd. Liability Co. to Glory Jones
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A Remarkable Household

The house at 239 Great Hollow Road is a special place. It is a Community Training Home (CTH) in which Alberta Goodrow, Susan Dupuis, and Nancy Dunigan are expertly and lovingly supervised by Jean and Bob Bailey. Since 1972, Jean and Bob have "parented" more than 15 mentally retarded women in their home for varying periods of time. Alberta, Susan, and Nancy have lived with the Baileys since they were teenagers—for 27, 25, and 23 years respectively. The Bailey home is licensed by the Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation; as such it is inspected quarterly. There are 30 CTHs in the Northwest Corner—not nearly enough to fill the need," says Jean.

Each of the "ladies," as the Baileys call their family members, has a case manager, with specialists available. Each has a program with specific goals; Jean keeps a daily record of each client's progress. Alberta, Susan, and Nancy work at LARC, a sheltered workshop in Torrington run by the Litchfield County Association for Retarded Citizens. The contracted work varies—sewing, filing, assembling, sorting, etc. The "Bailey Ladies" have also worked (with a special trainer) on community jobs—in a pet store and at the Cornwall Inn, for example. In addition, assigned chores at home are part of their daily routine. All three have won medals in the Special Olympics. Other recreation includes attending town gatherings, Indian powwows, bowling, bingo, walks, and shopping.

I enjoyed a visit to the Bailey home recently. Alberta joined us in the kitchen for the interview, quietly contributing to the proceedings. Then Nancy and Susan came home from work, warmly greeted me, and chatted before disappearing for some quiet time. At the end of my visit, I was treated to a tour of the ladies' bedrooms—cozy and full of momentos and collections reflecting each occupant's interests and comforts.

Jean spoke of the difficulty of "keeping up with the many and varied challenges of normalized living," particularly since she and Bob are getting older. Their biggest problem is getting respite care for overnight or even for an occasional afternoon or evening. But when asked about the joys and rewards that come from this part of their lives, Jean did not hesitate. "That comes when one of the girls accomplishes even a minor improvement in her way of life," and then she added, "...and the kisses and hugs we get." Bob and Jean could use some help. Anyone who would like to learn more about this opportunity should call them at 672-6041. Jean Bailey tells a departing visitor, "Yes this is a Community Training Home—the ladies have trained us well!"

—Peg Keskinen

THANKS, CORNWALL

My children and I moved to Cornwall Village about three and a half years ago. Sadly, we must leave. We count ourselves very fortunate to have been able to rent our home for that long. I am writing simply to say what a wonderful experience it has been for us and what incredibly fine neighbors and friends we leave behind.

The Village is a special place. I have always felt perfectly safe letting my children walk to friends', ride bikes, run with our dog (the thief of the neighborhood), and generally have free rein around here. As a single, working parent, it has been a great comfort to me to know that they would always be safe going to a neighbor's house for help if I were away.

We will miss your wonderful library and librarians. Ginny, in particular, has been a great friend and helper to my children, even calling my daughter in the evening with references for a term paper. The postmasters, the family services at St. Peter's, the Strawberry Social, the Bridge Dance, all the parades and carnivals, these have made for irreplaceable memories of our years in Cornwall. We love you and will miss you all.

—Cathy, Kristyn, Kevin, and Colin Reinhardt

P.S. We are only moving to Sharon.

ROCKY GREEN

I read with alarm the news from Anne Baren in last month's Chronicle that the "bright green and yellow spotted rock snake head on Kent Road in Cornwall Bridge" was in dire disrepair. Why, that is Rocky Green, as we Paul kids called him. In my family Rocky Green was a vital part of our lives between the wriggly ages of three and ten, when the long rides from New York to Cornwall on weekends were almost unendurable, but somewhere around Kent my parents would say, "Look for Rocky Green," and we would finally quiet and ungriggle and fixedly wait for his green-red froggy face to appear. Not only would he mean that there was a mere 15 or so minutes to go in the trip, but that somehow whimsy and mysticism lived beyond our child minds. For not even the adults knew when he had first appeared or how he had given his name.

If someone out there could take the time to re-froggy that glorious colorful creature, I would be glad to pay for the paint. Even though we are in California now, Cornwall is not far from our minds and Rocky Green remains a symbol of all that is magical about the town. Besides, there are kids out there who need to know that they are, finally, almost home.

—Caroline Paul

Send the paint/lunch-on-the-job bill to [me] at 387 Carolina St., SF, CA 94107.

RUSSELL IS MISSED

With the various letters of thanks for the brief life of Hedgerows Market, thanks should also be directed to Russ Sawicki and his family. They seemed to almost live at Hedgerows, working long hours day and night to bring the old building to new life. While it lasted, it was a pleasure to be able to have lunch and dinner there in the pleasant relaxed atmosphere Russ provided, and the carry-out food was a boon to many.

As for what West Cornwall needs, I don't think a general store is practical, given the competition both in terms of local convenience stores and area supermarkets. A restaurant/deli with good food and some staples could work if the food is good and the price is right. I am sure that the people in Cornwall and the surrounding area would go out of their way to support a moderately priced restaurant with a pleasant atmosphere. However, it would seem that a business like Hedgerows, starting from scratch, off a main highway, might take more than two years to become established.

Knowing how much Russ put into it, I know many people are sorry it did not work out for him and us.

—Paul Baren

LIBRARY SEeks OLD FRIENDS

The Library is on its way to raising its new building in the Village. One of our goals is to make it possible for everyone in the community to be part of the effort. We know too that people who have moved away or who spent summers here as children have strong memories of the Library and might well want to help in the building campaign.

Who are you? Where are you? Please let us know so that the Library can tell you about the plans for the new building and for growing the endowment. The Library's address is Box 126, Cornwall, CT 06753.

Anyone in town with ideas, names, and addresses of former Cornwall people (the Christmas card list?), please leave word with Ginny Potter at the Library. It will really be helpful—thanks!

—Lisa Lansing Simont
Events & Announcements

Memorial Day: During the week before Memorial Day, members of VFW Post 9856 will place flags at the graves of all of Cornwall's veterans. Memorial Day itself (May 31) will be observed as follows: At 9 A.M. a service in the North Cornwall Cemetery will be led by Charles Gold. Please bring your flowers to decorate the graves. At 10 A.M. the Seamen's Service will be held at the Covered Bridge. The Memorial Day parade will start at 11 A.M. followed by the traditional ceremony on the Town Green. In the event of rain, the ceremonies will be held at CCS. The annual Carnival—games, food, and fun—hosted by the Child Center and the United Church of Christ, will follow on the church grounds.

The Eighth Annual Bridge Dance, sponsored by the Fire Department, will be held on Sunday, May 30. Music will be provided from 7 to 11 P.M. by John Camp and his band Timider, and Karl Saliter will perform at 6 P.M. Great food will be available. Tickets in advance are $5 for adults and $4 for kids 10 to 16; $8 and $7 at the gate; children under 10 are free with a parent. No pets, please! Route 128 will be closed from 4 P.M. to midnight. Shuttle buses will run every five minutes to and from parking at CCS and the Firehouse on the east side of the bridge and on the west from Elm Tree lots on Route 7 just north of Cornwall Bridge.

A Bend & Stretch Clinic for seniors, offered by Visiting Nurse and Home Care Northw, will take place on Tuesdays from 9:30 to 10:30 A.M. at the UCC Parish House. The program includes balance exercises, weight training, moving and stretching, and time for group discussion. The six-week course, conducted by dance therapist Ruthellen Griffin with the assistance of Joseph Gwazdauskas, registered physical therapist, begins May 11 and runs through June 15. The clinic is free, but space is limited. Please register by calling 567-6000 or (800) 752-0215.

Financial Report

Our treasurer, Moneybags, is not a man to tolerate an ounce of fat in the expense ledger. His recent annual report showed costs of $6,400.00 (almost all from printing and postage). There were 291 donations (thank you very much). That was enough to hold us slightly in the black, and we're counting on you to keep it that way.

The Spring Frolic, a party to benefit the new Cornwall Library building, will be held at Mohawk Ski Lodge on Saturday, May 15, from 9 P.M. to 1 A.M. The 21-piece New Vintage Big Band will play music for all kinds of dancing from swing to rock to old favorites, and Mohawk will be fancifully festooned for the occasion. Admission to the fund-raiser is $60 per person and will include champagne and other drinks as well as desserts from Cornwall's gourmet cooks. For information call Marie Prentice at 672-6261.

Benefit Concert: Beth Samuels, alto, Carol Goodfriend, soprano, and Natasha Ulyanovska, accompanist, will present a recital for the benefit of Cornwall Extras for Kids on Saturday, May 29, at 5 P.M. in Cornubia Hall. The concert will include works by Purcell, Abt, Brahms, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Offenbach, and Dvořák. Tickets will be $15 for adults and $5 for children. Seating is limited, so residents should either send in a ticket request to Extras for Kids, P.O. Box 143, West Cornwall, CT 06796, or call the Rev. Scott Cady at 672-0143.

Spring Cleanup: Park & Rec. and The Cornwall Association are sponsoring the Third Annual Celebrate Spring Roadside Cleanup on Saturday, May 8. Meet at 10:30 A.M. at the West Cornwall post office for bags, gloves, and directions. Bring trash in by 1 P.M. for the Cornwall Garbage Awards for the strongest, oldest, largest, and most trash. Questions? Call Deirdre at 672-1123. The HVA’s River Cleanup begins at 10 A.M. at the same location; register with Judy at 491-4703.

Beautify West Cornwall: The West Cornwall Improvement Association invites you to a public meeting on Monday, May 17, at 7 P.M. at the Hughes Memorial Library to brain-storm ideas to improve the visual quality of the village. Please come and share your sparkling creativity.

Lifeguards Needed: Hammond Beach pays competitive wages plus paid rain days. Red Cross Lifeguard, First Aid, and C.P.R. required. For information call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

The Historical Society, having revised its bylaws, is holding its first ever membership meeting on May 8 at the Town Hall at 4 P.M. All are welcome.

Basketry Class: Cornwall Park & Rec. is sponsoring a ribbed egg basketry class. Adult students will weave a beautiful 10"x16"x16" basket featuring shaped ribs, a God’s-eye ear and a wrapped handle. The class will meet in two sessions: Friday, May 7, from 7 to 9 P.M. and Saturday, May 15, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. in the CCS art room. There is a limit of 15 students, and a materials fee of $25. Pre-register by phoning Jill Gibbons at 672-0033.

Art in Cornwall: At the National Iron Bank Park Riman will be showing photographs during the month of May. At the Cornwall Library Helen Migliacci’s exhibit of oil paintings will continue through May 15. Beginning May 17 and continuing until June 10, there will be an exhibit of selected works by CCS students at the Library. At the Consolidated School, the CCS student art show will be on view May 17 to 24. At the Wish House there will be an opening of a show of watercolors by Ellen Moon on May 22 from 6 to 8 P.M.

www.cornwallschool.org is a site you might be interested in visiting! Learn about our own CCS in words, pictures, and sound.

...and Our Apologies: The Editors regret that in their efforts to include all the many events in the April issue, they inadvertently omitted crediting Park & Rec. with sponsoring the Easter Egg Hunt, Shaker Basket and Gymnastics classes, Spring Hike, and Bird Walk; and Choices for the theater trip.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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