Something Special
A new Little League diamond, much-needed parking, a picnic area and a cinder walking track are in the works for part of the eight acres purchased by the Town east of Foote Field and the existing driveway off Route 4. The possibility for such improvements came in the form of a letter from the State Office of Policy and Management allocating a Small Town Economic Assistance Program Grant of $250,000 for funding the parking and recreation project. The parking area will accommodate about 40 cars and include a turnaround for buses.

Gordon Ridgway said the total cost of the work will have to await estimates by engineers, but he felt the big state grant should fund the project. Some day soon, he said, the new recreational area should be a “special place in the community.” —John Miller

Teeth for Town Plan
One of the top priorities in Cornwall’s Town Plan of Conservation and Development is to preserve Cornwall’s natural environment and rural landscape. The Planning and Zoning Commission recently adopted two regulatory tools to help achieve this goal. A “buildable area” zoning regulation was added to make sure that future development does not occur on land that is too wet, too steep, or would result in excessive reshaping of the natural landscape. In addition to protecting Cornwall’s scenic landscape, this regulation also serves to protect water quality and the natural environment.

The commission also recently adopted a “fee in lieu of open space” regulation to enhance opportunities for protecting open space and natural areas with future subdivision activity in town. Now, with future subdivisions, P&Z can either require the permanent protection of up to 15 percent of the subdivided land, or request payment by the applicant into a designated open space fund so that other land in town can be purchased as open space.

In pursuing implementation of the town plan, the commission has also established special study committees to: 1) enhance pedestrian safety and traffic calming in Cornwall Bridge, 2) simplify the permit requirements for certain business uses in the town business zones, 3) research the feasibility of a transfer-of-development-rights program, and, 4) update parking requirements.

This year the commission will also be initiating the preparation of a series of large-scale computerized maps that the commission and town residents can use to better document and understand important natural resources, as well as cultural resources such as historic structures and cemeteries.

The commission views this as a critical first step to updating the town plan in the coming years.

—Rick Lynn

After School Program—Yes!
There will be an after school program (henceforth to be known as the “Extended Day Learning Program”) when CCS reopens in late August. This from Park & Rec. director Bethany Thompson, who will be in charge.

The program was made possible by a $15,000 REAP (Rural Education Achievement Program) grant secured by Principal Kathleen Fitzgibbons. Funds from the grant will serve as seed money, and fees are expected to make the program self-sustaining and not affect the already tight town budget. —John Miller

The Country Wife
Dorothy Van Doren’s The Country Wife was first published in 1950. It is the first in a trilogy of breezy, often touching, memoirs that Van Doren wrote about her life in Cornwall and New York’s Greenwich Village, which include The Professor and I, and Men, Women and Cats (the last title of which echoes James Thurber’s Men, Women and Dogs). All of these once-popular books are now out of print, but they can still be found with a little effort at local bookdealers or on eBay. Each of the (continued on page 2)
relatively short chapters in The Country Wife—lovingly illustrated by Mimi Korach—is a little morality tale on the happy perils of life in the country and city. They are affectionate, wry tributes to the “double-life” many weekenders experience.

Van Doren is both the voice-of-reason and the survivor-who-lived-to-tell-the-tale. Her charming wistfulness is coupled with high anxiety, especially when she relates the first night she spent alone in her old house in Cornwall during a howling windstorm; and then when she grappled with a panicked night she spent in her old house in the city in their Model T; few, if any, roads were paved; and there was no stop & shop 20 minutes away. Mark and Dorothy and their two sons (always referred to as “the boys”) would never be mistaken for real farmers (Dorothy describes Mark as being a “late riser”), but they rejoiced in imagining they were. There was something of the pioneer in all of them, and this is what makes the book so engaging. They learn to tap syrup from their long row of ancient maples; they chop firewood; they make molasses; they learn from the multitude of crafts and chores (age almost nine, home schooled all her life) is taught by his mother, Deirdre. He studies math, and does a self-chosen unit project, in science or history, that develops his independent reading and writing skills. Margaret Tyler (age nine, second year of home schooling) uses a curriculum that concentrates by doing what interests her. Paris Fitz, is very positive about home schooling, and wants to work on the curriculum that she and her family do. She doesn’t follow any curriculum or pattern of schoolwork, but concentrates by doing what interests her.

James J. Vanasse, John P. Vanasse, Ophelia L. Vanasse to Paul Lincoln Cornell, Jr. Te., 344 acres on Ballyhack Road for $170,000. [Listed incorrectly in April.]

Bermice H. Merz to Bonney Brook, LLC, .78 acres on Kent Road for $19,000.

Mr. Madwom to William C. Gawel, Jr., 5.28 acres on Burwell Lane for $60,000.

John Ivan and Catherine Gualter to Elisabeth A. Mason and Paul H. Cohen, house and 6.5 acres at 53 Cream Hill Road for $395,000.

Robert C. Beetham to Gerard and Robin Mollica, house and 4.9 acres at 100 Kent Road for $335,000.

Thomas M. and Linda M. Cangiano to S. David Moche and Nancy Wolfson-Moche, house and 8,944 acres at 197 Great Hill Road for $800,000.

Judith Seaton Gates to Brian M. Mollica, house and land at 179 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for $185,000.

Roger Jackson to Mark J. and Nancy A. Hamilton, house and 1.254 acres at 364 Kent Road for $375,000.

Donald C. and Catherine Madigan to Michael L. and Carol Trevas Fleisher, buildings and 10,849 acres at 24 Flat Rocks Road for $675,000.

Home schooling is a growing preference for Cornwall parents. The Connecticut constitution states that parents are responsible for educating their children or seeing that they are educated. I have heard of at least eight home-schooling families in Cornwall, though there are probably more. I interviewed four Cornwall home-schoolers who are around my own age (14) and their parents.

I learned that there are as many ways of home schooling as there are home-schoolers. For instance, Silvia LaPorta (age 13, seventh year of home schooling) uses a curriculum from the Maryland-based Calvert School, complete with tests and assignments. Arnon Fischer (age nine, second year of home schooling) is taught by his mother, Deirdre. He studies math, and does a self-chosen unit project, in science or history, that develops his independent reading and writing skills. Margaret Tyler (age almost nine, home schooled all her life) learns from the multitude of crafts and chores that she and her family do. She doesn’t follow any curriculum or pattern of schoolwork, but concentrates by doing what interests her.

Paris Costello (age almost 13, half a year of home schooling) bases her work on the curriculum that her seventh grade class at CCS uses, but goes more in-depth and adds other units. CCS’s principal, Dr. Fitz, is very positive about home schooling, and wants to make the experience the best possible for the students. She makes all the...
Letters to the Chronicle

(Re: last month’s article by Earl Brecher which praised the writer for saving Cornwall a million dollars)

“HAPPY IS GOOD”

Thanks, I guess…But you do know that lots of people were involved besides me. Whatever. The addition to CCS is growing like Topsy, so we can all be happy or at least reasonably so. That condition is a good thing and, I for one, will be glad if it lasts for a long time.

—Biffie Dahl Estabrook

STUNNED!

I was stunned to read in April’s Chronicle Earl Brecher’s praise of Ms. Estabrook and her role in the school building fiasco. Certainly she helped engineer significant change, but not for good. And certainly not for a savings of a million dollars.

Imagine, Earl, you go to the store to buy something and I go and make exactly the same purchase. If I pay less than you did, I have saved money. When Cornwall abandoned the first plan to adopt a second, there were no savings because there was no attempt to purchase the second time what had been voted in the first referendum. Consider these reductions: under the second plan there is a substantial reduction in the amount of new construction, resulting in less instructional space for fine arts as well as considerably less space in the gymnasium and kitchen facilities. The current plan is to lay the gym floor with a lower grade wood, make it two feet short of a standard middle school basketball court, and to side the exterior with a cheaper material that does not match the existing building. Add to these examples the road not moved. Deduct roughly a half million dollars spent under the first referendum then lost as a result of the second. Furthermore, in the last 15 years our school has twice undergone major renovations but in neither plan has there been a provision for a cafeteria.

Now Earl, where is the purported $1 million savings? Clearly the purchase planned in the first referendum is not the one being made in the second; they are very different. Yet as different as they are, there is little difference in the taxpayers’ burden. Unfortunately, Ms. Estabrook’s obfuscation resulted in a costly two year delay. Kudos for these Ophidian maneuvers, Earl? I think not.

—Brian Kovanych

SAVINGS? AT WHOSE EXPENSE?

As a parent to three students at CCS, I can’t help commenting on Earl Brecher’s “Recollections of a Selectman” in the April Chronicle. At one point Earl Cheers the supposed million dollar savings resulting from the changes made to the initial school construction project. My response to that is that some money isn’t worth saving! The CCS campus has a road running right through the middle of it. We had an opportunity and a plan that would have corrected this situation. Instead the building committee was directed to “save some money” and so, rather than moving the road, we wound up with all the parking and drop off being moved across the street from the school and thus significantly increasing the foot traffic crossing the road. Hopefully tragedy will never strike, but if it does, I doubt that many will be looking back so fondly at the money saved. Lastly, let us thank those truly deserving of praise, the members of the building committee for all their selfless efforts on the town’s behalf throughout this entire process.

—Peter Busby

NEED HELP?

Did you know that half of the new “bump” on the backside of the Town Office building is the new Social Services Office? It’s a lovely little place where the Cornwall Cupboard Food Pantry is housed. Those in need of food and grocery items do not need an appointment and are welcome to “shop” anytime the offices are open, Monday through Thursday, 9 A.M. to 4 P.M.

I’m in the office, usually on Mondays, to assist folks of all ages who are in need of support services. Are you a parent with kids driving you crazy? I have parenting resources to help! Need help paying for the rent or heating fuel? Are you a senior struggling with the cost of prescription medications? Do you need help with chores that have become too difficult for you to manage alone? I have resources that may be able to help. Did you know there is a program that pays the Medicare Part B premium for people with low fixed incomes? It could mean an extra $60.60 in your pocket each month! Does the house need some fixing-up? You may qualify for help! Transportation a problem? We have a Rural Transit bus with door-to-door service if you give them 24 hours notice! These are a few of the many resources available, so stop by and visit or call me at 672-2603.

—Jill Gibbons

Cornwall Social Services

The Mohawk Season

The sign on the door of the ski lodge said “Closed for the season. See you in November.” Inside there was evidence that carpenters were making some new tables as I made my way for an appointment with Carol Lugar, who runs the Mohawk Ski Area. I was met at her office by a suspicious Saint Bernard named Mauja, which, I was told, means “storm” in the Inuit language. Mauja settled down by a picture window overlooking the empty parking lot as Carol was saying that Mohawk’s 57th season had been “a good one in spite of some unexpected expenses.”

“Such as?” I asked.

“Such as,” she said, “the cost of liability went up 30 percent. Our insurance bill was $400,000.” (In spite of my somewhat limited mathematic aptitude, I figured out that it would take well over 13,000 lift tickets—at, say $30-a-shot—to come up with that much

bread. Ouch!) Total attendance for the season came to slightly under 100,000, which Carol said was about average.

The other big increase was in electricity. In the month of January alone it cost Mohawk $70,000 to heat the lodge, run the ski lifts, light up the trails at night, and make all that snow. There was still much snow visible in mid-April when I paid my visit and it can stick to the trails well into May. Carol Lugar is the daughter of the late Walter Schoenkneckt, who started Mohawk back in 1947 and who (continued on page 4)
(continued from page 3)

pioneered the process of snow-making.

So it was a good winter for Mohawk in spite of the extreme and prolonged cold. Business was particularly good over the Christmas holiday and during February. And over the next six months the staff will be working hard in this labor-intensive business getting Mohawk ready for the next season.

—John Miller

Events & Announcements

Town Meeting on Budget: On May 21 at 7:30 P.M. at Town Hall the annual town meeting will be held to vote on the fiscal year 2005 budget.

Memorial Day Observances will be held on May 31. A service in the North Cornwall Cemetery will begin at 9 A.M.; all are welcome to bring flowers. The Seaman’s service will be held at 10 A.M. at the Covered Bridge. The Memorial Day Parade and ceremonies will start at 11 A.M. Marchers should be at Hubbard Field at 10:30 A.M. The UCC and Child Center will hold their annual carnival on the church grounds following the ceremonies.

Auction Time! The Cornwall Child Center is holding its 13th annual auction at Mohawk on Saturday, May 1. This year’s auction will have its usual wide array of offerings from European vacation homes to tickets for theater and music events to gift certificates for restaurants and salons to locally grown produce and meat, handcrafted gifts and original artwork. The silent auction will begin at 3 P.M., and the $10.00 admission includes a beer and wine reception, hors d’oeuvres, and live music. The live auction gets underway at 5 P.M. A catalogue of items is available at www.cornwallct.org. For more information call Emilie Pryor at 672-4226 or Jean Vitalis at 672-6880.

But Seriously, Folks

Our treasurer asks us to remind you again that the Chronicle has no endowment, receives no grants from the Town or anyone else and does not stockpile funds. So we need your continued response to the appeals in this space to meet our modest but ongoing expenses. Please send in a small donation if you have not done so recently.

Mothers’ Day Bake Sale: Extras for Kids will hold its annual bake sale at both Baird’s and the West Cornwall Market on Saturday, May 8, beginning at 7:30 A.M. Extras for Kids is a not-for-profit organization helping to enrich the children of Cornwall through curricular and extra-curricular programs.

The Sixth Annual Spring Bird Walk, sponsored by Park and Rec., will take place on Saturday May 8, from 7:15 to 9:30 A.M. and will again be led by Art Gingert, our resident naturalist and photographer. Bring binoculars and scope/tripod if you have them, and wear waterproof boots. We plan to meet at the intersection of Rattlesnake and Cream Hill Roads and then do a short carpool up to Ruxford Road, before enjoying a “bird hike” downhill through the meadows and woodlands of Hedgerows Farm. No rain date. For details and to reserve a place, call Carla Bigelow at 672-0283.

The Scholastic Book Fair will be held at the CCS library May 10 to 19, from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. daily. Profits from the annual affair are used by the PTA for various educational programs and playground equipment. This year’s book fair will feature a “Buy a Book to Donate to the Cornwall Free Library” option.

The Child Center summer camp program for ages three to six will take place July 5 to 29, Mondays through Thursdays, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Any questions, call Pam Brehm at 672-6989.

Civil Rights Safe Zone: There will be a meeting at Town Hall on Friday, May 7, at 7:30 P.M. to discuss the issue of civil rights and to whom we will send the petition recently signed by over 100 people. Questions? Call the Zinzers at 672-6400.

Hazardous Waste Collection Day is on Saturday, May 22. Further information and permits may be obtained at the Selectmen’s Office (672-4959) through May 20. The transfer station is now accepting cell phones and ink cartridges for disposal.

The Acting Class sponsored by Park and Recreation will hold its show on Tuesday, May 25, at 6 P.M. at Town Hall.

Children’s Picture Book author and illustrator Susanna Gretz (daughter of Helen Tennant) will read from and talk about her books at the Cornwall Library on Saturday, May 15, at 11 A.M. Susanna, a resident of London, England, is the creator of more than 30 books for children. It’s Your Turn, Roger won the 1985 British Smarties award, similar to our Caldecott and Newbery awards. Ages four and up.

Library Pajama Party: Kids of all ages are invited to a pajama party on May 15 at 4 P.M. to hear a reading by Cornwall author Sally Cook of her book, Good Night Pillow Fight, illustrated by Laura Cornell. Sally and Laura will also present a slideshow The Making of a Picture Book. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library.

Talks on Separation of Church and State will be held at the UCC on May 16 and 23 at 11:30 A.M. William Sloane Coffin (on video) and Gordon Bates, UCC Associate Conference Minister for Justice and Witness, will be the speakers.

Art In Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, Sari Goodfriend’s show of photography remains on view through May 8. Beginning May 10, the Library will be filled with the 6th Annual Show of CCS Student Work. At the National Iron Bank, Kelley Futurer will be showing oil paintings during May.