A Taxing Season

The town budget for fiscal 2019–2020 will be presented at a town meeting on May 24. The proposal as of mid-April calls for an overall increase of $112,787 to $7,068,978, which represents a 1.62 percent increase.

Looking at the main component categories (number-phobes are welcome to skip to the last paragraph now), the Board of Selectmen’s operating budget would increase by $64,473 to $2,066,500 (+3.22 percent). Notable increases in town employee health insurance and pension benefits, which were more than offset by projected reductions in workers compensation and public liability insurance costs. The capital spending budget would increase from $595,000 to $670,000, while the town debt service budget would be reduced slightly from $360,873 to $354,215 (-1.84 percent). Capital projects include planned alterations to the West Cornwall firehouse. Also on the agenda are upgrades to town buildings and equipment replacement, like oil tanks and boilers, as part of a multi-year project to do a little each year and avoid confronting major emergencies.

Finally, although the CCS budget would increase by $112,825 (+5.20 percent), the Region One share paid by the town would decrease by $142,852 (-8.73 percent), resulting, together with other smaller line item changes, in an overall Board of Education reduction of $20,027 (-50 percent).

The increase in the grand list by .83 percent would absorb much of the proposed budget increase at the current mill rate, with the balance to be covered by a small mill rate increase or from reserves, to be determined. Based on this, there is little chance that Cornwall will have to resort to tolls on our roads or bridges (although Ingersoll’s Toll House stands ready) or congestion pricing in Cornwall Bridge. That’s a good thing.

—Tom Barrett

Got Milk?

Do you know what’s in that glass of milk you just poured to go with chocolate chip cookies? If you’re drinking raw milk from Calf and Clover Dairy, rest assured you’re having a glass of milk that brims with nutrition, protein, minerals, amino acids, is hormone free, and delicious. This is milk that comes from Jersey and Normandy cows. Yes, rich with butter fat, but that’s actually good for you and the kids. Pasteurization of milk and milk products probably saved lives when first introduced, because milk production could often be below the standards raw milk farmers follow today. It’s a strict code, and if the milk has even a tiny problem it doesn’t get passed and it doesn’t get sold. But, as important as pasteurization is, there are drawbacks. The process kills bacteria in milk that could make you sick, but it also kills beneficial bacteria, probiotics, and many vitamins and minerals. “Some research has shown that raw milk actually helps reduce allergies in children and adults who may suffer from ‘milk woes’ like stomach issues,” said Sarah and Jeff

(continued on page 2)
Free Books

As our present library celebrates its 150th anniversary, we appreciate its lovely, calm spaciousness and all those books, DVDs, magazines, and CDs which we can borrow free, as well as computers, art shows, lectures, and film presentations. It wasn’t always so; in the library’s earliest iterations one needed to subscribe or pay a fee to the Cornwall Library Association (CLA) in order to take out a book. Created in 1869, the first library was in the study of the Rev. E.C. Sanford.

Of course there had been several previous small libraries which didn’t last long, like the United Proprietary Library which was out of existence by 1804. In 1826 the 50 members of the Public Library of Cornwall could take out a volume (116 books in 1833) from the schoolhouse south of the South Meeting House. North Cornwall’s two libraries rented books out to the highest bidder.

The CLA endured the longest of them all moving to the office of Frederick Kellogg, Esq. in 1874. But in 1908 J.E. Calhoun provided $25,000 for its own building, now our town hall and meeting room where we also vote. The bird case still visible in the first selectman’s office is an icon in the memories of those using that library when they were children.

The library was so important to children in the ’30s, ’40s and ’50s. Many like Lisa Lansing, Janet Walker, and Susan Fox had learned to read at home but came at least weekly to sit on the floor with friends, pulling out kids’ books from the bottom shelves. For Susan it was crucial as she was only allowed to bring one toy and one book when she came to Cornwall in the summer. Lisa remembers coming through neighbor’s yards from her grandmother’s to meet Sally Foote and Libby McCleod, reading the Betsy Tacy series together. She also signed the book cards herself with attempts at writing.

At one time, books and the bird case were housed upstairs, along with items in the historical society’s vault including World War uniforms (says Gordon Ridgway) and perhaps John Sedgwick’s sword (noted Amanda Fenn Ogren). John Calhoun recalls leaning over the balcony railing to peer down at the books below. But it was deemed unsafe so eventually people were not allowed to climb the spiral stairs. Ted Cheney and Colin Gold were getting a video and looked on in envy when Graham Waterston was allowed to go up. Years earlier Steve Foote had Pat Hare distract Miss Marsh with questions so he could go up, but theploy didn’t work.

John Calhoun shares a story about Miss Marsh, who was librarian for many years. She was very bow-legged and used to walk from her home on Pine Street (now the Bardots’) to the library each morning. Apparently if one was proceeding into the village from routes 4 or 128, they could see the valley right between her knees as she walked. Amanda Fenn Ogren remembers a woman from Columbia University who came one summer to put in the Dewey Decimal System and lived in Rumsey Hall during this reorganization. There is a picture of Amanda and her brother on the library porch, which was turned into the children’s room in 1965.

Some in town were happy to leave the sunny but cramped space in that former porch when the new library replaced the Calhoun version. The new children’s room is dedicated to Elizabeth Hubbard Lansing, who agreed to that only if Emily Marsh’s picture was also present. Now that room and the whole library can carry on the 150-year tradition of enjoying books. —Ann Gold

Prickly Neighbors

We share our Cream Hill “compound” with many creatures, many of whom we’ve come to think of as our friends, even family, like our two porcupines.

About two years ago we noticed a porcupine grazing in the field below the house. Like a diminutive soldier of Birnam Wood, this bushy, slow-moving creature made its way along the grasses, finding something delectable en route. Apparently clover blossoms are a treat.

Then last fall we realized we had two porcupines. Towards the late afternoon they’d be way up in a slender tree or out on a narrow branch munching the area under the bark called the cambrium. They are prodigious chewers, leaving branches white and stripped of bark with tiny teeth marks ringing the wood, while any remaining bark appears shredded. They’d work their way up or out along the tree, looking like a tree bole, except with a gauzy, almost nimbus-like light filtering through their quills, some 30,000 barbed and extremely sharp quills, according to Paul Rezendes, author of Tracking & The Art of Seeing. If they noticed us, they’d nimbly work their way down and hurry off. We named them Porky and Pinnie.

Two months ago they disappeared. Porcupines are homebodies and stay put. Concern turned to angst. We read up on possible porcupine disasters: they fall out of trees quite regularly, breaking bones or even being stabbed by their own quills. Perhaps a great horned owl snatched one or both of them out of a tree and dropped them on the ground. Worse yet, they are prey to fishers for whom, according to the American Museum of Natural History, they are a “…favorite prey…. First, a fisher will circle the animal, nimbly dodging lashes of the heavily quilled tail. Then it will dart in to bite the porcupine’s unquilled face, attacking repeatedly until subdued.” Dire prospects!

Then a few weeks ago I noticed the familiar, round shape in one of the areas they always frequent. Joy! A few days later both were spotted on the dead tree spanning a rocky crevasse. All is well. They are back—after a brief stay in the south? Who knows!

Docile as porcupines are, they may even take to being pets, according to...
our Audubon booklet on mammals. However, we keep our distance—wild creatures deserve our respect and space. Plus, there’s our Welsh terrier, who tore after one of them…and you know the rest.

— Honora Horan

Cornwall FMS Student from Kaua‘i

Hawaiians in the 1800s captured colorful birds and would release them after plucking a few feathers; hundreds of thousands of feathers were gathered to make a single cloak. Such was a cloak given to Humehume upon his return to Kaua‘i after many years in New England, including Cornwall. Humehume was a classmate of the more famous Cornwall Foreign Mission school student Henry Opukaha‘ia.

This story is equally as tragic and fascinating. The last paramount chief of Kaua‘i, Kaumuali‘i sent his first-born 4-year-old son Humehume to New England for an education in 1804 on the ship Hazard as Captain Rowan’s ward. The Kaua‘i chief knew his world had changed with the arrival of British, American, and Russian navies and traders in the late 1770s. Kaua‘i would need a chief schooled in the new ways.

Following 18 months at sea, the Hazard landed at Providence, R.I. After embezzling most of the education funds, Captain Rowan engaged Samuel Cotting of Worcester to educate Humehume. They chose to “westernize” the boy and named him George Prince.

By his teenage years, Humehume was ready to escape virtual slavery at Cotting’s school and enlisted in the U.S. Marines where he participated in sea battles in the War of 1812. He was wounded, recovered, and discharged. In 1816, Hawaiian Benjamin Corrae found Humehume at the Boston Navy Yard and invited him to join other Hawaiians. They traveled to New Haven to meet Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University.

Dwight arranged for housing and education through the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) until the Foreign Mission School (FMS) opened in 1817. The first class of the FMS in the spring of 1817 included seven Hawaiians, a Native American, and a native of Calcutta, India.

Humehume excelled at academics but interactions with fellow Hawaiians were often strained. Records show differences in social status and Humehume’s non-conversion to Christianity caused disputes. The Foreign Mission School received a heavy blow in February 1818 with the death of its star pupil Henry Opukaha‘ia.

In October 1819, the first Christian mission group, which included Humehume, sailed from Boston Harbor to the island of Hawaii. The reception was lukewarm. Negotiating with a new chief proved tedious, but eventually permission was granted for establishing a mission on Hawaii and Oahu. Humehume married a British/Hawaiian and sailed to Kaua‘i.

Teacher Samuel Ruggles describes his reunion thus:

“At Waimea the Chief Kaumuali‘i was in his finest cape and feathered helmet and he had another cloak for his son. As George entered the door his father arose, collapsed him in his arms and pressed his nose to his son’s after the manner of the country; both were unable to speak for some time. This scene was truly affecting. I know not when I have wept more freely. The chief welcomed the group and granted land for their use.”

Humehume’s adjustment to island life was conflict—should he return to Hawaiian ways or stay with strict missionary teaching? Occupying his mind was the health of his wife and newborn son, both weak from a long birth.

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In 1821, his father was kidnapped by the new Hawaiian chief and Humehume led a rebellion. Outnumbered and outgunned, the group failed. Humehume was captured and sent away with his family to Honolulu where his remarkable life ended of influenza at 26. His legacy continues today as a Kaua‘i native hero.

The 200th anniversary of the travels and arrival of the first Hawaiian missionaries will be celebrated starting in October with Hawaiian music and a one-man show by Moses Goods as Henry O. The event is sponsored by the Cornwall Historical Society and UCC.

— Jayne Ridgway

Letters to the Chronicle

CROW FOOLERY

Never doubt the capacity of crows to get bored and do crazy things. One early April day, I got out of my car at the Country Market in search of some lunch when I heard an angry crow cawing and saw paper napkins skimming off the porch in the wind. A crow had evidently been drawn to the porch by the flapping of a napkin halfway out of its dispenser on one of the porch tables.

What would any crow do at a time like this? Attack the dispenser and rip out as many of the annoying napkins as possible, that’s what.

Inside the store, a determined employee was heading for the door armed with a broom. She brought the dispenser indoors with her after chasing the crow away. When I came out with my sandwich, the crow was berating us all at the top of his lungs from the safety of a nearby tree.

— Lisa L. Simont

DIANE IS COOL!

Many Cornwall community service organizations rely on having a wide variety of volunteers. I can specifically speak about the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department. The department responds to emergencies 24/7. This is possible due to the flexible work schedules of many volunteers. Thank you to the employers who grant leniency to our members. A shining example of this is Prudential in Hartford. CVFD member (fire police, EMR and more) Diane Beebe is employed at Prudential. Prudential has encouraged her volunteering roles as part of the CVFD, Chronicle, UCC, Civilian Emergency Response Team, and the state animal response team. She was recently named Cornwall’s emergency management director. In 2018 Diane amassed 845 volunteer hours, making her the Prudential volunteer of the year! She was even featured on a billboard in Times Square. Way to go Diane!

— Elizabeth Ridgway

SHOE DRIVE

CCS is collecting your gently worn, used, and new shoes to raise funds for the Community Kitchen of Torrington, our area’s most active soup kitchen that provides hot, nutritious meals to the food insecure every day. Donated shoes will be resold or repurposed by small businesses in developing countries, providing a source of income to individuals and families. Look for a large box in the front door alcove at CCS. If you have questions or bulk amounts to donate, contact Emilie Pryor at 672-4226.

— Emilie Pryor

Cornwall Briefs

• Vacancy for Transfer Station Attendant. Contact the selectman’s office for an application form and job description.

• A Town Meeting for the budget will be held on May 24 at 7:30 p.m. at Cornwall Consolidated School.

• Hazardous Waste Day on June 1 at the Falls Village Town Garage. Details available soon. Participants must acquire a ticket beforehand at the selectman’s office.

• Applications for Tax Abatement are due June 1. They may be picked up at the town offices.

• The West Cornwall Septic Study Committee met and is considering possible sites and tentative price figures prior to making a recommendation to the selectmen. It can then apply for a USDA grant for the project. After that has occurred, there will be an informational meeting in the summer and a conceptual vote.

• The Economic Development Committee will hold a Meet and Greet business gathering for all town businesses and non-profit leaders on Friday, May 17, at 5 P.M. at the Pottery Store at 415 Sharon Goshen Turnpike. For details call Bianka at 672-2969.

Events & Announcements

For updates, changes, and additions, check the online calendar at cornwallchronicle.org or cornwallec.org (it is the same calendar). And for reminders, see the Chronicle Facebook page.

Art at the Dump will take place Saturday, (continued on page 4)
May 4, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, May 5, from 10 a.m. to noon at the town garage.

Motherhouse Events:
Family Country Dance on Saturday, May 4, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the town hall. Suggested donation is $5 to $8 per child and $10 to $15 per adult.

Keeping a Family Cow will be held on May 25 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and includes a potluck lunch. Cost is $35/person or $50/family (up to four persons.) For more information or to register call 860-672-0077 or email farmer@rlocalfarm.com.

Region One Budget Referendum Vote will be held on May 7 at town hall from 12 to 8 p.m. Absentee ballots are available in the town clerk’s office.

21st Annual Bird Walk led by Art Gingert on Saturday, May 11, (rain date May 12) from 7 to 9:30 a.m. Limited to 12 participants. For more details and to register, please call 860-672-0077. Please don’t wear white; waterproof shoes a must.

Art in Cornwall: The following exhibits will continue through May: Cornwall Library has Joan Edler’s “Verdant Moments” until May 25; Souterrain Gallery is showing Ellen Moon’s exhibit “Home and Away” of plein air watercolors through June 2; Toll House Gallery has works by Donald Bracken, Lennart Swede Ahrstrom, and photographs by Ian Ingersoll. The UCC Parish House opening of Joan Hinchman’s photographs “More Than Meets the Eye” will be on Sunday, May 12, at 11:30 a.m. The exhibit will be up until June 23.

The Democratic Town Committee will hold a meeting on Sunday, May 12, at 5 p.m. at the library.

A Blood Pressure Clinic will be held on Monday, May 13, from 10 to 1 p.m. in the UCC Day Room.

Cornwall Park and Recreation Events:
Monthly Senior Luncheon will be held

Know Your Sources

We know ours, sources of financial support, that is. It’s you! A dollar a day keeps the Chronicle in play. Thanks!

Tuesday, May 14, at the Parish House of the UCC. Cost is $8 per person. Please RSVP to Jen Markow at pcrnwall@gmail.com or call 672-4071.

Morning Coffee, Confections, and Conversations on May 28 at 9 a.m. at the Parish House. Free. No RSVP.

Applications to the Cornwall Woman’s Society Educational Fund Committee must be completed by May 15. A sum of $2,000 is available to every high school graduate from Cornwall for continuing their postgraduate education. Applications are available at the town hall, Cornwall Library, and Housatonic Valley Regional High School. The requirements are a completed application, high school transcript, two character references, and a personal letter from the student to the committee. Contact Pat Thibault for an application and for an answer to any questions at 672-6078.

At the Cornwall Library
The Cornwall Library is celebrating its 150th anniversary on May 18 at the library from 4 to 6 p.m. (See insert and be sure to respond.)

Memorial Day Book Sale will run for three days over the weekend of May 25: Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Monday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (closed during the parade). If you have gently used books of general interest to donate, please drop them off at the library.

Farm Markets to Open:
Cornwall COOP Farm Market will begin May 18 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will run every Saturday through October on the Cornwall Village Green.

The Original Cornwall Farm Market in West Cornwall will have its opening day on Saturday, May 18. It will run through October every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the grounds of the Wish House in West Cornwall.

Annual Canoe and Kayak Slalom Race sponsored by Housatonic Canoe and Kayak Squad (HACKS) will be held Sunday, May 19, at the Covered Bridge in West Cornwall from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. This is the oldest run slalom race in the Northeast and is part of NESS (New England Slalom Series.)

Kindergarten registration for the 2019–2020 school year will be held on Tuesday, May 21. Any child turning 5 years old on or before December 31, 2019 is eligible. Parents should call the school office at 672-6617 to schedule a time for their child to visit the school. Parents need to bring their child’s official immunization record, birth certificate, and proof of residency.

Memorial Day Festivities: Monday, May 27, a commemorative service at the North Cornwall Cemetery will be led by Virginia Gold at 9 a.m. Flowers are requested to decorate the graves. At 10 a.m. the Seaman’s Memorial will take place at the Covered Bridge. A parade followed by ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. at the town green. The carnival will be held after the ceremony on the grounds of the UCC.

Cornwall Child Center Prom Night fundraiser will be held at 6 p.m. on June 1 at the Torrington Country Club. (See insert.)

Spring Newcomer Gathering hosted by the Cornwall Association will be held at the home of a member on June 1 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. In order to have a smaller, more intimate event to personally welcome you, it is by invitation only. This is for anyone new to Cornwall within the last three years. If you would like to be invited, please send an email to info@cornwallassociation.org and we will send you details about the gathering.

Hike at Trinity Preserve on June 1 from 10 a.m. to noon, sponsored by the Cornwall Conservation Trust.

THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

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