Editors’ Note
It’s unusual for editors of the Chronicle to feel the ground shifting under their feet as an issue is being written and prepared for publication. March 2020, however, was different. Stories, plans, and proposals changed almost daily as Cornwall confronted the novel coronavirus. What you have before your eyes is the way things were on March 20.

Staying Safe and Healthy
Cornwall and the Northwest Corner have responded to the coronavirus threat with precautionary diligence. Before the viral disease was declared a pandemic, both the town and the Region One School District heeded the warning that silence is wrong-headed in times like these and quickly posted advisory notices on the ‘net and in the press.

On March 10, with two proven cases of Covid-19 disease in the state, Gov. Ned Lamont declared a statewide emergency. On March 12, Superintendent Pam Vogel of Region One announced that schools would be closed for two weeks and distancing learning made available to students. The Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) weighed in early with a long, information-packed press release.

On March 12, Superintendent Pam Vogel of Region One announced that schools would be closed for two weeks and distance learning made available to students. The Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) weighed in early with a long, informative press release available on its website. On March 2, TAHD gathered the chief elected officials from its 20-member communities and briefed them on the status of the virus. (A listing of helpful and accurate websites appears at the end of this story.) Stress was placed on hygiene—wash those hands!—and common sense actions like coughing into elbows.

The selectmen have activated an emergency working group, led by Diane Beebe, the town’s emergency response coordinator, who will be posting on Facebook (search for Cornwall Emergency Management). The fire department, ambulance, and CCS leaders are involved as well in what will be weekly meetings, perhaps on Skype or FaceTime. Personal protective gear has been made available to CVFD volunteers who have contact on medical calls.

Beginning Monday, March 16, the town hall and town offices were closed to visitors, although staff will continue to work and respond to the public by phone and email.

By March 16, First Selectman Gordon Rigmaiden said he had heard from 15 people willing to be part of a reconstituted Citizens Emergency Response Team (CERT). The previous team was composed of older members of the community who are now in the high-risk group for coronavirus infection. The new volunteers were in training by mid-March.

Help is available for vulnerable older people who are ill or self-isolating at home who need groceries, prescriptions, and other necessities. Those with internet access may go to cornwallct.org and fill out a request form. Those without internet may call Social Services Director Heather Dinneen at 672-9315. She will arrange for deliveries. All requests should be made before 9 A.M. on Friday each week.

The Cornwall Food Bank will be closed to visitors, but deliveries can be made to families who need assistance. Call Heather. Also, those facing loss of income during this time of crisis can call Heather to see if state or federal assistance programs are available.

The Cornwall Library announced in mid-March that it will be closed until March 31 when the situation will be re-evaluated. Director Margaret Haske and her staff are looking into whether or not offering “curbside service” for patrons can be done safely. Call 672-6874 and ask for the status of this plan. Books, by the way, can be safely sanitized.

As I write, there is no way to determine how the coronavirus will progress. The importance of accurate information during this time of crisis can call Heather to see if state or federal assistance programs are available. Here are some links to websites both governmental and academic.

(continued on page 2)

### APRIL 2020

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* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

For additions and updates, visit www.cornwallchronicle.org
enough protected capacity for testing at sites around the state.

As of March 19, Nuvance was asking those who thought they were experiencing symptoms to call the Covid-19 Community Hotline at 888-667-9262 for a remote screening that could lead to specimen collection at a site in Danbury. Specimens were being evaluated off-site and results were not expected to be immediately available.

Meanwhile, Hartford HealthCare—the system that runs Torrington’s Charlotte Hungerford Hospital—seemed to be ahead of others in providing online virtual visits with healthcare providers. By March 17 Hartford Healthcare had also set up a drive-through test site at Charlotte Hungerford Hospital. As with Nuvance, the test was available only after pre-screening; prospective candidates were asked to call 860-972-8100 for a virtual appointment.

As testing ramped up, the count of positive cases in Connecticut was also expected to rise dramatically—increasing the demand for more testing. Staying apart/together through a screen seems the only safe way to diagnose this virus. It may have taken a global pandemic to usher it in, but the age of internet medicine seems to have finally arrived.

—Paul De Angelis

Educating for the Future

The Board of Education (BOE) and the staff at Cornwall Consolidated School (CCS) presented the budget for 2020–2021 to the Board of Finance (BOF) on March 12. The numbers reflect the dedication to excellence demonstrated daily at CCS to what seems to be a growing student body.

The budget shows a modest increase of 3.17 percent for CCS as the school pursues its emphasis on sustainability, social justice, and equality. There are currently 91 students at CCS, 16 of them tuition students from outside town. Interim Principal Jenny Law told the BOF that the faculty and staff have become skilled at pairing teachers with blended grade levels using available staff members with free hours to support the classes. “The goal,” Law said, “is to provide the best possible learning experience” for each child.

Some of the budget increase is due to the need to hire a part-time guidance counselor to help students whose social skills need help and whose problems are getting in the way of learning. The school psychologist focuses on special needs students.

Another uptick in expenditure comes from the need to replace 20 first-generation iPads with newer models. These devices are used by students, as are the new Chromebooks coming to fifth-graders in the fall.

The budget included $16,490 for a middle school sports and activities program, still under review by Region One. In addition, CCS will be paying more for internet security and building safety programs required by the region.

The BOE’s proposed bottom line for CCS is $2,562,911, an increase of $78,641 over the current year. Cornwall’s share of the high school, pupil services, and administrative budget is down $99,703 due to changes in the high school population.

The total education budget, therefore, shows a modest decrease of 0.53 percent, welcome news in our fiscally challenged times.

—Lisa L. Simont

Fifty Plus One Violins

From the April 2010 issue

When this Chronicle reporter heard that there was a man in Cornwall who owned about 50 violins, his ears pricked up at the news. But could it be true? A good violinist would probably own one good instrument and perhaps a spare, but why 50?

The rumor turned out to be true. One more than true: Bill Beeman actually owns 51 violins.

Bill is an affable man with an easy smile and a passion for violins. He collects violins. He repairs violins. He talks violins—all this in whatever time is left over after earning a living.

Bill’s collection started in 2005 when he had a chance to buy a violin that had been repaired and restored by his great-great-grandfather, Henry Ward Beeman. Research revealed that H. W. Beeman, a versatile New Preston craftsman, had made “60 violins, 8 cellos, and one viola…as a hobby in his leisure time during the winter months” (J. H. Fairfield, Known Violin Makers). Although an amateur, H. W. Beeman’s production could be of top quality. Another reference work states that the famous Fritz Kreisler had two favorite violins. One he called his “Beeman.” The other was a Stradivarius.

Then Margaret Beeman, a cousin, gave Bill three large wooden crates of “violin stuff” that had been passed down in the family for years. These included Henry
Letters to the Chronicle

SANDWICH DREAMS: An Invitation
I invented a sandwich in my sleep last night! When I woke up, I could still see it clearly in my mind: four pieces of thinly sliced bread, with thick purees of peas, beets, and green beans in the three spaces in between.

The bread would ideally be dark, to highlight the bright colors of the purees. Not pumpernickel, which is too hard and would squish out the fillings. And those purees, seasoned to bring out their flavors, would have to be somewhat firm, so you didn’t wind up with moosh all over your hands.

You’d cut it diagonally, of course. Wouldn’t it be beautiful? And tasty? (OK, and labor-intensive.) I’m not sufficiently schooled in culinary matters (or maybe I have too many other obligations on my plate) to figure out the purees. But I can dream, can’t I?

Anyone want to give it a try?
—Carol Schneider

Sandwiches are much more interesting than toast
—Mary Schieffelin

LET’S GET SERIOUS ABOUT RECYCLING
For decades now I have heard complaints from our recycling professionals, aka “the guys at the dump,” about people who don’t follow the rules. Examples include:

• Not flattening cardboard boxes or trying to throw cardboard in with household trash
• Throwing away peanut butter or mayonnaise jars that haven’t been cleaned
• Throwing bulk waste in with household trash, bringing paint cans in without lids, and throwing Christmas paper into the paper box.

I could go on. If we really are going to be committed to doing something about the environmental crisis, we have to start at home. I would favor a “pay as you go” plan for our recycling center. Every other utility bill I pay lets me save by being conservation about my resource use. I see no difference between trash disposal and other utilities. They all involve resource use, waste, and conservation. Those who waste the most should have to pay more.
—Anna Timell

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

Cornwall High School Seniors may apply for the Cornwall Woman’s Society educational monetary gifts by May 15. It doesn’t matter which high school: private, public, local, or distant. Gifts must be used to further educational plans in the first year after graduating. Get applications from the Cornwall Library, your school, or email nitacolgate@outlook.com.

Election Day Postponed. At press time, the Chronicle learned that the primary election set for April 28 has been postponed until June 2. Town Clerk Vera Dinneen and the registrars of voters will revise the scheduled dates and deadlines. Check the May Chronicle for updates.

National Iron Bank Cornwall Bridge lobby doors will be closed until the current health emergency has subsided. However, the drive-up teller is available, as well as the night depository and ATM. For further questions about how the bank can serve customers, contact Ronald Goldstein at 672-6623.

July Tennis sign-ups have begun. The Cream Hill Lake Association hosts the five-week program for adults and kids who play weekday mornings starting Monday, June 29. Non-members of CHLA under 18 are welcome. Contact Todd Piker at tpiker@gmail.com if you want to hone your game. Some scholarship funds are available through the town’s Park and Rec program to help with the $12 per hour fee.

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