

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

DOCUMENTS SCANNED AND UPLOADED

BY THE

CORNISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SOME NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

When did the Highway Department, as we know it today, begin in Cornish?

Barbara Rawson, in her book *History of Cornish, New Hampshire*, stated that it started in 1931 with Clayton Bartlett serving as one road agent, responsible for all the roads. This replaced the earlier system where individuals were selected to supervise particular sections and report to the Selectmen.

It is worth noting however, for the year ending in 1899, for the first time in the annual Town Reports, W.L. Chadbourne was cited as Highway Agent and included with the list of Town Officials.

This was not repeated in subsequent annual reports. Reports from what was termed "Surveyors of the Roads" continued. In the one for 1914, for example, thirty-three districts were cited along with expenses submitted to the Selectmen.

For the report ending 1910, there was a warrant article "to see if the Town will vote to return the highway agent system and elect agents therefor." This article must have failed because reports continued from the Surveyors.

A change definitely occurred in 1919 as Highway Agents John Anderson, T.R. Lawrence, and M.B. Lindsay were included as Town Officials and financial reports were included. This practice has continued to the present day.

It is not clear how responsibilities for the Highway Agents may have changed from 1919 to 1931. But it is clear that Surveyors of the Highways were not included from 1919 on. But they were responsible for road maintenance for most of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century.

That system seemed to work well although there were difficulties at times. For example, in 1869, an Eri Richardson sued the town for injuries "on a highway near Cornish Flat" for \$600. The case went to the Sullivan County court, and William Balloch, described as the Agent for court cases, was pleased to report that the town won the case.

Interesting to speculate on the reason for the shift from individuals responsible for specific roads to a centralized service from a road agent. Perhaps the reason can be traced to a change in the basic method of transportation, from horse to

automobile. Easy to imagine that a trip on horse-back would have been easier when dealing with road problems. A horse could be maneuvered around deep ruts, for example, whereas a car would have been stuck in mud.

Going back in time before the Surveyors approach, roads were created and maintained by settlers on and abutting their property. This was the case for the Chase family that created a road that eventually led to Hanover. In Cornish, it became known as the Chase Road and corresponds to the present-day Route 12. Later there was the Cornish Turnpike Corporation, created in 1808, that connected the Turnpike at Newport with the Cornish Bridge and Windsor, Vermont. This was a toll road.

The following is a list of Road Agents, with their beginning dates of service, as listed in the Town Reports.

1. W.L. Chadbourne, 1899(apparently only one year)
2. John Anderson, T.R. Lawrence, M.B. Lindsay(1919)
3. T.R. Lawrence, Jesse Rollins(1922)
4. T.R. Lawrence, John Anderson(1923)
5. T.R. Lawrence, C.F. Chase(1925)
6. T.R. Lawrence, C.F. Chase, Marvin Lindsay(1926)
7. None listed 1927-1930
8. Clayton Bartlett(1931)
9. Harry Nelson(1936)
10. Charles Chase(1938)
11. Harry Nelson(1939)
12. Hiram Hawkins(1940)
13. Harry Nelson(1941)
14. Lawrence Hunt(1942)
15. George Geer(1944)
16. Robert LaClair(1963)
17. Harold Morse(1979)
18. Robert LaClair(1970)
19. Harold Morse(1972)
20. Charles DeAngelis(1994)
21. Albert Earle(1997)
22. Tom Spaulding(1998)
23. Dan Flynn(2007)
24. Kyle Witty(2012)
25. Wayne Grey(2014)

Compiled by Laird Klingler

CHS Librarian

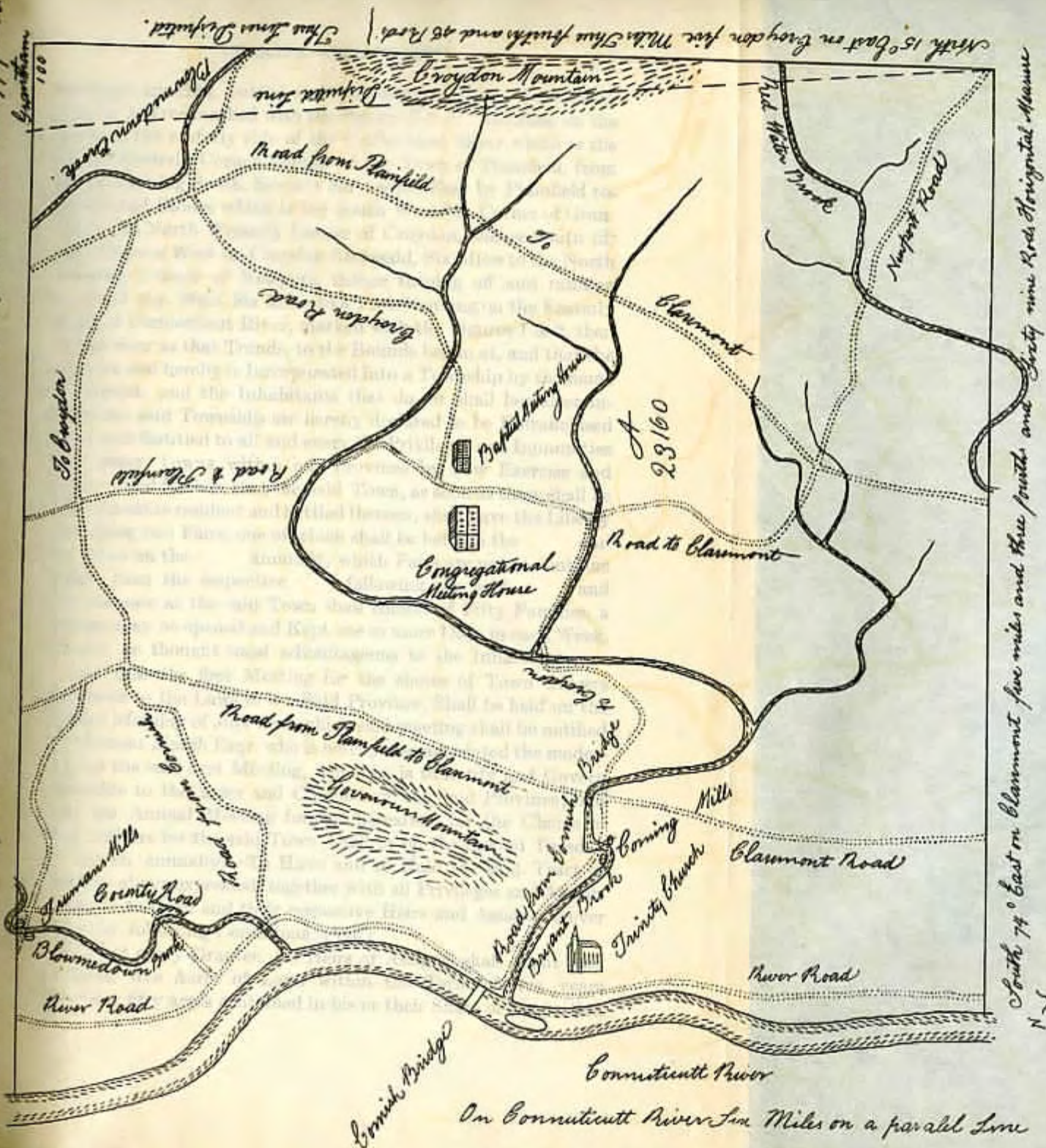
March, 2018

FOLLOWING IS AN EARLY, 1805,

MAP OF CORNISH ROADS

TAKEN FROM CHILD

South 76° East on Plainfield for Mile three fourth and then Road Thence on Grantham Eastward 1/4 of a Mile



This Plan Made and Returned with Surveyors Office Agreeable to an act of the Legislature of this State passed December the Twelfth One Thousand Eight Hundred and three For a true plan of the Town of Cornish taken on a Horizontal line agreeable to said act and Submitted by their Committee Shown for that Purpose Dated at Cornish the 29th day of May 1805

Joseph Chapman
 Moses Wild
 James Rippley
 Attest: Chase } Committee

On Connecticut River Ten Miles on a parallel Line

CORNISH TURNPIKE.

Length of the road 15^m. 21^q.

Rates of Toll established by Law

10 Sheep or Swine	1	15
10 Cattle or Horses	1	15
Horse & rider, or led horse	1	15
Sulkey, Chair, or Chaise, with 1 horse & 2 wheels	2	27
Chariot, Coach, Stage, Phaeton or Chaise with 2 horses & 4 wheels	2	40
Carrriage of pleasure, the like sums, according to the No. of wheels & horses		
Cart or carriage of burthen & 1 beast	1	15
.. .. 2 beasts	1	20
.. .. additional pair of oxen or horses	1	15
.. .. pleasure Sleigh & 1 horse	1	20
.. 2 horses	2	27
.. additional horse	1	15
.. .. Sleigh or sled of burthen, & 1 beast	1	15
.. 2 beasts	1	20
.. additional pair of oxen or horses	1	15

WEEKLY EAGLE-TIMES; Claremont, N.H., Springfield, Vt

New Hampshire



Eagle-Times photo - Micheir Mc Donald

THE CORNISH, N.H., ROAD CREW has been working on Tandy Brook Road installing a giant culvert. The culvert is almost 15 feet wide and 10 feet high. It replaces a small bridge in poor condition. From left, Bill West, Wayne Nelson and Myron Kuhre. *cutline*



TRAFFIC STOPPER — A large rock tumbled off Dingleton Hill in Cornish Sunday morning and landed in the middle of Route 12A north of the Windsor-Cornish covered bridge. The rock missed striking a car by a few seconds. (News photo—Brad Hills)

Cornish Road Crumbles Into Political Quagmire

By JANICE AITKEN
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Given a few more years of neglect, the north end of Clark Camp Road would disappear into the puckerbrush, and a quick route to Claremont would be no more.

Some Cornish residents, however, have their minds set on having the road repaired and reopened. And, in their determination to reverse the course of nature, they have created an uproar in town affairs.

In the last two months, the road issue has spawned petitions, accusations and insinuations, and, tomorrow in Sullivan County Superior Court, a hearing on whether there should be a special town meeting to decide the question. All this because of a narrow gravel road that saves five minutes of time and about three cents' worth of gasoline.

Three years ago, the selectmen closed a 2,100-foot portion of Clark Camp Road when a six-foot bridge near the Center Road end became unsafe.

Since then, the fate of the road has

been in limbo: Townspeople have voted not to discontinue it, but, then again, they haven't agreed to spend a dime to fix it. Two years ago, they voted down spending \$12,000 to replace the bridge. That figure may now be as high as \$60,000, if there are underground water problems, according to Sullivan County Engineer Le Geil, who inspected the site this week.

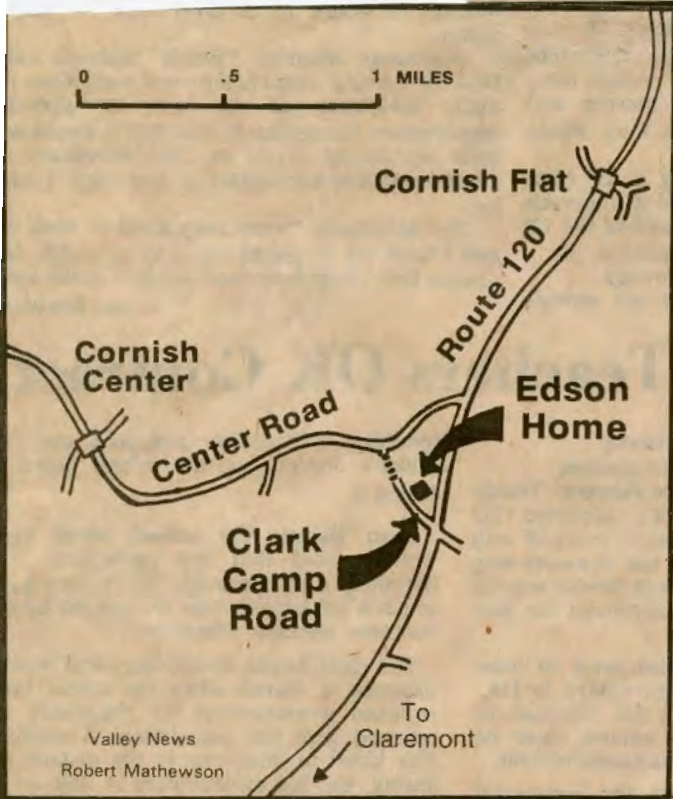
In early July, a Center Road home owner found an ingenious way to force the issue. Sharon Feeney learned from her brother, an attorney, about a little-known state law that requires repairs on a town road to begin within 24 hours after three residents petition for the work to be done.

She got the signatures and handed the petition to the selectmen on July 6.

"A lot of people use that road," says Feeney, a hairdresser whose customers from Claremont took that route to get to her house. "Farmers used it for their tractors because it was safer than go-

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— ROAD



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down Center Road and onto 120."

The selectmen were in a bind; the law said they must begin repairing the road, but this year's highway budget had already been divvied up, with no money to spare, they said.

The board took one step toward compliance. Road agent Harold Morse cleared and graded most of the road. Only the short stretch near the former bridge hasn't been worked on.

Then, on Aug. 5, the selectmen received another petition, sponsored by William Overman, a member of the town Finance Committee, asking for a special town meeting to let voters decide once and for all ei-

ther to repair the road or abandon it.

There is only one family living on the road. Any decision would affect them the most, but up until now George and Jill Edson have tried to stay out of the fray.

The Edsons' house is about 200 feet from the intersection with Route 120. The town has continued to maintain their portion of the road, and some people resent what they consider to be special treatment.

"The Edsons should not have a private driveway that is maintained and plowed by the town," Frank Ackerman, one of the leaders behind the repair-the-road effort, told the selectmen during an often-heated discussion earlier this week.

Selectman Cheston Newbold resented Ackerman's reference to the Edson "driveway."

"Are you accusing the board of collusion with the Edsons to keep the road closed?" Newbold asked angrily.

"That's not my intention," Ackerman said hastily. "I'm just making a statement. . . . Anybody can see the road's become a driveway for the Edsons."

Selectman Michael Yatsevich said the Edsons' situation is not unique. The town maintains other short stretches of road that lead to only one home, he said.

Jill Edson, contacted by telephone this week, said, "We offered to maintain and plow the road from our house to 120 ourselves if that would help solve the problem." But if the town had closed the road from Route 120 all the way to Center Road, "we would have been cut off from our only access to the highway."

Ackerman and Paul Duval, another Center Road resident, were angry that the selectmen have not gone forward with the repairs. A special town meeting isn't needed, Ackerman said. "All you've got to do is obey the law and put in a

bridge."

Duval, a dark-haired, intense man who is confined to a wheelchair, nervously fingered the edge of the selectmen's table while he talked. He said he had no trouble getting 100 people to sign a petition to have the road re-opened. It was not easy for him to drive his car from house to house getting the signatures, but he did it because he believes it is wrong for the selectmen to close a road arbitrarily.

And he accused the selectmen of laughing at the petition when Feeney presented it. Duval was sitting in his car outside the selectmen's office at the time.

"My signature is a serious thing, I don't like to have it laughed at," he said.

"I would not laugh at a petition, anyone's petition, in a derogatory way," Yatsevich responded.

Ackerman criticized the selectmen for spending money on other bridges in town, saying that was one reason why the controversy has come to a head.

But Yatsevich reminded Duval, who is a member of the town's bridge committee, that he has talked to him several times about the committee's recommendations for projects. "Clark Camp Road was never mentioned," Yatsevich said.

Duval said the bridge committee "talked about it for 10 or 15 minutes one night, but the rest of the members felt we didn't have enough information on it." No other bridge committee members signed the petition.

Overman said the idea for a special town meeting came up at a Finance Committee meeting.

"We felt that there was a lot of pressure being exerted on the Clark Camp Road issue by a few people. . . . My feeling is that it's something that should be decided by a majority of the townspeople."

Finally, Cornish Decides Clark Camp Road's Fate

By SALLIE GRAZIANO
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Residents voted 148-84 Saturday to keep Clark Camp Road open, and to repair the bridge over Clark Camp Brook in the least expensive manner possible.

Town Road Agent Harold Morse will fix the span for \$12,800.

The special meeting, approved by Superior Court Judge Joseph DiClerico earlier this month, held the promise of heated arguments.

But it began more like a fall get-together. Before it began, children dressed in brightly colored winter parkas pedaled their bikes in the cool autumn sunlight,

oblivious to the gathering collecting in front of the Cornish Town Hall.

Small, friendly clusters of people, associated by neighborhood or viewpoint, chatted about friends, children, and family. But mostly they discussed the issue calling them to the town hall Saturday: "To see what action the town will take about discontinuing the Clark Camp Road as a class 5 highway."

The future of Clark Camp Road has been debated by townspeople since July 1980, when they voted to repair a deteriorating bridge on the shortcut running between Route 120 and Cornish Center Road.

At Town Meeting in 1981, however, they

it is in the interest of anyone who owns property on any road in this town to keep it from deteriorating. If we say no to this little section of road that seems unimportant, will we see this again down the road talking about some of these other little-used roads?"

William Gallagher urged the town to adopt a standard policy on upkeep of the Class 5 roads, "and not look at each bridge to see how many people use it before we decide to fix it."

Voters concerned about the impact of the repair costs on their taxes were told by Moderator Peter Burling that a bridge costing \$12,500 would add approximately 50 cents per \$1,000 valuation.

The differing opinions did not cause any heated controversy Saturday. On the contrary, people were courteous in their disagreements and chatted while casting their written ballots.

As pipe smoke filtered through the crisp autumn air and toddlers grabbed at their parents' legs outside the town hall, Moderator Peter Burling stooped over a desk on the raised stage inside, tallying the vote.

A round of applause sounded when Burling called the meeting back to order and announced, "Now the road stays open as a class 5 highway."

There was no discussion on the related business of deciding what amount to appropriate for repairs. A photocopied list of estimates indicated the repairs could be done for \$75,000, \$28,000, \$16,500, or Morse's proposal of \$12,500 plus \$300 to remove a beaver dam. The cheapest solution was chosen.

The debate over the condition of back roads in town may not be over, however. Cathy Ackerman, who helped organize the "Save Clark Camp Road" group, said she was approached after the meeting about another road in town.

She smiled and said "I don't know that

refused to appropriate money for the project. Eventually, the bridge became so bad that the town took it down.

There was no action taken to fix the road for several years; although the repairs remained on the town's list of projects, the selectmen explained Saturday that the road was considered "low priority" because other routes were available, and intersections of Clark Camp Road with Route 120 and Cornish Center Road are dangerous. Only one family lives on Clark Camp Road.

The town was forced into action this summer, however, when three individuals signed a "notice of insufficiency" that under state law requires a town to begin

repairs on roads within 24 hours.

The town asked for and obtained permission to hold a special town meeting to appropriate money for any repairs that voters approved.

As that meeting was called to order Saturday morning at 10, the clusters of people outside moved into the sparsely furnished town hall and scraped their metal chairs into comfortable positions. About 30 people stood against the back walls of the meeting hall; there were no more seats because the turnout for the special meeting

— 233 — was even better than for March

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— ROAD

Road

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town meeting.

At least a dozen voters wore "Save Clark Camp Road" buttons.

From the start of the meeting, the variety of opinions over what should be done with the road became apparent. The number of people who use the shortcut, and the condition of Clark Camp Road during mud season, became central issues during the lengthy discussion.

Richard Ackerman said the number of people who use the road isn't important. "Any road that citizens say they're going to use, I think we have an obligation to those citizens to keep it open."

Others said the town should discontinue the road because it isn't a vital transportation link.

"We should distinguish between a section of road someone needs to get to their home, and a road that just makes it easier to get somewhere they want to go," Michael Fuerst said.

Merilynn Bourne, opposed to keeping the shortcut open, suggested putting money into repairs on the adjoining Cornish Center Road "instead of fixing up a road that can't be used year-round anyways."

Residents in favor of keeping the road open said Clark Camp Road is in no worse shape during mud season than most of the town's other roads.

Clara Weld said it should be treated like all the other Class 5 roads in town, and not left to deteriorate.

"I could count six other similar situations in town," Weld said, rattling off a list of roads that are not heavily populated but still kept up by the town.

Cornish Highway at town meeting,

CORNISH, N. H. — The Highway Department was the biggest loser at the 6½ hour business session at town meeting.

In addition to taking a verbal beating, the department had its budget reduced from \$200,447 to \$190,000 and lost an attempt to get a new truck. The truck was defeated even though the \$39,000 to purchase it would have come from a reserve fund and Revenue Sharing dollars.

Most everything else, with the exception of a \$2,000 reduction for town-owned building maintenance, passed, although many items were the subjects of lengthy discussions.

The \$19,143 budgeted for New Hampshire-Vermont Solid Waste District costs was approved, as was \$6,000 to defray costs of using the Claremont transfer station. Five thousand dollars will be used to pay the town's share of setting up the Claremont facility, the rest to be used to purchase tickets to sell to Cornish residents who wish

to use the transfer station.

Some voters thought Cornish should set up its own transfer station, but were told by Cheston Newbold, selectmen chairman, that the most feasible solution was using the Claremont facility.

Six thousand dollars was approved to pay for the preparation of a Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and Non Residential Site Plan Review by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Council.

The annual salary of the tax collector was increased by \$300 and the town treasurer's salary by \$200. Five hundred dollars was approved to pay for microfilming certain town records.

A subject which took a great deal of discussion was the fencing of the fire pond at the end of School Street. Finally the article, calling for \$8,000, was tabled.

Voters adopted an ordinance which provides for management and containment of hazardous materials and collection costs to such spills.

It was voted to instruct the town's state representative to take all necessary measures to insure that no low level radioactive waste from Seabrook nuclear plant or from any other source be stored or disposed of within the town unless approved by voters by written ballot.

Voters approved the \$10,000 principal payment on the new fire truck being built by Dingee Machine Co. by using Revenue Sharing Funds.

The \$15,000 Fire Department budget, which includes \$500 for training, \$800 for maintenance of the ladder truck and \$800 for building maintenance at the Cornish Flat station, was approved, as was the \$12,677 Police Department budget.

Ambulance costs of \$4,065 were approved to assure service from both Windsor Ambulance and Golden Cross of Claremont. Residents were assured that Golden Cross would cover the town,

Department slammed budget cut \$10,000

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through an agreement between the two services, if the covered bridge was closed to traffic for repairs.

A \$10,000 operating budget for the Cemetery Department was approved. A discussion took place concerning repairs needed on the cemetery fence, located adjacent to the Trinity Church, recently restored by Peter Burling.

James Lukash was appointed to help Hollis Boardman, cemetery sexton, to make plans for repairs and organize a work party. The

materials will be supplied by Burling.

Also approved was \$2,000 for the Cornish Rescue Squad, \$800 for Wheels Around Windsor, \$200 for Hospice and \$2,500 for Community Youth Advocates.

The \$2,400 budgeted for the Visiting Nurse Association, which was twice the amount budgeted last year, was approved. Ginny Wood explained the higher costs reflect that "more elderly people are choosing to die in their own homes," which requires increased

nursing support, and that more new mothers and babies are being visited in the home by the service. Blood pressure clinics are also provided for Cornish residents.

Voters approved \$6,802 to support the George Stowell Library, \$6,000 was placed in the Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund, with the revaluation slated for 1989.

Three thousand five hundred dollars was approved to pay costs of completing the soccer and baseball field projects, with total costs of the Cornish Recreation and Education Area project at \$58,000.



THE CORNISH HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT has received the 1990 International dump truck purchased from Ed's Equipment Service, Claremont, to replace the one-ton truck previously used by the department and now being used by the cemetery department. The purchase was approved by voters at Town Meeting in March. Selectmen Michael Yatsevitch, left, and Cheston Newbold, far right, looked over the vehicle Monday, with Harold Morse, highway agent, and resident Dorothy Johnson. (Ruth Rollins Photo)



Valley News — Geoff Ha

The Newcott's home, center in background, sits directly across Parsonage Road from the busy Cornish highway crew headquarters.

Reluctant Neighbors In Cornish

By PEGGY DILLON
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Two worlds are colliding on Parsonage Road.

On one side, just up from the field on which the Cornish Fair is held each year, is a sprawling Federal-style home owned by Edward and Jean Newcott. The year the house was built — 1814 — is proudly displayed in front on tan clapboards. A row of young pine trees screens the house and 6.3 acres from the dirt road. In back are three horses in a fenced-in stall attached to the house, and a rolling hill slopes upward away from the yard. The interior is a tribute to early-American architecture, complete with fireplaces, exposed ceiling beams, and wide floorboards.

Across the street from this pleasant scene is the rough-edged world of the Cornish Highway Department. In a big, weathered barn a grader, surrounded by drums of oil, metal road cones, and traffic signs reading "Road Repairs Ahead" and "Men at Work." A second, smaller wooden structure is the maintenance building for the grader, bucket loader and one-ton truck that are kept at the site. A pile of sand dominates the landscape outside, with a towering metal sifter

"We don't understand why they operate the way they do when it's so intrusive on neighbors."

William Baker
Attorney for the neighbors

"You'd be surprised at all the stuff we've done to try to keep them happy."

Harold Morse
Road agent

nearby so workers can, as Road Agent Harold Morse said, "keep the chunks out" of the sand before spreading it on roads.

Morse said the town bought the land in 1970 and has used it since then for highway department purposes. The Newcotts, though, say that when they bought their house in 1981, only a fire truck was stored across the street, and only gradually did the highway department begin using the property more actively.

Now, the operation is busy enough, not messy enough and unkempt enough, the Newcotts say, that they can't take it anymore. They would like to sell the property, but say the highway garage diminishes the value.

Jean Newcott said that for two years she worked with the selectmen on their complaint, but the board proved uncooperative. So last year they turned to Lebanon attorney William Baker who filed a suit in Sullivan County Superior Court asking a judge to force the town to modify the operation.

Court documents charge that "without apparent regard for the hour of the day or night highway workers sift sand, load it on trucks, and leave vehicles idling and unattended for hours at a time. It also said that the site is unsafe and unsightly, with barrels of waste oil left outdoors creating environmental hazards.

The suit alleges that selectmen have refused to do anything about the problem; Baker said they have told him they have no authority over Morse and his crew. "Everyone wants to blame it on everybody else, but nobody wants to take responsibility."

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— CORNISH

(Continued from page 1)

heat," he said.

The suit asks that town officials and highway workers not use the garage between 9 p.m. and 9 a.m.; that they not leave motor vehicles unattended with the motors running; and that they relocate the driveway on the site so that it isn't immediately across from the Newcott's driveway.

"It's noisy. It's intrusive. It's very disturbing to them," Baker said of the effect of the crew's work on the Newcotts. "We don't know why they bang on the sifter (at 3 a.m.). We don't understand why they leave trucks going while they sit inside and gab over coffee. In short, we don't understand why they operate the way they do when it's so intrusive on neighbors."

It was not one specific incident that irked the Newcotts, he said; rather, the noise and activity became a problem over time. "When does the headache get so bad that you finally take the aspirin?" Baker asked. "They certainly didn't jump the first time they heard a truck idling."

Town officials, meanwhile, say there's little more they can do to help the Newcotts and still have a working highway department. "We've made adjustments to keep as low a profile as possible," Selectman Michael Yatsevitch said.

Morse agreed, and said the town has done what it can to be cooperative. "You'd be surprised at all the stuff we've done to try to keep them happy," he said, citing improvements such as mowing the grass, keeping the grounds clean, and painting the buildings. To mitigate the noise and appearance of the operation, he said, he even had a fence built in front of the property, using rough-hewn planks cut at his own sawmill. (Baker said that has been little help.)

The town also has moved the driveway several hundred feet from the Newcotts', and now idles

“Who knows? Maybe the town will come around. It would be nice if we could stop the fighting. It doesn't make much sense to have this kind of thing go to court.”

William Baker
Attorney

the bucket loader in back of the barn to help lessen its noise. The sifter has been rebuilt so they don't have to bang on it to get it to work, although Morse said the sand must be sifted when it's needed and not ahead of time, to keep it loose enough to spread on the roads. He added, too, that the sifter has been in operation since the early 1970s, long before the Newcotts bought their house.

The highway department normally runs from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., except during storms. Then, the trucks are out at 3 a.m. to ensure that school bus routes are plowed and safe.

But he does not apologize for the way the highway department operates. "We have to work," he said. "My responsibility is to maintain these roads so there's safe passage on them." Besides, he added, "We don't make half the noise the Cornish Fair does."

As for the bucket loader's loud and constant tic-tic-tic while it sits in the yard, driver Tom Spaulding said the machine must be left on in cold weather or the hydraulic system won't work.

That explanation, Baker said yesterday, is

"horse manure" when temperatures are in the 30s.

Spaulding argued that his job has its hardships, too. On New Year's Eve day, he worked from 3 in the afternoon until 2 in the morning, and then was up again at 6 a.m. New Year's Day to plow and sand for the entire day.

Morse said there was a time when the road crew and Newcotts got along just fine. "After all, we're all neighbors," he said. As he sees it, the problem arose two years ago when the Newcotts decided to sell their house. "They just don't want us here," he said.

But he maintains that there's nowhere for them to move. Another town highway site on Route 120 in Cornish Flat has no more room. And as a further twist in the dispute, plans are under way for a new town office and garage on the same Parsonage Road site. Town offices now are located in the flat. A public hearing on those plans will be held Jan. 9 at the Cornish School. As of yesterday, Baker was not aware of the latter plans for the town, and had no comment.

However, he made no secret of the fact that the Newcotts are trying to sell the house, and that it was hard for them to do. "It would appear the town has done its best to devalue the property," he said.

The next step, said Baker, is to take the town's "track record" for the winter and go to court to find out "exactly how much authority the selectmen do have."

"Who knows? Maybe the town will come around," he said. "It would be nice if we could stop the fighting. It doesn't make much sense to have this kind of thing go to court."

Cornish selectmen sign road preservation ordinance

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — People with four-wheel drive vehicles who use remote roads in town for recreational purposes between March 1 and June 30 will be fined up to \$1,000.

Selectmen have signed an ordinance to preserve Class 6 roads from further destruction.

Those wishing to use such roads must get a permit from the town road agent between those dates. However, the permit does not release a person from financial responsibility for damage to a roadbed or rights of way caused by vehicles.

"During normal winter and summer months, damage from recreational vehicles is minimal," said Selectman John White. "However, during springtime, March through June, these roads become 'mud pits' and a challenge to four-wheel drive vehicles.

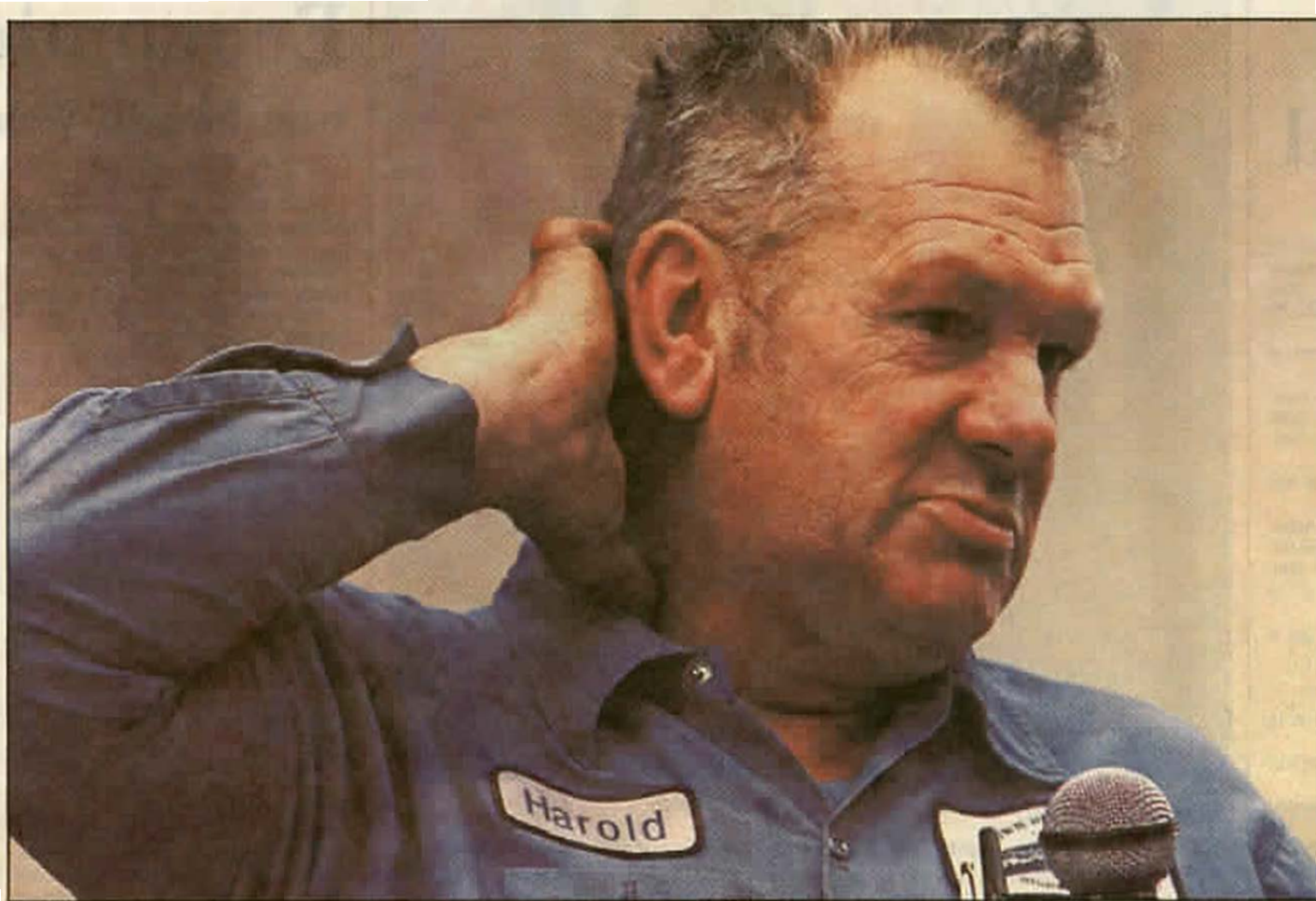
"Unfortunately, damage to the roadways can be extensive if used during these times. Previously, only Class 5 dirt roads were protected during springtime by posting by the road agent."

Under state law, selectmen can use their discretion to close certain Class 6 roads to motor-

ized vehicles when they deem it is in the best interest of the town.

The intent of the ordinance is to protect and preserve roads from damage during, but not limited to, the time March 1 and June 30. "The ordinance makes it possible to close certain Class 6 roads when road conditions deteriorate and then re-open them again when road conditions have improved," said White.

Class 6 roads are previously used town roads, not maintained by taxpayer dollars but to which the town still retains rights of way.



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Valley News — Geoff Har...

Cornish Road Agent Harold Morse explains a plan to put \$15,000 in reserve for purchases of highway equipment. Page 6.



Valley News — Geoff Hansa

Cornish voters follow the debate on a proposed review of a zoning ordinance during yesterday's Town Meeting.

Cornish

Voters Approve Budget, Site For Town Offices

By ANDREA SAND
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Living up to their reputation for debating every last penny at their town meetings, Cornish voters yesterday spent six hours painstakingly conducting town business.

In the end, they cut the proposed highway budget by \$20,000, approved spending up to \$12,000 for a site plan for new town offices and provided their police chief with medical insurance.

They turned down one measure that would have prohibited the use of alcohol on town property. They shot down another that would have classified three roads as scenic roads.

They tackled the town budget item by item, voting 40 times in two hours. Although several of the budget figures generated a lot of debate, none of the dollar amounts was changed. The biggest budget item was \$46,338 for the police department, which voters approved 77-51. (The highway budget was dealt with in a separate article.)

A measure to allow a property tax exemption for home solar energy heating and cooling systems was defeated by voters in Australian balloting 189-162. If it had been adopted, there would have been no assessment for systems under \$6,000. (A similar measure but with a \$12,000 cut-off failed last year.)

Also in Australian balloting, Bill Gallagher failed to unseat selectman John White with a write-in campaign.

One of the hottest topics of the day was the highway budget. Last year, voters had approved a budget of \$240,306, but \$286,837 was actually spent. The overrun was partly caused by unanticipated major repairs to a road grader and a dump truck, and by having to rent heavy equipment such as backhoes to handle excessive ice. This year, thinking the highway department had been underfunded in 1992, the finance committee and selectmen proposed spending \$271,787, but voters yesterday cut that to \$251,787, with \$175,926 to be raised by taxes.

In arguing for a bigger highway budget, selectman White said: "You should think about where that \$20,000 will come. Fewer oil changes? Less maintenance? Less time plowing so you'll have to wait until the afternoon to get your road plowed?"

But voters felt the department could perform adequately with less. One resident pointed out that as recently as 1987, the highway budget was only \$131,000. Another man charged that the department was being mismanaged.

Then, in a sense-of-the-meeting vote, townspeople told selectmen to include detailed itemization of expenditures for all

departments in next year's town report, as has been done in years past, but wasn't done this year to their satisfaction.

Sparking perhaps the greatest debate was a proposal to spend up to \$12,000 for a site plan for new town offices on town land not far from the historic town hall. Last year, Cornish residents voted against an addition to the town hall. Indeed, the subject of new town offices is one that's long been looked at in Cornish and studied by successive generations of committees.

"My grandmother thought we needed new town offices," said an exasperated Susan Littell. "My father thought we needed new town offices. I think we need new town offices. Do we have to wait for my grandchildren?"

Virtually everyone agrees a new building is needed. The selectmen's office and town clerk's office are four miles from the town hall in a tiny brick building with an outhouse; the town's computers and the tax collector's office are in a rented office across the road. But townspeople plainly have had trouble agreeing on what they want and where they want it.

Yesterday, however, after beating back motions to cut the amount to \$2,000 or kill it completely — and after a few jokes about the outhouse — voters took a step toward building new town offices. The best estimate of the cost is \$150,000.

Two main factors appeared to have finally prompted townspeople to vote to spend money on a site plan: They need new offices which would be handicapped accessible (in light of the new federal law) and they want to have a site plan in hand in case any grant money becomes available.

In a straw poll show of hands, voters overwhelmingly said they liked the choice of the site on nearly four acres of town property on North Parsonage Road.

Townspeople turned down a proposal from selectmen that would have prohibited drinking in the town hall and on other town property. The town's insurance company had advised selectmen not to allow alcohol. But voters said the town hall should be available for wedding receptions — and toasts.

Voters also turned down a proposal from the conservation commission that would have designated East Road, Lovejoy Road and Skyline Drive as scenic roads because they didn't like the idea of restricting the cutting of trees of a certain size or the removal of stone walls without written permission from the planning board and after a public hearing.

At the end of the meeting, voters debated a criticism by resident Bill Gallagher that selectmen last year did not follow through with a vote at last year's Town Meeting regarding Cornish's delegate to the Solid Waste Project. Voters last year directed selectmen to do whatever was in their power to make it possible for Cornish voters to elect their solid waste delegate rather than



Valley News — Robert Pope

A voter leaves the booth at Enfield Elementary School yesterday.

have him or her be appointed by selectmen. (According to the regional solid waste agreement, town representatives are to be appointed.)

Selectman White said yesterday that they weren't shirking their duty. He said that since the delegate's term isn't up until 1994, the selectmen decided they would wait until this year to deal with the issue. Townspeople yesterday voted to reaffirm the vote they took last year.



CORNISH CANDIDATE — Charles "Chuck" DeAngelis is seeking the seat being vacated by Highway Agent Harold Morse. (Ruth Rollins photo)

East Times Feb 4, 1994

DeAngelis seeks highway position

By **RUTH ROLLINS**
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Charles "Chuck" DeAngelis is running for highway agent.

Incumbent Highway Agent Harold Morse decided not to seek re-election. No others have filed for the position.

For experience, DeAngelis says, "I have worked for the Cornish Highway Department the past six years. Before that I was employed by Donald MacLeay Construction, operating heavy equipment." Ten years before that, he worked in a machine shop.

"I have been very lucky to have worked with such knowledgeable people as incumbent highway agent Harold Morse, MacLeay and Wayne Nelson; also, Gerald Baillargeon, who is in charge of the state highway crew in Cornish. MacLeay's equipment was often used, and I was fortunate to have his guidance while learning the techniques of plowing state highways.

"One has to have a desire for the work; it is a demand-

ing position, often seven days a week, if Mother Nature dictates it. If I get elected, I would like to eventually train some younger people for the department, so they can learn from those who have the knowledge of setting culverts, operating plows, and general road maintenance techniques — knowledge that has been handed down for years and years," said DeAngelis.

"Times have changed; we have a generation of people who demand stricter budget control, people who want more for their money. I plan to keep the department at the level of four full-time employees. Of course there are times when additional people are needed. Work will be performed with the best interest of the town as my goal."

DeAngelis is past president of the New Hampshire Antique Tractor Club, which has more than 200 members, and has spent a year as a Cornish Fair director. He resides on Root Hill, in a home built by him and his wife, Cheryl.

Article would extend term of road agent

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Albert Earle feels that the Cornish road agent should be elected for more than a one-year term.

Earle, the town's road agent, said, "I have started a plan to make the roads more serviceable and more maintenance-free. In order to build a plan and see it through, more than one year is needed."

Selectmen will include an article on the Town Meeting warrant asking if voters want to approve a three-year term for the road agent.

Earle, during his first year as the town's road agent, reports a productive year for his department, which confronted a record-dry summer and an early winter of heavy snowfall.

When he took on the position in mid-March, he and his employees started a plan to bring roads up to Class 5 specifications.

Early grading worked well, but the extreme dry conditions in the summer made it difficult to keep roads smooth. Most were regraded before the fall freeze.

"Lack of dust control caused concern by some people, but the budget did not include chloride for this purpose," said Earle. However, a warrant article in the upcoming budget will give voters the opportunity to decide if money will be available for chloride in 1996 to keep dust down.

"It snowed early in November and throughout December, resulting in extra plowing, sanding and pushing back snow banks," said Earle. "School bus routes were plowed early, so no lost days occurred

because of road conditions during 1995."

Major projects accomplished included completion of Dingleton Hill Road with a base coat of asphalt. A surface coat will be applied during 1996.

Four-foot culverts were installed on Hell Hollow and Cook Roads. The sites were excavated, rip-rapped and graveled. A crushed gravel finish coat will be applied this year, according to Earle. A major renovation took place on Hilliard Road, which was upgraded to an exemplary mile-long gravel highway.

The Highway Department also made emergency repairs to the failed fire-pond dam on School Street, which afforded emergency water for the dry summer months.

"The department had a safe work year with no injuries to personnel," said Earle. "However, the equipment was less fortunate."

Major repairs were needed on a 1978 International truck. The town's pickup was replaced after an unavoidable accident with a black bear. An unbudgeted \$4,000 was needed to purchase a new pickup. The grader also needed repairs.

All block grant money was used for major highway projects, including \$16,000 that was spent for an engineering design of the Coffin Shop Bridge.

"Therefore, funds such as bridge design, plus unbudgeted equipment costs and overtime for plowing snow, resulted in an overexpenditure of \$17,000 in the Class 5 highway budget."

Earle Times 2-6-91



HOLY MOLEY — George Rublee of Cornish stands on what's left of Platt Road in Cornish on Sunday, observing the handiwork of Mother Nature. Local police and highway crews reported mostly minor washouts and power outages caused

by heavy rain and wind that were attributed to the northward migration of the weather system once known as Hurricane Bertha. Story, page 5. (Wayne Carter photo)

Cornish Town grader destroyed by fire

BY LOIS FITTS

CORNISH SCHEDULE

Thursday, Aug. 15

Planning Board, Town Offices, 7 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 16

Selectmen will not meet tonight due to Fair

Cornish Fair gates open at 8 a.m.

Saturday, Aug. 17

Cornish Fair, gates open at 8 a.m.

Sunday, Aug. 18

Cornish Fair, gates open at 8 a.m.

Concert at St. Gaudens Historical Site, Route 12A, Inca San-Music of the Andes, 2 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 19

School Board, School library, 7 a.m.

Tuesday, Aug. 20

Garden Club, School cafeteria, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 22

Cornish Grange No. 25, Town Office building, 7:30 p.m.

Town News

Good news for parents. School opens Tuesday, Sept. 3. The count down begins!

With the better part of two weeks until school opens, what to do with bored children? The United Church of Cornish is hosting Vacation Bible School at the Church on Center Road from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. from Aug. 19-23. The theme is "Champions for Jesus." Come and learn about Jesus from Barbara Owens-Hayward as Hineni the Clown! There is also a dedicated staff of people from the United Church and other area churches.

If you need transportation call Carol King at 469-3453. If you have any other questions call Bob Hilliard at 675-2211 or Ellie Friend at 543-3895

The wee hours of the morning Aug. 9 brought some excitement to Cornish when the fire department was dispatched to a structure fire at the Town sheds on Parsonage Road. Moments later, the call was changed to a grader fire at the Town sheds which was excitement enough.

Fortunately, the grader was parked out in front of the small shed. Both sheds were undamaged but the fence was scorched and the grader is probably totaled as the fire gutted the cab and engine.

At this time, no cause has been determined and the Selectmen met with the Equipment Committee to Friday evening to decide the next step. They are also waiting to hear from the insurance adjuster and the Fire Marshall.

The highway department was beginning to catch up. They were behind due to wet weather and equipment problems. They asked for the patience of Town residents due to this unavoidable delay. Meriden Fire Department responded mutual aid. No one was hurt and all ended safely.

On Thursday, Aug. 8 approximately 70-80 area residents, mostly from Cornish, welcomed guests from the Aspet area of France at a covered dish reception at St. Gaudens Historical Site. John Dryfout, superintendent of the Site, had words of welcome in "American" as we do not speak "English" in this country.

Caroline Storrs, teacher and organizer in Cornish, introduced the guests and hosts. Gifts were exchanged—a white T-shirt with a black silhouette of the house at the Site from us to them and black T-

shirts with a gold medallion on the front and a white silhouette of an American Indian on the back.

The Selectmen presented a medallion by Cornish craftsperson Suzanne Lupienne, which was in a maple box made by Cornish woodmaker Dale Shafman. In turn, the Selectmen were presented with a pencil sketch of a farmer with sythe from the French guests. The reception was the culmination of an idea planted in 1989 by Francoise Sarradet when she wrote a letter to the Cornish Selectmen exploring the idea of "twinning" the towns of Cornish and Aspet.

Last July, teachers Caroline Storrs and Ruth Little went to Aspet, France, with four Cornish students, Lydia Durant, Sadie Dworak, Rebecca Baril, and Emily Pierce and Missy Little, Ruth's daughter. As usual, Cornish cooks had a delicious selection of salads, casseroles and desserts. It is hoped that future visits of this nature will continue.

The Mill Brook Gallery at the Cornish Town Offices will have a photography exhibit from Aug. 24 to Nov. 4. Any Cornish resident is invited to show. The photos must be 5 by 7 or larger, delivered before Aug. 23 to the Town Offices, framed and ready to hang. Up to three photos per exhibitor will be hung as space permits. Please sign a release if you have not done so. After the show, one of the exhibits will be held from Nov. 4 to Jan. 3. Any questions may be directed to Polly Rand at 542-4672 or Mariet Jaarsma at 675-6622.

The Thrasher Road bridge is pro-

gressing on schedule. All the inspections have gone well. The abutments are up, girders, deck forms and steel are in place and ready for the deck to be poured. Completion date is scheduled for Aug. 31.

The Farmers' Market in Cornish Flat on Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon has been very busy and well-received. Still available are plants, homemade breads, home-grown spun wool, and plenty of fresh vegetables. It is great fun to go on Saturdays and meet friends and neighbors and support their efforts.

The committee to interface Town and School issues, chaired by Peter Burling, will meet Sept. 3. They invite the Finance Committee to attend, and would like the Finance Committee to be involved with the School Board more than previously.

There is new business in Town that should be of interest to all stressed-out folks. Martha Zoerhede has received her New Hampshire license for massage. She studied at the Doverstar Elahemia Institute in Hooksett for three years and has a special certificate for geriatric massage. She also has a national certificate for massage as well as herbal body wrap and is a Reiki 2 practitioner. She will come to your home, nursing home or you may go to her home. Her prices are on a sliding scale so she is affordable to everyone. Martha is an LPN at the Brookside Nursing Home in White River Junction, Vt., but wanted to do something more and different so she investigated the possibility of massage and loved it. She may be reached at 675-2295.

Weather problems are minor

By **CASSIE DUBANIEWICZ**
Staff Writer

Thunderstorms and the tail end of Hurricane Bertha caused minor problems for state and area highway departments this weekend.

The hard, consistent rain and high winds also caused power outages for approximately 50 customers in the Claremont area over the weekend, according to a spokeswoman from Public Service of New Hampshire.

Ray Burke of the Vermont Highway Department said he was just getting reports in this morning of washed-out roads, but "nothing real bad" has surfaced.

Hard rain in southeastern Vermont caused some minor damage while to the north a washout at the junction of Routes 113 and 244 in West Fairlee required barricades.

There were scattered reports of minor road

washouts and trees blown over by high winds. A mudslide on Route 14 in Sharon caused an accident and high water was reported on Route 35 in Grafton, Vt. Grafton suffered heavy water damage in June.

According to a New Hampshire Highway Department spokesman only minor washouts were reported on state roads.

Cornish Police and the Claremont Highway Department said they received no notification of problems, although there was a washout on Platt Road.

Newport Highway Superintendent Fraser Michaud said one small washout occurred in a construction project on Oak Street.

An official at Connecticut Valley Electric Company in Windsor said they had received no complaints.

The 'Mud Was Everywhere'

Valley News 9/21/97

Storm Leaves Many Roads A Mess

By ED BALLAM
Valley News Staff Writer

Much of the Upper Valley dodged the heavy accumulation of wet snow that paralyzed points south yesterday, but the storm left many in the area slogging through an abundance of dark, oozing, axle-deep mud — the worst in many years, some say.

Basil Newmerzhucky, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Burlington, said the strongest parts of the Nor'easter passed to the south and east of Lebanon and Hartford. A complex weather pattern trapped warm air and spared most of the Upper Valley from heavy snowfall, he said, while some northern parts of the Twin States received no snow at all.

In southern Vermont, however, the storm hit hard — causing school closings, power outages and poor driving conditions.

About 16,000 customers of Central Vermont Public Service Corp., Vermont's largest utility, lost power, said company spokesman Jack Crowther. Most of those customers were in Windsor, Windham and Bennington counties, he said. As of about 5 p.m. yesterday, about 3,000 customers remained without power, he said, and power should be restored to all customers by today.

The wet snow that did fall in the Upper Valley exacerbated problems with the mud that has been clogging many back roads.

"It's nothing but soup up here," said Anne Peyton of Strafford, who lives on Downer Forest Road — one of many dirt roads crisscrossing the area. "... This is my first mud season on a dirt road, but I don't mind, really."

Having learned quickly that muddy back roads can swallow even four-wheel-drive vehicles, she opted to park her mini-van at the base of the hill she lives on and hoof the quarter-mile home. "I listened to the universe and it told me, 'Stay off this road,'" Peyton said after her one and only attempt at driving on the road.

Apparently her decision was the right one; even some of her more-experienced neighbors decided to ditch their rigs and squish up the road on foot.

"It's a nice vignette of life in Vermont ... walking up a muddy road with neighbors," she said.



Greg Hallow

Valley News - Geoff Hanson

Neither sleet nor snow nor Pig Farm Road could keep rural route driver Jack McNellis from making his rounds in Cornish yesterday. The town's road agent said the road is the worst example of a mud season that's as bad as he's seen it in 17 years.

If you must on walk muddy roads, Peyton said, she knows from experience that low rubber boots won't cut it. After the mud pulled one of hers off and filled it with muck, she now wears high, lace-up boots.

"I walked home with a muddy foot," Peyton said of her experience. "Mud was everywhere."

Muddy roads have plagued motorists since the first cars rolled off Henry Ford's assembly lines, said Jeff Stark, a civil engineer in the research division of the Cold Regions Research Engineering Laboratory in Hanover.

"It's a 90-year-old battle," said Stark, a specialist in soil stabilization who works in CRREL's soil lab.

Stark said muddy roads are caused by the pooling of water on top of frozen earth. When the top layer thaws and underlying layers stay frozen, the water has nowhere to leach. Silty soils are more prone to mud than sand and gravel soils, and traffic "churns" the mud, making it worse, he said.

Using 1990s technology, Stark said, he has experimented with geosynthetic fabric, mats made of tires and wood, as well as tire chips, tree slash and a special rapid-curing soil cement — all in an effort to stabilize muddy soil for military applications. "Once you have mud, about the only thing that can make it go away is time and warm temperatures," Stark said.

Hiram Allen, the town manager in Hartland, is somewhat of an expert on muddy roads himself, if only through experience. After 61 years in a town that has 75 miles of road — 65 of which are dirt — he knows what causes muddy roads and how to fix them.

He also knows a bad season when he sees one — and insisted this isn't one of them.

"It's nothing like what it used to be," Allen said. "Peo-

(Continued on page A3)

— MUD

Mud

(Continued from page A1)

ple don't know what mud is these days."

Some might disagree in Cabot, Vt., which was forced to close school yesterday for the second day in a row because of rutted, muddy roads.

And in Cornish, mud is everywhere, said road agent Tom Spaulding.

"This year is muddier than any other year I can remember," said Spaulding, who has been road agent for 17 years. "We're doing the best we can to keep up with it."

Because of the weight of the highway department trucks, Spaulding said, repairing remote roads is difficult.

"We don't want to ruin three miles

of good road to fill in a hole," he said.

Jerry Lee, the highway foreman in Hartford, said conditions there are "probably a little worse this year" than in previous years.

"The only thing we can do is keep putting gravel to them," Lee said.

Towns that weren't dealing with ankle-deep mud had to deal with knee-deep snow after Monday night's snowstorm.

Up to 27 inches of snow were recorded in Jaffrey, N.H., southeast of Keene, and blizzard conditions were reported in many parts of the state, with wind gusting to 50 mph. Widespread power outages were reported in Manchester, Hillsboro and Newport.

A power failure knocked WNNE-TV

off the air from 11:25 p.m. Monday until about 1:30 p.m. yesterday, said Gary Osheyack, general manager at the station based in White River Junction.

"Basically, we lost power on Mount Ascutney where the transmitter is," he said.

A backup generator at the transmitter failed to kick in, and two engineers who tried to hike to the summit turned back because of high wind and deep snow, Osheyack said. Station personnel finally reached the transmitter at about 6 a.m. yesterday, he said.

"That's life in New England," said Osheyack, who noted that his Valley News didn't reach his home in Norwich until about 9 a.m. yesterday.

231st Cornish Annual Report, March 1998

**CORNISH HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
1997 REPORT**

The year 1997 was a very costly and busy year due to the mud and late snow storms. We used 300 loads of bank run gravel during mud season. We had to hire extra equipment.

The first half-mile of Center Road was ground and we put 6 inches of crushed gravel over the top and blacktopped it. Many dollars worth of shim was put on other blacktop roads in town. The new garage opened in October and is greatly appreciated by the whole crew.

We built a new sand screen and put up 4950 yards of winter sand that came from the new sandpit on Townhouse Road.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas E. Spaulding
Road Agent



Thomas Spaulding, Highway Agent
Photo by Fritz Hier

Cornish faces highway garage vote

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH— When voters go to the polls March 11 they will decide whether to construct a new highway garage, appropriate money to repair a bridge and authorize selectmen to close a road.

Balloting for town officers will be held from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Cornish Elementary School gymnasium.

Voters will be voting on a total appropriation of \$863,553 if all 17 warrant articles are approved, a figure that is down \$58,000 from last year's total appropriations.

If property values and state revenues stay the same, it will show a decrease in the town portion of the tax rate, which was \$4.37 in 1996. Assessed valuation of the town is \$82,400,713.

A sum of \$292,927 will be asked for

maintenance of Class V highways and bridges. Of this amount \$210,603 would be raised by taxes, with \$82,324 received as a state highway block grant.

Articles submitted by the New Highway Garage Committee will ask voter approval of \$150,000 for site preparation and construction of a new highway facility. Voters will also be asked to authorize selectmen to sell through a public bid process, the current highway garage facility which is located on Route 120.

An amount of \$21,300 will be asked to repair the Mercer Bridge on Platt Road, with \$20,000 coming from the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund if approved, and the remaining \$1,300 coming from Highway Block Grant money.

Voters will also be asked to authorize selectmen to use funds in the New Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to

purchase used as well as new heavy highway equipment.

A committee formed to plan for such purchases feels it is prudent to purchase used equipment sometimes, rather than new. A most recent example of this was the purchase of a used grader to replace one that burned.

Article 13 requires approval of \$1,000 to continue participating in an Upper Valley Household Hazardous Waste Recycling program.

Article 14 pertains to allowing the tax collector to accept prepayment of taxes.

Article 15 asks authorization to allow the tax collector to collect property taxes twice annually, July 1 and Dec. 1.

An article, by petition, asks voters to adopt provisions of RSA 40:13 to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the town.

Eagle Times 2-9-97

Highway garage funding tops

East Times March 5, 1997 p.7

Cornish



Chartered: 1763
Population: 1,659
Current tax rate: \$25.59 per \$1,000 of property valuation

Town Meeting

- **WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. March 11, balloting for officers; noon, business meeting.
- **WHERE:** Cornish Elementary School gymnasium.
- **KEY ISSUES:** Proposal to construct a new highway garage and sell the highway garage in Cornish Flat.

By **RUTH ROLLINS**
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — A proposed town budget of \$696,565 will be voted at the annual Town Meeting to be held March 11 at the Cornish Elementary School.

Polls open at 10 a.m. with the meeting beginning at noon.

The budget shows a \$11,550 increase over the 1996 budget of \$685,015 for town spending. The total to be raised by taxes for the town budget would be \$329,450, resulting in a \$4 tax rate per \$1,000 as the town portion, which would be down 37 cents from the 1996 rate of \$4.37, or 8.4 percent.

Articles 1 and 2 of the warrant will be voted by official ballot.

Article 1 is to choose officers for the ensuing year. Article 2 pertains to adopting of official-ballot voting on all issues before the town. The article, submitted by petition, requires a three-fifths' vote for passage.

Selectmen and the new highway garage committee are looking forward to a two-thirds'

approval vote on a warrant article asking \$150,000 for the purpose of site preparation and construction of a new highway garage. The article asks approval to remove present buildings located on town property at North Parsonage Road, used by the department at that site. Voting on this article will be by paper ballot and requires a two-thirds' majority vote.

Voters will also be asked to authorize the sale of the current highway garage located on Route 120 in Cornish Flat. Money from the sale would be used to defray costs associated with construction of the new highway garage.

Other articles include: approval of a \$292,927 for maintenance of Class 5 roads and bridges; using \$20,000 of the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund to repair the Mercer Bridge on Platt Road; discontinuing Walker Drive; selling a small parcel of land located at Townhouse and South Parsonage roads; and six articles involving money to be placed in various reserve fund accounts.

money articles

Three vie for highway agent slot

By **RUTH ROLLINS**
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — The Cornish highway agent opening has three vying for the position: Thomas Spaulding, Everett Cass and Edward Benware.

Thomas Spaulding

Spaulding, a native of Cornish, has been employed by the Cornish Highway Department since 1980 and feels he has more knowledge about Cornish roads than either of the other two candidates.

"Seventeen years job experience more than qualifies me to be road agent," said Spaulding. He has worked on building bridges, paved roads and plowed every road in town, he said.

He believes in preventive maintenance on vehicles and will plan to do any repair work possible at the town garage.

"If I'm elected, my telephone number will be available. If I'm home I'll talk to anyone who calls, day or night."

Spaulding worked for Stacy's Fuel and Lumber in Windsor for 13 years prior to being hired by the town highway department. He served as a member of the Cornish Fair Association. He resides on Town House Road with his wife, Terrie.

Everett Cass

Cass is also vying for the position of Cornish highway agent and feels his 25 years of running his own business makes him an excellent candidate.

"I have done excavation work the past 10 years. I read blueprints and understand setting elevations and grades needed for road building. I know different materials in gravel, have learned where lots are located at comparative prices. I can work with budgets, the number of dollars and how to spend them," said Cass.

Edward Benware

Benware is a native of Cornish. He, too, has operated his own business the past seven years, which is winter plowing and summer roadside mowing.

Much of his life he worked in construction. He worked for the state of New Hampshire several years and nine other years doing paving. He has operated most types of equipment needed for highway maintenance, he said.

"I have some ideas which might be beneficial to the town during winter maintenance," said Benware. "One would be to find a way to heat hopper bodies during winter sanding."

Cornish ^{Valley News}

Mar 12, 1967 1.A7

\$150,000 For New Garage OK'd; Old Building Will Not Be Sold

By SUSAN J. RAND

Valley News Correspondent

CORNISH — Town Meeting voters yesterday approved spending \$150,000 to build a new highway garage and decided not to sell an old garage to help reduce the cost of the new one.

The garages, old and new, were the main topics at yesterday's more than three-hour meeting, which brought to the Cornish Elementary School about 135 residents, representing just less than 13 percent of the town's registered voters.

The appropriation of money to build the new 50-by-140-foot wood-frame garage had to be approved by a two-thirds majority of those voting and was approved easily on a 136-14 paper ballot vote.

The garage will be built on the North Parsonage Road site of the existing highway buildings, which have no running water or plumbing and will be torn down.

Deciding what to do with yet another highway building, this one on Route 120 in Cornish Flat, took voters longer than the new garage discussion. A committee and the town's three selectmen recommended selling the building, which currently is used for highway storage and as a place to park two fire trucks.

But voters decided in a 67-56 vote not to sell the old building. Several people suggested keeping the property so the town would have land on which to build a new fire station in the future. Others said the building lies in the flood plain and should be sold, with the proceeds used to reduce the cost of the new highway garage. Still others suggested pulling the decision off for a year.

With no dissent, voters approved spending \$333,638 to run town government and more than \$460,000 in other requested expenses. The current \$4.37 town portion of the tax rate will drop to \$4 this year if revenues come in as estimated, said Stuart Hodgeman, chairman of the board of selectmen.

Hodgeman said after the meeting that the money items — including the new garage — were approved because town officials could show the need for them.

"The name of the game is to prepare and be rational about how you want to spend the money," he said.

In daylong Australian ballot voting, residents picked Thomas Spaulding to be the town's highway agent, a one-year position. Spaulding received 186 votes to Everett Cass' 74 votes and Edward Benware's 27.

Voters also decided not to change to the official ballot system of voting, rejecting the proposal in a 200-102 vote.



Valley News - Rick Russe

Don MacLeay offers his opinion on the proposed sale of the old highway garage at Town Meeting yesterday in Cornish. Voters decided not to sell the building.

The Need For A New Highway Garage Facility February 1996

In December of 1995 the Selectmen asked a number of the town's citizens to investigate, and comment on, the need for a new garage facility for the Highway Department. Those called to serve on this advisory committee were:

Gerald Baillet-Latour	James Neil
Albert Earle	Clinton Newbold
Gerald Esty	Alan Pentold
Mike Monette	Thomas Spaulding B

The advisory committee met on several occasions to assess the present facility and to determine the conditions under which the members of the Highway Department are currently working.

It was unanimously agreed that the present facilities are substandard in the extreme. The employees work under conditions that are not only very unpleasant, but dangerous as well. In addition, the present facilities make it difficult to maintain the highway equipment in proper working order.

In February the advisory committee recommended to the Selectmen that an Article be placed on the March 1996 Warrant that:

- 1) Instructs the Selectmen to form an official *New Highway Garage Committee*.
- 2) Charges the committee with the task of bringing to the March 1997 town meeting a schematic, but bidable, set of plans for the construction of a new facility.
- 3) Charges the committee with the task of using the developed plans and specifications to determine, by a bid process, how much a new facility will cost.
- 4) Charges the committee with the task of determining the best means for funding such construction; and
- 5) Authorizes the Selectmen to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,000 which (it has already been determined) will be required for the execution of the committee's tasks.

Alan S. Pentold
For the Advisory Committee



EXISTING HIGHWAY GARAGE FACILITY - Photo by Dick Gosselt

Taken from 229th Annual Report, March, 1996

Eagle Times 3/26/97



RAZING IN THE SUN — From left, town workers Mike Duvall, Scott Morse and Tom Spaulding survey the scene Tuesday after helping to raze the old Cornish Highway Garage. Organizers said they were

preparing to burn the debris before the end of today. A new garage will be built on the same piece of town-owned land. (Wayne Carter photo)

Highway garage, budget pass

Spaulding new road agent

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — At Tuesday's annual Town Meeting, voters passed \$867,565 in appropriations, including an operating budget and several accompanying warrant articles.

The spending plan, down \$53,063 from the 1996 budget, is expected to cut the town tax rate 37 cents to \$4 per \$1,000 of valuation.

Following the nearly five hour meeting, Ray Evans, chairman of the Cornish School Board estimated with the \$2.81 increase in the school tax, over the current \$18.93, and a \$4 town tax, residents would be looking at a \$28 tax rate per \$1,000 if the county tax remains the same.

Article one asked voter approval of \$150,000 for the construction of a new garage for the highway department. After a presentation by Nathan Cass, which included a drawing and a model of the proposed garage, the article, which required a two-thirds majorit vote, was approved by a paper ballot vote of 136-14, after a short discussion period.

However, an article asking for authority to dispose of the current highway garage facility at Cornish Flat was defeated by a show of hands 67-55.

Voters approved \$292,927 for the maintenance of Class 5 highways and bridges, with \$210,603 to be raised by taxes and \$82,324 to be received from the state as Highway Block Grant Funds.

They also approved repair of the Mercer Bridge on Platt Road by withdrawing \$20,000 from the Bridge Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose. Another \$1,300 will be used from the highway block grant fund to complete the work.

(See CORNISH - Pg. 8)



LOOKS GOOD TO HIM— Resident Buz Lord looks over plans for a new highway garage prior to Tuesday's Town Meeting in Cornish. Voters approved the \$150,000 proposal along with a budget and numerous other expenditures during the nearly five hour meeting. But an article to switch to all-day balloting was defeated. The town tax rate could drop to \$4 next year but a higher school tax rate will more than offset the anticipated decrease. (Wayne Carter photo)

Edge Times 3-12-97

Cornish highway garage near completion

Benice Johnson Library Album

Highway Department

28-22-97
CORNISH — The 50-by-140-foot highway facility, approved by voters at the annual Town Meeting in March, has been under construction. Roof trusses were placed in July and the building has roofing and windows installed.

The \$150,000 project being carried out on town-owned land has Robert Curtis Building and Remodeling of Newport doing the construction work. He was chosen through a bid process carried out by the Cornish selectmen.

After town highway employees removed the old Fuller barn which was used as a garage for many years, site work was completed by Everett Cass of Cornish. Mel Clark of Meriden was in charge of the concrete work.

Cornish resident Richard Baril will do the electrical wiring and Douglas Free-land, also of Cornish, has been chosen to be the plumbing contractor.

Ruth Rollins



HIGHWAY FACILITY — The town garage will have metal roofing and hot air heat. The facility will house

both highway and cemetery equipment. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Cornish shows off its new highway garage

BY LOIS FITTS

CORNISH—it was damp and raw outside but friendly and warm inside as Cornish held an open house Saturday at the new town garage on North Parsonage Road.

The new building was completed within the \$150,000 budget thanks to many residents and contractors who volunteered time and did more than they were asked to do.

Thanks were extended to Robert Curtis, contractor; Mel Clark, concrete; Wayne McCutcheon, survey and septic; Everett Cass, site work; John MacNamara, bulldozing; Mark Dube, interior painting; Johnson & Dix, heat; Ron's Fix-it Shop, drain; Dick Baril, electricity; Doug Freeland, plumbing; Sentry System, alarms, and Nate Cass, clerk of the works who pulled it all together.

A special note of thanks went to Randy Baril who made the organization of the exterior painting his Eagle Scout project.

With the help of Mark Dube who obtained 45 gallons of paint donated by Sherwin & Williams in West Lebanon, Randy organized Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts and many other town residents to stir and spray the paint on Saturday, Oct. 4.

About 30 people participated and they polished off 70 hamburgers and five pounds of hot dogs in 40 minutes. The painting took about six hours including cleanup after.

Selectman Larry Dingee said the project started about 25 years ago when the town purchased the land and buildings from the School District for \$8,000 in 1972 for the purpose of a town garage. The old barn that was on the property served as the garage until it was demolished this past spring. A small barn that remains will be burned as fire training at a future date.

Rep. Peter Burling read a letter of congratulations from Gov. Jeanne Shaheen.

Selectman Stuart Hodgeman expressed appreciation and thanks to the townspeople from the Board of Selectmen.

Road Agent Tom Spaulding is pleased with the new garage. All the town's highway and cemetery equipment fits in the garage with room to spare. There is room for the trucks with the wings; room to

work on more than one vehicle at a time, and room to store supplies and other equipment.

The balance of the \$150,000 will be used to construct a central fuel depot for all town equipment. This will facilitate inventory of gas and oil. It is hoped to finish this project before snow flies.

The interior of the garage has a lunch room with sink, cabinets and refrigerator, office for the road agent and sexton, rest-rooms, and storage for oil and other material. There is also overhead storage for tires and miscellaneous equipment.

The road equipment consists of three dump trucks with plows and sanders, road grader with wing, bucket loader, lawn mower, pickup truck and cemetery truck known as the war wagon. It was formerly a military ambulance.



SNIP, SNIP — Four-year-old Nate Cass helped his dad, Nathan, right, snip the ribbon at a ceremony for the new

town highway garage in Cornish recently. (Ruth Rollins photo)

New Cornish highway garage dedicated

By **RUTH ROLLINS**
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — A large crowd turned out for the open house held at the new town garage recently, with Nathan Cass and his young son Nate cutting the ribbon during the opening ceremonies.

Selectman Robert Maslan told those present that the building had been completed under budget.

"Thanks to the many volunteers and various contractors, both local and others," Maslan said.

He praised Cass, the town's fire chief, who served as clerk of the works for the project.

"Nate volunteered to take on

this massive project from start to finish, he has volunteered all of his time and effort, and he accomplished it while staying under the \$150,000 approved by voters," said Maslan.

He also praised 17-year-old Randy Baril for taking on the responsibility of painting the outside of the 50-by-140-foot building as an Eagle Scout service project.

"Randy coordinated the entire job with the help of volunteers he gathered," said Maslan. "By the end of a work day 45 gallons of paint had been applied, which was donated by the Sherwin Williams Company."

Selectman Larry Dingee and Stuart Hodgeman also showed

deep appreciation to all who made it possible to construct a suitable building for both the highway and cemetery departments, saying good things take time and it was money well spent.

Representative Peter Burling read a letter of congratulations from Gov. Jean Shaheen who praised Cornish residents for pulling together in their acts of volunteerism.

The highway garage was constructed on town-owned land, located on North Parsonage Road, which was purchased 25 years ago for the purpose. Included is an office and storage space, as well as indoor plumbing facilities, including a shower.

Maslan said not only the volunteers deserved thanks but many of the contractors also gave over and above, when added work was demanded. The list included Wayne McCutcheon, surveyor, Everett Cass, site work, John McNamara, bulldozing, and Robert Curtis Building and Remodeling, which did the structural work.

The heating system was installed by Johnson and Dix Fuel, and electrical work was done by Dick Baril. Ron's Fixit Shop did drain work and Douglas Freeland installed plumbing. Interior painting was performed by Mark Dube. Sentry Systems installed an alarm system.

Eagle Times 11-4-9

Water Everywhere But...

By GEORGE LAMBERT

"Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink . . ."

Residents of many Upper Valley towns have had something in common with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's ancient mariner for the last few days. Their albatross has been the lack of drinking water due to the recent flood.

Hartford Okay

The biggest sigh of relief could be heard Thursday afternoon in Hartford when town officials took to the radio to announce that the water was safe to drink.

"People have been very good about it," said town manager Ralph Lehman. "We've had a number of inquiries but no complaints."

Lehman said the order to boil was issued because of turbulence caused by runoff in the White River Junction system and because the well that serves the Quechee area was under the rampaging waters of the Ottauquechee River. "The Water Resources Department in Montpelier suggested that we order people to boil because they didn't know if the river

had worked into the well," he explained.

There had been grumbling at the William Tally House Restaurant in White River Junction, especially on the part of bus passengers who discovered that the restaurant was without water and couldn't operate its soft drink machines. The local people know better, officials said.

Trouble Spots

Roads Out

Windsor: County Road

Hartford: Jericho Road

Route 4: White River Junction to Quechee exit of I-89.

Plainfield: River Road, below Robert Earl residence, Freeman Road, from High Hope Farm, Old County Road, north of Black Hill Four Corners.

Plainfield Bridges: Hill Hollow

Meridan: Underhill Road

Cornish: Townhouse Road

Water Must Be Boiled

In Royalton, Fairlee, Bradford, Meriden.

To the north in Fairlee, the situation was much the same. Selectman Maurice Roberts was particularly aware of the boiler order because he operates a restaurant. At his Fairlee Diner customers still aren't being offered water, pending the arrival of test results from the state health department.

"If a customer insists on water, we give it to them," Roberts said. "We tell them we think it's okay now but that we haven't got tests to back it up."

The Fairlee system developed problems because of runoff and turbidity, Roberts said. Voters in Fairlee will be asked to approve a bond issue later this month to finance improvements to the water system.

Bradford Problems

The Bradford water system which had been plagued by low pressure as well as poor quality since the flood, is still in trouble. "The water pressure is 'back up,'" said administrative officer Herbert Hoffman. "The people can drink all they want — so long as they boil it." Hoffman said that because work crews were still making

(Continued on Page 14)

— WATER

Rain washes out roads in Cornish

By EDWARD HURLEY
Staff Writer

CORNISH — Torrential rains over night and this morning washed out roads in Cornish, forcing police to close them to through traffic today.

Lang Road near the Plainfield town line and Town House Road, Dingleton Hill Road and Sunset Strip Road were all closed because of flooding, Windsor Fire Chief Lewis Gage said. Windsor dispatches for Cornish, whose crews were out in full force this morning.

Along Route 12A from Claremont to Cornish, motorists had to contend with water over the road in several locations caused by runoff from hills to the east.

Just past the Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge on Route

12A, mud and rocks from the bank slid down making the road nearly impassable — “a real mess,” according to the police scanner.

Emergency personnel in other towns reported no serious flooding but were keeping a watchful eye.

In Claremont, Jarvis Hill Road and River Road were flooded this morning by several inches of water, and a portion the road on the hill going down toward Cornish was washed out, according to a report.

The rain has caused a few minor road problems in Newport, Public Works Director Larry Wiggins said this morning. He added that if the wet weather continues, then there

(See FLOODING - Pg. 8)

FLOODING

From Page 1

may be some flooding in lower areas of town.

On the other side of the Connecticut River in Weatherfield, Windsor, Springfield and Bellows Falls, flooding has not been reported.

Springfield Fire Chief Ernest "Puggy" Lamphere said this morning that his department hasn't received any calls from residents to have their basements pumped out.

"The Black River is OK but the Connecticut River is getting high," he said.

Chad Illingworth with the

Bellows Falls Public Works Department said there was no flooding this morning but he could not guarantee that would last.

"It depends on the weather. We have been cleaning out catch basins as a precaution," he said.

The worse part of the storm should be over but people can expect showers on and off again until Saturday, according Mark Breen, a meteorologist with the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury, Vt.

Though it doesn't usually rain for over a week in the month of June, Breen said, it is not unheard of. But it is unusual to have the heavy, driving rain that has plagued the region.

A low centered over the Great Lakes will move very slowly east during the next couple of days. In its wake there are more lows moving in from the west. This scenario will continue to produce surges of rain moving north across New England over the next several days.



JUST HOW DEEP? — Cornish resident Bucky Demers stands near a neighbor's home on TownHouse Road in Cornish this morning, where water was flowing across the roadway following heavy rains. There were several reports of washouts and flooded roads in the Cornish area. (Wayne Carter photo.)



WASHED AWAY — Megan Thibault, 2, the daughter of Randy and Debbie Thibault of Cornish, points to the damage done to Sunset Strip Road by yesterday's

torrential downpours. The rushing water cut some ditches of up to six feet deep into the road. (Wayne Carter photo)

Heavy rains destroy roads

repairs
should
be done
today

By RYAN FRANCIS
and ED HURLEY
Staff Writers

CORNISH — Anne Tracy sat in a chair in her front yard yesterday afternoon, watching her dog bark at everything that went by — including some of the road.

Tracy is one of a few residents on Lang Road in Cornish who saw a portion of their two-mile road wash away in yesterday's torrential rain. The asphalt, contorted in every which way, looked like it had been ripped apart by an earthquake.

But highway crews working until 10:30 last night and were able to reopen Lang Road as well as Townhouse Road, Dingleton Hill Road and Sunset Strip Road, all of which were closed yesterday, Road Agent Thomas Spaulding said late last night.

Crews were out this morning to finish up the repairs but the roads should pretty much be back to normal by the end of today, Spaulding



REPAIR TIME — Work crews yesterday repaired the damage to Town House Road in Cornish near Dingleton Hill Road where water flowing down from the hills cut ditches into the sides of the road of up to 100 feet long in some sections. In some places the rushing water carried away the dirt from under the road causing the asphalt to crack and crumble. (Wayne Carter photo)

said.

The 37-year resident Tracy said she heard the storm early yesterday morning, but stayed in bed, thinking it would end soon. She figured the sheep on her farm, Tracy Homestead, could wait an extra hour before getting fed. But the deluge sent a rush of water down over the road pull-

ing it apart and washing away the ground underneath. Now Tracy had no way out.

"We won't starve," she said as she patted her dog.

The only thing she may need in the next few days is feed for her sheep, but Tracy was confident friends could retrieve it.

Cornish Fire Chief Nate

Cass said yesterday the water came like a deluge. Lang Road will be patched in certain spots and fill will be brought in for temporary passage, Cass said.

The flooding was basically held to one side of town, Cass said. Route 12A and Townhouse Road also re-

(See WASHOUT - Pg. 8)

WASHOUT

From Page 1

ceived damage from the storm.

The damage to Townhouse Road and Dingleton Hill Road was the worst. Townhouse Road resident Leon Fecteau has seen in about 40 years.

"There was huge, deep ditches to the side of Dingleton Hill Road. If a car fell into one it sure wasn't getting out," he said.

But the poor state of the roads didn't keep Fecteau inside. He went to Windsor to go shopping yesterday afternoon but admitted he drove very slow to avoid going into the ditches.

The destruction of Lang Road began just up the hill from Peter and Jean Burling's house. The torrential downpours early in the morning had removed, in some parts, one lane from the two-lane road, leaving gaps in the pavement measuring five-feet deep and five-feet wide. The raging "river" that flowed down the hill dumped mud onto the Burling's land into the pasture across the street. Jean Burling said they had to remove the gate to get the horses that were blocked in.

"This is a fragile bit of road. It is a big mess," she said.

It was not until she tried to bring her son to school at 8 a.m. that she saw the damage. With Townhouse Road closed, she could not get to Cornish Elementary School to drop her son off before heading to Claremont District Court where she is a judge.

Later in the afternoon, while the road was still in disarray, it was a sharp contrast to the serene picture of horses and sheep grazing in the pasture while a small brook quickly ran by the road. Even up the hill, a deer galloped across the street with no worry of vehicles making their way up.

That peaceful setting was interrupted by the faint noise of

town construction trucks working on other roads in the area. The only vehicles heading up Lang Road were bulldozers and front loaders and even the rough terrain made them cautiously climb the road.

Sunset Strip Road also has its share of problems. Rushing water washed out two sections of the dirt road temporarily, confining residents without high clearance vehicles in their homes. One of them was James Jordan who said this morning that he wasn't able to get down his road until 11 a.m. yesterday.

He said he probably could have made it out earlier but he didn't want to take the chance since he didn't have anywhere pressing to go to.

The washed out section on Jordan's side of the hill heading towards Root Hill Road was only two or three feet deep. But the one on the other side heading towards Tandy Brook Road was perhaps six feet deep.

Jordan said he thought the culverts were overpowered by the tremendous flow of water coming down the hill.

Many of the problems stemmed from debris getting stuck in the culverts, which prompted the runoff to find other outlets. The water eroded the dirt underneath the pavement, eventually collapsing the asphalt. Farther up on the hill, the road becomes dirt and that portion actually made out better with only some erosion of the shoulders.

The water ended out flowing over the road washing out the grading on the other side and in some cases the road itself. In one spot on Townhouse Road approximately 75 feet of the shoulder was washed out and an even larger 100 foot section was eroded as well.

In some locations there was a five to six foot vertical drop down to the Mill Brook because the rushing water carried the

dirt and rocks of the hillside down into the brook.

Lang Road resident Kay Wegner woke up to the sound of thunder at 6:30 yesterday morning. After watching the rain continue for more than an hour, Wegner and her husband left for Hanover. They narrowly got by Dodge Road in Plainfield to West Gate Road onto Route 12A. She said they had to pull some of the "junk" off the road to get through.

This is the fourth year she has lived on the road and can remember a slightly similar situation a few years ago where Dodge Road had received damage. She credited the work the town crews conducted a few years ago in keeping some of the road intact in this battle with the rain.

Spaulding said he hasn't seen such damage since heavy rains in 1973 wiped several roads. But he added that there really isn't much the town can do to prepare the roads when the rains were as heavy as they were yesterday.

Fire tape was stretched across the road at the Hayward Road intersection, prohibiting anyone from driving down Lang Road.

Cass wanted to caution truckers using the back roads of the conditions.

Claremont also received damage to its roads. Work crews tended to restructuring a portion of Jarvis Hill Road yesterday afternoon. A part of the east-bound lane had eroded by the heavy rains.

Meteorologist Tom Hoyt said there are two recurring jet streams over this area that are likely to remain through next week. There is not expected to be any more major downpours in the next three days, but it will remain cloudy, muggy and humid until next week. It may dry up next week, Hoyt said.



Valley News — Medora Heber

Kebalka of Cornish looks at the wreckage of a bridge that spanned a brook that ran under his driveway.

Valley News 6/17/98 1998

Washouts Temporarily Close Some Roads

By DAN RICHARDSON
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — The thunderstorms that have hit the Upper Valley during the past week built to a crescendo yesterday morning, causing numerous washouts that temporarily closed some roads and spurred New Hampshire Gov. John Shaheen to declare a state of emergency. Intensive flooding throughout the state led to Shaheen's emergency declaration, according to a release from the governor's office yesterday. Several counties were under a flood watch, including Grafton, the release stated. Perhaps the worst hit Upper Valley town was Cornish, where two washouts closed Town House Road, a major artery between Routes 12A and 120, and destroyed at least one private road. "I was living here in the '73 flood. That was devastating. This is tolerable," said Bonnie Kebalka, a Cornish resident watching heavy equipment fill in potholes on Town House Road.

The road was undermined as soil and gravel under the pavement was washed away in at least two places, said Jerry Baillargeon, patrol foreman with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation crew making the repairs. The washouts occurred at about 7 a.m. when water flowing over the road carried away the bank, undermining the pavement, Baillargeon said. The washout occurred several hundred yards from the 10 Percent Solution, the other was farther up the road, Baillargeon said. About 20 state workers were on the scene yesterday afternoon, and Baillargeon said they would have the road reopened last night.

Kebalka's private road, off Town House Road, was also washed out as was a bridge on the road that leads to her house. The bridge was smashed by a powerful torrent of white water. The normally gentle stream, violently swollen by recent rains, roared through a gash in the dirt road yesterday afternoon. Bridge beams and a culvert could be seen casually tossed high on the stream banks.

The Kebalka family's house was not threatened, however, and neighbors had let them park their vehicles at their houses.

"I thank God everything turned out good," Kebalka said about the lack of injuries and damage to homes there. "We're just thankful that everyone is OK."

Three other Cornish roads — Dingleton Hill Road, Sunset Strip Road and Lang Road — also suffered minor washouts or high water, but were clear and open by the evening, according to a Cornish police dispatcher.

Several roads in Woodstock were temporarily closed Monday evening or earlier yesterday, but had also been reopened as of yesterday afternoon, police said.

In Hartford, half a dozen roads were affected by the storms. Clogged culverts caused a washout behind 25,000 Gifts on Route 5 yesterday morning, as well one on Red Barn Road in Quechee and a mud-flow that temporarily blocked Old River Road near the C & S warehouse in White River Junction.

All Hartford roads were open by late afternoon, said Mike Lavalla, Hartford's director of public works.

"What happened in most of these areas is that the volume (of water) just overwhelmed the ditch-

es and culverts," Lavalla said.

A meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Burlington said most of the Upper Valley has seen about 3 inches of rain since Friday. There is now good news and bad news, he said — the rain is expected to continue, but in lesser amounts.

"We'll have a couple more days of thunderstorms and showers," the meteorologist said. After a break on Friday, the forecast calls for more light rain through the weekend.

"I wouldn't expect more than another inch or so," he said.

Bill Dodenhoff, the Connecticut River operations planner for New England Power Company, said river levels of the Connecticut River and its tributaries are high, but not higher than during many spring run-offs.

"We started with some very dry conditions, so the vegetation and the ground soaked up about an inch and a half or so," he said. "The runoff wasn't as severe as it could be."

According to figures from the U.S. Geological Service, the White River at West Hartford was flowing at 5,680 cubic feet per second, compared with a long-term mean flow of 808, as of yesterday morning. And the Connecticut River at West Lebanon was flowing at 19,900 cubic feet per second, compared with a mean of 6,000. Other area rivers were also higher than normal, figures showed.

No major rivers are expected to overflow their banks, Dodenhoff said. The problems now may be with small brooks and streams, and localized flooding if particular areas see heavy thunderstorms, he said.

After 43 years of highway work, Bayliss retires

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N.H. — Robert Bayliss retired last week after working 43 years for the State of New Hampshire Highway Department and leaves the job with lots of memories and stories to tell.

For example, there's the day he graduated from high school. "I graduated from Windsor High School in the morning and before the day was out there was a cloudburst over Cornish and Plainfield. At the time my dad, John Bayliss was a highway patrolman and he needed all available help," Bayliss recalled.

That was June 13, 1940, and Bayliss assisted his father until he went into the service, where he was in the 99th Infantry Division Engineer Battalion.

Discharged in December 1945, he returned to his employment with the state and became a highway patrolman, a position he kept for the next 20 years.

In 1966 Bayliss was promoted to construction superintendent in the Lebanon office and for the past 10 years he has been a maintenance supervisor, working out of the

office at Exit 16, Enfield, off Interstate 89.

Bayliss supervised the highway patrol crews all over the division, covering 40 towns — Piermont on the north to Claremont on the south and all the way to Bristol, Franklin and Plymouth on the east.

Bayliss helped the division engineer with carrying out decisions made as to where culverts were to be replaced, resurfacing jobs, patching of potholes and all the general work involved in covering 300 miles of State Highway in the division.

"I was out days, nights, during snowstorms and floods, just like the men on the work crews. I had that responsibility 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 43 years," said Bayliss.

Bayliss went out during blizzards, too. "Sometimes the truckdrivers would lose sight of the road while plowing; sometimes they had accidents. It was nothing for a driver to get in 1,000 miles of plowing on the Interstate during a bad storm," he said.

"We had 11 or 12 trucks between the Connecticut River and New London, during these storms," he recalled.

Bayliss has seen some bad accidents on Interstate 89, but noted, "Ninety-nine percent of the time the people do not get hurt badly. It's amazing — sometimes the vehicles have been demolished."

He has an album in the office of many of the accidents.

Bayliss recalled one personal near-miss.

"Six years ago, I was out in a storm on the interstate, there was an accident and I was putting out flares. Another car came up behind me, traveling too fast, and hit my car, just as I was stepping out of it. I have never felt the same since," said Bayliss.

"I have babysat the Old Covered Bridge (Cornish-Windsor) for all of these years, during ice jams. One could never predict whether the ice would go out at night or during the day, or what would happen. I have taken a



Robert Bayliss

lot of pictures of ice jams for the state," Bayliss said.

Bayliss was born in Cornish, son of John and Clara Bayliss. His mother lives in Windsor. He and his wife, the former Adel Howard, will celebrate their 35th anniversary in September. They have a son, Ronnie, and a daughter, Pam.

Bayliss has been a member of the State Employees Association for 43 years, a deputy fire warden for 35 years and a member of the Cornish Planning Board for 10 years. He is a member of the Blow-Me-Down Snowriders and very active in fundraising efforts for that organization. He is a past member of the Windsor-Claremont Lions Club.

Just prior to his retirement the division employees treated Bayliss and his wife to a luncheon at the Hanover Inn. They presented him with a wall clock in the shape of the State of New Hampshire.

Bayliss was also given a retirement party in Wentworth by his family and Pam and Gilbert Wilson and Ronald Belyea, attended by friends, relatives and state employees. A cake was made by Doris Buckman depicting his life.

Since retiring, Bayliss has had time to climb Kearsarge Mountain, "something I've wanted to do for a long time." He also attended the Balloon Festival in Quechee with his son, Ronnie.

OBITUARIES

ROBERT E. BAYLISS

LAKE GENEVA, FLA. — Robert E. Bayliss, 78, of Lake Geneva died Friday at Jacksonville (Fla.) Hospital.

He was born in Cornish and moved from there to Lake Geneva in 1991. An Army veteran of World War II, Mr. Bayliss had retired as a supervisor after 43 years with the New Hampshire Highway Department.

In Cornish, he did civil defense duties and was a fire warden. He was a member of the United Church of Cornish and the Lions Club.

Survivors include a daughter, Pam Bayliss of Hawthorne, Fla.; a son, Ronald of Lake Geneva; a sister, Olive Miller of Windsor; and a granddaughter.

Memorial services will be held Oct. 28 at 2 p.m. at the United Church of Cornish.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to United Church of Cornish, P.O. Box 40, Cornish Flat, N.H. 03746.



Fillin' In Cornish Road (News Photo - Larry McDonald)



INSIDE

New truck

December 2, 2001 EagleTimes

Highway Department



Cornish Highway Agent Tom Spaulding, far right, presents check to Phil Webster, of H.P. Fairfield Truck Services, for installation of plow equipment, when he delivered an International dump truck the town purchased from S.G. Reed Truck Services of Claremont. Looking on, left to right, were highway employee Paul Goewey, and selectmen Larry Dingee and Bob Maslan. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Bernice Johnson Library Album

Dump truck rollover affects Cornish budget

Edinboro Times Feb 24, 2002

By **GEORGE CHAPPELL**
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — A long-running debate over purchasing a new truck or trucks for the highway department has been complicated by an accident in which the town's 1990 International dump truck rolled over while sanding a road in freezing rain.

What to buy and how much to spend are still unresolved as annual town meeting deadlines near.

The selectmen have to decide by Monday whether to recommend the purchase of a road grader, a new dump truck and a road grader, or a dump truck while postponing buying a grader until next year.

"The '90 International truck is till a dark horse," Selectman Larry Dingee said Friday night.

The issue seemed to have been resolved two weeks ago, on Feb. 8, when the board of selectmen, the finance committee and the capital equipment committee, in a joint meeting, decided in favor of recom-

mending the purchase of a new road grader to replace the 1985 model the town is using. The decision set aside consideration for buying a replacement this year for the 1990 truck, which is used for plowing and sanding.

Selectmen then placed a \$165,000 article on the town meeting warrant for the purchase of a new grader. The money was to be taken from the town's capital reserve fund, and no money would be taken from taxes raised this year.

But then came the accident, the cause of which was attributed to the road conditions, selectmen said.

At first they thought they could repair the truck, but the insurer said Thursday that the truck would be totaled. But selectmen don't know the amount of the settlement for the truck or its status as salvage. They would like to buy the vehicle back from the insurer, repair it, and put the truck back in service for another year or two.

On Friday, the selectmen met again with the capital equipment committee to open dealers' bids on selling the town a grader. While the bid prices were supposed to have been the focus of the evening, they became almost a footnote as the discussion centered on what to do about the truck and the grader.

Selectmen early in the meeting were encouraged as equipment committee chairman Larry Duval opened three bids from dealers for the grader. All three prices were less than the amount the board had put in the warrant article. A bid was not accepted until the specifications of the machines were reviewed.

• Nortrax Co. of Springfield submitted a bid of \$115,000 on a new John Deere 670 CH model.

• R.C. Hazelton Co. Inc. of Hopkinton, N.H., submitted a bid of \$117,500 on a 2001 Komatsu GD 530. The price included the trade of the old grader.

• Southworth Milton Inc. of

Concord, N.H., offered a Caterpillar road grader at \$134,970 that selectmen said is better equipped than the other two machines.

After reading the bids, selectmen realized that they had as much as \$35,000 left over from the warrant article amount to use toward doing something about the 1990 International.

While some at the meeting wanted to place two articles on the warrant, even though it meant spending upwards of \$200,000 for a new truck and a new road grader, Dingee and Maslan held their ground on desiring to stay within the limits of the capital reserve plan.

"I know you don't like to empty the account, Larry," Fred Sullivan, a finance committee member told Dingee, "but sometimes you have to. This is one of those times."

Committee member Mike Monette at one point criticized Dingee for not wanting to let the voters decide.

"It's my job to stay within the reserve fund," said Dingee.

"No, no, no, no," replied Monette. "The people run this town. You're trying to play God."

Fire Chief Nate Cass, a truck operator in snowstorms, has made his feelings known about the 1990 International, before and after the accident, calling the vehicle "junk."

Cass put his feelings aside Friday and advised the committee and the board to follow the advice of road agent Tom Spaulding: Fix the 1990 truck for this year and buy the new road grader, thereby keeping the expenditures within the limits of the \$165,000 warrant article.

The group will try to find out by Monday how much the insurer will pay to settle the dump truck and return it as salvage to the town. Then, selectmen will try to find out how much it would cost to repair the vehicle.

It all has to be done by Monday afternoon, the deadline for posting the warrant for the March 12 annual town meeting.

Blocking of a town road debated in Cornish

APR 24, 2002 p. A3



ROAD CLOSED — Brian Meyette stands by the barrier he erected on the class six portion of Skyline Drive in Cornish. The action has spurred controversy with selectmen.

(George Chappell photo)

By GEORGE CHAPPELL
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Town officials and a local resident may soon be at loggerheads over private barriers put across class six public roads.

Skyline Drive resident Brian Meyette and the board of selectmen have placed steel cables across the beginning of the class six part of Skyline Drive just east of the culvert across from his driveway. Meyette says he feels his action is justified because the town's response to a 1992 ordinance that closes the class six roads to off-highway recreational vehicles has been lukewarm.

Selectmen disagree with Meyette's action, however, because his action impedes landowners' access to their property in the area. Selectmen said they plan to inspect the site this coming week.

"I think we should go up and take a look at that cable on Wednesday," Selectman Larry Dingee said at the board's regular meeting Friday night.

"We cannot deny landowners access to their property regardless of the time of year," Dingee said on Friday.

"A landowner clearly does not have the right to do that," Dingee added.

"There always has to be a balance trying to protect a class six road from needless damage and protecting the rights of property owners," Dingee said.

Under the ordinance, class six roads, which are town-owned roads not maintained, are closed and posted between March 1 and July 1 to protect vegetation on and around the usually unpaved road surfaces from traffic during mud season, Meyette says.

Meyette, who campaigned persistently 10 years ago to have the board of selectmen adopt the ordinance and went on to testify at public hearings for class six roads in towns surrounding Cornish, has stretched a steel logging cable across Skyline Drive.

Actually, two steel cables, including the one placed by Meyette and one by the Cornish road agent, are stretched across the road barring access to vehicles. The road is a class six road,

can sink a foot into the wet ground in places. There are vernal pools and wetlands in the interior.

The road is about 15 miles long and extends from a point near Meyette's driveway to Newport. The road used to be called the Cornish-Newport Turnpike because it was the shortest way to Newport.

The son of Peg and Joe Meyette, a former police chief and a selectman, Meyette, 49, relocated to California as a young man and moved back to the area 12 years ago. He bought 40 acres next to his parents'

land, where he slowly began building his home.

Meyette, who is self-employed as a computer consultant, has set up his home to be run on solar power and has purchased a satellite dish to allow him to access to the Internet, a feature important for his work. He is a bachelor who enjoys his privacy in the woods.

"Before I moved here, it was like the wild, wild west up here with parties on the road," Meyette said. "I once saw a pick-up with a keg and 10 people in the back of the truck drive through."

Cornish Selectman Bill Gallagher said recently of Meyette's efforts for the ordinances.

When the ordinance in Cornish was passed, most people didn't care about it or were against it, Meyette said, adding that officials' indifference to the ordinance continued until this year, when First Police Officer Douglas Hackett said his department would enforce it.

For a long time there was an ongoing discussion between the selectmen and Meyette that the class five part of Skyline Drive goes to the park gate, Dingee said Friday.

Then, two years ago, Meyette took the town to small claims court in Claremont because of Cornish's refusal to maintain the class six part of the Skyline Drive. He sued for \$2,000 to recoup his expenses for taking care of the road that he thought should have been maintained by the town as a class five road.

Opposite Meyette's driveway is a gate to Corbin Park, a 26,000-acre preserve that transcends town boundaries and overlaps into the towns of Croydon, Grantham, and Plainfield. Because the town had once plowed the snow on Skyline Drive as far as the Corbin gate, Meyette considered the plowing an act of road maintenance.

Not too long after his return there was a lot of local interest in "mud runs," or field events featuring sport utility vehicles driving over soggy wooded roads in mud season.

"They were tearing up the roads," Meyette said of the mud run drivers, "and vegetation didn't have a chance to grow back."

Plainfield was the first town in the area to adopt a mud season ordinance. Meyette said he testified for that ordinance at a public hearing in Plainfield. Other towns followed, and Meyette testified at them all.

"He did a very positive thing,"

"He said we were negligent because we weren't taking care of the portion of the road to the park gate," Dingee said. "We said 'No,' because it's not a town road."

The town turned to the New Hampshire Municipal Association for legal help and won the case. The court denied Meyette's claim, stating that snow-plowing alone does not imply road maintenance.

Dingee said on Friday that Meyette has said that other private interests place barriers to class six roads.

"He uses the example of the land of the Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests," Dingee said. "There are gates on Dodge Hollow Road and at the end of Fernald Hill."

Dingee said there are no affected landowners within the property, and the town has keys to the gates in case of an emergency.

Page 5-13-02

Cornish acts against threat of 'mudders'

By GEORGE CHAPPELL,
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Class six roads, the senior citizens of local byways, received a little tender loving care this week from the board of selectmen. The class six category refers to former roads that are no longer maintained by the town but that are still public ways.

The board recently visited the class six portion of Skyline Drive to inspect privately placed steel cables across the entrance. A 1992 town ordinance closes the class six roads to off-highway recreational vehicles during mud season.

Selectmen removed an unauthorized "road closed" sign from a tree next to the entrance of Skyline Drive because the sign was not in accordance with the town ordinance, Selectman William Gallagher said Friday.

The board then drew up a standard "road closed" sign and submitted it to town attorney Michael Fuerst for approval. The new sign, which was approved by Fuerst, will be posted on all class six roads in town, Gallagher said.

According to the new sign, anyone violating the ordinance may be fined up to \$1,000 and held financially responsible for any damage done to the roads.

Class six roads are closed and posted between March 1 and June 30 to protect vegetation on and around the usually unpaved road surfaces. Before the ordinance was adopted, there was a lot of local interest in "mud runs," or field events featuring sport utility vehicles driving over soggy wooded roads in mud season. "They were tearing up the roads," according to local resident Brian Meyette, "and vegetation didn't have a chance to grow back."

Meyette, who campaigned 10 years ago to have the board of selectmen adopt the ordinance, had closed and posted Skyline Drive. Selectmen disagreed with Meyette's action, however, because it involved a private citizen closing a public way, and it impeded landowners' access to their properties off the road and made access by emergency vehicles difficult.

Scenic road status sought in Cornish

By **GEORGE CHAPPELL**
Contributing Writer

A local landowner wants the street where he lives to become designated a scenic road by the

N e w
Hampshire
Department

of Transportation.

But the scenery of Leavitt Hill is not uppermost in the

mind of Charles Aiken of 401 Leavitt Hill Road in Cornish Flat. Aiken said he is more interested in the maintenance of his road than he is in its scenery.

Charles and Patty Aiken have an ongoing beef with the local road agent for failing to act against the perpetrator who trimmed brush on the upper roadsides and dumped

the trimmings in their yard more than a month ago.

Aiken sees a state scenic road designation as a stronger enforcement tool than a local ordinance that is not enforced.

"I don't like the way the road is maintained," Aiken told the Cornish selectmen Friday night during their regular meeting. "It's been a month since I visited you, and nothing's been done."

Following his initial complaint a month ago, Aiken told selectmen that Cornish Road Agent Tom Spaulding had assured him the brush would be removed right away.

"That brush still hasn't been picked up," Aiken said Friday.

Spaulding, who happened to be present at last Friday's selectmen's meeting when Aiken arrived, had just finished explaining to the selectmen that his crews had been chipping brush on town roads all last week. The workers did not have time to get to Leavitt Hill by 3 p.m., the deadline for returning the brush chipper to its rental agency in Claremont.

"That's fine, and I want it done on my property," Aiken replied.

"I sent the chipper back," Spaulding told Aiken. "I'm sorry."

"Next week I have to pay my taxes," he reminded the board.

"Sorry doesn't do it to get the road trimmings off my property."

Selectman William Gallagher said as far as he knew, the scenic road designation offers protection and limits what a town can do to a road. Excessive brush trimming could be a violation, for example.

He said he thinks the Whitten Hill Cemetery and Saint-Gaudens roads are designated as scenic roads.

In any case, there is a state law that lets towns designate scenic roads through the town meeting process, Selectman Larry Dingee told Aiken.

Dingee said the scenic road designation would require a petition of 25 residents to get the question on the annual meeting ballot. Then the designation would require a vote of the town at town meeting, he added.

The selectmen assured Aiken they would investigate the steps to take in establishing Leavitt Hill Road as a scenic road.

Meanwhile, Spaulding said he would send a crew to the Aiken property to remove the debris left from the trimming.

George Chappell may be reached by e-mail at gchap@sover.net.

Eagle 6-24-83

A passing grade



Paul Goewey, an employee of the Cornish Town Highway Department, cleans dirt off the lower blade of the 2002 Galion grader the town just purchased. The town purchased the grader, a 2002 Galion made by Dresser Corp of Tennessee, from the manufacturer's dealer, R.C. Hazelton Co. Inc. of Manchester, N.H., for a net cost of \$110,000. The purchase included the trade-in of the town's 1983 Galion, which was bought six years ago with an insurance settlement when the town's 1981 Galion burned. (Robert North photo)

THURSDAY
MAY 22, 2003

SMOOTHING IT OUT



CAREY DUTTONS PHOTO

ROAD WORK — Bob Kibbie, a five-year veteran of the Cornish road crew, grades the ruts from Burr Road in Cornish Flat Wednesday.

241ST ANNUAL REPORT



**CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MARCH 2008**



Highway Crew standing in front of the 2009 International Dump Truck.
Left to Right: Paul Rheaume, John McNamara, Roger Gilbert, Dan Flynn, and Gary Spaulding.

From 2009 Town Report

WAYNE GREY BECAME ROAD AGENT IN 2013

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS ABOUT HIM ALTHOUGH

IT FOCUSES ON HIS ACTIVITES AS

HEAD OF THE CORNISH FAIR

Cornish Fair's President Works to Keep Country

Valley News Aug 15, 2010

By Katie Beth Ryan

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH—The dog days of August may mean that summer will soon be drawing to a close. But no summer in the Upper Valley is complete until the Cornish Fair, with its ox pulls, Tilt-A-Whirl and the Cornish Fair Queen pageant, has come and gone.

When the fair gates open at 7 a.m. Friday, visitors will be able to enjoy everything from ox pulls to bluegrass performances to a hypnotist — in addition to 4-H competitions like sheep blocking, beef fitting, and the rabbit show (the fair doubles as Sullivan County's agricultural exhibition).

For the third year in a row, the president of the fair is Wayne Gray, 44, a Cornish resident of 16 years and a fair director for 15. Growing up in Ascutney, it was the ox pulls that kept Gray coming back year after year.

Now he's working behind-the-scenes, year-round to make sure that the fair goes off without a hitch, with the help of a team of volunteers who include his 11-

Cornish Fair Wayne Gray
year-old twin daughters.

"They have to work at some of the booths, they help set the fair up," he said. "At the end, they help tear things down. So they know how other things go into operating the fair."

After last summer's heavy rains drenched the 2009 Cornish Fair, Gray and other fair directors are hoping for cloudless skies for the 61st annual fair, which will run Aug. 20-22. Gray spoke with the *Valley News* about the work that goes into running one of New England's few remaining agricultural fairs. Following is an edited transcript:



WAYNE GRAY

Valley News: Do you have any memories of past Cornish Fairs that stick out to you?

Wayne Gray: Not really. I can remember a bunch of them. I looked at it a lot different then than I do now, just because then. I was a little kid, the rides, looking at the animals and all that.

Now we're looking at the portion of keeping everything running and making sure things are going smooth and stuff like that. It's a total opposite way of looking at it.



Wayne Gray, of Cornish, is president of the Cornish Fair.

VALLEY NEWS — JENNIFER HAUCK

VN: How do you think the fair has changed?

WG: One thing I can say about the Cornish Fair (is) the Cornish Fair has stayed more of a country fair. We're not totally commercialized, like some of the other

fairs. We still are trying to keep this thing as a small country fair.

VN: There are still a decent number of agricultural fairs in New England, like the Tunbridge World's Fair and the Frye-

See Q&A — B5

Q&A: Wayne Gray

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1

burg Fair. What do you think sets the Cornish Fair apart?

WG: Cornish is a much smaller fair than any of those. Overall, they're all set up the same. They all have rides, they all have cattle and horses and ox pulling and stuff like that. I think our fair, with it being small, it just brings more people from the community. It's like an Old Home Day, where everybody from the community all comes to it, gets together and visits and has time together.

VN: What time of year does preparation for the fair begin, and what does it involve?

WG: With the fair directors, we actually go year-round. We start in September and go right through until fair time. We meet every month.

Committees have meetings to set up things for the following year's fair. The fair takes a lot of people to run it. We have a lot of dedicated volunteers that work this fair. I have 20 directors, but the volunteers that I have — I probably have another 100 people that volunteer their time to make this thing really happen.

VN: Do you ever feel that the focus of the fair has shifted away from its agricultural roots? It's still called the Sullivan County Agricultural Fair, but you've got rides, you've got entertainment, lots of other things going on.

WG: We try to stay still agricultural based on the fair. Yeah, we have rides and stuff, they help bring the people in for the kids to do things, but

we still really concentrate on the animals, the farmers, and ... on school exhibits with the 4-H groups.

VN: What makes this year's fair different from the fair last year? What do people have to look forward to this year?

WG: We're hoping three good days, not three days of rain like we had last year.

This year, we had to try to keep this thing plain and simple, because of

bad days last year. I mean, we're not having the horse shows, we're not having entertainment, everything's normal, but we just had to water down what we did on cutting things back, or we've spent to do things. So hopefully we can have three good days, be able to get people back in, get up.

Katie Beth Ryan can be reached at 603-727-3242 or kbryan@vnews.com.

ARTICLE ABOUT HAROLD MORSE

AFTER HIS DEATH



VALLEY NEWS FILE PHOTO — JENNIFER HA

Harold Morse lets his dog Roger back into his home in Cornish in late 2008. Morse, who served as Cornish's road agent from the 1970s to 1994, enjoyed driving the town's roads with his dog after he retired.

Highway Department

Cornish 'Welcoming Committee'

By STEVE GORDON
For the Valley News

CORNISH — Harold Morse liked to drive the roads of Cornish very slowly, his old dog, Roger, beside him, his old pickup ambling along while he checked out what was happening around town. He had the look of a man surveying his holdings, which in a way wasn't all that far off. Harold Morse, who died on Aug. 17 at the age of 81, kind of owned Cornish.

I met Harold in 1983, a few months after my wife and son and I moved to town. Early that winter, my wife became concerned by the amount of time it had taken the town to plow our dead-end dirt road after a snow-



storm. She went straight to the highway garage the next day and tucked a stern note to the door, addressed to the road agent. "Dear Mr. Morse, ..." It probably was a risky move for newcomers to town, but the result was that Harold pulled into our driveway a day or so later, and by the time he'd left, my wife was charmed, we had hired him to plow our

VALLEY NEWS FILE PHOTO — GEOFF HANE
Cornish Road Agent Harold Morse explains a proposal to put \$15,000 in a reserve fund for highway equipment during Town Meeting in Cornish in 1993.

long driveway that winter (it was one of its side businesses), and we'd gained a friend. That was not unusual. Harold was the first acquaintance or friend of many people new to Cornish over the years.

"So many people told me that when they first moved to town, Dad was the welcoming committee," Sherrie Bulkeley, Harold's oldest child, said. "If somebody new moved to town, he was going to drive by till he met them."

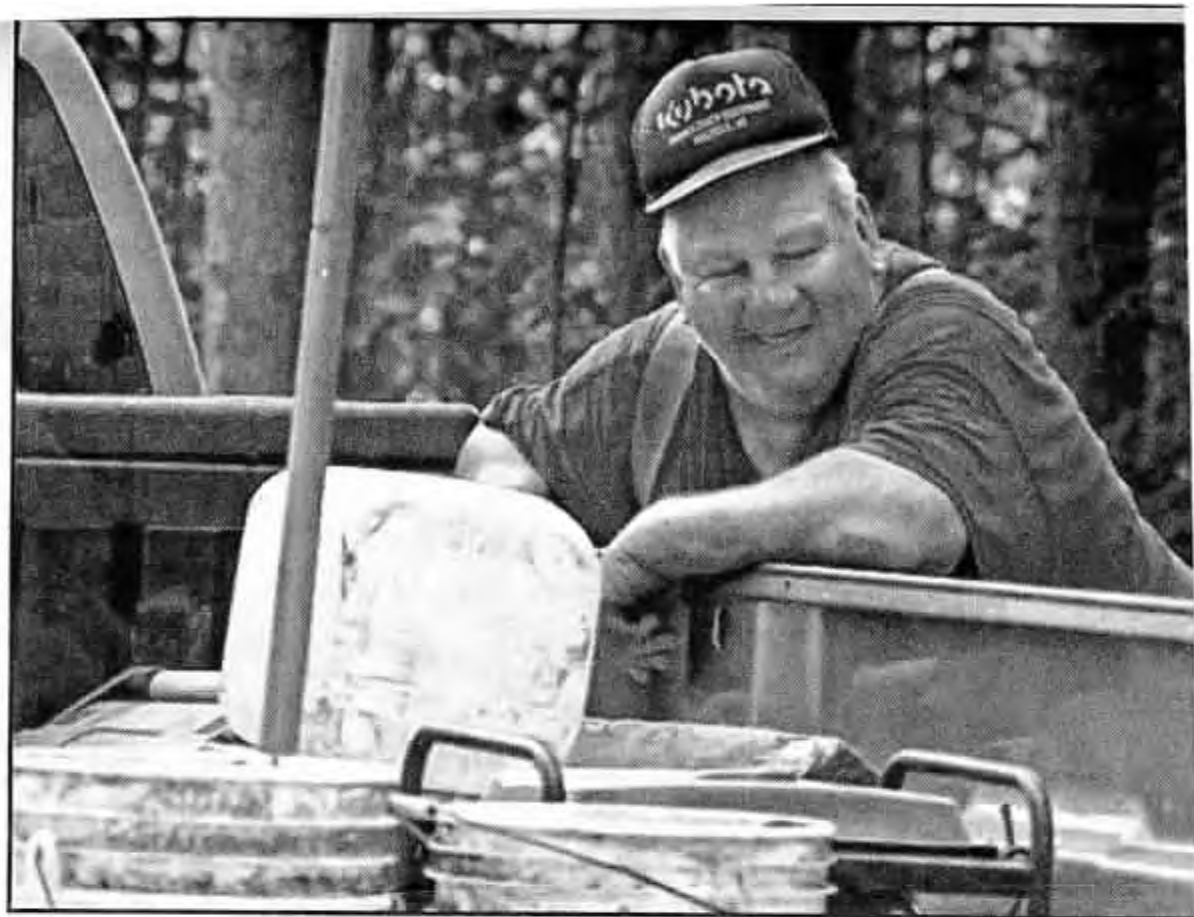
Harold was one of the disappearing generation of elderly Cornish residents who

been here since childhood. He was born in Cabot, Vt., but his mother moved the family to Cornish when he was young. He attended a one-room schoolhouse just a couple of miles south of his home off Route 10. He joined the Army during the Korean War, and was stationed in Washington, D.C. He was part of an honor guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, Va., and carried a flag at Eisenhower's inauguration. He was, his daughter said, very proud of his military service.

He married, began raising a family in Cornish, and held a few jobs, including helping to build Interstate 91 in Vermont. The marriage ended in 1971, and four of the five children moved to Vermont with their mother. Not long afterward, though, Bulkeley moved back to Cornish to live with her brother and their father, who, she recalled, was particularly strict with

"I had a 9 o'clock curfew when I was 17 years old," she said. Once, while in high school, she concocted a plan to sneak out of her bedroom window with a visiting friend to meet some boys just down the road to go to a party. Harold apparently noticed them escaping, and when he came back into the house. It was Harold, then, who met up with young men. "Well, boys," he said according to what they told her later, "I think it's time you go home." He was carrying a shotgun. They went home. From then on, whenever boys visited his mother, they had to come inside, and the shotgun was always leaning against the wall next to the

road. He became Cornish's road agent in the early '70s and held the job for a break of two or three years, but he retired in 1994. Traveling roads for a living kept him far from what was going on all around town — who'd moved in or who was renovating or building who was haying. Who had fruit near the road that might be too good to resist. "He had his eye on everybody's fruit trees," his childhood friend, Marilyn Wallace, said. "Everybody's fruit was Harold's



Harold Morse works on seeding land belonging to Ted Degener in 2008 in Cornish.

TED DEGENER PHOTOGRAPH

because we were both alone," she said. "Probably he on me more than me on him. ... He almost had a daily routine of going around and checking on all of his old friends."

Leaving his job as road agent didn't keep Harold off the roads. He still drove around town to see what folks were up to, checking in on those friends, stopping to watch — and maybe comment on — the work people were doing in their fields or on their homes. "He called himself The Inspector," Bulkeley, who still lives in Cornish, said laughing. He also stayed busy with his "retirement" businesses: operating his small sawmill, plowing driveways in the winter, mowing and haying in the warmer months.

I doubt there was a day that he wasn't on the road until his health started declining in recent years. He drove, and he stopped to talk. He went out to get ice cream (one for him, one for Roger). He went to the general store to visit and chat, which in Harold's case often meant telling stories, which many people who knew him, including his

with Harold. DeRusha learned early on to take the details of Harold's stories with a grain of salt, but she does credit him with her decision years ago to stay in town. She'd moved to Cornish in 2000, having fallen for the town while passing through it frequently on trips between her home in Nashua and a friend's home in Vermont. It took her a while to get to know anyone; that changed when she started working at the Cornish General Store. "Harold was one of the first people I really met in Cornish," she said. "We became friends."

Still, she wasn't settling in. "At some point, I just decided that I didn't want to be here." She shared that with Harold, and one day he said something like, "Let's take a ride." He picked her up after work that day and they cruised around town, Harold sharing tidbits about Cornish's history, quirky features and other details that made it special to him. The rides continued over the course of a couple weeks. Eventually, he just said: "You can't leave because you're supposed to be

said.

"Wow," I said. "Thanks. What do I owe you?"

"Nothing."

I tried to insist, but he shut me down. "I guess I can cut some lumber for a boy's treehouse if I want," he told me.

"I understand he did that for a lot of people," Marilyn Wallace said when I told her that story. "It was something he had about kids and tree houses."

Here's my favorite story about Harold, dating back to the 1990s. I arrived home from work one spring day to find that our garden had been tilled. I hadn't arranged for it to be done, but I had no doubt who had come by with his tractor and broken the ground for us. The garden wasn't even visible from the road, so he'd had to make a point of going out back to see it.

I didn't run into Harold for another week or two, until a Saturday morning when I was working on my house and his truck rolled to a stop out front. He got out to see what I was up to, and we chatted for

old 70-plus years ago and far from his hilltop home. You went to a one-room you were kind of like ex-family," she said. No surmen, that the two of them almost every day in recent ust to be sure that each was e'd check up on each other

bellished liberally. (That's why I never knew exactly what to make of his story that someone once hanged himself in the silo out behind our house.)

"He was legendary. He was a legendary storyteller," said Marie DeRusha, who had a long-term surrogate father-daughter relationship

"And I thought, 'You know, I think you're right.' It's his fault that I ended up staying here."

She learned how to drive a tractor from Harold, and now owns the tractor she learned on. He taught her how to hay. "He taught me a lot about patience, and not just from driving behind him," she said, with a little poke at his road speed.

The drives didn't end with his initial effort to keep her in town. Every holiday season, for instance, he'd pick DeRusha up and drive her around the area looking at Christmas lights. Sometimes to Enfield's famous LaSalette display, and often just around Cornish, where he would sometimes stop to talk with someone he knew who'd put out an ambitious display. She'd sit in the cab next to Harold, the heat blaring, while the old timers yakked on until they ran out of things to say. "Then they'd just turn to yuppin'" DeRusha said. "One of them would say 'Yup.' Then three or four minutes would go by, and the other would say, 'Yup.'"

Harold did give the appearance of a stereotypical New England good ol' boy. The chewing tobacco, the old and sometimes tattered flannel shirt, the big belly, the hat — bearing some tractor logo or another — perched on his head. The stories, embellishments and all. But he was no two-dimensional figure, and what many in Cornish will remember about Harold is all that he did to help his neighbors. "He was a good friend to his friends," Bulkeley said. "And even if he didn't like you, he'd still help you."

"If he liked you," Marie DeRusha said, "he'd go to great lengths to see that whatever you needed would get done."

Needed or, I would add, just maybe wanted. I once told him, back in the 1980s, that I was thinking about asking him to saw some lumber so that I could build my son a treehouse. Not long afterward, I woke up on a weekend morning to the sound of Harold unloading a big stack of boards onto my driveway. I got dressed and went outside to ask what was up. For the treehouse, he

tion of my front doorway. It's an old house, and he knew its history, had known all of its residents for more than half a century. Eventually, I said: "Hey, Harold. Thanks for tilling my garden."

"Ayup," he said.

"What do I owe you?"

"How about 10 bucks?"

The garden was big enough that anyone else would have charged 50 or 60. So I said: "Ten bucks! How about nine?"

Without a missed beat, and in his perfect rural drawl, he replied: "Well ... all o' nine's better than none o' ten."

I laughed and gave him the 10, then watched him amble back to his truck, pull himself up into it, and head down the road at eight or nine miles an hour.

Harold died after a lengthy decline in his health, one that eventually left him barely able to walk, although I and others saw him driving around town long after we'd thought it was beyond him. He was in a nursing home in Claremont, being taken to Lebanon for dialysis three times a week, when he reached his end point. "He knew," his daughter said. "He told me 'I've had enough, Sherrie. I don't want any more.' He was tired." She ended his treatments, and he died in a matter of hours. With that, Cornish lost one of its more colorful, larger-than-life characters.

"He loved it," Bulkeley said of his reputation in town. "He loved that people knew him, and that anybody could talk to him." She also told me when I ran into her at the post office a couple of weeks ago that she had just developed a roll of film he'd left on the seat of his truck. He always kept a disposable camera with him, and the pictures on that last roll said a lot about Harold. They were scenics. The view toward Vermont's hills from his porch, and many photos taken from the seat of his truck along Cornish's back roads. He'd lived here for about 75 years. He'd been road agent for 20 years. And until the month he died, he was still taking pictures of his town.

Steve Gordon, who lives in Cornish, is a former Valley New write and editor. He is now a massage therapist in Hanover and Cornish and executive director of The Heart to Heart Project. He can be reached at gordons.cornish@

Harold Morse

