

CORNISH FIRE DEPARTMENT

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BY THE

CORNISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

“ BIRTH “ of the Cornish Fire Department

The Birth as Bernie Johnson put it, of the Cornish Fire Department got its start during the Second World War in 1942.

A hand drawn pumper was purchased by some of the folks in town. This was a two wheeled cart that was pulled by two or more strong men. This pumper, so called was a water tank filled with a container of soda/acid solution to give the water pressure when it was released. How long it lasted or whether it could be recharged on site, I have no idea.

Along with this pumper there was also the Bucket Brigade that you saw often at fires. Of course the buckets were only useful if there was a source of water close to the fire.

The pumper was kept in the garage of Evarts Brown who owned the store on School Street across from the library. This is the yellow house on the left side of the street.

At about this same time (1942) the Town took possession of a 1934 flat bed Chevy truck for back taxes. This truck was used to haul logs and belonged to Jessie Deming who was one of our Selectmen in Town. (1927-29 and 1957-60)

With this truck Ellsworth Atwood and John Tewkshury built a wooden body on the truck and Harry Hunt found portable pump for it, then they added a 250 gallon tank for water. With some fire hose, they were ready to go. How much water the pump flowed is anyones guess. Even with a small pump the water wouldn't last long.

To purchase 1 1/2 inch fire hose the firefighters held Card Parties and raised enough to buy 2000 feet of hose. Harold Dean made a nozzle for the hose and no doubt this was a straight bore nozzle.

I have no idea what the card parties were or how many Town Folks got involved.

In 1943, the Selectmen appointed Ellsworth Atwood as “ Chief Engineer”. Today they are Fire Chiefs and the Engineer is generally the pump operator.

In May of that year they chose officers and set up by-laws to govern the department. These By-laws are still used today with very few changes.

The first officers were Leonard Lovejoy, Assistant Chief,, Benjamin Lindsay as Captain and Myrl Kidder as 1st Lieutenant. There have been six Chiefs so far in the Department. There was Ellsworth followed by Duane Allen, Scott Kearns, John Rand, Mike Monette and Nate Cass.

The Department started with about 36 members, most of whom lived in and around the Flat area. Ten of these guys purchased their own fire coats and the Town bought eight helmets. This meant that they could get closer to the fire than the others.

Today our gear consist of a Bunker coat and Pants [\$1500 to \$2000] Helmet and face shield [\$200], Boots [\$130 to \$150], Gloves [\$40 to \$50] and Hoods at \$30 each. Needless to say its not cheap to outfit a Firefighter today.

For grass and forestry type fires we wear lighter helmets and yellow Nomex shirts. We make sure that we have dungarees on and work type boots.

From the beginning and up to about the early 70's the Firefighters were paid when they attended a fire. With a small budget this limited the Department as to what they could spend for equipment.

Eventually the members chose to abolish the pay system and be totally voluntary. This allowed the budget money to be used to purchase and replace worn out gear.

Some of the old timers didn't like this idea and one by one left the department.

To this day no firefighter gets any pay for attending a fire ,training or any other function. We do have a training fund for anyone who goes out of town for Level I training or to perhaps pay someone to give a class to the Department and most will give their time for the sake of the department.

Starting about 1951 the Firefighters and their wives started raising money to buy extra equipment. They started by having a Wheel of Chance at the Cornish Fair and then about 1967 started a food booth at the fair. The food both went on for 15 to 18 years some of which were shared with the Rescue Squad. In the late 70s they started running Bingo at the fair and are still doing so to this day.

In 1953 the town voted to spend up to \$8000 for a new firetruck. A search

turned up a 1952 Ford Pumper with a 500 gallon tank and pump. This was the first commercially built truck in Cornish. This truck was in use when I [Dale Rook] joined the department in 1969. This was not a custom truck. Most department design their on trucks to fit their area and then find a company to build it.

This pumper was housed in one end of the Highway garage in the Flat and then in 1962 they added a bay to the garage for a second truck. The Firefighters did all the work after which they returned the \$900 back to the general fund. This kind of volunteerism has been going on since day one. Their second truck was to be a tanker to haul water. A truck was found in Sweetwater, N.J. and brought home and outfitted to be used as a tanker. I have no idea what the cost of this truck was.

However, Sweetwater, as the tanker was called, got cracked up in the late 60's responding to a barn fire. It seems that Pappy Atwood missed the corner on Rt. 120 by Konnie Kousmans in the fog a found a large pine tree in its way. Pappy didn't get hurt but Sweetwater needed some help.

It later became a farm truck for the Broken Ridge Farm. I hauled a lot of hay with this truck up out of the Flat and from the fields where the Plainfield School now sits...

Sweetwater got replaced by an old 1943 GMC Air Force 10 wheel drive tanker that Paul LaClair got through Civil Defense program. We have had a number of tankers since then.

During the early days, Communications was just one step ahead of smoke signals, really it was all through the telephone system and this took a lot of time as most were party lines.

Originally someone in need would call the Chief's home and Ellsworth's wife would run across the road to the garage and Ellsworth would sound the siren. Of course only those with in hearing shot would respond. Now comes the phone calling. It really took time to get a crew together but they managed.

Then about 1960 a Red Phone System was put in that rang three phones at the same time. There was a Red Phone was at Atwood's, another at Thorntons Store and one at Phil Reynolds.

When the dial system came about every thing got easier. There were less party lines and you could direct dial so two or three women could make a lot of calls in a short time.

Along about this time we had fire calls going into Claremont Fire and they would call the Red Phones. Also three of us purchased Plectrons which we would receive a tone and message from Claremont as to a fire. This made it possible to have up to six people respond in shot order.

Today all the Firefighters carry a pager which we can receive a tone and message at the same time. We have come a long ways over the years.

In the early 80's the Department decided it was time to build a new fire station as we had more equipment than we could house. At the time we were using a barn on Parsonage Road for two of our trucks and had two others at the Flat station. It was getting time to move on.

We decided not to give up the station in the Flat but to have a second one near the center of town. The people in the Flat wouldn't let us give up the Flat station.

Dwight and Ruth Wood learned that we were looking for some land and they came forward and donated the land where Station 1 now stands across the road from the school.

We then increased our efforts with Bingo to raise money. We also let people in town know what we were doing and in came a lot of donations. By early 1984 we felt we had enough to build a fire station. We were able to build a two bay station with a meeting room and two offices, one of which was used by the Police for a number of years.

This station was built at no cost to the taxpayers of Cornish.

In 2004-5 the Cornish Police Department added space to the building giving them a large office, private room, storage and a garage for the cruiser. This was also done without tax dollars.

As for fire trucks, we did have a few used trucks and in 1972 we took delivery of a new pumper built in N.J. and we have had new trucks since then. Most pumpers have a 20 year life span and then get replaced. The pumpers are funded through the Capital reserve Fund and the Association generally fund all other equipment with monies we raise, donations and monies the Ladies Aux. raises.

Our present line up includes a 86 International pumper, due to be replaced in the near future, a 95 International pumper, 2003 Mini pumper , 2005 tanker

and a utility pickup.

For a few years we had Claremonts old 1945 Seagrave ladder truck with a 75 foot aerial ladder. For most of the guys this was a monster for them to drive. This was partly due to the fact it was older than they were. When it turn 50 years old the insurance company said no more and getting it tested was hard to do and costly. The truck went back to Claremont to be used as a parade truck.

In 2004 we applied for a federal grant and received a grant for \$105,000. With this money we purchased all new self contained air packs with spare bottles and masks, all new Bunker gear for each member and a special washing machine to wash bunker gear. This was a big boost for Cornish. Some of the old gear and air packs were given to small departments in need.

Another grant allowed us to purchase new forestry water packs, forestry hose with all the fittings and tote bags. These are known as forestry mop up kits. The water packs replaced the old Indian Cans that have been around forever. The packs are much more comfortable to use .

There is an arm of the fire department I must tell you about and that is the Ladies Auxiliary. They got there formal start in 1969 and their goal was to raise money so that we could buy more equipment and replace old and worn out equipment. Over the years they have donated over \$40,000 towards equipment and just last year gave \$20,000 toward our new station in the flat. There second goal was to bring hot coffee, Bernies homemade donuts and sandwiches to any large fire in town. they also, on occasion have had breakfast ready for the men after they were up all night fighting fire. At the present time there is ten members in the auxiliary, two of the original members are still very active, they are Bernie Johnson and Judy Rook.

In 1994 the department developed a "Life Member" program. to be eligible a fire fighter must attain 25 or more active years in the Cornish Fire Department. So far our roster includes Leland Atwood, Tim Bannister, Peter Decatur, Robert Hunt, Andy Kuhre, Dale Rook, Robert Rice, Dave Wood, John Rand, Nate Cass, William Fitts, Lee Baker and Robert Maslan. It's not unusual for someone to join the dept. and stay 10 to 20 years or more.

As a result of the 911 disaster we received a lot of donations. It was felt that the best use of this money would be to create a scholarship program for

Cornish Students. The Fire Association and Ladies Auxiliary together operate the scholarship. The scholarship is for \$500. We have given a scholarship grant for the past six years.

2007 saw us take down the old highway garage in the flat and make way for a new fire station. Again this was done through fund raising and donations and not through tax dollars. All the work was done by area contractors. This \$400,000 plus building was erected for about \$250,000. This is the "Cornish Way"

In December last year we were able to move our trucks back in even though there was some work to be completed. Cornish Fire Department averages about 100 calls a year and last year 30 of our calls were for mutual aid to other towns. Of course there are times when we call them for assistance. There was a time when mutual aid calls cost a town a lot of money because they were billed by any town that responded. today if you are needed you just go.

Some of the major fires in Cornish

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1896 High Court | Emma Lazarus | Platt Rd. |
| 1923 Harlakenden | Winston Churchill | Rt. 12-A |
| 1926 Blow-Me-Down | William Beaman | Rt. 12-A |
| 1927 Hillside Creamery | | Rt. 12-A end of covered bridge |
| 1927 Cornish Inn & Store | | Cornish Flat |
| 1929 Fecteau cabin | | Townhouse Rd. 5 deaths |
| 1930 Barn on School St. | Jessie Rollins | |
| 1935 House | Ferris Johnson | East Rd. 1 death |
| 1937 Barn | Joe Brooks | Rt. 120 South |
| 1944 Small studio at St. Gaudens | | |
| 1945 Davidson house in the Flat | | |
| 1947 Kibby's Dance Hall on Burr Rd. | | |
| 1953 Forest fire on Croydon Mt. | all summer | |
| 1969 King Elm farm | Rt. 12-A South | |
| 1970 Trailer fire in Jonesville | 1 Death | |
| | The Oaks on Freeman Hill, Plainfield | |
| | William Balch's home on Rt. 12-A South | |
| 1973 Barn | Fred Sullivan | East Rd. |
| | Howie Marks garage on Rt. 120 | |

John Dryfout's home on Dingleton Hill Paul St. Gaudens's

J. D. Salinger's home

Mastlands on Rt. 12-A North

2003-4 Welkers Barn on Rt.-A above 12% store

And there were many Mutual Aid Calls in Claremont, Windsor, Plainfield,
Meriden and Lebanon.

So ends a brief history of the Cornish Fire Department.

CHARTER MEMBERS CORNISH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

E.H. Atwood
Leonard R. Lovejoy
Benj. M. Lindsay
Myrl E Kidder
Allen L. Palmer
Newton F. Pardy
W.E. Brennan
John E. Bayliss
Adelbert E. Arnold
Glen E. Parks
Harry Hunt
John F. Lovejoy
Clyde LaClair
Robert C. LaClair
Arnold A Jacob
Wm. G. Bugbee
L.H. Pardy
Robert Rawson

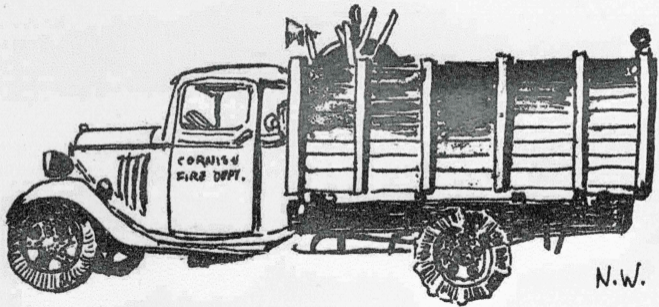
John M. Tewksbury
H.D. Witherill
L.H. Gerritson
Donald W. Cole
Maurice A. Butman
Kenneth T. Hunt
Lawrence E. LaClair
Joseph H. Brook
Howard Cassidy
C.W. Crane
A.C. Thornton
John A. MacMillan
Harold H. Dean
Arthur R. Bailey
Charles S. Sullivan
Wendall A. Stone
Perley C. Welch
Fred Davis

Early in the forties, Dick Lovejoy the Forest Fire Warden kept shovels and rakes for use at grass and forest fires but they weren't too effective for chimney fires. So it was that Selectman Harry Hunt began to talk of a fire company.

1942 came and the town took for taxes a 1934 Chevy truck equipped with logging straps. John Tewksbury and Ellsworth Atwood built a wooden body and Harry Hunt purchased a portable pump. A 250 gal. fuel tank was added to carry water and we had a fire truck. It's interesting to note that 2000 ft. of 1½" hose was purchased with money raised by the firemen at card parties. Also the nozzle for it was made by Harold Dean.



On March 27 1942 --



N.W.



The firemen were restricted to the use of hand chemicals, and the bucket lines, but it was found that their endeavor to quell the flames were useless and they concentrated efforts to save as much of the furniture as possible.

Some valuable old pieces of furniture, paintings of great value and other articles were carried through the flame and smoke by the braver of the volunteers.

Harlakenden mansion, the last word in New England summer residences, occupied a place on an estate of 700 acres, setting back from the turnpike running from Windsor to Meriden, N. H., being well hidden from the eyes of travellers by a heavily wooded forest of oak and pine.

It contained 30 rooms, 16 of which were sleeping chambers on the upper floors. The house was of brick construction, two stories high, its front overlooking the Connecticut River, while two approaches from the main roadway led to its rear entrance in the centre of two wings. The house, in its stern simplicity, bore out the spirit of Colonial days.

Professor Dow, a French instructor at Dartmouth; the wife of Justice Hinds of New York; George Rublee, noted New York attorney, and members of the Slada family were among those who aided the Churchills in removing the furniture and other belongings from the wings of the house.

The house was fully insured. It was quite well understood that the music room alone was provided for in a special insurance policy for \$45,000.

Mrs. Lucy M. Lewin has closed her house and gone to Springfield, Mass., to visit Mrs. Jennie Taylor and Mrs. E. P. Ward for a few days and from there will go to Cleveland, O., to spend the winter with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Quimby. Mrs. Ruth Foster and children who have spent the summer with her mother, Mrs. Lewin, started on Friday for the return trip to Globe, Ariz. Her husband will meet her in Stamford, Conn., and they will visit a brother, Dr. Deane Foster, of that city for a short time and arrive in Globe about Oct. 31.

On Wednesday, Oct. 10, Mrs. Lucy Lewin entertained at lunch her nephew and wife, Dr. and Mrs. Victor Rambo, with other relatives. Dr. and Mrs. Rambo will soon journey across the continent to visit his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Rambo in Washington and then

HARLAKENDEN NOW IN RUINS

Famous Estate of **Winston Churchill**
Author, at Cornish, N. H., Burned
To the Ground Saturday.

"Harlakenden," the famous summer home of Winston Churchill, author, and for several summer seasons the home of President Woodrow Wilson, burned to the ground early on the afternoon of Saturday, October 6, while volunteer fire departments and prominent members of the artists' colony of Cornish stood by powerless to stop the destruction.

The famous author and his son, John, together with Stephen Parrish, members of the Saint Gaudens family and others, succeeded in carrying out furniture of priceless value when they realized that their efforts to stop the fire were hopeless. The damage is estimated at between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

The fire started at about noon time in a large fireplace in a sitting room on the first floor while the family was at luncheon. It spread rapidly and the fire departments of Windsor and Claremont, N. H., were called upon for assistance.

Because of the peculiar construction of the house, it was well nigh impossible for the firemen to pump water from the Connecticut River, the surface of which lay 90 feet below the house, which stood on a cliff-like eminence.

A bucket brigade of prominent authors, artists and sculptors was formed while the firemen were dashing to the scene from the three towns. It was necessary to carry the water from a point a half mile away.

By 4 o'clock in the afternoon the building was in ruins.

The author and his family will occupy another residence, Churchill's Inn, there.

Churchill, author of, "The Crisis," "Conniston," and other famous books, wrote several of his best known novels at Harlakenden.

Most of the personal belongings of members of the Churchill family were saved, it was understood.

Mrs. Churchill was away at the time, the house having been occupied by the author and his son, John, for the last week.

CORNISH INN AND STORE CONSUMED BY FIRE WHICH THREATENS ENTIRE TOWN

Claremont Apparatus, Summoned by 4:00 A. M. Call,
Pumps Water for Hours Before Conflagration Is
Brought Under Control — Light Fall of Snow
Checks Spread of Flames—Authorities Investigate
Origin of Fire

Cornish Inn

1927

The historic Cornish Inn and outbuildings, together with the general store and United States Post Office conducted by E. P. Brown, both situated in the heart of Cornish Flat, ten miles from Claremont, were totally destroyed by a spectacular fire early this morning which for a time threatened the entire community.

A call was received at four o'clock at the Central Fire Station and the 750-gallon pumper and a number of firemen, including Assistant Engineers Sheridan and Edmonds, were sent to the scene. This piece of fire apparatus did splendid work in pumping water for nearly five hours, supplying two lines of hose which were played upon the burning ruins.

The Inn, which was built about 125 years ago and which is a well known landmark, was owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Davis and family. Members of the family were able to save only a few of their personal belongings, while Mr. Brown succeeded in getting out a small amount of Government property from the Post Office. Mr. Davis this morning estimated the set of buildings worth between \$7000 and \$8000. They are covered by only \$1000 of insurance, part of which is applied to the contents. E. P. Brown stated that his property together with contents, was valued at over \$10,000 and was only partially covered by insurance.

The fire, which was discovered shortly after three o'clock by Mr. Davis' son, was confined to the main part of the Inn which at present was unoccupied. Aided by a high wind the fire spread with great rapidity and it was but a short while before the entire group of buildings and the store was a roaring furnace, the property being doomed before a call could be sent to the Central Fire Station here.

Cornish Flat is without fire fighting equipment or organization, so that the 50 residents who were attracted or called to the scene could do nothing but watch the fire take its course.

Bad road conditions delayed the response of the local firemen. The ten mile run was made within 35 or 40 minutes but their arrival saw the buildings entirely consumed. The wind was carrying large sparks and burning embers over the entire community, but due to a brief but severe snow squall the roofs of residences were somewhat protected. The slight ruin of last evening, together with the snow squall of this morning, probably saved a much more serious conflagration, while Claremont's latest piece of fire apparatus and firemen played no small part in safeguarding the community.

A brook running through the Flat supplied the pumper with water. By five o'clock two good streams were doing effective work on extinguishing the burning ruins, and by eight o'clock the fire was brought under control. Shortly after nine o'clock the smoldering embers were practically out and the local department started to pick up in preparation to returning to their quarters. It was 10:15 when the local men and apparatus returned to the station.

During the height of the fire two residences caught fire, but were extinguished before causing any damage. The Inn buildings were composed of a brick cottage house to which the main part of the hotel with 28 rooms was joined; a large barn, large open shed connected to the general store, and several smaller sheds and outhouses. Two automobiles, the property of Mr. Davis, who conducted the Claremont-Lebanon bus line, were safely removed from the open shed.

At the time of the arrival of the local firemen a series of heavy blasts caused by combustibles stored in the building blew the entire front of the store out and for a time made the fire fighting hazardous.

All that remains of the buildings this afternoon are a few standing brick walls.

It is understood today that Cornish authorities will conduct an investigation into the origin of the conflagration.

TRAGEDY

Assistant Attorney General Arrives To Aid Local Officials

Carlton Assumes Charge Of Probe Into Holocaust

County Solicitor Hamlin Not Satisfied with Theory of Kerosene Oil Explosion as Cause of Blaze Which Cost Lives of Five in Tiny Cabin—Gruesome Scenes as Officials Probe Ruins of Cottage—Stage Driver Tells of Vain Attempt to Render Aid to Trapped Inmates

Investigation into the cause of the fire at the Gibson home on the Cornish Millroad at Cornish yesterday afternoon that claimed the lives of two women and three children was continuing today under the direction of County Solicitor Howard H. Hamlin.

Mr. Hamlin informed The Eagle... all, satisfied with the theory of a kerosene oil explosion in the cabin that trapped the five occupants and while granting that such might have been the case, the fact that no one of the five escaped although egress through windows and a door was but a matter of a few steps from any part of the tiny room was a sufficient cause for continuing the probe until this and other peculiar circumstances had been gone into more thoroughly.

Positive identification of the bodies was completed at an examination this morning at the undertaking rooms in Windsor to which the remains had been taken. Dr. Kingsford of Hanover, State pathologist, Medical Referee F. P. Claggott of Newport, and Dr. A. L. Patch of Windsor, conducted the examination. The bodies were identified as:

Mrs. Mercedes Gibson, wife of William Gibson, and their year-old daughter Elizabeth Ann.

Mrs. Bertha M. Talbot, wife of William H. Talbot, their daughter Pauline, aged 7, and their son William Jr., aged 3 years.

It is believed that Mrs. Talbot and her children on the way to dig dandelions had stopped in to visit Mrs. Gibson, and this chance stop

added three victims to the flames that swept the cottage.

The fire is presumed to have started about one o'clock in the afternoon.

Not even the tragic fire at the Balloch Crossing railroad station in February 1928 when four men were trapped in the burning building equalled the horror of the gruesome tragedy at this little shack on the bank of Mill brook, as investigation of the ruins uncovered body after body until a total of five had been discovered.

Almost unbelievable was the story unfolded in this heap of twisted metal that once was a bed, and a stove, the whole covering a space no larger than the size of a living room in the average home.

Arriving at the scene shortly after two o'clock, County Solicitor Howard H. Hamlin and Sheriff Emery B. Montz were told that two lives had been lost in the blaze, Mrs. Gibson and her infant daughter having been thought to be alone in the cottage.

A half hour later Medical Referee F. P. Claggott of Newport, reached the scene of the disaster and by that time the fire had burned itself out allowing a closer approach to the ruins.

A few feet from the place that marked the door of the cottage was the body of Mrs. Gibson, while on the ruins of the bed could be seen the remains of the child. Closer examination, however, disclosed a third body that of a woman. The investigators immediately turned to the work of attempting to establish the identity of this third body, but had scarcely begun inquiries when those probing the ashes uncovered a fourth charred body, that of a child.

The metal wheels and frame of a child's cart that had stood outside

(Continued on page 4)

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that he hastened to the Lindsley home nearby to telephone the alarm to Windsor.

William Smith of Red Water Brook road, Claremont, and Willis Spencer, passed along the road shortly after Mr. Barton had left to telephone. They told officials that they also went to the burning house but by that time the fire was too hot to permit a close approach. They then drove to Windsor where one of them located Chief of Police Clyde Robie and told him of the

Cornish Fire

May 17 1929

Fecteau Boy Dies From Burns; State Ends Investigation

Officials Find Fire and Deaths Due to Accidental Causes and Credit Kerosene Oil Explosion Theory—Investigators Find New Airplane Amid Primitive Surroundings on Fecteau Farm

A sixth victim of the fire in the one-room cabin on the Cornish road Wednesday afternoon, was added to the list of fatalities today with the death at the Claremont General hospital of Robert Fecteau, aged 15 years. The boy succumbed to burns received when he dashed into the burning building attempting to rescue his sister, Mrs. Mercedes Gibson, who perished in the flames together with her infant daughter and Mrs. William Talbot, a neighbor, and two Talbot children.

The investigation conducted by Assistant Attorney General John P. Carleton and County Solicitor Hamlin in to the tragedy was dismissed today, after a thorough probe of the ruins and questioning of neighbors and witnesses established that the fire and deaths had resulted from accidental causes, probably an explosion of kerosene which was being used to kindle a fire.

The funeral of Mrs. Bertha Talbot, her daughter Pauline and son William Jr., was held this afternoon from Cabot's Funeral parlors at Windsor with interment in the cemetery at East Plainfield.

Services for Mrs. Mercedes Gibson and her infant daughter will be held Saturday morning at 10:30 o'clock at the Baptist church Windsor. Interment will be in the Ascension cemetery.

The funeral of Robert Fecteau had not been arranged this afternoon but will probably be held from St. Francis church at Windsor on Monday morning.

While pursuing the investigation at the scene of the tragedy the officials made a discovery, which while holding no connection with the case, was nevertheless one of the most surprising yet encountered.

Assistant Attorney General Carleton and County Solicitor Hamlin after making a close survey of the ruins of the Gibson cabin, went down the road some two hundred yards to the home of Henry Fecteau, father of Mrs. Gibson.

The Fecteau house is scarcely much larger than the one room shack wherein six lives were lost. It boasts a second room, however, but is meagerly furnished with none of the modern conveniences or luxuries save only a radio set. Outside is another smaller building covered with roofing paper, just large enough to house a car, and to all appearances used for that purpose.

Mr. Fecteau led the investigators to this building and threw open the door. To their utter amazement confronting them in the dimly lighted interior was a full-sized, fully equipped two-passenger airplane, ready to hop off, needing only the reattachment of the wings which had been removed to allow the ship's entry into the narrow confines of this tar-paper shack.

To the puzzled inquiry of the officials, Mr. Fecteau told them that the plane was his, built in spare time from his work at a Windsor garage, with the aid of his oldest son, Ernest Fecteau, aged 22.

The ship is 17 feet 6 inches in length, a bi-plane type with a wing

spread of 17 feet, and is equipped with a 120 h. p. La Rhone rotary air cooled motor. The fusilage is constructed of mahogany-ply, and painted a bird blue. The plane weighs 695 pounds and has a lifting area of 120 square feet. These and other figures and technical details Mr. Fecteau reeled off for the puzzled investigators who were still trying to recover from the surprise of finding a specimen of civilization's most advanced development amid so primitive surroundings.

Later, in an interview with The Eagle representative, Ernest Fecteau sketched the story of the airplane.

"That plane was built to test out a theory of father's which if successful would materially alter airplane operation and control," he said. "We worked with small models and tested them in wind-tunnels we constructed ourselves, and our device proved successful."

This device, the youth explained, is connected with the wings of the plane and permits the ship to climb or descend by operating the wings instead of the "elevators" at the tail.

When the working models demonstrated the feasibility of the wing device, the Fecteaus, father and son, decided to build a real plane. "Drawing their own plans, and doing their own work in their hours after their daytime employment, the youth and his father constructed the ship and then purchased a La Rhone nine-cylinder motor. The work of installing the motor was completed late last fall, but before winter set in the Fecteaus had taken their ship to a nearby pasture and had taxied it about the field even hopping it into the air for a distance of a hundred yards or so, although neither Ernest nor his father have had any flying experience. The trials showed some changes necessary in the alignment of the wing devices with the tail elevators and these have been perfected during the winter. This spring the Fecteaus plan to carry on their experiments and, as the son expresses it, "to fly that ship."

Cornish Fire

(Continued from page 1)

of the walls of the burning building caught the eye of Henry Fecteau, father of Mrs. Gibson and he recalled that shortly after noon he had seen Mrs. William Talbot, a neighbor, going up the road with such a cart. With this information to work on the officials sent a call for Mr. Talbot who was at work at the Cone Automatic Machine company at Windsor. All unmindful of the tragedy that awaited him he left his work and hastened to the scene. Questioned by the officials Mr. Talbot stated that his wife had gone to pick dandelions, but had not returned home as he had stopped at his house on the way to the fire ruins.

"Did she have a child with her?" he was asked.

His reply to this inquiry caused a gasp of horror from the officials.

"She had two children with her," Mr. Talbot answered.

Mr. Talbot identified the cart as one belonging to his children and identity of the additional fire victims was made certain a few minutes later as searchers found the fifth body in the ruins.

Piecing the story together from the location of the bodies it appeared that the Gibson baby and the 3-year-old Talbot boy were at the foot of the bed, while Mrs. Talbot and her 7-year-old daughter were either near or seated at the head of the bed.

Mrs. Gibson had apparently reached the door of the cottage or had been dragged there by her brother, Robert Fecteau, who is dying at the Claremont General hospital from burns received in an attempted rescue.

However the fire originated, its spread must have been instantaneous as the location of the bodies of Mrs. Talbot and the three children indicated that they had had no opportunity to seek escape through the door or by way of the several windows all within a few steps of the bed in the tiny one-room cabin.

An oil can, its sides collapsed and the bottom gone, may offer the explanation of the origin of the disaster. Found near the stove, it offers the theory that Mrs. Gibson in building a fire in the stove had started to pour on kerosene to quicken the kindle, with an explosion resulting that scattered burning oil over the cabin and its occupants.

The investigation conducted by County Solicitor Howard H. Hamlin divulged that Levi Barton, Windsor-Cornish Flat stage driver was the first person at the scene of the fire with the exception of the Fecteau boy. Mr. Barton told Sheriff Montz last night that as he was over the road that passes the Gibson property he saw the house all ablaze. Leaving his team he dashed down the bank and while running toward the building saw a window fall out and then Mrs. Gibson stumbling across the threshold of the door her clothing all aflame. A few seconds later, Mr. Barton said, Mrs. Fecteau mother of Mrs. Gibson joined him, hastening from her home a short distance below. Telling her to do what she could, Mr. Barton informed the Sheriff

that he hastened to the Lindsley home nearby to telephone the alarm to Windsor.

William Smith of Red Water Brook road, Claremont, and Willis Spencer, passed along the road shortly after Mr. Barton had left to telephone. They told officials that they also went to the burning house but by that time the fire was too hot to permit a close approach. They then drove to Windsor where one of them located Chief of Police Clyde Robie and told him of the fire. Chief Robie sent a call to County Solicitor Hamlin and to a Windsor doctor, rounded up several men and drove to the scene.

Escapes Fire



WILLIAM E. BEAMAN

Mr. Beaman escaped with his life when fire destroyed his home at Cornish early yesterday.

BEAMAN MANSION IS DESTROYED BY FIRE

Owner Has Narrow Escape from Flames; Jumps from Window 1926

BUILDING HOUSED LARGE COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS

Special to The Union.

CORNISH, Feb. 2.—William E. Beaman, former representative in the State Legislature from this town and a well known figure in Granite State political circles, was trapped by the flames at Blow-Me-Down Farm here early this morning and escaped death by leaping from a second story window into the deep snow as fire destroyed the Beaman mansion, one of the show places of the upper Connecticut valley and housing a collection of priceless paintings and art objects.

Near Windsor.

The fire started between one and two o'clock this morning in an unoccupied section of the Beaman home, a 40-room mansion located about a mile north of the Windsor, Vt., toll bridge on the New Hampshire side of the river and comparable in interest and reputation with Winston Churchill's famous Hurlakanden House nearby, destroyed by fire two years ago.

The house had been in the Beaman family for 42 years and its contents, all of which was destroyed together with the building, included many valuable paintings, fine collections of bronze, antiques, Oriental rugs and silver and a unique collection of autographs of famous men and women.

Aroused by Farmhand.

Mr. Beaman was aroused by a farm hand, William Wilder, but so rapidly did the fire spread that before the two could descend the stairs the lower floor and staircase were in flames. Lacking time even to throw on outside wraps, the men leaped from a second story window into a snowdrift, finding themselves scantily clad in temperature registering between 10 and 20 degrees below zero.

Mr. Beaman suffered frostbitten feet and both were badly chilled by exposure to the coldest night of the winter.

Aid was summoned from Windsor, Vt., a general alarm being sounded in that town at 2 o'clock, and firemen came through the drifts with hose and other apparatus, utilizing the farm pumping station to save the barn and other buildings.

The present owner of the property was a member of the State Legislature from this town in 1915 and 1917 and an unsuccessful candidate for the State Senate in 1919 and 1921, being defeated at the primaries on both occasions. He has taken up temporary quarters at the Windsor house in Windsor, Vt.

MISS MARY BEAMAN TO WED AUGUST 31

Mr. and Mrs. William Evarts Beaman announce the engagement of their daughter, Miss Mary Stacy Beaman of Cornish and New York, to Eric Lagercrantz of Djurholm, Sweden and New York.

Miss Beaman attended Concord Academy and Princess Meatchersky's School in Paris. She studied at the Sorbonne, Radcliffe, and Black Mountain college and for the last four years has lived in New York. She is the granddaughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cotesworth Beaman of New York and of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Phelps Benjamin of Preston, Conn. She is also the great-granddaughter of the late Senator William Maxwell Evarts, Secretary of State under Hayes.

Miss Beaman came out in Boston. She is a niece of Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Holmes.

Mr. Lagercrantz is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gustaf Lagercrantz of Djursholm, Sweden. He graduated from the School of Administration and Business of the University of Stockholm and has been connected with banking circles in Stockholm, Hamburg, Paris, and London. At present he is the American representative of the Goteborg Bank, Stockholm.

Mr. Lagercrantz's father is president of the Stockholm Mortgage Bank which was founded by his grandfather. He is the nephew of Mr. Lennart Palme of Carmel, Calif., and a great-nephew of Herman Lagercrantz, former Swedish minister to Washington.

The wedding is planned for the thirty-first of August.

The wedding of Miss Evelina Mary Marcou, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Marcou, to Gordon Albert Laurie, son of Mrs. Nora Barnes Laurie of East Barnard, Vt., was solemnized last Saturday evening, Aug. 16, at 7:30 o'clock in the Bryant Memorial Parsonage with the Rev. Marshall Eck as officiating clergyman, in the presence of the bride's family. The young people expect to live in East Thetford, Vt., where Mr. Laurie has employment.



Cornish to get new fire station

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N. H. — The efforts of the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department have been evident for many years, not only in actual fire situations, but in times of need.

However, the department's involvement in fund-raising stands out as well. Firefighters have saved the taxpayers of the Town of Cornish thousands of dollars.

Over the years, these monies have paid for 3,000 feet of three-inch hose; 1,000 feet of one-and-a-half inch hose, 25 folding tables for the town hall, and many other pieces of equipment used by the department.

A survey of the \$76,000 replacement value of equipment determined that a large portion of the equipment has been purchased by either the Ladies Auxillary or the men themselves.

"Three years ago members of the department decided they needed to set goals, and to have priorities as to how we spent the money raised through a food booth at the Cornish Fair and bingo games held each Tuesday of the week," said Scott Kearns, department chief.

"First on the list was a new chassis for the tanker truck. In 1982, a new International chassis was purchased, using the presently owned tank without going to the voters for funds," said Kearns.

The next priority was to build a new fire station for Engine 1, which will be located in the old barn on Parsonage Road, remodeled into a one-bay station some years ago by the department.

Ruth and Dwight Wood, in a generous gesture to the town, donated a parcel of land on Town House Road, and the department will make the new station a reality. The 4.5-acre property is located directly across the road from both the

Cornish School and the Cornish Town Hall. Preparation of the site has begun.

Several sets of plans were drawn up by Timothy Schadd, and recently the volunteer firemen voted to build a two-bay station 60 by 42 feet in size.

The station will include a hose tower, where hose may be dried after use. "Presently, if we have a bad fire, some of the hose must be taken to Claremont, Meriden or Plainfield to dry," said Kearns. "Once we took them to Springfield because the Meriden and Plainfield departments did not have any room."

The building will house offices for the police and fire chiefs, a training room, rest rooms, and a 12-by-28 kitchenette.

"We will install a large pipe into the pond adjacent to the building area and install a large pump inside the station to which we can hitch a steamer fitting. With a steamer fitting it can be used as a live hydrant, providing a 500-gallon-per-minute flow. In case of fire at the school, the truck would actually drive out of the station with the hose already hitched to the truck.

"We hope to have enough

funds to pave the driveway following completion of the structure," said Kearns. "The project will go out for bids March 15 and be constructed during the summer months, ready for opening in the fall."

At a later date the department hopes to dredge out the pond area again.

Currently 19 members of the department are taking the state level I firefighter certification course, and following completion the department will have 22 certified firefighters.

The Cornish Fire Department was organized in 1943 under the supervision of Ellsworth Atwood, who held this responsibility for the next 30 years. Their first truck was a 1934 Chevrolet with a wooden body, holding a portable pump and a 250-gallon tank.

Fire calls were taken by Elsie Atwood, the chief's wife, who crossed the street from her home to her husband's garage, where she sounded the siren and returned home to call as many of the members as she could reach.

Later, a couple of other people had red network phones in their homes to help with the chore of making calls. The

first, big fire following the formation of the department was at the home of the town treasurer, Reginald Davidson. There was damage to the structure but the building could be renovated. In previous years it probably would have been totally destroyed.

The department added trucks, one of them a fuel oil truck, one obtained through civil defense, and later, more modern vehicles. All have been repaired by firemen and kept in service.

Space has been added at the highway garage, and the men renovated the old barn which is to be replaced by the new structure.

In 1969 a group of women organized the Ladies Auxillary of the department and work continually to raise funds toward the purchase of equipment. They serve refreshments at meetings and food at fires. They have also been known to fight grass fires.

Andrew Kuhre has been a member of the department for the past 40 years. Philip Reynolds recently retired after 25 years as an active firefighter, and a new truck purchased in 1982 was dedicated to him.

Valley View
Jun 18, 1984

Frame Up

Cornish firefighters put up the framing for the new fire station on Townhouse Road. Their volunteer work yesterday morning followed a two-year fundraising drive by the fire department, which has also provided free labor for the building. The structure won't cost the town or its taxpayers any money. The firefighters held a series of Bingo games to raise \$50,000. The game of chance has also paid for a firetruck for the town.

Photo by Doug Demers



BINGO — Cornish Wins Free Firehouse

Valley News
Sun 10/19/54

By SALLIE GRAZIANO

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — It's the firehouse that Bingo built.

Tuesday night Bingo games helped pay for one of the fire department's firetrucks, and now they're paying for a new building to house the equipment.

Firefighters yesterday nailed up the sides of a \$50,000 firehouse on Townhouse Road that won't cost the town a cent. "This has been in the minds of the men for a long time," said firefighter Larry Dingee, chairman of the fire department's building committee.

Firefighters held Bingo games every Tuesday night for two years to raise the money they needed. Small donations totalling about \$1,000 added to the reserve until firefighters had enough to pay for the building.

"We wouldn't get into this unless we had all the money in hand," Dingee said.

The new building will replace a nearby fire station on Parsonage Road, according to Fire Chief Scott Kearns. "It gives us a lot more space than we have now," he said. "In the station on Parsonage Road we have to put one truck in frontward and the other one in sideways. Our equipment is scattered all over the place, and there's no room for the hoses."

The new 42-foot by 60-foot station will provide office space for the fire chief along with a 27-foot-high tower to dry hoses in, a meeting room and a training room.

The building will also give Police Chief James Lukash an office from which to work. Lukash's office is next to the town hall, an arrangement Selectman Michael Yatsevich said was very difficult.

Kearns said firefighters will keep using a second station which houses two firetrucks on the flat on Route 120. "We thought about putting everything in the new building, but the manpower's limited out there," he said. "Our manpower's much greater on the flat."

Firefighters hired Cornish contractor Tim Schad to direct the job, but the firefighters agreed to provide the heavy labor needed to set the frame and put up the siding. Dingee said that after the building is finished — by the end of August — firefighters will donate it to the town.

"I think it's most commendable and shows good community spirit," said Selectman Michael Yatsevich about the firefighters' efforts. Yatsevich and the other selectmen worked with the firefighters developing plans for the new building. "The town has to accept

the future maintenance of the building, so they kept us informed as they went along and were open to suggestions," Yatsevich said.

Construction of the fire station grew from an idea to a reality after Ruth and Dwight Wood donated land for the building across from the school on Townhouse Road. "The land is in the right place," Yatsevich said. "It's centrally located in town, it's possible to get out to the main road conveniently and it's near water so the tankers can be filled."

Yatsevich said other factors contributed to the project's success, including the community's interest in the new station. But firefighters have earned the feeling of satisfaction they have now, he said. "They've worked for this for a long time," Yatsevich said. "What a wonderful initiative."

Cornish fire house dedicated

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N. H. — As the ribbon was cut for the new fire station in Saturday ceremonies, the department responded to a power line and tree fire on Dingleton Hill and returned eight minutes later.

Nearly 150 people were present as the building committee, Randall Kenyon, Larry Dinglee, Chief Scott Kearns and Robert Hunt, presented the key to the building to Selectmen Michael Yatskevitch, Cheston Newbold and David Monette.

The ribbon-cutting was by Ruth and Dwight Wood, Cornish residents for more than 70 years, who donated the lot for the structure.

An opening prayer by the Rev. Larry Turns, minister of the First Congregational Church, Claremont, was followed by a brief history of the department by Dale Rook, president of the Fire Department Association, who told of rigging up a 1935 Chevrolet farm truck with a 250-gallon water tank and pump. It had a homemade nozzle, made by a resident. This was in 1942.

The following March, Ellsworth "Pappy" Atwood was appointed fire engineer for the town, a position he held for the next 30 years. By-laws and an ordinance were drawn up and the volunteer department chartered.

In 1953 the town voted to purchase a new fire truck with \$8,000 raised for the purpose. The new Ford boasted the largest Lincoln engine available and was used for the next 23 years, finally being sold to the Croydon Fire Department. It is still in service there as a spare.

A second bay was added to the Cornish Flat station in 1962. It housed a tanker, dubbed "Sweet Water" for the New Jersey town it came from.

In 1969 the Cornish Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary was formed, with women often helping at brush and grass fires. The group conducted various fund-raising events, raising more than \$17,000 toward equipment as well as furnishing refreshments at meetings and during fires. Most recently the Aux-

iliary equipped the kitchenette area of the new station.

Another new truck was bought in 1973, and a goat barn on Parsonage Road remodeled by the men to create a second station for quicker response to the west side of town.

Throughout the years fund-raising events were held to provide necessary equipment. These included operation of the weekly social games and food booths at the Cornish Fair. With the proceeds a 1982 International tanker, the materials and labor were provided without recourse to tax dollars.

Former Cornish residents Norman and Deanna Stowell, Crown Point Mfg., Claremont, furnished cabinets for the kitchen; County Fire, Hartland, donated a fire extinguisher, and bathroom mirrors came from Claremont Glass and Carpet Co.

Cadette Girls Scouts Tina Williams and Melissa Longacre helped serve refreshments for the dedication.



THE NEW FIRE STATION, dedicated Saturday in Cornish, is an object of admiration to the residents who gathered for the ceremonies. (Ruth Rollins Photo)



FTY FIFTY — This Cornish Fire Department facility, seen displaying a 50-year banner, Route 120 was constructed in 1984 from funds raised by volunteer firefighters, the Ladies Auxiliary and their friends. The land was donated by Dwight and Ruth Wood.

Included inside is a 75-foot ladder truck provided by Rep. Peter Burlin (Ruth Rollins photo) *Bayle Times Jan 9, 1994*

50 years of service for Andrew Kuhre

CORNISH — Andrew Kuhre joined the Cornish Fire Department shortly after it became a chartered organization in May 1943, and he's been involved with the organization ever since.

Kuhre remembers well some of the fires that were devastating, especially a fire that destroyed a barn and 21 head of cattle, owned by Perley Welch, several years ago.

"When Chief (Duane) Allen and I arrived, our first thought was to try to release the cattle," Kuhre recalled. "As we went to step into the barn, the whole building became involved, destroying not only the cattle, but farm machinery and equipment also."

A night-time fire that took

the life of a 16-month-old child, after attempts to rescue her from a crib failed, is another fire that has remained in Kuhre's mind for more than 20 years. "These are events that you can't forget," said Kuhre.

Kuhre, 69, was very proud when he received his 45-year service pin and is nearly due for his 50-year recognition, although many others in the community have also given extended dedicated service to the department.

"I don't respond to night-time fires and I haven't been as active recently, but I still help where I can," said Kuhre, who is very proud of the many improvements in skills and equipment that have taken place over the 50 years of the department.



ANDREW KUHRE, 69, holds his 45-year certificate of service to the Cornish Fire Department recently in his home. Kuhre, who can recall virtually all of the skill and technology improvements the department has undergone, will soon mark his 50th year with the organization. (Ruth Rollins photo)

1994

Charter members

E.H. Atwood, Leonard Lovejoy, Benjamin Lindsay, Myrl Kidder, Allen Palmer, Newton Pardy, W.E. Beaman, John Bayliss, Adelbert Arnold, Glen Parks, Harry Hunt, John Lovejoy, Clyde LaClair, Arnold Jacobs, Robert LaClair, William Bugbee, L.H. Pardy, Rubert Rawson, John Tewksbury, Fred Davis, H.D. Witherill, L.H. Gerritson, Donald Cole, Maurice Butman, Kenneth Hunt, Lawrence LaClair, Joseph Brooks, Howard Cassidy, C.W. Crane, A.C. Thornton, John MacMillan, Harold Dean, Arthur Bailey, Charles Sullivan, Wendell Stone and Perley Welch. 1994

Current roster

Chief Michael Monette (17), Leland Atwood (33), Lee Baker (11), John Bannister (4), Tim Bannister (27), Michael Boutilier, Peter Burling (13), Nate Cass (17), Gary Chilton (11), Peter Decatur (25), Larry Dingee (12), Mark Dube (10), George Edson (6), Steve Fellows (11), William Fitts (17), Jim Guy (4), Robert Hunt (28), Scott Kearns (18), David Kibbie (8), Robert Kibbie (4), Andrew Kuhre (49), Leo Maslan (8), Robert Maslan (6), Dale O'Connor (2), Polly Rand (11), John Rand (21), Robert Rice (22), Dale Rook (24), Jason Rook (6), John Rublee (6), Charles Sullivan (6), Doug Thayer (9) and David Wood (22).

1994
Editor's note: The numbers in parenthesis represent years of service.



BRUSH FIRE — Cornish and Claremont firefighters spent more than six hours Sunday battling a stubborn brush fire that burned a heavily wooded area of between six and eight acres near Ironwood Hill off Route 120 in Cornish. Cornish Fire Chief Duane D. Allen Jr. said the fire was probably started by hunters. Firefighters were at the scene from 3:39 to 9:50 p.m. (News photo—Judy Colpas)



Windsor Fire, 1979



Bingo Buys Cornish New Fire Truck Body

By PAT YODEN

Valley News Correspondent

CORNISH — The Cornish Volunteer Fire Department has given the town a new fire truck chassis purchased with money raised from the weekly Bingo game operated by the department.

The 1981 International truck cost \$11,870, according to Fire Chief Duane Allen, who presented the keys to the selectmen Saturday at the Cornish Flat Fire Station.

"We use the Bingo money to buy fire equipment and keep the tax rate down," said Allen. "This truck didn't cost the taxpayers a cent."

The fire department took over the Bingo game 15 months ago, renting the equipment for \$1 per year from the Cornish Fair Association, which formerly operated the game.

Bingo committee chairman Michael Monette and members Charles Aitken and Evelyn Allen, assisted by other members of the fire department, put in 40 hours each week in setting up and operating the game, and cleaning up the town hall afterwards.

"All the money we raise stays right here in town," said Aitken, a former fire fighter who recently retired. "We also use some of it for improvements to the town hall, where the games are held."

The department also has purchased a Smoke Eater Air Cleaner for the town hall, at a cost of \$888.

The truck chassis, which will be equipped with a tanker now owned by the town, was purchased from Ed's Equipment of Claremont.



Valley News — Pat Youden

Cornish Fire Chief Duane Allen inspects the new fire truck.

Cornish blaze seen for miles

By FLORA YOUNG

CORNISH, N.H. — A spectacular fire which could be seen for miles on both sides of the Connecticut River brought men and equipment from Cornish, Plainfield, Meriden and Windsor, late Sunday afternoon.

Mastlands, the residence of the Thomas Stevens family, was extensively damaged by fire, smoke and water.

The fire started in the rear section of the building which housed a garage with an apartment on the second floor. Two cars were destroyed and there was heavy damage to the ell which housed the kitchen.

The main part of the historic landmark received heavy smoke damage as did all the contents.

According to Fire Chief Duane Allen, Stevens and his wife and baby had been in the house only five minutes when the smoke detectors sounded. The first call to the fire department went out at 5:30

p.m. and within minutes, trucks were converging on the scene from all directions. Heavy black smoke could be seen as far away as Windsor.

Allen said he has no idea how the fire started, but Inspector James Wells of the New Hampshire Fire Marshal's office was on the scene Sunday night. He was not available today at press time for comment.

Exile Times Apr 14, 1980

(Please see FIRE—Pg. 12)

From Page 1

watching firefighters chop holes in the roof of the ell and said, "Thank God my wife and baby are out and there was no one in the apartment."

Although there was no water available on the property, Allen said it presented no problem. A pumper was stationed next to Blow-Me-Down Pond, about two miles from Mastlands, and a steady parade of tankers from neighboring towns ferried water to the fire. Allen said, although the garage and attached building were heavily involved when he reached the scene, it was under control within an hour. "The guys did a wonderful job to save the main part of the house," he added. He credited the mutual aid system for quick control of the fire.

In addition to trucks and tankers from several surrounding towns, Claremont Fire Chief William "Skip" Sullivan and a crew of men stood by with their Cascade Unit which was used to refill air bottles as dozens of firefighters entered the house which was filled with dense black smoke.

Stevens was not available for comment this morning, so the monetary loss is not known, or the extent of insurance coverage.

The property was first known during the last century as the old Chester Pike farm. It was purchased many years ago and renovated by Dr. Arthur Nichols of Boston. Nichols' wife, the former Elizabeth Homer, was sister to Augusta Saint-Gaudens, wife of the famous sculptor. The couple had three daughters, all well-known as suffragettes. One of the daughters, Margaret Shurcliff, still owns some of the land, but the house was sold long ago.

A number of years ago, thieves broke into the house and did extensive damage while burglarizing the property. They gouged out walls and ripped out all the copper plumbing, leaving the house in a deplorable state. It was at that time that Phidias Dantos, owner of the Hotel Coolidge, White River Jct., bought the house and did all the major work on it.

At one time, Mastlands was known as "The Cornish Galleries," and a sign still stands by the side of Route 12A near the stately yellow building.

At the height of the conflagration, a wood stove and smoke pipe could be seen in the debris of the garage, but the owner, who is the proprietor of The Owl's Nest Restaurant, Lebanon, said it had not been installed.

Stevens walked around the well-manicured grounds of the estate

Monday, A



RIGHT ORANGE FLAMES engulfed the garage and apartment at the rear of Mastlands, Cornish home of the Thomas Levens family, and started licking away at the ell housing the kitchen shortly after firefighters arrived on the scene

Sunday afternoon. The photo on the right was taken from the back just as the second floor collapsed into the garage. Two cars were destroyed and the kitchen was heavily damaged



by fire, smoke and water. The main part of the huge house received extensive smoke damage as did all the contents. The building, rich in history, was once part of the old Cornish

Colony and at one time belonged to Augustus Saint-Gaudens. See story (Photos)

Barn destroyed in Cornish blaze

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N.H. — Fire wreaked total destruction Saturday afternoon on a barn owned by James Neil of East Road, despite the efforts of firefighters from five towns.

No one was injured by the blaze, although two Cornish firemen were reported to

have been administered oxygen by the Cornish Rescue Squad.

Several cows and sheep in the barn at the time were hustled out by Neil's wife, Susan, and Al Soucy of Charlestown, who was at the Neil's nearby home to purchase a Christmas tree.

A tractor and baler, as well as an undetermined quantity of hay in the upper portion of the barn were destroyed by the blaze.

A sheep shed and a storage

shed located near the barn were saved.

The fire started sometime before 1 p.m. A call was lodged with the Claremont Fire Department at about 1:04 p.m.

But when he arrived on the scene, Cornish Acting Fire Chief Scott Kearns said, "The structure was completely engulfed."

Kearns was uncertain as to what ignited the fire, but he noted he had been told by Neil that the Cornish man had fired-up a wood stove in the

Excerpt from The Times Dec 20, 1981

barn before leaving to take his children to an appointment.

Smoke from the burning structure could be seen for miles, according to one eye witness. Fueled by the hay, the heat generated by the fire was described as "enormous... intense."

When the fire broke through the top of the building and the roof collapsed slightly before 2 p.m., flames shot up into the sky 15 to 20 feet.

By 3 p.m. little of the structure was left standing.

The barn was located high on a hill off East Road overlooking Mount Ascutney.

"We did all we could," to save the building, said Kearns. But the acting chief said "the distance to the water supply hurt," the fire-fighting efforts.

Water needed to douse the blaze flames was trucked to the scene from a pond located a half mile away from the foot of the hill on which the Neil home and barn are located.

Responding to the fire with approximately a dozen pieces of equipment were departments from Cornish, Claremont, Plainfield, Meriden and Windsor.



FIREMEN GAVE IT THEIR ALL Saturday afternoon, but failed to prevent an intensely hot blaze from destroying a barn on the East Road in Cornish owned by James Neil.

Hampering firefighting efforts was the lack of an on-site water source. Details on Page 2. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

Cornish fire chief, Duane

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N. H. — Duane Allen, Cornish Fire Chief, was honored at the annual Sullivan County Pomona Guild Banquet held at the Cornish Town Hall Saturday evening. He was presented the Community Citizen Award by the Park Grange, with the presentation made by Margerie Huntoon, a member of the State Grange home economics committee.

Allen has been a resident of Cornish since 1957, moving here from Springfield where he was born.

His first involvement in

town affairs began as a 4-H leader and soon after as a director of the Cornish Fair Association.

He joined the Cornish Fire Department in 1963 and was appointed deputy fire warden in 1971. In 1972 Allen was appointed Deputy Fire Chief by the Cornish Selectmen to serve under Chief Ellsworth Atwood.

Upon the retirement of Chief Atwood the following September, Allen was appointed chief of the department. He was also made fire warden for the town

by appointment from the state at this time.

Allen owns and operates a dairy farm on Burr Road, Cornish Flat, with the help of his wife, Evelyn, daughter Linda and son-in-law, Robert Rice. He has a granddaughter, Cara.

Allen has found time to oversee the many fund-raising projects that have benefited the Cornish Fire Department. The main event is weekly bingo games held at the Cornish Town Hall. Also, a food booth and bingo tent manned annually at the Cornish Fair.

Through the efforts of the

Allen, honored by County Pamona Guild

department, members and Chief Allen have earned and purchased thousands of dollars worth of equipment, to provide better protection for the Town of Cornish. This year alone the department and the auxiliary members spent over \$20,000 on equipment, which included the purchase of a new tanker at the cost of \$11,870.

Stephen P. Tracy was also the recipient of the Community Citizen Award. Tracy was born in 1905, in Meriden, where his father was the headmaster of Kimball Union Academy.

He graduated from the academy, Dartmouth College and Harvard University School of Architecture.

After a few years of teaching high school in Wilton he moved to Nashua where he practiced architecture for over 25 years.

While in Nashua he designed houses, schools, churches and other public buildings, both in the city and throughout the state. He also designed several buildings at the Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth and the Training Center building at the Laconia State School.

College buildings included the University of New Hampshire, Keene and Plymouth State Colleges, as well as several buildings at Kimball Union Academy.

During his years at Nashua, Tracy was involved as president of the Rotary Club and the State YMCA.

In 1964, he moved to the ancestral homestead in Cornish and has continued his practice on a reduced scale, designing both resident and public buildings.

He has served on the Cornish Planning Board, the

Town Hall Committee and was the first president of the Cornish Historical Society.

Tracy is a former trustee of the Mount Ascutney Hospital and a trustee of Kimball Union Academy, as well as of

Saint Gaudens National Historic Site.

Tracy was co-author of the most recent issue of the Cornish Town History, compiling the genealogy section.

Tracy received his award from Cornish Grange No. 25.

Famed Covered Bridge Escapes Blaze

By BRAD HILLS

Union Leader Correspondent

WINDSOR, Vt. — The longest covered bridge in the United States spanning the Connecticut River between Cornish, N.H., and Windsor, Vt., was not damaged by a fire Saturday night that caused extensive damage to a building that for many years served as a tollhouse for the 466-foot-long span.

The historic former tollhouse at 43 Bridge St. in Windsor stands less than 20 feet from the western edge of the covered bridge, a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The bridge is owned by the State of New Hampshire.

Windsor Fire Chief Bruce Stearns said that at no time was the historic bridge threatened by flames even though the burning structure was only 20 feet away.

Traffic on the bridge was halted for several hours until the fire was brought under control and firefighting equipment was moved.

The 115-year-old bridge is the only span across the Connecticut River between West Lebanon to the north and Claremont to the south.

A Vermont state fire investigator termed the fire "accidental."

The fire was caused "when somebody threw something that ignited a pile of kitchen garbage in the upstairs apartment of the house," said a spokesman for the Windsor Fire Department.

Units from Cornish and Windsor responded to the blaze at 9:05 p.m. Saturday after receiving a call from an unidentified man.

The occupants of the two-family house were uninjured in the blaze, although several of the firefighters were treated at the scene for heat exhaustion.

Firefighters brought the blaze under control within two hours, but returned to the scene at 3:54 a.m. yesterday after it rekindled, causing additional damage.

The present bridge was constructed in 1866 by James F. Tasker of Cornish.

A private company operated the span as a toll bridge.

In 1935 the state of New Hampshire bought the bridge for \$20,000 and it became toll free June 1, 1943.



NEW CHIEF—Scott Kearns, right, took over today as the new fire chief in Cornish replacing former chief Duane Allen. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

Scott Kearns is new chief of Cornish Fire Department

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N. H. — Scott Kearns, a captain in the Cornish Fire Department, has been appointed by the Cornish Selectmen to become chief of the department effective Sept. 1.

The appointment became necessary when Fire Chief Duane Allen recently gave his resignation, due to his increased involvement with his farming operation.

Allen said, "I find little time for myself and think it is time for a change." He has doubled the amount of cattle he had at the time of taking on the responsibility.

Selectman chairman Michael Yatskevitch, said, "Duane has been a very conscientious and effective fire chief in the Cornish Fire Department and the department has come a long way under his supervision. We accept his resignation with regret; we will miss him."

Allen joined the department in 1963

upon his move there from Springfield. In 1971 he was appointed deputy fire warden by the State of New Hampshire and in 1972 the selectmen appointed him deputy fire chief, under the supervision of Chief Ellsworth Atwood, who served the town for more than 30 years.

The following September Allen was appointed chief upon Atwood's

(Please see KEARNS—Pg. 12)

retirement from the department. At that time Allen was also appointed Fire Warden of the town by the state.

Besides the weekly meeting and training session much time was spent by both Allen and his wife Evelyn, helping department members raise funds for needed equipment.

Weekly bingo games, dances, and both bingo and a food booth at the Cornish Fair have accounted for many hundreds of hours spent to raise funds to purchase much-needed equipment. Most recently the department purchased a new truck, paid for entirely by funds raised by the department's members.

"Scott is familiar with the fire department and filled in as Deputy Fire Chief last December for two months when Allen was hospitalized," stated Yatskevitch.

"He is in town a lot and is available, he is also well qualified and we hope he'll have the complete cooperation of the department," the chairman added.

By coincidence Kearns, like Allen, also came to Cornish from Springfield. He moved to Cornish in 1973, purchased

KEARNS

From Page 1

the former Hunt-Hood home, a large brick house on Route 120, where he runs a bee farm with 34 colonies, that produce up to a thousand pounds of honey a year.

The self-employed Kearns was born Sept. 22, 1943, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Luke Kearns, Springfield.

Upon graduation from high school, Kearns attended a meat cutting school in Toledo, Ohio and was employed as a meat-cutter until 1978.

He joined the Cornish Fire Department soon after arriving in town and for a time was a member of the Cornish Rescue Squad too. He has the background of an emergency medical technician.

Kearns has taken advantage of fire-fighting courses offered throughout the years, some in Vermont, some in New Hampshire, and several of which have been held at the N. H. Vocational Technical College in Claremont.

Kearns has no plans for changing things in the department in the near future.

"I feel a slow approach to changes is best. The biggest thing I want is to see

the department continue to grow together. I will plan training sessions at least once a month," he said.

"I shall plan initial plans of action for all types of fires, but at the same time I will analyze the situation and said Kearns.

"I shall miss getting into the field but I feel confident that I have the experience to do the job. I will be bashful about taking advice from others, however," he added.

"I feel we have one of the best fire departments in the state; we work together at a fire, and I want to continue that way."

Recently Kearns was a member of the department's Muster Team and took the Claremont Fire Department Muster Trophy and rotating plaque the second year in a row, with the department winning in all four events.

Kearns is married to the former Shella Hickey of Springfield and has a daughter, Michelle, a junior at St. Albans High School and a son, Brian, an eighth grade student at Cornish Elementary School.



DESTROYED HOME—The one-and-a-half story Cornish home of Jim Gregory was burned almost to the ground this morning by a blaze presumably started by a faulty chimney. Cornish Fire Chief Scott Kerns said Gregory reported the fire at about 6 a.m. after he woke up and saw his bedroom ceiling in flames. Gregory was able to get out of the Route 12-A building safely. About 40 firefighters from

six communities battled the blaze, but were hampered by a lack of water, said Kerns. Six tankers were shuttled to Claremont and Windsor to bring water to the fire because the nearest source of water, the Connecticut River, was frozen over. Personnel from Claremont, Cornish, Plainfield, Meriden, Ascutney and Windsor responded to the fire. (Steven Webster Photo)

Scenes from Sunday's muster



THE CHAMPS — The Cornish Fire Department Muster Team walked away with the Claremont Fire Department Muster Trophy and rotating plaque for the second year in a row Sunday. Front row, from left, are Scott Kearns, team

captain Ed Lawrence, George Aldrich and Peter Decatur. Back row, from left, are Lee Baker, Nate Cass, Dave Wood, Bill Fitts, and Larry Dingee.



HUNKERING DOWN — Claremont firefighter Andy Chamberlain awaits the signal to blast a target as teammate Charles Kasaras races up behind him.



STAND BACK — Claremont Assistant Fire Chief Victor Bergeron empties out a hose in preparation for the next event during the Claremont Fire Department Muster Sunday at Monadnock Park. Behind him are firefighters from Cornish and Unity. Cornish Muster Team Captain Ed Lawrence is at far left, Andy Chamberlain of the Claremont call force is in the navy jersey in the center. (Margo Howland Photos)

Cornish firefighter honored for rescue

Ennis Times
Jul 12, 1984
p.3

CORNISH, N. H. — James R. Lukash, Cornish, was honored by New England Telephone recently for his actions in saving a man's life last year.

In a ceremony at the Hanover Inn, Lukash, an NET technician in Lebanon, received the Theodore N. Vail bronze medal for courageous rescue of a man from a high-voltage live wire." Lukash also was presented a cash award and a special pin.

The events leading to the award occurred on April 29, 1983, when Lukash, part-time police chief of Cornish, helped local firefighters in putting out a brush fire. As he was leaving the scene he heard a cry from a volunteer fireman with whom he had been walking.

Several moments later he found the man lying face down on the ground. His body was shaking and smoke was coming from the middle of his back, where a large green electrical wire was resting.

Unsuccessful in removing the wire with a stick, during which attempt he received a shock and burn, Lukash was handed a rope by another firefighter. He used the rope to remove the wire from the victim's back.

"I knew the voltage was killing him, and I had to do something," Lukash later commented.



James Lukash

The victim, whose heart and lungs had ceased to function, was revived with the use of CPR and rushed to a hospital. His condition stabilized after a few days and he eventually recovered. Lukash suffered a small burn under his right arm.

With Lukash at the ceremony were his wife, Pamela Jean, and their children, Heather Marie, Amanda Lynn and Nicholas John.



FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION— While one volunteer, left, takes a cold drink, two others attach a support during the construction of the Cornish Fire Station June 9-10. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

6/10/84



WINNING FORM — A member of the Ascutney Fire Department reacts happily after finishing the mystery event during the Claremont Firefighters Muster Sunday in Monadnock Park. Although the

Ascutney firefighters had the fastest time scaling the building, the Cornish department outdistanced the four-team field to claim first place in the five-event competition. (Steven Webster Photo)

Early Time Sent 10/1/84

Cornish firefighters tops in Sunday muster

CLAREMONT, N.H. — Firefighters from Cornish Sunday showed a trio of other firefighting teams how to combine speed and teamwork, claiming first in the Claremont muster.

The Cornish squad was awarded first place, after it wound up in a tie with the eventual second place team of mutual aid firefighters. Third place went to the hosts, Claremont, and the Ascutney team claimed the fourth position.

The five-event competition in Mondadnock Park challenged the teams to perform various firefighting-related tasks under controlled conditions.

In the bucket brigade event, with six firefighters carrying water over hurdles and then filling a drum, Cornish jumped out to a lead, finishing a full seven seconds before the closest other team.

The mutual aid squad, made up of two members of each of the other departments present, followed the 42 second time of Cornish with a 49.1 second effort. Claremont was next, at 50.8 seconds, and Ascutney fourth, at 55.4 seconds.

Cornish added to its lead in the wet hose layout event, where 200 feet of hose needed to be rolled out and targets knocked over.

By clocking a time of 24.6 seconds, Cornish grabbed another 10 points,

effort and Ascutney was fourth in 59.4 seconds.

The preconnected hose layout bolstered Cornish's lead, as the visitors ran away from the rest of the field with an effort of 27 seconds. Second through fourth places were separated by 1.2 seconds in the event where competitors had to uncouple and then recouple hose before knocking targets over. Claremont was second in 35 seconds, mutual aid was third in 35.4 seconds, and Ascutney was in fourth in 36.2 seconds.

Ascutney got on the beam in the midnight alarm, grabbing first, and sending Cornish and Claremont to third and fourth places respectively.

Ascutney got its team dressed in 35.7 seconds, with mutual aid right behind in 36.6 seconds and Cornish third at 37.5 seconds. Claremont was behind, at 1:43.3.

The mystery event, sprung on the competitors with 15 minutes to prepare, had firefighters carrying ladders to a building and then climbing to the top.

Ascutney took top spot in the event with a 17.1 second timing, with Claremont in second at 18.4 seconds. Cornish grabbed third at 23.3 second and mutual aid, fourth, at 25.7 seconds.



Valley News — Dan Hu

Cornish Fire

A fire in Cornish last night left five people homeless and badly damaged a 200-year-old house, but nobody was injured. Page 4

Fire Damages 200-Year-Old Home

By BRIAN COUTURIER
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Five people were left homeless last night after a fire heavily damaged a 200-year-old home and destroyed an adjoining structure on East Road.

The blaze began at about 8:10 p.m. and was under control by 9:00 p.m., according to Cornish Fire Chief John Rand.

No injuries were reported, Rand said.

A total of about 20 volunteers from the Cornish Fire Department and the town's entire fleet of two engines, a pumper, a ladder truck and a forestry unit, responded to the blaze, Rand said. Fire units from Plainfield, Meriden and Claremont also responded to the fire.

An attached 16-by-16 foot home was

destroyed in the blaze and damage to the main home was restricted to an upper room and back corner room, Rand said. The home's location on the top of a steep hill did not prevent fire units from getting water or equipment to the scene, he said.

Rand said that several tankers provided water until a pumper was set up at a private fire pond at the bottom of the hill.

According to the homeowner, Perley Welch, the fire may have started near the electrical outlet between the two adjoining structures. Welch, 72, said all the occupants of the two homes were in the front room watching television when the blaze started. Welch and his wife, Lula, live in the main home. Kevin Jones, Welch's nephew, and his wife and child live in the adjoining home.

Welch said his wife tried to call the fire department twice but could not get through. He said he had to drive his car to Cornish Flat, about two miles away, in order to get help.

Chief Rand said he didn't know anything about the lines being tied up or out of order, but he would investigate the complaint.

Jones said that both woodstoves from each home were lit at the time of the fire, but he believed the blaze was not related to the woodstoves. "It started on the little house near the electric thing, I think," Jones said.

Rand said that a couple of firefighters suffered from the heat, but none required hospitalization.

Cornish Families Get Help, Too

Cornish Fire Department

By LISA JONES

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Stephen A. Tracy of Cornish knew from listening to his scanner that the Jones and Welch families had lost much of their belongings in a fire at their home Friday, so he launched a drive to help them out that very night.

Four days later, the drive is still going strong.

"It's coming in so fast," Tracy said this morning. "The reaction has been so great. . . . I still have a load of baby clothes in the car."

The 200-year-old home of Perley and Lula Welch on East Road was heavily damaged and an attached home was destroyed in a fire Friday evening which Perley Welch said could have started near the electrical outlet between the two structures.

Welch's nephew, Kevin Jones, lived in the attached home with his wife Tammy and their five-month-old baby boy. Welch, 72, said all the occupants of the two homes were in the front room watching television when the fire started at about 8:10 p.m. It was under control

by 9 p.m., according to Cornish Fire Chief John Rand.

The families lost nearly everything, from money to clothes.

"Clothes came in fast and furious," said Tracy. "One of the nicest things is a place called Changes, a used clothing store (in Claremont), called and said both families could come down and get free clothes."

The Welches are seeking a loan or a low-rent camper to live in on the house site to they can rebuild this winter, Tracy said. "He's on social security so it has to be low-rent."

The Joneses are looking for an apartment in the Cornish area, as well as money to replace Kevin's newly cashed paycheck. Tracy said that donation cans have been placed at Powers Country Store in Cornish Flat, and at the 12 Percent Solution on Route 12A in Cornish. Donations can also be mailed to the United Church of Cornish, Box 40, Cornish Flat, N.H. 03746. For more information on the drive, call Bernice Johnson at 542-4849 or Carol Fitch at 675-5131.

Cornish will get new fire truck

By RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N.H. — The Cornish Fire Department will have its new \$92,000 fire truck this year as the result of an overwhelming affirmative vote of 123-14.

The sum of \$51,117 will come from the Capital Reserve Fund and the Cornish Firemen's Association has earmarked \$10,000 to help finance the truck, leaving \$30,882 to be raised.

Voters also adopted a \$461,712 municipal operating budget.

The Police Department also fared well at the annual town meeting when voters approved the purchase of a radar unit which Chief Philip "Joe" Osgood said is needed to control speeding and protect school children.

District Court Judge Jean Burling also stressed the need of radar equipment to help in the prosecution of habitual offenders. Voters approved the \$1,750 expenditure 84-49.

The sum of \$181,170 for maintenance of Class V highways and bridges was appropriated with \$128,-

(Please see CORNISH-Pg. 14)



CITED—Fred Weld, right, was honored at Cornish Town Meeting Tuesday when Leonard "Bunny" Barker presented him with a wood carving of a Brown Creeper, a woodland bird, in recognition of the outstanding forestry work he has done in the town of Cornish. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

067 to be raised by taxes and the balance of \$53,103 to come from the state Highway Block Grant Fund.

There will be an increase in the town's insurance coverage from \$36,918 to \$53,918.

Future decisions on capital equipment will be made with the assistance of a Capital Equipment Committee to be established to advise selectmen on major purchases. The five-member committee will include one selectman as an ex-officio member.

The development of a high-level radioactive waste dump in Sullivan County or elsewhere in New Hampshire met with almost unanimous opposition. Town Clerk Bernice Johnson will convey the town's decision to Gov. John Sununu.

An article to change the way Planning Board members are chosen was soundly defeated by a voice vote. The selectmen appoint members to that board.

This was the second defeat for proponents of the change to an elective process. A special town meeting last September resulted in a negative vote of 114-39.

Voters declined to establish a Cemetery Upkeep Capital Reserve Fund, but they did approve the expenditure of \$1,618 from the present cemetery fund toward a riding mower. They also added \$500 to the department's \$8,000 budget to cover the purchase.

The voters approved making the last payment of \$13,000 on the Gallien grader out of Revenue Sharing funds.

One article (for discussion only) regarding two sessions for annual town meeting, one on the traditional second Tuesday when officers of the town would be elected, and another

day for the business meeting, evoked little interest.

However, the few people in favor of the proposal were told they may present a petition to the selectmen requesting the split session prior to the 1987 town meeting and an article can be placed on the ballot.

An article by request found voters approving the sum of \$250 as the town's share of Sullivan County Hospice for 1986.

Other money requests approved were \$4,309 for ambulance service from Claremont's Golden Cross and the Windsor Ambulance Service; \$15,300 for landfill; \$1,417, septage; \$3,998 for Sullivan County Solid Waste Disposal District, an increase of \$2,082 over budget; \$1,200, Visiting Nurse; \$2,000, Cornish Rescue Squad; \$700, Wheels Around Windsor; \$2,500, Community Youth Advocates; \$12,550, Cornish Fire Department, and \$12,677 for the Police Department.

The sum of \$6,000 will be added to the Capital Reserve Fund for a re-evaluation to be done by the appraisal division of the Department of Revenue in 1989 or later.

Chester Newbold was re-elected to a three-year term as selectman and Bernice Johnson, long-time town clerk, was also re-elected. Also elected were Jean Duval, treasurer; Carol Fitch, tax collector; Harold Morse, highway agent and Hollis Boardman, sexton.

Also, Peter Storrs, overseer of welfare; Sherrie Bulkeley, auditor for two years; Peter Hoe Burling, moderator for two years; Charles Aiken, trustee of trust funds for three years and Kathryn Patterson, library trustee for three years.

Robin C. Monette received 30 write-in votes for supervisor of checklist for a six-year term.

Firefighters Will Buy A New Truck For Once

By JANE WHITTINGTON PICARD
Valley News Correspondent

CORNISH — About 150 of the town's 943 registered voters gathered at the town hall yesterday to vote on a long list of budget and article appropriations, many of which they passed only after lengthy debates and some amending.

The approved budget is \$555,530, almost \$20,000 higher than last year's appropriation. David Monette, chairman of the selectmen, estimated that the combined town, school and county tax will increase roughly \$1.50 per \$1,000 of valuation, but he stressed that the figure is only an estimate that is contingent upon receipt of other revenues.

An increase of \$1.50 would bump up last year's rate of \$35.98 about 4 percent.

Following a long debate, voters decided 123 to 14 to spend \$92,000 for a new fire truck that will replace a failing, secondhand Mack truck purchased in 1980.

Some residents said the fire department should purchase another secondhand vehicle at a lower cost to the town, but outgoing Fire Chief Scott Kearns said members of the department are tired of spending unpaid hours repairing old trucks that don't stand the test of time.

"We do it for nothing," said Kearns. "We don't get paid. I think this is about as low as you can go and have a truck that's going to last you 25 years."

More than half the money for the truck will come from the fire department's capital reserve fund, which now contains over \$51,000. The fire department association, an organization that raises money by holding weekly bingo games, has offered a donation

Valley News

of \$10,000. The balance will be raised by the town over a period of years.

Voters debated for 45 minutes over a proposal to give the police \$1,750 for a radar unit. Chief of Police Joe Osgood said that radar would help him reduce the number of speed-related accidents in Cornish, and would make him feel a lot more confident about the safety of school children waiting for buses on Route 120, where many motorists exceed the 50 mph speed limit.

Resident Jim Lukash backed Osgood up. "I don't want to wait until one of our kids gets killed before we settle down and do something about it," Lukash said.

But resident Fred Weld said a radar unit would not stop speeders, it would only cause them to drive slowly past the police cruiser. "I feel that a radar unit is a prosecution device," said Weld. "It's not going to stop speeders."

Residents approved the purchase 84 to 49 on a standing vote.

Selectmen requested \$53,918 for town insurance costs, though the figure appearing on the warrant article asked for only \$36,918. The last-minute increase came about because Great Global, the town's insurance carrier, was placed in receivership, said Monette. Selectmen have chosen to buy insurance from Illinois Insurance Exchange, at least until May, and the new company charges a higher rate than Global. Voters approved the expense on a voice vote.

Library Trustee Frank Ackerman said the \$7,844 request for the library budget could be reduced by \$600, because the request had been inaccurately calculated. A few residents suggested putting the extra money into the library fund anyway, but an overwhelming majority opposed the idea.

"If they say they don't need it, why give it to them," asked Fred Sullivan, adding that it makes little sense to spend tax dollars unnecessarily.

The library request was amended to \$7,244 and approved by voice vote. The figure, up \$2,009 from last year, includes the cost of a new furnace installed in the library after the old heating unit failed.

In other appropriations, voters approved \$181,170 for the maintenance of class V highways and bridges, up \$13,000 from last year's amount. The additional money will cover personnel raises, higher fuel costs, and higher sand and gravel expenses. Taxes will pay for \$128,067 of this appropriation and the balance will come from a state highway block grant.

A loud majority of residents voted in favor of sending written messages to the governor and congress expressing opposition to the development of high-level radioactive waste dumps in New Hampshire, and especially in Sullivan County. At least two residents asked voters to give rational consideration to how this waste can be taken care of if it isn't dumped somewhere in the state.



Valley News — Larry Cro

Larry Dingee thinks out the next move in building his town's new fire truck. His company recently finished one for Newbury, VT

New Fire Trucks, One At A Time

Valley News Dec 13, 1986 p.1

CORNISH — It was a standard chassis of a 1986 Ford 8000 diesel truck — \$36,000 worth of metal — plus engine parts when it arrived at Larry Dingee's shop.

With those materials, Dingee could have built almost any type of truck. A dump truck, perhaps, or an oil delivery truck, or a garbage truck.

Jim Kenyon
Valley News Columnist



But Dingee doesn't make just any type of truck. He makes fire trucks. "When I tell people what I do I get a lot of funny looks," he said. "There aren't too many people around who build fire trucks."

There are even fewer people who build fire trucks for their own town, which Dingee and his two employees — Dave Wood and Bob Rice — are doing.

"This is going to be ours," said Dingee, a member of the fire department and president of the rescue squad. "We're going to be the ones driving this truck."

The town accepted Dingee's bid of \$55,000

(the chassis was paid for separately by the town, and delivered to Dingee) at town meeting last year, and he is scheduled to deliver the \$91,000 truck early next year to the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department. One branch of the department is less than 100 yards away from Dingee's shop on Route 120.

A black and red sign that reads, "Dingee Machine" hangs over the front door of the shop. Clapboards are missing and a pile of junk parts takes up one side of the parking area. But inside, the building is neat and spacious, with the smell drifting through the air. There's room for three big fire trucks in a recently built expansion to the shop.

A radio, piping out Top 40 music, is frequently interrupted by the voices from a police and fire department scanner. "All work stops when we get a fire call in Cornish," Dingee said. "It's a good thing my customers understand that."

Earlier this week, the unfinished Cornish truck was the only one in the shop. The pump hadn't been installed, but the red cab and shiny aluminum catwalks were giveaways that this

will be a fire engine.

Clamps, nuts, bolts, a socket wrench and an empty coffee cup cluttered one of the catwalks. Dingee orders nuts and bolts by the thousand before he's finished about 500 of each will be drilled into the Cornish pumper.

Although it's done on a much grander scale, putting a fire truck together piece by piece is much like building a model car from a kit. "That's about the size of it," Dingee said as he reached for his tape measure. "You can look at it as a big erector set."

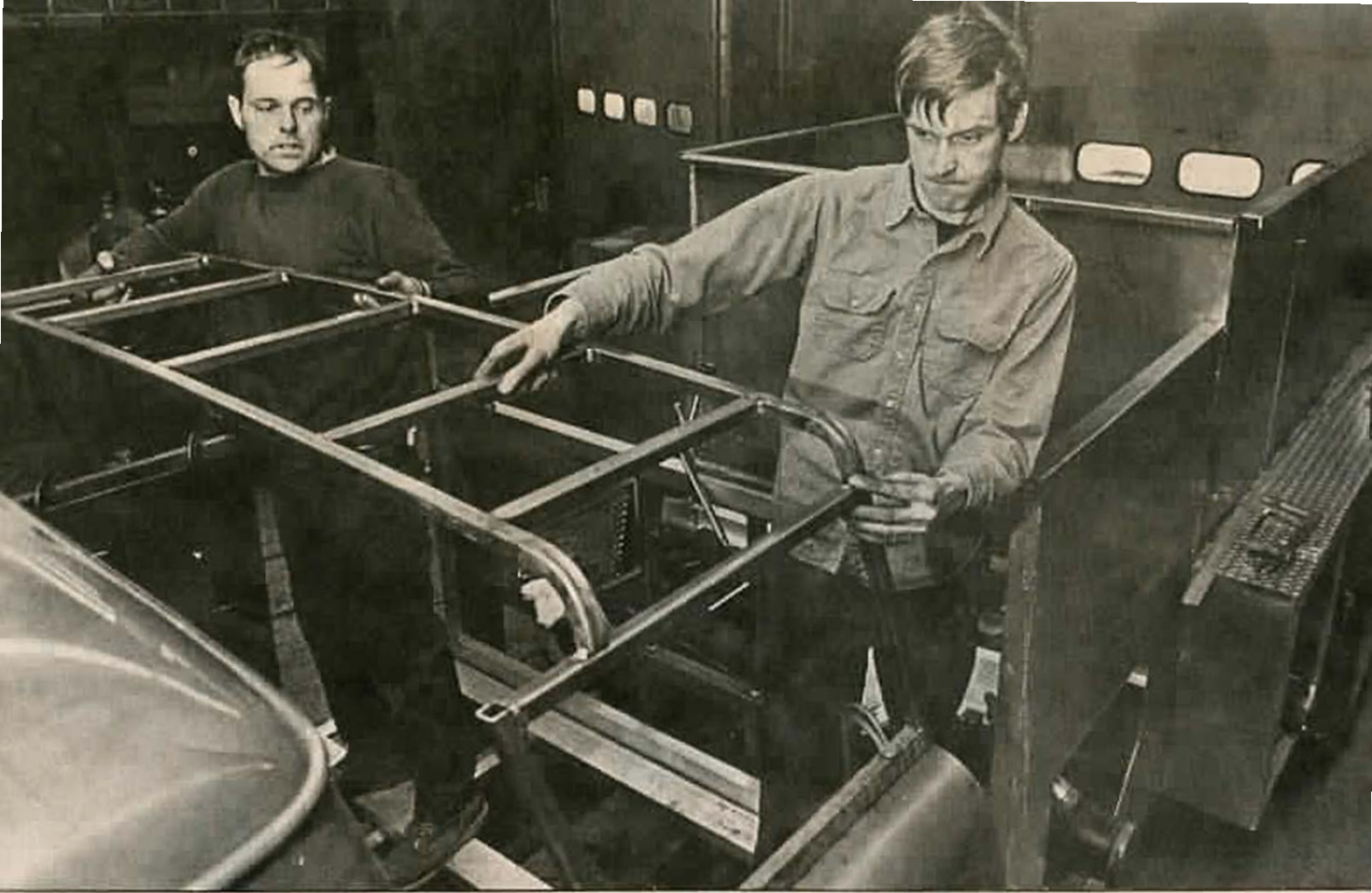
Except that when this truck is finished it will weigh 29,000 pounds, must last 25 years and probably respond to 90 to 100 fire calls a year.

"You've got to build them durable," Dingee said. "You've got to use methods of construction that are going to keep pieces from cracking or wearing out. You've got to undercoat them well to prevent rusting, and all the wiring has to be high quality."

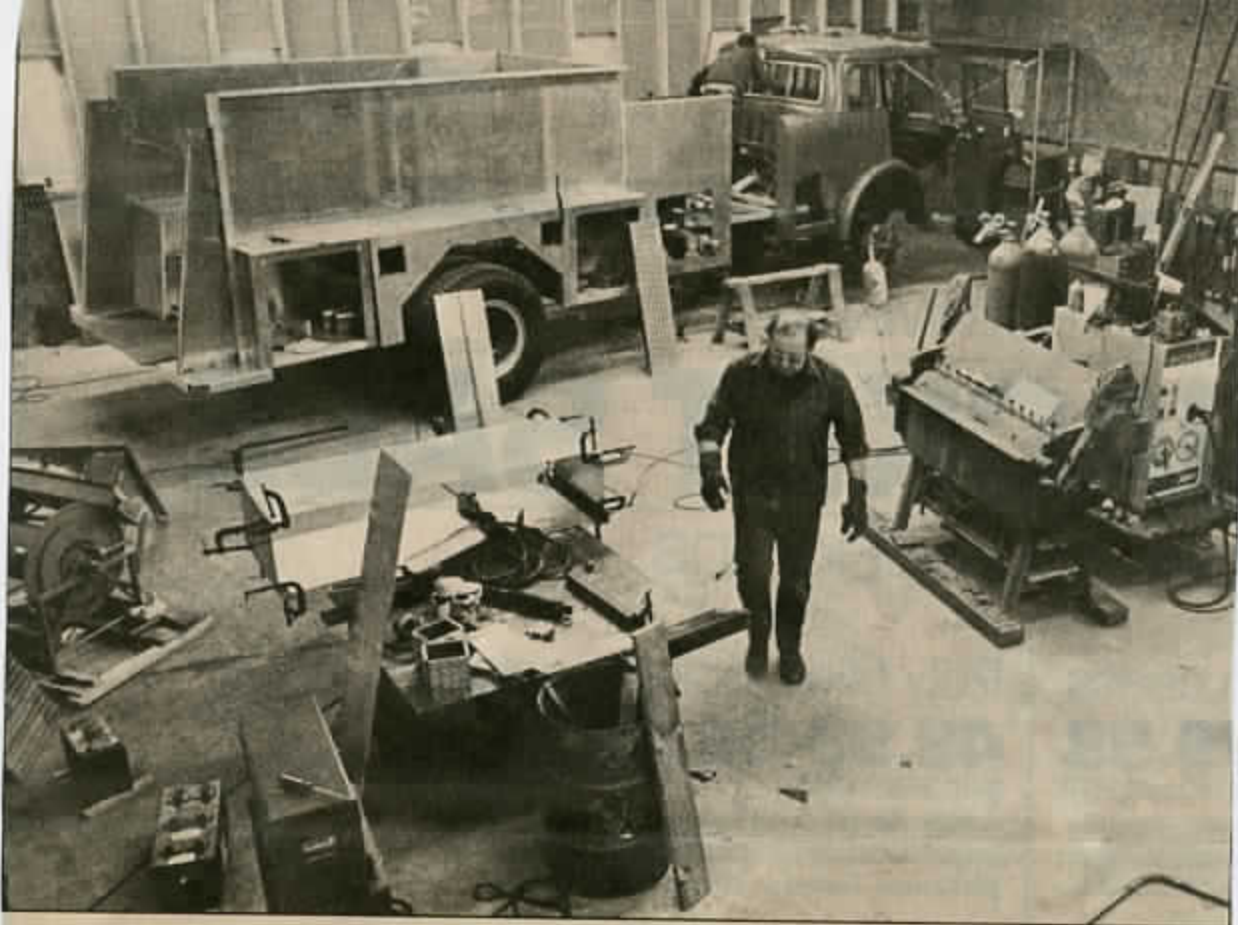
And unlike the \$4 model, the \$91,000 fire truck doesn't come with instructions. Rice

(Continued on page 10)

— DINGEE



gee, at right in photograph at left, and Bob Rice align the frame of a canopy over a seat for three firefighters behind the cab of what will be Cornish's truck.



Inside the machine shop and spacious garage on Route 120, the new fire truck is taking shape.



Valley News — Larry Crowe

At right, Dinglee welds pieces of tubing.

when asked if there were blueprints, pointed to Dingee and said, "Right there."

"Even though we don't have formal blueprints, we've built enough of them so we have a good idea of the measurements."

The trucks do come with specifications, but often they become irrelevant. Earlier this week, Dingee and Rice were building an extension to the Cornish truck's cab large enough to seat three people. Underneath the seat, the Cornish Fire Department wanted a hose storage space.

Dingee and Rice spent an afternoon building a small door to that hose cubby. They put on their welding helmets and gloves, and sparks flew. They got out rulers and measured, and then welded some more.

Dingee made several trips to the shearing machine, sort of an electric guillotine, snapping sheets of aluminum three-sixteenths of an inch thick easily.

Dingee and Rice talked almost non-stop. "How are we going to get that square?" Dingee asked.

"Good question," Rice said.

Dingee grabbed a level and tapped the piece of sheet metal a few times. Rice stood at one end of the piece and squinted. "Pretty close," he

concluded.

"With something like this," Dingee said as he clamped the piece of metal to another piece, "since we don't do it every day, it's really a play-by-ear sort of thing."

There are days in the four months it takes to build a truck like this when they can barely see the progress they've made. "For me the favorite part is starting them, (and) getting to the point where it starts to look like a fire truck," Dingee said. "It always seems to get most tedious when you get near the end and you're doing the little stuff."

But there's no rushing the work, largely because Dingee is his own toughest critic. He's been known to get something built and then decide that it's no good.

"I'll throw it over my shoulder, and start over," he said.

Dingee, who moved to Cornish from Connecticut six years ago, said he's always been intrigued by fire trucks. His father was in the machine shop business, and after moving to Cornish, Dingee began doing fire truck repairs. Building entire trucks seemed a natural step, he said.

Not that it's an easy market to enter. Bidding is very competitive

and towns are cautious about who they deal with with. Many prefer large manufacturers, in case there are problems.

"Quite a few towns, I didn't get the bids, quite frankly, because I didn't have a track record. We had to prove ourselves, we had to show that we could build something that was going to stay together."

But his reputation grows, and so does his list of customers. He recently finished a truck for Newbury, Vt., and has contracts to build new trucks for Woodstock, South Royalton, and Saxtons River, Vt., next year.

Dingee said he can build a truck for less than a large manufacturer, and he thinks he give a town more individual attention. "Nine times out of 10 if we build a truck we're going to be doing the service work on it. We know the truck inside and out."

In fact, he becomes somewhat attached to his trucks. He feels pride when he sees one of the trucks he built in service, whether at a four-alarm fire or in a Fourth of July parade.

"Little towns take a great deal of pride in their fire departments, their firemen, and their equipment," he said. "I'm the same way."



SWEARING IN — Cornish Selectman David Monette, left, swears in the town's new fire chief, John Rand, Wednesday in the

selectmen's office. Rand will take over the duties of former chief Scott Kearns, who recently resigned. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

Cornish fire chief sworn in

CORNISH, N.H. — John Rand was sworn in as chief of the Fire Department by Selectman David Monette Wednesday. Witnessing the event were Selectmen Chester Newbold and Michael Yatsevitch as well as former Fire Chief Scott Kearns who resigned from the position.

Rand has been a member of the department since moving to Cornish in 1972 and is highly recommended

by fellow firefighters. He is employed at the Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory, Hanover, and resides with his wife and two sons at Cornish Flat.

Rand, who has also been active in the Cornish Rescue Squad, recently retiring as its president, will be the fourth chief in the 43-year existence of the volunteer department.



CLAREMONT FIREMEN used the Jaws of Life to extricate two victims from their car after a head-on collision Saturday. Two passengers in another car which came to rest nearby the first vehicle were also taken to Valley Regional Hospital. (Dawn Handschuh Photo)

Eagle Times Nov 13, 1983 p. 1

Four injured in crash

CLAREMONT, N.H. — Four area residents were hospitalized Saturday following a two-car, head-on crash on Route 120, Claremont.

The accident occurred at about 5 p.m. when a sedan driving north just past the New Hampshire Vocational Technical College collided with a Volvo station wagon heading south.

The sedan's occupants, Jody Tebo and Gerard Branch, and the station wagon's, occupants John and Polly

Rand, were all transported to Valley Regional Hospital, Claremont.

The Rands had to be removed from their vehicle by use of the Jaws of Life. According to police on the scene, they apparently suffered head and neck injuries.

Claremont police and firefighters arrived at the scene at 5:10 p.m. Traffic was stopped in the area for approximately one hour.

Conditions of the injured were unavailable at press time.



NEW TRUCK — Larry Dingee, far right, presents the keys to the new Cornish fire truck to Fire Chief John Rand Friday, as selectmen Robert Ballard, Cheston Newbold and Michael Yatsevich look on. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

Cornish gets fire truck

CORNISH, N. H. — Larry Dingee, Dingee Machine Co., Cornish Flat, turned the keys to the new fire truck over to town officials Friday during a picture-taking session near the town offices, School Street.

The \$92,000 truck was approved by voters at the 1986 town meeting. The Ford cab and chassis was purchased from Grappone Ford, Concord and the complete fire body built by Dingee Machine,

over four months. All work, with the exception of the lettering, was done by Dingee Machine.

The new truck, which replaces the 1962 Mack pumper taken in trade, is equipped with a 750 gallon water tank, 2,000 feet of three-inch hose, three one-and-one-half-inch attack lines and one two-and-one-half inch pre-connect hose.

A deck gun, with top mount control panel, allows the pump operator good eye contact for surveying surrounding areas at the fire scene and will be especially

useful at such things as a barn fire, fire officials said.

The truck, which is equipped with all standard equipment, is also equipped with five Scott Air Pacs, (self contained breathing apparatus.) Six firefighters can respond on the truck.

The steel cab and chassis has an aluminum body, with plastic-lined water tank which lightens the weight. This feature will be an advantage when responding to fires on Cornish back roads, firefighters said.



Valley News Tom Wolfe

Investigators said that the fire that destroyed this vacation home in Cornish probably started in a woodstove.

Vacation Home In Cornish Burns

CORNISH — A vacation home on Parsonage Road owned by a Connecticut family burned yesterday morning.

A trail of blood in the snow and a dry patch in the driveway where a car had apparently been parked at first led the police and fire marshal to suspect arson.

"It looks right now like it started from the woodstove," Cornish Fire Chief Scott Kearns said. "However, whoever was there didn't have any right to be there." The house is owned by Robert Kallinich

of Gilford, Conn., who uses it as a hunting cabin and vacation home. Kallinich was in Connecticut at the time of the fire.

Kearns said the blood appeared to indicate "someone was injured during the night and left." Next-door neighbor Paul Jackson said a path of blood led to several homes, including his own. The police took blood samples from his truck, Jackson said.

The fire was reported at 7:34 in the

morning by Jackson's family. "My oldest daughter noticed it," Jackson said. "She hollered," and when Jackson looked, "flames were shooting right out the roof."

Kearns said Cornish, Meriden, and Windsor firefighters came to the scene and had the fire controlled in about a half an hour. "It was a total loss," he said. "It was just about gone when we got there."

Cornish House Blaze Just A Drill

CORNISH — For more than 30 years, the 1½-story cape on Wayside Lane had been in Bruce Tracy's family.

He grew up the house, which was built sometime in the late 1850s or early 1860s. His mother lived there until last Wednesday.

On Saturday, more than 40 volunteer firefighters from six different departments arrived at the house for a training session. By the end of the day the house was reduced to ashes.

"We wanted to get rid of it, simply because we didn't have time to restore it," said Tracy, who plans to build a new house on the site for himself and his wife Debra. His mother Rena will move into a trailer on the property.

But neither Tracy nor his mother went to watch the

house burn. "I didn't feel like watching it," he said.

For the firefighters, the day was "very much a success," according to Cornish Fire Chief John Rand, who said that volunteers from Cornish, Meriden, Plainfield, Windsor, Claremont and Newport focused primarily on extinguishing interior fires during Saturday's session.

After doing exercises on ventilation overhaul and search and rescue, the firefighters started about a dozen small fires in the house to practice extinguishing interior fires.

Finished with their training, the firefighters torched the house and watched it burn to the ground. Rand said the house was consumed within an hour.

"Our primary emphasis was just on interior fire attacks, so firefighters would get respect for the amount of heat and fire and smoke that's inside," said Rand.



Valley News — Larry Crowe

Fire Chief Scott Kearns shows Cornish voters picture of fire truck he wants to buy. They appropriated money for it.

Moments Of Levity Break Up Routine

Even the most businesslike town meeting has its share of humorous asides, and there were a few at meetings around the Upper Valley yesterday.

In Charlestown, resident John Ahern expressed his dismay at the lack of fiscal restraint exhibited by his fellow voters.

"I don't think we have turned down a single thing tonight so if your taxes are higher you know why," Ahern said before Charlestown's meeting adjourned. "You can tell the world that if there is anything they want, they can come here to Charlestown to get it."

Things were a little different in Cornish, where Library Trustee Frank Ackerman actually asked voters to take money out of the library's budget. Ackerman said the \$7,844 request for the library could be reduced by \$600 because the request had been inaccurately calculated.

A few generous residents suggested putting the extra money into the library fund anyway, prompting resident Fred Sullivan to remark, "If they say they don't need it, why give it to them?" An overwhelming majority agreed with him, and the budget was reduced.



Valley News — Dan H

Cornish firefighters battle the flames at a fire that began in the chimney and destroyed Jim Gregory's house this morning.

Fire Spreads Too Fast To Be Contained

By LEE HORWICH
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — An early morning fire that started in the chimney destroyed the Route 12A home of Jim Gregory.

The house was fully engulfed in flames by 6:30 a.m., when the first firefighters from six towns — Cornish, Plainfield, Windsor, Claremont, Ascutney and Springfield — responded to the call.

"When I woke up, I smelled smoke," Gregory said. He immediately called the fire department and left the house.

"The fire had to start in the chimney, and the radiant heat spread the fire to the rest of the structure," he said.

Flames, ashes and smoke shot up more than 100 feet in the air, making the fire visible across the Connecticut River in Windsor and for three miles to the south and north along Route 12A.

Gregory, who works at the Great Lakes Airplane Co. in Claremont, had lived alone in the one-story, cape-style house for six years.

By 7:30, firefighters had extinguished most of the flames, but pieces of the house still

Fire Reports

smoldered. The fire spared only the unstacked cord of wood on the north side of the house.

Cornish Fire Chief Scott Kearns said the frigid temperatures did not directly hamper the firefighters, but the lack of water did. Since there was no source of water near the house except the frozen Connecticut River, tankers were forced to shuttle to two unfrozen parts of the river — near the Cornish-Windsor covered bridge and south on Route 12A in Claremont — to bring water back to the fire.

Gregory said the house was insured, but no estimate was available on the cost of the damages.

Route 12A was closed between Claremont and a mile south of the covered bridge for part of the morning.

THETFORD — A fire of undetermined origin damaged a barn at the home of Dan and Nancy Tilden in Post Mills early this morning.

Thetford Fire Chief Guy Cook said Tilden, an electrician, had an office and workshop in the barn. The fire was on one side of the building and was working its way up the stairs. Firefighters from Thetford, West Fairlee, and Lyme arrived shortly before 2 a.m.

"We got there in time to get water on it and save most of the building," Cook said.

He said the cause of the fire is still being investigated, but he doesn't believe it was arson. "It wasn't the wiring and it wasn't the woodstove, but I'd rather not say just started it until I'm sure," Cook said.

The Tildens' insurance investigator will show up to look at the barn with him later this morning, Cook said.

DANBURY, N.H. (AP) — Selectman Mel Austin says it is unusual that Edward and Eleanor Colby's house burned to the ground without anyone noticing.

The Colbys' ranch-style home was about a mile from a main road.

A gas company driver making a delivery to the house on Thursday found it had burned to the ground.

Sullivan County Launches Study for Dispatch Center

By BRAD HILLS

Union Leader Correspondent
NEWPORT — A seven-member committee is currently reviewing a recommendation that calls for Sullivan County to establish a county-wide public safety dispatch center.

The committee, which was appointed by the Sullivan County commissioners, held its first meeting on Thursday. Another session will be held at the Newport District Courthouse tomorrow.

"The parties are working extremely well together," said county business manager Robert Hemenway following the first meeting.

Serving on the panel, in addition to Hemenway, are Newport Police Chief Arthur Bastian, Sunapee Police Chief Orville Fitch, Claremont Fire Chief Thomas Ford, Lempster Fire Chief Phillip Tirrell and emergency medical service representatives Steve Neil of Charlestown and Larry Dingee of Cornish.

The committee is looking at a report that was presented to the county commissioners by the International Association of Police Chiefs last month.

The IACP called Sullivan County's current public safety communications "less than desirable" and recommended that the county establish a dispatch center at an estimated annual operating cost of \$318,832. The IACP also estimated that the center could be set up with a capital outlay of \$246,800.

The committee will be reviewing several options for the dispatch center.

Once the review is complet-

ed, the committee will submit a recommendation to the commissioners, and ultimately to members of the Sullivan County legislative delegation, who would have to come up with the money to pay for the center.

In its report, the IACP noted that police, fire and ambulance

emergency telephone numbers vary from one town to the next; radio and telephone equipment is old, unreliable and unrepairable in many areas; dispatchers, in most instances, are improperly trained; radio transmissions are complicated by mountainous terrain; and public safety personnel are often forced to communicate with one another through "round-about-means."

New home ravaged by fire family was to move in

By ILENE GARBER And RUTH ROLLINS

CORNISH, N.H. — Fire destroyed the nearly-completed home of Arthur and Carol Brown, Jackson Road, early this morning.

The two-story structure was ablaze and the attached garage nearly destroyed when firefighters arrived on the scene. Over 40 firefighters from Claremont, Meriden, Plainfield and Cornish responded to the mutual aid call.

The fire began at approximately 12:15 a.m., according to Cornish Fire Chief John Rand. He did not know how the fire was started, but added that State Fire Marshal Thomas Norton was at the scene for a short period of time "and will conduct a full investigation during daylight hours today," he said.

Although mutual aid departments were released from the scene at 4 a.m., firefighters returned to the home later that morning to control burning embers that started up again.

The Browns began building the house in the fall and were ready to move in. Their present home in Claremont is in the process of being sold.

"We will probably rebuild, but right now it is overwhelming. We

(Please see HOME-Pg. 6)



MIDNIGHT FIRE — A blaze of unknown origin destroyed the home of Arthur and Carol Brown Wednesday evening. The home had been under construction since last fall and the

family was planning on moving in next few weeks. (Ruth Rollins)

6 —EAGLE TIMES, Thursday, July 2, 1987

HOME

From Page 1

did a lot of the work ourselves," said Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Brown would not comment on the cost of the construction, but did say the house was insured. In addition to the house, several pieces of construction equipment were destroyed.

A large bucket loader parked near the building was saved due to the quick action of firefighter Nathan Cass who moved the vehicle away from the blaze.

Two 1,000-foot lengths of three-inch hose were laid up the steep, winding driveway from a brook adjacent to Jackson Road which provided a source of water.



AN EARLY AFTERNOON fire Thursday damaged a single-story house on Center Road, Cornish. Valentina Ivanov and her son, whose name was not available, escaped without injury. Cornish Fire Chief John Rand suspects the cause of the fire was an electrical problem. The circuit breaker box was destroyed, and part of the floor in a bedroom had to be removed. "Structurally, there was not a lot of damage," he said. Cornish firefighters were assisted by five area departments. (Wayne Carter Photo)



Cornish barn leveled

AN UNUSED horse barn owned by Martha Cooper on a logging road in Cornish Flat was leveled by a Sunday afternoon blaze. Over 20 volunteer firefighters and members of the FAST squad responded. (Pat Mudge Photo)



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Cornish barn leveled

AN UNUSED horse barn owned by Martha Cooper on a logging road in Cornish Flat was leveled by a Sunday afternoon blaze. Over 20 volunteer firefighters and members of the FAST squad responded. (Pat Mudge Photo)

25 Cornish volunteer firefighters honored for years of service

CORNISH, N.H. — Recently 25 Cornish Volunteer Firefighters were honored for having more than five years of service.

Years of Service Awards were presented to Andrew Kuhre, 43 years; Leland Atwood, 27 years; Robert Hunt, 22 years; Elbert (Tim) Bannister, 21 years; and Clarence (Pete) Decatur, 19 years.

To show recognition of past members, the Cornish Fire Department Association is establishing an honor roll which will be on display in the Engine One Station, showing the firefighters names and years they served.

The association purchased a bronze plaque, also placed at the station, which reads that the station was built entirely through volunteer efforts of the members and friends of the Cornish department.

The building, built in 1984, stands on four acres of land donated to the Town of Cornish by Ruth and Dwight Wood.

The Cornish Fire Department responded to 82 calls during 1987, including automobile accidents, power line problems, mutual aid, chimney fires, public assists, hazardous spills and smoke investigations, as well as several alarms and two structural fires.

The Cornish firefighters hold bi-monthly training sessions and weekly fund raising activities in

their efforts of providing excellent fire coverage for the town.

New guidelines adopted by the National Fire Protection Agency has established stricter operating procedures for departments. Included in these guidelines are standards for protective clothing, communications, operating procedures and protective devices to mention but a few.

To lessen the financial impact on taxpayers, the association is obligating money towards the purchase of protective pants which is one of the standards. (established by the National Fire Protection Agency.)

The department is building a two-story training tower, which will be used to improve the skills of the department.

Also awarded were Dale Rook, 18 years; Thomas Spaulding, 17 years; Robert Rice and David Wood, 16 years; John Rand, 15 years; Polly Rand, 14 years; Scott Kearns, 12 years; William Fitts, Nathan Cass, Michael Monette, and Steven Monette, all 11 years;

Also Robin Waterman and George Aldrich, 9 years; James Lukash, 8 years; Peter Burling, 7 years; William Monette and Lawrence Dingee, 6 years; and Steven Fellows, Gary Chilton, Mark Dube and Lee Baker, all 5 years;

Fire departments get hazardous waste grants

By SANDRA LOWE

CLAREMONT, N.H. — With recent large oil spills ruining the drinking water of large populations in other areas of the country, the prospect of even smaller incidents affecting local resources becomes real.

So the Sullivan County fire departments received some good news recently that could help prevent hazardous materials hurting local areas.

Governor John H. Sununu presented first-ever grants from a state revolving fund established to aid local efforts in dealing with hazardous materials, and Sullivan County received \$10,500 out of the \$47,000.

Assistant Fire Chief Victor Bergeron said the money will be used to train firefighters from the county to deal with such problems as industrial oil leaks and highway traffic accidents involving vehicles carrying such materials. "There's a lot of nasty chemicals out there and we want to train (firefighters)

in order to avoid somebody getting hurt."

He said the training would include learning to recognize a problem situation which the department was under-equipped to handle, calling in help to handle the problem, and evacuating people from the area if necessary.

The fund was established through 1983 legislation which directed 5 percent of fees and penalties collected from the transportation of hazardous material to be returned to local communities. The law was amended in 1987 to increase the communities' share of funds to 15 percent.

Bergeron said the \$10,500 will help the county "begin the process of training firefighters."

He said training will be held at the Claremont Fire Department's training facility on Sugar River Drive. Construction of training platforms will begin in the spring, he said.

Fire damages Cornish home

CORNISH, N.H. — About 35 firefighters from Cornish and Meriden responded to a Center Road basement fire Wednesday around 6 p.m.

Assistant Fire Chief Michael Monette said the fire was contained to the basement of the home of Robert Hall, but that the house received smoke damage, and the floors of the log-cabin frame home's kitchen sustained damage.

The Claremont Fire Department covered the Cornish station and no injuries were reported.

The cause of the fire is being investigated by the state fire marshal's office.

UNION LEADER, MANCHESTER, N.H. — Friday, April 29, 1988

Electrical Fire Damages Home

CORNISH — A fire that was caused by an electrical problem damaged a corner of the single-story residence of Valentina Ivanov on the Center Road yesterday afternoon.

Cornish Fire Chief John Rand said the fire was reported at 12:10 p.m.

The blaze was battled by 19 firefighters from Cornish and personnel from the Claremont, Meriden, Plainfield, Ascutney and Windsor fire departments.

Rand said the residence sustained very little water or smoke damage.



Cornish volunteer firefighters Mike Monette, left, and Bob Michal, right, slide the face of the bingo board together while replacing light bulbs and checking electrical connections before the fire department sponsored game at Cornish Town Hall. The state inspector paid a visit a week earlier and recommended the routine maintenance. The department has been running the game for the last four years.

Games Benefit Fire Department

Photographs and text

by James M. Patterson



MORE THAN AN HOUR BEFORE STARTING TIME, the Cornish Town Hall is filled with murmurs of conversation and decision making. Busy hands sort through hundreds of cards with practiced speed, weeding out the useless in favor of those with potential for profit.

Cards are chosen and fat ink markers, wild-haired trolls and other trinkets are in place for good luck. The murmur turns to a dull roar punctuated by the snap of "rip tickets" popped open by the hundreds, their owners hoping for a return of a couple dollars to buy another handful of the perforated cardboard game pieces.

As Cornish volunteer firefighter Mike Monette's voice comes over the loud speaker, reciting the rules of the game with a calm familiarity, few in

the meeting room are diverted from discussions with their neighbors. Only when the first ball pops into Monette's fingers and he calls the opening bingo number does the noise die down, replaced by the soft, focused pounding of markers moving over sometimes 12 paper bingo cards for every player.

The bingo games, which benefit the Cornish Fire Department, have been running from 6:30 to 9 p.m. every Tuesday for the last four years. The department runs the smoke-free game night as a social event, complete with refreshments provided by the ladies auxiliary, and puts some of the proceeds back into the Town Hall for

Monette reads off a number while calling for the bingo game.

See BINGO—C10

Bingo in Cornish

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1

improvements, such as a recent interior paint job.

Players from as far away as Florida and Wisconsin attend the game with the friends and family members they are visiting, and everyone is looking for more than just a chance at the nearly \$10,000 "Carry Over Cover-all" jackpot.

Several women point out that the money goes to a good cause, and many attend as an enjoyable way to contribute to the fire department.

The night moves on at a dizzying pace, hundreds of eyes scanning several cards at once before someone calls "Bingo!"

Volunteer firefighter Bob Michals works the floor quickly, accounting for each successful combination before the magnetic wands that draw in the colored chips clatter over the tables.

Soon Monette is back on the loud speaker calling numbers, starting the cycle again.

Bingo! Hope Goes Up In Smoke

CORNISH — By about 8 o'clock Tuesday evening, the cigarette smoke was cotton thick and creeping floor to ceiling about the Cornish Town Hall. I was 60 minutes and about \$6 into my first bingo game, and was staring through teary eyes at six cards on the table in front of me.



Stephen Gordon
Valley News
Columnist

I had yet to win a game, to be even close to winning a game. But I wasn't alone.

Seventy people, mostly women, lined the tables — a little lighter crowd than on most nights, said Leo Maslan of the Cornish Fire Department, which sponsors the weekly games — and most would go home losers in an hour or two.

And most will return next week.

Bingo is a fairly simple game. You buy cards that have 25 squares, all numbered except the middle one, which is a free space. As someone at the head of the room shouts numbers pulled from a barrel, you scan all of your cards, placing little tokens over each square in which the numbers appear.

When your tokens cover a horizontal, vertical or diagonal line, or when you have covered each corner, you shout BINGO! and win some money. There also are special games in which you win by covering the entire card or filling in a variety of configurations.

For most of the 25 games played Tuesday, the prize was \$15 or \$20. The prize in one game would have been \$500 had someone got bingo within the first seven numbers. In another game, it would have been \$300 if someone had



Valley News — Dan Huntington

Barbara Miller, left, and Claire Sprague use bingo markers to play a special game.

covered the entire card within 59 numbers. (It took 62, and the prize had dropped to \$50.) The last game, a cover-all, had an \$88 prize, which was split between two people. I helped pay

those prizes.

In playing six cards at one time, I was

(Continued on page 10)

— BINGO

Bingo

(Continued from page 1)

showing myself to be a novice. Sitting to my left, and helping me when I missed a number or fell behind, was Jean Menard of Claremont. She was playing 21 cards and having no trouble with it, nor with keeping a close eye on the progress of her partner Barbara Miller, also of Claremont, who sat opposite her. Menard always knew what numbers she needed to have bingo on one or more of her cards, as well as what Miller needed. (As partners, they split all winnings.) But then, Miller played fewer cards.

"I play 18," she said just before the number-calling began, "but that's so I can talk while I play. I tried playing 21, but I couldn't visit."

The paraphernalia of bingo is surprising. The sponsor supplies the cards, but the players must bring their own chips. Most also buy magnetic wands to collect the chips off their cards after each game, and specially made "Dab O Ink Bingo Markers" that leave a chip-sized dot on the paper cards sold for special games throughout the evening.

Menard glues little eyes on some tokens, and uses them to mark places in which she is one number from a bingo — situations called "waits."

"One thing you'll see here if you look around . . . is people bringing lucky things," Miller said, noting that she and Menard don't go in for such charms. Indeed, a look around the hazy room

revealed people playing next to little porcelain frogs, tiny stuffed animals or pictures of their children.

Minutes later, Miller got BINGO! and won \$28. She collected it and quickly passed it to Menard, myself and Claire Sprague, playing across from me. We all rubbed the money and handed it back.

"It's supposed to be lucky," they said.

Despite playing with 39 cards between them, Miller and Menard carried on a fluid conversation, punctuated by "Oh, that's the first time that number's been out tonight," or "I've got two waits now," or "G5? That's been a good number for me tonight."

How often do you play? I asked them.

"Once a week," said Menard, "unless my husband's out of town. Then I play every night." She laughed, and took that back.

How much do you spend on an average bingo night, when you don't win?

"We can't say," Miller said. "Our husbands don't know. We tell them anywhere from \$5 to \$8, but it's more like \$20."

The players take a break halfway through the night, after which they can buy new cards or exchange the ones they have. I did both, doubling to 12 new cards. A few games later, I was on the verge. One number from bingo. The caller need only have called, "Under the B, 4."

"Under the B," he called, "3."

Shortly before the night ended, the offered a large prize to the first person to card entirely. Menard moved quickly down one number left. Number after number called, but none was hers. Each time, the of someone else winning increased. Each her number stayed hidden.

"Nervous?" I asked.

"Yes," she said. "See, my palms are tingling." A couple of numbers later, a voice through from the other side of the smoky BINGO!

Frustrated, Menard swept her chips happened last week, too," she said.

Maslan, the fire department's bingo crowd for the evening, said after the games, people and smoke straggled out together they took in about \$800 Tuesday night, a out \$633 in prizes. The state collects about licensing and other fees each night. The r to the fire department.

Bingo has been good to the Cornish department. The new fire station across the from the town hall was paid for entire three or four years' worth of bingo profit year, the department donated \$10,000 toward purchase of a new fire truck. It sure beats sales and dances, Maslan said. "Hour for hour labor), this is the best that we can do."

They got my money.

Bingo has served Cornish well

To the Editor:

This past Wednesday, the Cornish Fire Department ran its last bingo game after nine years of operation. Because the termination of the game caused some feelings of disappointment among members of the department as well as among the players, I thought a few lines might help put things in perspective.

The chief reason the game had to close was diminished attendance. The number of people who came to play dropped to the point, literally, of no return. I suspect the closing of the Cornish-Windsor Bridge played a major part in that; many of our friends could no longer get to us. It was also hard for our members to continue to find time. The ever-increasing demands of training, preparation and actual emergency service meant that evenings were harder to free up for bingo.

The main point is that things change, and the nine years of effort came to an end. They were years of tremendous accomplishment, the fruits of which should be known to all who ran or played in the game. In addition to the countless pieces of smaller equipment that were purchased by the department as a result of the game, there were the following: A new chassis for our tanker, made possible by the game; a new fire station, built by the department with proceeds of the game; and a new fire truck (our

Engine One), made possible by the fact that the game had produced revenues which could be used to reduce the tax burden. It was a great effort.

For all of this, the personnel of the Cornish Fire Department will remain grateful, both to the people who came to play and to the citizens of Cornish who gave us assistance and support. Thanks to you all.

Peter Hoe Burling
President, Cornish Volunteer Fire Dept. Inc.

Valley News

Thursday, June 9, 1988

Explanation Of Bingo's Demise

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PETER HOE BURLING

President

Cornish Volunteer Fire Department

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

LADIES' AUXILIARY

OF THE

CORNISH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Full-text at History Center,
another undated edition

Revised copy
Dated March 1973



FIRE DAMAGED the Cornish home of the Dr. Leonard M. Rudolf family yesterday.
(Photo by Brad Hills)

Cornish House Damaged by Fire

CORNISH — The hillside home of Dr. Leonard M. Rudolf and his family received severe damage during a fire early yesterday morning.

There were no injuries and the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Fire Chief John H. Rand said heavy fire was visible on the second and third floors at the east end of the three-story contemporary residence when fire crews arrived about 1 a.m.

The local fire department, with mutual aid assistance from the Claremont, Plainfield and Meriden fire depart-

ments, brought the blaze under control in about one hour, but some firefighters remained at the scene until about noon.

Firefighters from Cornish laid 1,500 feet of hose from Paget Road up the driveway to the Rudolfs' home. The Claremont Fire Department set up at the bottom of the driveway while crews from Plainfield and Meriden manned operations at ponds on the Center and Paget roads.

Firefighters also pumped water from a swimming pool in front of the home.

About 50 firefighters

fought the blaze.

The home is about 12 to 18 months old, Rand said.

Rand said the fire damage was contained to the second and third floors, but that heavy smoke and heat damage was sustained throughout the house.

Rand said the Rudolfs called in the initial alarm. He said the noise from the fire awoke the Rudolfs before their smoke detectors were activated.

Rand said the Rudolfs are staying with neighbors, the Wallace A. Cole family on Paget Road.

Chimney Fire Goes Up In Smoke

Damage Limited In Cornish Home

CORNISH — Firefighters from Cornish, Meriden, Plainfield and Claremont extinguished a chimney fire in a Cornish home Saturday that left slight water damage, more severe smoke damage and left furniture and clothing basically intact, said Cornish Fire Chief John Rand. No one was hurt.

The house belongs to Jenny and Dave Wood, who were away at the time of the fire. The firefighters reached the scene at 4:15 in the afternoon, Rand said, and had controlled the blaze within 45 minutes. His company remained at the scene until 9:30, however.

"It was very icy during the day and on the ground around the fire," Rand said. "(That's) very treacherous when you are trying to move quickly."



Cornish firefighters search for the source of smoke inside David Wood's Cornish home Saturday



ON THE SCENE — Firefighters clean up this morning following an early morning structure fire in Cornish. (Wayne Carter Photo)

Cornish family left homeless by fire

CORNISH, N.H. — A fire on Paget Road early this morning has left one family homeless, Cornish Fire Chief John Rand said today.

According to Rand, about 50 firefighters from Cornish, Claremont, Meriden, and Hanover responded to the blaze at the home belonging to Dr. Leonard Rudolph. He said the fire began about 1 a.m. It took about an hour to bring the blaze under control, he said.

Rand described the damage to the upper two floors of the three-floor, single-family residence, as severe. Rudolph, his wife, and two children, were at home at the time of the fire, he said.

Smoke detectors woke family members up and they were able to escape, according to authorities. There were no injuries.

Rand said the fire is under investigation and that no cause has yet been determined.

Ashes Start Grass Fire

CORNISH — Discarded ashes from a wood stove started a grass fire yesterday afternoon that burned an acre of land, accord-

Police Report

ing to a fire department spokesman.

The fire started at the Alexander Daniell residence on West Tass Road and burned onto a neighbor's property, according to the fire department. Fifteen firefighters extinguished the blaze.

CORNISH — A partition fire near a house chimney was contained before it caused much damage Saturday morning, according to Cornish Fire Chief John Rand.

The fire happened at the Tharon Tewksbury residence on Tandy Brook Road at about 10 a.m. Saturday.

"The Tewksburys fortunately were at home and pretty much had the fire contained," Rand said. "They apparently had gotten into the wall themselves and were putting on buckets of water."

From the evidence of the char, Rand said, it appears that the fire started in the thimble, which is the access area to the stovepipe from the chimney.

Cornish firefighters removed a 4-foot by 4-foot section of both the interior and exterior walls around the chimney to ensure that the fire extension didn't go beyond that area.

Cornish, Claremont, Meriden and Plainfield fire departments responded to the fire.

Cornish firefighters contained the fire within 15 minutes.



Steven Monette checks under the eaves for more signs of flame at the Tewksbury residence in Cornish Saturday, where a fire caused little damage. Larry Dingee, left, is ready to assist.

Firefighters Kept Busy

Valley News Feb 21, 1989



CORNISH BLAZE — Firefighters from four towns worked to extinguish an early morning fire Sunday on Old Turnpike Road. (Wayne Carter Photo)

Fire strikes Cornish home

CORNISH, N.H. — A fire caused extensive damage to an Old Turnpike Road home Sunday. The home was unoccupied at the time and no injuries were reported.

Frank Amadon, a neighbor, who was camping out with his children in his backyard, woke up to noise coming from the home shortly after 6 a.m. and discovered the blaze.

"At first he thought someone was breaking into the house," Cornish Assistant Fire Chief Mike Monette said.

Cornish firefighters found fire coming out of the gable ends of the two-story log cabin structure, owned by Diane D. Cosgriff, and a heavy fire within the home upon arrival.

Engines from Claremont, Meriden and Plainfield re-

sponded to mutual aid calls. The fire was brought under control by 6 a.m. and firefighters left the scene at 11:30 a.m.

No damage estimate was given, but Monette said, "it was pretty close to a total loss." The cause of the blaze is under investigation by State Fire Marshal Tom Norton.

Fire Destroys Cornish Garage, Contents, Car

CORNISH — A garage and its contents — including a car — were destroyed in a fire yesterday afternoon.

Doug Thayer of the Cornish Fire Department said the garage at the home of Doug McGrath was fully engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived. The home is off Route 120 just south of Cornish Flat. The call,

from someone who saw the fire while driving by, came in just before 1 p.m. It was under control minutes later.

"It was mostly down when we got there," Thayer said. The owners were not home.

In addition to leveling the garage, Thayer said, the fire destroyed a Saab, two snowmobiles and every-

thing else inside the building.

Firefighters from Meriden assisted Cornish at the scene, and a crew from Plainfield covered the Cornish station.

Thayer said state Fire Marshall Tom Norton visited the fire scene later in the afternoon, and will investigate its cause. No cause was known yesterday.

Cornish blaze probed

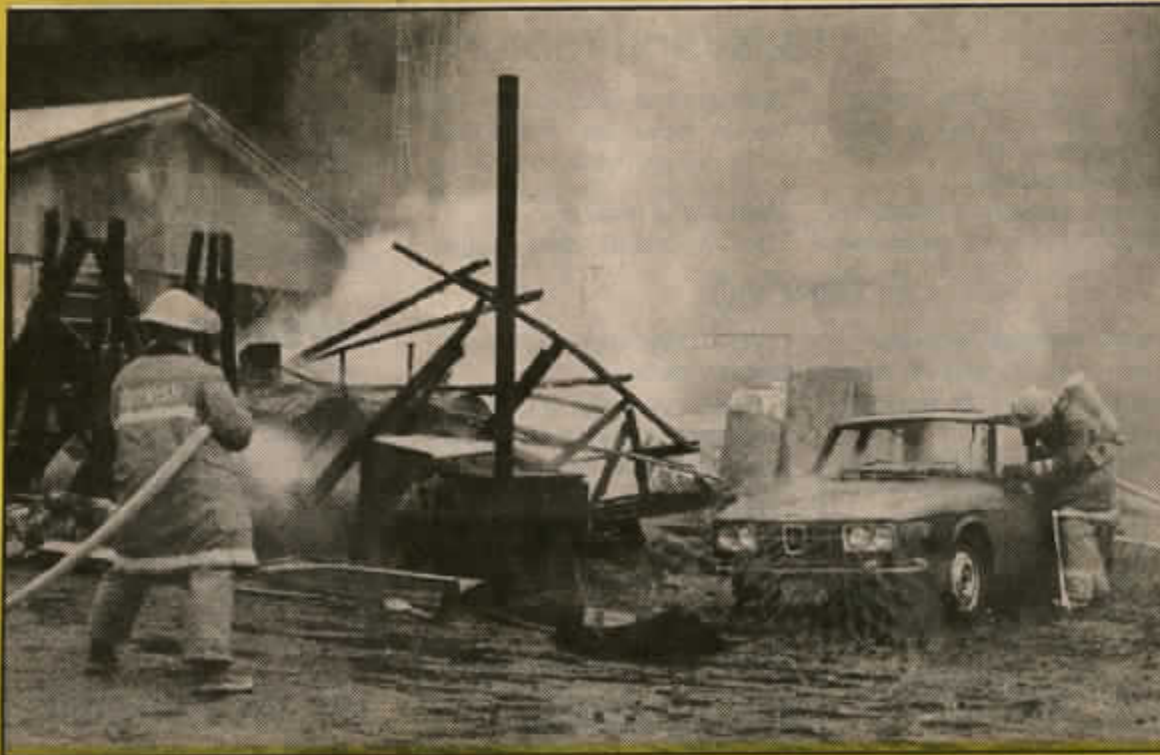
CORNISH, N.H. — A garage owned by Mr. and Mrs. Douglas McGrath, Route 120, was destroyed by fire Monday afternoon.

Firefighters found the garage "totally involved" upon arrival. The garage and its contents, which included a car and two snowmobiles, were destroyed.

Firefighters responded at 12:58 p.m. to the residence, after a passerby spotted the fire and called the Fire Department.

A total of 22 firefighters, including Plainfield, responded. The fire will be investigated by the state fire marshal's office

(Please see CORNISH-Pg. 6)



FIRE DOUSED — Cornish firefighters work to extinguish a garage fire Monday. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

From Page 1

and the state Forest and Lands Division, according to Fire Department spokesman Doug Thayer.

No one was home at the time of the fire.

The garage was separated by about 10 feet from the modular home owned by McGrath, but firefighters were able to keep the home from being damaged.

Family Finds Hope In The Ashes

By ROGER CARROLL

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — They're planning another party in Cornish.

"It's like a tradition in this town," said resident Tertia Zapletal of the community's track record for holding parties to help residents who, for one reason or another, need a hand. She listed a handful of people who have overcome adversity through community effort.

The latest Cornish resident to meet with a bad break is Diane Cosgriff. Her dog home on the Old Turnpike Road was destroyed by fire early Sunday morning.

The blaze, according to state Fire Marshal Tom Norton of Plainfield, started in a light fixture in the dining room.

"It was a total (loss)," said Cosgriff, who works at the Upper Valley Senior Citizen Center in Lebanon.

She called it a miracle that nobody was home when the fire broke out. Her two children, 9-year-old Matt and 12-year-old Carrie, were staying with their father for

the weekend.

Cosgriff was at a friend's house in Claremont, and she had taken her dog Bull along. Cosgriff's 18-year-old cat Thunder and Carrie's gerbils weren't so lucky. They died in the fire.

Her friend, Mac MacLeay, was the first to learn of the fire, Cosgriff said: When he heard on the radio that firefighters were pumping water from the brook along School Street, he called the fire department to find out which house was on fire.

"He woke me up and said, 'Do you want to go see a fire in Cornish?'" Cosgriff said she was less than enthusiastic, but agreed to go after he told her it was near School Street in Cornish and might be someone she knew.

During the ride, Cosgriff wanted to turn on the fire department radio. MacLeay told her it didn't work well.

As she walked up Old Turnpike Road, Cosgriff kept asking people whose house was on fire. "Nobody was really answering me," she recalled.

She got an answer just before she saw the flames shooting out of the windows of her home. "I kind of came apart," she said.

As is their custom, Cornish residents have taken it upon themselves to help put one of their neighbor's lives back together.

"There is going to be a house demolition party and a building party," said Zapletal, a friend of Cosgriff's who is helping to coordinate the effort.

"I've sent out letters to a lot of Cornish people, including builders and carpenters to let them know we'll be calling on them for a donation of time," Zapletal said.

She's hoping to organize a work crew later this month to clear the site and make way for construction of a new home.

Cosgriff said she hasn't decided what to build yet — it'll depend on how much money she has to work with from the insurance settlement — but she has started to look at plans.

The family, she said, was able to move

immediately into an apartment in Claremont that had become vacant a week before the fire. Other people had put down a deposit on the place and were planning to live there but postponed their plans after hearing about her loss.

Her children, at first devastated by the fire, are starting to handle it better. "Once in a while they think, 'Oh, I don't have that (item) anymore.'"

People have rallied to the Cosgriffs' side with donations of children's clothing, household items and other necessities.

Losing everything, said Cosgriff, has made the family relish what they do have and look with amazement at the support the town has thrown behind them. "Oh yes," she said, "so every little thing we get now is going to be big."

Like the soccer ball that boosted her son's spirits this week, or the family's new mattresses. "People are just so supportive. They've gone over and above," Cosgriff said of her neighbors. "It takes a lot of the worry and anxiety out of losing everything."





HOUSE BLAZE — Firefighters climb ladder to battle house fire in Cornish Saturday. (Wayne Carter Photo)

Fire damages Cornish home

By **JEFF LANAGAN**
Staff Writer

CORNISH, N.H. — A two-story home on Center Road sustained extensive interior damage during a fire Saturday afternoon.

Firefighters from Cornish, Claremont, Meriden and Plainfield responded to the blaze, which touched both floors and the attic of the private home.

The owners of the home, David and Gina Wood, were away for the day and a neighbor reported the fire shortly after 4 p.m. The blaze was declared under control at 5:04

p.m.

The fire was inside the interior walls of the home, said Cornish Fire Chief John Rand, and many of the walls were destroyed. The home, white with a single-story ell connected to it, was located "in the middle" of Center Road, Rand said. A cause of the fire has not been determined, said Rand. A representative from the State Fire Marshall's office was at the home Saturday to aid in the investigation for a cause.

The home has a wood stove.

(Please see FIRE-Pg. 5)

When firefighters arrived, smoke was coming through eaves in the attic and flames could be seen on the first floor, Rand said. At 6 p.m., some flames were still burning around the chimney in the attic. By then, many firefighters were busy tossing charred wood out through some of the home's many broken windows.

Rand said that a nearby brook normally used as a water supply was not available. Two tankers, one with a 2,000-gallon capacity and one with a 3,000-gallon capacity, were used to supply water.

More than 10 fire trucks responded to the scene, but Rand was not certain how many firefighters responded. There were no injuries reported.

Valley News Oct 26, 1989 damage, Thayer said.

Fire Causes Light Damage To Parsonage

CORNISH FLAT — An inadequate extension cord on a freezer caused a small fire this morning in the parsonage of the United Church of Cornish, according to the fire department.

The Rev. Dale Louise Nicholas, who was sleeping in the living room of the parsonage, was awakened shortly before 6:23 by noise in her kitchen, according to Doug Thayer of the Cornish Fire Department, who said all his information came from Fire Chief John Rand.

Nicholas found a fire burning next to a small freezer in the kitchen and put it out with a fire extinguisher, Thayer said. The electrical fire was caused by the use of an under-rated cord, he said.

Eighteen firefighters and two fire trucks responded to the call at the parsonage, at Stage Road and Route 120 in Cornish Flat. There was only a small amount of

6 —EAGLE TIMES, Tuesday, April 18, 1989

Wall fire extinguished

CORNISH, N.H. — Cornish firefighters extinguished a partition fire at the Thomas LaFlam residence, Route 12-A, early Monday afternoon. Firefighters were called to the scene at 12:43 p.m.

The fire was contained to an outside wall, according to Doug Thayer, a spokesman for the Cornish Fire Department.

The burned area was about 10 feet by 4 feet, and the cause was ruled a crack in the fireplace chimney, Thayer said.

A total of 22 firefighters responded, including Claremont firefighters on a mutual aid response.

The fire was declared under control at 1:13 p.m.

EAGLE TIMES, Friday, October 27, 1989—

Fire in parsonage does little damage

Eagle Times Oct 27, 1989

CORNISH, N.H. — An electrical fire broke out early Wednesday morning at the United Church of Cornish parsonage. The minister was able to put it out before it caused a great deal of damage.

According to Cornish Fire Chief John Rand, the fire was caused by an extension cord used to power a freezer. The Rev. Dale Louise

Nicholas, who lives at the parsonage, heard noises coming from the kitchen.

She discovered the fire and was able to put it out with a fire extinguisher. Firefighters, who received the call at 6:23 a.m., inspected the kitchen and found the fire out. The walls were slightly damaged.

Valley News

Monday, July 10, 1989

Huge Flash, Tiny Blaze

Valley News Jul 10, 1989

CORNISH FLAT — Lightning hit a spruce tree on Route 120 this morning and started an electrical fire in an adjoining house.

It sounded a lot worse than it burned.

Lois Sitts said she was doing macrame downstairs a little after 9 a.m. when she heard an explosion in her son's room upstairs. She called the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department, which sent virtually every truck.

When firefighters arrived, they found the fire had breached a weak point in the upstairs back room, and burned a small hole where outdoor electrical lines connect to the house. They needed about five minutes to put out the blaze with a fire extinguisher.

Michael Monette, assistant fire chief, said the lightning bolt hit a spruce tree, and sent a surge of electricity through its branches to the electrical lines.

Fire Destroys Cabin in Cornish

CORNISH — A fire of undetermined origin destroyed a two-story log cabin on Old Turnpike Road yesterday morning.

The fire was reported at 5:08 a.m. by Frank Amadon, a neighbor who was camping in his backyard with his children.

When Assistant Fire Chief Michael Monette arrived at the scene, flames were coming out of the gable ends of the house and there was "heavy fire" in the interior of the structure, said a spokesman for the Cornish Fire Department.

The blaze involved 24 Cornish firefighters and 20 mutual aid firefighters from Claremont, Meriden and Plainfield.

The fire was brought under control at 5:57 a.m.

THE UNION LEADER, MANCHESTER, N.H.

Monday, July 3, 1989

Valley News

Tuesday, April 18, 1989

Fire Damages Home By Covered Bridge

CORNISH — A fire caused minor damage to a Cornish home just down the road from the Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge early yesterday afternoon.

Cornish Assistant Fire Chief Mike Monette said the fire at the home of Thomas LaFlam on Route 12A apparently started as a chimney fire in the living room fireplace and burned through to the adjacent wall.

The fire, said Monette, took about 10 minutes to bring under control. There was smoke throughout the house, but fire damage was limited to the wall behind the fireplace where the fire started.

Fire trucks from Plainfield, and Claremont responded to assist Cornish at the scene, about 200 yards from the bridge. No special measures were taken to protect the span, which is currently being repaired.

IN LEADER, MANCHESTER, N.H. — Tuesday, April 25, 1989

Fire Destroys Garage in Cornish

CORNISH — A 12-foot-by-20-foot wood frame garage on Route 120 was destroyed by fire yesterday afternoon.

Cornish Fire Chief John Rand said the blaze was reported by a passer-by about 1 p.m.

The structure was engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived at the scene.

A vehicle that was used for parts was also destroyed. A pickup truck sustained extensive paint damage.

The fire was brought under control in 15 minutes.

Rand said the probable cause of the fire was the rekindling of a brush pile that had been burned.

The garage was owned by Douglas McGrath.

There were no injuries and firefighters cleared the area at 2:30 p.m.

On, Off On, Off

Odd Summer Storm Soaks Upper Valley

By ROGER CARROLL
Valley News Staff Writer

The skies rained cats and dogs on the Upper Valley yesterday, then played possum for a while before opening up again.

There were the usual winds, thunder and lightning, but the highlight was the sheets of blistering rain that came and went and came again through the day. Those who ventured into the sunshine often came back soaked.

Tornadoes smash through the Northeast.
Page 6.

The storm's bark was worse than its bite, and damage was limited. Rainfall amounts were not.

At the North Hartland Dam, Project Manager Jim Dyer said 0.95 inches of rain fell; not a lot compared to some other places: "It came in bursts at my house in Sharon," Dyer said. We got 1.24 inches."

North Haverhill reported 1.44 inches of rain and the Lebanon Airport flight service station reported a more than an inch of rain during the 24 hours ending at 7 p.m., according to meteorologist Mark Breen, who keeps track of such things for the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium in Saint Johnsbury, Vt.

"Those amounts would essentially have been from yesterday's storm," Breen said, noting that the Burlington International airport received the most rain in the state, with 1.98 inches."

Breen said the storm system was caused by warm air moving in and pushing out cold air that had settled over the region. Usually, he said, the region gets its storms the other way around: Cold air pushes out warm air. It takes longer for the warm air to push out the cold, Breen said, so yesterday's storm system moved slower than usual, lingered longer, and gave additional time for additional storms to brew; hence the back and forth effect between calm and violent weather.

Despite the torrents of water that ran along roadsides, public works officials reported few problems locally.

Stephen Gray, the assistant engineer at the state highway garage in Enfield, said

(Continued on page 12)

—RAIN



Don Amison, son of Lois Fitts, asks Cornish Fire Capt. Larry Dingee when he can go shoes. He left the house in a hurry when lightning struck it yesterday morning, sta

Rain

(Continued from page 1)

the storm brought nothing major in the way of problems.

Dispatcher Ray Burke said the Vermont highway department received no reports of storm-related damage from the Upper Valley area, though Montpelier's storm drains couldn't handle the torrents, and several inches of water backed up on the streets of the state capital.

Lebanon Public Works Director George Gline was astonished that the city didn't experience similar problems. The fact that the downpours came and went, he said, helped storm drains cope. "It was quick and over, and we were able to handle it," said Gline.

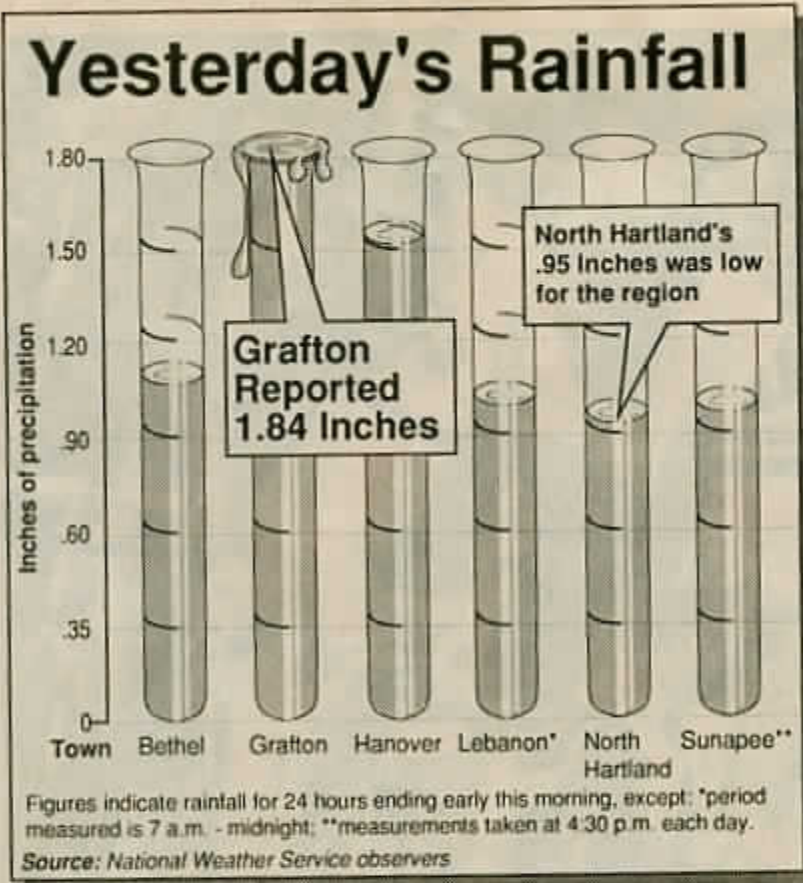
The storms brought lightning in flashes and bolts, but damage was limited. Lois Fitts received a scare when a tree that had been hit by lightning sent a surge of electricity to her house in Cornish, causing a small electrical fire that was quickly put out.

Electric companies reported numerous outages owing to lightning and falling trees and branches.

A fallen branch caused the longest reported outage — about two hours — in the Quechee, Pomfret area served by Central Vermont Public Service.

In West Windsor, about 500 to 600 customers lost their electricity for about 30 minutes after lightning hit a power line and shut a breaker off at the substation, according to Bill Stillson, CVPS Service superintendent.

Stillson said crews were being called out to service lines until about 3 a.m. WNE television and customers in Cavendish, Windsor, Cornish, Plainfield and at the top of Mount Ascutney lost power briefly, he



added.

Some Granite State Electric customers also lost power in scattered locations, according to Richard Holmes, district supervisor of field engineering. Residents in the Hardy Hill area in Lebanon, Poverty Hill Lane, the East Hill area in Enfield and people living just outside the village of Meriden were among those who lost power, he said, adding that

service was entirely restored by 11 p.m.

Green Mountain Power customers who live on River Road in Norwich and one house on Jericho Road in Hartford lost power yesterday, but it went back on by 4:30, according to Steve Blood, district manager.

Staff Writer Rachel Gottlieb contributed to this story.

Valley News — D. Maritza



CABLE FIRE — Cornish firefighters had to turn their attention to a limb on a Route 120 telephone cable Sunday. Damage prevented long-distance calling for a while. In the photo, firefighter James Lukash handles the hose. (Ruth Rollins Photo)



FLAGPOLE DEDICATED — Members of the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department dedicated a flagpole and plaque in memory of Randall Kenyon, a 15-year member of the department. Taking part in the ceremony were from left, the Rev. Dale Nicholas, United Church of Cornish, Robert Maslan, Nathan Cass, Clarence "Pete" Decatur, Fire Chief Michael Monette, Kenyon's wife, Margaret, his son, David Kenyon, and his grandson, Brian Hastings. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

Cornish dedicates flag pole

CORNISH, N.H. — Cornish residents witnessed the dedication of a flagpole and plaque placed at the Cornish Fire Station on Town House Road, in memory of Randall Kenyon, who served the department as a volunteer for 15 years.

Kenyon served as a lieutenant in the department and was responsible for providing first response at the Town House Road station.

Kenyon's son, David, made the flag presentation and the flag was hoisted by department members Clarence Decatur and Charles "Chuck" Sullivan. The plaque was unveiled by Robert Maslan. Also taking part were Fire Chief Michael Monette and Nathan Cass.

The dedication ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Eric Burnard, First Congregational Church, Claremont, and the Rev. Dale Nicholas, United Church

of Cornish, with Kenyon's grandson, Brian Hastings, involved, wearing his grandfather's fire hat.

Those present included Kenyon's wife, Margaret, daughters, Dorothy Bennett, Goshen, Doreen Burnell, Newbury, and Charlene Hastings, Claremont. Also attending were son Dexter Gokey, Newport, and granddaughters, Katherine Stewart and Sally Gokey.

Up from the ashes

Cornish family rebuilds after winter fire

By RUTH ROLLINS
Correspondent

CORNISH, N.H. — When William Balch left to attend the Daytona 500 stock car race in February with friend Richard Girard, he never imagined that an early morning fire would wipe out his home and much of the family's belongings.

The Balches' son, Russell, had just spent leave time home from the Navy and was returning to a new ship, the U.S. Peilou in Long Beach, Calif. It was decided Barbara Balch would travel as far as Sussex, N.J. with him to visit her mother and sisters, so she was away also.

The fire call was discovered at 12:04 a.m. on Feb. 19 and when firefighters arrived they found the home fully involved. Firefighters stayed on the scene the rest of the morning, checking the remains of the fire, which was caused by electrical problems.

Following a call from her son, Jeffrey, who resides in Claremont, Mrs. Balch was brought to the home site by Lois and Robert Perasso.

Unable to be reached, while returning by bus, Bill Balch learned of his loss two days after the fire.

The Cornish Fire Department



members arranged to help with clean-up chores and the rest was taken away by Donald MacLeay, who the Balches cannot speak about highly enough. The site was readied for a new home lot.

"The fire departments that responded did a wonderful job," said Balch. Two firefighters were treated at Mount Ascutney Hospital for minor injuries.

When the couple was able to get their thoughts together, they felt the purchase of a modular home would solve their need for living quarters and "was the natural way to go," Mrs. Balch's brother-in-law

(Please see ASHES-Pg. 6)



WATCHING — From left, David Dunn, Havens Home representative, West Balch, Margaret Balch, Barbara Balch, the Rev. Dan Nicholas, and Bill Balch watch as the ridge cap is placed on the roof of their new home, top photo, by Haven Home worker recently. (Ruth Rollins Photos)

is a representative for Haven Homes Inc., Beaver Creek, Pa., so he was contacted and after much discussion, a Pioneer modular home was ordered.

Balch's aunt from Lyme and his father, 87-year-old West Balch, Oak Ridge, N.J., were involved in the planning from the beginning and with their help some redesigning was done to make the home even more pleasing.

Brought to the site in four pieces, Mrs. Balch's brother-in-law, David Dunn, was on hand to see things went well the day of construction. Also on hand was the Rev. Dale Nicholas, pastor of the United Church of Cornish, who has given them both moral and spiritual support throughout the ordeal. Lunches and cold drinks for both family and workers was provided by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Cornish Fire Department.

Arriving at 6 a.m. one morning, a 65-ton crane from Miller Construction Co. was used to place the four parts on a watertight cellar foundation. A few hours later, complete with blinds, the ridge cap was in place.

Work crews from Haven Homes did the finishing work. Brick work was done by Marty Cowdry and backfilling by MacLeay.

The house that was ordered has seven rooms, breezeway and garage. The Balches chose to order the home fully applanced, with plumbing and wiring, right down to the telephone and TV jacks.

The home is heated with baseboard hot water oil-fired heat and 6-inch exterior walls with plenty of insulation.

"It is hard to believe we have gone through this," said Barbara Balch. "It just does not seem real, and the sound of fire engines still terrify me."

Moving-in day is Saturday.

In the line of fire

Three stories on fire fighters and a survivor



The cover

WOMEN FIREFIGHTERS — Fighting fires is no longer strictly a man's job, with many towns in the Twin State Valley utilizing the firefighting skills of women. Among those women are, in photo above, from left, front row, Polly Rand of the Cornish Fire Department, Elsie Heiser of the Ascutney Fire Department, and Tammy Files, a member of both the Windsor and Ascutney Fire Departments; back row, Tracy Spaulding, Sue Reitze, and Charron Picknell, all of the Ascutney Fire Department.

Gage Is Named As Windsor Fire Chief

By SUSAN J. RAND

Valley News Correspondent

WINDSOR — Windsor has a new fire chief — the town's fourth in eight years — but this one says he's here to stay.

And he's no newcomer to town. Lewis Gage Jr., in his 14th year as a Windsor firefighter, takes over today as chief.

Gage, who lives in Cornish, has been acting chief since since October, when former chief Ron Lima left Windsor for the chief's job in Rye, N.H.

One of Gage's priorities is establishing some continuity in the administration of the Windsor department, Gage said in a telephone interview last night. "I'm looking forward to staying in Windsor for quite a few years."

Town Manager David Battistoni appointed Gage to the post, which pays just over \$33,000.

"He's very capable of doing the job," Battistoni said. "I think he (had) proven himself even before he was acting chief."

Gage, 50, will oversee a staff of three full-time firefighters, 24 call firefighters and 18 to 22 emergency medical technicians.

His other goals, said the chief, are to adopt a set of town building codes and to work on fire prevention education both in town and in Windsor's schools.

Gage also said he wants to find a permanent home for Windsor's fire trucks, which are now being housed in the town's municipal garage and the former Goodyear building.

Almost two years ago, cracks were discovered in the fire station floor. Fearing the floor's collapse under the weight of the trucks, fire officials immediately moved the trucks out of the building.

Firefighters honored for chase

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH, N.H. — Sen. George Disnard recognized Cornish firefighters Dale O'Connor and Larry Dingee for their exceptional courage and quick response to a potential disaster in March, during an awards ceremony held at the Cornish Fire Station recently.

Both Dingee and O'Connor were also read letters of thanks from Gov. Judd Gregg, thanking them for their efforts to prevent serious injury during an emergency situation.

When the Cornish department was toned to respond to a car fire at the Cornish covered bridge, O'Connor left the Elementary School office where she serves as secretary and was picked up at the fire station across the road by Dingee.

Not far below the Elementary School they met a moving car billowing with smoke. Dingee made a quick turn back to the school to keep the students from the road and out of danger. With no students in sight, Dingee turned again, passed the burning vehicle and managed to block the north-bound lane as the car ap-



CORNISH FIREFIGHTERS were honored recently for their part in a burning car chase. From left are, firefighter Dale O'Connor, Assistant Fire Chief Larry Dingee, Sen. George Disnard, Fire Chief Michael Monette and Barry Bush, state chief of the Bureau of Fire Standards and Training. (Ruth Rollins Photo)

proached Route 120.

Though O'Connor and Dingee were unable to stop the burning vehicle, they managed to force it toward Claremont, where Claremont police were able to control the situation.

The vehicle was finally

brought to a halt by Claremont police who had moved in front of the vehicle. When stopped, the vehicle had no right front tire and another tire so flat and badly worn that the rim had worn down nearly to the axle.

A plaque was also presented Fire Chief Michael Monette during the event, which was organized by Lawrence Stevens, Claremont.

Other contributions to O'Connor and Dingee were given by Red Barn Sports, Charlestown, their plaques were donated by Scranton & Son Trophy, Claremont.

Others taking part were Selectmen Michael Yatsevitch, John White and Robert Maslan, Barry Bush, chief of the Bureau and Fire Standards & Training, of the New Hampshire Department of Safety, and Capt. William Wilmot of the Claremont Police Department.



HANDING OVER THE REINS — Nathan Cass, left, is congratulated by outgoing Cornish Fire Chief Mike Monette with the department's new International fire

truck in the background. Cass was sworn in as chief of the volunteer fire department during a regular department meeting on Wednesday. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Cass named new Cornish fire chief

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — A new fire chief was named during the Wednesday evening meeting of the volunteer fire department.

Cornish selectmen swore in Nathan Cass to take over the duties of chief, following the recent resignation of Michael Monette, who served as chief the past five years. Monette will continue as a member of the department. Cass was appointed for a three-year period.

Both Cass and Monette have

been members of the department for more than 20 years. Both have gone through the ranks together, always concerned with the safety of both the men and the equipment.

Fourteen years ago they were vying for the position of assistant chief. Monette won out and served in that capacity for nine years before becoming chief of the department.

"Now he has it all back," said Monette, who stepped down to have more time with his wife, Robin, their two sons and both his and his wife's parents.

The fire chief position is not only demanding during fires, accidents and mutual aid situations, but requires being a member of many committees.

"It is quite time consuming and takes its toll on family life," said Monette.

He feels one of the most important accomplishments during his five years as chief was to encourage townspeople to approve money to replace the propane-fired heating system at the Cornish Elementary School, which he deemed an

Among the many duties that Cass will be responsible for will be monthly training sessions, finishing the writing of a disaster emergency plan and the budgeting process.

"Another heavy duty responsibility will be building inspections," said Cass. "Especially with the heating renovations being done at the elementary school."

During the swearing-in ceremony Selectman Stuart Hodgman thanked the entire department for their volunteer efforts and especially Monette for his many years of service and Cass for stepping forward to take on the chief's duties.

Hodgman told those attending that the department's ordinance, written in 1943, has been updated several times and will be renewed with some changes, such as the part that allows only male members to join the department. Cornish has had several women firefighters who have performed well and will continue to have women firefighters, he said.

Dale Beck, a 27 year member

said, "The department is fortunate to have people Monette and Cass take positions. They have been available most of the time for this department everyone put together, none of us know the answers. But when a situation requires it, we all work well together. During emergencies each man knows what to do. No one waits to be told."

Cass has not only been a member of the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department but also served as deputy fire chief in Meriden too, a position he is stepping down from in the future.

He is the owner of New Country Door on Route 101, just over the town line in Ploverfield. He lives next to the school, which makes him available for both day and night emergencies. He and his wife, Sherry, have three children.

The Cornish Volunteer Fire Department, which has 28 firefighters, answers an average of 100 calls annually, including several mutual aid calls.

Eagle



Times

Quick thinking saved the day

By **ANDREW C. NELSON**
Staff Writer

CORNISH — Assistant Fire Chief Larry Dingee said it was instinct bred from extensive forest fire training that led him and another firefighter to take measures that saved a Cornish fire truck and themselves.

On Sunday a brush fire that burned more than 30 acres off Hunt Hill Road in Windsor had engulfed the truck, Dingee and Windsor Capt. Ron Fisher. Windsor Fire Chief Lew Gage credited the firefighters' action with saving the vehicle and themselves.

Rather than fight the fire with hand-pumped canisters, the firefighters opened the containers and poured the water around the truck "and then dove under the truck and

crossed their fingers until the fire ran past them," diverted by the water, Gage said.

"That's a tough one," Dingee said this morning when asked how he knew what would be the best way to save the truck.

"It's just what you do. Here in Cornish we're very well trained in the use of hand tools used to fight forest fires. Something instinctive comes with that."

Dingee said it was "just minutes" that he and Fisher were trapped under the truck.

"Before you know it, it was all over," Dingee said.

The fire, which came within 100 feet of one of three houses in the area, got out of control when gusting winds took hold of a small garden fire. Gage didn't reveal who was watching over the fire.

Man sought in Cornish fire

East Times Sept 9, 1994

Allegedly set blaze after arguing with owner over phone use

By ANDREW NELSON
Staff Writer

CORNISH — Police are searching for Jason Charbono after he allegedly set fire Thursday night to the Cornish home he was living in.

At press time, it was not known if Charbono, 37, escaped from the Dingleton Hill Road home, which was gutted in the blaze.

According to an affidavit for a search warrant, Charbono allegedly told the house's owner, Bradley Sausville, "we're all going to die," as he struck a cigarette lighter to a flammable liquid poured in the hallway. Charbono and Sausville, 45, lived in the house.

District Judge Albert Leahy Jr. granted the search warrant.

At press time, police were waiting for fire investigators to comb through the rubble to determine whether Charbono died in the fire or escaped.

State police issued all points bulletins for Charbono Thursday night and this morning, saying he is wanted for attempted first degree murder and should be considered armed and dangerous.

A week ago Sausville asked Charbono to move out, the affidavit says. The document, filed in Claremont District Court, says Sausville — who was able to escape the fire — told authorities that after the two argued about telephone use Thursday night, Sausville heard "clicking in the hallway" and upon checking, saw a wet, oily substance on the floor.

After Charbono allegedly ignited the flames, Sausville said he beat Charbono over the head with a cane and then punched him in the head with his fist, according to the affidavit, which doesn't say what happened next.

State Fire Marshal Thomas Norton wrote in the search warrant that a "charred gallon metal container was lying on the kitchen floor" when Norton searched the home.

(Please see FIRE-Pg. 6)



CORNISH FIRE — This home owned by Bradley Sausville of Cornish was allegedly set on fire by a roommate following an argument about phone use. It was not clear at press time whether the roommate, identified as Jason Charbono, was able to escape the blaze. The house was destroyed. (Wayne Carter photo)

The fire was first reported at 6:40 p.m. Thursday. About 60 firefighters from Cornish, Plainfield, Meriden, Windsor and Ascutney responded.

"It was a difficult fire," Cornish Fire Chief Michael Monette said. "Out on a back road. Too little manpower and too little water at the beginning of the fire. It had a good head start on us."

The green house with gray trim was burned out by about 10 p.m., Monette said.

Flames shot through the roof. Fire consumed the second floor, preventing firefighters from going upstairs, said Monette, who was at the scene until about 4:30 this morning.

The New Hampshire State Police Major Crime Unit was at the scene this morning, along with Cornish Police Chief Joe Osgood.

Man faces arraignment for arson

Suspect arrested in Windsor

The Associated Press

CORNISH — A 37-year-old Cornish man will be arraigned Monday, charged with arson in a fire at the house of his landlord and housemate.

Jason Charbono is charged with starting the fire after threatening his housemate, Bradley Sausville, police said.

He was arrested at 5:10 p.m. Friday in a public parking lot in Windsor by Windsor police and is being held at Woodstock Regional Correctional Facility in Woodstock, Vt., on \$25,000 cash bail as a fugitive from New Hampshire.

Charbono will be arraigned in Vermont District Court in White River Junction when the issue of releasing him to New Hampshire authorities will be determined.

According to court records, Charbono allegedly told Sausville, "We're all going to die," as he struck a cigarette lighter to a flammable liquid poured in the hallway Thursday evening.

Sausville, 45, escaped from the house, which was gutted by the fire. Police searched throughout Thursday night for Charbono's body in the debris, according to Thomas Norton of the New Hampshire Fire Marshal's office, before learning he had escaped.

Sausville, who owns the house, asked Charbono to move

Jason Charbono is charged with starting the fire after threatening his housemate, Bradley Sausville.

out a week ago, according to court documents. Sausville told authorities after the two argued about telephone use Thursday night he heard "clicking in the hallway" and found a wet, oily substance on the floor.

After the fire started, Sausville said he beat Charbono over the head with a cane and then punched him in the head with his fist, court records said.

Norton said a "charred gallon metal container was lying on the kitchen floor" when he searched the home.

About 60 firefighters responded to the fire at 6:40 p.m.

"It was a difficult fire," Cornish Fire Chief Michael Monette said. "Out on a back road. Too little manpower and too little water at the beginning of the fire. It had a good head start on us."

Firefighters were unable to go upstairs because the floor was burned away, said Monette, who was at the scene until about 4:30 Friday morning.

Alleged arsonist is arraigned

By ANDREW NELSON
Staff Writer

CLAREMONT — Jason Charbono was arraigned today in Claremont District Court on charges he set a fire last week that destroyed the Cornish home in which he was living.

Charbono, 37, has confessed to pouring Coleman camping appliance fuel on the kitchen floor and igniting it with a cigarette lighter during the incident last Thursday night. Charbono had been arguing with his roommate and landlord, Bradley Sausville, 45, about using the telephone.

No plea was entered on the felony arson charge. If Charbono is found guilty in Sullivan County Superior Court, he could face 7½ to

If Bradley Sausville was in the house as Jason Charbono allegedly flicked his lighter, then Charbono could also be charged with attempted first degree murder, according to County Attorney Marc Hathaway.

14 years and-or a \$4,000 fine. The case would move to Superior Court after a probable cause hearing set for Sept. 23 in District Court. District Judge Jean Burling set bail at \$25,000 cash.

In a statement to New Hampshire State Police signed shortly after being arrested in Windsor on

Friday, Charbono said he drank vodka from the time he woke up Thursday until he passed out at noon. At about 6 p.m., he woke up and wanted to make a phone call. Sausville wouldn't let him, apparently because of a high phone bill from the previous month.

After drinking more vodka for about an hour, Charbono says he found a half-full can of the camping fuel in the mud room and poured it "on the couch and the rest on the floor of the kitchen." But before he lit it, Sausville hit him on the head with his cane.

Charbono said he lit the fuel when he "came to," and that Sausville was already out of the house.

Sausville's version of the events

differs. According to police, Sausville claimed Charbono told him "we're all going to die" as he ignited the fuel. And only then, as the fire raged, did Sausville hit Charbono with the cane and flee the house.

If Sausville was in the house as Charbono allegedly flicked his lighter, then he could also be charged with attempted first-degree murder, according to Sullivan County Attorney Marc Hathaway.

Hathaway said the two versions of events are being investigated to determine whether the additional charge should be filed.

(Please see CHARBONO-Pg. 6)



JASON CHARBONO, left, is led into Claremont District Court by Sullivan County Deputy Sheriff Don Coons this morning. Charbono was arraigned on a felony charge of arson resulting in a fire in Cornish last week. (Wayne Carter photo)

As nearly 60 firefighters struggled to extinguish the blaze, Charbono says he passed out in the woods behind the house. He woke up the next day and went back to the house. Two state troopers asked who he was, but he gave a false name. Charbono was later arrested behind the Cumberland Farms convenience store in Windsor, where he had gone to buy some food.

On Monday, Charbono waived an extradition hearing in Vermont District Court in

White River Junction and was sent to the Sullivan County House of Corrections.

He was sent back to the county jail in lieu of bail this morning.

On the witness stand today, New Hampshire State Police Det. Michael Carroll testified that Charbono had lived with Sausville for 14 months, but that Sausville had recently asked him to move out and took away his telephone privileges after a \$235 bill the previous month.



Valley News Geoff Hansen

New Hampshire state fire investigator Tom Norton examines the scene of a Cornish fire that police say was intentionally set Thursday.

Valley News SEP 10, 1994

Man Charged With Burning Cornish House

By ED BALLAM
Valley News Staff Writer

A Cornish man was arrested in a Windsor parking lot yesterday afternoon on an arson charge, just hours after firefighters left the charred remains of the house he had shared until it was destroyed by a Thursday night fire.

Jason Michael Charbono, 37, is charged with Class A felony arson, according to a New Hampshire State Police news release.

Police say Charbono intentionally set fire to a house on Dingleton Hill Road in Cornish that he had temporarily shared with Bradley Sausville.

Charbono set fire to the house at 8:45 p.m. Thursday, police said in the release, and then fled the scene as the blaze gutted the 1½-story wood-frame building. He was arrested in Windsor yesterday at 5:10 p.m.

Bail was set at \$25,000 for Charbono,

who is being held at the Woodstock Correctional Facility as a fugitive from New Hampshire. An arraignment was scheduled for 12:30 p.m. Monday in Windsor District Court in White River Junction, at which time the release of Charbono to New Hampshire authorities will be determined, the release said.

According to police reports and court records, Charbono threatened Sausville before setting fire to the house.

Police and fire officials initially thought Charbono died in the blaze, but no human remains were found at the scene during an investigation. A preliminary search of the area was conducted Thursday night, police said, but Charbono was not found.

"We believe he stayed out all night," said State Police Sgt. Wayne Fortier, a

(Continued on page A9)

- FIRE

(Continued from page A1)
member of the State Police Major Crime Unit.

Fire investigators and state police were on the scene for most of the day yesterday, sifting through the rubble and the charred remains of the gray home near the top of the hill.

State Fire Investigator Tom Norton collected several pieces of evidence and took photographs of the scene.

He said his dog, Cinder, "got a workout" yesterday investigating the fire. The dog is trained to detect flammable substances that may have been used in arson fires. He said the damage to the home was "extensive."

According to court records, Sausville asked Charbono to move out a week ago and the two fought about telephone use on Thursday night.

After the fight, Sausville said he heard "a clicking in the hallway" and found a wet oily substance on the floor. According to court records, Charbono told Sausville, "We're all going to die," as he struck a cigarette lighter to a flammable liquid poured in the hallway. Norton said he found a "charred gallon metal container (that) was lying on the kitchen floor" when he searched the home, the records said.

At the scene yesterday, Norton had a scorched Coleman lantern fuel can in the back of his station wagon among other pieces of evidence.

Sausville, 45, escaped from the burning house after he allegedly beat Charbono over the head with a cane and the punched him in the head with his fist, according to court records.

Cornish Fire Chief Mike Monette said that when firefighters first arrived on the scene, they were told by a neighbor that someone was in the building at the time the fire broke out.

"We tried to get into the building, but there was just too much fire," Monette said. "We started the procedure to get in, but there was just no way. We had fire coming out the living room window and I would say we had good fire on the main floor of the house."

Once the fire had been extinguished, police searched for Charbono's body before learning that he had escaped.

Yesterday afternoon, the dormered, cape-style home, gray with white trim and nestled into a stand of large maple trees, was surrounded by state police vehicles, two cars from the fire marshal's office, and local police and fire officials' vehicles.

The inside of the building appeared to have been completely gutted by the fire and many of the exterior walls were charred where fire burned through the broken windows.



Valley News — Geoff Hansen

New Hampshire State Police Trooper Benedict Hargraves takes down information on a driver of a pickup truck, in background, that police say struck the back of an unmarked state police car, foreground, at the intersection of Route 12A and Townhouse Road in Cornish yesterday afternoon. The trooper in the car was investigating yesterday's fire.

Fortier said he considered the building a total loss. And as of yesterday afternoon, authorities were unsure whether the building was insured.

A white Chevy Camaro was parked near the garage and an old farm tractor, with a trailer load of cordwood attached to it, was parked next it.

Monette said about 50 firefighters from Cornish, Plainfield, Meriden, Windsor and Acutney battled the fire, which was reported at about 6:40 p.m. The fire was essentially out by about 9:30 p.m. and firefighters remained on the scene until about 4:30 a.m. yesterday morning.

It was the third house fire in 18 days for the Cornish Fire Department, Monette said.

"We've been busy lately," Monette said. "Too busy."

Sgt. James Kelleher, a member of

the Major Crimes Unit from the Keene barracks who was investigating the arson fire, was involved in car accident yesterday afternoon.

He was taken to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon by ambulance where he was treated for a neck injury and released.

According to State Police on the scene of the accident, which occurred at the intersection of Route 12A and Town House Road, in front of the 12% Solution Store, Kelleher, who was in an unmarked Ford cruiser, was struck from behind by a full-sized Ford pickup truck driven by Joe Estey of Cornish.

Estey drove his pickup from the scene and Kelleher's cruiser sustained extensive damage to the rear end and frame and was towed from the scene.

— The Associated Press contributed to this story.



Valley News - Geoff Hans

Cornish volunteer firefighters, above, keep four 300-gallon propane tanks cool with water as the gas slowly leaks from the tanks. At right, firefighters form two hose lines closely together.



Valley News - Geoff Hansen

This Cornish home owned by Will Stanley of Claremont was destroyed by fire, which was fueled by burning propane tanks.

Cornish Fire Guts Home

Family Of Four Homeless

By ED BALLAM
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH - A fire started by an unattended pot on a stove and fueled by hundreds of gallons of propane destroyed a two-story home on Beechwood Circle yesterday, leaving family of four homeless and killing a pet kitten.

The fire began at about 1 p.m. yesterday at the rented home of Jeff "Scott" Morse and gutted the structure. Most of the family's possessions were destroyed. A local fund drive and clothing collection has been started to help the family.

"I would say it was a total loss,"

said Cornish Fire Chief Mike Monette.

Monette said the fire was fueled by four, 300-gallon propane tanks under the wrap-around porch behind the home.

"Once those propane tanks vented, they sent fire right up to the ridge pole," Monette said as firefighters sprayed thousands of gallons of water from two directions on the tanks, which were still burning long after most of the fire in the house was out.

"We'll just have to let it burn off,"

(Continued on page A5)

- FIRE



Regulatory Com-
to request that the
dam to restore the

Fire

(Continued from page A1)

Monette said.

Monette said it was safer to let the gas from the tanks burn than it was to put the fire out. If the gas was allowed to escape into the air, it could accumulate and explode, he said.

Monette said most of the building was burning when he arrived, and the propane tanks vented shortly after.

More than 60 firefighters from nine towns battled the blaze for more than four hours, working to keep the tanks cool and to reduce the danger of explosions.

Monette said one firefighter suffered heat exhaustion and another suffered minor burns to his foot. Monette himself suffered an allergic reaction to two bee stings he received on his right hand while fighting the fire.

The owners of the house, William and Barbara Stanley of Grantham, used the propane for the gas-fired hot air furnace that heated the home, according to Barbara Stanley. She said they had the extra tanks installed because they didn't want a large tank in the backyard and also didn't want to run out of fuel in the winter.

Investigator Tom Norton of the state's Fire Marshal's office said it appeared that the fire started on the kitchen range, located on the second floor.

"There's nothing left of the stove," Norton said.

Norton said the propane acted as an accelerant and "a significant amount of the damage" done to the house can be linked to the venting gas.

Norton said the propane could have exploded. A phenomenon called a boiling liquid expansion vapor explosion could have occurred if the firefighters were unable to keep the tanks cool.

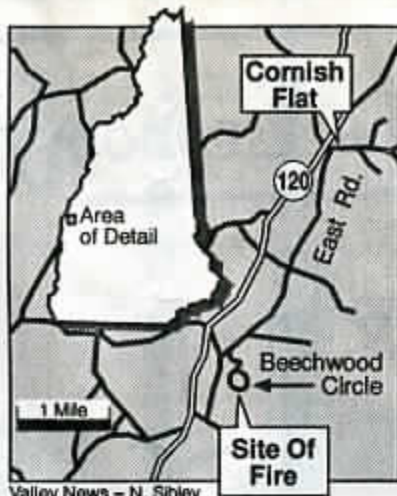
That's why water was trucked from nearby ponds by firefighters from Cornish, Meriden, Plainfield, Claremont, Hartland, Newport and West Windsor, providing firefighters on the scene with an almost endless supply of water. Acutney firefighters also assisted at the scene.

No one was home when the fire broke out, Monette said, and the fire was reported by neighbors who said they heard explosions that sounded like fireworks.

Morse is a part-time police officer for Cornish, according to neighbors and friends, and Monette said he suspected that the sounds the neighbors heard came from ammunition for Morse's weapons, which detonated in the fire.

John Scott, a neighbor who lives on Lower East Road, said his wife, Terrie, reported the fire after hearing explosions in the woods behind their house.

"When we looked out, the whole north side of the house was just a



sheet of flames. There was nothing (firefighters) could have done."

Firefighters were able to salvage numerous rifles and shotguns from the home. They were carefully placed on the front lawn as firefighters scurried around battling the fire. Later, the weapons were placed in the back of a Cornish police cruiser.

After the fire was out, firefighters helped Morse load what family belongings had been saved into pickup trucks. One pickup was loaded with blackened clothing in melted laundry baskets and dresser drawers filled with smoky clothes. A friend volunteered to launder the sooty pile.

Morse arrived on the scene shortly after the fire broke out and rescued the family dog, a rottweiler named Ben, who was in the nearby garage, according to his neighbor, Linda Moore. Moore said she was housing the dog in her garage, at least temporarily. She said a kitten the family got for their daughter on Friday was not so fortunate - it perished in the blaze.

Morse and his wife, Penny, and their two children, Jeff, 10 and Toni, 8, stood on the front lawn, near the picket fence, and watched the fire consume their home. A tearful Morse declined to talk about the fire.

The back side of the home was nothing but charred ruins. A gaping hole in front slope of the metal roof showed the skeletal remains of the attic. Nearly every window in the Colonial-style home had been smashed out. Flames rolled out of the ridge of the roof as firefighters blasted water from different directions on the blaze. A nearby garage appeared unscathed, but firefighters continued to pour water on it to prevent it from catching fire.

Ralph Simonds, owner of Simonds Auto in Claremont and Morse's friend and boss, said the family had moved back to Cornish from Florida three months ago to be with Penny's ailing father. Simonds said Penny's father died two weeks before the family moved back to the area.

"They haven't had much luck lately," Simonds said. He said he



Valley News - Geoff

Members of the Morse family survey the damage to their home.

offered the use of his motor home so the family would have a place to stay. Red Cross workers were also on the scene offering assistance to the family.

Simonds said Morse occasionally did odd jobs for him and also operated a pressure wash business. Simonds' wife, Laura, who works in the advertising department at the *Eagle Times* in Claremont, said Penny worked as a typesetter at the newspaper.

Friends and neighbors said that Scott and Penny Morse are natives of the area and have a lot of relatives nearby.

Barbara Stanley said she and her husband have been trying to sell the house since January and decided to rent it to the Morse family in June.

She said the building was insured, but the Morses had no insurance on their belongings.

"They had just moved back into

the area and were trying to over," Stanley said. "Anything we can do help them I'm sure would be appreciated."

Cornish Town Clerk Cathy Dr. accepting monetary donations as well as donations of clothing for the Morse family. Donations made dropped off at the Town Clerk's Office P.O. Box 397, Cornish, N.H. 03746. Donations may also be sent to David K. North Parsonage Road, R.R. 2, 397 Cornish, N.H. 03745 or sent to a friend of the family, Claremont Police Lt. Steven Marshall, 16 Memorial Dr., Claremont, (603)543-0271.

Marshall said the family will accept clothing, women's size 12 men's size 42-32 pants and shirts, boys and girls clothing, size 14.

"I'm sure they would appreciate anything," Marshall said.

Cornish woman fights the flames out West

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Volunteer firefighter Dale O'Connor experienced a different kind of firefighting when she went to help fight wildfires in the West.

O'Connor wears many hats, first as a wife and mother, then as a school secretary in Cornish, where she also fills in as school nurse, giving tender, loving care to students in the absence of a full-time nurse.

After all this responsibility, she also joined the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department nearly three years ago. She has advanced to second lieutenant and is a Level I firefighter. Her training includes hazardous waste materials, high angle rope rescue and propane training.

Most recently, she joined the New Hampshire firefighting crew that assisted with wildfires raging in the West. She

flew out of Manchester, N.H., on a chartered air flight Aug. 6 to assist with fires burning in the Wasatch National Park in Utah and Payette National Forest in Idaho.

Arriving in Salt Lake City, Utah, the firefighters were driven to Tooele, where they set up camp.

An incident commander took charge of crews from all over different states, and a forest ranger named Brian Nowell from Manchester became their crew boss, O'Connor said.

"Each crew was divided into three squads with three squad bosses. Our squad boss was Douglas Chapman of Meriden.

"While we stayed in Tooele, we were assigned to jobs, which were mostly mop-up assignments. We worked in desert area in 100 degree heat each day, with real low humidity. Coming from New Hampshire, the elevation was a problem for



WILDFIRE FIGHTER — Dale O'Connor, a Cornish volunteer firefighter, was among the crew of New Hampshire firefighters that battled the flames in the West in August. (Ruth Rollins photo)

East Time Sept 18, 1994

me at 10,000 feet. However, after a few days I adapted to it, or just didn't think about it, so I could do what I had to do," she said.

"One day it rained, and joked that we had brought

(Please see **FIREFIGHT** Pg. 7)

rain with us. We were caught in a terrific thunderstorm, which was scary. The fires had started from lightning."

In Utah it was a lot of mop up, not a lot of fire, O'Connor said. Firefighters had to dig up tree stumps, cut down snags (dead trees affected by the fire) and use their backpacks to put out hot spots.

"Once, we worked with a crew called Flamingos, who provided water from pumpers. Otherwise, we packed it in on our backs," O'Connor said.

"We were camped out in a field by a high school and a catering crew set up in the cafeteria, so we had hot breakfast and supper and carried bag lunches."

Though there were other women involved, O'Connor was the only female in the crew she was assigned to. The crew was taken by bus to a dropoff point most days, although one day, while in Utah, they were transported to an assignment by helicopter.

After seven days the group was taken to Warm Lake, Idaho, to work in the Payette National Forest. On the way the bus got stuck in the sand on a back road and they were stranded for 6½ hours in the middle of nowhere.

"I grabbed my sleeping bag and rested under the Idaho stars, it was absolutely beautiful," O'Connor said. "The bus was 10 miles from base camp at the time and when we finally arrived there it was 4 a.m. We grabbed a little sleep and were up at 5:30 a.m. to start our day."

The first day there the group worked 10,000 foot elevations, digging fire line. It was the first O'Connor saw actual fire.

"We saw lots of candelings, fires that would start at the bottom, torch and blow up, the whole tree would burn. This was my first experience and it was pretty awesome! We had to hike out of the area in the dark and did not get back to camp until 11 p.m. that night," she said.

After hot showers and some rest the firefighters were flown in by helicopter the next day and again hiked out. Another day they were flown into a helispot (where a helicopter could land), where they set up a Spike Camp. It was supposed to be for one night, but turned into two.

While the firefighters worked a quarter mile from their camp area, they stood and watched Spike Camp burn along with some of their gear, including paper sleeping bags that had been assigned to them.

"We watched 500 acres burn," O'Connor said. "At that time, we were requested to go to a safety zone as the fire was 40 yards behind us at that point."

"Once, while our crew was working a 10-acre spot fire which was ahead of the actual big fire, a shift in the wind blew the fire around us on three sides. It was a little scary, my heart was pounding."

On Wednesday of the last week, the group worked with the Pleasant Valley Hot Shot Crew out of Arizona, doing a 50-acre backburn. "It was pretty incredible, working 10 feet

copter pad and half the crews were picked up before the New Hampshire firefighters.

"Before we were picked up the helicopter broke down. We had to hike out about five miles, using a lot of cat line (animal trails). That is how we got through the mountains," said O'Connor.

"Our main tools were shovels and pulaskis (a combination shovel with a small pick)," O'Connor said. "Our web gear included a waist belt, water bottles and fire shelter. The fire shelter was only to be used as a last resort. It was a little tiny foil pup tent that could cover a person if surrounded by fire."

Their lunch and essentials, such as socks, were also kept in the webbing pack, which weighed about 30 pounds. O'Connor didn't have a problem with it. "Bringing up children, you give a lot of piggy backs," she said.

However, O'Connor started out with a brand new pair of logger boots the day she left, so she had some pretty good blisters. But she changed socks

away from 80-foot flames," O'Connor said.

One shift in the wind and they had to run. They watched the smoke direction and could feel the air being sucked into the fire, but they couldn't see. It wouldn't be long, but they hoped it wouldn't spot below them.

"The last Thursday we went into the original 10-acre fire working over a ridge, cutting more line and digging 18-inch fire line in the green, trying to stop it from spreading," O'Connor said.

"After clearing a safety zone we could leave some of our yellow packs there. On that Thursday we got a call from a division boss who told us we needed to get out of there as the fire had jumped ahead of us."

They weren't allowed to go back after their packs because the safety zone was on fire. However, they were fortunate as another crew did pull some of the packs out and saving a lot of gear.

That Thursday the firefighters "hoofed it" to the heli-

frequently, and dealt with them.

In Utah, a pay phone was available, but when the firefighters got up at 5 a.m., it was a trial to get to a phone and meet the bus on time.

"I did talk with my husband from there. At the Spike Camp in Idaho, it was much more difficult to get access to a phone," O'Connor said.

"I have to thank my husband, Chris, for his support, if I had not known my children would be alright I could not have done this. My family is No. 1," she

said.

O'Connor is the mother of three children, Shane Smith and Ashley and Kelsy O'Connor.

She is in her sixth year as secretary at the Cornish Elementary School, employment that follows that of her mother, Lorraine Lawrence, who also filled that position for many years.

Her family ties to firefighting include both her father and grandfather, who have been department volunteers in New York and New Hampshire.

She credits volunteers in the Cornish department for their supportiveness during her training.

"Everyone has done more than their share to make me feel welcome and help me during all my training," said O'Connor.

She arrived home at midnight Aug. 19, tired, but happy.

When asked if she would do it again, she said, "Having the opportunity, I'd absolutely do it again. It was a great experience!"

6/6/96
Eagle Times

Last tone sounds for Lt. Pete Decatur

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Cornish firemen were joined by firefighters from several other departments in paying tribute to one of their own this week at the funeral of Clarence "Pete" Decatur, a 25-year veteran of the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department. His sudden death of an apparent heart attack at age 56 occurred last Friday.

They were joined by snowmobile club members, antique car owners, friends and family with former Cornish Fire Chief Scott Kearns, associate pastor of the First Baptist Church in Claremont, the officiating minister.

Friend after friend spoke of times spent with Decatur during a time of sharing. Many spoke of how he was always up for a challenge, how he loved nature, and his willingness to help others.

Bill Fitts told of the importance of his companionship and Cheston Newbold spoke of his patience and kindness. Peter Burling said, "I never saw him when he didn't have a warm smile on his face. It always made me want to stop and talk to him."

"When my time comes, if my family thinks as much of me as his family and friends do, I'll feel I've accomplished something," said Nathan Cass, who made the pine casket Decatur was laid to rest in.

Due to his love of restoring antique cars, a Model T Ford pickup truck was used to carry the casket to the cemetery, followed by several other antique cars. Leading the procession was a Cornish fire truck carrying flower arrangements.

During the service, held at Comings Cemetery, the Rev. Neil Johnston, the Highland piper of Orford, played bagpipes. He was hired by fellow firefighters because they knew Pete loved that kind of music.

Not an eye was dry when during the committal service a dispatcher put out the "last tone for Lt. Pete Decatur." "We all loved him," said Pastor Kearns, "and now we have memories of him that will last as long as we live."



HIS LOVE OF ANTIQUE CARS was evident at the funeral of Clarence "Pete" Decatur. Note the license plate on his casket. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Fire leaves family homeless

Evening Times AUG 31, 1994

Blaze traced to kitchen

By PAUL CLIFTON-WAITE
Staff Writer

CORNISH — A family of four is homeless and without most of their possessions today after a fire started by a pan left on a hot stove destroyed a two-story home off Route 120.

The family had no insurance on their possessions, and donations are being sought.

Fire ate through the Beechwood Circle house rented by Jeff "Scott" Morse, his wife and two children throughout Wednesday afternoon, while the family was out. A family kitten died in the blaze.

Fueled by propane from four 100-gallon tanks under the house's deck, the fire blazed for four hours. About 60 firefighters from nine area communities responded, training two hoses on the tanks alone, to cool the metal and prevent an explosion.

"That was probably one of the most dangerous fires we've been to, as far as the potential for firefighters getting hurt," said Fire Chief Michael Monette.

Flames as high as 30 feet raced up the rear of the house because of the gas, which Monette said "accelerated" the fire.

One firefighter suffered heat exhaustion, and another a burned foot. Emergency response to the



DANGEROUS DEEDS — A house rented by the Morse family on Beechwood Circle in Cornish was destroyed by fire Tuesday afternoon. Four 100-gallon propane tanks located under the house's deck "accelerated" the fire, according to Cornish Fire Chief Michael Monette. At right, an unidentified firefighter prepares to enter the home; above, Cornish firefighter Holly Rand attempts to catch her breath in between shifts. (Wayne Carter photos)

Beechwood Acres development began shortly after 1 p.m., when the fire was called in by a neighbor who said she heard the sound of "firecrackers" and saw smoke.

(Please see FIRE, Pg. 6)



Fire

(Continued from page A1)

Monette said.

Monette said it was safer to let the gas from the tanks burn than it was to put the fire out. If the gas was allowed to escape into the air, it could accumulate and explode, he said.

Monette said most of the building was burning when he arrived, and the propane tanks vented shortly after.

More than 60 firefighters from nine towns battled the blaze for more than four hours, working to keep the tanks cool and to reduce the danger of explosions.

Monette said one firefighter suffered heat exhaustion and another suffered minor burns to his foot. Monette himself suffered an allergic reaction to two bee stings he received on his right hand while fighting the fire.

The owners of the house, William and Barbara Stanley of Grantham, used the propane for the gas-fired hot air furnace that heated the home, according to Barbara Stanley. She said they had the extra tanks installed because they didn't want a large tank in the backyard and also didn't want to run out of fuel in the winter.

Investigator Tom Norton of the state's Fire Marshal's office said it appeared that the fire started on the kitchen range, located on the second floor.

"There's nothing left of the stove," Norton said.

Norton said the propane acted as an accelerant and "a significant amount of the damage" done to the house can be linked to the venting gas.

Norton said the propane could have exploded. A phenomenon called a boiling liquid expansion vapor explosion could have occurred if the firefighters were unable to keep the tanks cool.

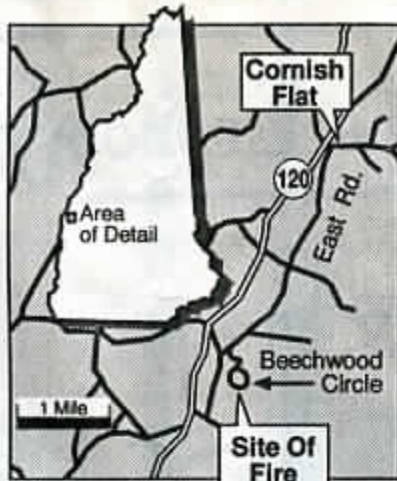
That's why water was trucked from nearby ponds by firefighters from Cornish, Meriden, Plainfield, Claremont, Hartland, Newport and West Windsor, providing firefighters on the scene with an almost endless supply of water. Acutney firefighters also assisted at the scene.

No one was home when the fire broke out, Monette said, and the fire was reported by neighbors who said they heard explosions that sounded like fireworks.

Morse is a part-time police officer for Cornish, according to neighbors and friends, and Monette said he suspected that the sounds the neighbors heard came from ammunition for Morse's weapons, which detonated in the fire.

John Scott, a neighbor who lives on Lower East Road, said his wife, Terrie, reported the fire after hearing explosions in the woods behind their house.

"When we looked out, the whole north side of the house was just a



sheet of flames. There was nothing (firefighters) could have done."

Firefighters were able to salvage numerous rifles and shotguns from the home. They were carefully placed on the front lawn as firefighters scurried around battling the fire. Later, the weapons were placed in the back of a Cornish police cruiser.

After the fire was out, firefighters helped Morse load what family belongings had been saved into pickup trucks. One pickup was loaded with blackened clothing in melted laundry baskets and dresser drawers filled with smoky clothes. A friend volunteered to launder the sooty pile.

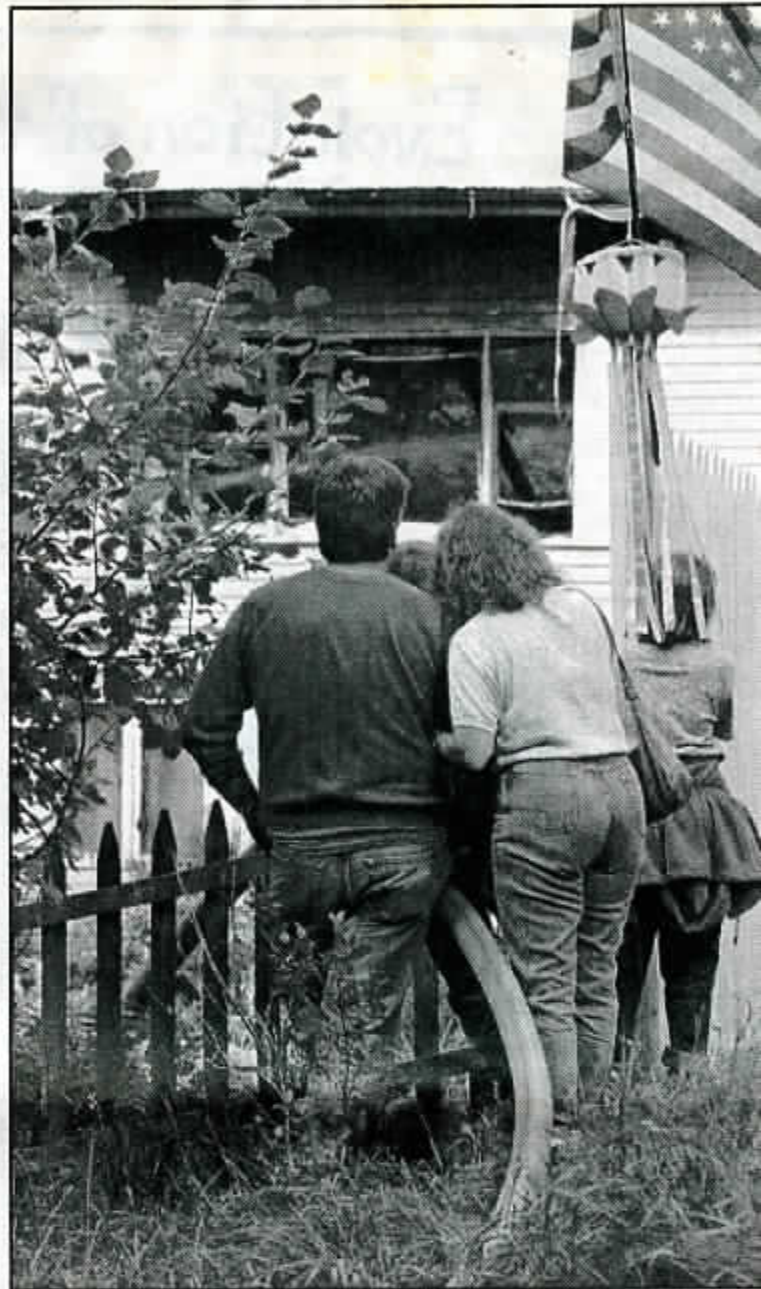
Morse arrived on the scene shortly after the fire broke out and rescued the family dog, a rottweiler named Ben, who was in the nearby garage, according to his neighbor, Linda Moore. Moore said she was housing the dog in her garage, at least temporarily. She said a kitten the family got for their daughter on Friday was not so fortunate - it perished in the blaze.

Morse and his wife, Penny, and their two children, Jeff, 10 and Toni, 8, stood on the front lawn, near the picket fence, and watched the fire consume their home. A tearful Morse declined to talk about the fire.

The back side of the home was nothing but charred ruins. A gaping hole in front slope of the metal roof showed the skeletal remains of the attic. Nearly every window in the Colonial-style home had been smashed out. Flames rolled out of the ridge of the roof as firefighters blasted water from different directions on the blaze. A nearby garage appeared unscathed, but firefighters continued to pour water on it to prevent it from catching fire.

Ralph Simonds, owner of Simonds Auto in Claremont and Morse's friend and boss, said the family had moved back to Cornish from Florida three months ago to be with Penny's ailing father. Simonds said Penny's father died two weeks before the family moved back to the area.

"They haven't had much luck lately," Simonds said. He said he



Valley News - Geoff

Members of the Morse family survey the damage to their home.

offered the use of his motor home so the family would have a place to stay. Red Cross workers were also on the scene offering assistance to the family.

Simonds said Morse occasionally did odd jobs for him and also operated a pressure wash business. Simonds' wife, Laura, who works in the advertising department at the *Eagle Times* in Claremont, said Penny worked as a typesetter at the newspaper.

Friends and neighbors said that Scott and Penny Morse are natives of the area and have a lot of relatives nearby.

Barbara Stanley said she and her husband have been trying to sell the house since January and decided to rent it to the Morse family in June.

She said the building was insured, but the Morses had no insurance on their belongings.

"They had just moved back into

the area and were trying to over," Stanley said. "Anything we can do help them I'm sure would be appreciated."

Cornish Town Clerk Cathy Dr. accepting monetary donations as well as donations of clothing for the Morse family. Donations may be dropped off at the Town Clerk's Office P.O. Box 397, Cornish, N.H. 03746. Donations may also be sent to David K. North Parsonage Road, R.R. 2, 397 Cornish, N.H. 03745 or sent to a friend of the family, Claremont Police Lt. Steven Marshall, 16 Memorial Dr., Claremont, (603)543-0271.

Marshall said the family will accept clothing, women's size 12 men's size 42-32 pants and shirts, boys and girls clothing, size 14.

"I'm sure they would appreciate anything," Marshall said.



THIS BEECHWOOD CIRCLE house in Cornish, rented by the Morse family, earned the attention of nine area firefighting communities Tuesday afternoon. Despite their efforts, the home was destroyed. (Wayne Carter photo)

"In the few seconds between when I went in to call and when my husband and I went out again, we saw flames," said Terrie Scott of Lower East Road. "It was so hot and happened so quickly."

"Even through the heavy, thick tree line, we could see the flames," Scott added. "The flames were as high as the tree line sometimes. I thought they were going to hit the trees and come our way."

Scott thought the firecracker sound came from ammunition, which Scott Morse had because he is a part-time police officer in Cornish. His wife, Penny, is a typesetter for the Eagle Times. Donations are being sought for the family.

Monette said the upper portion of the house was "just lost," as the roof burned off. It took an hour to get the fire under control, he said. The rest of the time was spent extinguishing the flames and cooling the propane tanks.

Properly operating safety valves vented the propane tanks, which created the "fireball" that engulfed the house, Monette said. Otherwise, an

explosion could have occurred.

The fire was traced to the kitchen's stove on the second floor, and Monette said it appears to have started after Scott Morse left for work at 8 a.m. It was the first day of school for the children.

"The kitchen range started the fire. Something was left cooking on the stove," Monette said.

The house was owned by William Stanley of Grantham, who could not be reached for comment today. The Morses have been renting the home since April, when they returned to the area from Florida to be with an ailing father who died two months ago.

The Morses, their son Jeffrey, 10, and daughter Tonya, 8, stayed at the Claremont Motor Lodge on Tuesday night. Friend Laura Simonds of Claremont said the family has received several housing offers.

Nevertheless, the family is still in bad shape, she said.

"I talked with (Penny's) mother last night, and she said they're like zombies," Simonds said.

A family dog and some gold-

fish survived the fire, but Simonds said they lost most of their possessions, for which they had no insurance. Monette said Stanley had insurance on the house itself.

The Morses declined comment at the scene and could not be reached for comment today.

Donations sought

Anyone wishing to donate clothing or household items can leave materials at the Cornish Town Hall, the David Kibbe residence on Parsonage Road in Cornish, or at the home of Claremont Police Lt. Steve Marshall at 16 Memorial Drive in Claremont.

Monetary donations can be made out to the "Morse Family Fund," and is being managed by Town Clerk Catherine Dubey. Donations can be sent to her at P.O. Box 183, Cornish Flat, N.H., 03746.

Marshall can be contacted at 543-0270; Dubey at 464-3674.

Kitchenware, bedding and furniture are especially needed, and clothing sizes requested are men's XXL — 42x32; women's 12 medium; boys 14; and girls 14.

Morse family is starting over again

By PAUL CLIFTON-WAITE
Staff Writer

CLAREMONT — Inside the confines of the Claremont Motor Lodge, Jeff "Scott" Morse and his family are thinking ahead to when they can return to Cornish in a home of their own.

Tuesday's fire, which destroyed their rental home and most of their possessions, has caused Penny Morse to quietly question whether her young family is meant to live there.

But it's hard to give up on her home town, and so Scott is calling around in an effort to find a used mobile home to put on an open lot.

And they're starting to remember to laugh.

"We've been about a week late on about three different places. Unfortunately, I couldn't schedule my fire a little earlier

"It's an incredible feeling. Gut-wrenching is probably the only way to describe it. It just reaches down inside you and literally pulls you inside out."

— Jeff "Scott" Morse

and maybe get this figured out," says Scott, 33, in an interview Thursday.

It's been a week of hard knocks, confronting not just the loss but also their decision to put off buying renter's insurance and Scott's fateful mistake of leaving a pot on the hot stove.

Penny admits she was more than a little angry at first, given how she'd cautioned Scott three times to remember it before he

left for work at Simonds Auto Body Claremont that morning.

"I said: I told you! I told you! I told you before I left! But I guess that's what the accident is," sighs Penny, 30. Like her husband and daughter Tonya, 10, she wears donated clothing. Tonya fiddles with a Troll doll given to her by an aunt and uncle.

Son Jeffrey, 11, reclines on the other bed, wearing new clothes bought by family friend. Donations have poured in, overwhelming the family to the point they've come to realize the good fortune of living here, and not back in Florida.

"You can't begin to thank everyone," says Scott, a Claremont native and part-time Cornish police officer. "We'll be sending out thank-you's for six months."

(Please see MORSE-Pg.



ROAD TO RECOVERY — The Morse family discusses what's next after losing many of their possessions during a fire at their rented home in Cornish last week. From left, mother Penny, children Jeffrey and Tonya, and father Scott. (Paul Clifton-Waite photo)

The family left Florida in April, a little earlier than planned because of the death of Penny's ailing father. They found jobs — Penny works as a typesetter at the Eagle Times. And the family quickly moved into the Beechwood Circle home, in the Beechwood Acres estate off Route 120.

They caution others not to delay buying renter's insurance.

"It was just one of those things we put off," Scott explains. "We had it down in Florida. It's cheap. But we've been scrimping a bit. Moving down there was expensive and moving back was just as expensive."

They estimate the expense of the fire at \$45,000. The fire swept through the upper portions of the home, fueled by propane from an outside set of tanks. The home was gutted and Tonya's bureau in a second-story loft was found on the concrete slab.

Only Jeffrey's bedroom and the living room were spared, leaving them with some personal papers but without much else. Among items lost included a set of home videos featuring Penny's father and the children go-cart racing.

"I was thinking recently of just how precious that would be in the years to come and now it's gone. Now it's something you can never get back...." Penny says, her voice trailing off.

Their dog, Ben, and the family goldfish survived the fire, but a kitten named Milo is believed to have perished. Its body hasn't been found, and

hope lingers that it may have escaped and will be back. But its disappearance is hard on Tonya.

Asked if she lost anything she really needs, Tonya says simply: "kitten." She and Jeffrey have been back to school, spending afternoons with relatives and nights at the motel.

The family talks of taking people up on housing offers. But first, they feel they need to regroup and regain composure.

"It's hard at school," admits Jeffrey. "Everyone's asking you about it."

The stress clearly shows in Scott. As he talks, his hands toy a crumpled tissue he uses at times to wipe his eyes. He can still vividly recall the awful feelings that hit him when he rushed home and saw the fire and firefighters.

"It's an incredible feeling. Gut-wrenching is probably the only way to describe it," he says. "It just reaches down inside you and literally pulls you inside out."

Several days later, Scott continues to dwell on how he forgot the pot of corned beef and cabbage. He guesses the morning was a bit out of sequence, being the first day of school.

"It's almost like we were not supposed to come back," Penny comments.

But the outpouring of sympathy has tempered the frustration and hurt of losing most of 14 years worth of history. Penny and Scott acknowledge they can replace just about everything, and that the goal now is to return home.

"We're trying to stay in Cornish," Scott says. "Our kids are in school there and they've been real happy."



CORNISH FIRE — Firefighters are seen battling a blaze at a summer camp off Route 120 Sunday afternoon. Firefighters from Cornish, Claremont, Meriden and Plainfield responded to the blaze. While the cause is not yet known, a caretaker at the camp, Tom McCoy, 38, claims the fire was meant to send him a threatening message. He said he was not present when the fire started. The camp was destroyed. (Wayne Carter photo)

Fire destroys summer camp; is under suspicion

By **SUSAN POTTER THIEL**
Staff Writer

CORNISH — A suspicious fire that destroyed a summer camp off Route 120 Sunday is under investigation by the state fire marshal's office.

Cornish Fire Chief Michael Monette said a neighbor, Jim Lukash, discovered the fire at about 2:49 p.m.

Monette said that when firefighters arrived, the fire had spread throughout the building. He said the blaze was under control within 20 or 30 minutes, but the building was destroyed.

Monette said Tom McCoy, 38, a caretaker for the camp owned by Bernie Bastian of Weare, had spent the night at the camp and left in the morning to go to the Cornish Fair.

Monette said the length of time that elapsed between McCoy's departure and discovery of the fire made it suspicious. The fire is being investigated by Thomas Norton of the state fire marshal's office, according to Monette.

McCoy, who was not available for comment this morning, told reporters on the fire scene that he left the camp at about 1 p.m. He told them he'd been warned by a friend to "watch his back" and had received some telephone calls in which the caller hung up without speaking.

"They were checking to see if I was there," he said.

McCoy said he had recently separated from his wife and formerly lived in Claremont.

Fire crews from Meriden and Claremont assisted at the scene.



Valley News — Robert Pope

Firefighters pour water on smoldering timbers at a Cornish summer camp yesterday afternoon.

Valley News Aug 24, 1994

Fire Destroys Cornish Camp

Caretaker Says Fire Suspicious

By SARAH STROHMEYER
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — A summer camp off Route 120 was destroyed by a suspicious fire yesterday that a caretaker of the home says was meant to send him a threatening message.

Route 120 was closed for nearly two hours after the fire was spotted around 2:15 p.m. by a driver for Golden Cross Ambulance and a local resident. Fire crews needed the road so they could send water up the hill to the camp, located about a mile south of the Cornish Fairgrounds.

Cornish Fire Chief Mike Monette said fire investigators would be called to investigate the blaze which quickly ripped through the camp.

"Every place you see, there was fire coming out of it," Monette said, as he watched crews from Cornish, Plainfield, Meriden and Claremont hose down the smoldering embers. The fire was under control within a half hour.

Tom McCoy, 38, who said he has been the caretaker for the camp for two years, arrived about an hour after the fire was spotted. He said he left the house at 1 p.m. after spending last night there.

"I was warned yesterday to watch my back," McCoy said, adding that he had not used the wood stove or left any appliances on. "A friend warned me five times within an hour to watch my back."

McCoy, who is recently separated from his wife, said he had most of his belongings at the couple's home in Claremont. The only items left at the camp were clothes, a television and some guns.

He said he was particularly suspicious because he



Caretaker Tom McCoy, right, talks to Cornish Fire Chief Mike Monette about the fire along Route 120.

received a couple of telephone calls from someone who "hung up" as soon as he answered the phone.

"They were checking to see if I was there," he said, explaining that he has been staying at the camp off and on.

Bernie Bastian of Weare, N.H., confirmed yesterday that he is the owner of the camp and that McCoy was the caretaker. When told that there was a fire there, Bastian said, "No kidding."



Overnight Fire

Valley News, Jan 16, 1995

Valley

Area volunteer firefighters, including Kimball Union Fire Brigade member Peter Crowell at far left, hose down the remains of a fire at Bradley Sausville's home

on Dingleton Hill Road in Cornish early this morning. Smoldering and burned down the trailer he was living in. Story, page A2.

Man Hospitalized After Fire Guts Mobile Home

By KATHRYN NIEMELA
Valley News Correspondent

CORNISH — A fire completely destroyed the mobile home and garage of a Cornish man early yesterday morning and sent him to the hospital, just four months after his 1½-story wood-frame home burned to the ground, the result of arson.

Bradley Sausville of Dingleton Hill Road, was taken to the Veterans Administration hospital in White River Junction yesterday morning and was reported in fair condition yesterday afternoon according to hospital administrator Bob Ogara.

"He is an in-patient here and is in fair condition. I do not know when he will be released," Ogara said. "We'll make that determination sometime Tuesday." Ogara did not provide more specific details on Sausville's condition.

Tom Norton, an investigator for the state fire marshal's office who investigated the scene early yesterday morning, said Sausville was transported to the hospital with what he suspected was "some level of smoke inhalation." He said the fire was most likely the result of "demolition activi-

ties" by Sausville.

Sausville and a group of friends were demolishing his former home Saturday night and hurling the torn down debris. Apparently the group did not fully extinguish the fire and Sausville attempted to put it out later that night by throwing snow on the smoldering ashes.

At approximately 12:30 a.m. yesterday, Sausville awoke to smoke and fire in his 20-foot-long mobile home. He left the home and went to a neighbor's to call the fire department.

Jason Michael Charbono, who had shared the home that burned in September with Sausville, has been indicted for attempted murder and arson, according to Norton. Charbono's case is pending, Norton said.

Court records indicate that Sausville had asked Charbono to move out of his home and the two had fought over the use of the telephone.

After the fight, Sausville said he heard a clicking sound in the hallway and found a wet oily substance on the floor. Court records also indicate that Charbono told Sausville "We're all going to die," as he struck a lighter to a flammable liquid.

Eagle Times 11-2-95



SMOKY'S PALS — First-grade pupils Nathan Rook, left, Chelsea Jewett, center, and Ethan Freeland received special attention from Smokey Bear when he visited the Cornish Elementary School recently during Fire Prevention Week. Forest Ranger John Ricard spoke to the youngsters about fire safety. The event was sponsored by the Cornish Fire Department. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Cornish firefighters honored

Andrew Kuhre cited for 50 years of volunteer work

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Recognition for years of service by Cornish volunteer firefighters and auxiliary members was notable during an awards ceremony conducted by Chief Michael Monette last weekend at the Cornish Trinity Church on Route 12A.

Andrew Kuhre was recognized for his 50 years of service to the Cornish Fire Department and received a 50-year pin. He and his wife, Vera, and Pete Decatur and his wife, Mary, were also presented plaques noting a sincere thank you for their many years of dedication and friendship to the department and auxiliary.

Kuhre also received a lifetime honorary membership pin and certificate, and recognition of dedicated service to the Cornish Fire Department. Robert Hunt was recognized for his 30 years of service, Leland Atwood for 35 years, and Tim Bannister, Pete Decatur and Dale Rook, all with 25 years.

Former Fire Chief Duane Allen, who was unable to be present, was also a recipient of a life membership.

Those receiving 20-year veteran certificates of service were Robert Rice, David Wood, and John Rand and Scott Kearns, both former fire chiefs. Peter Burling and Monette each have 15 years.

Ten-year certificates went to Larry Dingee, Lee Baker, Steve Fellows, Doug Thayer, David Kibbie, Leo Maalan, Mark Dube, Nate Cass, William Fitts and Polly Rand. Those receiving five-year recognition pins were Robert Maslan, Charles "Chuck" Sullivan, Robert Kibbie, Jim Guy and George Edson.



LONGTIME VOLUNTEER — Andrew Kuhre, right, was awarded this lifetime honorary membership certificate from Chief Michael Monette last weekend during an awards ceremony for Cornish volunteer firefighters and auxiliary members. Kuhre has served the town for more than 50 years. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Judy Rook was recognized for her 25 years of dedication to the Cornish Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary. President Cassie Sullivan thanked all members for their dedication to the department both day and night. She also thanked firemen for their support and help during the auxiliary fundraisers. Each auxiliary member was presented a plant. Special cups designed by Paul Whalen Jr., owner of Image Connection, were given both firemen and auxiliary members.

A special gift, "Smokey the Bear," was presented to Dale O'Connor in recognition of her participation in controlling the western forest fires of 1994.

"We volunteer for the most hazardous duties," said former Chief Rand. "Those of you who

are new members have a long way to go in the footsteps of the many who have volunteered so long. They have been a tremendously guiding light to all of us. You can be proud of the job we have set forth to do. We have excellent equipment and capabilities."

Selectman Stuart Hodgeman congratulated the volunteers and said, "From all the citizens of the community, we take our hats off to you for your voluntary tasks of keeping us all safe."

Guests at the event were Windsor Fire Chief Lewis Gage, Meriden Fire Chief David Best and Meriden Assistant Chief Nathan Cass.

Following the awards ceremony, a family-style pot luck supper was served on the lawn. Seventy-five people attended.

Nathan Cass named chief of

BY LOIS FITTS

CORNISH SCHEDULE

Sunday, July 21

Antique Tractor Club Pull, Cornish Fair Grounds, all day, \$2 admission

St. Gaudens Concert, Route 12A, Rogers & Millican/flute and piano, 2 p.m.

Youth Group, Parsonage, Cornish Flat, 4 to 6 p.m.

No Boy Scouts; at camp until July 27

Tuesday, July 23

Rescue Squad, Rescue Shed, 7

p.m.

Wednesday, July 24

Conservation Commission, Town Offices, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, July 25

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

Town News

Wednesday, July 10 saw a change of command of the Cornish Fire Department as Nathan Cass took the reins from outgoing Chief Michael Monette.

Mike was chief for five years and has been a member of the depart-

ment for 20-plus years. He plans to stay with the department and spend more time with his wife, Robin, and sons Joshua, 11, and Daniel, 10.

Nate was sworn in by Stuart Hodgman, chairman of the Selectmen. Nate has been Deputy Chief of the Meriden Fire Department for six years and has been a member of the Cornish Fire Department for 20 years as well. Nate owns and operates North Country Door on Route 120 at the Cornish/ Plainfield town line. He and

News Leader—Thursday, July 18, 1996

Cornish Fire Department

his wife, Sherry, have three sons, Nathan, 2, Gardiner, 7 months, and Harrison, 2 weeks.

At present, Nate sees no changes within the Department and intends to be an approachable chief, open to suggestions and discussions.

On Saturday, July 20, and Sunday, July 21, there will be an Antique Tractor Club Pull at the Cornish Fair Grounds beginning at 9 a.m. both days. Saturday there will be games for children and a wagon/trailer driving with

tractors. There will also be a dance Saturday night for members.

On Sunday, more serious pulling will be done, beginning with the slow race and quick starts. Food will also be available for sale both days, and a \$2 admission will be charged on Sunday.

Last July, four Cornish Elementary School students traveled to Aspet, France, with Caroline Storrs and Ruth Little to establish a "twinning" of Cornish, home of Aspet, Augustus St. Gauden's

home and Aspet, France. This year, guests from Aspet will be visiting Cornish from Aug. 5 to Aug. 11 and staying with host families.

A busy schedule has been planned for the travelers, including a "covered dish gathering" at Saint Gaudens on Thursday, Aug. 8. This event is open to any Cornish resident, and the price of admission is a covered dish. The evening will end at dark since there is little lighting at the me-

See CASS, Page 15



NEW CORNISH FIRE CHIEF—Nathan Cass, left, is the new Chief of the Cornish Fire Department. Outgoing Chief Michael Monette is at right.

Photo by Lois Fitts

CASS

From Page 14

morial. The Cornish Selectmen will also make a presentation to the French guests at this time.

Another opportunity for the people of Cornish to meet the guests will be on Saturday, Aug. 10 at the Storrs' home on East Road. A dish or an appetizer would be appreciated.

Tuesday, Aug. 6 there will be a gathering at Anne and Tony Neidecker's. There will be swimming, tennis and dinner. At 7:30 p.m. there will be a special presentation by film-maker Michel Gayraud, which will be attended by the Cornish Historical Society. Refreshments will be served by the Historical Society after the film. The film showing is open to the public.

On Tuesday, Aug. 7 a trip to

Shelburne Museum in Burlington, Vt., is planned. Help is still needed. A driver and car is needed to help bring the group from Montreal and drivers and cars are needed during the week to help transport people to the Museum. Rebecca Baril, Lydia Durant, Emily Pierce and Sadie Dworak are wanted to greet guests and help serve at parties and anyone is needed to help take people to favorite spots that your family might enjoy with a guest, or any ideas you might have. Contact Caroline Storrs at 542-2362 and leave a message if the machine answers.

On July 14 there was a new exhibit at St. Gaudens featuring sculptor Jon Kessler. The exhibit will run through Aug. 25.

Fire Burns About Three Acres In Cornish

CORNISH — About three acres of woods burned in an early evening fire that came within several feet of a residence on Saint-Gaudens Road, Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass said last night.

Cass said the fire started when an old, rotted birch tree fell or was blown onto a power line at the intersection of Dingleton Hill Road and Saint-Gaudens Road. That touched off fire in about three acres of woods, he said.

The fire burned to within 2 or 3 feet of the Jenkes residence on Saint-Gaudens Road, said Cass.

He said firefighters got to the edge of the fire to extinguish it "just in time."

No one was home when the fire near the house was put out, said Cass. He said residents returned to the Jenkes property later and "were surprised. There was a lot of equipment around."

Cass said he thinks most of the

acreage that burned was on the Jenkes' property. The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, which is also located on Saint-Gaudens Road, was never threatened by the fire, Cass said.

The fire was reported at about 6 p.m. by Windsor Fire Chief Lewis Gage, who Cass said noticed smoke from Route 5, near the golf course in Windsor.

Firefighters from Meriden, Windsor and Plainfield departments assisted Cornish at the scene. Claremont sent a truck to cover at the Cornish station, Cass said. Firefighters finished mopping up from the fire at about 10 p.m., he said.

"It was all in the woods and there was a lot of overhaul and clean up," Cass said. "Nothing serious got damaged so these fires are kind of fun. We all get to just go out and play."

— Staff Report

Valley News 4-30-98

Fire levels barn in Cornish

By JANE ANDREWS
Staff Writer

CORNISH — A barn that was more than a century old went up in flames Thursday, bringing five area fire departments to the scene.

Neighbors of the Neily family, who heard two explosions and saw flames shooting from the old structure, called the fire department at 4:11 p.m. but the building was already engulfed in flames when firefighters arrived, according to Dale Rook, assistant fire chief.

The roof collapsed shortly after Rook arrived on the first firetruck, and when the department learned there were no people or animals in the barn, they used a "surround and drown" approach, knocking the fire down quickly, he said. The house is located 200 feet away and wasn't damaged.

Several beef cows and a miniature goat had left the bar to graze in a field, and had moved to the far side of the pasture away from the blaze, he said.

Rook said the cause was traced to human error involving a minor, but he declined to elaborate. The family was at home at the time and were among the people calling the department. There was no electricity in the barn, which was used for the livestock and storage of snow, lawn and garden machinery.

Firefighters from Plainfield and Meriden, N.H., and Windsor and Ascutney, Vt., assisted the Cornish Fire Department.

96-11-11-96
Google Times

Cornish Home Saved After Bag Of Embers Catches Fire

By ED BALLAM

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — A paper bag filled with live embers from a fireplace caused smoke and some fire damage to a cape-style home on Route 120 last night. No injuries were reported and the damage was described as minor.

Firefighters responded to the home of Lynn Simino, located about one-half mile south of the village of Cornish Flat, about 8 p.m. to investigate a report of a smell of smoke in the building, said Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass.

"We got here just in the nick of time, I mean just in time," Cass said, as firefighters packed up hose and equipment around the white home.

"When I first got here, it was all black inside. I turned around and then there were flames."

Apparently, hot embers from a fireplace, which had not been used

for three days, ignited the bag and the floor, Cass said. The bag of ashes was placed near a rear door of the two-story building sometime on Thursday, he said.

"It burned a pretty big hole in the floor and causes some smoke damage," Cass said. The fire did not spread to walls or any other area, Cass said.

Simino noticed the smoke in the building when she arrived home and called the fire department, Cass said. No one was home while the embers charred the floor and started to ignite, he said. "There was no great firefighting efforts here," Cass said. "There was no great save. We were just here at the right time."

The New Hampshire State Fire Marshall's office has determined that ashes can retain heat and embers for up to seven days, Cass said, stating that embers should always be disposed of properly.

Valley News 11-22-97

Cornish firefighters set controlled blaze

CORNISH - The Cornish Fire Department conducted a controlled burn on Center Road, Sunday morning, Feb. 28.

At the request of the owner, it burned a small, white house that had been unoccupied for about 10 years.

Beforehand, the house had been stripped of anything salvageable, such as windows, doors, and odd furniture, so the building was wide open, with few, if any, obstacles in the blaze's path.

The odd lumber piled in the attached shed was ignited at about 7:30 a.m. In less than 10 minutes, the whole building was ablaze, with flames leaping from the windows and even the front doorway.

There were two out-buildings, about 30 feet away from the house, which the firefighters sprayed with water to keep them from igniting. However, the buildings were so hot, they steamed when the water hit them.

With little or no wind, some dry leaves behind the house caught fire, and were easily extinguished with shovels of snow.

In 30 minutes, the little house was essentially reduced to ashes. In a few weeks, there will most likely be a new home on the site.



PRACTICE TIME—Members of the Cornish Fire Department got in some training Sunday morning with a controlled burn of an unoccupied house on Center Road.

News Leader

3-4-99

Photo by Lois I

Three Cornish firefighters develop device that improves accountability

Called the "X-Track," the system helps fire departments track the whereabouts of fire scene personnel

By CASSIE D. LAVERTUE
Staff Writer

CLAREMONT — Two weeks ago, at a fire at the vacant Homestead building on Sullivan Street, Claremont Fire Chief Peter Chase said he could have used some extra help tracking who went in and out of the expansive building and its numerous entry and exit points. For years, the city's fire department has been using a bucket system where firefighters drop a name tag in the bucket as an accountability measure, but Chase admits that the method is a bit outdated.

Thankfully, starting June 1, that will be less of a concern for Chase as the department implements a more reliable and technologically-advanced accountability system recently developed by three neighboring firemen in Cornish.

The system, called XTrack, is a bar-code driven, hand-held device

that enables fire departments to more effectively track personnel entering a fire's "hot zone," the area of a fire scene that poses immediate safety and life risks to firefighters and other emergency workers. The device works when an appointed command officer scans a firefighter's bar-coded accountability tag before he or she enters the hot zone. XTrack calculates the time the firefighter is in the building and alerts the command officer if a firefighter has spent his or her air supply. When the firefighter leaves the hot zone, he or she is scanned out.

And since XTrack is Web-based, it also allows a department to enter individual medical profiles on each firefighter, upload fire scene information and prepare reports. It replaces the archaic, and sometimes inaccurate, accountability systems — like the bucket drop

"Firefighting has basically been done the same way for 100 years. We're actually getting to the point now that we're putting the firefighter in greater danger today. The firefighter is covered head to toe in protective gear and going in deeper in the fire. That's why accountability is so critical."

— Claremont Fire Chief Peter Chase



The XTrack's hand-held device works on a magnetic antenna and chip, and information logged into the system can be uploaded onto a PC, which creates secure reports and audits the trail of fire scene activities from the web site (www.XTrack.com). Also on the site is a collection of firefighters' recipes from around the world, an honor roll and photographs, which is accessible to the public. (Cassie D. Lavertue photo)

used in Claremont — with an easy to use, portable computer that works on a magnetic antenna and chip. According to Chase, the National Fire Protection Association requires that departments have an accountability system in place, but the associa-

tion does not outline what process should be. XTrack's inventors said the issue of accountability was brought up casually at a meeting three years ago. Gary Child, Paul Whalen and Nate Cassi... it soon became clear that they needed to find a better and more effective way to track personnel

The new XTrack accountability system is as easy as point and scan, as shown here by Claremont firefighters Lt. T.P. Bergeron, left, and Deputy Chief Mike Monetta, right. XTrack will be implemented in the Claremont Fire Department starting June 1. Developed by three firemen from Cornish (Gary Chilton, Paul Whalen and Chief Nate Cass), XTrack is a bar-code driven device that tracks firefighters as they enter and exit the fire's hot zone.

(Cassie D. Lavertue photo)



at the fire scene. "Most of the conversation in the parking lot for a fund er for the fire department," Chilton. "But accountability been an issue for years."

The trio attended several shows and did a lot of research before deciding on a specific hand-held version. They it is the only accountability tem that they know of that tied to a laptop computer, th a PC is required if a fire de ment wants to prepare rep and gather fire scene info tion. At the time, both Ch and Whalen had full-time outside their firefighting du but they now work exclusivel

(See XTRACK - Pg.

XTrack, a fire division of Tek Data Systems in Ramsey, N.J., a bar code warehouse system company. Cass, Cornish's fire chief, owns and operates North Country Door.

Chilton said that finding a manufacturer for hand-held devices was difficult, and that because the technology was so new, they didn't have the finances to market the product nationwide, so they decided to license its patent to Tek Data. Though company headquarters are in New Jersey, XTrack's sales and marketing is done out of an office on Route 12A in Cornish and employs 12.

For the past two months, Chilton, Whalen and Cass have been sharing information with Claremont and Cornish fire departments, the New Hampshire Fire Standards Training Facility in Concord and the Massachusetts Fire Academy on

prototype XTracks, filtering out problems and streamlining the product. There are four versions — the XTrack 1700, the 4600, 7200 and the newest, the 1740. The major differences among the four are the number of hand-held scanners included in each package and actual scanner size, that is, the amount of information a scanner can hold. For large departments with several fire companies, like Boston or Worcester, a department may have up to 10 scanners, said Whalen.

Right now, the three are making contact with area hospitals to start "MEDlifeline," a secure function in XTrack that allows a hospital to access a firefighter's medical history before the firefighter arrives in a medical emergency. Other options on XTrack let a fire department maintain inventory, separate firefighting groups into

roof and basement teams and pre-load staff shifts, as well as keep track of mutual aid respondents (who must also have bar-coded tags). There's also a more fun element to XTrack on its web site (www.xtrack.com) that gives a collection of firefighters' recipes from around the world, classified ads, pictures and honor rolls. Anyone can visit the site, but portions sensitive to each department, like medical history, scene reports and inventory, can only be opened by fire personnel.

Already, orders for XTrack have come in from Ohio, New Jersey, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Massachusetts, though, like Claremont, none will go out until June 1. Cost for such a system (all packages include a charger for an engine truck, the hand-held, tags and a cradle for uploading to the Web) corresponds to a system's capabilities, which for the XTrack

1700, is \$2,400. But the des well worth its cost if it saves said Chief Chase.

"Firefighting has basically done the same way for 100 y said Chase, who counts 42 time, part-time and volu firefighters in the Clare department. "We're actually ting to the point now that putting the firefighter in gr danger today. The firefight covered head to toe in prote gear and going in deeper is fire. That's why accountabil so critical.

"It allows us to keep track large number of people in a time," he added. "And for concerns, like a flash insi building, people are bailin and we want to know who is isn't still in the building."

Whalen agrees. "What it's is fairly important and we ne it to do it well," he said.



BIG BOOST — John Dryfhout, superintendent of Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site (second from the right) presented a \$20,000 check to Cornish Fire Chief Nathan Cass (third from right) at the site this week. Joining them were, left to right, Selectman Robert Maslan, former Fire Chief Michael Monette, Selectman Bill Gallagher, park biologist Steve Walasewicz, Assistant Chief Dale Rook, and April May Gelineau (far right), administrative officer at Saint-Gaudens. (Ruth Rollins photo)

Cornish Volunteer Fire Department receives \$20,000 grant from Interior

By RUTH ROLLINS
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Cornish Fire Chief Nathan Cass and several department members were presented a \$20,000 check from John Dryfhout, park superintendent at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site Wednesday morning.

The money was awarded by the Department of Interior, through a Rural Fire Assistance Program grant, which administrative officer April May Gelineau and biologist Steve Walasewicz had applied for last year on behalf of the town of Cornish.

The Rural Fire Department Assistance Program was created by the 106th Congress to support departments protecting communities with fewer than 10,000 people and which play a substantial cooperative role in the protection of U.S. Department of Interior lands.

"The National Park Service has always valued the support of local fire and emergency services. We are delighted that this application was funded in this the very first exploratory

year of the program," said Dryfhout.

"In previous years I could not find any funding to help the Cornish department, which responds to the site, and when this came on line I asked for the fullest amount. Cornish is the primary recipient for this project, receiving the largest award possible through the program," said Dryfhout.

The grant enhances funds raised by the Cornish Fireman's Association to pay for a 2002 four-wheel drive Ford, which was recently purchased from Claremont Ford. The truck will replace the 1978 Dodge Mini Pumper and will be used as a forestry truck.

"If we had not received this grant we would not have been able to buy the chassis for another year," said Cass. He said another like amount must be raised through donations and fund-raising events before the truck will be put into use, as it will cost about \$30,000 to put on the body, which will be done locally. Funds raised by the members are divided for two projects, half for the truck and half to build a new station at Cornish Flat.

Fire Fails To Shake Salinger's Seclusion

By WILLIAM H. HONAN

CORNISH, N.H., Oct. 23 — Not even a fire that consumed at least half his home on Tuesday could smoke out the reclusive J. D. Salinger, author of the classic novel of adolescent rebellion, "The Catcher in the Rye." Mr. Salinger is almost equally famous for having elevated privacy to an art form.

His fastidiously preserved seclusion was threatened on Tuesday when his third wife, Colleen, reported a fire in their home to the volunteer fire department. Within minutes, the blazing house was surrounded by fire trucks and emergency vehicles from Cornish, the New Hampshire towns of Plainfield, Meriden and Claremont, and two small towns in Vermont, Windsor and West Windsor.

Mike Monette, Cornish's fire chief, said the fire was brought under control in about an hour. No injuries were reported, he said, but "damage to the house was extensive." Neither he nor anyone else was able to say whether any of the author's unpublished manuscripts were destroyed.

The New Hampshire Fire Marshal's office is investigating the cause of the fire.

The Author Retreats
On Thursday afternoon, Mr. Salinger, now 73 years old, cavorted around his property playing hide-and-seek with a reporter and a photographer who had come to learn how he was bearing up.

When first spied, Mr. Salinger, lanky and with snow-white hair, was outside his house talking to his wife and a local building contractor. As strangers approached, Mr. Salinger, like the fleet chipmunks that dash across his driveway, scurried into his charred retreat.

The contractor barred the way of the pursuing reporter and pleaded: "You've got to understand, this is a man who is really *serious* about his privacy."

Meanwhile, Mr. Salinger's wife, who is considerably younger than her husband, strode vigorously toward a blue Mazda pickup truck in the driveway.

"I have things to do!" she announced, brushing aside all questions and glaring as she leaped into the vehicle and roared away.

There have been persistent rumors that Mr. Salinger has completed one or two books but has decided not to publish anything except perhaps posthumously.

The author's agent, Phyllis Westberg of Harold Ober Associates, said on Wednesday that she was not aware of any such books. She said Mr. Salinger had left a recorded telephone message telling her of the fire but had not mentioned any manuscripts. She has had no further communication with him, she said, because he does not have a telephone.

Positioned for Privacy

Mr. Salinger's modest house, surrounded by three plain garagelike structures, including the author's writing studio, is positioned for privacy. To reach it one crosses an old covered bridge high above a roaring

24, 1992
1992

Fire Fails To Shake Salinger's Seclusion

Continued From Page 13



Paul O. Bonvert for The New York Times

The house of the author J. D. Salinger in Cornish, N.H., which caught fire on Tuesday. The house, positioned for privacy, has a panoramic view of Mount Ascutney across the Connecticut River in Vermont.

brook and grinds for several miles up a steeply winding, hard-packed dirt road. The last 100 yards are an extremely steep grade, and the Salinger house, nearly invisible from the road, seems almost an eagle's nest with a panoramic view of Mount Ascutney across the Connecticut River in Vermont. An immense white satellite dish behind the house suggests that Mr. Salinger is still in touch with the outside world, at least through television.

The fire appears to have burned out the interior of about half of the main house, and two large, bright blue tarpaulins now cover sections where the roof is evidently burned through. The fire did not damage a new wing, still being built, that thrusts toward Ascutney.

Mr. Salinger is a sort of literary Mount Fuji: hugely prominent yet almost always shrouded in mist. If Ronald Reagan was the great communicator of his generation, Mr. Salinger has become its best-known enigma.

After publishing "The Catcher in the Rye" in 1951 (which is estimated to have sold two million copies) and three volumes of novellas and short stories, Mr. Salinger abruptly stopped writing for publication in 1965.

With two exceptions, he has not submitted to an interview since 1953. The first of the exceptions was in 1974, when he spoke by telephone for half an hour with Lacey Fosburgh of The New York Times, venting his anger about unauthorized editions of his early, previously uncollected works.

"There is a marvelous peace in not publishing," he told Ms. Fosburgh, adding: "Publishing is a terrible invasion of my privacy. I like to write. I love to write. But I write just for myself and my own pleasure."

Seven years later, Mr. Salinger granted an interview to a columnist for The Advocate in Baton Rouge, La., Betty Eppes, who was also a former insurance agent and Playboy Bunny. Despite being singularly unrevealing, the Eppes interview was reprinted in The Paris Review in 1981.

More informative was a deposition Mr. Salinger made in October 1986 in

his successful suit to keep Random House from publishing the original version of Ian Hamilton's biography, "In Search of J. D. Salinger," on the ground that it made excessive, unauthorized use of Mr. Salinger's private correspondence.

Asked how he had occupied himself over the previous 20 years, Mr. Salinger replied: "Just a work of fiction. That's all."

He added: "It's almost impossible to define. I work with characters as they develop. I just go from there."

Good Fences

Mr. Salinger has kept aloof from his neighbors in Cornish as well as from prying journalists and the public. For example, Clara Perry, who was Mr. Salinger's next-door neighbor for 20 years, ran a kindergarten attended by both of Mr. Salinger's children, Matt, an actor, and Margaret Ann, now both grown. Mrs. Perry

refers to him affectionately as J. but says that neither she nor her husband were ever invited into Salinger's house.

Mr. Salinger's neighbors express great pride in his fame and literary accomplishments, but none could found who had read anything he written.

"I'm not one for reading," a neighbor explained.

Another, Dorothy Johnson, said never got around to them."

Mrs. Perry said that she and her six children had never cracked one of Mr. Salinger's books because "Catcher in the Rye" was banned from the Windsor public school they attended.

After the book became accessible, she said, the Windsor school used to send groups of students to visit him. "But pretty soon he stopped that," Mrs. Perry said. "It got too much for him."

Cornish selectmen still feuding with town's fire chief

East Times Apr 6, 2002 p. A1

Even driving habits are an issue

By **GEORGE CHAPPELL**
Contributing Writer

CORNISH — Some aggressive driving by Fire Chief Nathan Cass and selectmen's attempt to give him a public slap on the wrist for it reignited a dispute between the fire department and selectmen last week.

Sparked by this latest incident, officers in the town's fire department met Friday with the Cornish Board of Selectmen in an attempt to patch a lingering rift between

the two organizations.

Cass said he received a telephone call from the selectmen asking him to write a letter stating that he admitted to a "criminal" act of passing another vehicle on a yellow line while responding to a fire two weeks ago.

Residents Karen and Jim Strout, whose car Cass passed while driving his own vehicle and not an emergency vehicle, reported the incident

(See **CORNISH** - Pg. A14)

to Cornish Police Sgt. Douglas Hackett. The Strouts subsequently withdrew their complaint.

The incident then was reported to the New Hampshire State Police, who responded and said there was nothing they could do because no charges had been brought. At Friday's meeting, no one present claimed to know who reported the matter to the state police.

Cass, meanwhile, said he had apologized to the members of his department for having set a bad example of driver safety.

Firefighters then said the incident should have ended with the apology.

"There were no charges, no complaints, no nothing," Cass said. "Yet I'm continually being pushed to do something on my part. If you think I'm going to

hand this board of selectmen a letter saying I'm guilty of a crime, that ain't going to happen," Cass said.

Firefighters directed their comments Friday night to Selectman William Gallagher because they said he did not understand the department and that he often took his cue from Selectman Lawrence Dingee in criticizing Cass.

Dingee was not at the meeting Friday.

Chairman Robert Maslan, who has been a regular supporter of the fire department, said a public safety issue had developed and the selectmen merely wanted an explanation from Cass.

Nevertheless, when two of the three selectmen last December tried to unseat Cass by drafting an ordinance of term limits for the fire chief, Maslan refused to support the

motion, which had it passed would have ended Cass's career as chief.

Cass's term was renewed after his department and several members of the community

little of the history of discord between him and Dingee, who also voted against the chief's re-appointment three years ago.

"Probably why the pressure

"If you think I'm going to hand this board of selectmen a letter saying I'm guilty of a crime, that ain't going to happen."

— Fire Chief Nathan Cass

defended him and Gallagher joined Maslan in opposing the ordinance change.

At the beginning of Friday's session, Cass said he wanted the meeting to be non-public, but Gallagher said he preferred the meeting to be public because "that's the legal thing to do."

He explained to Gallagher a

pot blew the last time, when you guys rewrote the ordinance and handed it to these fellows that wasn't a healthy meeting for anybody," Cass said of the December incident.

Cass said he and all 25 members of his department felt that they were being boxed into a corner with the new ordinance.

"You're listening to Larry,

but you're not listening to us," Cass told Gallagher. "Us' is a bunch of us, and Larry is one person," he added. "He's obviously vindictive and after my position, for whatever reason."

"You've got to start thinking for yourself, and not follow Larry's lead," Cass told Gallagher.

He said he believes the selectmen are trying to take over the fire department the way they run the local police, without a chief.

The fire captains said they were irate over a report of a verbal reprimand to their chief.

"I feel like Nathan does; I have to watch my back," said Robert Rice, captain of Engine No. 2. "I want to make sure he's going to be safe at the end of the fire."

Cass said fire companies dating back to the Roman Empire have had fire chiefs because of

the dangerous nature of fire-fighting.

"When you have a life and death situation, someone has to be in charge," he said. "You can't run a fire department without a chief."

Gallagher, who remained quiet throughout most of the session, confirmed after the meeting that the selectboard asked Cass to write a letter explaining what happened during the alleged incident.

In response to a question why the firefighters felt that Gallagher took his lead from Dingee on votes affecting the department, Gallagher suggested that perception exists because he is the newest selectman. He was just re-elected in March for a second three-year term.

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



Exeter Times Apr 7 2002 p. 03

NEW ENGINE — Cornish's selectmen and fire chief accept new Engine 2 from Dingee Machine, a shop in Cornish, in this March 1995 file photo. Dingee Machine, located next to the fire station, specializes in building fire trucks. Pictured, from left, are Larr Dingee, Fire Chief Mike Monette, and selectmen Stu Hodgeman, chairman Bob Masla and John White.

Fire department gets \$105K grant

By DAMIEN FISHER
Staff Writer

*Eagle Times Nov 11, 2009
1, A 2*

A \$105,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security was awarded to the Cornish Fire Department last week, allowing the department to purchase needed equipment.

Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass said the Assistance to Firefighters grant will allow the department to buy new turnout gear, air bottles and air packs for all of its 25 members. Cass said the equipment the department now has is out of date and needs to be replaced.

The Department of Homeland Security

has provided more than \$18 billion in grants for local fire, police and first responder departments across the country since its inception. This year 39 New Hampshire fire departments have been awarded \$2,465,452 through the Assistance to Firefighters grant program.

Cass said four of the department's volunteers deserved a good deal of the credit for getting the money. Captains Bob Rice and Bill Harthan and firefighters Dale O'Conner and Paul Whalen all helped land the grant.

"They all took grant writing classes and spent weeks re-writing it before submitting it," he said. "They all deserve a lot of recognition for their hard work."

Their hard work paid off with the \$105,000 total award. Of that amount, \$95,000 is guaranteed by the Department of Homeland Security with Cornish making up the rest.

Cass said the award allowed him to cut the department's budget by 20 percent this year.

"If only all the other departments could cut out 20 percent," he joked.

Cass said the department is now focusing on building up its membership from 25 to about 30. The department has been in existence since the 1950's and Cass said he usually likes to have about 30 firefighters.

Damien Fisher can be reached at 603-543-3100 ext. 139, or by e-mail at dfisher@eagletimes.com

Seeking Clues Among Charred Timbers



Cornish Assistant Fire Chief Dale Rook, left, and Claremont Fire Lt. Tim Bergeron investigate the remains of a barn after it was destroyed by

fire yesterday morning in Cornish.

VALLEY NEWS — J. GWENDOLYNNE BERRY

Cornish Three-Story Barn Burns

Valley News Oct 29, 2004

By KRISTEN FOUNTAIN

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — A swift-burning fire early yesterday morning reduced a three-story red barn on Route 12A to a pile of charred logs, severely damaging the collection of antique machinery stored within.

Longtime residents Larry Welker and his wife were staying overnight in Pennsylvania while driving to Williamsburg, Va., for a camera tradeshow when they were notified by phone about the fire on their property, friends said. They were expected back yesterday evening, but could not be reached last night by phone.

The quick response by firefighters from Windsor, Cornish, and other nearby towns kept the fire from spreading from the barn through a connected breezeway to the couple's two-car garage, said Cornish Fire Chief Nathan Cass at the scene. Their house, less than 50 feet from the barn, was also spared, as were piles of lumber stacked behind the barn and inside the garage.

"It was amazing that we could keep that garage standing," said Cass, who

particularly praised the first responders who doused the garage with foam.

Forty firefighters, including teams from Plainfield, Meriden, and Ascutney, worked for at least three hours to control the blaze, which was visible from more than 5 miles away, he said. As of last night, the fire chief could not pinpoint what caused the blaze.

No animals were housed in the barn, which served primarily as a workshop for Welker, who makes parts and attachments for Leica cameras and restores antique furniture, said a friend, Dave Teffner of West Lebanon, whose son lives in Cornish and spotted the flames and smoke on his way to work.

"I thought about it and realized (the Welkers) were out of town, so I knew they were safe," said Susan Teffner, his wife.

A truck, bulldozer, and crane from Daniels Construction in Ascutney were parked around the barn, as were two trailer-size red metal storage containers filled with antique furniture. None of that equipment was damaged.

Next-door neighbor Jim Ferland said his brother John called the fire depart-

ment after they woke up at around 3:30 a.m. and looked out their window to see flames licking 80 feet high from the southernmost wall of the barn.

"Once that went, it just went through the whole barn," he said. Flames engulfed the entire structure within less than half an hour, he said.

By 11:15 a.m., when a representative from Liberty Mutual insurance arrived, what remained was a waist-high 80 foot by 30 foot mass of sodden black logs surrounded by large pools and moving streams of brown water.

Large antique metal lathes, saws, mills, grinders, and a bench were keeled over amid the wreckage, stained brown and orange from the heat.

Local firefighters did not have long to rest.

Cornish and Ascutney firefighters assisted Windsor in responding to a call from a Windsor home along Route 5 early yesterday afternoon after a faulty furnace filled the structure with smoke.

Kat Poland, whose family owns and lives at the home at 1155 Route 5, south of downtown Windsor, said she "smelled fuel ... it was overwhelming" and then

called the fire department.

Windsor Fire Chief Lewis Gage said a crew responding to the 12:52 p.m. call intended to check the house with carbon-monoxide detectors and other gas-detecting equipment, but then saw "smoke venting out of the gable vents" of the two-story home, which dates back to 1935.

"What happened, I believe, is we had a malfunctioning oil burner that wound up filling the house with smoke. It flooded the attic with smoke," Gage said.

Uncertain whether the house itself was on fire, Windsor also called in mutual aid from Cornish, Ascutney and West Windsor. Hartland was also en route but turned around when firefighters at the scene determined that there was smoke, but no flames in the house.

"We went downstairs and shut the oil burner off, and took corrective action," said Gage.

"We're in the process right now of venting the house, to get that nasty oil smoke out of there."

Gage said the house remains habitable.

"It will be. They'll have some cleaning to do," he said.



WAYNE CARTER PHOTO

BARN BLAZE — An early morning fire destroyed a barn and damaged a garage Wednesday at a home near the junction of Rte. 12A and Town House Road in Cornish

Barn lost, home saved in blaze

By **DAMIEN FISHER**
Staff Writer

An early Wednesday morning blaze destroyed a three and a half story barn near the junction of Rte. 12A and Town House Road. The barn was attached to a garage and home. The barn was destroyed but firefighters managed to save garage and home.

“The firefighters had a job of it,” said Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass. “When you have a three-and-a-half story barn going it’s one hell of a job to keep the garage and home from burning. They did a hell of a job.”

The garage was damaged, Cass said, but all of the contents were saved including two vehicles. Cass said the Cornish department responded to the blaze at 3:30 a.m. and immediately knew they would focus on saving the garage and house.

“When we first got there with limited supplies of water we put all the water on the house and

“When you have a three-and-a-half story barn going it’s one hell of a job to keep the garage and home from burning. They did a hell of a job.”

Nate Cass

Cornish fire chief

garage,” he said. “When you first get there you’ve got about 8 to 10 guys doing 25 jobs.”

Once crews from nearby departments started arriving on scene the barn started to get attention, but Cass said by then the fire was too far advanced.

“By the time we got to it the barn was down,” he said.

In addition the Cornish department, firefighters from Windsor, Ascutney, Plainfield, Meriden and Claremont assisted with the fire. Cass said more than 40 firefighters helped out. The fire was under control two hours after the Cornish department first responded.

Cass said the fire was devastating, completely destroying

the barn and all of it’s contents. Inside the post and beam barn, there was reportedly hundreds of thousands of dollars in machine tools, some of them antiques. Cass called it a million dollar fire.

“It was a very costly fire,” he said. “The loss was tremendous.”

The cause of the fire was still undetermined Wednesday evening, after Cass spent most of the day investigating the scene. He said the cause is likely accidental.

Damien Fisher can be reached at 603-543-3100 ext. 139, or by e-mail at dfisher@eagletimes.com

Blaze totals new race car

Brothers were working in garage when fire began

By **JOSH ADAMS**
Staff Writer

4-18-05

A brand new race car and the garage it sat in were destroyed Saturday evening in a two alarm blaze that leveled the wooden structure.

There were no injuries.

Brothers Lee and Lyle Parry were working on the vehicle at Lee Parry's 45 White Water Brook Road home when the flames broke out. After dialing 911, the two quickly went through three fire extinguishers as they waited

for firefighters to arrive.


"We were just hoping we could contain it," Lee Parry said as he watched his garage crumble.

For firefighters, the initial concern was the proximity of the garage to the house. With less than 30 feet between the two structures, Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass said the emphasis was on protecting the home until a water source was established.

"It was fully involved when we got here," Cass said.

In addition to the water supplied by tanker trucks, nearby Red Water Brook was used as a source to douse the flames as well. Cass estimated it took roughly 30 minutes to get the blaze under control. Lee Parry, his wife and two

See **FIRE** - Page A8

 **Cornish**



COURTESY PHOTO

GONE — Brothers Lee and Lyle Parry were working on this car, seen in this undated photo, when a fire broke out and destroyed both the building and vehicle.



JOSH ADAMS PHOTO

FIRE — Cornish firefighters soak the remnants of a garage on White Water Brook Road after the structure was completely lost to the flames. Inside the garage was a brand new race car waiting to be driven by 17-year-old Lee Parry Jr. According to the boy's father, the car had just been lettered.

FIRE FROM PAGE A1

children will be able to stay in their home, which did not sustain any damage, Cass said.

Having just had it lettered with dozens of colorful decals, Lee and his brother Lyle were visibly upset with the loss of the race car. Lee's son Lee Parry Jr., a 17-year-old student at Stevens High School, was the driver for LJ Motorsports.

Though an investigation had not initially determined the cause of the fire, Lyle said his brother reached for the unattached fuel tank of the car and got a static electric shock that "exploded" the tank. Neither brother was hurt in the initial explosion, nor in their attempts to dampen the flames. Containers of propane, acetylene, oil and other items only spurred the flames on, according

to the brothers.

Firefighters reported hearing several explosions during their first 10 minutes on the scene.

"Almost instant," Lee Parry said of the quick moving fire. "We turned around and it was going."

Also lost in the fire was a trailer for the race car, which was initially parked alongside the garage. Lyle Parry said he and his brother pushed that to the other side of the driveway in hopes of saving it.

In addition to Cornish, crews from Claremont, Plainfield and Meriden also responded.

Josh Adams can be reached at (603) 543-3100 ext. 104, or by e-mail at jadams@eagle-times.com.

Claremont, NH Historical Society

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NEWS & UP-COMING EVENTS

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SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2006 9am

Bring a rake, gloves, & dress appropriately
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Wanted! Books, plants, large and small items, odds and ends, etc. all in good condition for sale.

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A LAST GIFT FOR A FRIEND

VallyNews Jan 11 2006

Some people know Nate Cass as chief of the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department. Others know him as the owner of North Country Door, a custom woodworking business near the Cornish-Plainfield town line.



What most people don't know is that Nate Cass is also a casket maker. And here's the best part: He gives away far more "boxes" than he sells. "It's not much of a business," he told me. "We just have the materials around when someone needs one."

Cass, 56, doesn't keep a list of such things, but over the years he figures that he's built 15 to 20 free caskets for local families who have lost a parent or a spouse. "Most of the people were friends of mine," he said. "It's about the last thing you're ever going to get to do for them."

Last month, Paul Sayah, a Windsor firefighter, died of cancer at age 61. Retired Windsor chief Lew Gage helped the family make arrangements, including lining up pallbearers. Gage called Cass, honoring Sayah's wish that area firefighters lead the funeral procession. During the conversation, Cass volunteered to build a casket if Sayah's widow and children were OK with it. Gage checked with the family. "They were very pleased," said Gage. "Keeping more of the (the funeral process) in the fire family meant a lot to them."

The casket, made of oak, took Cass, 56, two days to build. After selecting and milling the wood, he put the pieces together with screws and sprayed on a clear finish. "There's certainly more of a personal touch to have someone you know make the box," Cass said.

Nearly 10 years ago, Cass built a casket for his friend and fellow firefighter Pete Decatur. Mary Decatur told me that the idea of charging to build her husband's casket never would have crossed Cass' mind. "That's just the way Nate is," she said. "If I would have offered him something, he would have said I was insulting him."

Along with the emotional benefit that Cass provides families at a time when they could use a lift, there's another aspect of what he does that can't be overlooked. Because just like about everything else these days, dying is expensive.

According to information on the AARP's Web site, it's not unheard of for a family to spend \$10,000 on a funeral. If you stop and think about it, the AARP says, after a home and cars, a funeral can be one of the most expensive purchases a family makes. And with most funerals, the casket is the big-ticket item.

To get a feel for what caskets cost, I called the New Hampshire Funeral Directors Association in Pittsfield, but executive director David Pollard said he couldn't give me a price range. I guess he was trying to save me from a case of sticker shock. So I turned to the Internet, where a search indicates that the average price for a casket is around \$2,000. Caskets made of mahogany or teak can run \$10,000 or more. The least expensive wooden casket I could find, made of pine, sold for \$1,395.

On the rare occasion when Cass sells a casket, he charges about \$1,200 for one made of hardwood. It won't have a lot of fancy carvings or brass handles, but Cass has never really seen the sense in that any way. "They're all going into the ground," he said.

Caskets can be made of just about any material. The challenge is sizing. Cass builds his caskets 6½-foot long, but can be longer if needed. The only requirement is that the casket fit inside the vault that lines the grave. "If you can't get it in the vault, you're in trouble," he said.

Cass, an Upper Valley native, built his first casket 25 years ago. After his father died, Cass and his brother Gary visited the funeral home where they were shown their options for caskets. Being in the woodworking business, Cass had a pretty good idea what it would cost to build one from scratch. But the funeral home's asking price was quite a bit higher.

It's easy to see how this can happen. Families that have just lost a loved one don't tend to have much interest or time to shop around. It's helped that the Federal Trade Commission began tightening up its oversight of the funeral home industry in the 1980s. Federal law now requires funeral homes to give prices over the phone. Many families don't realize that they're under no obligation to purchase a casket from the funeral home handling the burial. It's rare when families go elsewhere, said Pollard, head of the state's funeral directors.

After building his father's casket, Cass approached local funeral homes about becoming a supplier, but there wasn't much interest in working with him. He continued to build caskets anyway, giving them to families who appreciate not only his craftsmanship but his thoughtfulness. It's a gesture that seems to please everyone.

"Everyone except the undertaker," he said.



Sound of Gunshot Pro

Valley News Nov 4, 2006

By BOB HOOKWAY

Valley News Staff Writer

Second Bomb Scare a

CORNISH — A shot heard yesterday by a school custodian in the area of Cornish Elementary School prompted a lockdown in the school gym of about 18 children who were participating in an after-school program.

At the same time, most of the approximately 140 students — who were in the process of been dismissed for the day when the shot was heard — were instructed to leave school grounds quickly.

Meanwhile, for the second day in a row, students, staff and administrators at Hartford High School were sent home early after a written bomb threat was found in a girls' bathroom near the principal's office, according to Hartford police.

The Hartford evacuation occurred, once again, at about 11 a.m., while the Cornish inci-

dent took place at mid-afternoon just as school was letting out, School Administrative Unit 6 Assistant Superintendent Allen Damren said.

"School was being dismissed for the weekend. Some children were on the playground with their parents. There was the normal after-school chit-chat, when the custodian heard a gunshot," said Damren, who praised the work of custodian Michael Monette and school secretary Dale O'Connor who — in the absence of Adrienne Noel, the principal — followed emergency procedures exactly, he said.

They got the departing children onto buses or into family vehicles quickly, and also cleared the playground and secured the build-

mpts Lockdown at Cornish School

at Hartford High Leads to Early Dismissal

ing with the remaining students in the gym, he said.

"They both responded according to the school's emergency plan," said Damren, who said in addition to state police, officers from Cornish, Plainfield and the Sullivan County Sheriff's Department responded to the scene.

Damren said state police later declared the school area safe without commenting on the source of the gunshot.

"They didn't say where it may have come from, and I'm not going to speculate on that either," said Damren, who was preparing a letter for students' families late yesterday afternoon explaining the incident to them. The children who remained at the school on Town House Road after dismissal were to be

sent home at 5:30 p.m., he said.

Cornish Police said two other residents heard the gunshots, which may have originated in the gravel pit area of the Cornish Fairgrounds, police said in a press release last night.

In Hartford, police Capt. Tim Rich said yesterday's note appeared to be in the same handwriting as the one found in the same girls' room about 24 hours earlier.

"It was almost a duplicate," said Rich of the message that threatened a bomb would go off at a specific time at the school. Rich said one thing that differed in the two situations was that a similar threat was also written yesterday on the wall of a third-floor boys' bathroom.

"As a former teacher, things like that are

incredibly disruptive," said Hartford school board member Chuck Bohi, who taught history at Hanover High School for 27 years. "It's scary for the younger children, and maybe for the high school kids it's more of a lark, but it screws things up terribly," he said.

Former Hartford School Bboard member Bob Durkee said the incidents would upset him in any case, but more so because he has two children at Hartford High.

"As a parent, I'm especially grieved to think of this becoming a pattern," he said.

Police planned to inspect the empty school thoroughly over the weekend, said Rich, who added it was expected classes would resume on Monday morning at the usual time. He also said anyone who has information on either or both of the incidents call the Hartford department at: (802)-295-9425.

Bob Hookway can be contacted at bhookway@smnews.com

Cause of Cornish Fire Uncertain

Valley News Nov 3, 2006 1A2

By MARK DAVIS

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH, N.H. — Mike and Sandi Reynolds had grown tired of living in downtown Windsor, of having a few feet of yard space and cars trolling the right of way behind their home. So in April, they moved onto a ranch home on a 50-acre parcel owned by Sandi's parents on rural Root Hill Road.

It may be a while before the Reynolds can live in their new home again, after a fire yesterday morning damaged much of its entrance and sent smoke throughout the building.

"My boss was waiting and the first words out of his mouth were, 'Your mother called, your sister called, your house is on fire,'" said Sandi Reynolds, 40, who works in an Ascutney office building. "Those words don't register in your brain: 'Your house is on fire.' My house is on fire?"

No one was home at the time of the blaze, which started at 8 a.m. Mike, Sandi and son Paul had left for work, and daughter Nicole had been dropped off at Windsor High School. Their German shepherd Mason was not hurt, but two cats were unaccounted for hours after the flames had been extinguished.

The fire apparently started in the front porch, Cornish Chief Nathan Cass said, engulfing the front door and penetrating the ceiling and roof.

Fire officials were unsure of the cause yesterday, but Cass said the fire did not appear to be arson.



Second Lt. Leo Maslan looks out the front door of the Reynolds home in Cornish yesterday, where a morning fire damaged the entrance. Behind him is fellow Cornish Fire Department member Dale O'Cor.

VALLEY NEWS — JENNIFER H.

"We believe it was probably accidental," Cass said. "There's no suspicion."

The home is insured, the family said.

Members of the Windsor Fire Department were the first on the scene, about a half-mile from Covered Bridge 22 on Town House Road.

"We had flames by the front door that (reached) up over the roof eave," Windsor Fire Lt. Kelly Young said.

More than 20 firefighters from the

Cornish, Meriden and Plainfield fire departments responded to the scene, Cass said, taking about 45 minutes to bring the fire under control. Five fire engines and three tankers were used.

A neighbor driving down the street saw the flames and called 911.

Mike Reynolds, 42, works at the Windsor wastewater treatment plant. One of his co-workers at the plant, listening to the scanner, overheard chatter of a fire on Root Hill Road. Mike Reynolds figured it could be his

house, or his in-laws' or neighbor's and started driving home.

The Reynoldses, Windsor natives who met in grade school and had been together ever since, said yesterday they were unsure what they do next.

"I don't want to talk about it," Sandi Reynolds said. "I just want to go home and sleep in my own bed."

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No one hurt in fire

North Country Door will rebuild damaged building

By ELIZABETH MARTIN

Staff Writer

05-24-07

Cornish Fire Chief Nathan Cass' instincts made him want to rush in to the smoke-filled spray room he uses as part of his North Country Door business, Thursday, but he said his training made him stop.

Meriden Cass left his business on Route 120 and everything seemed fine, but when he returned 10 minutes later he spotted smoke.

Firefighters arrived quickly and were able to extinguish the fire in the spray building, which stands alone away from the main shop.

"Fortunately 35 years of training, I didn't go in," Cass said. "I knew this was more than a fire extinguisher could handle."

At 7:10 p.m. Cass saw the smoke rising from one of the building's. He grabbed the fire extinguisher from his truck and cracked the door — sans his firefighting gear. Black smoke and the heat made him reconsider.

See FIRE - Page A5

Cass called for backup at 7:14 p.m.

Then he waited and waited for what seemed like forever, but was only minutes. Every three minutes a fire doubles, a statistic that was all the more real for a firefighter who is used to helping others.

"It's a hell of a lot easier when you go command somebody else's but your own," he said looking at the melted tin roof and blacken red structure.

Cass had a strategy in the works, but by the time the fire caught air it moved fast and an all clear was called. No one entered the building until it was more under control, trucks pumped water anyway they could.

"There's nothing there worth saving to risk any lives as far as I was concerned," Cass said. "It's a building."

At the fire's peak there were about 1,000 gallons of water a minute being poured on the building, Meriden Fire Chief David Best said. He was uncertain when the fire was under control, but by 7:35 p.m. there were no visible flames, only white smoke.

The building contained cabinets, parts and some storage for a future yard sale. The items that would have been on sale were a studio, an iPod, cookie sheets and plastic bowls.

The two-story spray building will be rebuilt, Cass said. Cass believes the fire started in the main spray room, but is uncertain how. It could have been worse. The main shop was in walking distance



ELIZABETH MARTIN PHOTO

Volunteer Meriden firefighter Darrel Beaury on the site of a fire at North Country Door. No one was injured and the fire never reached the main building of the business.

and would have caused more than \$1 million in damage.

The fire is under investigation, Best said. There were no injuries.

Fire departments that responded were: Cornish, Meriden, Claremont, Lebanon, Enfield, West Windsor, Plainfield, Hartland and Hartford. When a structure

fire is called every department in the three counties responds, Best said.

"They sent the whole world, probably didn't need this much, but it's OK they're here," Cass said.

Elizabeth Martin can be reached at (603) 543-3100 ext. 103 or emartin@eagle-times.com.



COURTESY PHOTO BY GEORGE ALDRIDGE

A Cornish fire engine, draped in black, leads the funeral procession for former Cornish Fire Chief Duane Allen, Jr. under a flag hung from two ladder trucks.

EX-FIRE CHIEF HONORED

Cornish says goodbye to community leader Duane Allen

By **ANDREA OSMUN**
Staff Writer

Townpeople, friends and relatives gathered at the Cornish fire station on Route 120 Saturday afternoon to pay respects to a man who had given back to his community for many years. Duane Divoll Allen Jr., 78, was Cornish's former fire chief and passed away from cancer on Aug. 19.

The Rev. Scott Kearns officiated the

funeral.

"Duane was a people-person, and he loved life," Kearns said. "You'd be very hard-pressed to find someone who didn't like him."

Allen was born to Duane Divoll and Clarissa (Converse) Allen in Springfield on June 10, 1930. He graduated from Springfield High School in 1948 and then served in the United States Army during the Korean War. For 15 years, he worked for Bryant Grinder Corp., in Springfield, as a

machinist and then for Rachel Tenney Chicken Farm in Claremont. In 1958, he moved to Cornish and became a dairy farmer. He owned Lockwood Farm on Burr Road and maintained the farm for the rest of his life.

He was involved in many aspects of the community, including 4-H, the Cornish Fair, the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 1201, the Farm Bureau and the American Legion.

See **CORNISH** - Page A7

CORNISH FROM PAGE A1

Post 25 of Windsor. He was a volunteer in the fire department and then worked as the fire chief in Cornish from 1973 to 1982.

Nate Cass, Cornish's fire chief, remembered Allen as a family man and a dedicated fire chief.

"Some 50 years ago, a young man, his wife, his daughter and a cow came to Cornish. The Allen Farm was a family farm," Cass said, adding that it was in the Allen family for four generations.

"I served under Duane for six years when he was fire chief," Cass said. "He helped bring the fire department into the 21st century...His famous statement was, 'What kind of idiot runs into a house when everyone else is running out?' We do...The hardest job Duane did was put up with young whippersnappers like myself. But Duane was calm...This fire department has grown by the foundation Duane has laid."

Several people who knew Allen stood up and shared their memories of him.

One firefighter said,

"Cornish was a bedroom community. There were not many men in town, and Duane called on six of us to become female firefighters. He was breaking new ground in the '70s, to train women to fight fires. He had a big affect on the town and me personally."

A firefighter named Michael said Allen used to call his kids Gertrude and Henrietta, even though they were boys and their names were Daniel and Josh.

Lisa Snyder, of Cornish, said Duane treated her family like his own.

"He took care of us," she said. "We live on the farm up the road. He always checked to see if we were OK."

Another lady said, "I can't remember the first time I met Duane, because he was one of those people who embraced you and treated you like family."

One of Allen's step-sons remembered finding him and his mother behind the barn one day giggling like teenagers and taking hay off a truck.

"That's how I knew my mom was all right," he said.

George Aldridge, a photographer for the fire department, said after the funeral that Allen hated driving the fire trucks. One time, Aldridge said, Allen asked him to stop in the middle of Route 120 and switch, so Allen could drive Aldridge's car and Aldridge could drive the fire truck.

"It's been a big joke," Aldridge, who knew Allen for 30 years, said.

Kearns made some closing remarks about Allen.

"He had the love of family and friends and he had time to give back to the community," Kearns said. "Duane embraced life. He was a self-made man and did what he wanted to do...Duane asked Jesus Christ into his heart...Even if it was two months before he went away, he had all his ducks in a row."

Before a processional with fire trucks, police cars, family, friends and townspeople, Cass asked the crowd to "Follow us to Edminster Cemetery. We're going to take Duane on his final ride."

Dry, Windy Weather Helps Fuel Stubborn Brush Fires

Valley News 326A



Plainfield firefighter Bob Michal rinses smoke and sweat from his eyes while working with Meriden firefighter Peter Mahar, right, to douse hot spots with water and clear brush away from the fire line

on Harrington Hill in Cornish yesterday. The fire quickly spread in the dry and windy conditions that led to a red flag fire warning yesterday in New Hampshire. VALLEY NEWS — JAMES M. PATTERSON

Cornish Sees Blaze on Hot Day

By John Woodrow Cox
Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — Dylan Gelineau, his face smeared with soot, munched on a Kit Kat candy bar.

Yesterday afternoon's brush fire on Harrington Hill that consumed more than 10 acres was the first blaze that the 16-year-old Claremont High School student and Meriden firefighter had faced since volunteering in June.

"It was intense," said Gelineau, a water bottle stuffed in his baggy pants and splotches of black covering his once-yellow fireman's jacket.

Nearby, other Upper Valley firefighters, their legs tired and throats parched, snacked on bologna sandwiches, potato chips and oatmeal cookies, as they chugged water and took a much-needed rest after more than four hours of battling the blaze, which was aided by yesterday's dry, windy conditions.

Officials believe the fire started accidentally,

though they didn't release the cause as of last evening. Firefighters received an emergency call around 2:30 yesterday afternoon. By 8 p.m., the fire was extinguished.

Down the hill, dust and leaves swirled in stiff gusts around a one-third of a mile long line of more than 40 cars and pickups of volunteer firefighters from 13 New Hampshire and Vermont fire departments.

Just feet from where they rested, a snaking line running up along the steep hill separated the black, scorched ground from the mounds of dried leaves and twigs that, combined with fierce

winds, made extinguishing the burn such a challenge. The conditions were so taxing that one Meriden firefighter, suffering from dehydration and heat exhaustion, was taken to Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, though he was later released.

"As fast as the fire guys could get up the hill, it was going by them," said Jack Williams,

whose property sits close to where the woods burned. "It was like a race."

Williams and Cornish Selectman Keith Jones ran firefighters and supplies up and down the hill throughout the day in their ATVs.

"It wasn't real bad, but then the wind hit us hard," Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass said. "We didn't know where this was gonna stop."

Fire officials and neighbors also feared that if the fire burned over the hill's crest, to an area covered in quick-igniting pines, they might not have been able to stop it.

"It would have burned all the way to (Route) 120," Williams said. "It would have kept going."

Officials believe the blaze started on Tina and Daryle Downing's Harrington Road property and then spread across the hill, though they also said they didn't know how the fire started. Flames came within about 200 feet of their home and a few others in the neighborhood.

Four of the more than 75 firefighters who showed up to the scene stayed last night as a pre-

**Fire officials
did not release a
cause of the fire
yesterday.**

Dale Lawrence of Cornish Fire and Rescue pauses with a roll of tape used to mark trees with burned roots on the hike to the front of a fire on the top of Harrington Hill in Cornish yesterday. Lawrence made several trips up and down the hill ferrying water and tools to the fire line.

VALLEY NEWS —
JAMES M. PATTERSON



Cornish Brush Fire Proves Stubborn on Windy Day

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

caution in case the fire reignited.

Richard Melloh, who lives on the north side Harrington Road across from the burned area, said he was working in his shop next to his house, and he when he walked outside to retrieve a soda, he noticed the fire.

"I took a look at it and knew there was nothing I could do but call 911," he said. "It's all kind of a blur now."

Firefighters struggled throughout the afternoon to establish a containment line because gusting winds repeatedly blew embers past them, expanding the fire's reach. New Hampshire and other parts of New England are under a red flag fire warning, the most severe caution level, because of warm weather and unusually dry conditions for this time of year.

For most of the afternoon and into the evening firefighters searched for smoke coming from hot

spots, as dark clouds lingered overhead, to a rainstorm that never arrived.

"That was the biggest challenge, keeping jumping our fire line," said Meriden Fire David Best, standing next to a pile of rakes and shovels. "This is one of the worst that we've spring."

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Leland Atwood, center, is honored for 50 years of service with the Cornish Fire Department. Atwood began volunteering as a fire fighter at the age of 19, when his father was fire chief, and has been an

eager, hard-working volunteer since, according to his peers at the department.

VALLEY NEWS — SARAH PRIEST

Fire Volunteer Marks 50 Years

Valley News Nov 22 2010

BY KATIE BETH RYAN

Valley News Staff Writer

Cornish Department Honors Atwood, Others

synonymous with fire safety. Ellsworth Atwood played a large role in the founding of the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department in 1943. Leland Atwood joined the department at 19, a year after graduating from Stevens High School in Claremont.

"I just kind of grew up in it. When I was old enough to join, I joined," he said.

None of the other active members of the squad were on duty when Atwood first suited up, but there's no doubt in their minds that he's as sprightly as he was 50 years ago.

Chief Cass recalled a fire on Harrington Hill Road earlier this year in which two young members of the department struggled to keep up with Atwood's prowess as he led them in extinguishing the fire.

See CORNISH—

CORNISH — Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass didn't need to be reminded of the significance of honoring a volunteer firefighter for 50 years of active service.

"It's a very unusual occasion," Cass said yesterday afternoon, before paying tribute to the service that Leland Atwood has given to the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department at the station in Cornish Flat.

Atwood was honored alongside other members of the fire squad who were celebrating their 10th, 15th, 20th and 25th anniversaries with the department.

Getting to 50 years, however, is no small

achievement — Cass believes it's the first for a volunteer firefighter from Cornish — especially considering the middle-of-the-night phone calls, often sub-freezing temperatures and the burning structures that an unpaid firefighter must often encounter.

"I'm proud to be able to give this to you, Leland," Cass said, presenting Atwood with a wooden plaque and a proclamation from Gov. John Lynch, to the applause and standing ovation from those gathered at the firehouse.

In Cornish, the Atwood name is practically



Della Whalen, 6, and Amy Whalen of Cornish scoop ice cream in the midst of the fire department crowded with people attending an ice cream social to honor Leland Atwood for 50 years of service with the Cornish Fire Department.

Atwood began volunteering as a fire fighter at the age of 19, when his father was fire chief and has been an eager, hard-working volunteer since, according to his peers at the fire department.

VALLEY NEWS — SARAH PRIESTAP

Cornish Volunteers Honored

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

guishing the blaze.

"Keeping up with this man is just about impossible," said Cass.

"He's just one of the guys," said Leo Maslan, recognized yesterday for his own 25 years of service to the department. "He knows his job and he does it ... Two o'clock in the morning, 10 below zero, he'll be there."

Since Leland Atwood joined the Cornish Volunteer Fire Department, it has grown from a squad with just one engine and tanker, and just one firehouse, to a department with five vehicles and a second fire station in Cornish Flat, completed just a few years ago.

One area in which the department would like to see more growth is in the number of volunteers willing to take on an unpaid but very necessary job.

"It's very difficult to keep members and keep them active," Cass acknowledged. That's partly due to the nature of the work involved in firefighting, but can also be attributed to fewer young people sticking around town after they graduate from high school,

unlike in previous generations.

Some other volunteer fire departments have resorted to "paid compensating firefighters" only the hours they put in for the department. Cornish, however, remains staffed entirely with volunteers, most of whom balance full-time jobs with their work for the department.

Before retiring from the squad in 2009 after 40 years, Dale Rook juggled his volunteer duties with a full-time job as a fire safety officer at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center and raising four children.

"It was difficult," Rook said, "but it's a sacrifice that a lot of people make."

For now, the department continues with a crew of 23 active firefighters, and Atwood has no intention of abandoning the ranks.

"You don't enjoy going to someone's house for a fire," Atwood said, "but you enjoy the work."

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

Longtime fire chief to hang up helmet

Leaside Times 20 June 2015

Low Gage set to retire from dept. this summer

By **DAMIEN FISHER**
Staff Writer

Ending nearly 30 years of work in emergency service, Fire Chief Low Gage will retire this summer.

Though he will miss the career to which he devoted so much of his life, Gage said there is one aspect to his job he will definitely not

Windsor be sorry about leaving. "I certainly won't miss the pagers," said Gage, whose retirement was announced Tuesday night.

Gage recounted that for three years running, the Gage family Thanksgiving meal was interrupted with a page for a fire. The first two years, with guests over at his house in Cornish, Gage said he was called away before the meal started to deal with serious structure fires. In both instances he didn't make it home until the next morning.

The third year, his wife Virginia refused to invite guests. The two of them managed to sit down to the table and actually eat their dinner.

"I'll be damned if I didn't get toned out halfway through the meal," he laughed.

The anecdote is illustrative of one of the reasons Gage is stepping down. After being constantly on call for the past three decades, Gage said he needs to go



DON CLARK PHOTO

Windsor Fire Chief Low Gage, who will retire this summer, stands with an antique fire pump in the Windsor fire station.

back to being with his family.

"The primary reason I'm retiring is that I want to get re-acquainted with my family," he said. "I gave this community a good portion of my life and my family's life."

The other reason Gage is taking his bow is that at 63, he finds it difficult to work the long hours required of firefighters. He said there are days when he has to work 36 hours straight, some-

thing he used to be able to do on a regular basis, but not so much now.

"This is a young man's game," he said.

Gage has been with the Windsor department for the past 26 years. He still remembers his first day on the job, Jan. 29, 1979.

"Twenty-six years, you don't do that unless you love the community and you

CHIEF

FROM PAGE A1

love the department," he said.

Before moving over to the fire department, Gage was president of the Cornish Rescue Squad for about five years.

He has been chief of the Windsor Department for about the last 12 years and said he

has been lucky to work with many good and talented people.

"I have worked with some of the best people over the last 25 years," he said. "I deeply respect each and every one of my colleagues."

Retirement will not see Gage inactive. He plans to pur-

sue his interest in the history of Gettysburg. Gage and his wife have had a long standing interest in the Civil War battle site, and have given tours and lectures there.

"I'm not the kind of guy who is going to be satisfied getting done here and then going home

to sit on a couch," Gage said.

Gage said he would like to do more research, write and even give lectures on Gettysburg.

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Cornish Selectman Building Town's Fire

By JON WOLPER

Valley News Staff Writer

CORNISH — On a quiet stretch of Route 120, in the shadow of a branch of the Cornish Fire Department, a town selectman is working on an overdue fire truck.

Larry Dingee, who is one of the three selectmen, has owned Dingee Machine Co. for 28 years. When the town set aside money for a truck to replace the aging Engine No. 1 last year,

Dingee recused himself from the vote awarding of the contract — and bid on it himself.

He won, but now he's missed his July 10 delivery deadline.

The original \$207,000 contract, which was drafted in September of last year, required the truck to be completed 120 working days after the chassis was delivered to Dingee Machine. The chassis, which Dingee purchased from International Trucks, arrived in late January.

The lateness of the truck has left some res-

idents and firefighters impatient.

"Basically, we just want it," said Fire Chief Scott Reuthe. "We're tired of waiting. We spent all this time, we've got to see some results."

According to a letter sent from Selectboard Chairman John Hammond to Dingee in February, Dingee said at a town budget hearing that the truck would not be ready "until the end of summer or early September."

"As a Selectman for the Town of Cornish,"

Truck Is Late to the Scene

Hammond wrote, "you are aware that the Fire Department's current pumper has just failed and after costly repairs is still in unsatisfactory condition." He urged Dingee to complete the truck by the due date.

"We've tried to go about it in a manner that was correct," Hammond said in an interview. "Sometimes things don't — well, completion dates sometimes aren't met."

Dingee built the old Engine No. 1 25 years ago. Though it's still in service, Reuthe said,

the truck's preferred lifespan is two decades.

As of this week, the new truck isn't near completion, Dingee said. The deep red paint of the front of the truck gives way to an empty metal bed where the body will eventually be attached.

"Would we like to see it out of here tomorrow?" Dingee said, leaning on the driver's side truck step. "Of course."

He said it's likely that within a month the

See CORNISH—A5

truck's body will be painted and mounted on the chassis — painting of the body had to be postponed because his in-house painter had been on a four-month disability leave — but then the real work begins.

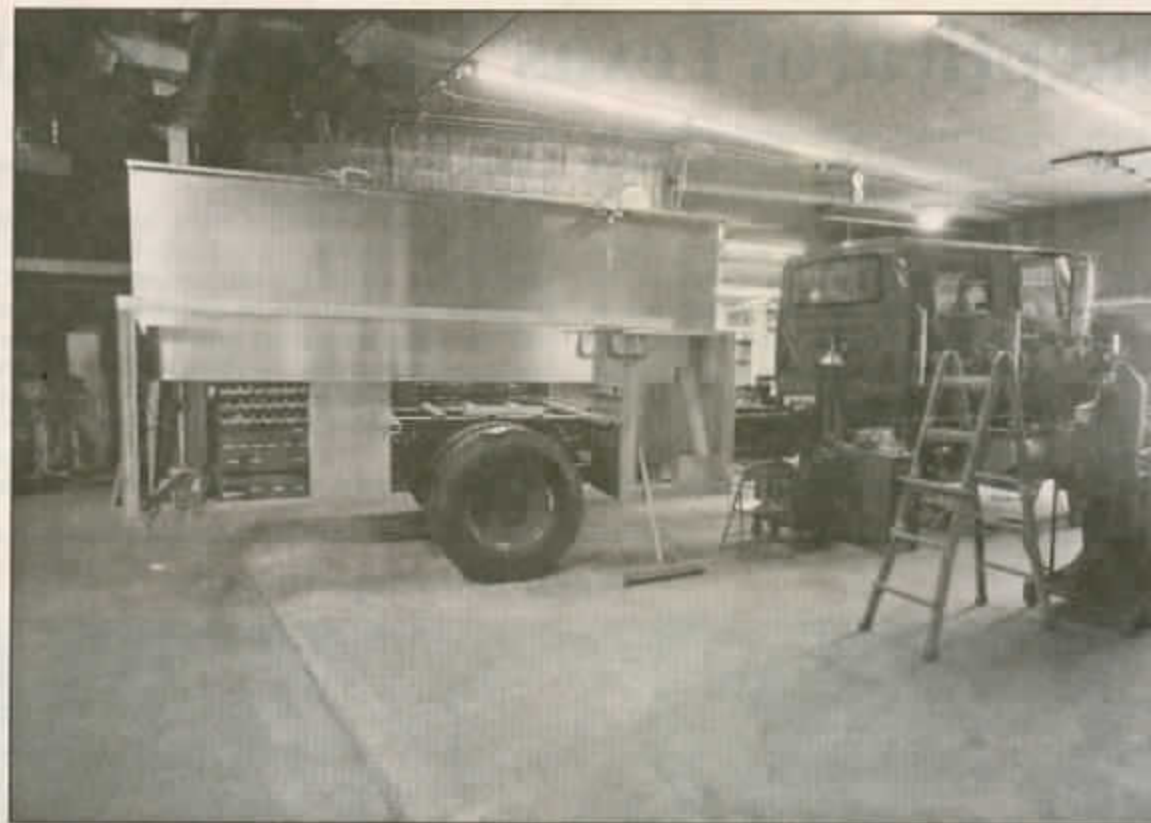
He likened it to building a house: It's easy to get the structure standing, Dingee said, but the internal work is where it gets trickier.

"It's the last 25 percent that takes 75 percent of the time," he said.

Because of that and any number of other variables, such as other trucks needing immediate repair, Dingee said it would be impossible to speculate when he'll be done.

Dingee ordered a chassis from International Trucks, on which the truck's body will be placed. The chassis includes the car's motor components needed for driving; Dingee's company builds and installs the plumbing parts that turn it into a fire truck, such as the water pump.

Although the chassis arrived in Cornish on Jan. 23, Dingee said didn't get to work building the truck until shortly after a change order involving the type of tires used passed through the Selectboard. The change order shows Dingee's signature in Oct. 2011. Though the Selectboard didn't approve it until Feb. 17, Selectman Merilynn Bourne said that change order had to do with the chassis, which was ordered in October. Therefore, the board's failure to sign the change order until February shouldn't have tripped up production.



In a response to Hammond's February letter, Dingee wrote that he would "make every effort to complete the vehicle in a timely fashion," though he hadn't started construction until later because the change order had not yet been approved by the Selectboard, who told him not to make changes to the original specifications until they approved it.

Dingee said the board's desire to

sign off on all change orders was unusual, and perhaps hindered construction from moving as quickly as it should have.

"It is unusual for the selectmen to be involved in the actual nuts and bolts process," he said.

Bourne disagreed.

"The selectmen ultimately have to approve and put their signatures on change orders, because it indicates

the expense," she said. Machine was one of four bidders for the contract, for which the town allocated \$220,000. Dingee's was the lowest bidder that met all the required specifications and he eventually got the job. According to Bourne, the board had to do so in the interest of transparency, considering Dingee is a selectman.

The town of Cornish's new pumper truck, shown yesterday under construction at Dingee Machine Co. in Cornish. Owner Larry Dingee said they will be working on the truck full time until job is complete.

VALLEY NEWS — GEOFF HANSEN

His company produced a quote of \$207,000, beating out Desorcie Emergency Products, LLC in St. Albans, Vt. (\$218,918), Valley Fire Equipment in Bradford, N.H. (\$223,005) and Rosenbaeur America in Lyons, S.D. (\$243,042).

The leftover \$13,000 will be used for additional improvements to the truck, Dingee said, whether they're purchased through him or someone else. At the Town Meeting in March, voters approved the spending of that money. Dingee will likely install any extra components, Bourne said. Any of the unused \$13,000 will remain in the capital reserve fund for the fire department, she said.

As of now, the town has used \$1,621 of that money to buy from Dingee a pump compartment heater and heat pans to go under it, according to a change order.

Lois Fitts, a Cornish resident for 41 years, sent a message on July 5

through the town email network. Connect Cornish, expressing discontent with the lateness of the truck.

"The truck is now due, no where [sic] near ready and the feeling is: 'we get it when we get it,'" she wrote.

"I don't think it should be that way," Fitts said in an interview. "Mr. Dingee's machine shop knows that the present engine is overdue, it has its problems, and he was aware of that when he accepted the bid."

But she added that, as far as she knows, Dingee Machine has a good track record with its other clients, who are spread throughout New England.

This year, the company converted a truck for the Plainfield fire department. It delivered the vehicle on July 3, just in time for it to be a part of the July 4 parade. According to Fire Chief Frank Currier, Dingee had the vehicle between four and five months, though Plainfield set no hard deadline for him. Right now, Dingee Machine is building two trucks besides the one for Cornish.

"Dingee does a fantastic job," Currier said. "Otherwise, we wouldn't have gone with him."

Jon Wolper can be reached at jwolper@vnews.com or 603-727-3248.



While being comforted by her friend Dale Lawrence, of Cornish, homeowner Laura Zell, center, watches firefighters douse the remnants of a blaze at her Center Road home in Cornish on Monday. Zell was at work when the fire was reported. Lawrence is also on the Cornish Rescue Squad. *See story, page B1.*



While neighbors walk by, Cornish firefighters spray the rafters of Monday. The space above Zell's garage was saved. Laura Zell's Center Road home with water from a truck in Cornish on

VALLEY NEWS — GEOFF HANSEN

Cornish Home Destroyed in Fire

Valley News Mar 18, 2011 1.51

By JORDAN CUDDEMI

Valley News Staff Writer

Woman, Child Escape Unharmd

noon.

A portion of the yellow siding on the two-story home was melted off.

Firefighters continued to spray water at full-blast even once the flames were extinguished to try and knock down a wall and put out hot spots.

Smith and another firefighter were seen lugging an old chest containing family photos out of a portion of the home on Monday.

The chest, along with antiques and other items, were located in a room above the garage, which suffered smoke damage, but was largely untouched by fire.

"It is my job to protect property," Smith said. "I wanted to get whatever valuables I could out. The main house is gone, but stuff in that upper back room is OK."

Because of the home's rural location, a tanker shuttle was ready to act if need be, but a nearby brook acted as the primary water source.

Zell loaded a large tote filled with belongings into the back seat of a large pickup truck in the neighbor's yard on Monday afternoon. Inside, was the golden retriever.

"Let's go have some treats," another woman said softly.

The dog complied.

Jordan Cuddemi can be reached at jcuddemi@vnews.com or 603-727-3248.

CORNISH — Fire officials said working smoke detectors helped a woman and child escape a burning Cornish home unharmed on Monday.

Cornish Fire Chief Scott Reuthe said a woman inside the Center Road home heard smoke detectors sounding around 12:30 p.m. and ushered a two-year-old child and a golden retriever to safety.

"That is what we like to see — those smoke detectors working," Reuthe said outside the charred house on Monday.

The homeowner, Laura Zell, was not home at the time the fire started, but arrived on scene shortly after crews responded.

While standing in the driveway of a neighbor's house, Zell said her sister — who is visiting from Colorado — and her great granddaughter were inside the home at the time of the fire.

"My sister came to visit for six weeks. She was helping me clean the house and we were getting ready for a sale," Zell said.

A large red and white for-sale sign sat in the snow near the home which is assessed at \$135,600.

The cause of the fire was unknown as of Monday evening, Reuthe said.

The fire more than likely started in a front

corner of the main portion of the home, though Reuthe said he couldn't determine which room caught fire. He said the home is uninhabitable, and approximately three-fourths of it was a total loss.

The American Red Cross reached out to provide assistance services, but Zell said she and the occupants would stay with family.

Tanker trucks blocked Center Road from the intersection of Parsonage and Paget roads all the way to Route 120 for several hours. Limited traffic was being let through.

Cornish Fire Lt. Shane Smith said the flames spread rapidly and made fighting the fire with only the first responders impossible.

"The outside corner was just ripping when we arrived," Smith, a first responder, said. "And then the fire walked itself through the downstairs. We tried to make an interior attack but we pulled out because of the lack of back up.

"It started to get bad, quick."

Once crews from several surrounding towns arrived and knocked down the flames, thick white smoke billowed out of smashed windows and a crippled roof for much of Monday after-

CRS Auto Extrication Drill





DON CLARK PHOTO

Cornish Assistant Fire Chief Dale Rock, right, helps pull in a rescue boat that searched the Connecticut River for about an hour after emergency personnel were informed of three men who had gone missing while canoeing. The claim later turned out to be false.

Missing canoeists claim false

Police: Man who called in report has history of mental illness

By DAMIEN FISHER
Staff Writer

Emergency personnel swarmed the Connecticut River Tuesday afternoon in search of three men who had reportedly gone missing while on a canoe trip. About an hour into the search, Cornish police learned it was a false

Cornish alarm

A 48-year-old Windsor man called police at about 2:30 p.m. claiming his brother and two friends had taken a canoe onto the river in Hartland and were heading for the boat landing in Cornish. The man claimed the boat had not been seen since about 12:45 a.m.

Cornish Police Sgt. Douglas Hackett said he learned the man has a history of mental illness and hallucinations.

"The report (about the boat) was due to

his emotional difficulties which were due to his being off of his medications," Hackett said.

The false alarm triggered police officers and rescue squads in Cornish and Plainfield, as well as fire departments from Claremont, Windsor and Hartland to begin an intense search of the water.

"It was a significant emergency response," Hackett said.

While the Cornish Rescue Squad was putting a search boat onto the river, the man was watching and looking out onto the water. He told the *Eagle Times* his brother was visiting for a couple of days.

He said he first searched both sides of the river from Hartland to Windsor himself when the canoe did not turn up in Cornish. He then called police.

The man claimed his brother was a military veteran who had served in Iraq. Looking out to the river through Tuesday's

freezing rain, the man said he expected the worst.

"I would rather this brother be shot at than this," the man said.

While the Cornish Rescue Squad was on the river, and having engine trouble, police were interviewing the man. It was during that interview that his mental illness was discovered.

Hackett said he spoke to the man's family and confirmed that the brother was alive and well and not in Cornish. The search was called off and the man was taken into custody.

Tuesday evening, Hackett said the man had been admitted to Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont for treatment and observation. Hackett said he would not be bringing any charges against him for the false report.

"We're not charging him, we're helping him," Hackett said.

FOLLOWING PAGE

**NEW CORNISH FIRE STATION LOCATED
IN THE CORNISH FLAT**

TAKEN FROM 2008 CORNISH ANNUAL REPORT







Celebrate the kickoff of Fire Prevention Week with a

Safety Services Open House

Sunday, October 4

12:00-2:00 pm

Cornish Fire Station

283 Town House Road

Cornish, NH

Eat lunch with members of the fire department, police department, rescue squad, and more!

Touch our trucks! See our equipment! Ask questions! Get a few goodies! Free lunch and drinks!

For more information contact:

Chantelle at chantelle.ornen@gmail.com or

Dale at dalehlawrence@yahoo.com





COMMUNITY
POLICE FIRE DEPT

FIRE DEPT.
RECEIVED FROM THE
COMMUNITY
THANK YOU
MARY















New Chief In Cornish

COURTESY PHOTOGRAPH

Mike Boutilier, second from right, was sworn in as the town's new fire chief on March 16. Boutilier has been with the Cornish Fire Department for 12 years, the last three as captain. Boutilier takes over from Robert Rice, second from left, who is retiring after three years as chief and 47 years with the fire department. In addition to friends and family, former Cornish Fire chiefs Nate Cass, far right, and Scott Reuthe, far left, were at the swearing in ceremony.

Valley News
4/15/18 p. B2

Cornish Fire Department
Mike Boutilier
Bob Rice, Nate Cass,
Scott Reuthe