



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 21 : NUMBER 3 APRIL 2011



1 April Musings

This is the month of tentatively poking our heads out of the foxholes to see what remains after so many days of shelling.

"April is the cruelest month," wrote T.S. Elliott in his classic poem, *The Wasteland*. Obviously, though, the misguided poet had no way of knowing about Cornwall's last December. Or January. Or February. Whatever weather we have this month, I'll give odds that it will not be remembered as "the cruelest." Granted, though, his chosen line does have a bit more gravitas than the more appropriate "April's here! Yippee!"

Yes, the snow was lovely. Yes, the cold was bracing. Yes, the lovely/bracing novelty wore off around the time when our thermometer registered minus 16. With the firewood truck unable to get through the snow to resupply us, I began to make Gail nervous, walking through rooms, hatchet in hand, critically eyeing some of our wood furniture. "You know, I never did like these kitchen cabinets."

April was originally the second month of the year under the Roman calendar before the months of January and February were added around 750 B.C., which would have made *The Wasteland's* beginning more appropriate.

The name *April* is derived from the

Latin word *aperire*, which means "to open," as in flowers, and it appeared as the fourth month of the year around 450 B.C.

Compared to the defining seriousness of a hard New England winter, the warmth of April is like a hot water bottle on a March night. It brings relief. Coats are shed, smiles return, puppies join the family. The contrast is absolute. Life becomes lighter. There is no mystery as to why there is not a January Fool's Day.

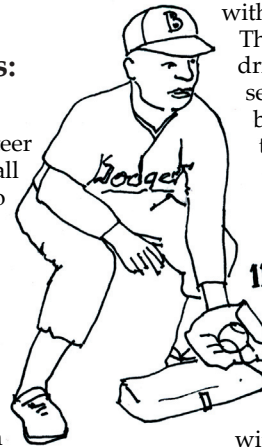
Edna St. Vincent Millay says it best, noting that "April comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers."

—Jeff Jacobsen

Helping Neighbors: The FISH Story

For many years, a group of volunteer drivers has been helping Cornwall residents who do not drive get to weekday medical appointments. It's the kind of assistance that keeps people where they want to be – in their own homes.

FISH was started by the United Church of Christ in Cornwall and for a long time it was led by the late Polly Calhoun. Marie Prentice remembers getting a call from



Polly in the early 90's: "You're going to run FISH" and for nine years Marie did.

Since 2001 Joan Edler has fielded calls from those who need rides. Several FISH drivers are over 80, she says, so the time has come for a "generational change." and, it turns out, an organizational change as well. Ella Clark has offered to be the contact person for riders and volunteer drivers.

So that drivers can manage their time, they will choose one or two days each month during which they will be available to offer rides. Those needing rides will be asked to request them by contacting Ella with at least 24-hour notice.

The current crew of about a dozen drivers must be expanded because several volunteers have asked to be relieved. With more drivers, the program could easily cover the 20 to 24 weekdays each month.

So what's involved? If you've agreed to be available on a specific day (or two) each month, Ella will send you requests, rarely more than one a day. Riders usually need to get to appointments in nearby towns, sometimes with a little side trip for a few

(continued on page 2)

APRIL 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball , 7:30 pm CCS gym; VNA Bend & Stretch 1–2 pm UCC Wednesdays: Tai Chi , 6–9 pm CCS; Karate 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball , 7:30 pm CCS gym Sundays: Meditation , 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672–0229					1	2
3	4 NEW ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Ag Commission 7:30 pm Town Office ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	5 ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	6	7	8 ♦ Story Hour 1:15–2:15 pm Cornwall Library	9 ♦ Passport Day 9 am–noon ♦ Motherhouse 10:30 am–1:30 pm UCC Parish House ♦ CCS Art Show Reception 3:30–5:30 pm Cornwall Library ♦ <i>The Lady Vanishes</i> 7:30 pm Cornwall Library
10	11 ♦ Democratic Town Committee Meeting 7:30 pm Town Hall	12 ♦ Board of Education 4 pm CCS Library ♦ P & Z 7 pm Cornwall Library	13 ♦ CCS Early Dismissal 1 pm	14 ♦ CCS Early Dismissal 1 pm ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	15 ♦ Deadline: May Chronicle Copy ♦ Story Hour 1:15–2:15 pm Cornwall Library	16 ♦ Diane Dupuis Art Reception 3:30–5:30 pm Cornwall Library
17 FULL	18 <i>Passover Begins</i> ♦ CCS Closed	19 ♦ CCS Closed ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	20 ♦ CCS Closed	21 ♦ CCS Closed	22 ♦ CCS Closed ♦ Library Closed ♦ No Story Hour	23
24 <i>Easter</i> 4thQ	25 ♦ CCS Reopens ♦ ZBA Appeals* 8 pm Town Hall	26	27 ♦ CVFD Meeting 8 pm West Cornwall Firehouse	28	29 ♦ Story Hour 1:15–2:15 pm Cornwall Library ♦ Budget Hearing 7:30 pm CCS Gathering Room	30 ♦ Art @ The Dump 1 am–4 pm
31						

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

groceries. "I've learned about Cornwall's history and about gardening in dry climates from my rides," one volunteer said. "It's a great way to connect with people and be helpful at the same time."

If you are interested in driving for FISH now and in the future, please contact Ella Clark at 364-1003 or e-mail her at ellaclarke@sharon-ct.org. —Lisa L. Simont

The Winter's Fury

Any report on our January and February is rich in statistics. Samples: the average winter snowfall in the northwest hills has hitherto been 50 inches. On January 11/12, a fast 28 inches fell overnight at the ski area. With a total of 54.9 inches, January has become the snowiest single month recorded in Connecticut (previous record set in 1945). Officially, this has been only the sixth snowiest season ever. But it hasn't felt like that in Cornwall.

Snow-covered roofs were the Achilles' heels of Cornwall homeowners. Ice dams were common disasters, with snow rakes sold out across the state. Press reports of collapsing roofs generated dozens of calls to the emergency crew. "We were getting ten to 15 calls every day to shovel off roofs – we cleaned off 40 some odd in two weeks," said Ralph Dzenutis. "People aren't used to doing all that maintenance." A utility barn collapsed and a few temporary shelters went down. A car was crushed when the porch next to it buckled under the extra weight of snow sliding off the house roof.

"The storms that used to come in the 20-degree range came this year in the single digits," said Ralph. Our coldest temperature was minus 14 degrees (the lowest ever recorded in town was minus 32 degrees in 1943). Life in Cornwall was sustained by the constant efforts of its road, fire, and ambulance crews and other support services.

Postal service continued throughout – with a little help from individual enterprise. Doug Wachtel and Jessie Koleszar from the Cornwall Bridge post office took rooms at the nearby motel for the night of January 11 to avoid long trips in the blizzard. On February 1 Pat Case, postmaster in the Village, brought her meals to work and camped overnight on a cot. Mail carriers took buckets of sand along for traction.

At the end of February there were still 15 inaccessible mailboxes on West Cornwall's delivery route, buried because the heavy trucks plowing up hills couldn't get up the speed to throw the snow aside. On really steep hills, these trucks couldn't be used at all. The Magic Salt de-icing mixture melts from 4 to 6 inches of snow and allows

trucks to do a better job on areas with lots of little roads, like West Cornwall and the Village, and on the steep hills like Coltsfoot Mountain and Dark Entry.

"This winter was such a blur," Jim Vanicky said. "and you had to be thinking about your next move the whole time."

For residents, the rumbling of plows clearing the roads is a reassuring sound. The four men of our town crew are at work seven days a week in heavy weather, starting at 7 A.M. so that people can get going – and this winter, those days often continued into nights. Once they finished a run, they sometimes had to go out and plow the route all over again. Because hours spent out on the roads make for big overtime, Jim kept a watchful eye on the weather service's doppler radar to calculate when to go out next and this helped to keep costs down.

The crew had to work constantly to keep the roads as wide as possible. Dealing with the aftermath of storms – which meant pushing the immense heaps out of the way to keep the roads open – also generated a lot of overtime and consumed a lot more fuel than usual.

"This was a winter like no other," said Skip Kosciusko. "Storms kept coming and coming and shredded our equipment: the trucks, the transmissions, the plows. One plow broke right off the truck in the middle of the storm." Deep snow spilled over the plow blades and dropped back into the road. Huge four-wheel drive front-end loaders got stuck in drifts and had to be hauled out. Jobs that ordinarily take 20 minutes took an hour. As the roadside heaps grew larger with each storm, roads and driveways got narrower. The town's equipment wasn't powerful enough

to push these barriers back by slamming into them, so Steve Scoville was hired to bring his huge machine to its aid. By the end of February, the piles had become so big and so hard that even he couldn't push them back or break through them.

This year the snow heaps became obstacles to ambulances and fire trucks trying to respond to calls. Fortunately we had only chimney fires, but during February there were 29 ambulance calls (the yearly average is 180) and when the ambulance couldn't navigate a driveway, the patient had to be brought down from the house by truck.

"It was a wicked winter and I hope it's a long time before we have another one like it," said Skip. As the *Chronicle* goes to press, the snow pack (persistent layers of accumulated snow) in Cornwall is still a

foot thick or more in places. When it finally melts, there's going to be a lot of work for the sweeper; it all has to be cleaned up by Memorial Day. Is this brutal winter finally at an end or will it sock us again? Blizzards late in the season can get us yet. But after long months of a landscape colored grey, black, and white, everyone is hoping to see green in the greenest town in Connecticut.

—Ann Schillinger

Good Bye to Friends

Kathleen B. Ford
Charlotte Baldwin

Land Transfers

Marian A. Vita to Roger L. and Margaret T. Kane, real property known as 15 Cemetery Hill Road for \$375,000.

Estate of Liane C. Dunn to Federal National Mortgage Association, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 126 Kent Road.

50 Years a Cornwall Fireman

Cornwall is a town of volunteerism and few here can match the record of Jack Preston who quietly acknowledges his 50th year this month as a stalwart member of the town's volunteer fire department. Jack actually goes back more than five decades because his dad, Walter, was fire chief back in 1949-50 when Jack was a teenager.

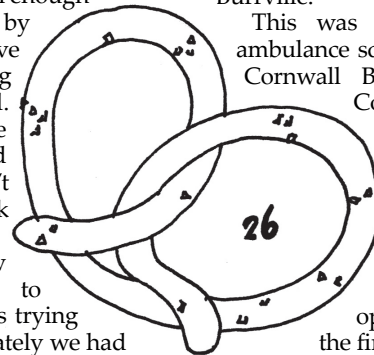
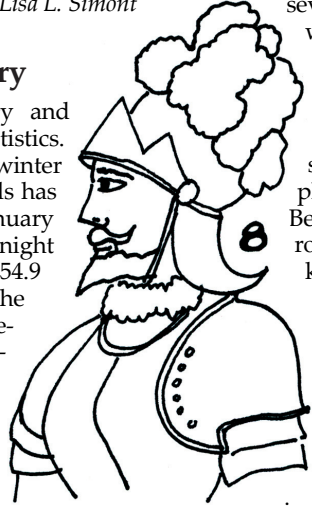
"It sparked my interest," he said, "and I wasn't too young to pack hose and clean equipment. Sometimes a spark from one of the trains would get a brush fire going and they'd let me use an Indian pump with a tank on to strap on your back to help put it out."

Jack became a fireman in 1961 when fire school was not required but he took all the courses at the state-run academy in Burrville.

This was before Cornwall had an ambulance squad. "We had one truck in Cornwall Bridge and one in West Cornwall at the old firehouse across the road from the post office. There were no radios to communicate with in those days. "We relied on the sirens and then someone would call the Cornwall telephone operator to get the location of the fire," he said.

"Some time in the 1970s we converted a 1967 International Suburban into our first ambulance and a bunch of us took an EMT course at Sharon Hospital from Dr. Reyelt. We then increased the size limit of the department from 40 to 55 and began taking women members. I think we were the first town up here to do so. It was a good move. We've had some great female EMTs over the years."

Jack Preston retired from the state



highway department in 1992. He had been a foreman with jurisdiction over 52 towns and 1,260 miles of roads. He continues to help maintain Cornwall's fire vehicles that now include three trucks in Cornwall Bridge and five in West Cornwall.

Jack's two most memorable fire calls remain Paganelli Auto Body in Cornwall Bridge during a total eclipse of the sun "when we had to turn on the lights," and another that burned down the old Bradley's store in Torrington, where T.J. Maxx now sits. "Our chief, Dick Dakin, offered our department for that one and the paid professionals in Torrington did not appreciate our presence. We didn't have proper breathing equipment back then."

Jack and wife, Pat, still live where he grew up in the old Preston family home across from the Covered Bridge and move to a cottage on Cream Hill Lake in the summer.
—John Miller

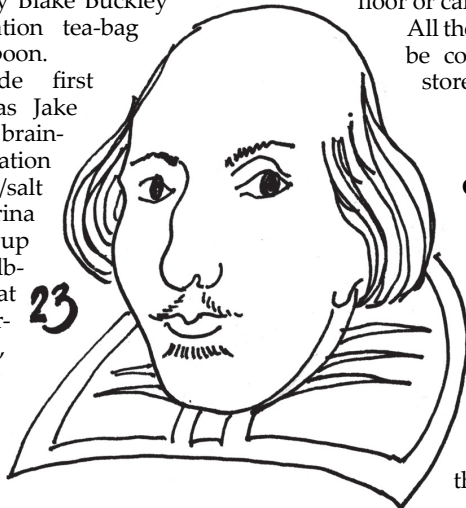
Patents Pending

Seven judges, grave of mien, handed down their decisions after lengthy deliberation in the halls of Cornwall Consolidated School. It was Wednesday, March 16, and participants from the sixth and seventh grades, under the guidance of science teacher Kathy West, had submitted their brainchildren for the annual Invention Convention.

The 26 entries displayed imagination worthy of a Rube Goldberg or a Gyro Gearloose. They ranged from Malcolm Scott's concept, a sort of Roman catapult to toss salt on your icy roof, to Anna D'Alvia's rope-and-pulley system for filling a compost bin without setting a foot out of doors. There were several clever gizmos for cleaning and washing, including Alea Laigle's self-lathering sponge, slit to accommodate a bar of soap inside.

After racking their brains, the judges bestowed their awards. In the sixth grade, first prize went to Nina Givotovsky for her cart which rakes leaves when you push it (carpentry courtesy of Will Calhoun). James Nicholas came in second with his new improved snow sled made from a fishing boat seat fastened to a pair of skis. Third prize was won by Blake Buckley with a combination tea-bag squeezer/sugar spoon.

Seventh grade first prize winner was Jake Hurlburt, who brainstormed a combination snow shovel/salt spreader. Marina Matsudaira came up with a squeeze bulb-and-tube setup that defogs the wearer's eyeglasses, winning second prize. Chelsea Kearns earned third prize for a long-handled



Letters to the Chronicle

BOY SCOUTS RETURN

I've been living in Cornwall for almost a decade. I moved here when my wife was pregnant with my son. When my son was old enough for the Cub Scouts I asked around to sign him up. I found we had no Boy Scouts in Cornwall, only Girl Scouts. This seemed strange to me with all the parks and trails here, it's a Scout's paradise.

With a school class of 13 boys and two girls, things had to change. Luckily they did, thanks to Joe Fuller. He rounded up the parents from Cornwall school and talked to The Connecticut Rivers Council. He found out what we needed to do to become recognized and chartered.

Happy to say Cub Scouts have returned to Cornwall. I was appointed den leader and have scheduled meetings for the first and third Thursday of every month at the Firehouse. The Cub Scouts can't exist in Cornwall without Scouts. We need a minimum number. I'm reaching out to all.

The boys had their first ceremony on March 17. They received their first badge (The Bobcat badge). Thanks to Gordon Ridgway and all the parents that participated. Cub Scout Pack 15 is back in Cornwall and here to stay!
—Gary Bevans

IT'S ALL CORNWALL

During the debate over the prospect of ten senior housing units on Route 7, I was troubled by the pseudo divisions of Cornwall. By any measure we are a wealthy community that enjoys the highest standard of living on this planet. We are victims of too many post offices that set up these pseudo divisions. When I'm asked where I live, I answer Cornwall. When our ambulance is dispatched, it's Cornwall ambulance. This is Our Town and it is ridiculous to think one part or another is better or worse. After seeing the drawings of this Cornwall Housing Corp. project, I believe this will be a showpiece property that we all will be proud of, and I am grateful for their efforts.
—Dave Cadwell

sticky roller that picks up pet hair from floor or carpet.

All these inventions will doubtless be coming soon to a hardware store near you. —Matt Collins

Cornwall Briefs

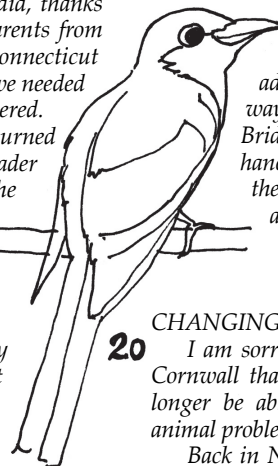
Cornwall is Counted: Anyone curious about the local results of the 2010 census? Please say you are. Anyway, like it or not, here it is.

Our population is down slightly in the last decade from 1,434 to 1,420, and, big surprise, 1,386 of us are white. The rest of us are: three African American, one

PRAISE FOR HOUSING PROJECT

We want to commend the Cornwall Housing Corporation for the very professional presentation at the March 8 P&Z meeting hearing for the elderly housing project adjacent to Baird's. They were able to answer all questions raised by the audience and members of P&Z with facts and background material. It was our first view of the drawings for the project and we are very impressed with the design.

The project will be a great addition to the community and in no way adversely impact Cornwall Bridge. On the contrary, it will enhance it as a village center. We hope the project moves ahead quickly—there are already several people in Cornwall hoping to move in.
—Anne and Paul Baren



CHANGING OF THE GUARD

I am sorry to report to the townspeople of Cornwall that as of March 3, 2011, I will no longer be able to answer calls for Cornwall animal problems.

Back in November of 2010 all locks on the doors of the Town Highway Garage were removed and changed. This is the same garage where I would hold local dogs overnight while waiting for their owners to call looking for their animals, as opposed to taking them to the Harwinton dog kennel for the night which would in turn cost the dog owner money. I would keep the animals in the area for the night.

On December 20, 2010, I received a letter from the first selectman stating that I was no longer a town employee, and please do not interfere with department operations by continued visits to the garage.

So you will now have to call Brad Hedden for ACO help. He will be glad to assist. His phone number is 672-2917.

It was a pleasure serving you these past years, but things change. —Rick Stone

Native American, nine Asian, 34 Hispanic or Latino, and three other.

It is the last category that got our attention; what could "other" be? We could contact the Census Bureau but let's just keep it in the family. If you think you might be an other, would you send the Chronicle a note and explain? Much thanks.

Animal Control Officers: Brad Hedden (672-2917) is the new ACO and his number two is Cindy Shook of Warren (868-1763). See letter.

Compost Tour: the town has its popular house and garden tours, now BJ's of Torrington will be sponsoring a tour of the town's outstanding compost heaps. It is being organized by Cornwall's Queen of Green Katie Freygang, who will be scouting for the best of the heaps. The tour is planned for early October and BJ's is

providing a prize of 500 13-gallon garbage bags for the town's outstanding composter.

A Town Hearing for the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen budgets will be held in the CCS gathering room at 7:30 P.M. on Friday, April 29. —*John Miller*

Super Shooter

Ten-year-old Morgan Betti of Cornwall Hollow Road attended all the games at the Big East Women's Basketball Tournament. She had the good fortune to be selected for a free throw contest during a time-out at the final championship game on March 8. With the Husky mascot Jonathan cheering them on, Morgan and another girl had 30 seconds to shoot free throws. Morgan won. Her prize is a year's supply of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and a Reese's T-Shirt. As the girls were leaving the court, they got to pose for a picture with the Notre Dame leprechaun mascot. All this in front of 10,000 noisy fans. —*Jane Pollok*



Little April

We wait for the show of leaves at the end. The hillsides will blush with the earliest red buds and finally that kiss of pale green. If you can drag yourself away from the window, you might write a check to the *Chronicle* which is always hopeful of a little green.

Events & Announcements

At the Library:

•Story Hour resumes for the spring on April 1 at 1:15 P.M., running through each April Friday except the 22nd (Good Friday).

•Saturday, April 9, at 7:30 P.M. *The Lady Vanishes*, will be shown at the Library. This irresistible 1939 Hitchcock thriller is a delicious combination of humor and suspense starring Margaret Lockwood and Michael Redgrave. Suggested donation is \$6 per person and \$10 for two.

•Friday, April 22. The Library is closed for Good Friday.

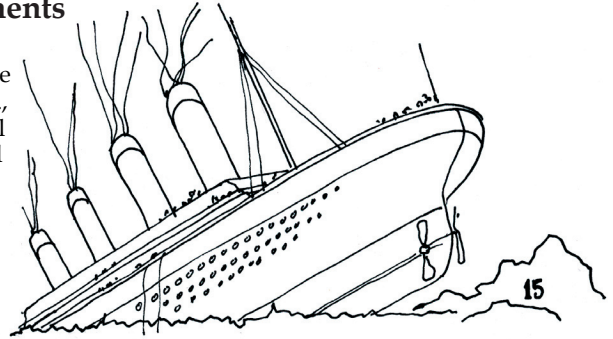
Family Contra Dance: April 2, 7 to 9:30 P.M. at the Town Hall with Fern Bradley teaching and calling. Still the Homegrown Band playing. Suggested donations: \$3/child, \$5/adult. Call Jim or Jane Prentice at 672-6101 for more information.

Gospel Music: The members of St. Peter's Lutheran Church invite everyone to Friendship Sunday, April 3 at 10 A.M. Holy Ground, a gospel group from Concordia College in Bronxville, N. Y., will lead the music for the worship service. Refreshments will follow. For information, call 672-6897.

Art in Cornwall: At the Library, Shaun MacDavid's paintings will continue to be displayed through April 8. From April 9 to April 14, an exhibit of photographs made by CCS eighth graders in a photography workshop, sponsored by the CCS Fund for Excellence, will be on view. A reception for the students will be held, Saturday, April 9, from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M. Beginning April 15, Diane Dupuis will show her recent paintings, with a reception held for the artist on Saturday, April 16, from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M.

At National Iron Bank, Mike Sweeney's art will be exhibited for the month of April.

National Passport Day: Post offices in West Cornwall and Cornwall Bridge will be taking part on Saturday, April 9, from 9 A.M. until noon in a national effort to provide passport information and accept passport applications from U.S. citizens. The Cornwall Village P.O. is not taking part.



Motherhouse Workshop: Old Style Life-Skills Series, A Stitch in Time. April 9, 10:30 to 1:30 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Learn to use a sewing machine while creating a summer shift, lady's blouse, or placemats and napkins. Potluck lunch. \$35/family. Must preregister at Debra@motherhouse.us or 672-0229.

Reverse 911: Litchfield County Dispatch can now instantly call Cornwall residents with notification of major emergencies, natural or manmade. This system came in handy last month in North Canaan when a propane leak required the evacuation of hundreds of nearby residents to the safety of the North Canaan Elementary School. Unfortunately only people with AT&T landlines (mostly the 672s) are automatically enrolled in this program. Cellular phone owners or non-AT&T landline telephone users can sign up for the free Connecticut Alert System at www.ctalert.gov.

This month our illustrations depict April Holidays. Make your guesses and look for the answers in the May issue of the *Chronicle*.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

APRIL ISSUE

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