



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 19 : NUMBER 7 AUGUST 2009



## 06753? 06754? 06796?

Will one or more of these zip codes become a distant memory as the United States Postal Service copes with its multibillion-dollar deficit by closing post offices? Someday, yes, but contrary to rumors, no time soon, according to information furnished by Cornwall Postmaster Patricia Case. Closing a post office is a lengthy process, and those in jeopardy this summer are located in bigger cities. But doesn't the presence of three post offices serving a population of 1,459 raise a red flag? Perhaps. However, federal law prohibits shutting down small post offices just because they aren't big revenue generators.

When, inevitably, consolidation comes, which of our offices should get the axe? I asked some Cornwallians this question. Replies tend to reflect the "nimby" factor. Richard Griggs no doubt spoke for many West Cornwallians when he said his neighborhood's post office is vital because "that's where the businesses are." Cornwall Bridgers canvassed voiced the same argument, while Cornwall Villagers wanted their post office spared "because that's where the Town Hall is."

We cherish our post offices for the memories they hold for us and for the small-town spirit they embody. As West Cornwallian Maggie Cooley succinctly put it, "I love the

Cornwall Post Office because there is never a line and because they have the best candy."

—George Kittle

## Sweet Peet and Zoning

Horse manure, unlike roses, apparently does not smell so sweet even by any other name—at least here in Cornwall. The June *Chronicle* told the story of how Ralph and Charlie Gold plan to use part of their Cream Hill Road farm to produce a high-quality garden mulch called Sweet Peet. It's made from a composted mixture of horse manure, wood chips, hay, and other material. They discussed their plans with Cornwall's Planning and Zoning Commission last April 14. At that meeting, the Golds received what they saw as a signal to go ahead "full speed." P&Z voted that "the use...is agricultural in nature and does not require a special permit...." Since then, however, obstacles have arisen, and the Golds' Sweet Peet project has stalled.

First, P&Z asked its lawyer, Steven Byrne, if it had been right to decide that no permit was needed. Was composting horse manure, most of it coming from out of town, permitted as a "farming" use under Cornwall's zoning law? He re-

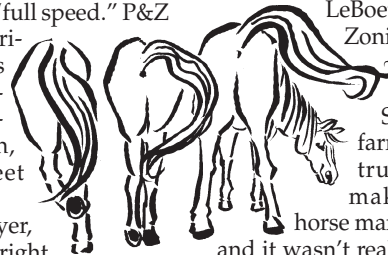
plied that in his view "...the Sweet Peet project may not necessarily be a permitted use of...farm property." But he went on to say that P&Z "...could find that [it] is an accessory use to a farm."

Then, after hearing about the Golds' Sweet Peet plans from the *Chronicle* story, about a dozen neighbors who live on or near Cream Hill Road met. They signed a petition to P&Z arguing that production of Sweet Peet was not a customary agricultural use and thus should be prohibited.

Subsequently, one of these neighbors, Kathleen O'Flinn, sent a "lawyer's letter" to P&Z complaining about its action on Sweet Peet. This was followed by an inch-thick set of documents from the law firm of Dewey & LeBoeuf addressed to Cornwall's Zoning Board of Appeals. This presented many arguments against making Sweet Peet on the Golds' farm. It would generate heavy truck traffic, involve noise-making machinery, collect horse manure from faraway places—and it wasn't really farming and thus didn't belong in an agricultural zone.

The Golds respond to these complaints by noting that a comparable Sweet Peet operation has been going on for years in Bethlehem, Connecticut, and has had no

(continued on page 2)



## AUGUST 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M.</b> Call 672-0229 for Location; <b>Men's Adult Basketball, 7:30 P.M.</b> CCS Gym <b>Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7 P.M.</b> CCS Gym <b>Wednesdays: Stretch Class, 5 P.M.</b> Town Hall; <b>Women's Adult Basketball, 7:30 P.M.</b> CCS; <b>Tai Chi, 6 P.M.</b> Call 672-0064 <b>Sundays: Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M.</b> 672-0229 to confirm						<b>1</b> Henna Tattoo Demonstration 10:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. W. Cornwall Farmers' Market Family Contra Dance 7 P.M. Town Hall
<b>2</b> Ice Cream Social 2-4 P.M. Cornwall Historical Society	<b>3</b> Region One Bd. of Ed. 6 P.M. HVRHS Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	<b>4</b> Agricultural Commission 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Office	<b>5</b> Family Mystic Paper Beasts Program 6:30-8 P.M. Library †	<b>6</b> 	<b>7</b> Rose Algrant Show 5-8 P.M. CCS †	<b>8</b> Rose Algrant Show 10 A.M.-5 P.M. CCS †
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Blood Pressure Screening Noon-1 P.M. UCC	<b>11</b> Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <b>Deadline: September Chronicle Copy</b> W. Cornwall Herb Walk 10:30-11:30 A.M. W. C. Farmers' Market Michael Pollan: Book Signing 11:30 A.M. W. C. Farmers' Market; Benefit Talk 1 P.M. CCS †
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>  Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. West Cornwall Firehouse	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Motherhouse Round Sing. 7:30 P.M. Local Farm Barn † <b>22</b> Guided Tour of Corn. Bridge 10 A.M. Near Iron Bank † Wool Spinning Demo. 10-11:30 A.M. W. C. Farmers' Market
<b>23</b> Motherhouse Carving, Fire Cooking 9:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. Local Farm †	<b>24</b> ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall *	<b>25</b> P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	<b>26</b> Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. West Cornwall Firehouse	<b>27</b> 	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Opening Day for CCS and Cornwall Child Center †					

\* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

problems with its neighbors or the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. They admit that most of their horse manure will come from outside Cornwall, but note that this will involve only about one truckload per day during most of the year. They also note that the site is over half a mile from most of their neighbors' houses and that the neighbors won't hear or smell anything different than when there were a lot of cows on the farm.

What happens next? That's hard to say at this point. Land Use Clerk Karen Nelson has sent copies of Mrs. O'Flinn's complaint to Zoning Board of Appeals members in advance of their scheduled July 27 meeting (after the *Chronicle's* deadline). We have also heard that discussions are going on between the Golds and some of the concerned neighbors to find an acceptable compromise.

—David A. Grossman

## Can First Responders Find You?

If you have a fire or need medical help, can first responders find you? Is your house marked?

If you are having a cardiac problem, your survivability can be measured in fractions of a minute. If your house is on fire, your house's survivability can be measured in minutes.

Let's imagine the worst-case scenario. It's night and raining and you call 911 for medical help. The first responders' pagers go off and people head to the firehouse. The first one drives the ambulance out of the garage and waits for the other two team members. Perhaps one member has headed directly for your house. It takes three people to fill the required team. All they know at this point is the address and a brief description of the problem. During the wait for a full team, he/she/they think about the problem, what equipment they need, and whether they need outside help like Northern Dutchess Paramedics and/or Star flight. Usually the team is complete in less than five minutes after the pager goes off. Our average time for the ambulance to be at your house is twelve minutes and seven minutes for an EMT to be at your house.

The team pulls out. The driver is occupied trying to drive fast and prudently. The second person is working the siren and the radio. The third person is in the back, inventorying everything he or she may need, so that when they get there they can hit the ground running.

The ambulance is rolling toward you. The road is wet and headlights produce glare. It is hard to see through the rain. Where is the house? Sometimes it's almost impossible to find.

The next time you are driving down your road by day, by night, or during a storm, observe how easy or hard it would be to find your house. Is the number at your entrance and not just on the house? If it is winter, has the snowplow covered the number?

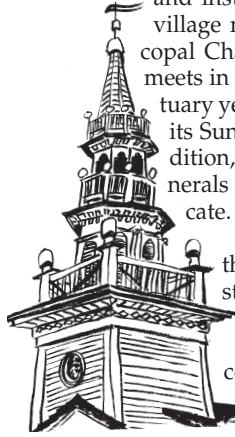
If it is not easy to see your house number from down the street, install three-inch re-

flective numbers next to the driveway at mailbox height facing both directions on the road. It could save your life or your home.

—New Dunn, CVFD

## A Temporary Closing

It was with some trepidation that we learned last month that Cornwall Building Official Paul Prindle had issued an Unsafe Structure Notice to the North Cornwall Church and the building had to be closed. This forced the United Church of Christ to cancel its traditional "summer vacation" on Town Street and instead hold services in the village meeting house. The Episcopal Chapel of All Saints, which meets in the North Cornwall sanctuary year round, has also moved its Sunday services there. In addition, several weddings and funerals have been forced to relocate.



Luckily, the rumor that the church's trimly elegant steeple is listing appears to be unfounded. The actual occasion for the discovery of structural problems was a forward-looking review of the building's status by a joint committee from UCC and the Chapel of All Saints formed shortly after the new year. This led to Cornwall structural engineer Joe Marchetti's taking a walk through the church in early June to check for potential problems. Some deflection in a beam above the balcony area aroused Joe's concern.

Though temporary measures would probably permit some continued use, the committee felt it should hire a different structural engineer for a complete analysis and recommendations for long-term remediation. That analysis, from engineer Brian Neff of Roxbury, is expected in early August.

—Paul De Angelis

## Dread

Across the general green some yellow leaves drift down, inscribing random scratches on the dying face of summer. Not yet the reddening patch, not yet the rampant inflammation that swells from hill to hill and undoes creation.

—Kim Waller

[Kim Waller died in May. She had a place on Everest Hill Road with her husband, Al.]

## Cornwall Briefs

- **Solar Panels:** The panels that we are getting for free because so many of you converted to renewable energy should be in place on the grounds of CCS just about the time this issue of the *Chronicle* arrives in your mailboxes. Be neighborly and go say "hello"!

- **STEAP Grant Funds** that are going to Cornwall businesses for sprucing up their façades are already making a difference. The West Cornwall restaurant RSVP has three

handsome new planters and an awning over its outside tables. Watch also for some new touches at the Cornwall Inn, Ian Ingersoll Cabinetmakers, the Cornwall Package Store, and several other local businesses.

- **Oh Them Bills:** Because of a spike in medical and electric bills and the economy in general, the Cornwall Food and Fuel Bank has run through more than 80 percent of its funds and has only a few thousand dollars left. Contributions can be sent to P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753.

- **Recreation:** Hammond Beach has a new set of docks, with carpentry by Peter "Nails" Russ and installation by the town crew. Also in play is a snappy-looking half basketball court, a few dribbles to the west of the baseball diamond on Route 4. —John Miller

## Welcome

Forrest Amory Chamberlain  
to Hope Cheney and James Bentley

## Good-Bye to Friends

Nicholas R. Givotovsky  
Charles Osuch  
Hans Dieter Wolf

## Congratulations

Camilla Mager and Maria Smith  
Amy Dillon and Mark Jones  
Kathryn Sandmeyer and Jeffrey Ward

## Land Transfers

US Bank National Association, Trustee, to Martha B. Lane, land, buildings, and improvements thereon at 378 Kent Road for \$277,000.

Fred M. and Joelle E. Sander, Trustees, to Grace Jaihee Yoon and Stephen Kilroy, .030 acres on Cherry Hill Road for \$4,000.

Estate of Ethel B. Jamgotchian to CVA Everest, LLC, two parcels of land on Route 4 for \$562,500.

Elvira Delany Hart to 6 Railroad Street, LLC, .192 acres with buildings and improvements thereon at 6 Railroad Street for \$235,000.

## The Beavers Are Winning?

"I respect beavers," First Selectman Gordon Ridgeway told me the other day. "They have the work ethic, 24/7. But," he continued, "they create problems." The dams of *Castor canadensis* can flood roads, make people's ponds silt up, and create ponds where landowners would rather have brooks. Recently the "Letters to the *Chronicle*" section received the following missive:

"You won't dare print this letter. The land is ours and you usurped it, trapping our ancestors, destroying their habitat. But we are coming back. Where 200 years ago there were beaver dams, there are beaver dams again. Next year there will be more. In 20



years the valleys will be flooded. We will reclaim our rightful heritage. Each year there are more of us and we are winning. You will never defeat us. [Signed] Fidel Castor, leader of the Beaver Liberation Front of Cornwall."

Is Gordon right? Perhaps the beavers are winning? I decided to talk to Rick Stone of the highway crew, who is Cornwall's resident beaver-control expert. "They're pretty industrious little guys," he said. "I enjoy 'em when they're out in the woods, but I have problems when they're breaking down the roads." He explained that when the beavers block culverts with their dams, the roads flood and the water undermines the road surface. In the old days the only way to deal with the problem was to tear out the logs that were blocking the culvert. But the next morning the beavers would be back blocking the culvert again. There are nine vulnerable culverts in town. Think of having to clean each one out once a day.

But a couple of years ago the town experimented with dewatering cages. A dewatering cage is a pipe running from several yards out in the stream or pool. The upper mouth is surrounded by a steel cage. This means that water flows in to the pipe from all directions. The beavers, which are hard-wired to block single-direction flows, "haven't figured it out," says Rick. Now he's installing dewatering cages wherever they are needed.

It seems that Rick has come up with a compromise that protects our roads. But this is only for the roads. It leaves most of the town's waterways free for the beavers to do their beaverish thing in. Unless Cornwall's landowners want to go to the expense of putting in dewatering cages all over town, Fidel Castor may be right. Maybe, as Gordon says, the beavers are winning. —Hendon Chubb

## About and Out in Cornwall

After several years of underemployment, Cornwall's justices of the peace are enjoying a new market for their services. Of the twelve wedding ceremonies performed in Cornwall since November 12, 2008, when same-sex marriage became legal in Connecticut, nine have been same-sex couples: six female, three male. Some have been married in church, but most have been married by justices of the peace.

In social and cultural matters, Cornwall has often led the way. Several years ago, when the United Church of Christ needed a minister, members of the church elected to fill the position with an openly gay candidate. The Reverend Micki Nunn-Miller has now been pastor of UCC since 2004. The official form for the State of Connecticut's marriage license now offers several options for designating members of the wedding: bride, groom, spouse. In a humorous nod to these options, at a recent wedding reception the two young women who were "tying the knot" introduced themselves as the Bride and the Bride.

But among gay residents of Cornwall, the



### THE SCHOOLS OF CORNWALL

The Cornwall Historical Society will be publishing shortly an updated edition of *The Schools of Cornwall*, which Lewis Gannett and Michael Gannett produced in 1984. To mark the occasion, the Society would like to hear from Cornwallians (and others) who attended the old district schools before 1940, when the Cornwall Consolidated School opened. Anyone who would like to share memories of that earlier time should contact Norman Dorsen, 277 Town Street (672-6352), or Ginny Potter, 337 Town Street (672-6191). Many thanks.

—Norman Dorsen

### BRAVO SWEET PEET

I'm writing to express my support and delight at the prospect of Sweet Peet, fertilizer made from horse manure, coming to Cream Hill Farm. What a wonderful way to utilize this land which has been farmed for hundreds of years, long before my family came to Cream Hill. With such an alarmingly stagnant economy and the loss of mom and pop shops left and right, I find it refreshing that this eco-friendly product has found a home in Cornwall. I can't wait to buy some.

—Louise Levy

fear of homophobia is not entirely absent. One couple stated without hesitation that their partnership has encountered not a trace of prejudice during their many years as Cornwall residents; they preferred to remain anonymous nonetheless. The formal and official nature of marriage provides legal recognition as well as emotional security. Many same-sex couples choose a public wedding ceremony. But, as one couple puts it, "Many of us are willing to wed publicly, but some of us are not willing to hold hands in public."

—Catherine Noren

## Cornwall for Locavores

It takes advance planning to eat food born and raised in Cornwall. It also takes a really big freezer.

The Cornwall Agricultural Council's list of Cornwall's food producers (available at the Library, among other places), includes a variety of purveyors. One is Lynn Scoville of Scoville Farm, who said that meat eaters should leave a message (at 672-6149) about their particular interest—pork or beef—and

# Letters to the Chronicle

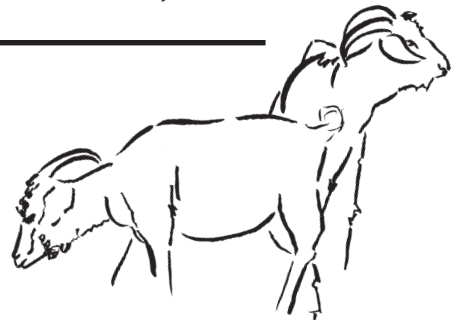
## COMING BACK

It has been nine years since I left Cornwall. I first moved to Florida and for the last three and a half years have been in California. Although the weather in Florida and Southern California does not include northern winters, the sense of community is nowhere near as warm.

I try to get back to Cornwall as often as I can, always in summer when there are corn, tomatoes, and tennis. The house that I rebuilt in 1979 and subsequently sold to my sister and brother-in-law was built a hundred years ago as the summer studio of my great-grandfather James Henry Moser. We will celebrate the anniversary this summer and I will again get to see many of the people that I miss every day. There are many people that I miss in Florida, too. But no memory can ever replace the precious histories in my mind that I lived through in Cornwall. —Todd Aichele

## ADVENTURES IN GREEN

I write as a first-time CSA member—someone who gets a box of vegetables once a week from a local farm (Jonathan Kirchner's Stone-wall Vegetables in my case) and then has the fun of figuring out what to do with them. This early in the season there are a LOT of greens and I sure have expanded my horizons as far as they are concerned. Garlic scapes? Who ever knew they are now considered a delicacy at fine restaurants? Kale? I know it's supposed to be super nutritious but how do I cook it? Unknown leafy veg? Garlic & oil are always helpful. I urge everyone to try this wonderful way to support our local farmers, expand our culinary knowledge and be healthier for it! —Anne Baren



someone would return the call when the meat became available. (Prize barn kittens, however, are available now. "New models coming out all the time," Lynn observed dryly.)

Birdseye and Tanner Brooks Farm features Belted Galloway cattle and Icelandic sheep. The farm also raises rare-breed San Clemente goats, which make for good—and rather trendy—eating. Animals are sold by the half or quarter largely in the fall. To reserve your fraction, leave a message at 672-6906 or betbrooksfarm@optonline.net.

"Our waiting list's a mile long," said Bill Hurlburt on the phone that evening. Hurlburt Farm's Angus Hereford crosses are raised and

finished on grass, humanely butchered (not an oxymoron in livestock circles) on the farm, and dry aged at Litchfield Locker where they are cut to clients' specifications. To get in line, write to bexbill@aol.com. Better yet, offer up your lawn.

A stop at the Saturday Farmers' Market in West Cornwall offers more for the Cornwall locavore, with several local stands including Ridgway Farm and Debra Tyler's Motherhouse. —Jessica Marshall

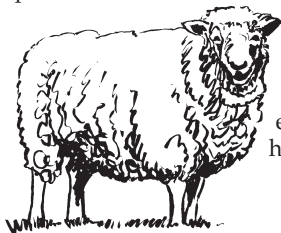
### The Probate Court, Again

Four years ago Cornwall joined with Sharon, Salisbury, Norfolk, Canaan, and Falls Village judges and town governments in agreeing to form the Northwest Corner Probate District. This brought staff, payroll, and benefits reductions, and helped lighten the financial strains on the self-supporting probate court system, whose savings were being rapidly drawn down by entitlements, by a huge increase in the no-fee social services caseload, and by some \$20 million in unspent contingency funds that the state transferred to its own general fund.

What courts in this part of the county acted to avoid has now come to pass: the governor and the legislature, tired of waiting for the probate system to reform itself, have decreed that the number of districts shall be reduced from 117 to 50 and shall serve populations around 40,000.

Sitting judges in our region are keenly interested in how to divide the pie, as their salaries and electability depend on where the lines are drawn. All the selectmen and judges from the towns involved are agreed that adding Litchfield (which now includes Kent and would expand to include Harwinton and Thomaston) to our district is the most logical and comfortable way to bring us up to the required size. But Winsted and New Hartford also want to acquire our six towns, while Torrington would like to have Litchfield. It is all highly political, and judges are furiously lobbying the Probate Assembly and the General Assembly to promote their preferred outcome. Charlie Vail, our judge (who will not be running again), says it is like "asking the chickens to design the henhouse."

—Maggie Cooley



### The Time Is Ripe

Seize the moment and write the *Chronicle* a nice check. Our bankers are muttering. Thanks!

## Events & Announcements

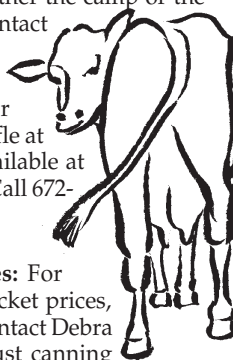
**Art in Cornwall:** Beginning August 4, the Cornwall Library will show *Aleith Lewis: Altered Histories of Cuba: Photographs and Text*.

At Lady Audrey's Gallery, the exhibit of H. Helmy's impasto abstracts and the ceramics of Stacey Belle Ornstein continues through the end of August. Artists accepted to the "Bridges" art competition should deliver their work to the gallery during the last week of August.

**Rose Algrant Art Show:** CCS gym, Friday, August 7, from 5 to 8 P.M. (with reception), and Saturday, August 8, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. (See insert.)

**Grumbling Gryphons** will hold a Theater-Arts Camp for ages 6–13 at the Town Hall from Thursday, August 6, to Friday, August 14. Family discounts and scholarships are available. Leslie Elias will lead two musical storytelling workshops for three- to five-year-olds at the Town Hall on August 6 and August 13 from 9 to 9:50 A.M. The fee is \$10 per class. To enroll in either the camp or the storytelling program, contact Leslie at 672-0286.

**Cow Plops:** Tickets for the annual cow plop raffle at the Ag Fair are now available at the Selectmen's Office. Call 672-4959 for information.



**Motherhouse Activities:** For information, location, ticket prices, and to reserve places, contact Debra Tyler at 672-0229. August canning workshops are full.

**August 15:** Free round sing at 7:30 P.M. at the Local Farm Barn at 22 Popple Swamp Road. Call Jane for more info at 672-6101.

**August 23:** Join Joe Brien carving wooden spoons and Wyatt Whiteman cooking over an open fire, 9:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. Limited to eight whittling pairs. Must pre-register.

**Meditation:** 1 P.M. Sundays (672-0229).

**P&Z Special Meeting:** Tuesday, August 25, 7:30 P.M. at the Town Hall.

**Care Packages for U.S. Soldiers:** Donations for our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq will be collected in a box at the Cornwall Library. Wondering what to send? Contact Lee Pryor at 672-4226 or c.leepryor@gmail.com.

**Guided Tour of Cornwall Bridge:** Dody Clarke-Wolfe and Connie Gomez will tell you about the railroad, the iron industry, the 1930 cement bridge, and all the changes they caused. Sponsored by the Cornwall Historical Society. Meet near the National Iron Bank and Cornwall Electric on Saturday, August 22, at 10 A.M.

**Library Events:** On Wednesday, August 5, from 6:30 to 8 P.M., the Mystic Paper Beasts will perform *Sky Tails*, a Native American story. Admission is free.

Children are reminded to continue to keep track of their summer reading with a reading log, available at the Library. Raffle tickets for prizes will be awarded for time spent reading. For more information, call 672-6874 or check the Library's website, www.cornwalllibrary.org.

On Saturday, August 15, at 1 P.M., Michael Pollan will speak at CCS on growing and eating local foods. He will sign books after his talk. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$5 for students and may be purchased in advance at the Library (check, cash, or MC/Visa), at the Farmers' Market in West Cornwall that morning (where Michael will also be signing books at 11:30 A.M.), or at the door.

**Fuel Assistance:** If you will be applying for heating fuel assistance, you should start collecting documents now to save time later. You'll need your four most recent weeks of paycheck stubs, bank statements, and other income. Applications open in September.

**The Cornwall Child Center** will reopen on Monday, August 31, at 7:30 A.M. Children ages one to eight are welcome Monday to Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Registration will take place the week of August 24. Call 672-6989 for an appointment.

**Family Contra Dance:** Saturday, August 1, from 7 to 9 P.M. at the Town Hall.

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### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

AUGUST ISSUE

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SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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