

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 16 : NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 2006

Reval Rap

The new assessments drew crowds to three meetings in November at which Assessor Barbara Bigos explained her appraisal methodology.

Those who could not attend the open meetings may call the assessor at 672-2703 (cwlassessor@optonline.net) to make an appointment to discuss the new values.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will hold hearings in March 2007 for those who wish to appeal the decision of the assessor.

—The December Editors

A Day at the Polls

Cornwall takes its politics seriously in any election year, but this year was exceptional. For the first time in years there was a viable candidate—Chris Murphy—to contest and beat U.S. Representative Nancy Johnson, a circumstance Democrats welcomed. For the Republicans, Governor Jodi Rell's success in replacing disgraced Gov. John Rowland earned her a term of her own. There was a lot to bring us to the polls, and we came in sufficient numbers to give us a 77.7 percent turnout. The national figure—40.4 percent—didn't come near ours.

This was the end of the era of the old mechanical voting machines. Next time it will be pencil on paper to be fed into an electronic scanner.

—The December Editors

New Probate Court Shows Promise

The Northwest Corner Probate District will open on January 3, 2007, with Charles Vail as its first elected judge. The new district serves the towns of Canaan, Cornwall, Falls Village, Norfolk, Salisbury, and Sharon, and will occupy the space now housing the Canaan Probate Court at the Town Hall on Pease Street.

The decision to consolidate was made by the boards of selectmen of the six towns and passed by the Connecticut legislature in the 2004 session. The impetus to consolidate came from the sitting judges themselves; keen as we are on the virtues of small local courts, the six of us have been almost unanimously in favor of a merger since we began discussing it among ourselves and with our selectmen five years ago.

As the smallest court in the state, Cornwall was clearly slated for the high jump sooner or later. We have never been held to the statutory minimum requirements for maintaining an independent court, and achieving this standard would be silly given our small workload.

There will be huge savings to the central Probate Administration in terms of entitlements, training, equipment, and support: providing health insurance, pensions, and sophisticated computer systems to six courts, some open to the public only a few

hours a week, has never been fiscally inspired. From the point of view of probate clients, the bother of having to go out of town should be small. Administrative procedures have been streamlined to sidestep needless court appearances, and most decrees are issued without actual hearings. A further advantage is that the judge who is handling multiple children's matters, complicated conservatorship accounts, or steamy will contests is going to be more on top of these topics than the judge who sees only one such case every term, as I have found in acting as Canaan's probate judge for the past two years.

All of the courts involved in this venture have been beavering away for months to make the transition smooth, and there is going to be considerable continuity of staff. Several experienced clerks and I will be helping in the new court.

—Maggie Cooley

If It Snows on Thursday...

It's easy to have a *que-sera-sera* attitude when looking at the weather forecasts for the new ski season. They are all over the map, according to Carol Lugar, president of Mohawk Mountain Ski Area. She and the staff at Mohawk Mountain, the oldest and largest ski area in the state, always like the most optimistic forecast for a snowy season. Last

(continued on page 2)

DECEMBER 2006

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Village Meeting House; Men's Adult Basketball, 8 P.M. CCS Gym Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7-9 P.M. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Play Group, 10 A.M. Playscape or UCC; Stretch Class, 5 P.M. Town Hall; Tai Chi, 7 P.M. CCS; Women's Adult Basketball, 8 P.M. CCS Gym Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. UCC Day Room Sundays: Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M. Debra Tyler 672-0229 for location					1	2 Christmas Fair 10 A.M.-3 P.M. UCC Insiders/Outsiders Gallery Art Opening 4-6 P.M. †
3	4 Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Ag. Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	5 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall CCS Winter Concert Grades 5-8 7 P.M. †	6 Yoga with Ruthellen Griffin 6:30-7:30 P.M. UCC	7 <i>Too Hot Not to Handle</i> (Free Film) 7 P.M. W.C. Firehouse	8	9 Cornwall Association 9 A.M. UCC Motherhouse Herbal Remedies Workshop 10:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. UCC
10 Anne Chamberlain's Trips to Vietnam 11:30 A.M. UCC †	11 Blood Pressure Screening Noon-1 P.M. UCC Parish House	12 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	13 Yoga with Ruthellen Griffin 6:30-7:30 P.M. UCC <i>Wings to Fly</i> Reading Program 6:30-7:30 P.M. Library	14	15 Deadline: January Chronicle Copy Holiday Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library † Annual Tree Lighting & Carol Sing 7 P.M. Town Hall †	16 CHANUKAH Barbara Wolff on Illuminated Manuscripts 4 P.M. Library † Annual Christmas Pageant 7:30 P.M. UCC †
17 Annual Winter Bird Count † Book Signing: Chris Webber, Scott Cady 4 P.M. Library †	18	19 CCS Winter Concert Grades K-4 10 A.M. † Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	20 Yoga with Ruthellen Griffin 6:30-7:30 P.M. UCC	21 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	22 WINTER BEGINS CCS Early Dismissal Holiday Recess	23
24 Candlelight Service of Lessons & Carols 5 & 8 P.M. N. C. Meeting House †	25 CHRISTMAS	26 Annual Boxing Day Reading N. C. Meeting House 4 P.M. † ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	27 Red Cross Blood Drive 1:30-6:15 P.M. UCC Parish House † Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	28	29	30 
31						

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957
† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

year's weather was bizarre, with alternating warm and cold spells, but as Mohawk enters its 60th season, Lugar sees no specific trends. Like many of us, she remembers giant snow banks during her youth, but she was shorter then. Fortunately Mohawk's state-of-the-art snowmaking can cover all of its 24 trails.

At its peak, Mohawk employs people from a pool of about 380, a majority of them part-timers. Twelve people are employed full-time throughout the year.

Thousands of Cornwall kids have taken their first snowplows on Mohawk's slopes. Classes for Cornwall's children began over 58 years ago, just two years after the ski center opened.

Mohawk Mountain attracts people from all over Connecticut, and many ski- and snowboard-laden cars and buses can be seen on Cornwall roads in the early evenings and weekends; the busiest times are around Christmas, Martin Luther King Day, and—according to Lugar—"any weekend after a big snowfall on Thursday."

—Louise Dunn

Local Groceries Delivered

Organic produce, meats, and dairy products from area farms are available through a new delivery service developed at Local Farm's Motherhouse and managed by Jessica Marshall. Orders may be placed by Thursday for farm food from 15 local organic farms and businesses for Friday delivery by Josh Bate, the official food wrangler. There's a \$10 charge for the service.

Cornwall farms include Stone Wall Farm (formerly Lorch's), Hautboy Hill, and Local Farm. In Pursuit of Tea, now housed in the Cornwall Bridge train station, will provide teas for the market basket.

According to Jessica, "We're trying to encourage a loose sense of perfection in all who participate. In keeping with that goal, the farm food arrives on doorsteps at some point Friday afternoon or evening. For those who need more control, boxes can be left in a refrigerator at Local Farm for pickup." For more information and orders, contact info@motherhouse.us or call 672-0229.

—Lisa Lansing Simont

Crowd of Witnesses

Cornwall can boast of ten burying grounds, four of them active and all of them treasuries of our history. All are fun to explore, and some are easy to find, but the woods have overtaken others. Whether prominent and well tended or unnoticed, these graveyards share a serenity and dignity that draws those who venture onto our back pathways.

The Cornwall Historical Society has some records for the different sites. Local history



enthusiasts and relatives often find burials on these sites impossible to identify because rough fieldstones were often used for early grave markers instead of more costly carved headstones—in some cases, even wooden slabs were used. Meanwhile, for over a century, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has faithfully decorated the graves of Cornwall people who served in the nation's wars—more every Memorial Day.

The Allen Cemetery (on Route 125, 200 feet up the old wood road opposite Dibble Hill Road) is the oldest in the town, with an obelisk and plaque to Cornwall pioneers. Graves (no longer visible) date from 1739 to 1762. (Ethan's father, Joseph, is the only Allen buried there.)

The Bradford Cemetery (on the hillside overlooking Route 43, opposite Lake Road) was the original Cornwall Hollow burying ground, as early as 1757, and sheltered under tall trees, perhaps the most beautiful of them all. Its legible epitaphs show mostly Sedgwicks and Hurlburts.

The Cornwall Cemetery (above the village on Route 4) was originally one acre. Its earliest stone (1763) belongs to William Tanner, and several pupils of the Foreign Mission School, as well as other major players in that story (1817–1826), are buried there. (The stone receiving vault was built in 1921.)

The Calhoun Cemetery (on Route 7 opposite Route 45) was established in 1773 for the Puffingham settlement of the town. General Heman Swift—commander in the Revolutionary War and Cornwall's foremost man of the time—lies there.

The Cornwall Hollow Cemetery (on Hautboy Hill by Route 43, opposite the Sedgwick monument), the fifth to be opened, dates from 1793 and contains the graves of Major General John Sedgwick and other prominent members of the family.

The North Cornwall Cemetery (southern end of Rattlesnake Road), whose first stone is 1808, holds 68 Harts, 49 Rogers, 41 Scovilles, and 18 Golds.

The little Southeast Cemetery (on a driveway running west from Flat Rocks Road north of Hawkins Pond) dates from the mid-19th century, when the area had an economic boom.

Small private burying grounds are the Wilcox Cemetery (on a wooded knoll west of Route 63, a mile north of Hautboy Hill) with family markers from 1828 to 1852; the Wright Cemetery (1846–1910; on a knoll between Route 128 and Wright Hill Road); and the isolated Smallpox Cemetery (fenced, in the open field on Cogswell Road west of the North Cornwall Church), a few graves from 1777 to 1801. Not such a long list for 266 years.

—Ann Schillinger

Welcome

Aislinn Ann Cook to Keri Ann and Adam Cook

Congratulations

Elizabeth Raniere to Karl Zimmerman

Sarah Getz to James LaPorta

Elizabeth Waterston to Louis Cancelmi

Polly Cecile Tobin to Andrew Bartlett Goddard

Land Transfers

Claudia Killackey to Jose C. Firmiano, property at 268 Great Hollow Road for \$300,000.

Christopher B. Harned to Bonnie Sue Bevans, property at 52 Dark Entry Road for \$550,000.

Peter D. Meier to Christopher and Mary Heffernan, 1.280 acres on Route 7 for \$70,000.

Jennifer, Amanda, and Cristopher Nash to George D. and Karen J. Yancopoulos, property at 71 and 73 Popple Swamp Road for \$1,975,000.

Sometimes Cold, Sometimes Not

This year Cornwall will have 365 days of weather, some good, some bad. There is an 85 percent chance that the weather tomorrow will be the same as today. As we get closer to Christmas, I predict that it will get colder and that precipitation will be in the form of snow.

Considering that Old Saint Nick comes around December 24, and we all know that he drives a sleigh with wooden runners, we need a little snow so that he makes less noise on the rooftops that night. Bad enough that 32 little feet are prancing and dancing around up there.

Back to the facts: Over the years Cornwall has seen snow as early as October 20 and as late as May 26. In December 1980 it was 17 below, and in 1984 it was 68 degrees above. In January 1961 it was 27 below, and in 1973 it was 62 above.

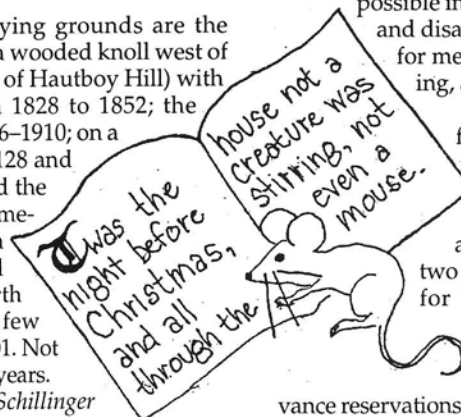
I remember that on February 1, 1971, it was 20 below zero. I worked at the West Cornwall Garage for my dad, and that morning the phone was ringing off the hook. Cars wouldn't start because of the cold. But in February 1985, it was 70 degrees above. Weather around here can be pretty crazy, but that's what makes Cornwall just a little more fun than Miami.

For a more accurate report on this winter, call me in May at 672-6313. —Rick Stone

Take the Bus

The Northwestern Connecticut Transit District has announced that new funding makes possible increased service for seniors and disabled residents of Cornwall for medical appointments, banking, and shopping.

The expanded schedule for Dial-a-Ride is Monday through Friday to Canaan, Falls Village, Lakeville, Salisbury, and Sharon. On Thursday, two buses will now be available for this busy route. And on Monday and Friday there is also service to Torrington. Twenty-four-hour advance reservations are required for these trips.



Inter-regional transportation (i.e., Hartford, New Haven) is also available on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Reservations should be made at least one week in advance and are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Call 489-2535 for information and for all reservations.

—Audrey Ferman

Local Smoking Habits

The recent news that the nicotine levels in cigarettes increased in brands that appeal most to young people sent me on a study of Cornwall and cigarettes.

Paying for my gas at Citgo in Cornwall Bridge, I noticed a teenager—he said he was 18—buying cigarettes. My curiosity got the better of me, and I asked this person why he smoked. He told me he could not help it, that he was hooked.

There are four places to buy cigarettes in our town, in addition to Citgo: the Berkshire Country Store, the West Cornwall Market, Baird's General Store, and the Cornwall Package Store. Citgo, the one establishment that advertises its sale of cigarettes on the road, sells them at the state minimum, which is an 8 percent mark-up from cost. As a result it sells the lion's share of the cigarettes sold in Cornwall.

The other establishments sell cigarettes as a convenience for their customers, who typically buy packs (20 cigarettes) rather than the cartons that Citgo typically sells (10 packs). A pack of cigarettes in Cornwall costs between \$4.50 (the state minimum) and \$6.00, a healthy mark-up from cost. Connecticut has a sales tax of \$1.51 per pack. The average state cigarette tax is \$0.94; New Jersey is the highest at \$2.57 per pack, South Carolina the lowest at \$0.07. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between increases in the cigarette sales tax and people quitting smoking.

My study led me to the following estimate: Approximately 100,000 packs of cigarettes are sold in Cornwall each year. Some other facts, courtesy of the American Lung Association's 2005 smoking survey: 18 percent of adults in the state smoke; 22 percent of high school students in the state smoke; 5.9 percent of middle school students in the state smoke. The economic estimate of the cost of smoking to the state was \$2.2 billion in 2005. One of the owners I spoke with told me that he was not surprised at the high school statistic, citing the number of kids with cigarettes in their pockets that he has seen at Housy.

—Thomas K. Levine

Events & Announcements

The Kent Singers will present their winter concert on Sunday, December 3, at 3 P.M. in the Chapel at Kent School. The program features Gerald Finzi's brilliant "In Terra Pax" and seasonal English carols. Two works by Buxtehude and Pergolesi are included as well. Parking is along the road to and at the hockey rink, the location preferred by the school. For more information call 672-2659.

Letters to the Chronicle

REVAL EVALUATION

I must thank you for Ed Ferman's highly amusing piece on property taxes last month. Unlike other exact sciences like weather prediction, property valuation, particularly for tax purposes, really needed a good send-up. As Deirdre unfailingly reminds me, our home lacks three quarters of its interior trim, a bunch of siding, a deck, a bathroom, and front steps. However, I can safely retort that the town considers it 97 percent complete and she should too—as long as there is nothing within her reach to hurl at me, that is. No one can tell you the weather a decade from now, but most anyone could tell you the direction your property taxes are headed—North. Thank you for the good laugh.

—Adam Fischer

WHAT TAX CUT?

I liked last month's article on revaluation. That is, until I got to the punch line—that the reval means taxes on cars will go down. That's literally so, because the mill rate will be cut in half if land and home values double (as they're expected to do). Cars, being valued on a state-wide basis, will benefit from the drop in the mill rate. But the town budget won't be affected by revaluation. So any car owners' savings have to be made up elsewhere. In Cornwall, the only "elsewhere" is land and homes, so the taxes on them will have to rise to compensate for the cut on cars. To car owners, it may look like a cut, but since the same people are also homeowners or renters, they will pay for their own tax cut.

Of course, if you live in your car you will get a real tax cut.

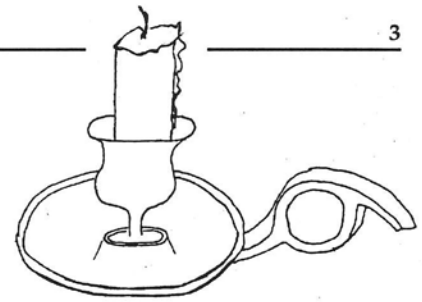
—David A. Grossman

COLD-WEATHER CHECKLIST

As temperatures drop, now is the time to check for winter preparedness. Simple steps that can make a difference include changing batteries in smoke detectors; making sure your street numbers are visible from the road (for 911); having emergency supplies of food, water, heat, medicines, and radios on hand; checking tires for good tread; and discussing emergency numbers and plans with family members.

Building Inspector Paul Prindle (672-0711) should inspect any installation of new supplementary heating

The Christmas Pageant, for all faiths and ages, will be held on Saturday, December 16, at 7:30 P.M. at the UCC Meeting House. Snow date Sunday, December 17. "White Gifts," a new toy wrapped in white paper, will be collected to give to a local shelter, and refreshments will be served. Those interested in being part of the pageant and those with questions should call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.



systems such as wood- or coal-burning stoves.

We've had a good response to the fuel bank program. If you need fuel assistance, call Jill Gibbons (672-2603).

—Gordon Ridgway

MORE ANGELS NEEDED

The Cornwall Housing Corporation was delighted to receive the results of the Columbus Day House Tour in the form of a check for \$21,000. The money will be used by the Clifton Read Rental Assistance Fund, which provides short-term assistance through the Cornwall Social Services Office.

The search for land that would be suitable for the Parcel Program goes on. Recently the Housing Corporation received a gift of stock worth \$15,000, which will assist in land procurement. There really are angels and some of them live right here in Cornwall!

The Corporation has set a goal of \$175,000 to add to the parcel inventory. Please consider becoming an angel so that a home becomes affordable for all people in Cornwall.

—Jim Levy

PEACEFUL HALLOWEEN

Park and Rec. and our selectmen have produced a very successful party at Town Hall for all the trick or treaters in the village. The next morning was absolutely amazing. For the first time in years there were no white streamers dangling from the tree limbs, no smashed pumpkins and no eggs smeared on cars and buildings.

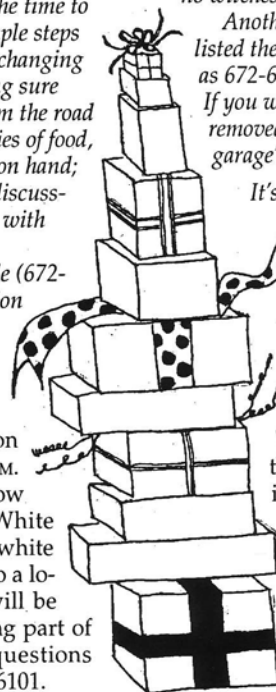
The closing of the Mohawk Trail through Dudleytown for the Halloween season was another brilliant move. Valley Road was peaceful—no witches and warlocks!

Another thing—the Town Report this year listed the Highway Garage telephone number as 672-6320. The trouble is that's MY number. If you want a snow drift plowed or a tree limb removed, don't call me, call 672-6230, the garage's number.

—Ann Peterson

It's true. The gremlin in the Town Office list file in my computer changed the garage's number. For this and all other acts of the gremlin, I apologize.

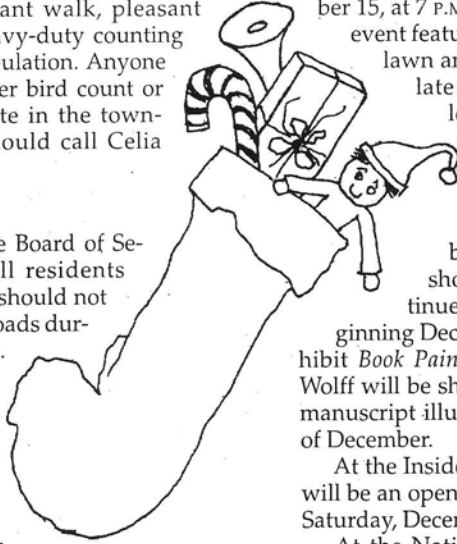
—Lisa Lansing Simont



Winter Concerts at CCS begin on Tuesday, December 5, at 7 P.M., with the fifth through eighth grades offering seasonal carols. On Tuesday, December 19, at 10 A.M., grades K-4 will present their concert suitable for younger voices. Early dismissal at 1 P.M. on Friday, December 22, will mark the beginning of CCS's holiday season recess, which lasts through the holiday week.

The Annual Winter Bird Count will take place on Sunday, December 17. This census makes for "a pleasant walk, pleasant talk," and some heavy-duty counting of the feathered population. Anyone willing to do a feeder bird count or willing to participate in the town-wide bird count should call Celia Senzer at 672-6898.

Winter Parking: The Board of Selectmen reminds all residents that cars and trucks should not be parked on town roads during snowstorms. They get in the way of the snow plows, and maneuvering one of the nine-foot plows past parked cars is a hazard all around. Please be thoughtful and park safely during bad weather.



At the Library This Month: Barbara Wolff, expert gilder and illuminator, will present a talk and short film about rediscovering the secrets of the masters who created the great illuminated manuscripts on Saturday, December 16, at 4 P.M. She will share some of her adventures in the search for the colors and techniques used in a treasured 14th-century manuscript and show her own work employing those medieval methods and pigments.

The Reverends Scott Cady and Christopher Webber will read from and discuss their new book, *A Year with American Saints*, on Sunday, December 17, at 4 P.M. The book describes the lives of 365 American Christians who have made incredible sacrifices and changed lives. Reception and book signing will follow the discussion.

A story hour and holiday party, including popcorn stringing, will be held on Friday, December 15, at 1:15 P.M. Children ages 3-6 are welcome.

A Holiday Companion

Copies of *A Cornwall Companion* are still available. ("Like cozying up to a good friend!"—*The Lakeville Journal*.) This anthology offers over 200 memorable stories from the *Chronicle* along with scores of elegant drawings. The color jacket is from an original painting by Marc Simont. A great holiday gift for friends, family, or yourself. \$20 plus \$4 first-class postage. Profits go to the *Chronicle's* operating budget. Use the coupon below.

Carol Singing and goodies to follow will be on offer at the Town Hall on Friday, December 15, at 7 P.M. This annual Park and Rec. event features tree lighting on the front lawn and music by the Hot Chocolate Society. Refreshments follow in the Town Hall. Everyone welcome; bring your best singing voice.

Art in Cornwall: At the Library, Duncan Hannah's show *Works on Paper* will continue through December 16. Beginning December 19, Ken Krug will exhibit *Book Paintings*. In the case: Barbara Wolff will be showing some of her work in manuscript illumination during the month of December.

At the Insiders/Outsiders Gallery, there will be an opening for the holiday show on Saturday, December 2, from 4 to 6 P.M.

At the National Iron Bank, Robert M. Parker's show of watercolors and prints continues through the month of December.

The Red Cross Blood Drive will be held in the UCC Parish House on Bolton Hill Road on Wednesday, December 27, from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. Walk-ins are welcome; however, to avoid a possible wait, please call to schedule a time. Allow one hour in all. Donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in good health. To register to donate blood or request further information, call the Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE LIFE or Jerry and Pat Blakey at 672-6516.

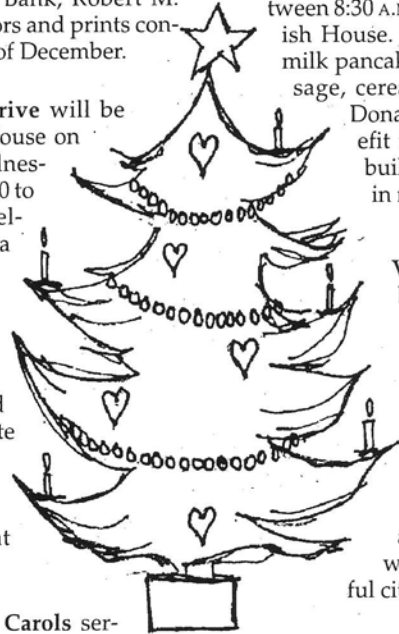
Candlelight Lessons and Carols services will be held at the North Cornwall Meeting House on December 24, Christmas Eve. The early service at 5 P.M. is designed for families with young children. A second service will be held at 8 P.M. All are welcome.

To Avoid Long Lines at the Transfer Station after Christmas: (1) make more than one dump run over the course of Christmas week; (2) save wrapping paper and packaging for the week's end; (3) re-sort all recyclables at home in order to save time in line; and (4) remember that wrapping paper and greeting cards are not recyclable and are to be disposed of in the household garbage.

The Hughes Memorial Library in West Cornwall is searching for a new head librarian. Volunteers are currently manning the desk during the open hours: Fridays from 4 to 7 P.M. and Saturdays from 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Board Chairman Jerry Doolittle says the tasks are simple and the librarian gets to be the first one to read new books. "If any of this sounds like fun," says Jerry, call him at 672-6700.

The Annual Boxing Day Reading will be held at the North Cornwall Meeting House on Tuesday, December 26, at 4 P.M. The candles will be lit, and several Cornwall residents will read their favorite holiday selections. Holiday punch and cookies will follow.

New Year's Breakfast: This annual delight will take place on Monday, January 1, between 8:30 A.M. and 1 P.M. in the UCC Parish House. The menu features butter-milk pancakes, local maple syrup, sausage, cereal, milk, juice, and coffee. Donations will once again benefit the La Casa Project, which builds homes for the very poor in northern Mexico.



Vietnam Talk: Anne Chamberlain has spent the last four summers in Hanoi, Vietnam, where she has coached and performed with Vietnamese musicians. On Sunday, December 10, at 11:30 A.M. at the UCC Parish House, Anne will talk about the people she has worked with and the beautiful city of Hanoi.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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