



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Cornwall Beware...

During the night of January 5, "serious" tools, including an antique drill press and a heavy router with table, were carried off by intruders from the barn at the Outsiders Gallery (Routes 7 and 45). The Gingras family lives on the premises, three windows face the barn, and they were home that night. No glass-blowing equipment or artwork disappeared. Kelly and Dana Gingras are offering a \$2,000 reward for any information leading to the arrest and conviction of the thieves who made off with Dana's tools.

The robbery is not an isolated incident—valuable tools and construction equipment were also taken from barns in Amenia, Falls Village, and Millerton, all in late December. Incredibly, a race car driver reported that recently a truck backed up on his property south of Cornwall Bridge on Route 7 and stole the engine out of his racing car.

Kelly warns that the thieves know what they are doing. She suggests securing locks, installing motion-detector lights, and possibly spray-painting valuable tools with garish colors so that they lose their value for resale. In checking various pawnshops in the area for Dana's treasures (which he has collected since he was ten years old), the couple noted

that none had tools marked by colors.

True to form, the Cornwall community has offered comfort and help in the form of replacement tools and moral support. So...why wait to lock the barn door until the tools are gone?
—*Elisabeth Kaestner*

Small Business, Big Heart

The spirit of adventure is alive and well at the Berkshire Country Store. Last month, a young family, the Cochrans, in a gutsy move, bought out the convenience store at the juncture of Routes 4 and 128. They put their house in Southbury on the market and, just like that, brought their family to a strange town half a state away. To make this life decision work, husband Richard is taking a leave of absence from his consulting business to help his wife, Beth, get the business reorganized. The couple has moved into temporary living quarters below the store and enrolled four of their five children in CCS and HVRHS. (Their oldest is a freshman at Central State College in New Britain; their youngest, a kindergartner at CCS.)

Sound quixotic? Maybe so, but Beth Cochran, who will be managing the store, grew up working in off-school hours at her mother's Yum Yum Shoppe deli in Wisconsin. So how tough could it be...? Probably

tougher than anticipated, true. But where's the fun in life without the challenge?

Beth's first shock was the amazing quantity of paperwork involved in taking over the store. Just the multiple license applications to be filled out in order to sell and buy product were daunting. (To appreciate the red tape involved, check out the collection of permits and documents posted on the store wall above the cash register.) And then there was the task of putting together her employee team. Fortunately she was able to keep some holdovers: cook Joe Harnett, "utility infielder" Justine Oldenweilder, and some experienced college students on winter break. Along with these, she hired on Melanie Finn and Cornwall's Karen (née Blakey) Fisher.

The store has been shined up to a fare-thee-well, and the offerings of Joe's fresh deli fare, country bakery goods, and cooking are well known to be blue ribbon. Beth and crew are highly likable and, though not widely acquainted here yet, already are making for a homey and welcoming atmosphere.

The Cochrans will be holding their official grand opening sometime in the spring. But why wait? The soup's on now, the coffee's hot, and the welcome mat is out, seven days a week.
—*Scoville Soule*

FEBRUARY 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Village Meeting House; Men's Adult BB, 7 P.M. CCS Gym Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7 P.M. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Play Group, 10 A.M. Playscape or UCC; Stretch Class, 4 P.M. Town Hall; Hot Chocolate Hour, After School, Library; Tai Chi, 7 P.M. CCS; Women's Adult BB, 7 P.M. CCS Gym				1	2 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	3
4	5 Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm.: Farm Land Assessment Changes 7:30 P.M. Town Hall †	7	8 Town Meeting 7:30 P.M. CCS Gathering Room †	9 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	10 Cornwall Association 9 A.M. UCC Dick Frank: Explorer of Light 4 P.M. Library † Beekeeping/Motherhouse (see p.4) †
11	12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY Blood Pressure Screening Noon-1 P.M. UCC Parish House Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	13 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	14 VALENTINE'S DAY 	15 Deadline: March Chronicle Copy Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Film: <i>The Corporation</i> 7 P.M. Library † Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	16 CCS Closed Painting Churches 8 P.M. Town Hall Players †	17 Painting Churches 8 P.M. Town Hall Players †
18 Painting Churches 2 P.M. Town Hall Players †	19 PRESIDENT'S DAY CCS Closed Mother-Son Day/Motherhouse (see p.4)	20 CCS Closed Benefit Italian Dinner 5:30 & 7 P.M. Wandering Moose † Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	21 Benefit Italian Dinner 5:30 & 7 P.M. Wandering Moose †	22 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY	23 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library Painting Churches 8 P.M. Town Hall Players †	24 Readathon Sleepover 7 P.M. Library † International Dinner Benefit 5:30-7:30 P.M. UCC Parish House † Painting Churches 8 P.M. Town Hall Players †
25	26 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	27 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	28 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	Every Week This Month: Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. UCC Day Room Fridays: Family Game Night, 7-9 P.M. CCS † Saturdays: Ice Skating, 7-8 P.M. Hotchkiss School † Sundays: Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M. Debra Tyler 672-0229 for location		

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

From Milk Cows to Beef Cattle

When Rachel Hammond Speiden decided to raise Angus cattle at the former Hubbard farm in 1949, the rest of Cream Hill was still bustling with dairy cows. Her Hedgerows Farm boasted little more than 75 acres of cleared rocky pasture and 25 to 30 cows, but on that small farm, according to her cousin Gene Roberts, "she created an Angus legend."

An independent woman with limited resources, Rachel Hammond was a pioneer in the Angus breeding and artificial insemination business for 34 years, until she sold the farm in 1983. With the support of her husband Manley Breck and a handful of other cattle breeders, she played a critical role in the rise of the Angus brand. Its reputation as America's "premier" source of beef is now so well established that last year in Los Angeles, McDonald's was even promoting Angus burgers as a "high-end" menu item.

After Rachel Breck died at age 98 on New Year's Day 2007, local residents recollected her fondly. Ralph Scoville remembered her from his days as road foreman: she was always "willing to help out." Gordon Ridgway, who worked for her while he was in high school, called her that "amazing" woman with the *ANGUS* license plate whose brother-in-law happened to be Benny Goodman. (In fact her own brother, the record producer John Hammond, is credited with discovering not just Goodman, but Billie Holliday, Bessie Smith, and Bob Dylan.) At her funeral service in Sharon, she was described by her daughter as "running three mental programs simultaneously" and able to "talk about all three at the same time without losing a breath or her train of thought."

From the perspective of Cornwall agriculture in 2007, Rachel Breck's move into high-end breeds of beef cattle 60 years ago looks prescient. As the large-scale commercial dairy business has proved increasingly unprofitable, more and more local farmers have turned to hay and meat as alternatives to milk production. The new "Support Cornwall Agriculture" brochure now available lists six farms producing beef or veal, while only three produce milk. Hautboy Hill, the only dairy farm with a long Cornwall history, diversified some years ago into livestock, and has plans soon to offer roaster chickens as well.

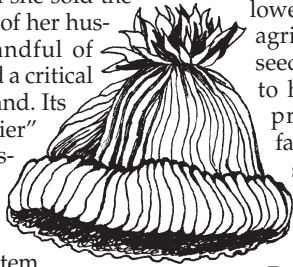
The Scoville Farm is the most recent convert from milk cows to beef cattle. Although historically Ralph and Fred Scoville have always kept a half dozen or so Angus cattle (some with a Hedgerows ancestry), their new herd is a mix of Herefords and Simmentals. At Peter and Barbara Russ's Hickory Grove Farm and Sam Waterston's Birdseye & Tanner Brook Farm, the breed is Belted Galloways. The cattle from this heritage strain have a reputation for the taste of their beef and for being excellent foragers who can live in all weather on grass alone. Buddy Hurlburt, at Hautboy Hill Farm, maintains a

herd of Hereford and Angus, as well as both breeds crossed with Holstein.

While the survival of a large segment of Cornwall's small agricultural community may be riding on a successful conversion from dairy to livestock, several impediments loom over the process. One is the gradual disappearance of regional slaughter and butcher facilities. (A major one in Massachusetts went up in flames shortly before Christmas.) Another is federal and state regulations favoring large producers over small ones.

Luckily, a couple of recent grants have allowed the funding of Cornwall's new agricultural brochure and provided seed money for programs designed to help local farmers market their products. Ultimately, Cornwall farmers will have a better chance to survive if they are supported by Cornwall residents. It's like the "Eat Your View" bumper stickers mentioned by Michael Pollan in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*: only by consuming homegrown products will we preserve the landscape and community we love.

—Paul De Angelis



Birthrates and the Cost of Schooling

Recent articles posted by David Grossman and Hector Prud'homme on the Cornwall website (www.cornwallct.org) regarding the future of Cornwall have addressed the scarcity of affordable housing here and the resulting decline in families with young children. Since 2000, 10 children, on average, have been born per year to Cornwall parents who are full-time residents, down from 14 between 1990 and 1997. As a result, the enrollment at the Cornwall Consolidated School (grades K-8) has dropped. Recently, the Cornwall Child Center has also enrolled fewer children. While preschoolers from neighboring towns are eligible and actually attend the Center, many of these towns have also felt an exodus of young families.

If this trend continues, education as we know it in our community is threatened. While a decline in enrollment usually reduces the education budget, at a certain point the budget levels off, while the cost per child increases dramatically. Imperative expenses, such as salaries and insurance for a core teaching staff, for building repair/maintenance, and for busing cannot be cut in proportion to declining student enrollment. Reverting to the one-room schoolhouse is no option: state mandates for elementary education require individual teachers for science, music, and physical education.

The disproportionate increase in cost per child as enrollment decreases also holds for the Child Center; pre-school child-care laws require that two teachers be present, whether one child is attending or six. Costs for heat, electricity, insurance, and building repairs hardly vary whether 10, 20, or 30 children attend the

Child Center or whether the elementary school has 5 or 25 children per grade level.

If birthrates and enrollment continue to go down, how will we bear the significantly higher per-student costs? Granted, the overall budgets may hover around the same level, but will the taxpayer support high per-student expenses?

The brunt of the CCS budget is paid through property taxes. State school aid is already limited, because the mean income level in Cornwall is relatively high, despite a considerable number of low-income families. (See David Grossman's article, "Cornwall in the Zeroes Decade," www.cornwallct.org.)

As for the Child Center, it would either have to accelerate its fundraising or reduce the number of programs offered, a loss that would directly affect the families that need it most. This year, the Center is already experiencing a decline in revenues from tuition, because a greater number of families have qualified for the lowest tuition level on the Center's sliding scale.

We clearly need to attract and take care of young families in order to strengthen our community. Can you imagine a day when the Cornwall Consolidated School and the Child Center have to close their doors and even pre-schoolers have to be bused to a regional school? May we find answers well ahead of such a development.

—Elisabeth Kaestner

Welcome

Charles Scoville Folds
to Bethany Berry and Patrick Folds

Good-Bye to a Friend

Rachel Hammond (Speiden) Breck

Congratulations

William Berry to Erin Bayne

Land Transfers

William and Pamela K. Krizan to Stephen J. Hart,
land on Railroad Street for \$19,500.

Peter and Barbara Barrett to Stephen J. Hart, land on
Railroad Street for \$19,500.

G.A.G.S., Inc., to B.R.O.C. Enterprises, LLC, land and
buildings at 103 Cemetery Hill Road for \$650,000.

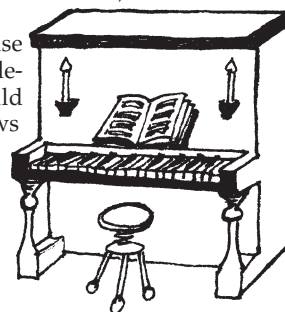
Adam M. Weiss and Lydia Callaghan to Allan L.
Gropper and Carolyn L. Warner, 6.76 acres and
buildings at 263 Dibble Hill Road for \$900,000.

Bernice Merz to Sandra L. and Ralph W. Sandmeyer,
Jr., 19.620 acres on Dark Entry Road for \$210,000.

Curtain Up!

Painting Churches, a play by Tina Howe, will be presented by the Town Hall Players on two weekends in February. This three-character play, once a Broadway hit, is "about aging, about coping with incipient Alzheimer's—all treated sensitively and warmly, sometimes with exasperation, sometimes with humor," according to properties mistress Bobbie Tyson. (See page 4 for performance times.)

About four years ago, the acting group had its debut



with *Our Town*, reviving an old tradition of Cornwall theater. The Players recently incorporated, with Larry Stevens as president and Fred Thaler and Bobbie Tyson as vice-presidents. The new group aims to develop acting, production, and directing skills, including young and old, to find good plays, and to entertain the community. Readings for playwrights are also contemplated.

Past workshops on Shakespeare have attracted people from all parts of the Northwest Corner, culminating in a performance last summer of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that "blew our hearts and minds," according to one fan. A new production of *As You Like It* is planned for next summer and will once again embrace all ages. —Anne Zinsser

Planning for Planning

Cornwall's Town Plan of Preservation and Development is moving along, with several new initiatives. The Planning and Zoning Commission has proposed reconstituting the Conservation Commission (CC), lapsed since the 1980s, to accomplish work that does not fall naturally to P&Z or the Conservation Trust. A new CC could have responsibility for town-owned land such as Gannett Park, the open-space set-aside pieces of subdivisions, and the oversight of natural resources. Persons interested in serving should contact the Selectmen's Office (672-4959).

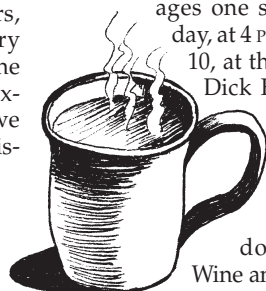
Annie Kosciusko, chair of P&Z, reported that several steps were taken at the January meeting: four study committees were formed—Natural Resources, Housing, Economic Development, and Community and Cultural Assets. Also, Tom McGowan, professional town planner, was chosen to oversee all plan-revision work. He will meet with committees, help with public presentations, and coordinate and develop options for the final plan. In addition, Glenn Chalder of Planametrics was hired to assist the Housing Committee. Annie hopes that volunteers with interest in these areas will contact her (672-6406) or any P&Z member.

—Ginny Potter

Events & Announcements

Farm Land Assessment Changes, for land being used under the 490 Act, will be the topic at the Agricultural Commission meeting to be held at 7:30 P.M. on Tuesday, February 6, at the Town Hall. Barbara Bigos will be on hand to answer questions.

Hot Chocolate Hour, an after-school, read-aloud program for third- to fifth-graders, will begin on February 7 and run every Wednesday thereafter for six weeks at the Cornwall Library. Several chapters of an exciting novel will be read each week as we snack on hot chocolate and cookies. Registration forms are available at CCS. The school bus will drop off participants at the Library. For further information call 672-6874.



Letters to the Chronicle

EIGHTH-GRADERS AT THE WANDERING MOOSE

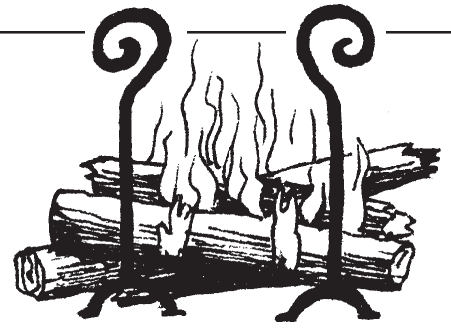
Once again, for the fourth straight year, Russ and Sharon Sawicki are being incredibly generous by sponsoring the Eighth Grade Pasta Dinner [see page 4 for details]—even though this year they do not have a child in eighth grade. The Sawickis donate three days of work, the premises, and all ingredients beyond the basic food (soda, milk, napkins, etc.). Students benefit far beyond making money for their class trip. To work in a real restaurant setting with all its stress and sweat is a great learning experience. The kids do it all, from taking orders and serving to bussing and washing dishes. Not to forget the support of the town: every year, I believe, the dinners are all but sold out.

—Peter Busby, Eighth-Grader's Father

ONE ROAD SIGN LEFT STANDING

It was early 2007, more than two months since the general election. As Cornwall's unofficial road sign detective, I felt a certain responsibility for making sure that no straggling political signs remained on our town roads.

So off I went on this particular Tuesday: up and down hills, along the Housy, in and out of the village. Soon I was driving up Cream Hill Road, past the Angus farm. My eyes flicked to the right at an open barn door; I pulled over,



discreetly got out of my car and peeked in. Several Nancy Johnson signs were lying there on the ground. (Was the owner anticipating a Nancy comeback in '08?) There was nothing to do, everything was legal, so I left.

On I went to Cornwall Bridge. Someone at Baird's said I better try Route 45. So, up Warren Hill Road I went, and there it was, about two miles up: a Ned Lamont sign slightly downhill from a driveway. A strange man sat nearby in a canvas chair. He said he was riding shotgun on his beloved sign to make sure no one messed with it. I asked why? After all, the election was long over and Lamont had lost.

"Lamont may have conceded the election," he said, "but I haven't and won't. In fact," he went on, "if the town tells me to take it down, I'm going to legally change my name to Lamont and just say it's a house sign telling people that a man named Lamont lives here with his white cat and Original Cast Broadway CDs. Are you familiar with Finian's Rainbow?"

He started to hum the overture, and I decided it was time to move on. I said goodbye, but he was already into "How Are Things in Glocca Morra?" and didn't hear me. —John Miller

Park & Rec. Activities:

- Monday, February 5: Park & Rec. Commission meeting at the CCS Library, 7 P.M.
- Every Friday night from 7 to 9 P.M. is Family Game Night at CCS. Bring your favorite board or card game to play with others. Pizza, beverages, and goodies will be provided. An adult must accompany all children.
- Every Saturday in February from 7 to 8 P.M.: ice skating for Cornwall residents at the Schmidt Rink at Hotchkiss School. All skaters must wear hats.
- Mid-February: Registration for baseball and softball season. For forms and details visit www.cornwallparkandrecreation.org.

Dick Frank, "Explorer of Light," will present a slide show and talk about photographic images one sees in the media every day, at 4 P.M. on Saturday, February 10, at the Cornwall Free Library. Dick Frank has been creating commercial photographs for 33 years for clients like Red Lobster, Sony, and *The New York Times*. Come see how it's done. No admission fee. Wine and cheese to follow.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, David Nickeson's show of photographs from his extensive travels will continue through the month of February.

At the Insiders/Outsiders Gallery, a rotating group show of New England artists runs through the winter.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will hold hearings by appointment in March. Applications to schedule a hearing are available at the Town Clerk's Office through February 20.

The Corporation, a critical documentary about the origins and power of global conglomerates, will be shown by ECCO (Ecology/Cornwall) on Thursday, February 15, at 7 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. The film lasts 145 minutes; light refreshments will be served during a brief intermission.

The Third Annual International Dinner will be served in the UCC Parish House on Saturday, February 24, from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. to benefit Heifer Project International. The menu will offer family-friendly food from around the globe. Ages 12 and older pay \$7.50, children 2 to 11 pay \$5, with a maximum of \$25 per family. No reservations necessary. For more information call 672-6840.

A Readathon Sleepover Fundraiser, sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Free Library, will be held from 7 P.M. Friday, February 24, to 8 A.M. Saturday, February 25, at the Library. Fifth-, sixth-, and seventh-graders are welcome for a night of reading, playing games, socializing, and of course SLEEPING. The top fundraiser will receive a very special prize. For more information and to sign up, call the Library at 672-6874. Space is limited, so reserve your spot early. Snow date to be announced.

Divining Dante? Have you always meant to read *The Divine Comedy*, but never did so? If that's the case, here's your chance! Cornwall's Episcopal Chapel of All Saints will sponsor a reading group led by longtime Cornwall resident John Leich. The group will meet at Christ Church, Canaan, on Fridays from 2 to 4 P.M. beginning February 2. Contact Rev. Rosalie Richards at 824-7410 or rnealrichards@msn.com.

Funding Available: The Cornwall Foundation encourages local not-for-profits to apply for grants of up to \$500 whenever the need arises. For more information and applications, go to www.cornwallfoundation.org.

The Cornwall Historical Society is planning a military exhibit in May that will recognize Cornwall's participation in our country's wars from the French and Indian War to the present. The exhibit will present a selection of the many artifacts the Society holds. Also, townspeople are invited to loan items they may have of war experience—uniforms, letters, military orders, equipment, ration books—to enhance the exhibit. Persons interested in helping or loaning items should call the Historical Society at 672-0505 to talk to Curator Jodi Polsgrove, or any CHS board member.

The \$\$\$\$\$\$ Corner

With this issue the *Chronicle* enters its 17th year. It's been a good run. Remember the special swimsuit issue? The fold-out map of celebrities' houses? The tax worksheet that cut your Cornwall bill in half? The centerfolds with pets? Without your help, none of this would have been possible. Keep the checks coming our way, and we'll try to do even better. Thanks.

Motherhouse-Sponsored Events:

- Saturday, February 10: Join Mark Moorman of Sprain Brook Apiary in Woodbury, CT, as he explains the basics of beekeeping. Buzz over the tools, taste varieties of honey, and dip your own honey-scented beeswax candles.

- Monday, February 19: Motherhouse's Mother-Son Day. Spend a relaxing day of (s o m e w h a t) quiet activities with your son(s). \$35 fee per pair. Free lunch provided.

For information and reservations, contact Debra Tyler at debra@motherhouse.us or 672-0229.

Sign Up for Green!, a state initiative to encourage the use of "smart" power, will provide solar photovoltaic cells and other "green" resources to municipalities that are able to convince 10 percent of their households to commit to buying 10 percent of their power from renewable sources. Look for a public workshop in April. In the meantime, please call the Town Hall if you're interested in signing up or helping with the campaign.

The Fourth Annual Italian Dinner to benefit the CCS eighth-grade class trip to Washington, DC, will be held at the Wandering Moose Cafe on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 20 and 21. There are two seatings each night, at 5:30 and 7 P.M. The cost to adults is \$12 and \$6 to children. Take-out is also available. For reservations e-mail pastadinner@thewanderingmoosecafe.com, or call 318-0107.

The Land Use Office is served by a new person with new hours: Karen Nelson, who lives in New Hartford and works with other towns as well, will be in the Cornwall office from 9 A.M. to noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. She will clerk for P&Z, ZBA, and the Wetlands Commission and will perform as ZEO for these boards.

From the Office of the Highway Department:

All homeowners are requested to make sure their snowplow contractors completely clean driveway entrances, including snow piles and windrows—even if created by town plows. Such piles are *not* to be plowed back into the street, where they can create berms that are especially dangerous to plow trucks. Thank you for your cooperation.

The Town Hall Players present *Painting Churches*, a three-person play about the transformations induced by aging, on two weekends in February. The play, produced and directed by Fred Thaler, stars Eileen Epperson, Kate Fitch, and octogenarian actor Jack Murphy. Performances at Cornwall's Town Hall will take place Fridays and Saturdays, February 16, 17, 23, and 24, at 8 P.M., with a Sunday matinee on February 18 at 2 P.M. An open dress-rehearsal for seniors will be held on Wednesday, February 14, at 5:30 P.M.

A Town Meeting will be held in the CCS Gathering Room on Thursday, February 8, at 7:30 P.M. To be considered are resolutions regarding proposed STEAP grants for (1) expanding the Cornwall Historical Society building in Cornwall Village; and (2) renovating the Hughes Library in West Cornwall. Also needing approval is a P&Z proposal for the town to accept .45 acres adjacent to the landfill as satisfaction of the new town requirement that 15 percent in cash or land be donated in conjunction with any new subdivision approval.

Jackson Pollock Film: The feature documentary *Who the \$*%\$ Is Jackson Pollock?* will be shown at the Cornwall Free Library at 7:30 P.M. on Saturday, March 3. It is the story of an elderly lady truckdriver in California who is convinced that the painting she bought from a junk dealer for five bucks is a Jackson Pollock. The film was written and directed by Harry Moses, a resident of Kent and former producer at *60 Minutes*. The film will be followed by a Q&A session and refreshments (suggested contribution: \$10). Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

FEBRUARY ISSUE

Erica Prud'homme, Illustrations
Elisabeth Kaestner and Paul De Angelis, Editors

MARCH ISSUE

Ann Gold and Jayne Ridgway, Editors
gridgway@snet.net

MANAGING EDITOR Tom Bechtle

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