



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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## Senior Housing Site Visited

On a sunny January 9 the Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) made clearer its outline of the proposed senior housing complex in Cornwall Bridge to a group of interested citizens. Standing in freshly fallen snow, the band of 22 — members of CHC, Committee on the Aging, and the public — could see Baird's to the north and the Firehouse to the south. The proposed building will nestle into a sandbank well back from Route 7.

The 5.56-acre lot curves back up an increasingly steep hillside. The back of the lot, once hoped to be the site of two CHC parcels for new homes, has proven unusable. Nor will it be possible to construct the senior housing facility farther up the hillside because wetland areas bracket the hill. Denny Frost volunteered that he and his excavator had been bogged down there outside the wetlands in midsummer.

CHC chair Maggie Cooley, in response to a request by Joanne Wojtusiak of Cornwall Bridge, agreed to stipulate that no housing, other than the proposed senior facility, would be constructed on any part of the lot.

The maps came out and Will Calhoun and Wayde Wolfe, both members of CHC, led the explanations. The facility will enjoy

energy-saving benefits from being backed into the hill; an ample basement will accommodate whatever energy supply serves the building best. The landscaping will blend the light forest now covering the lot with new plantings to screen the building and Route 7 from one another. A stone wall now at the top of the sandbank will be relocated near the roadside. Septic facilities will reside under the parking area between the road and the structure. Lighting will be unassuming, aimed at the ground.

The Planning & Zoning Commission on January 11 set February 8 as a hearing date for the special permit required to construct the multiple-unit affordable housing. The site plan and designs of the proposed building will be made available then or possibly sooner on the CHC website: [cornwallhousingcorporation.com](http://cornwallhousingcorporation.com).

—Lisa L. Simont



In the January issue, the *Chronicle* reported in "P&Z Hears, Approves" that at the December 14 hearing Joanne Wojtusiak described the proposed Cornwall Housing Corporation senior housing project as a

"monstrosity." A review of the audiotape of the hearing confirmed that Joanne did not use the word in question during the recorded hearing. The *Chronicle* regrets the error.

## Behind the Plow

I first started snow plowing after I got out of the army in 1956 and went to work for the Town of Cornwall for a few months. Clarence Blake was both first selectman and road foreman; I rode shotgun at first, pushing sand out the back of the truck into a sand spreader. What we considered a good-sized truck back then you might call a wheelbarrow today.

When I started my lawn maintenance business a family friend loaned me the money to buy a truck I could plow with. It was the first of many. Over the next 45 years we built up a large list of plowing customers. After I sold the business to Josh Tyson I didn't want to give up plowing. It's beautiful to push up through two feet of virgin snow on a wooded piece of land with snow rolling away from the truck; it's also challenging, since at any moment you could get stuck, and sometimes I do.

A lot of driveways around here have

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## FEBRUARY 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	2 NEW	3	4 ♦ Family Friendly 1st Friday 3:30–5:30 pm Cornwall Child Center	5 ♦ Pine Ridge Experience 4 pm Library ♦ Community Contra Dance 7–9:30 pm Town Hall
6	7 ♦ Reg. One Bd of Ed 6 pm HVRHS ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Ag Commission 7:30 pm Town Office	8 ♦ P & Z 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 pm CCS Library	9 ♦ Hot Chocolate Club 3–4 pm Library	10 ♦ Tots, Tales, & Tambourines 10:30–11:30 am Library	11 1st Q	12 ♦ Cornwall Association 9 am UCC Day Room ♦ Friends of the Library 9 am Library ♦ <i>The Bride of Frankenstein</i> 7:30 pm Library
13 ♦ W.E.B. Dubois Documentaries 11:30 am UCC	14	15 ♦ Deadline: <b>March Chronicle Copy</b> ♦ Bd. of Ed 4 pm CCS Library	16 ♦ Hot Chocolate Club 3–4 pm Library ♦ Middle School Band/ Chorus Concert 7:30 pm HVRHS	17 ♦ Tots, Tales, & Tambourines 10:30–11:30 am Library ♦ Bd. of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	18 ♦ CCS Closed	19 ♦ Family Cow Forum 10 am–2 pm UCC Parish House
20 ♦ Pine Ridge Benefit 3 pm UCC	21	22 ♦ CCS Closed ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	23 ♦ Cornwall Volunteer Fire Dept. 8 pm W.C. Firehouse ♦ Hot Chocolate Club 3–4 pm Library	24 4th Q ♦ Tots, Tales, & Tambourines 10:30–11:30 am Library	25	26 ♦ <i>The Scarlett Pimpernel</i> 7:30 pm Library
27	28 ♦ ZBA* 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball,</b> 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Wednesdays: Tai Chi,</b> 6–9 pm CCS; <b>Karate</b> 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; <b>Women's Basketball,</b> 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Fridays: Pre-school Story Hour,</b> 1:15 pm Library <b>Saturdays: Skating,</b> 7–8 pm Hotchkiss School <b>Sundays: Meditation,</b> 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229				

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957



(continued from page 1)

hazards that are especially tricky when you're tired and you can't see where the road is. I used to put up stakes to point out the hazards, but they were expensive and some customers found them useful instead for holding up tomatoes. Mostly now you just find the tricky spots and learn as you go. Sometimes when you're on a very steep hill you lose traction and the truck will get away from you. It's easy to veer off into a drainage ditch along the edge. Last year I dropped a wheel over a retaining wall that I didn't know existed on a driveway I hadn't plowed before. We had to jack up the front end of the truck and haul it out with a tractor. Luckily we've got radios in each truck, which are a big help when you're in trouble though you always take some razzing after you get stuck. But we all do it sooner or later.

In a storm like the one January 12 there's so much snow that some driveways are really difficult to plow unless you do them twice; I worked 11 hours that day, and the other fellows worked more than that. The first driveway I plowed was in Ellsworth and already had two or more feet of snow. Ellsworth and East Cornwall seem to get more snow than in the Village or by the river.

With a big storm there's often the problem of where to put the stuff. Some customers don't want any piles on the lawn – or along the driveway – as if they expect you to take it with you. Still, so far it's been a good year: ample storms with hard ground underneath and cold weather so the road doesn't turn slippery or you plow up most of the grass. I like a substantial snowstorm, not the two-inch kind, when not everyone wants plowing and it's a "darned if you do, darned if you don't" situation. My prediction about how much more snow we'll have this winter? What you see is what you get.

—John Frost, interviewed by Paul De Angelis

## Going to Pine Ridge

In early May, volunteers from Cornwall sponsored by the United Church of Christ and the Michigan nonprofit group Remember will travel to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota to renovate and repair housing and get acquainted with the Lakota Sioux culture. This work trip replaces the UCC's longstanding involvement with the La Casa homebuilding project in Tecate, Mexico, where recent

violence has made church participation impractical. The choice of Pine Ridge was inspired partly by the Berry-Folds family of North Cornwall.

Bethany Berry's attachment to Pine Ridge began 15 years ago during a five-month stay, part of her nurse-midwife training at Yale. After several return trips, she and Patrick lived and worked on the reservation from 2004 to 2008—she as a nurse-midwife, he as a middle school science teacher. They also began raising their three children there, with the oldest two attending reservation schools.

Pine Ridge is both a town of 6,000 and a reservation spanning several counties not far from the Dakota badlands. It has the second lowest life expectancy rate in the Western Hemisphere and may be one of the poorest regions in America. For Bethany, though, it was "a great place to live outside of mainstream America" because of the "resilience of the people in the face of so much heartbreak and devastation."

The reservation is "dry," though bootlegging is a principal source of income for the economically hard-pressed community. Alcoholism is endemic and drinking often leads to fatalities. White Clay, Nebraska, a village with a population of 31 only two miles outside Indian territory, is famed for selling more cans of beer than any other town in the nation.

Outsiders who visit the reservation are usually shocked at first by the rundown condition of the housing (mostly unskirted trailers), unattended kids, and trash as far as the eye can see, says Bethany, but after two or three years it becomes "part of the background." Bethany emphasizes recent signs of good leadership, and that a growing movement to return to traditional Lakota beliefs and practices shows promise of shrinking the drinking problem. The bonds of the extended family are still strong, even sacred, and the only real change has to come from within the tribe.

To hear and see more about Pine Ridge Reservation, come February 5 to Bethany's Library talk about her family's experiences; to support the trip, come February 20 to Anne Chamberlain and Ron Carbone's UCC benefit concert (see E & As for details).  
—Paul De Angelis

## Two Worlds, One Town

There's Cornwall proper and then there's Mohawk Ski Area. Populations of both are about the same on winter weekends — around 1,450 each — with one group outside enjoying the snow and the other . . . not so much.

The Mohawk Ski Area came into being in 1949 when Walter Schoenkecht, later a member of the Skiing Hall of Fame, established trails on the west side of the mountain and introduced novel snowmaking machines to offset the uncertain snow conditions of New England winters. In 1961 Walter built his first

chairlift, replacing the more conventional tow rope of the time.

Years later Walter became ill and in 1987 his daughter Carol Lugar, a ski instructor and ski patroller out west, came east to take over the business. She was soon joined by her longtime family friends, the Heddens. Together, they turned Mohawk Ski Area into the modern operation it is today, complete with night skiing, equipment rentals, ski and snowboard instructors, a retail shop, two food catering facilities, and (one of their later innovations) a short practice trail for children and beginners served by a unique moving carpet lift.

It has not been all smooth skiing for the Lugar/Hedden company though. Two million dollars of damage from the infamous 1989 tornado forced a major decision on the new owners: either take the insurance and run, or make the "character" decision and rebuild. Fortunately for the area, a two-year cleanup and rebuilding process under the supervision of partner Steve Hedden went into high gear and saved Mohawk. Also saved: a lot of jobs. Today, year-round employees number 16, but during the season the workforce reaches 400 (80 on ski patrol).

Mohawk is not only a first-class ski slope but also a good neighbor and a generous contributor to the Cornwall community. One of its most appreciated wintertime gifts to the town is the free pass program for our grammar school children Thursday and Friday afternoons and on holidays. Another is management's making the main building facilities available to the town for off-season occasions.

It's hard to imagine improvements to the operation that could still be made, but Carol thinks deeply and she's already planning warm weather projects for later in the year and beyond.  
—Scoville D. Soule

## Welcome

Didi Child Parisi  
to Olivia Prud'homme and Stefan Parisi

## Good-bye to Friends

Albert Waller  
Kenneth Whitney

## Land Transfers

Barbara Shirk and Kathryn P. Taylor, as co-trustees, to Joseph Christopher Suffredini and Kristin Michelle Rodriguez, land with improvements thereon, at 21 Town Street, for \$420,000.

## Excellence at CCS

In tough times, we might be concerned that children in our small, rural school will be shortchanged. But fortunately the Cornwall Consolidated School Fund for Excellence provides a variety of activities to enrich their educational experiences, no matter what the financial climate. The fund was created by Catherine Tatge to support and

supplement the regular curriculum and the hard-working board aims to implement ideas of students, faculty and administration.

Each year, members seek input from eighth graders about desired extracurricular activities: workshops such as filmmaking, cooking, or learning about other cultures. The very hands-on CCSFE board then selects activities based on their viability, affordability, and educational value. Besides allocating funds, members also research and organize to find teachers and realize the programs.

This year a digital photography course will be offered in March during free study periods or recess time. Cornwall's own Lindsey Stone, a Rhode Island School of Design graduate, will teach the course in which students will produce a photographic essay with accompanying text.

Each year CCSFE provides a grant to the teacher whose creative ideas offer new experiences for students in several grades. For example, Mrs. Nelson, technology teacher, instituted a Unified Studies Curriculum to integrate technology into all grades and subject matter classes, encouraging teachers to collaborate with each other. And the art room is buzzing with enthusiasm and creativity as students profit from their teacher's summer study of print-making techniques with mixed materials.

The CCSFE has also brought to life ideas presented by parents and administrators, such as a writers-in-residence program for children in grades 3 to 5 (in partnership with the Cornwall Foundation). Budding writer Anna D'Alvia described her experience last year in fifth grade when writer Carl Anderson taught the children how to compose persuasive essays by asking them to choose as a topic something they wanted to change. Anna chose to recommend that the school include such string instruments as violins and cellos in their music program. Anderson gave her and the other students individual attention and helped her see how to expand her ideas while writing in an interesting and convincing way.

The nonprofit fund has presented enriching experiences even while fund-raising, as when it brought the popular Jefferson/Madison debate to the region. Among ideas currently being investigated are ways to collaborate with the Cornwall Library. With the help and support of the community, members will continue to provide activities that enhance student learning. Excellent work, CCSFE!

—Ann Gold



## Duet

A few nights ago, around midnight, we heard something that reminded me of one of the Random Acts of Culture. Maybe you saw the YouTube film of Macy's department store in Philadelphia, suddenly transformed by anonymous singers who were performing the Messiah. This was a little like that: suddenly, through the cold, silent night, we heard singers, two bright voices, harmonizing in an exquisite and nerve-racking duet. Their song was eerie and haunting, lunar in its cold loveliness. The night was transformed.

Coyotes, of course. Cornwall has an active resident population. My cousin Fred Scoville told me that a pack of them took 11 of Thalia's geese in one night. Which sounds like a good-sized pack, though it was probably only one pair of parents and their pups. Connecticut coyotes hunt in packs only until the pups are grown, and then disperse. Coyotes are monogamous and the main social unit is the mating pair.

The coyote (*canis latrans*) is a medium-sized member of the Canidae family. Originally from the western plains, they've moved east, breeding with big Canadian wolves, so our Connecticut coyotes are slightly larger than their western cousins. They're beautiful animals, with luxurious bushy coats, slender pointed noses, and long prick ears. They'll breed with dogs, though coydogs are rare. (Mixed offspring rarely survive since pups need both parents for support. Also, like mules, coydogs are often infertile.) Coyotes are opportunistic and will eat almost anything, which is why they're so successful as a species. They'll eat garbage, insects, mice, rabbits, small deer – even small pets, I'm sorry to report.

And they're singers. They have at least ten different variants of vocal sounds, including growls, woofs, barks, howls, and yelps. Woofs and growls are short-distance threats, barks and bark howls are used in greeting, lone and group howls provide location information during separation, and a group yip howl occurs after a reunion.

The song we heard the other night was clear, passionate, and very potent. At first I thought they were hunting. I've heard them sometimes in full cry, voice after voice declaring itself, yodeling up to the top of the scale, then drifting into strange, four-part harmony. But this was different: discrete, full of sudden energy, rising at once to full pitch, and then, just as suddenly, stopping.

Coyotes breed once a year. In Connecticut this happens between January and March. The female is only in estrus for four to 15 days, so there's a small window of opportunity. According to my book, there's one other occasion on which coyotes vocalise: before copulation the pair may sing a duet.

I don't want to start rumors, but I think last week our local coyotes had a date night.

—Roxana Robinson

## Letter to the Chronicle

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEEDS YOUR HELP

CHS is planning its major 2011 exhibit on Dr. Brad Walker. To bring the man himself and the years of his practice in Cornwall and Litchfield County to life, the Society needs your help now. If you have photos or items relating to Dr. Walker, his family, his practice and interests that you would consider loaning to CHS for the exhibit, please let us know soon. We are also interested in hearing your stories about him. Please call 672-0505 or e-mail us at [cornwallorallhistory@gmail.com](mailto:cornwallorallhistory@gmail.com). Thank you.



—Dinny Greene

## Fed Up!

Snow covers the fence,  
only the top rail showing.  
Crows, juncos, and chickadees  
view it from above,  
a white sheet covering  
the once green earth.  
Are they, like me, pining to see sod  
and myrtle and partridge berries  
again?



Months ago our first snow fell,  
fluffy feathery flakes  
blanketed the ground.  
I welcomed the white world that  
snow bestowed, so clean,  
pristine, and virginal.  
Boots and skis would trample it,  
but second and third snowfalls would  
restore pure white landscapes once more.



"Like magic" it was the first time,  
the second and the third  
but now the magic's gone,  
white and only white has grown  
monotonous.



Today at the store picking over  
sprouted potatoes and wrinkled carrots  
I heard a man say

"In two weeks I'll be  
out putting sap buckets  
under my maple trees."

A serendipitous remark  
that brightened the rest of my day.

—Bee Simont



## Someone New To Lay Us Out

Since our November issue, the *Chronicle* has had a new compositor: Sarah K. Hermans of Millerton. She joins managing editor Ruth Epstein and calendar editor Erin Hedden to give us an entirely new nuts-and-bolts crew as we enter our 21<sup>st</sup> year of publication.

## Cornwall Briefs

• **Rumsey Redux:** Word comes from the first selectman that he expects to have a check from Chase Home Finance for the cost of the Rumsey demolition by the time you are reading this item. That would be \$43,278.99. Since Chase holds the mortgage, it's responsible for the 18 percent interest, or \$600 a month. Chase was unhappy, so Cornwall is getting its money right away and Chase Home Finance has to deal with Rumsey owner Andrew Hingson. Cornwall is, so to speak, off the \$\$ hook!

• **State CCS Funds:** The town has received \$15,000, the last of the state's share of 2006's \$3.5 million addition to Cornwall Consolidated School, paid upon completion of the project's audit.

• **Bargain Sand:** It seems we have nothing but good financial news for Cornwall this month. The state highway department switched this winter from a sand/salt mix for icy roads to a new liquid salt cocktail, leaving behind a huge pile of unused sand (1,500 cubic yards) at the state highway garage off Route 4. Normally, Cornwall pays \$18 per cubic yard but we were able to get the state sand pile for a bargain \$1.50 per yard, saving the town over \$20,000.

• **UCC Pancakes:** Allow me to indulge with a personal rave for the pancakes served at the annual New Year's Day breakfast at the UCC Parish House. Eggy and thin, they were perhaps the best I've ever eaten. Griddlemasters David Blakey, Dave Cadwell, Denny Frost, and Will Schweizer produced 800 pancakes that served more than 200 people, who donated \$1,633.01 toward expenses for a group going to work at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota in spring. Here, with some factual help from Pat Blakey, is the pancake recipe: 2 cups flour, 2 tsp. baking soda, 1 tsp. salt, 2 tbs. sugar, 4 large eggs, 4 cups buttermilk, one-half cup canola oil.

—John Miller



## Celebrations

February is for rejoicing and remembering. Aside from Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day, there's Groundhog Day, the Chinese New Year, Mawlid al-Nabi (Muhammed's birthday), and Estonian Independence Day, to name a few. It may be the dark, cold weather that makes us want to shout and sing. It's also recommended that you write a check to the *Chronicle* as a means of keeping warm.

## Events & Announcements

### At the Cornwall Library

• On Saturday, February 5, at 4 P.M., Bethany Berry will talk about "Our Family's Experiences on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation" in South Dakota (see related E&A for February 20).

• Hot Chocolate Club for third and fourth graders begins Wednesday February 9, 3 to 4 P.M. and will run for six weeks. Sign up at school.

• Tots, Tales and Tambourines, a music and movement class for 2-5-year olds (with parent or caregiver) will be led by Leslie Elias and start Thursday, February 10. Cost is \$10 per class or \$72 for eight weeks. Register by calling at 672-6874.

• Story Hour on Fridays at 1.15 P.M. continues through March 4.

• The Winter Film Series will present *The Bride of Frankenstein* on Saturday, February 12, at 7.30 P.M. and *The Scarlet Pimpernel* on February 26, same time. Suggested donation at each event is \$6 for one and \$10 for two persons.

**Cornwall Contra Dance** rocks the Town Hall on Saturday, February 5, 7 to 9:30 P.M., with Bill Fischer calling and music by Still the Homegrown Band. Suggested donations: \$3/child, \$5/adult. For more information call Jim or Jane Prentice at 672-0229.

**Cornwall Housing Corporation:** The P & Z will hold a public hearing on February 8 at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall, on the CHS application for a special permit for the construction of an affordable multi-family housing unit for seniors.

**W. E. B. Dubois Documentaries** filmed by two local students about and the civil rights movement will be shown on Sunday, February 13, at 11:30 A.M. at the UCC. Karen Whiteside Falcon and four graduates of the Jubilee School in Philadelphia will discuss the films and their creation.

**Middle School Concert:** Thirteen CCS students will perform on February 16 in a band and chorus concert of the best middle school musicians from Region 1. After concerts during the day at the Kent, Cornwall, and Sharon schools, they will perform for the public at the high school at 7:30 P.M. (next day if snow).

**A Free Family Cow Forum** sponsored by Motherhouse will take place on Saturday, February 19, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., at the UCC Parish House, including a potluck lunch. For more information, call Debra Tyler at 672-0229 or e-mail at farmer@localfarm.com.

**Pine Ridge Benefit:** concert to benefit the Lakota Sioux Reservation in South Dakota will be held at the UCC on Sunday, February 20, at 3 P.M. Noted pianist Anne Chamberlain will be joined by Metropolitan Opera violist Ron Carbone in a program of Brahms, Schubert, and Granados. Tickets \$15.

**Art in Cornwall:** At the Library, Nick Jacobs' show of photos and Duke Besozzi's exhibit of carved wooden water fowl continue through February.

**Ice Skating** for Cornwall residents, sponsored by Park & Rec, takes place on Saturdays from 7 to 8 P.M. at the Schmidt Rink, Hotchkiss School.

**New CCS PTA Fundraiser:** Support by signing up with schopwithscrip.com and earn money for CCS when you buy groceries, gas, etc. For more details call Gina at 860-240-0482 or you can e-mail her at gina.olson@sothebysrealty.com.

**Cornwall Food Pantry:** Drop off items at the UCC Church office on Bolton Hill Road Monday and Friday, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. or at A. F. Stone & Tile (Monday through Friday 7 A.M. to 5 P.M., Saturdays to 4 P.M.). The Food Pantry is open for take out Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 A.M. to noon. Call Anne Scott at 672-0595 to arrange other times.

**A Red Cross Blood Drive** will be held on March 1 from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Please schedule an appointment by calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

### FEBRUARY ISSUE

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