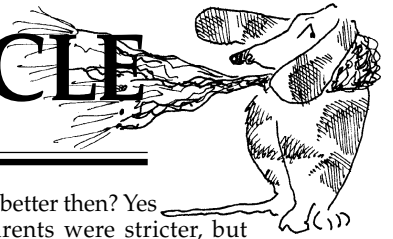




CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 13 : NUMBER 12 JANUARY 2004



Inland Wetlands Agency Acts

You may have noticed the large area of bare earth on Dean Hill at Furnace Brook Farm. It can be seen from Route 7 in Cornwall Bridge above the National Iron Bank.

Unfortunately every time there is a heavy rain the soil is washed down from the slopes and runs off the site onto neighboring property, into wetlands and watercourses and eventually into Furnace Brook causing "elevated levels of turbidity which threaten the integrity of the drinking water supply." On October 3, 2003, the Cornwall Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Agency issued an order to the owner of Furnace Brook Farm to "cease and desist depositing such sediment in wetlands and watercourses" in the Town of Cornwall.

Even though no further excavation activity is taking place, remediation of the present situation is necessary. At a special meeting of the agency on December 15 the Cease and Desist Order was amended requiring the owner to have a consulting engineer design a stabilization plan to prevent further erosion and wetland degradation, and to present the plan and a timetable for its completion at the next Inland Wetlands meeting on January 6, 2004.

—Celia Senzer

Tom Torre Bevans

Tom Bevans died December 16. He was the founder of the *Chronicle*, and we are all indebted to him for seeing the need for this publication and conceiving it so perfectly that it is almost exactly the same today as it was when Tom and his wife Margaret published the first issue in 1991.

The Good Old Days?

In late November the 4th graders—all 26 of them—and their teachers, Mrs. Samson and Mrs. Nelson, hosted a tea party at the Library for the senior (and not-so-senior) citizens they had chosen to interview as part of their Cornwall history project. Forming circles, the kids read their reports to their interviewees, after which everyone mingled and chatted and ate cake and cookies and drank soda.

"It was wonderful to get the children connected with the people who know the history of our town," said Mrs. Samson. They learned about rope tows and leather ski boots and homemade bats and balls, that girls wore skirts and horses ploughed the snow, and kids walked or rode horses to school, which sometimes had only one room, and that pizza was not to be had.

Was life better then? Yes and no. Parents were stricter, but kids had more freedom. People had lots of animals, but there were "chores." One writer started out his essay as a "no" but by the end thought it would've been "not so bad" being a kid back then.

Now these reports have been assembled and placed in the Library, where readers can find out things like how Marion Blake traded her home-made bread sandwich for one with Wonder Bread, how Mary Cahill got uniforms for the girls' baseball team, how Art Brean rescued a bald lady who was stuck in a hammock, about Jerry Blakey's Halloween prank involving outhouses, about cutting ice on Cream Hill Pond, how Cilla Mauro's Valentine's Day party was saved, and a newborn foal's "thoughts" on being separated from his mother at the Behn farm.

"The children had a great time doing the interviews," said Mrs. Samson. You will have a great time reading them. —George Kittle

Debriefing Gordon

In a conversation with the First Selectman, the following news was conveyed:

Winter Road Care: We were lucky to receive less snow than predicted during our first storm in December, though the highway crew had to work long hours to keep the roads open. A few ways to help them: please make

(continued on page 2)

JANUARY 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 NEW YEAR'S DAY Pancake Breakfast 9 A.M.—1 P.M. UCC Parish House	2	3 Cornwall Skating at Hotchkiss Every Saturday 7–8:30 P.M. (p.4)
4 Howard Dean Information/Support 4 P.M. Library (p.4)	5 CCS Reopens Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30–8 P.M. UCC Day Room Jam Session Every Tuesday 7:30 P.M. Town Hall or Library Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	7 Play Group Every Wed. 10–11:30 A.M. UCC Parish House Stretch Class Every Wed. 5:30–6:30 P.M. Town Hall	8 Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15–2:15 P.M. UCC Day Room	9	10 American Girl's Club 11:30 A.M. Library Anne Chamberlain on Vietnam 4 P.M. Library (p.4)
11	12 Blood Pressure Screening 3–4 P.M. UCC Parish House Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Corn. Dem. Party Caucus 7:30 P.M. Library (p.4)	13	14	15 Deadline: February Chronicle Copy Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	16	17 Art Auction and Reception 5 P.M. Library (p.4)
18	19 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY OBSERVED	20	21 Patriot Act Talk & Discussion 6 P.M. Library (p.4)	22 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	23	24 Thomas the Tank Group 11:30 A.M. Library
25	26 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	27	28 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	29	30	31

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

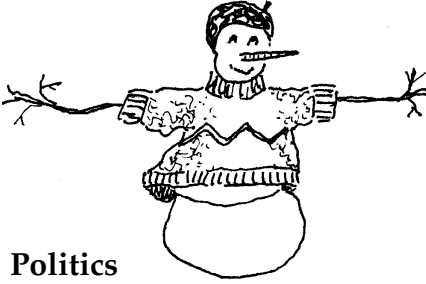
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sure cars are not parked on or near the roads; don't put snow from driveways into the road; don't put any markers on pavement edges within the town's right-of-way.

Drama in Town Hall: The stage has been reopened for use, with the curtain on order.

Parking Progress: The selectmen have hired an engineer for the parking lot and new baseball field next to Foote Fields. At CCS the parking area has been paved.

Tick Czar Sought: If you are interested in being Cornwall's representative to the Lyme Disease Prevention Program run by Torrington Area Health District, please call the Selectmen's Office, 672-4959. —Maggie Cooley



Politics

Isn't Dead, It's Only Sleeping

At a time when national politics has become increasingly rancorous and partisan, Cornwall's has quietly slipped into a decade-long coma. More than half the town's voters stayed home in the recent election, and who could blame them for passing on this sleepy affair, a vote with few contests and almost no campaigning.

The last closely contested vote for first selectman was in 1991, when Gordon Ridgway defeated Dick Dakin for the first of his seven terms. Town Clerk Cheryl Evans attributes the low interest to her feeling that "far fewer residents are here full time and are willing to get involved in town government."

In contrast, the '70s and '80s had lively and closely contested elections with turnout at 80 percent or more. Most of the first selectman races were between Patsy Van Doren, who energized Democratic politics for many years, and Bob Beers or Dick Dakin on the Republican ticket. Patsy's last victory was in 1985 when she beat Bob 282 to 278.

Not only were elections contested, it was not unheard of for 50 or 100 people to turn out at a party caucus to contest the nominations! As for campaigning and fund raising, it was not quite New Hampshire in primary season, but there was plenty of action. In the '70s the Democrats threw huge bashes at Mohawk, with drinks, dinner and gambling (yes, gambling!) Al Waller recalls a legendary poker game. "At the table were Judy Gates, Marty Gold, Patsy Van Doren, E. J. Kahn* and me, and others who I can't recall. Patsy raked out 10 percent of each pot for the Dems. I kept winning, somewhat to my embarrassment, as Kahn got angrier. In the last

*A *New Yorker* writer who lived in Cornwall at the time. He wrote about the game in his memoir, *About The New Yorker and Me*, and said this: "Things got so out of hand that I found myself involved in raises of fifty and a hundred dollars on a single card. There was over a thousand dollars in one pot."

hand Kahn had an Ace high flush, but I had a full house."

The Republican events were more decorous, but just as well attended. In 1987 Republicans invited voters to no fewer than five meet-the-candidates parties, offering everything from ice cream sundaes at one to wine and cheese at another. (It paid off; Dick beat Patsy 327—316.)

Things are far quieter these days. The Republican Town Committee meets infrequently and does not even have a chairman. Democrats do meet regularly, but partisan politics is foreign to both.

Why the change? Listen to Annie Kosciusko, who crosses many lines in this story. She's a former Democrat, now a Republican, and Patsy Van Doren's daughter:

"I think there is a declining interest in politics in Cornwall because people are satisfied with the current approach of town leaders, which seems to be to maintain and protect both the land and quality of life here and to do it as cheaply as possible. I chuckle to think of someone running with the slogan 'Time for a change.' Change to what?

"One issue is the huge number of unaffiliated voters, and I understand their position. I don't like the national faces of either the Democratic or Republican parties and wish there was a no BS party for me. Lots of people my age share that thought.

"I don't agree that there are fewer people willing to run for office—but they are reluctant to come forward and have to be asked. This town is full of fascinating people who would enrich the town boards; the trick is to ask the right person at the right time."

If Annie is right, when it is time for a change, there will be one, and political passions may stir once again. But if they don't, Cornwall could eventually share the fate of Blytheville, Ark., where Carl Miner thought he was a shoo-in for a seat on the school board since he was running unopposed. Unfortunately, not a single person voted—including Miner.

—Ed Ferman

A Gift of the Dodds

Ted Dodd grew up spending weekends and summers in Cornwall Hollow, and though he and his wife Elena eventually settled in Vermont, his feelings for land and people in Cornwall remained strong. In 1995 the Dodds put a conservation easement on 22 acres of their land along Cream Hill Lake, thus assuring that everyone's grandchildren unto the umpteenth generation will be able to look at an undisturbed stretch of lakefront from shore to ridgeline.

This year the Dodds subdivided the rest of their land on Lake Road and gave two lots beside the Town Beach to the Housing Corporation. This brings the number of lots in the parcel program to 12. The back lot has been awarded to Jonathan Beardsley, Danielle Giulian and the adorable Odin, while Cindy Kirk and Charles Grivas will be building on the front lot. Another great example of how landowner generosity can provide homeowner happiness.

—Maggie Cooley

Congratulations

Kenneth Considine and Theresa Lee

Good-bye to Friends

Carol Nelson

Tom Torre Bevans

Marjorie MacKinnon

Land Transfers

Linda LaPorta to NWI LLC, 10 acres at Poughkeepsie Turnpike for \$165,000.

Nancy Hardin to Sidney and Nancy Ganis, Tr., 12 acres at 144 Kent Road for \$325,000.

Gunnar K. Holmes to Dana Gingras and Kelly Futerer, house and land at 131 Kent Road, for \$270,000.

David M. Blakey and Laura L. Frenzel to Chester K. Lichaj and Nicole Caron-Lichaj, house and 11.2 acres at 39 Ballyhack Road for \$272,500.

Scott D. and Sylvana Simko to Douglas O. Landy and Carla E. Herman, house and lot at 77 Pritchard Road for \$315,000.

Bear Gets Goat Girl's Goat

Thursday night before Halloween, a little after 9 P.M., my goat Gaia had a fight with a bear that ended her life.

I keep my goats behind page-wire and barbed-wire fencing at Wayne Wolfe's, up the hill from my house on Popple Swamp Road. Though I vaguely realized a bear would have no trouble with that, it seemed unlikely one would bother with four horned beasts so near the road. With hibernation approaching, however, bears are bolder. Unlike females protecting their cubs, a large male has little fear. One hundred years ago bears had little reason to enter human territory, but nowadays have little choice.

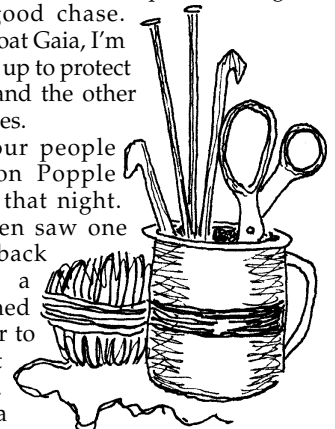
When I went to feed hay the next morning, I found Gaia, shivering amidst the wild roses and brambles with obvious fang bites on either side of her body, showing a gap of about three and one half inches between canines. Doctor Hayden gave her some B vitamins and penicillin, and we kept her warm and comfortable, moving her on a stretcher in the afternoon so she wouldn't attract the bear. Bears apparently often return to wounded prey.

But Gaia turned out to have a large claw gash underneath her belly as well as the superficial bites on her back and leg. She died around three in the afternoon and we buried her in the pasture. The other goats had not a scratch, though their mud-splattered legs hinted at a good chase. Knowing my goat Gaia, I'm sure she reared up to protect her daughter and the other two young males.

At least four people saw a bear on Popple Swamp Road that night.

Ursula Dinneen saw one right off her back porch, and a neighbor opened his garage door to a bear about eight feet tall.

Bianca La Porta

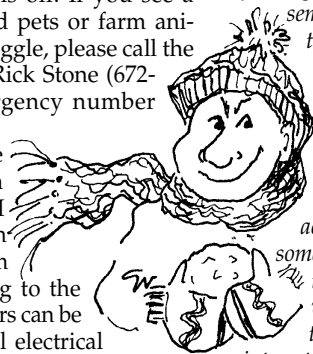


called the Bill Dinneens to come scare off the bear at her house with pots, pans and flashlights so she could put her goats in, and later still Bill Gold saw a green-tagged bear lumbering downhill from Gaia's pen.

Regardless of whether this particular bear moves on, is caught, or scares people enough to get shot, it seems to me like bears are going to continue to be among us, along with other predators. Within the past year goats in Goshen and Harwinton were killed by bear attacks. Game Warden Tate Begley explained that killing a bear is justified when it cannot be scared away from humans and livestock. I'd like to see us try to keep our distance and scare off wildlife to avoid having to kill them. In Florida people with sense don't feed the alligators, to keep them from associating people with food. Might be bird food is a bad idea.

The older country and farm folk offer me a shotgun upon hearing my tale, but I'm a novice with a 12-gauge and have no desire to practice on a bear. Fortunately, lights and noise scare many animals off. If you see a predator around exposed pets or farm animals, or if you hear a struggle, please call the owner of the animal or Rick Stone (672-6313), or the DEP emergency number (860-424-3333).

With much effort we built a fence from which goats cannot escape, and I can't help but see irony in having thus trapped them in with a bear. According to the Premier Fence catalog, bears can be fenced out with powerful electrical chargers and wire, which seems too expensive for my tiny herd. Which leaves me to consider giving up my dreams of creamy goat cheese or moving to New Zealand, where there are no bears, or any other mammals but those brought in by people. In the meantime, I've moved my goats, along with a new Sanaan named Maria, right behind my house where I can keep an eye on them. —Rachel Gall



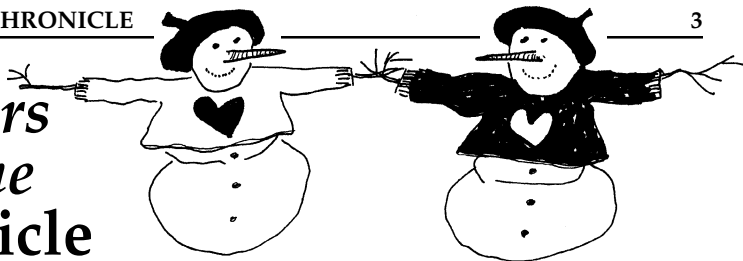
One Summer

When I read my books in the schools along our river, the sessions end with the kids sharing stories they have written in school. Sometimes they tell me they are writing a book at home. I marvel at their imaginations and wonder if they will ever transform their stories into finished books.

In 1934 Bobby Klaw, age 14, did that. She worked on a novel, finished it and it was published by Viking Press under the pen name Martin Gale. I had the good fortune of coming upon it when I was eight or nine and now that I have moved to Cornwall, have had the fun of reading it again. *One Summer*, a book about a family in a fictional version of Cornwall known as Woodville in the early '30s, opens a window on the Cornwall of some 70 years ago. Three sisters and their two horses and two dogs live in a farmhouse on a dirt road near Cream Hill Lake.

It is not just a paved Cream Hill Road that marks our different world now. In an unlitigious time, a casualness regarding risk

Letters to the Chronicle



THE HOUSATONIC RIVER TRAIL

Some of you have walked the River Trail that runs from West Cornwall to Cornwall Bridge or may remember when Mrs. Bennett took her students there for nature study. Today the unspoiled trail is one of Cornwall's treasures. But what of tomorrow? Mindful that the pressures of increasing use of river and watershed can change what we have to what we will be sorry to have lost, the Housatonic Valley Association and the Housatonic River Commission are exploring ways to guide change through their involvement in a joint project. What can be done? If possible, our trail pieces could be joined to form a complete "greenway." This would need to be assembled by gift, purchase or through negotiated easement with landowners. The health and scenic values of the river would need to be protected and friendly use permitted. Much work must be done before any decision is made on opening the trail. The work of HVA and the HRC addresses the impact of human activity on the river and watershed. While some members of each organization are on the Trail Committee, they are there as volunteers along with other citizens interested in this project. If you are also interested in helping, call me at 672-6969.

—Cilla Mauro

WINTER TRAILS

December's snowstorm brought with it some excellent early cross-country skiing. One of my favorite trails (perfect for beginners) starts near the end of River Road on the Sharon side of the river, south of Cornwall Bridge. Park where the road begins to climb, and ski in on the dirt road to a series of fields and then on to the Appala-

chian Trail, beside the Housatonic. This can take you all the way to Kent! Then there is the skiing off Dawn Hill Road, Wickwire Road (when the stream is frozen enough for crossing), and off North Goshen Road. By now, aren't you hoping for a map? Which brings to mind a project Deirdre Fischer planted in me some time ago: the production of a map highlighting favorite trails to hike and/or ski in the area. Of course, there's the Pine Knob loop trail, Kent Falls, the Blue trail up over Coltsfoot. But there also are many lesser known gems such as Pond Mountain, Topsmead (OK: that is a bit far afield), and Black Spruce Bog. If anyone wants to help with this, or has any favorite trails to suggest, please let me know. —David Colbert (672-0064)

TRAILS OF GLORY, A CLARIFICATION

John Miller's December story of the election results refers to me as someone "who invented affordable housing in the community." Thanks, John, but I am innocent of that charge! Along with many concerned citizens, both Selectmen Patsy Van Doren and Gordon Ridgway were early supporters of such housing. The Planning and Zoning Commission amended its regulations to facilitate the creation of Kugeman Village as well as the "parcel program." The first (1987) Housing Committee was chaired by Peter Hammond. When Peter stepped down, I was asked to replace him as chairman, and I served in that capacity for ten years. I, the "inventor"? Nope. The Cornwall Housing Corporation is alive and well, with interested members and strong leadership. It continues to provide affordable housing options by acquiring parcels of land on which families can build homes. Indeed, the Cornwall program continues to serve as a model for other towns in the state. —Ken Keskinen

was evident. Unsupervised, unhelmeted, the girls galloped their horses and flew over homemade jumps, training until they felt proficient enough to enter a horse show and then arranged to do so themselves.

Of course the lake was the same, except there were springy diving boards on the floats, and on Water Sports Day jackknives and swan dives were featured. One of the swimming events on that day particularly intrigued me—it was an underwater distance contest. Bobby described it:

"Mr. Anderson (the judges seemed to only be men!) had a ball of cord. He tied one end of this to the shoulder strap or the belt of the swimmer and played out the string as the child swam. Then when the swimmer came up, Mr. Anderson would tie a knot in the string to show the distance." A contest today where kids compete to stay under water for as long as they can? I don't think so.

Bobby wrote that between events the kids

joined the adults on the upper porch where they were served hot cups of tea!

Besides riding and swimming the children hiked—no ticks kept them from bushwhacking in Dean's Ravine.

And a final quote describing a train ride from New York to Cornwall by the 12-year-old sister will underscore the difference between life in Cornwall then and now. "The conductor stopped at her seat and said, 'We reach Woodville in three minutes, Miss. Shall I take down your bag?' She thanked him and he carried her suitcase out to the platform."

All those differences, yet there are similarities as well. Emanating from Bobby's world was a sense of freedom and autonomy. I sense it still. —Anne Zinsser

Getting Bonded

Both the Town of Cornwall and Region One have recently been in the throes of financing projects whose need (continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

has been at issue for years.

In November, to finance the CCS expansion, the town sold \$2.7 million in bonds at a very favorable rate of 4.08 percent. Earlier predictions had set the rate as high as 4.5 percent. The lower rate will save the town about \$100,000 over the 20-year life of the bond.

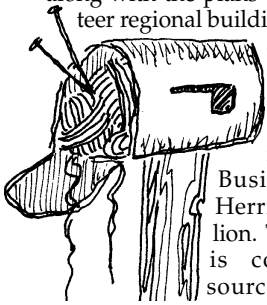
Treasurer John Green and Finance Director Lisa Lansing Simont worked with Webster Bank to prepare the dense statistical report known as the Operating Statement, which tells all about Cornwall—probably more than anyone might want to know. Based on this document, Moody's rating service gave the town an A1, which indicates to prospective buyers that Cornwall is doing a good job for a community of our size.

The sale was done over the internet at the bank's offices in Hartford, with results flashing on the screen of a laptop computer.

In December, Region One asked voters to approve a referendum authorizing as much as \$1,795,000 to repair nine separate problems in the 1939 section of the high school building. These range from replacing ancient bathrooms to reconstructing the running track oval.

Cornwall's voters agreed 58 to 27 to go along with the plans drawn up by a volunteer regional building committee. The referendum passed in the region, 482 to 147.

The actual amount to be bonded, according to Region One Business Manager Sam Herrick, will be \$1.5 million. The rest of the money is coming from other sources, including a state grant. —Lisa Lansing Simont



Events & Announcements

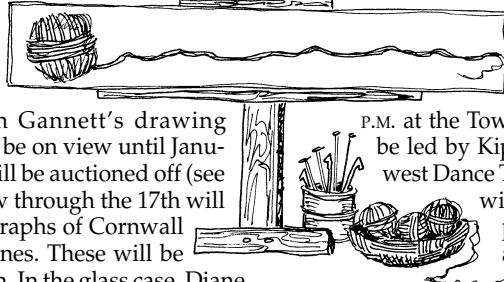
Chamberlain on Vietnam: On Saturday, January 10, at 4 P.M. at the Library, Anne Chamberlain will talk about her experiences living in Hanoi for two months last summer and working as a volunteer editing magazine articles. She also met and worked with professional Vietnamese musicians. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library. Donations gratefully accepted.

Monkey Business

2004 is The Year of The Green Monkey, which we hope portends a more light-hearted year than the last few. We'll try to keep you informed and have some fun in 2004 as long as you keep us going with your continued support. We wish all our readers a happy and healthy New Year.

Art in Cornwall:

At the Library, Jonathan Scoville's painting *Departing Storm III* and Ruth Gannett's drawing *Christmas Angel* will be on view until January 17, when they will be auctioned off (see below). Also on view through the 17th will be Scoville's photographs of Cornwall farms and other scenes. These will be sold by silent auction. In the glass case, Diane Schapira's exhibit of clay masks and furniture will be on display through the 17th. Beginning January 21, Wallace Harding will be showing her lush and lyrical paintings and drawings, while the glass case will house portrait busts of the Presidents made by CCS 8th graders.



At the National Iron Bank during January, Harold J. Brien, Jr. will be exhibiting mixed media paintings of landscapes, still lifes and flowers.

Art Auction: Jonathan Scoville's monumental work *Departing Storm III* will highlight a festive reception and auction at the Library on Saturday, January 17, from 5 to 7 P.M. Ruth Gannett's drawing *Christmas Angel* will also be on the block. The event will also mark the closing of the month-long silent auction of Scoville's photographs of Cornwall farms and other landscapes now on exhibit at the Library. Wine and cheese will be served. All sales benefit the Library. For more information about bidding procedures call 672-6874.

Music and Movement Classes for children eight months to five years will be conducted by Music Together teachers Tom Hanford and Kath Bloom at the Library Wednesday afternoons in January from 1:30 to 2:15 P.M. They will lead children (and parents) in singing, instrument play, and creative improvisation. Classes are \$32 for the series of four, and \$20 for each additional sibling. Kindergartners may take the bus directly from CCS to the Library with parents' written permission. To register call 672-6874.

Cornwall Democratic Party Caucus will be held on Monday, January 12, at 7:30 P.M. at the Library to elect members of the Democratic Town Committee for two-year terms. A regular meeting of the Committee will follow. All Cornwall registered Democrats are encouraged to attend.

Ice Skating for Cornwall Residents at the Hotchkiss Rink will again be sponsored by Park and Rec. on Saturdays from 7 to 8:30 P.M. Refreshments. Free. All skaters must wear hats!

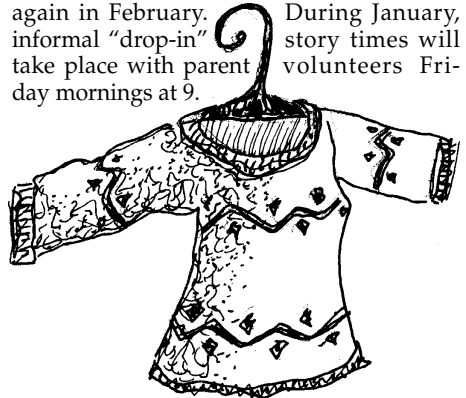
Acting Classes for Kids

will meet on Tuesdays through May from 3:30 to 4:40 P.M. at the Town Hall. The classes will be led by Kip DiPaolo of the Northwest Dance Theatre Center. Children will work on three short plays and perform them at the end of May. Cost is \$32/month plus a \$12 registration fee (covers scripts, costumes, and instruction). Sponsored by Park and Rec. For more information or to register call Bethany Thompson at 672-6058.

The Patriot Act, its history, origins, and effect on civil liberties in this country will be the topic of a talk by American Civil Liberties Union Executive Director Teresa Younger on Wednesday, January 21, at 6 P.M. at the Library. Discussion follows. Free. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library.

Interested in Supporting Howard Dean? A meeting will be held Sunday, January 4, at 4 P.M. at the Library with a local representative of the Dean campaign to let people know what can be done to help. Information only, not a fund raiser. Everyone welcome. For further information, call Paul Baren, 672-6637.

Library Story Hour and Crafts will start again in February. During January, informal "drop-in" story times will take place with parent volunteers Friday mornings at 9.



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CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Here is my tax-deductible contribution of: \$ _____

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