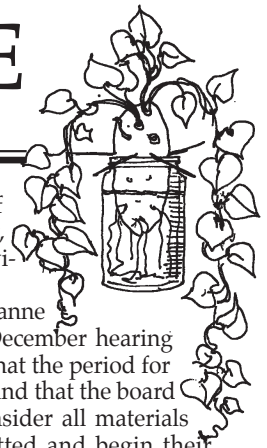




CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 19 : NUMBER 12 JANUARY 2010



Sweet Peet But Is It Farming?

Impassioned testimony swirled around both sides of the debate over Charlie and Ralph Gold's proposed Cream Hill Farm Sweet Peet enterprise. At crowded hearings in November and December, the major question before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) was whether in fact the composting of imported horse manure should be allowed as an agricultural activity.

"Is it farming?" asked the appellants' lawyer. "Does it involve the 'raising and harvesting of living things'?" Or does the project actually involve, as appellants' supporters described it, a "commercial industrial use in a three-acre residential zone," a "manufacturing facility" that poses industrial hazards: dangerous truck traffic, potential fires, perhaps even equine flu. "It's the thin edge of the wedge," said one Cream Hill resident, speaking for the appellants. "This could lead to commercial slaughterhouses or a pesticide factory." (Note from ZBA: Cornwall's own zoning regulations [definition of farming in Sec.16] state "but excludes the slaughtering of animals not raised on the premises.")

On the other side, equally fervent Cornwall residents cited Cornwall's agricultural history, now much diminished. "Used to be cows down the road," said Larry Stevens. "You could hear the sound of the corn chop-

per long into the night."

The most compelling argument in favor of the defendants' case came not from neighbors and their trust in the Golds' stewardship of the land, nor from Brenda and Graham Underwood's testimony that the comparable Sweet Peet operation in Bethlehem posed, according to that town's first selectman, no negative impact on the community. Nor did it come from Charlie Gold's presentation of approving letters from the Connecticut Commissioner of Agriculture and Torrington Area Health, nor from words in his father Ted Gold's will (voice from the grave?) reminding his children of the family's long tradition of responsibility to and love for the land.

Instead, it was the testimony of two long-time Canaan farmers that spoke most directly to the issue of farming as it may need to be defined and conducted now. Echoing similar views from Cornwall residents, Dave Jacquier and Matt Freund told how farmers must diversify and create alternatives to traditional farming—such as Friends' Cow Pots. "And we must combine our resources," said Jacquier. "Twelve to sixteen percent of my feed comes from crops raised on Cream Hill Farm land; and I store haylage in their bunker silos and remove it as needed over the winter months, thus cutting my trucking

costs by 40 percent. If we all work together, we'll have a better environment."

ZBA chairwoman Joanne Wojtusiak ended the December hearing reminding all present that the period for public input was over and that the board will now read and consider all materials that have been submitted and begin their deliberations at the next regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 28. She also recalled that the charge to the ZBA is always to do what is right for the land—regardless of who owns it at the moment. —Ella Clark

Town Plan for the Decade

About 50 citizens attended the hearings conducted in November by the Planning and Zoning Commission on the proposed Town Plan of Conservation and Development. There were lots of comments and suggestions.

At its December meeting, P&Z members reported on the additions they wished to make that would reflect the public comment. It is expected that P&Z will vote on the completed plan in January, since the changes only add to the document presented for the hearing.

For example, the Economic Development subcommittee added a recommendation to support DSL or hi-tech availability for

(continued on page 2)

JANUARY 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Call 672-0229 for Location. Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 P.M. CCS Gym. Wednesdays: Stretch Class, 5 P.M. Town Hall; Tai Chi, 6 P.M. CCS. Call 672-0064, Women's Basketball 7:30 P.M. CCS.					1 NEW YEAR'S DAY New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast 9 A.M.-Noon UCC †	2 Family Square, Contra, Circle Dances 7-9:30 P.M. Town Hall †
3	4 Region One Bd. of Ed. 6 P.M. HVRHS  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	5 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 	7	8 Story Hour 1:15-2:30 P.M. Library	9
10	11 Blood Pressure Screening Noon-1 P.M. UCC Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library Democratic Town Caucus 7:30 P.M. Library †	12 P&Z 7 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	13 	14	15  Deadline: February Chronicle Copy Story Hour 1:15-2:30 P.M. Library	16 Family Paper Marbling Workshop 10:30 A.M.-Noon Library †
17	18 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY State Holiday	19  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	20 	21 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. West Cornwall Firehouse	22 Story Hour 1:15-2:30 P.M. Library	23  Jazz in January 7 P.M. Library †
24	25 Housy Music Dinner 5:30-7:30 P.M. Wandering Moose † ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	26 Housy Music Dinner 5:30-7:30 P.M. Wandering Moose †	27 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. West Cornwall Firehouse	28 Incentive Housing Zone Info Meeting 7 P.M. Town Hall (see p. 2)	29 Story Hour 1:15-2:30 P.M. Library	30 
31						

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

home businesses, and to add retail sales to home-occupation special permit uses. The Cultural and Community Resources committee members responded to comments that social services are needed by all age groups. A community-wide regular survey and assessment would lead to recommendations to help those in need and improve the town's service programs. Housing and open space management are complicated issues, but affordable homes are needed for all age groups. The members considering natural resources and conservation wanted to add support for farmers' markets possibly in other areas of town and to support appropriate alternate agricultural uses.

The plan is the product of a couple of years of work on the part of many people. Incorporating much of the intent of the previous plan, which is still viable, it sets a basis for goals for the town. Although P&Z has the state-required job of preparing a plan every ten years, much of the content necessarily extends beyond P&Z's authority. With this new strategic plan in place, Cornwall should have a to-do list not only for the new year but for the next decade.

—Ginny Potter

Hunkering Down

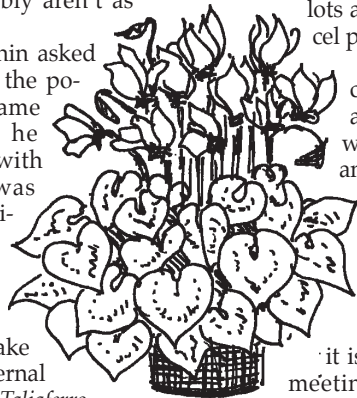
Now that the solstice is past, winter is closing in with painful seriousness and it's time to hunker down. No more half-hearted gestures: a heavily padded coat, sheep-related boots with grippers on them, and astronaut mittens are all very well, but when winter weather gets tough, the tough must *hunker down*.

And what, you ask, does it mean to *hunker*? The *Oxford English Dictionary* feigns uncertainty about the word's origin, but suggests some winsome cousins in Middle Dutch, Middle Low German, and Old Norse; all these words pretty much mean "to squat." The *OED* will go so far as to say that, by extension, to *hunker* is "to cower or squat in a lowly manner." But what does the *OED*, lapped as it is by the Gulf Stream, really know about winter?

Leave it to the more widely climate-zoned *American Heritage Dictionary* (4th ed.) to point out that *hunker* means "to take shelter, settle in, or hide out," as in "hunkered down in the cabin during the blizzard." Exactly! The reason deep mid-winter is so exhausting is that you confront it while warily settled on your *hunkers* (akin to Old Norse *hokra*, to crouch?), and those haunches probably aren't as supple as they used to be.

What is to be done? Lenin asked the very same question in the political pamphlet of that name (1902), possibly because he was too well acquainted with the Russian winter and was wondering about opportunities for revolution in the South Seas. For those of us who spend this season in Litchfield County, *hunkering down* will have to do. Wake me, please, in time for the vernal equinox.

—Franny Taliaferro



Incentive Housing Zone

During the town planning process, it was made clear by those participating that the creation of more affordable housing was the top priority for our town. The lack of affordable housing—not just low-income, but "work-force" housing for middle-income folk—means that it is difficult or even impossible for anyone with modest means to purchase a house in our town. That usually affects young people, families looking for starter homes, and seniors looking to downsize.

In December 2008, Cornwall received a planning grant to study what areas of town might be appropriate for housing on smaller lots than are currently allowed under zoning regulations. The impetus for this study was an incentive program created by the state in 2007. The "Incentive Housing Zone" program encourages towns like Cornwall to develop zones in town where development is more dense than is currently permitted, and if 20 percent of the houses are affordable in that zone, the town would be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per single-family house created. Although the financial return for this was intriguing (albeit dubious in the current state fiscal climate), what was more attractive to town officials was the potential to create much-needed affordable housing. With careful planning and much smaller lots, the hope would be for lower market-priced houses.

A committee was formed consisting of representatives from the Board of Selectmen, Planning and Zoning, and the Cornwall Housing Corporation. This committee has been working with the Northwestern Connecticut Regional Planning Collaborative to find housing sites that meet the Incentive Housing Zone criteria: the zone must be near one of Cornwall's village centers and must have good soils to support septic systems. After researching lots currently for sale, an appropriate site has been identified in Cornwall Bridge. This site, under current zoning, would allow nine lots if the parcel were equally divided. Under the IHZ plan, up to 15 housing units (a few would be multifamily) could be developed on only one-quarter of the parcel, creating the small, lower-priced lots and leaving the rest of the parcel permanently undeveloped.

The next step in the process is to develop regulations and design standards that would apply to the new site, and then the town would have to adopt this new "Incentive Housing Zone." The IHZ committee and the Regional Planning Collaborative will hold a public informational meeting about this plan. As it is still early in the process, the meeting will allow the committee to explain further the IHZ concept,



show potential plans, and allow residents to ask questions and express any concerns. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 28, at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall.

—Anne Kosciusko

Welcome

Austin Lee Skok to
Valeria and Jesse Skok
Davion Xavier Pope to
Cassandra Shaw and Adrian Pope
Olivia Grace Jeans to
Melissa and Christopher Jeans

Good-Bye to a Friend

Mary C. Totten

Land Transfers

Bank of America, N.A., for Estate of Helen W. Tennant to Harriet Ford Hubbard, 0.641 acres and improvements thereon at 7 Rumsey Circle for \$430,000.

Susan T. Costanzi and William R. Colbert, Trustees of the Susan T. Costanzi Revocable Trust, to Bruno Lalicata and Celeste Maher Lalicata, land and improvements thereon at 54 Flat Rocks Road for \$400,000.

Griffith Energy Services, Inc., to Superior Plus Energy Services, LLC, land and appurtenances thereon at 10 River Road South, for \$248,920.

Joseph Marc Freedman and Ilisha Beth Helfman to Michael Incantalupo and Brian Gloznek, Trustees, land and building and improvements thereon at 128 Cornwall Hollow Road, for \$510,000.

Walking the Woods in Winter

If you're feeling housebound by now, the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has the answer for you: Take up letterboxing in one of our local state forests.

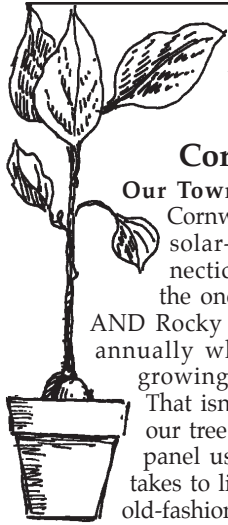
A mix of treasure hunting and orienteering, letterboxing requires a stout pair of walking shoes and a clear head for clues and directions; a compass isn't necessary but makes the trip more fun.

The DEP has identified two letterbox locations in or near Cornwall. One is just over the river on Sharon Mountain along the Appalachian Trail (Housatonic State Forest), and the second is at Mohawk Pond (Mohawk State Forest). There is a third trail in Kent at North Spectacle Pond (Wyantnock State Forest). The DEP website provides well-thought-out instructions and a trail of clues for each letterbox hike (www.ct.gov/dep/site; type *letterbox* in the search box).

Letterboxing began in the British Isles as an outdoor game and mystery hunt. Walkers in our woods will be looking for a plastic container tucked away in a secret place. Inside is a stamp unique to the site, an inkpad and a booklet in which the hiker stamps his own stamp as proof he found the box. The location stamp then marks the hiker's own book. If you prove visits to five letterboxes, you can win a badge! Visits to all 32 locations earn you a walking stick.

Connecticut, beginning in 1903, has reserved 170,000 acres in 32 state forests. The letterbox hunts began in 2003, 100 years later, when a "Centennial Series" of hunts included the Golds Pines walk near the West Cornwall Firehouse. The current letterboxes, the

Letters to the Chronicle



"Seedling Series," were placed in all the forests beginning in 2005.
—Lisa L. Simont

Cornwall Briefs

Our Town's Christmas Tree in Cornwall Bridge is the biggest solar-powered tree in Connecticut and second only to the one in Rockefeller Center.

AND Rocky gets a freshly cut tree annually while ours is alive and growing every year. But wait! That isn't all. The 500 lights on our tree are powered by a solar panel using less energy than it takes to light a 100-watt bulb the old-fashioned way. So, let us raise a glass of eggnog to those responsible: solar maven Jim LaPorta and the guys at Cornwall Electric.

Rumsey Hall: It's going to be demolished, possibly before it falls down on its own. Cornwall's Building Inspector Paul Prindle told us that owner Andrew Hingson has applied for a permit to tear it down, but first the building needs further testing for lead and asbestos by a licensed company. No time frame was given for the job, but it obviously becomes more complicated if either of those materials remains in the structure.

Knox Boxes: As noted in the current Fire Department annual appeal letter, it's a system that allows entrance to your house in case of an emergency without compromising access. Houses equipped with the boxes call 911. A 911 operator then activates a box in a CVFD response vehicle. A key inside that box then can open the box on the house and use a key inside it to open the front door. Now, if you're able to follow the above, then you're eligible for early admission to Harvard or any college of your choice. If not, get in touch with Town Hall or the CVFD. Of course, if you have a neighbor or two with keys to your house, an expensive Knox Box becomes either a luxury or is unnecessary.

Cornwall Food Pantry: Even though the holiday season is over, there is still a need for contributions to the pantry, which is in the capable hands of Anne Scott. Now housed at UCC, it is open to the public for pick-up on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 A.M. to noon. On Fridays from 11 A.M. to noon, Anne will be there to accept contributions and organize donations. To contact Anne call 860-672-0595.
—John Miller

"The Rest of the Story"

The year 2009 now recedes into history, trailing bits of unfinished business chronicled in these pages. Here are some updates as we start the new year.

The Bank Robbery: In our June issue, John Miller related the tragicomic tale of a holdup at the National Iron Bank in Cornwall Bridge. In some ways, John wrote, the saga sounded as if it "had been coached by Inspector Clouseau." A Millerton man named Jason Durant entered the bank with what appeared to be a serious weapon,

AN APPRECIATION

After the tragic heartbreaking loss of my dear husband, Nicholas Givotovsky, the question I answer the most is whether I will stay in Cornwall. The answer is yes. My sincere and grateful thanks go to you dear community, from the emergency responders and neighbors the night of the accident, to the volunteers who brought food, flowers, cleaned up our yard, picked up family and friends from the airport, donated rooms and houses for their lodging, to St. Peter's Lutheran Church clergy past and present, UCC, donations and help with the reception, to the neighbors who spent a day here delivering, moving, and cutting wood and doing yard work, for my weekly meals delivered as I work and get back on my feet, to every family who helps me with Nina and Sasha, to the staff at CCS who are supporting Nina and Sasha with great sensitivity. Their young eyes and hearts are taking all of this in. My family in Kansas thanks you all and can rest knowing we are in such a special place. Sasha interviewed Marion Blake for his 4th grade Cornwall history project. Her favorite thing about Cornwall was how people helped each other. Isn't it good to know in almost 100 years that spirit still flourishes?
—Laura Kirk

P.S. Feel free to print Nicholas's poem—all in lower case as he wrote it:

summer berries
when you see them, pick them
don't pass by, thinking
you'll be back again
there is no back again, when
you see them

n.r.g. 2003

CELIA AND THE SNAKE

Maggie Cooley's Chronicle story about the great rattler on Great Hollow Road (December 2009) reminded me of a story I heard from my former neighbor and naturalist, Celia Frost. I

did not witness this, for which I am curiously grateful: Celia was walking her son Isaac down to Foote Fields to play soccer. At the end of Pierce Lane lay a rattlesnake coiled into a heap the size of a sofa cushion, sound asleep on the hot pavement.

Being Celia, she found a stick and gave the rattler a poke. She said he shifted a bit and lifted his head, but he was so warm and sleepy that it was too much effort to protest. He made his way over to the stone wall between Pierce Lane and the Tatge-Lasseur house.

Where is he now? Or his kinfolk?

—Lisa L. Simont

CORNWALL, CT, FOUNDATION

In mid-November, Howard Dean, chairman of the Helston Town Band, emailed the Cornwall Foundation inquiring whether we offer grants for the refurbishment of old buildings. True, we had contributed to the renovation of the Historical Society, but who exactly was Mr. Dean and what is the Helston Town Band? It turned out that Mr. Dean is from Helston, Cornwall, in the United Kingdom. He was in need of a certain sum to refurbish the town band room there. We informed him that England is slightly out of the Foundation's jurisdiction, but it is nice to know that our reputation is spreading internationally.

Thanks to the generous contributions of former and present Cornwall citizens and a stock market rebound, the Cornwall Foundation's endowment has bounced back to \$150,000, about where it was before the crash. Since its founding in 2003, the CF has distributed about \$21,000 in grants ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 each. Our newest recipients include the Cornwall Child Center for a new roof gutter and improvements to bring the split-rail fence up to state code; the Historical Society for a model they'll present at their grand re-opening; and a \$2,000 boost to the Cornwall Fuel and Food Bank.

—Larry Zuckerman, out-going Secretary

jumped up on a counter, grabbed what cash he could, and stuffed it in his pockets. Then he made his escape down a steep embankment behind the building, at the bottom of which his girlfriend sat waiting in a getaway car. But before Durant got there, he had tumbled head over heels down the 45-foot incline, spilling most of the money and breaking his leg. There followed a trip to the emergency room at New Milford Hospital, reports of two people with flashlights searching the embankment, and finally a loud argument with the girlfriend that led to a 911 call and an arrest. The rest of the story? The bank recovered every dollar of the \$9,359. Jason Durant later admitted his guilt in Litchfield Superior Court and chose a plea bargain over a trial. He is to be sentenced on January 29: 10 years in jail, suspended after five, with three years' probation.

Real Estate: Last year at this time, realtor Priscilla Miller reported that there were 38 properties on the market, 13 under \$500,000, including two foreclosures. How much has changed? Very little. There are now 34 listings, 14 under \$500,000. Six properties are priced at over \$1 million, two of those over \$3 million. There are no foreclosures, but two are pending.

The Probate Court, Again: It's now official: the legislature has placed Cornwall in



a new configuration of 12 towns, headquartered in Litchfield (not Winsted, as originally proposed). The group includes the Region One towns plus Thomaston, Harwinton, Warren, Morris, and Norfolk. But according to Maggie Cooley, our authority on such matters, the future is still "unbelievably vague." Our present court in North Canaan might become a "satellite" court—or it might not. There might be more satellites—or none at all. Much depends on who is elected probate judge in the new, larger region.

Cell Tower Update: Throughout the year the possibility of a tower site near Popple Swamp Road has been up in the air—balloons and Blumenthal. News has just come that Verizon has eliminated the site at 78 Popple Swamp from consideration. However, the site at 16 Bell Road Extension remains a possibility.

101 & 102: January's issue honored our "two lady centenarians," Helen and Florence. The year 2009 passed away taking both these well-loved women with it. It's *Chronicle* policy not to go beyond a name in tiny type for "Good-Bye's" but centenarians deserve an exception. In case you missed it: Helen Tennant died on June 3, Florence Gomez on November 11. A cursory look at the records in the town offices reveals that no one now living in Cornwall is over 94.

—Bob Potter

Events & Announcements

The Annual Pancake Breakfast for the benefit of La Casa will be held in the UCC Parish House on January 1 from 9 A.M. to noon. Enjoy sausage and buttermilk pancakes served with Cornwall maple syrup. All contributions will benefit the La Casa Project, building homes for the very poor in Northern Mexico.

Dance in the New Year with Bill Fischer calling square, contra, and circle dances for the whole family on Saturday, January 2, from 7 to 9:30 P.M. at the Town Hall. Music by Still the Homegrown Band. Suggested donations \$3/child, \$5/adult. For more information call Jim or Jane at 672-6101.

Sustenance

Horses and deer do well in winter pastures because they know how to paw the snow away to get to the grass. Cattle, however, stand miserable and clueless in the snow; they must have people bring them hay. This isn't really going anywhere except toward a big thank you from the *Chronicle* to all our supporters in 2009. You kept us nicely in hay.

Art in Cornwall: Magaly Ohika's show, *A whimsy spill*, continues at the Cornwall Library through January 9. **CAN'T STOP MAKING THINGS**—A crafter blogs about everything she makes, a mixed-media show by Gail Jacobson, will open on January 12.

Lady Audrey's Gallery will continue to show entries in the *Winter's Waltz* art competition together with the sculpture show, *Stones by Stone*, through the month. The gallery will remain open this winter.

The National Iron Bank will exhibit Marc Simont's artwork for the month of January.

Taxes Due: The second half of real estate and personal property tax bills is due January 1; also supplemental motor vehicle bills are due. Payments must be postmarked by February 1 to avoid interest of 1.5 percent per month including January. No additional bills are mailed; use bills that were mailed in July. The tax office is open Mondays from 9 A.M. to noon and Wednesdays from 9 A.M. to noon and 1 to 4 P.M. Call 672-2705 for further information.

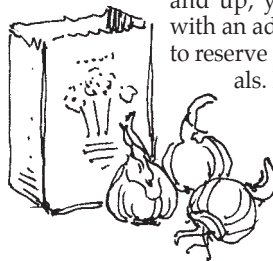
At the Cornwall Library

- A ten-class series on basic Italian will meet on Tuesdays, 9 to 10:30 A.M., from January 12 to March 16. Cost: \$10 per session. The class is filling up fast, so if interested call Amy Cady at 672-6874.

- The Library has offered to host a playgroup for children birth to three and their caregivers. If interested contact Heather Dinneen, heather.dinneen@gmail.com or 672-6740.

- Jazz in January: On Saturday, January 23, at 7 P.M., Ram Miles and his Swing Set will give a concert to benefit the Library's youth and community services. Enjoy the flavor of a French bistro with cafe tables, quiches, salads, wine, and incredible sounds. There is plenty of dancing space in the main part of the Library. Call 672-6874 to reserve a seat. All seats are \$10.

- A paper marbling workshop for kids and families will be led by Amy Buck on Saturday, January 16, from 10:30 A.M. to noon. Sheets of paper will be decorated and later used to cover Japanese-style books. Ages 5 and up, younger children with an adult. Call 672-6874 to reserve space and materials. Free.

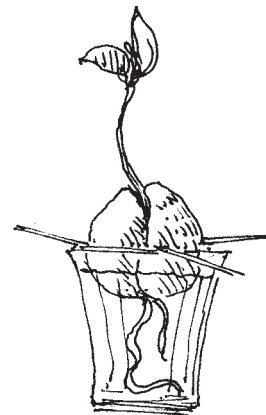


A Two-Night Fundraising Dinner to support the HVRHS Music Program, January 25 and 26 from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. at the Wandering Moose. \$10–\$15 per person. To reserve: Housymusic@TheWanderingMooseCafe.com or 672-0178.

The Cornwall Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus on Monday, January 11, at 7:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library for the purpose of electing members to the Town Committee for the term 2010–2012. All registered Democrats are invited to attend.

Cornwall's Tai Chi Class, sponsored by Park & Rec., will be welcoming beginning students January 20. The beginners' group meets Wednesdays from 6 to 7 P.M. in the CCS Gathering Room. Contact David Colbert at 672-0064 or ourmaridog@yahoo.com for more information.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will hold hearings by appointment in March. Applications to schedule a hearing will be available at the Town Clerk's Office beginning January 4. Applications must be filed by February 22. Applicants will be contacted by a board member to schedule hearings.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

JANUARY ISSUE

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Ginny and Bob Potter, Editors

FEBRUARY ISSUE

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