



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 21 : NUMBER 12 JANUARY 2012

## Happy New Year!

Let's start this issue of the *Chronicle* the way many of us begin the new year—the annual Pancake Breakfast at the Cornwall Village Parish House.

Jerry Blakey started the breakfast in 1999 as a way to make a difference in the lives of others. Since then it has become an important community gathering. As Jerry says, "People want to come; it's a real social event."

If making breakfast for a large family and guests feels daunting, especially the morning after ringing in the new year, imagine this—it takes 24 dozen eggs, 20 pounds of flour, 28 quarts of buttermilk, three pounds of butter, two gallons of maple syrup, 40 pounds of sausages, eight gallons of orange juice, and of course the all-important coffee: 140 cups of hot coffee—sounds good now, even better then. Nine to ten volunteers are required to keep the food coming and the tables cleaned and reset.

The breakfast is very much a Blakey family activity with Jerry and son David on griddles, son-in-law Gordon Fisher running the dishwasher, daughter Karen waiting on tables, and wife, Pat, managing the buttermilk pancake batter. Sandy Sandmeyer provided the recipe back in 1999 and it has remained unchanged. Pat has elevated the process to a science. She

pre-measures the dry ingredients into separate batches. When a batch is needed, in go the eggs and buttermilk, then Pat whisks by hand. Yes, by hand. Per Pat: "It keeps the pancakes tender and delicious."

This is a Cornwall community event in all respects. In years past the warm maple syrup for smothering those pancakes has been provided by numerous Cornwall families: the Harts, Potters, Ridgways, Scovilles, Heddens, and Frosts. The farm fresh eggs have come from Buddy Hurlburt's Hautboy Hill Farm. Denny Frost has worked one of the four griddles every year from the start, and on average 200-plus individuals come in each January 1 to enjoy the food and conversation. For those not a fan of pancakes, there is cereal on hand, a favorite of many children.

This all-you-can-eat breakfast is open to everyone between 9 A.M. and noon. Donations are welcome but not required. In past years, proceeds over costs have gone to the LaCasa Housing Project in Mexico. This year proceeds will help the local soup kitchen and families on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

—Diane Beebe

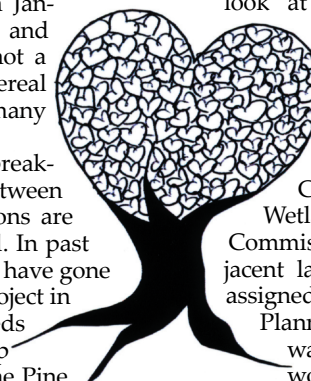
## A Bridge In Time

Back on August 28, Tropical Storm Irene knocked out the bridge over Mill Brook where it enters the Housatonic River in West Cornwall. Yet by November 22, a new bridge—bigger, better, and more beautiful—was declared open for traffic.

How long is 86 days? If you were one of the four homeowners without road access to your house on Lower River Road, it is a long time. If you had to plan, organize, and build a bridge there, it is a very short time.

To understand how the new Lower River Road bridge came to be requires a look at a dizzying array of legal requirements, the agencies involved, and good luck. The State of Emergency declared by Governor Dannel Malloy simplified the red tape. The approvals required from the CT DEEP, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Cornwall Inland Wetlands, the Housatonic River Commission, FEMA, CL&P, and the adjacent landowners were fast-tracked and assigned the highest priority.

Planning began almost before the storm was over. The selectmen assembled a working group, including Lenard Engineering of Winsted and Roger Kane, a retired DOT bridge expert and Cornwall



# JANUARY 2012

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 1 <sup>st</sup> Q ♦ Pancake Breakfast 9 am–Noon UCC Parish House	2	3 ♦ Bd of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	4	5	6 ♦ Children's Story Hour 1:30 pm Library	7
8	9 ♦ P & Z 7 pm Library ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	10 ♦ Democratic Town Caucus 7:30 pm Library	11	12 ♦ Republican Town Caucus 8 pm Town Hall	13	14 ♦ Priscilla Gilman Book Talk 4 pm Library
15 ♦ Deadline: February <i>Chronicle</i> Copy	16 ♦ No School	17 ♦ Board of Ed 3:30 pm CCS Library	18	19 ♦ Conservation Comm. 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	20 ♦ Children's Story Hour 1:30 pm Library	21
22	23 ♦ ZBA* 7:30 pm Town Hall	24	25 ♦ Parent-Child Book Group 6 pm Library	26	27	28 ♦ Jazz & Dinner 6:30 pm Library
29	30	31	<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Tuesdays:</b> Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Wednesdays:</b> Tai Chi, 6–9 pm CCS; Karate 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; <b>Women's Basketball</b> , 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Saturdays:</b> Ice Skating, 7–8 pm Schmidt Rink, Hotchkiss <b>Sundays:</b> Meditation, 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672–0229			

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

resident, to investigate the replacement or repair possibilities. A hydraulic study found the old bridge to have been inadequate for the potential flow of Mill Brook. The new bridge is ten feet longer, increasing the flow capacity 60 percent.

General requirements were created and bid requests sent out. Mohawk Northeast, Inc. was chosen as the contractor based on price, innovative design, and track record. A town meeting was held to approve the project expense, with the understanding that FEMA will reimburse about 75 percent of the cost. The contract was signed and work begun. Thirty-two days later the bridge was opened.

The untold story is the parts played by many individuals and groups. A partial list of these includes: the town for having the cash reserves available to pay the immediate bills; the selectmen for acting quickly and decisively; Roger Kane for his expertise, being willing to work long hours as project manager, and his on-the-spot judgment calls; Mohawk Northeast for its competence, cooperation, dedication, and friendliness; Ian Ingersoll for giving up a large part of his parking lot during construction; Tim and Tony Locke for donating several tons of stone that helped maintain the natural look of the bridge area; Russ Sawicki for countless cups of coffee and treats; and the representatives of the various agencies that made quick decisions without holding up progress.

What did we get in the end? An attractive bridge across Mill Brook that has the capacity to handle future flood waters, an improved water entry of Mill Brook into the Housatonic that benefits both fish and the river water quality, and most importantly, four Cornwall houses that are back on the grid.



—Ralph Gold

## Tracing the Trash

The average adult in Connecticut generates about 5.5 pounds of trash a day—over a ton a year. Some of our waste is left behind in places like garages and restaurants. But most of it follows us home—to Cornwall—and sooner or later winds up at our Transfer Station.

So the question becomes: Where does all this stuff go after it leaves Cornwall? I asked this question of Transfer Station Manager Steve O'Neil. His first suggestion was that I visit the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRRA) facility on the south edge of Hartford. To this quasi-public, nonprofit outfit most of our trash is sent.

The Hartford CRRRA is a sprawling structure that also labels itself a "Trash Museum." A ground floor of ingeniously trashy displays leads to a fascinating mezzanine overlook, where one can peer

through a row of large windows to see a vast acreage of waste-processing activity, or turn around to see, via closed circuit TV, ongoing operations not visible from the viewing area.

Some kinds of waste are easily handled. Our Transfer Station separates cardboard, newspaper/magazine, and paper trash. The CRRRA simply creates huge bales (2,100 pounds for newspaper) that are sent forth to buyers of recycled pulp. The real problem comes with the containers—anything from steel cans to liquor bottles to plastic containers too numerous to name.

All this stuff gets dumped onto a conveyor belt, which then splits and splits, rises and falls, as various kinds of recyclables are removed. Little of the work is done manually: #2 plastic (mostly milk jugs) and non-plastic milk and juice containers get picked out and tossed into separate bins. The rest is automatic: a rotating shaft makes the very light plastic spin out. An overhead magnetic belt pulls up and removes all steel cans. An electric current spots and removes aluminum cans. The belt is crushed to break the glass into little pieces, which fall through openings onto another belt below, where a vacuum device removes stray paper labels, caps that got through, and neck rings. An optic sorter identifies #1 plastic items by density of material and puff!—a blast of air blows them into a wire cage.

The CRRRA's recycling program is pretty much self-sustaining. That is, its expenses about balance the income it receives from buyers who transform its output into new products. Recycling costs the Town of Cornwall little or nothing. Moreover, every item recycled is not part of the so-called solid waste, which IS an expense.

Solid waste is what we throw—usually in bags—into the compactor at the Transfer Station. It is burned in a CRRRA facility, a "waste-to-energy" program that produces electricity—but hardly enough to cover costs. Last year solid waste disposal cost Cornwall \$69 a ton—and we produced 432 tons. (This down from 598 tons two years ago; as our recycling aggregates go up every year, so our solid waste numbers go down).

Our other waste? Tires we pay to dispose of, but motor oil gets burned as a fuel to keep the Town Garage warm. Metals we sell at market price, which brings in thousands for copper, brass, light iron, and aluminum. Vehicle batteries also bring in money, but so-called bulky waste is an expense (mostly reimbursed by local Cornwall fees). Certain non-processible items, e.g., mattresses and asphalt shingles, go into approved landfills in other Connecticut towns.

Electronic waste, a growing category, is handled by a company called WeRecycle! at no cost to the town. It is not sent overseas (remember those horrible photos?) but processed here in a responsible and approved fashion. Last fall WeRecycle! challenged its 91 towns to see which could collect the most "e-waste" per capita in a six-week period. Cornwall came in third—with a \$1,000 prize. Steve O'Neil hopes most of the award can go for recycling education in cooperation with the school, possibly with a field trip to the great Temple of Trash in Hartford.

—Bob Potter

## Goodbye to Friends

John Carroll

Peter Folger Frost

Carol Rita Herity

Ethel M. Scott

Ralph Scoville

## Land Transfers

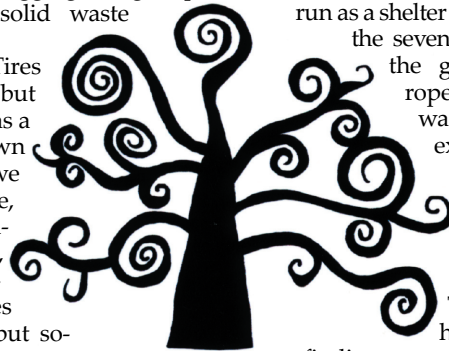
William L. Fox and Lynne Fox to Anne A. Hubbard, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 6 Rocky Cove Lane, for \$300,000.

James Kelly Poinsett, Jennifer Ahlberg and Peoples United Bank, Co-Trustees to Michael J. Hickerson, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 120 Whitcomb Hill Road, for \$663,000.

## Expectations and Realities

When new CCS Principal Michael Croft enumerated his expectations in August for the coming year, he did not include six snow days necessitated by a tropical storm and 20 inches of snow before Halloween. The latter resulted in the town using the school as a shelter/warming site/shower and meals provider for stranded motorists and powerless citizens. Fortunately, says Croft, the school's generator had been repaired just two weeks before the snowstorm. And the school even had a trial run as a shelter when bad weather forced the seventh-graders to "camp" in the gym for their two-day ropes course; so the school was prepared for the unexpected.

After the unusual weather challenges, Croft faced the realities of normal CCS demands and activities. The principal noted that his greatest challenge is finding enough time for classroom observations. Since the opening of school, Amanda Forbes has joined the staff as a teaching assistant in the kindergarten class.



As for those snow days—six of them—two will be made up in February by changing the February 17 and 21 teacher workshop days to a half day of school and half day of workshop each. To make up the other four days, the last day of school will be moved from June 8 to June 14 (tentatively).  
—Barbara Gold

### Our Town Is Equipped

Last summer the weeds on northern Town Street grew tall and arched into the road, and our lilies sprawled and bloomed freely. My *Do Not Mow* sign became lost in the tangle of goldenrod. Where, I wondered, was the mower, the one I usually feared would decapitate the lilies? Now I worried I would be driving in the middle of the road avoiding ragweed and meet another car doing the same.

Then a big yellow flail mower appeared, delicately slicing and cutting all weeds and even saplings between asphalt and stone wall, effectively clearing away the summer's thick growth. I asked First Selectman Gordon Ridgway about this great machine, and he stated, "The town owns it."

I began to think about the tools of the road crew, and the different tasks required by the seasons to care for Cornwall's 60-plus miles of right-of-way property. It turns out that Cornwall has about a dozen vehicles, and, as Road Foreman Jim Vanicky explained, most of them have additional equipment that is attached for a particular job.

Most obvious is the dump truck (we have four large and one small) which in winter carries a plow and sander. Other times it pulls a brush chipper and carries away the debris, or it works with the sweeper (which is shared with other towns) to haul away sand. The town also shares a large special truck for vacuum cleaning the dozens of culverts under all the roads. A most versatile machine is the grader: with its plow blades it can shape a dirt road, move a drift of snow, and with its wing attached it does the push-back of high snow banks; it also has a row of teeth that can rip up old pavement for road repair.

There are also other machines for specific needs. A forklift works at the Transfer Station to move bales and dumpsters. A one-ton roller flattens asphalt, that is laid down by a skid-box (constructed by the crew members themselves) attached to the front of our payloader. The payloader loads sand, but with its bucket off and mower on, it can mow too. A farm-size backhoe works mainly against the beavers' construction efforts. And finally, we own a pickup that has a small plow and carries tools such as chain saws and other supplies.  
—Ginny Potter



## Letters to the Chronicle

### APPROVED!

The rapid completion of the bridge over Mill Brook in West Cornwall is an excellent example of how local government can respond quickly and responsibly when the need is clear. I applaud our selectmen and only hope that the alacrity and aplomb of this effort may find itself expressed on other issues in Cornwall.

One dissonant note is the fact that the community was not invited to celebrate the completion of the bridge. A ceremony was held and refreshments shared, but only a select few even knew the event was scheduled. After setting numerous special meetings including a town meeting to approve the financing, it was too bad the selectmen did not make the effort to invite all of us to the official opening.

The new bridge is definitely worth a stop next time you are in West Cornwall. It was

great to see that the selectmen responded to concerns we raised about the use of ugly grouted rip-rap on the brook bed and when DEP added their voice about that choice being "not fish friendly" the selectmen changed the plans to keep a natural streambed; it looks great!

—Joanne Wojtusiak



### HEARTS HELPED

The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department is the recipient of a grant of \$6,700 from the Cornwall Foundation for the purchase of four defibrillators. These are electrical devices that can restore a chaotic heartbeat to a rhythmical pattern. They will be placed around town with EMS personnel for the protection of Cornwall residents and visitors. More and more, Cornwall is becoming a heart safe community!

—Joyce Hart, President, CVFD

### Green Eggs and Ham

The Cornwall community was treated to an extra special serving of green eggs and ham when *Seussical, Jr.* hit the stage at CCS in early December. The talented cast showcased numerous well-rehearsed songs, dances and the remarkable rhymes of Dr. S(uess) under the careful baton of Mrs. S(imonetti-Shpur). Will Vincent, assisted by many, also helped bring an exciting colorful festival to the stage which had not seen this type of performance in years. With great enthusiasm the cast amazed friends and family well beyond the audience's expectations.

"Better than my high school play," remarked one fan. CCS Principal Michael Croft, who made a brief appearance as the Grinch, acknowledged the end result was "80 minutes of really great music and competent acting."

The pure joy experienced by the talented cast and large audiences will hopefully lead us to expect more excellent productions in the future.  
—Jayne Ridgway

### Another Award, Another Amy

The Cornwall Child Center has again achieved the accreditation of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This came after a year of self-study, evaluation, and implementation of best practice of over 400 criteria by the staff. Our Cornwall center is one of only four centers in the Northwest Corner to earn this accreditation.

A new director will be welcomed as the new year begins. Amy Bresson comes from Torrington, where she lives with her husband and two children; she brings extensive early childhood education and directorial experience to Cornwall.

—Ginny Potter

### Cornwall Briefs

•**Speed Signs:** We have the grant money, now we need permission from the Department of Transportation to place four of them (the signs) on state roads. That would be on either side of Route 128, in to and out of West Cornwall Village. The other two would be on Route 7 in Cornwall Bridge, one going north by the firehouse and the other going south coming off the concrete bridge. The signs, powered by solar panels, would indicate to motorists their miles-per-hour speed.

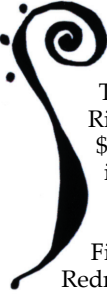
•**Appointments:** If you are interested in serving on a town committee or commission there are many openings and the place to apply is the Selectmen's Office at the Town Hall. What follows is a rundown of said openings: **Inland Wetlands Water Courses Agency** needs two alternates; **Economic Development Commission** has two vacancies; **Commission on the Aging** has one vacancy to be filled (and you don't have to be aging); **Planning & Zoning** needs two alternates; **Park & Recreation Commission** lacks one regular member and two alternates, the latter appointed by the commission; **Cornwall Grange Trust Advisory Committee** and the **Sydney Kaye Trust Fund Advisory Committee** each has one vacancy; and, **FINALLY**, the **Housatonic River Commission** needs one alternate. The number to call is 672-4959.

•**Undefeated,** that's what the CCS boys soccer team accomplished this year as it came in first in the league of Region One schools. The team, made up of sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders, was coached by Cornwall physical education teacher Aaron Boucher.

•**New Steel Shed:** The old shed at the Town Garage, circa 1950, was a victim of time and, more recently, of our severe weather.

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I'm told it had started to sag, which is what happens when people and buildings get old. The new shed was built by Pine Ridge Pole Barns at a cost of \$100,000, half of it covered by insurance. Pine Ridge also built the pavilion overlooking the baseball diamond at Foote Field. One of its owners is Pat Redmond of Cornwall Bridge.

• **There's a handsome new redwood bench** sitting on the grass overlooking Coltsfoot Valley. On it is an inscription: *For the Town of Cornwall with appreciation from John F. O'Brien, Rags, Buster and Scooter.* We found John F. and talked to him on the telephone. He was diagnosed with early stage Parkinson's about 15 years ago and his doctor told him walking would be good. So he walked the Village. It was a safe place. Folks were friendly. He'd rest on the bench he eventually replaced. Drivers would wave to him. John is now pretty much confined to a wheelchair and his house by the Housatonic. He gets along with considerable help from the Chore Service people. Rags is gone and Buster and Scooter are getting old, but his spirits sound fine and he is grateful to the good people of Cornwall. And we say thank you to him for the beautiful bench. —John Miller

### Events & Announcements

**Art in Cornwall:** At the Cornwall Library, Harriette Dorsen's show of large-scale photographs of flowers and birds continues through January 21. Beginning January 24, Erica Prud'homme will exhibit her paintings.

**The Board of Assessment Appeals** will hold hearings by appointment in March 2012. Applications to schedule a hearing will be available at the Town Clerk's Office

### The Heart of Winter

Do you ever wonder where all the chipmunks, voles, and mice go when it gets really cold? Perhaps they have hidden parlors with a roaring fire and good books to read. We hope so. Send a check to the *Chronicle* now and we'll keep the animal stories coming all through 2012. Thanks.

beginning January 2, 2012. Applications must be received (or postmarked, if mailed) by February 21, 2012. Applicants will be contacted to schedule hearings during March.

#### At the Library

The Children's Story Hour will take place on Fridays January 6, and 20, at 1:30 P.M. with kindergartners and second-graders taking the bus from school. Other five- to seven-year olds are welcome too.

The Parent-Child Book Group (fifth- and sixth-graders) will meet on Wednesday, January 25, at 6 P.M. The group will read *Firefly Letters: A Suffragette's Journey to Cuba* by Margarita Engle. Please call Amy Buck at the library if you would like to participate.

A book talk by author Priscilla Gilman will take place on Saturday, January 14, at 4 P.M. She will discuss her practical and inspiring memoir about raising a child with special needs. Books will be available for purchase and signing.

The third annual Jazz in January and Dinner will be on Saturday, January 28, at 6:30 P.M. New Orleans jazz by Bob Parker and his Jive by Five Band; dinner of southern favorites prepared by GRITS (Girls Raised in the South) and Friends of the Library. Proceeds to benefit library programs for children. Dinner is \$20 per person; cash bar: wine and beer. Tickets must be purchased in advance at the library or by calling 672-6874.

**Skating:** Park & Rec will offer skating at the Schmidt Rink, Hotchkiss School, for eight consecutive Saturdays from 7 to 8 P.M. beginning on January 7.

**The Child Center After School Enrichment** program will present Awesome Engineering from January 9 to 12, from 2:55 to 5:30 P.M., at CCS. This is an opportunity for children kindergarten through fifth grade to learn through construction, motion, and basic electricity. To register, please send an email to [cornwallchildcenter@yahoo.com](mailto:cornwallchildcenter@yahoo.com) or call 672-6989.

**A Democratic Caucus** will be held on Tuesday, January 10, at 7:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library on Pine Street to endorse candidates for the 2012–2014 Cornwall Democratic Town Committee and attend to any other business. All enrolled Democrats are invited to attend.

**A Caucus of All Enrolled Republican** electors of the Town of Cornwall will be held on Thursday, January 12, at 8 P.M. at the Town Hall to endorse candidates for the Republican Town Committee. All registered Republicans are eligible to vote and are invited to attend.

**Taxes Due:** The second half payment of taxes is due January 1, 2012; supplemental motor vehicle taxes are also due. Payments must be postmarked by February 1 to avoid interest. Any tax bills not paid by February 1 will be considered delinquent, and interest will be charged at the rate of 1.5 percent per month and fraction thereof including January. This means that even if you pay on February 2 you will be charged for two months interest. No additional bills will be mailed for second installment; please use the bills that were mailed in July. Taxes may be paid at the tax office on Mondays from 1 to 4 P.M., and on Wednesdays from 9 A.M. to noon and 1 to 4 P.M., or sent by mail addressed to: Cornwall Tax Collector, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753. Taxpayers also have the option to pay online at [www.webtownhall.com/cornwall](http://www.webtownhall.com/cornwall), but there is a 3 percent charge for this service.

**Winter Parking:** The Board of Selectmen reminds all concerned that a parking ban on town roads is in effect until March 30. Cars and trucks should be at least six feet off the road. Snow plowing can occur at any time, even set-back plowing in clear weather. State law empowers the town to remove vehicles parked in violation. Phone the Town Garage (672-6230) or Selectmen's Office (672-4959) with any questions.

### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

#### JANUARY ISSUE

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