

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 23 : NUMBER 12 JANUARY 2014

Goodbye to a Friend: 2013

The year 2013 is now in the record books and your *Chronicle*, as Cornwall's newsheet of record, has tried to keep on top of things. Sometimes it's a month late, but eventually most of the news that's fit to print finds its way to your mailbox.

So, what will historians many years from now find in the 48 pages of the 2013 *Chronicle*?

The January issue reported that "it looks like the last chapter in the Rumsey Hall saga has gone to press." Andrew Hingson, the owner of record, had paid the town \$58,268 for demolition and other costs. However, that same issue announced the first chapter of what could become another continuing saga: the rumored sale of the Trinity Conference Center and its 464 acres.

News in a similar vein continued the following month. The state's Open Space Program granted \$450,000 to the Cornwall Conservation Trust to cover half the purchase and preservation costs of 84-plus acres off Cherry Hill Road. Cornwall's seniors, too, made the news, with Park and Rec offering a free bus trip to a flower show in Hartford and a free Valentine's Day lunch at the Cornwall Inn. The Cornwall Committee for Seniors arranged monthly lunchtime get-togethers at the Wandering

Moose and the general store in Cornwall Bridge.

As spring approached, Storm Nemo hit the town with winds that piled snow more than waist deep and closed the schools. Perhaps the unplanned vacation helped the CCS boys basketball team win the Region One Championship for the third straight year, edging Salisbury in the final 37-36. With the melting snow came the rise of the Bonney Brook senior housing project in Cornwall Bridge. And Margaret Haske was named director of the Cornwall Library, replacing Amy Cady, who had resigned after seven years of cheerful service.

On May 7, the Region One budget was defeated in both Cornwall and the district, in what would turn out to be the first of seven referenda before a final yes. On a more positive note, May 11 saw the opening of the West Cornwall Farm Market for its seventh season.

Early summer seemed to bring a lull. Voters continued to trickle to the polling place for still more Region One referenda. Mohawk had closed; Hammond Beach opened. The general store in Cornwall Bridge, formerly leased by Dana and Louise Beecher, stood idle, awaiting extensive alterations and a new opening by Idella and James Shepard.

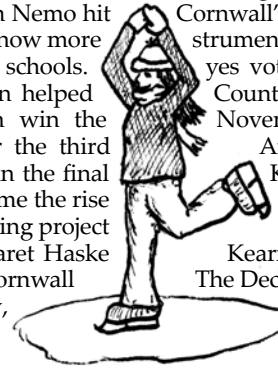
And finally, on October 17, the Region One budget passed on its seventh trial.

Cornwall's 165-108 approval was instrumental, as the six-town margin of yes votes was only 73. The Cornwall Country Market opened its doors on November 1 to a rave *Chronicle* review.

And Gordon Ridgway defeated KC Baird to win his 12th two-year term as first selectman, Richard Bramley and Heidi Kearns joining him on that board.

The December news? Well, that's in this issue. The *Chronicle* may be a month late, but maybe that's a month to get things right.

—Bob Potter



Bonney Brook Welcomes Residents

Cornwall's Bonney Brook elderly housing complex in Cornwall Bridge welcomed its first five residents during the week of December 9. Will Calhoun, vice president of Cornwall Elderly Housing (CEH), owners of the facility, said the other five tenants would likely move in the following week. All residents have a Cornwall connection.

A former occupant of Kugeman Village is one of the new Bonney Brook residents,

(continued on page 2)

JANUARY 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Yoga, 5:45–7 pm CCS; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6–9 pm Town Hall; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym ♦ Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Toddler Play Group, 10:30–11:30 am Library; Yoga, 5:30–6:30 pm Library; Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym ♦ Fridays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library ♦ Saturdays: Skating, 7–8 pm Hotchkiss Schmidt Rink ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; Meditation, 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229			1 NEW	2 ♦ Pancake Breakfast 9 am–noon UCC Parish House	3 ♦ Woman's Society 10 am UCC Parish House	4 ♦ Artists' Talk & Reception Robert Andrew Parker and Thomas Whitridge 4–6 pm Library
5 ♦ Art Opening: Debra Tyler 11:30 am UCC Parish House	6 ♦ Region 1 Budget Wrkshp 5 pm HVRHS Room #133 ♦ Region 1 Board of Ed 6 pm HVRHS Rm #133 ♦ Park and Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	7 ☾ ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	8	9	10	11 ♦ Movie: <i>The Bicycle Thief</i> 7:30 pm Library
12	13	14 ♦ Economic Development 8:30 am Town Hall ♦ Seniors' Luncheon 11:30 am–1 pm Wandering Moose ♦ P&Z 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Housatonic River Commission 7 pm CCS	15 ○ FULL ♦ Board of Education 4 pm CCS Library ♦ Dance Movie: <i>Bill T. Jones...</i> 7 pm Library ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library ♦ Deadline: February Chronicle Copy	16 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Comm. 6:30 pm Town Hall	17 ♦ Movie: <i>How to Train Your Dragon</i> 7 pm Library	18 ♦ 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament CCS ♦ Diabetes Educational Talk 3 pm Library
19 ♦ Sierra Nevada Mtns. Slide Show 4 pm Library	20	21 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	22 ♦ Region 1 Budget Wrkshp 6 pm HVRHS- Room #133	23	24 ☾ 4thQ	25 ♦ P&Z Special Meeting 10 am Town Hall ♦ Author Talk; Beth Gutcheon 4–6 pm Library
26	27 ♦ Cell Tower Meeting 7 pm Library ♦ ZBA* 7:30 pm Library	28 ♦ Region 1 Budget Wrkshp 6 pm HVRHS Room #133 ♦ Committee for Seniors 7 pm Library	29	30 ● NEW	31	

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

Calhoun reported. "That will open up an apartment at Kugeman for a new family—just the way it should work."

Bonney Brook has 10 apartments; four on the ground floor and six on the second floor. In addition to a grand staircase, there is an elevator. Calhoun said a Tim Prentice mobile will hang in a cupola over the main staircase.

Each apartment meets HUD guidelines for size and other regulations including bathroom accessibility and safety. The apartments also have emergency call mechanisms should residents need assistance.

To learn more about Bonney Brook elderly housing, call Elderly Housing Management at 203-230-4809. —Asher Pavel

Choo Choo

Pressure is mounting for the return of passenger service on the Housatonic Railroad between Pittsfield and New York City, via Cornwall. Standing in the way of this development, however, is a great bundle of *ifs, whys* and *how muchses*.

The railway first came to town in the 1840s, opening a more prosperous future for the town's economy. By the late 1940s, when this writer, then 6 years old, rode the train with a tag pinned to her jacket asking that she be let off in West Cornwall, the train had been a lifeline. It took teenagers to high school, carried milk to New York City, and reunited families every summer weekend when the Friday evening "daddy train" arrived.

By 1971 the service didn't make economic sense anymore and the passenger line through Cornwall was shut down. After the Housatonic Railroad began hauling freight there was a brief revival in 1983 as an excursion train carried tourists along the river bank. This service ceased not long after.

The current push to restore service surfaced back in July when Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and his transportation chief rode a train from Sheffield to Pittsfield. Patrick, who has a summer home in Alford, saw "real potential" for economic gains and jobs in reopening the line to passengers, according to a report in the *Berkshire Eagle*.

Housatonic Railroad CEO John R. Hanlon, Jr., who accompanied Governor Patrick, has stated that six trains a day, each way, with a running time between Pittsfield and New York City of three hours and 15 minutes, would be competitive with car travel. The full route to Grand Central Station would head west at Danbury on a new track bed to join the existing Metro North line in Southeast, N.Y.

Governor Patrick emphasized, according to the *Eagle*, that Connecticut has to do its part to improve the tracks between Canaan and Danbury. The 51 miles in need

of repair, plus the construction of new stations, sidings, and safe crossings, would cost \$113 million, about the level of funding Massachusetts has committed to its piece of the project.

Where will the money come from? Federal funds for Connecticut rail repairs may be cut as much as 98 percent in coming years. The accidents which have beset Metro North in 2013 are putting pressure on Governor Dannel Malloy to direct any available funding to Fairfield County and its daily commuter population. The Housatonic project may not be competitive in this scenario.

If passenger service comes to pass, the economic impact in Connecticut could be substantial. Jocelyn Ayer, community and economic development director of the NW Hills Council of Governments, estimates that \$625 million in added goods and services would be brought to our region over the first decade. About 610 jobs could be created.

Reaction in Cornwall has been mixed. Gordon Ridgway has attended meetings with state officials and supports the new line. He said that the state DOT seems refreshingly interested in greener transportation (bikes and rails). CONNDOT has set up a long-term planning initiative, TransformCT, which will be seeking community participation in setting regional priorities. The local COG has met with the planners several times.

Twenty residents of West Cornwall Village have signed a petition protesting more trains, citing damage to local homes and danger to residents, their children, and dogs. More trains would "negatively affect the peace and quiet and safety of our town," they stated.

By contrast an online petition sponsored by Restore the NW CT Railway in Canaan, which supports the passenger trains, had gathered 2,261 signatures by mid-December. Thirty-five local businesses have declared their support. "This is the right direction for northwest Connecticut," the petition declares. —Lisa L. Simont

Held in Trust

Two woodland areas along Town Street will be protected by the Cornwall Conservation Trust (CCT) through actions taken by their owners at year's end.

Roxana and Hamilton Robinson made it possible for the trust to buy 62 acres east of Town Street which includes stands of hardwood, pine woods, and a prominent ridge with rock outcroppings. The site offers panoramic views of Cornwall Hollow and Red Mountain. The Mohawk Trail (formerly part of the Appalachian Trail) crosses the property and can be reached

going west from Johnson Road or south from Lake Road.

"I found this property to be one of the natural gems of Cornwall as I hiked over it in the fall. I even flushed a woodcock as I walked through some brush," said Bart Jones, president of Cornwall Conservation Trust. "Future generations of Cornwall will be well served by conservation of this property thanks to the Robinsons and like-minded friends and neighbors."

The Prud'homme family has donated to the CCT an additional 41 acres to be protected by a conservation easement. The land lies between Town Street, Lake Road, and Cream Hill Lake. The easement will protect the southwestern shore of the lake from future development. It also creates a 148-acre wildlife block a mile in length, connecting the trust's 13-acre Dodd Preserve to its 90-acre Rattlesnake Road Preserve. Such linkages are a key objective in conservation. For more information go to: cornwallconservationtrust.org.

—Bonnie VanGilder

Land Transfers

Faye Kling to Catherine Scailier, five acres of land with all buildings and improvements thereon, at 79 Todd Hill Road for \$1,100,000.

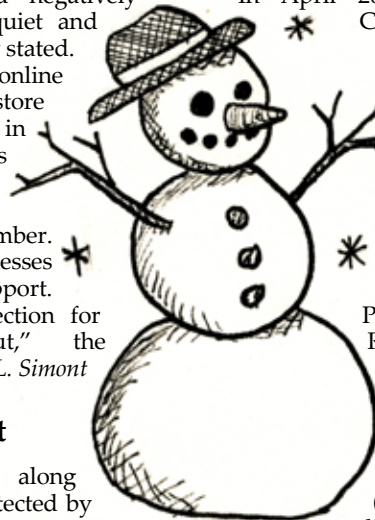
Irving F. Robbins and Cynthia P. Robbins to Henry C. Russ and Julieann M. Russ, three acres of land on Town Street, for \$92,500.

Our Housatonic: A Wild and Scenic Update

In April 2013, the Housatonic River Commission (HRC) held an introductory meeting at town hall to announce its support for a new proposal to seek National Wild and Scenic status for the Housatonic River from the Massachusetts line to Boardman Bridge in New Milford. The goal is designation as a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, with a limited administrative role played by the National Park Service.

There are two ways to achieve this designation: either by an act of Congress (the federal route) or an application by the governor to the Secretary of the Interior (the state route). Several commission members, including Vice Chairman Phil Hart, met with CT DEEP representatives in July seeking state support which met with a positive response. Phil will be attending the town plan meeting on January 25 to further discuss the issue. (See the E & A about the meeting.)

The commission is considering allying itself with a similar Massachusetts organ-



ization in order to create a larger, more effective lobbying body to protect a greater portion of the river. Commission members are also attending regional meetings of other boards of selectmen to share information concerning the pursuit of wild and scenic status through the state route. Public town meetings would then be held as desired.

There are no federal lands along the Partnership rivers and no financial obligations to towns bordering the rivers. National Wild and Scenic designation, however, often benefits local economies, along with preserving the magnificent scenic, recreational, and ecological resources so apparent along the more than 200 rivers already in the national program.



—Art Gingert

“Let’s Get Growing” Encore

Now is a good time to think about next summer’s vegetable garden.

For the past two years the Cornwall Energy Task Force has offered the program at the library “to encourage local sustainable production of food and thus save energy through transportation costs.” Apart from that laudable intention, it is very gratifying to eat food you grow yourself, that tastes delicious, could not be fresher, and is only a few steps away.

Have you seen the two raised beds behind the library? As part of the “Let’s Get Growing” program in 2012, Debby Bennett put them together and planted them with all kinds of vegetables and shared her expertise with all present.

Many Cornwallians have been growing their own produce ever since they can remember, as their parents did before them. They don’t have to think about how and when to start and what to do next. The rest of us need all the help we can get.

The big question is whether there is enough interest in the community to continue “Let’s Get Growing” next year. Debby would really like to hear from you if you are interested and if so in what particular topics and the best times for you. Some possibilities are: How to construct a raised bed; Where? How big? How high? How much sun is needed?

How to start seeds indoors; How to make a cucumber plant climb a trellis; How to make the trellis; What constitutes a hill for squash? Visits to some of the local community gardens and those of experts; How to choose seeds, plants and select varieties which may thrive in our area; and knowing those that won’t. There are so many things.

If you would be interested and would like to participate in “Let’s Get Growing” next season, send an email to dbennett@kentgreenhouse.com and list some or all of the topics you are interested in.

—Celia Senzer

Consider the Knox Box . . . Please!

A few years ago the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) urged residents to purchase a Knox Box for safety. The steel box, attached to the outside of the customer’s house, contains a key with instructions as to which door to use to gain access. In the event of an emergency, a signal goes out to Litchfield County Dispatch, which in turn sends a signal to the Cornwall fire truck that carries a master key to open the box at a given house.

Tom Barrett, CVFD treasurer, says that once the fire department is called, firefighters must gain entry into the house, locked or not, to assure the safety of place and persons, and cannot leave without doing so. Absent a Knox Box, the CVFD has to find the key holder or break down the door to gain entry.

According to Joyce Hart, a CVFD member and administrative assistant to the first selectman, the key holder often lives in Manhattan or Torrington and is either inaccessible or, if it’s very late at night, doesn’t want to be disturbed. As Joyce so aptly expressed it, a Knox Box is cheaper than a new door.

The box is a one-time expense of anywhere from \$150 to \$300 depending on how big a box you need. A sample box is available at the town hall for those who wish to check it out.

There are only about a half a dozen boxes installed in Cornwall. The CVFD is not happy about this: It would much prefer that people take the initiative to protect themselves and their homes.

The Knox Box can be attached to a locked gate as well as to the house itself. It can be hooked up to an alarm system should the owner have one installed but it is not necessary to have an alarm system to use the box. Examples of the various models of boxes, as well as contact information for the company, can be found at knoxbox.com.

—Jane Bevans

Town of Cornwall Taxes

The second half payment of taxes on the Grand List as of October 1, 2012 is due January 1, 2014. Supplemental motor vehicle taxes are also due at this time. Payments must be postmarked by February 3, 2014 to avoid interest.

Any tax bills not paid by February 3, 2014 will be considered delinquent, and interest will be charged at the rate of one and one half percent per month and fraction thereof (including January). This means that even if you pay on February 4 you will be charged for two months interest. No additional bills will be mailed for second installments. Please use the bill you received in July.

Taxes may be paid at the Tax Office on Mondays from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. and on

Letter to the Chronicle

BONNEY BROOK OPENS

The first five residents inaugurated the Cornwall Elderly Housing Corporation’s Bonney Brook by spending the night of December 12 in their new apartments. People were moving in as the board held a celebratory meeting in the second floor Common Room, and these pioneers would soon be joined by the occupants of the remaining five apartments.

Soliciting and vetting applicants has been carried out by our management company, which reports that there is a waiting list, and that all of those residents with signed or pending contracts have some kind of Cornwall connection: they are moving from another place in town, or they have relatives who want them living close by.

Because of the tightness of the building and rental schedules, and with winter upon us, formal opening ceremonies won’t occur until spring. Meanwhile, we intend to mount a selection of interior plans and photos at the town hall in mid-January. Bonney Brook now belongs to people getting used to their new homes, but you can have a virtual tour of the apartments by checking out this exhibit.

—Cheryl Evans, President

Wednesdays from 9 A.M. to 12 P.M. and 1 P.M. 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.invoicecloud.com/cornwallct, but there is a 2.95 percent charge for this service.

—Jean D. Bouteiller, CCMC, Tax Collector

Cornwall Briefs

- **Call It a Scoop:** The Berkshire Country Store may just be back in business as early as late this month. A young Goshen couple, Ryan Craig and his fiancée, Nastasha Travieso, will be the proprietors. Ryan, who worked at the store for six years as a teenager, said they would operate the place much the same as it had been, with a deli counter and interior tables, plus the typical convenience groceries on the adjacent shelves. Selling gas is a future possibility depending on finances, but the current out-of-use tanks will be pulled from the ground.

- **Trinity Property:** The *Chronicle* has learned that something may be in the works between Trinity Wall Street and the Cornwall Conservation Trust. It would involve several hundred acres of heavily forested, rocky, and steep undeveloped land priced in the neighborhood of \$1 million. If things work out, perhaps as much as half the purchase price would come from a state grant, with the remainder sought from private donors. Our source tells us that at least some members of the

Trinity board of directors strongly favor keeping the land on the east bank of the Housatonic River away from developers and preserved in its current natural state. As for the big, hotel-like building and several smaller satellite structures on the Trinity property just south of West Cornwall, there is nothing new to report other than that they are on the market.

• **Appointments:** The entire Inland Wetlands gang has been reappointed: Steve Hedden, Bill Hurlburt, Adam Fischer, Andrew MacDavid, and alternates Jeff Lynch and Debby Bennett. Other appointees: Richard Bramley and Mark Hampson to the Economic Development Commission; Earl Brecher as representative to the Northwest Regional Mental Health Board; Charlie Gold, representative to the Torrington Area Health District; Mark Hampson, representative to the Northwest Regional Tourism District; Bill Dinneen and Wendy Kennedy to the Cornwall Grange Trust Fund Committee; Lynn Scoville to the Sydney Kaye Fund Advisory Committee; Joe Marchetti to Planning and Zoning; Joanne Wojtusiak as alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals; Ron Hummell to the Conservation Commission; John Sanders and Rocco Botto to Park & Rec.

There are still openings for two alternates on Planning & Zoning, two members for Park & Rec and one membership on the town's senior committee. An opening on the Board of Finance will have been filled by the time you read this. A town historian is also needed. Those interested in the empty slots should contact the first selectman's office at 672-4959.

• **Cell Towers:** It's getting kind of tiring writing about the adventures of Verizon and AT&T as they contemplate where to put their towers, but it now looks like the latter is going for the town gravel pit off Route 128, which is near both the West Cornwall firehouse and Cornwall Consolidated School. Alternatives to the gravel pit will be presented by AT&T at a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen on Monday, January 27, at 7 P.M. at the town hall. The public is welcome. Snow date is January 28.
—John Miller

New Year's Balm

Did the envelope in last month's *Chronicle* inadvertently slip out of your paper and into oblivion? Don't panic: contributions are still being accepted at the usual address. Start out 2014 by fulfilling your resolution to keep the *Chronicle* going.

Events & Announcements

The New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast will be held, as it is every year, in the UCC Parish House from 9 A.M. to noon. Buttermilk pancakes, sausage, Cornwall maple syrup, orange juice, coffee, cocoa, and tea will be on tap. This year's donations will contribute to the preservation of the North Cornwall Meeting House.

A Diabetes Presentation sponsored by the Cornwall Woman's Society will be at the Cornwall Library, Saturday, January 18, at 3 P.M. The diabetes epidemic in the United States and worldwide continues to grow unabated. It is estimated there are currently 32 million people in the United States with diabetes and 79 million with pre-diabetes. Anne Hummel, RN and certified diabetes educator, will speak about this public health problem and its effect on us individually and as a society. RSVP 860-248-3089. Snow Date: Noon Saturday, January 25

A Town Plan Review with the town's boards and commissions will be hosted by P&Z Saturday, January 25, at 10 A.M. at the town hall. The focus will be on economic and development issues. The meeting is open for the public to participate as time allows.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will hold hearings by appointment in March 2014. Applications to schedule a hearing will be available at the town clerk's office beginning January 2. Applications must be received by February 20. Applicants will be contacted to schedule hearings in March.

At the Cornwall Library

The winter film series begins with *The Bicycle Thief* on Saturday, January 11, 7:30 P.M.

Alice Wolf's dance movie selection for January is *Bill T. Jones, Dancing to the Promised Land*. Wednesday, January 15, 7 P.M.

The family movie *How to Train Your Dragon*, based on the children's book series by Cressida Crowell, screens Friday, January 17, at 7 P.M.

Author Beth Gutcheon will be at the library on Saturday, January 25, 4 to 6 P.M. for a literary conversation with Franny Taliaferro.

Park & Rec

Skating at the Schmidt Rink, Hotchkiss

School, will be offered for eight consecutive Saturdays from 7 to 8 P.M. starting January 4.

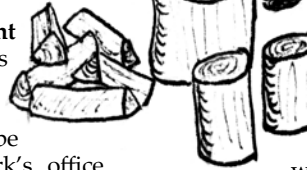
The second annual 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament will be held on Saturday, January 18, at Cornwall Consolidated School. Trophies will be awarded. There will be three divisions: Men's, Women's, and Coed. All participants must be at least 18 years old. Teams must be registered by January 10. Registration cost is \$20 per team. For more information, contact Becky Hurlburt at pcornwall@gmail.com or 672-4071.

Art in Cornwall

At the Cornwall Library: the exhibit *Words and Pictures: Ink, Inc.* Prints by Robert Andrew Parker will run through February 1. Some 20 books that Parker and the Salisbury-based typographer and printer Thomas Whitridge have produced together over the last six years will be exhibited. All the work is a combination of typesetting, printing, and drawing, with the distinction often blurred. An artists' talk and reception is scheduled for Saturday, January 4, from 4 to 6 P.M.

At the UCC Parish House: an exhibit of works in mixed media by Deb Tyler titled *Of Joy and Justice* will be displayed. The opening will be on Sunday, January 5, at 11:30 A.M.

At the Souterrain Gallery: the exhibit *Visions of Earth, Trees & Skies* with works by artists Cindy Kirk and Zejke Hermann will run through February 9.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

cornwallchronicle.org

THIS MONTH

Iris Hermann, Illustrations
Lisa Simont, Celia Senzer and Jane Bevans, Editors

NEXT MONTH

Paul De Angelis, Elisabeth Kaestner, and Kerry Donahue, Editors
paul@abouttown.us or kerry@kerrydonahue.com

MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein

CALENDAR EDITOR Louise Riley
calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

CIRCULATION Nan and John Bevans

Denny Frost

DIRECTORS

Paul De Angelis, PRESIDENT

Annie Kosciuszko, VICE PRESIDENT

Pam Longwell, SECRETARY

Tom Barrett, TREASURER

• Tom Bechtle • Audrey Ferman • Edward Ferman

• Erin Hedden • John Miller

• Jonathan Landman • Lisa L. Simont

Tom and Margaret Bevans, FOUNDERS

THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is \$15 or more, we'd be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. PO Box 6, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be E-mailed to the publishers at: info@cornwallchronicle.org