

CORNWALL CHRONICLE



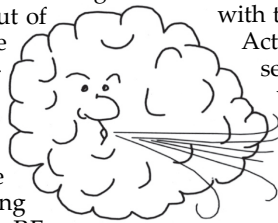
VOLUME 22 : NUMBER 2 MARCH 2012

Chairman Phil Hart

For the first time in years, Cornwall's representative on the Region One Board of Education has been named its chairman. Philip W. Hart was elected to that office by his fellow board members last November.

His qualifications? Well, they go way, way back. Phil's father, C. Whittlesey Hart, was also chairman of what is commonly known as the "high school board" back in the early 1960s. Phil graduated from the school and went on to become a high school teacher himself. He has taught on the college level. He has written a textbook on writing. Years ago, he served as a long-term substitute at our high school. He has been on Cornwall's school board for 18 years, and chosen by that board to speak for Cornwall at the high school level for the last ten.

Readers of local papers know the big bad headlines that have come out of the high school in the last couple of years. Administrators suddenly resign; a formal inquiry reveals knots of dissension throughout the building; office workers file grievances; one board member is accused of causing endless turmoil; and recently: RE-



GION 1 PLANS FORUM AFTER HIGH SCHOOL SEX PHOTO POST (Waterbury Republican-American, Feb. 9, 2012).

In Phil Hart's view, the above negatives pale in comparison with the many positives that often escape the headlines. "This high school might even be called superlative," Phil states. The new principal, Matt Harnett, "is gathering things together," such as turning the recent sexting episode into a valuable learning experience for students and parents alike. The principal is working to meet the goals of the long-range plan to fulfill the recommendations of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. (The school is in absolutely no danger of losing its accreditation.) The school has signed on to Common Core Curriculum, a nationwide standard of what every student should achieve by high school graduation. The new Science and Technology Center, made possible with wide financial support from the community, will open its doors soon. Building alterations will fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities

Act. As for the board itself, Phil sees it as "a deliberative body with an important leadership role, one concerned with student achievement."

That achievement will be possible only if the school

moves in the direction of many new trends that are rapidly changing the field of education. "We need to go forward," Hart told the board. "Yesterday's river will not turn today's mill. And I'm ready for today's mill."

—Bob Potter

Ready for Anything

In spite of the lack of bad winter weather and scary blackouts, townspeople took advantage of opportunities to learn how to be safe at home and how to help others.

Sixty residents attended The Cornwall Association's February 11 presentation of the nuts and bolts you need to know during a severe weather emergency like Storm Alfred last fall. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway led off with a review of the town's Emergency Plan. Nevton Dunn, Cornwall's emergency preparedness director, Fire Marshal Stan MacMillan and Dave Williamson, representing the Volunteer Fire Department, discussed life off the grid for long periods.

An FDA handout laid out the basics about food storage. This will be a big help for those of us reluctant to chuck out hundreds of dollars of food when we really should. "Food Facts" is available by searching www.fda.gov.

(continued on page 2)

MARCH 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball , 7:30 pm CCS gym Wednesdays: Tai Chi , 6-9 pm CCS; Karate 6:30-7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball , 7:30 pm CCS gym Saturdays: Ice Skating , 7-8 pm Schmidt Rink, Hotchkiss Sundays: Meditation , 1-2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229				1 ♦ Blood Drive 1-6 pm UCC Parish House	2 ♦ Story Hour 1:15 pm Library	3 ♦ Child Center Social & Auction 6-9 pm W.C. Railroad Station ♦ Community Country Dance 7-10 pm Town Hall
4	5 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	6 ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	7 ♦ Hot Chocolate Hour 3 pm Library	8 ○ FULL	9	10 ♦ Bee-ginning With Bees 10:30 am-1:30 pm Local Farm ♦ <i>Billy Liar</i> Film 7:30 pm Library
11 ♦ DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS!	12 ♦ Blood Pressure Clinic noon-1 pm Parish House ♦ Democratic Town Committee 7:30 pm Town Hall	13 ♦ P & Z 7 pm Cornwall Library	14 ♦ Hot Chocolate Hour 3 pm Library	15 ☾ 1st Q ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library ♦ Deadline: April Chronicle Copy	16	17 ♦ Marc Simont Celebration 11 am-noon and 4-6 pm Library 
18 ♦ Poetry "Un-slam" 2-4 pm Library	19	20 ♦ Board of Education 3:30 pm CCS Library ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	21 ♦ Republican Town Committee 8 pm Town Hall	22 ● NEW	23 ♦ <i>War of the Worlds</i> 7 pm Town Hall	24 ♦ Crooners and Spoons noon-2 pm Parish House ♦ <i>War of the Worlds</i> 7 pm Town Hall ♦ <i>Fooling With Words</i> Film 7:30 pm Library
25 ♦ <i>War of the Worlds</i> 4 pm Town Hall	26	27 ♦ Committee on Aging 7 pm Town Hall	28	29	30 ☾ 4th Q	31

(continued from page 1)

Richard Schlesinger talked about his willingness to open his home to neighbors who need shelter and suggested that others with powerful generators do the same. The rest of the meeting was devoted to generators, large and small, as electrician Steve Saccardi and Scott Goff talked about the many options available.

Nev Dunn has organized the training of a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Cornwallers of all ages, shapes, and sizes will be ready to fill the minor, but critical, safety jobs which crop up during emergencies. By the second of six training sessions in mid-February, 17 townspeople had signed on. They were each outfitted with a sturdy green knapsack full of tools, gear, and a snappy hard hat.

Developed by the federal Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the course teaches basic fire safety and suppression, medical triage and basic care, "light" search and rescue—all with a focus on the team's supporting role for Cornwall's trained fire and medical volunteers.

The new CERTers are secretly hoping for a place in the line of march for the Memorial Day parade. Hard to let those hard hats and neon green vests go unseen by the town they serve. —Lisa L. Simont

Unraveling Family History

It was a find a historian would delight in: more than 800 letters dated between 1820 and 1870, carefully organized and bound with ribbon, tucked into a trunk. They were marvelous in their variety: some written on tissue-thin paper, others on sturdy business letterhead; some filled with scrawling, confident script, others with tiny, crabbed penmanship, others still with a schoolboy's carefully penciled printing. These letters would come to occupy John Calhoun for the better part of 13 years.

John found the letters in his parents' attic in 1998. In 2012, having spent innumerable hours grappling with the eccentricities of 19th-century spelling and the writers' tendency to leave as little blank space on a page as possible, John laughingly admits he's "sick and tired of them." He can also point to the results of his labor: two volumes of transcriptions of all 831 letters, with accompanying pictures, maps, and historical notes.

I was lucky enough to join John in his transcription efforts several years ago. At first, I found the project daunting. There was the sheer volume of the letters, primarily written by John's great-grandfather John C. and various family members, which included business correspondence, political discussions, and notes to and from various friends. (The fact that I joined John just as he was working his way through a seemingly endless stream of letters between John C. and his seamstress sister Abbey, describing

in mind-numbing detail the specifications for shirts that John C. wanted made, probably contributed to my dismay!)

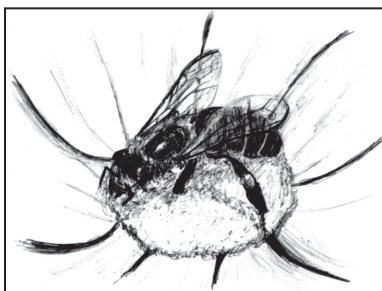
I was startled at how familiar the letter writers became. They began to feel like family. Far from being dull, dry historical documents, the letters were vivid, their tone almost intimate. John and I came to speak of the letter writers as if we knew them. "Frederick's in trouble again," we'd report to Nancy Calhoun over lunch. (Frederick was quite the adventurer; his moaning over his office job was so familiar it made me laugh.) Or, "John's writing to Sarah from Paris." (John, whom we watched transform from a young store clerk in Connecticut to a successful merchant in New York, was a devoted husband and father whose love for America was most clear when he was abroad.)

The most delightful part of the project, for me, was the way these people came alive and walked through my imagination despite the nearly 200 years separating us. I began to follow their story lines anxiously: would the identity of Abbey's secret admirer be revealed? Would we ever discover why Mary Ann caused scandal by seeking a divorce? I reveled in the details, drawn in both by the tiny, domestic details of daily life in Cornwall and by the writers' perspective on the great events of history, from economic depressions to the Civil War.

The Calhoun Family Letters: Life in New England, 1820-1879, in two volumes, is now available online, free, on the Google Books website. Those who would like to purchase hard copies of the books may do so at www.lulu.com.

Unfortunately, we never do learn who Abbey's secret admirer was, or why she never married. But reading the letters, I came to care for the writers not just as distant figures of the past, but as real people. I encourage digging in for a good read. Just don't start with the details about the shirts!

—Maja Gray



Signs of Spring

What will the month of March bring to us this year? I'm writing this piece in February when we have bare ground, no snow cover, and the surprising showing of pale green daffodil shoots and tiny crocus spears coming up in the garden.

The seed catalogs have arrived, glowing with bright enticing colors. They provide such contrast with the austere palate and gray trees in our landscape out of doors. Turn the pages and see the yellows, reds and greens; the variety and display of summer flowers and vegetables dazzle the eyes! Take in the range of possibilities and begin to make choices: shall it be old favorites? Or what to try new this year?

Moving past the splash of zinnias, dahlias, and sunflowers, plants with interesting foliage and the quieter tones beckon to me. Heuchera, brunnera, nicotiana will enhance the perennial borders. I'll order morning glory seeds for the blue, sweet peas for the smell and surprise of colors.

The kitchen garden vegetables in these catalogs make the mouth water for the summer fare to come: excellent photographs and corresponding descriptions of green and varied lettuces, ripe tomatoes, melons of wide-ranging hues, purple of eggplant, peppers, carrots, beets, on to the fragrance of herbs, dill, basil and coriander. Mark the pages and choose more than you need!

The sowing of seeds enlivens the gardener's spirit. It's time to put out the starter sets, press the seeds in soil, water them, bring them into full sun in a window as instructed on the package of seeds.

Meanwhile, out of doors, the star magnolia buds are fuzzy to the touch, they seem fatter every time I go by, and the lilac shoots are coming green with life. Goldfinches, chickadees, purple finches flock to the feeder. The occasional red-headed woodpecker, blue jays, and cardinals send the smaller birds racing to the top branches of the apple tree nearby. Squirrels flicking their fur tails take their share of seed. The wind is no longer so harsh, the warm sun on one's back is invigorating. Cows in the pasture choose the sunny slope for a communal rest in midday. The rollicking sound of plentiful water in the brook makes music as I walk past. Those shoots coming up through the earth bring the news of spring once again.

—Roxana Laughlin

Congratulations

Diana Flutie and Justin Julian

Maggie Tauranac and Evan Bardot

Land Transfers

John T. Luning to Weld Royal and Marc Matsil, land with all buildings standing thereon at 19 Great Hollow Road for \$129,000.

Paul Vizcarrondo, Jr. and Andrea Lynn Vizcarrondo to Phillippe Z. Selendy and Jennifer M. Selendy, two parcels of land with buildings thereon at 137 and 143 Town Street for \$2,400,000.

Jacet, LLC to G.A.G.S., Inc., land and buildings thereon at 103 Cemetery Hill Road.

Oh, What a Lovely Lunch

I should thank *The Chronicle* for letting me write this piece: A Valentine's Day Luncheon for Seniors. The word had come from Park & Rec honcho Becky Hurlburt. "We are thrilled that this invitation is popular," she later emailed, "and we cannot wait for a delicious lunch at the Cornwall Inn."

Actually, Becky and Bridget Lynch greeted guests at the front door as I arrived with Paul and Anne Baren. They had picked me up because I was on a senior driving ban imposed by one of my many doctors. Inside more greetings from Park & Reckers Ron Laigle, and the always-adorable Erin Hedden. Cornwall Inn proprietors Mark Hampson and Stacey Marcin were on the spot with trays of goodies. And then I spotted, uhm, uh-oh. (What is her name?) "Oh, hi, Norma." (Just kidding.) I know Norma Lake when I see her!

Eventually we gave up the meatballs and shuffled from the bar into the dining area where a delicious, easy-on-the-gums buffet luncheon awaited the still hungry. A soft, garlicky clump of spinach surrounded by filet of sole, breast of chicken requiring a minimum of chewing, rice, and mixed veggies. With that kind of menu who needs toothpicks?

Pretty soon all the tables were filled by happy, mostly familiar Cornwall faces. Some had come down from Geer, such as Steve Senzer, Jean Tyler, and my tablemate, the ever-elegant George Kittle. You know Geer, a sort of halfway house up the road in Canaan. George and I sat with Nancy and Peter Kalmes, and Betty Spence who apparently had to show her AARP membership card before they'd let her in. (It's those long, healthy walks on Lake Road that keep her young.) George Kittle, ever the show-off, impressed Nancy Kalmes when he remembered and sang (along with Ella Fitzgerald) the mostly correct lyrics to "My Funny Valentine."

It was a wonderful party. Almost too wonderful. I overheard guest after guest bursting with suggestions that maybe such special senior luncheons just might be the thing to have on a monthly basis or at least seasonally. Becky Hurlburt was almost overwhelmed with thanks and they were all deserved. A real wowsie it was!

—John Miller

Trust Invests in Local Youth

The Cornwall Conservation Trust (CCT), perhaps known best for protecting our verdant forests and wetlands, has an expansive view of its mission. CCT knows its ability to fulfill its mission "depends upon an educated and aware public." Since 2008 CCT has administered a grant program to help Region One students who are

pursuing higher education in environmentally related fields.

Board member Emilie Pryor says, "Helping students further their education in fields related to open space preservation makes sense because education is critical to long-term conservation success."

The grant program was the brainchild of board member Duke Besozzi. Besozzi, who was a teacher of environmental education in the 1970s, always liked the idea of getting young people outdoors. He organized camping trips, led tours of fish hatcheries, and helped students identify trees. When he joined the board of CCT he suggested that a portion of its endowment be used to help the youth in our villages and surrounding towns with stipends.

A three-person panel oversees the awarding of grants. Besozzi said they look for students who have a real interest in the outdoors, "even horticulture, botany, plant science—anything related to the great outdoors."

Happily the fund continues to grow. Recently, the Calhoun family made a generous gift in honor of Frank and Polly Calhoun that was earmarked for student grants. According to Pryor, "This donation enables CCT to think long term about the program by helping initiate an endowment to fund future years of grant making." Proceeds from the August Farm to Table Dinner will also be used for grant making this year.

Pryor said that each year an average of five grants are awarded, ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 per student. A total of 21 grants has been given so far to students pursuing a wide range of subjects. Grant recipient Liz Sawicki is currently studying marine affairs, political science, and international relations as it relates to marine conservation at the University of Rhode Island. Charles Russ, a past recipient, studied agricultural mechanics at SUNY/Cobleskill and is now an agricultural engineer with John Deere. Other past recipients include Stephanie Kearns, Brittany Zuckerman, Elizabeth Saccardi, and Justin Julian. Most students receive more than one grant.

The scholarships are available to any college-bound Region One student, however Cornwall students are favored. Graduating seniors are encouraged to apply; the deadline is May 1. For more information contact Emilie Pryor at emilie.pryor@gmail.com, or go to CCT's website, cornwallconservationtrust.org, to find the application form.

—Pamela Longwell

Cornwall Briefs

• **Colby land offer:** The owner of a sizeable parcel of land across Route 128 from CCS is offering the town first refusal on the purchase of the property. The property

abuts the West Cornwall Firehouse and extends down to the town gravel bank. The land is surrounded by state forest including Gold's Pines. This property has piqued the interest of the selectmen. It has some fairly level and well-drained terrain, it is located adjacent to other town properties, and it contains useful sand and gravel. The selectmen are moving ahead with a study and appraisal of the property. More details will be forthcoming soon, with information and discussion at a special town meeting in late April or early May.

• **The Warming Trend** has been noted by a prankster who propped a plastic owl on top of an old branch beside the Library's parking area. "I am a genetically [sic] altered Great Horned Owl. Where is the snow?" said an attached tag. Good question. The USDA let us know where it stands by releasing a new hardiness zone map demonstrating that warmth is creeping north. Cornwall is now in zone 5b.

• **Great Hill Makeover:** Great Hill Road is scheduled to be completely refurbished this spring and summer. In the first phase, the road from Mohawk Ski Area to College Street will be sealed and paved with stone, rather than oil and sand. In the second phase, the roadbed from College Street to the Goshen town line will be ground up, then new drainage and a smooth layer of asphalt installed.

For the second phase, traffic will have to be diverted over College Street. Stimulus money will help fund the majority of this \$950,000 project. The town, however, will have to foot the bill initially, then get reimbursed. A town meeting will have to be held to approve this expenditure.

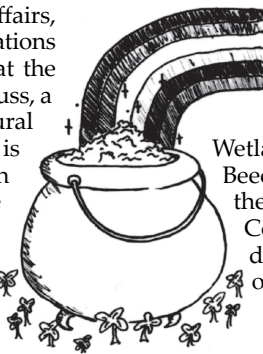
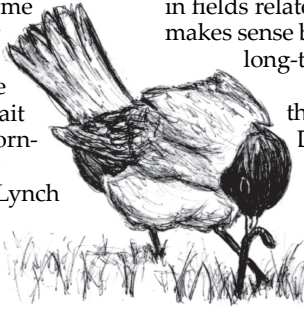
• **New Commissioners:** The selectmen have been busy filling vacancies on various town boards. The following appointments have been made: Steve Saccardi and Anna Timell as alternates to P&Z; Jeff Lynch and Debbie Bennett as alternates to the Inland Wetlands Commission; Dana Beecher and Janet Carlson to the Economic Development Commission; and Joe Gwazduskas to the Committee on the Aging.

—Annie Kosciusko

A Good Soup

During these dark nights of winter, knowing there's an easy and delicious soup possible for supper can be a lifesaver. I found a version of "caldo" in Claudia Rhoden's *The Food of Spain*. When I served it to my son's Brazilian girlfriend, she said "Oh, we have this at home too." It's so good you could eat it every day as some country people do in Spain. The ingredients below can be adjusted with a little practice to get the amount you want; this serves about three or four.

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(continued from page 3)

CALDO

- One and a half quarts of good chicken stock
- A ham bone if you've got one around, or not
- Two big potatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- Four strips of raw bacon, in three-fourth-inch pieces
- A 14-oz. can of white beans, washed
- Cabbage or kale or Swiss chard, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

All you do, dear reader, is put the ingredients into a pot big enough to hold them, bring to a boil and cook for about 25 minutes or until it's ready. Add the beans for the last five minutes. Serve it with some bread and any wine you have open. You will believe that you have died and gone to heaven.

—Lisa L. Simont

Events & Announcements

Winter Social and Vacation Home Auction to benefit the Cornwall Child Center March 3, 6 to 9 p.m. at the West Cornwall Railroad Station. Beer/wine, elegant savories, and sweets will be served. Door prize. Tickets: \$25 per person, limited space. For questions call Jen Markow at 672-4875.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, Erica Prudhomme's show of large luminous landscapes continues through March 3. Beginning March 6, the Library will present "The World of Marc Simont" (see insert).

Lauren Kendrick's artwork will be on display at the National Iron Bank in March.

The Wish House continues to exhibit hand-blown glass objects by Nunwell Glass through the month.

Cornwall Community Country Dance with Patricia Campbell calling and Still the Homegrown Band playing. March 3, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Town Hall. \$3/child, \$5/adult. For more info, call Jane or Jim Prentice at 672-6101.

At the Library:

The Hot Chocolate Club is held Wednesdays, March 7, and 14, for third- and

Spring Sooner Maybe?

Well, I hear some sap buckets were up the first week of February. That's about two weeks early, another factor to fit into the emerging mathematical formula describing our warming planet. If you like numbers you can write them on a check and send it to *The Chronicle*. We'd be grateful!

fourth-graders. Amy Buck will finish reading C. S. Lewis's, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

The second Poetry "un-Slam" will be held Sunday, March 18, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Billy Liar will be featured at Saturday Night Films on March 10 at 7:30 p.m. This 1963 film stars Tom Courtenay and marks Julie Christie's debut. Suggested donation: \$6/person and \$10/couple.

fooling with Words with Bill Moyers will be featured March 24 at 7:30 p.m. Moyers captures the excitement of the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival where thousands exult in the pure pleasure of the spoken word. It features Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky, Coleman Barks, Stanley Kunitz, Lucille Clifton, Mark Doty, and others. This film will introduce you to the power and joy of poetry as expressed by some of the world's foremost wordsmiths. Producer Dominique Lasseur and director Catherine Tatge will introduce the film.



Bee Workshop: BEEginning with Bees, Saturday, March 10, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Learn about life in the hive of our friend the honey bee: who's who and what they do. Buzz over the tools of beekeeping. Fire up a bee-soothing smoker. Use an empty bee package to role play the steps of installing the real thing. Make beeswax candles. Potluck lunch. \$35/family. Please contact Debra@Motherhouse.us or 672-0229 for location and to preregister.

Spring Ahead: Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 11, at 2 a.m. Move all clocks ahead one hour.

The Cornwall Democratic Town Committee is sponsoring a "meet the candidate" forum for the Fifth Congressional District on Monday March 12, at 7:30 p.m. at the Cornwall Library. Dan Roberti of Kent will be the speaker. Everyone is welcome.

VNA Northwest nurses conduct a free blood pressure clinic on the second Monday of each month at UCC Parish House, 8 Bolton Hill Road, from noon to 1 p.m. The public is invited at no charge and no appointment is necessary. For more information, please call 860-567-6000 or visit www.vnanw.org.

The Town Hall Players will read *War of the Worlds*, Orson Welles's shocking radio play, March 23 and 24. For information call 672-6752 (see insert).

Crooners and spooners! Soup and sandwich luncheon for seniors featuring live

musical entertainment by Nicolas Xatis and Paul Cantelon, noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 24, at the UCC Parish House. This event is free and handicapped accessible. For more information call Bronwyn O'Shaughnessy at 860-619-8047.

The Cornwall Historical Society is seeking high school applicants for its 2012 Summer Internship Program of two weeks in either July or August. The intern will help scan photos from the collection under the direction of Executive Director and Curator Raechel Guest. Call Raechel at 672-0505 for more information or send application to CornHistSoc@optonline.net or to Cornwall Historical Society, P.O. Box 115, Cornwall, CT 06753.

Passport assistance will be available at the 06796 and 06754 post offices on Saturday mornings in March.

Property Tax Relief: The Assessor's Office will be accepting applications for the homeowner's tax relief program from February 1 until May 15, 2012. Applicants are required by law to submit proof of their 2011 income (income tax return if filed) and their Social Security form 1099 for the year 2011. The income limits for this year are: married: \$39,500 or single: \$32,300. This means all income including Social Security. Elderly homeowners must have reached the age of 65 by December 31, 2011 to qualify. Those homeowners on Social Security Disability do not need to meet the age requirement but must show proof of their permanent disability status and meet the income limits for this program. Cornwall residents who qualify may apply at the Assessor's Office at the Town Hall. Assessor office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. Call 672-2703 with any questions.

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