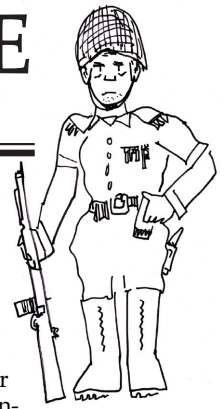




CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 21 : NUMBER 4 MAY 2011



A Budget for Trying Times

Work continued through April on a town budget for 2011–2012 as the effects of tense economic times in Cornwall and in Hartford made themselves felt.

What was known by mid-April was that expenditures will be \$6,129,669, the amount the Board of Finance (BOF) is expected to discuss at the April 29 budget hearing. Of this total, education costs amount to \$3,875,480 and the selectmen's budget to \$1,631,025. Debt service is \$197,169 and capital projects another \$425,000. In all, the increase over the current year is 1.56 percent.

The revenue side – an amount to match the proposed expenditures – was much less certain. The state's efforts to right its own financial situation mean that towns like Cornwall will face reductions in aid. How much was anyone's guess. By the May 20 town meeting to approve the budget, Governor Dannel Molloy and the legislature will have acted and Cornwall's choices of revenue options will be clearer.

The current thinking, according to BOF Chairman Ralph Gold, is that we ought to expect cuts in state funds of about \$65,700, or about one-third of what was initially proposed.

What about expenditures? Both the Board of Education and the selectmen held back all but the most necessary increases. The nearly 20 percent increase in capital spending is partly caused by the savagery of the past winter. One casualty was the steel equipment shed behind the Town Garage which was declared a total loss after heavy snow on its roof bent it beyond repair. Of the \$65,000 replacement cost, about \$48,500 will be paid by the town's insurance. Roads in the Cornwall Bridge section of town will benefit from most of the \$220,000 in repair funds this summer; \$32,000 and \$30,000 respectively will be set aside for a new dump truck and a new fire engine.

Remember the huge Great Hollow and Great Hill Road rebuilding project? Federal stimulus funds promised \$150,000 and now an additional \$295,000 in paving funds will extend repairs to the Goshen line. The town will pay only \$54,000 in the end. The project, managed by Roger L. Kane, will begin this summer at last.

All in all, the town's financial health is good. Tax collections for the current year have exceeded expectations. The fund balances are strong and likely will increase when the audit of 2010–2011 is complete because of about \$200,000 worth of unanticipated revenue and closeouts of certain capital projects. Of the latter, the

largest chunk will be the closing of the CCS renovation account and the transfer of the balance, \$175,000 in interest, to the general fund.

What about our taxes? The Board of Finance has a number of options before it, the most likely of which adds just over a tenth of a mil for a .95 percent increase in the mil rate. We'll know more at the May 20 town meeting.

—Lisa L. Simont

CCS Principal Search

With the imminent retirement of current CCS Principal Robert Vaughan, Region One Superintendent Patricia Chamberlain and CCS Board of Education (BOE) Chair Becky Hurlburt have selected a preliminary search committee to winnow the list of candidates applying for Vaughan's position.

Not surprisingly, considering the importance given our school system by Cornwall citizens, there was no lack of volunteers to serve on such a committee.

The following cross section was selected: Superintendent Chamberlain and her assistant Diane Goncalves; from the CCS staff, Patty Rovezzi; CCS teachers, Bonnie

(continued on page 2)

MAY 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 ♦ Art @ The Dump 10 am–4 pm	2 Annual Meeting Cornwall Historical Society 8:30 am 7 Pine Street ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Ag Commission 7:30 pm Town Office ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	3 ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Region 1 Budget Referendum noon–8 pm	4	5 ♦ Chorus Angelicus Youth Choir 5:30 pm Library	6 ♦ Story Hour 1:15 pm Library ♦ Open House 3:30–5:30 pm Cornwall Child Center	7 ♦ Park & Rec Bird Walk 7:30 am ♦ Grumbling Gryphons Rehearsal 10–11 am ♦ Cornwall Child Center Annual Auction 4:30 pm Mohawk ♦ Community Contra Dance 7–9:30 pm Town Hall
8 ♦ Housatonic River Picnic 3–6 pm Housatonic Meadows	9	10 ♦ P & Z 7 pm Cornwall Library	11	12	13 ♦ Story Hour 1:15 pm Library	14 ♦ Cornwall Farm Market 9 am–12:30 pm Wish House Lawn
15 ♦ Deadline: May Chronicle Copy ♦ Women's Society Scholarship Application Deadline. ♦ Easter Vespers 5 pm North Cornwall Meetinghouse	16	17 ♦ Board of Education 4 pm CCS Library ♦ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	18	19 ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	20 ♦ Town Meeting To Adopt 2011–2012 Budget 7:30 pm CCS Gathering Room ♦ Senior Party 4:30–6 pm Library	21 ♦ Cornwall Farm Market 9 am–12:30 pm Wish House Lawn ♦ Rumsey Hall Memories 3–4 pm Town Hall ♦ Art Reception 4–6 pm Library
22 ♦ Alternatives To Violence Speaker 8 am Chapel of All Saints, NCMH	23 ♦ ZBA Appeals* 8 pm Town Hall	24	25 ♦ Electronic Waste, Document Shredding 9 am–1 p.m. CRRR Station, Watertown ♦ CVFD Meeting 8 pm West Cornwall Firehouse	26	27 ♦ The Ghost Net, Grumbling Gryphons 1:10 pm CCS	28 ♦ Cornwall Farm Market 9 am–12:30 pm Wish House Lawn ♦ Book Sale 9 am–3 pm Library
29 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Trust John Welles Property Dedication 2 pm 43 Town Street	30 Memorial Day ♦ Memorial ♦ UCC Carnival ♦ Mass at St. Bridget's ♦ Book Sale 9–11 am, noon–3 pm Library	31	Every Week This Month: Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym; VNA Bend & Stretch 1–2 pm UCC Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6–9 pm CCS; Karate 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Sundays: Meditation, 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229			

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

Burdick, Buffie Clarke, and Kristi Pramuka; CCS parents Gordon Ridgway, Valorie Fisher, and Cay Tyson; Becky Hurlburt and BOE members Irene Hurlburt, Wynne Kavanagh, Tom Levine and Rachel Matsudaira; and from the community at large, Barton Jones and Pam Wilson.

The timeline envisioned by Superintendent Chamberlain was a busy two weeks early in April reviewing a first round of applications and reducing these to a manageable number for interviews by the BOE. This would be followed by an equally busy month of May for the board to interview the selected survivors in person. By early June a contract is expected to be signed and sealed, and a counselor, educator, and administrator worthy of our beloved school will be in place to hit the ground running come next September.

—*Scoville Soule*

Alphabet Soup

Sounds of exuberance bubbled out from the Cornwall Library on April 9, the day *Alphabet Soup* made its appearance in the exhibition space. In educational terms, this show of digital photographs by Cornwall Consolidated School eighth-graders is “a 26-piece study in focus, creativity, and originality.” In plain old English, it’s a lot of fun.

The CCS Fund for Excellence sponsored the project, which grew from the goal of the Adobe Youth Voices curriculum: empowering middle and high school students to “create with purpose” and make their voices heard.

Here on the ground, the leader was CCS alumna Lindsey Stone, a recent graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design. In Lindsey’s world view, “everyone has a creative streak,” and she’s found ways to release all that eighth-grade energy in the medium of photography.

In *Alphabet Soup*, each letter of the alphabet gets a word or phrase as well as a photograph. Each letter reveals something about the student photographer’s point of view or secret self — something thoughtful or quirky or unpredictable. It’s all out there, from A “Animal enthusiast” (a foot wearing a jungle-cat sock pokes out from under a blue-jean leg) to Z “Zany is outlandish and crazy!” (three boys in unexpected head-dresses are horsing around).

Most viewers found themselves startled into *really looking* at these fresh, eloquent photographs, which suggest that Generation Y has plenty to say. No eighth-graders were available for comment, however — it was a beautiful afternoon and they’d all gone outdoors to release more creative energy.

—*Franny Taliaferro*

Healing Bodies and Broken Hearts

Rusty the dog has been blind forever and he oozes love. Several cats are diabetic but their motors run all the time. All of them live at the Little Guild.

A no-kill shelter, the guild operates totally on donated funds. Operating costs are recouped when an animal is adopted. Before an animal leaves the shelter it will have had all its shots, been neutered or spayed, tested for heartworm, and have a clean bill of health, at least physically.

“People don’t know what a toll it takes on an animal when they just dump it on our doorstep,” said Little Guild Director Denise Cohn. “These animals come to us unhappy, or scared, or sick, and we restore them to good health before they find a new home.” Even though her career for 15 years was as a loan officer, Denise has always been involved in the world of dog rescue. Her job at the Little Guild started last August and “is the most rewarding job I’ve ever had.”

One concern has been the economic downturn of the last few years. “If people lose their homes, they often have to rent an apartment where animals are not allowed. Millions of dogs are euthanized every year in shelters around the country—millions. Who knows about the number of abandoned cats that are destroyed every day? Probably many millions,” Denise said.

The Little Guild has recently seen more animals returned to them by former adopters just because they cannot afford the vet bills, food costs, and other incidentals animals need.

And, if owners have to move due to foreclosure, they simply can’t take their pets with them. No animal is turned away from The Little Guild. Some animals are left at the shelter by well-meaning people who don’t know what else to do. Currently there are 14 dogs and 29 cats available for adoption.

Interested adopters spend time at the shelter with their potential new pet. They are also run through a vet-check background, and their references are scrutinized.

“We don’t want any animal returned because they didn’t fit,” said Denise. The guild will always take back a dog or cat if it doesn’t work out, but that’s the last thing anyone wants.

The Little Guild couldn’t operate as well as it does without the three full-time and two part-time staff members. Many volunteers from the community come to help walk dogs and brush the cats. Dr. Dave Sandefer and the Sand Road Animal Hospital provide the veterinary services. The board of directors is extremely supportive as well.

“Everyone contributes their time and expertise—they are all animal lovers for sure. If we are short handed at a certain

time, board members will often help play with animals, walk the dogs, and take care of the shelter inhabitants as though they were their own.”

As for Rusty, the blind dog? He’ll be going to his new home in a few days, just one success story among many. For more information, check the website: www.littleguild.org.

—*Jane Bean*

Welcome

Giovanni Noe Aguilar to Rebecca Aguilar and Pedro Aguilar-Solis
Charles James Locher to Ariana Holmes Locher and Brian Locher

Good Bye to Friends

Edward Bigelow
Lotte Kohler
Susan M. Trager
Kathryn Joan Sandmeyer Waller

Land Transfers

Donna D. Vincenti, Trustee of the George W. Kittle Revocable Trust, to Cornwall Limited Liability Company, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 11 Jewell Street, for \$275,000.

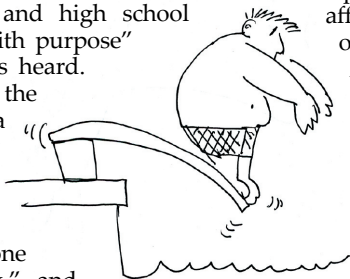
The Slow and Sleepy Opossum

According to ABC’s *Good Morning America*, in January the Berlin Zoo’s Heidi the cross-eyed opossum had more than 110,000 Facebook friends. While our nameless locals may not be YouTube sensations, they perhaps merit better press than they usually get.

My own consciousness of opossums was raised one afternoon in the early days of our relentless winter when I caught a glimpse of a grey creature slowly traversing our yard that I first thought was my 20-pound tabby. Upon closer inspection, however, I realized it was a rather distraught-looking opossum painstakingly inching its way over the crusted foot and a half of snow, trying desperately to keep from breaking through.

I watched for several minutes, fascinated by its adeptness at keeping its footing, yet put off by its sheer ugliness, with its blanched needle-nosed face, creepy pink hand-like claws and hairless rodent-like tail. Despite my aversion, when it finally got to our gazebo and disappeared under its floor, I felt relieved that it had reached shelter during what would turn out to be many more weeks of thigh-high snow and frigid temperatures. My curiosity piqued by witnessing its trek, I turned to the Internet to learn more about this specimen and was surprised by what I found.

According to the Opossum Society of the United States (OSUS) website, www.opossumsocietyus.org, opossums are not related to the rat, but rather, as the only marsupial native to North America, to the



koala and kangaroo. Unexpectedly, they have been dubbed "Nature's Little Sanitation Engineers" due to their environmental clean-up activities in both urban and rural areas. They feed on pests and rodents such as beetles and cockroaches as well as mice and rats. Contrary to popular belief they do not hang upside down by their tails, but they do employ opposable thumbs on their rear claws to hang on branches. While they live only one or two years on average (thanks to predatory dogs, cats, and humans) their lineage dates back to the dinosaur.

I went on to read many USOS hints for dealing with opossums on your property, in your pool, or with your pets, as well as about rehabilitative techniques for the injured and orphaned. Perhaps the most practical advice was to allow an opossum playing 'possum four hours to awaken before assuming it is dead, or else you might kill it.

While I have no idea whether our visitor under the gazebo has resurfaced this spring, I do know that next time I spot one I will look upon it with more of a smile than a grimace on my face. I must also admit that if I had a pool, I might even make an opossum ladder to help keep one from drowning.
—Louise Riley

Gardening Beckons

Daffodils poke green shoots through the snow and tell me it's time to think about gardening. Other flowers will emerge, little by little, and I'll wait impatiently to see how many delphinium survived the winter. I lose about half of them every year and plant new ones to brighten my perennial bed with their vivid blues. The red will come automatically; bee balm loves it here.

Visits to nurseries will start as soon as I know the spots that need to be filled. Decisions on what to plant will depend on what attracts me at the nursery, and I will buy beautiful specimens that I feel sure will fulfill their promise to grow to perfection.

Keeping them alive with nourishment, water, and space to grow will satisfy a maternal instinct in me. The hard work of weeding will be like therapy. I release suppressed aggression by prying up dandelions and yanking out voracious vines like ivy and Virginia creeper. I take revenge on enemies by grabbing hold of goldenrod and tossing it out ruthlessly.

I am anxious to get started, to get out in the sun and watch my yard come alive.

—Bee Simont

Two Grants to Enrich Kids' Lives

Two local organizations working with children have received funding that offers opportunities for increasing environmental

awareness and participating in the arts.

The Armand M. Oppenheimer Environmental Fund, through Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, has funded a special performance by the Grumbling Gryphons. *The Ghost Net: An Environmental Musical of the Sea* will be presented at CCS on Friday, May 27, at 1:10 P.M. for the whole school. Children will play both sea creatures and environmental hazards, making their own costumes from recycled plastic items. Prior to the performance, there will be a community clean-up and a workshop with seventh- and eighth-graders on Friday, May 6. For more information, please contact Vicki Nelson at CCS.

The Cornwall Foundation has awarded a grant to the Cornwall Child Center to support enrichment programs and field trips for the 3- to 5-year olds over the next nine months. The activities will include ceramics, puppet making, tumbling, drumming, and community helper excursions.
—Louise Riley

Cornwall Briefs

Another STEAP Grant, this one worth \$150,000, is on its way from Hartford for such local improvements as funding more solar panels for town facilities, a solar-powered vehicular speeding indicator coming down the hill into West Cornwall, and further sprucing up of some local business facades. And you thought Connecticut was broke!

The New Cornwall Senior Committee is planning a number of activities like bus trips, bend-and-stretch classes, and a special party for seniors that is set for

Friday, May 20, from 4:30 to 6 P.M. at the Library.

Changing of the Guard at the transfer station, known in some quarters as the dump. According to the first selectman, Steve O'Neil is the new CEO replacing Fred Bate and Fred the new assistant replacing Steve. Yes, they swapped titles, which is unlikely to have an effect on the operation. Remember, you read it here.

Did you know that llamas have no upper front teeth which is why they also have a split upper lip that allows them to grab food like grass or grain in spite of the missing molars? I know this because there was a very large llama named Topper sitting quietly on the carpet in the Library meeting room when I popped in on a recent Tuesday to see Librarian Amy Cady. Topper's owner/handler Debbie Elias was reading llama stories to about a dozen youngsters who had gathered there for the weekly story hour.

The scene was so unusual for a library I forgot why I was there and joined the kids to learn more. Llamas have two toes on each foot which certainly cuts down on the time it takes to give them a pedicure. Go on, ask me anything!
—John Miller

Letter to the Chronicle

THE CHRONICLE WELCOMES LETTERS

We heard from a reader last month who had some great ideas about what to do at Mohawk in the summer. For example, how about a music venue using the arena shape of the ski slope as seating for the audience. Good idea but the letter didn't get into the paper because it was signed "A Cornwall Resident." That counts as an unsigned letter, unfortunately, which The Chronicle's policy doesn't allow.

John Miller's appeal in last month's issue to one of the self-designated "others" listed in the 2010 census brought an elegant reply filled with legend and mystery. But "Other" was as shy as "Cornwall Resident" so you won't be able to read that letter here either. Don't be so modest next time!

We still are not able to run thank-you notes, obituaries, and remembrances only because there are so many we would have room for little else.

One more thing: From now on when you submit a letter, please attach a telephone number. We might need to ask a question. Nowadays many people are using phone services which don't list numbers for public use.

Keep the letters coming, please! We love to fill this space with your ideas and comments.
—The Editors

Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall: At the Library, CCS art teacher Diane Dupuis' show of encaustics continues through May 14. Starting May 17, Phyllis Nauts will show recent paintings, with an opening reception held Saturday, May 21, from 4 to 6 P.M.

Me & Hue, an exhibit of Lisa Keskinen's art work, will be at the Wish House Gallery from May 28 through July 31. An artist's reception will be held Saturday, May 28, from 4 to 7 P.M.

Robert Parker's art will be on display at the National Iron Bank during May.

Cornwall Historical Society (CHS) Annual Meeting, Monday, May 2, at 8:30 A.M. at the Society's historic carriage house, 7 Pine Street.

BTW, CHS is now on Facebook. "Like" our page to stay updated on our exhibits and programs, and to see regularly added highlights from our collections.

A Referendum will be held in the Cornwall Town Hall, 24 Pine Street, on Tuesday, May 3, from noon until 8 P.M., for the purpose of voting on the Region One school budget. Absentee ballots are available in the Town Clerk's office, 672-2709.

Chorus Angelicus youth choir, a training organization for the renowned children's chorus, will perform Thursday, May 5, at the Cornwall Library at 5:30 P.M. Admission free; donations welcome.

Cornwall Child Center Open House Friday, May 6, from 3:30 to 5:30 P.M. to celebrate National Child Care Recognition Day. Parents may register during May for Summer Camp which starts June 27 for ages 3 to 6 with eight one-week sessions. Summer care will be available for the same age group between 8 A.M. and 4 P.M. Call Sandy Gomez at 672-6989 for information.

Bird Walk. Park & Rec steps off Saturday, May 7, at the early-bird hour of 7:30 A.M. Rain date will be May 8. Leader Jean Bouteiller promises a new route. Contact her for the location at 672-3139, or thewoodmistress@optonline.net. Please provide a phone number in case of rain.

Grumbling Gryphons will hold a workshop for ages 5 to adult Saturday, May 7, from 10 to 11:30 A.M. to prepare for *From the River to the Sea* on Sunday, May 8, at 4:30 P.M. (See insert). At Listening Lake Studio, 29 Lake Road. Call Director Leslie Elias at 672-0286 for details. A pre-performance workshop will be held on Sunday at 3:15 P.M. Masks and costumes will be provided.

Housatonic River Picnic, sponsored by HVA and the Cornwall Foundation, offers fly fishing demonstrations, historical activities, games, and lots more on Sunday, May 8, 3 to 5 P.M. (See insert).

The Cornwall Farm Market opens its season on Saturday, May 14, from 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. on the Wish House lawn. Park mindfully in Railroad Square or on the post office side of Route 128. The market will be open every Saturday through October, rain or shine. Local vegetables, meat, baked goods, and other goods will be for sale. For information visit cornwallfarmmarket.org and a blog too.

Scholarship applications to the Women's Society Education Fund are due May 15. All college-bound, secondary school seniors are welcome to apply no matter where they are in school. Forms available from Thalia Scoville (672-6288) or the HVRHS guidance office.

Spring Cheer

May! What can you say 'cept hurray, hurray, hurray! Donations to *The Chronicle* are welcomed with similar warmth. Thanks!

Easter Vespers will be presented on May 15 at North Cornwall Meeting House by Cantus Excelsus Bruce Fifer, conductor. A classic of the Anglican musical tradition, the evening concert begins at 5 P.M. and is hosted by All Saints Chapel.

Budget Town Meeting. A five-item agenda will be considered Friday, May 20, in the gathering room at CCS. The town-wide budget for 2011-2012 will be put to a vote and the Board of Finance mil rate calculation will be explained. The meeting begins at 7:30 P.M.

Cornwall Historical Society: On Saturday, May 21, 3 to 4 P.M. at the Town Hall, Louise Dunn and her brother Bill MacLeod will present *Rumsey Hall - The Early Days with Lillias Rumsey Sanford*, family stories and photographs of their redoubtable great-grandmother's founding of the school. Tea and Rumsey Hall cookies will be served. For information, call 672-0505.

Alternatives to Violence speaker Khalil Cumberbatch will talk about this prison-based program which prepares individuals for life after release. All Saints Chapel, Sunday, May 22, at 8 A.M. at the North Cornwall Meeting House (NCMH).

Electronic Waste Day. Cornwall residents with proof of residency may take items to the Watertown Transfer Station operated by the CT Resources Recovery Agency, May 25. Document shredding will also be available. No ticket required. The site is on Echo Lake Road, west of Route 8 at Exit 37, and will be open from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

The John Welles Property will be dedicated by the Cornwall Conservation Trust on Sunday, May 29, at 2 P.M. Welles left his land to the Trust. Visitors may enter the property at 43 Town Street. Brief remarks will be followed by refreshments.

Memorial Day Events. On May 30 the decoration of veterans' graves and a tour by Charles Gold will begin at 9 A.M. at North Cornwall Cemetery. The **Seamens' Memorial** will be observed at 10 A.M. at the Covered Bridge. The **parade** starts at 11 A.M. in the Village in front of Town Hall. The **VFW commemoration** follows the parade.

Then the **UCC Carnival** offers hamburgers and hot dogs, fresh salads, beverages, and ice cream, plus games for children of all

ages. New this year: activities and races on the town green. Proceeds support local charities, Child Center scholarships and a variety of UCC mission concerns.

St. Bridget Church will hold an outdoor Mass at 1 P.M. to honor members of the military who sacrificed their lives for our country. Rain or shine, all are invited to attend.

Library Book Sale. Saturday, May 28, the doors open at 9 A.M. for a \$10 fee; at 10 A.M., free for the general public. The sale ends at 3 P.M. and reopens for final sales on Monday, May 30, from 10 to 11 A.M. (closed for the Town Parade) and open again from noon to 3 P.M. Donations welcome at the Library for the Memorial Day Sale. No textbooks, please, no encyclopedias, or musty, mildewed items.

Library Story Hour for 3- to 5-year olds continues on Fridays, May 6, 13, and 20. No Story Hour on May 27.

Complimentary Passes for a passle of Connecticut and Massachusetts historic sites and museums are available at the Library. Reduced admission coupons are also available. Sites include state parks and forests, the Higgins Armory Museum in Worcester, the Wadsworth Athenaeum, the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, the Old State House and the new Science Center, both in Hartford. Some rules apply, so plan ahead and call Amy Cady at 672-6874.

June Dates to Save. Hazardous Waste Day in Falls Village, June 4, between 9 A.M. and noon. Ticket required which is available in the Selectmen's Office. Catherine Tatge and Dominique Lasseur's film *John Muir in the New World* will be shown at the Cornwall Library on Saturday, June 4, at 4 P.M. Seating is limited to 55 chairs. Call to reserve, 672-6874. Donation of \$6 per person, \$10 per couple, is suggested.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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

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Please mail the Chronicle to the out-of-town address above; a \$15 contribution will be appreciated.

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