

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 10 : NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 2000



CCS Test Results—Good News!

The Connecticut Mastery Tests are said to be some of the most reliable in the country in determining the skill levels of students living in the computer age. And this year, for grades four, six, and eight, the results reveal marked improvement in math, reading, and writing skills.

According to Principal Bill Oros, the required skills are far more diverse than those of a generation ago. In a world where people change jobs on the average of nine times during their working lives, students must demonstrate a range of skills that help them meet and cope with such change.

The test results reflect the improved ability of students to read, write, and compute, and to evaluate and organize information in effective ways. The tests also determine the students' "symbolic literacy" through computer training, along with "social literacy" in communicating effectively with others—and to apply such skills to the demands of a high-tech age.

The scores, listed in the following table, reflect significant improvement, much of which can be traced to the special education program which helps incoming students with weak backgrounds to achieve at an appropriate level. Surely Bill Oros and his staff can take satisfaction in such achievement.

	1998	1999
MATH		
Grade 4	68%	76%
Grade 6	82%	91%
Grade 8	81%	94%
READING		
Grade 4	96%	100%
Grade 6	88%	96%
Grade 8	92%	100%
WRITING		
Grade 4	29%	47%
Grade 6	53%	82%
Grade 8	66%	88%

—Ken Keskinen

Closure at the Gravel Mine

What's happened to the Strobel gravel mine off Route 7? After the heated accusations and loud arguments about dangerous traffic and noisy gravel trucks, about pollution and about yawning ugly chasms on the tranquil slopes of the Housatonic River, about the rights of citizens to make a living from their land—where are we now? (See letter, page 3.)

A visit to the site reveals the neatly contoured restoration of the mine area on the 10.6 acre parcel of land now sold, reports Jackie Strobel, by FSB Associates to the Appalachian Trail Conference Land Trust. The mission of the trust is to preserve land in all 14 states through which the trail winds. The

parcel is not part of the trail itself (which is located on the west side of the river), but it is part of the view from the trail, a hiker's view now unmarred by earth movers and torn-up terrain. The sale agreement permits only one residence on the parcel.

The Land Trust may, in turn, sell the parcel to other land trusts, groups, or individuals who must continue to preserve the land in its natural state. The public has walking access to the parcel from Route 7 along the service road over which the gravel trucks once rumbled and groaned. —Ken Keskinen

At Last—A PCB Settlement

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) have finally agreed to a cleanup process set forth in a proposed consent decree with General Electric in Pittsfield, after five years of negotiation, and many years of pollution and stalling by GE, as toxic waste continues to wash down the Housatonic.

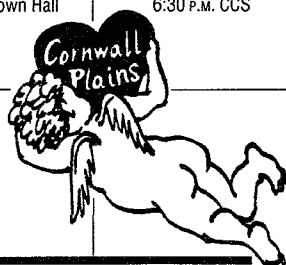
So, what are the terms of the decree? What do they mean to Cornwall?

First and foremost is a cleanup at the Pittsfield source where PCB readings are now so high that millions of tons of sediment and earth from river banks must be removed along a two-mile stretch of the river. That cleanup is to be completed by 2006. By the year 2003, the EPA will have made further

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FEBRUARY 2000

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	February Art in Cornwall: National Iron Bank Artist of the Month—Lee Rogers Wish House Art Exhibit by M. I. Cake Cornwall Library—Susan Gallo Exhibit Opens February 7 (p.4)	1 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. Town Office	2 Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. Every Wed. St. Peter's Ch.	3 School Building Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS	4 Preschool–K Story Hour Every Friday 10 A.M. Library Farm Forest Open Space Group 5:30–6:30 P.M. CCS Library	5 Baseball Registration 10–12 A.M. Town Hall
6 Stretch Exercise Every Sunday 10 A.M. Town Hall Slide Talk by Lilly Hollander on <i>Works of Art on Paper</i> 2:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	7 Last Day to Drop off Items for Ghana (p.3 Letters) Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	8 CCS PTA 7 P.M. CCS Repub. Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	9 Cub Scout Parents Meeting 7 P.M. UCC Parish House	10 Cornwall Housing Corp. 4:15 P.M. Kugeman Village Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	11 Park & Rec. Game Night 7–9 P.M. W. Cornwall Firehouse (p.4)	12 LINCOLN'S B'DAY Community Center Group 10 A.M. W. C. Firehouse (p.3 Letters)
13	14 VALENTINE'S DAY Blood Pressure Screening 3–4 P.M. UCC Parish House P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	15 Deadline: March Chronicle Copy Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Library Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall (p.4) School Building Committee 7:30 P.M. CCS	16	17 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library: Selectmen's Budget	18	19 Last Day Property Tax Appeals May Be Mailed (p.4)
20	21 PRESIDENTS' DAY School Vacation Day Friends of Cornwall Library 4 P.M. UCC Day Room	22 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY School Vacation Day Voter Registration Session 12–2 P.M. Town Office (p.4) Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	23 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	24 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	25 Cub Scouts Blue and Gold Dinner 6:30 P.M. CCS	26
27	28 Red Cross Blood Drive 2–7 P.M. UCC Parish House (p.4) Cornwall Website Group 5:30 P.M. Town Hall ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Office	29				



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health and ecological risk assessments to determine the extent of remediation needs for the Housatonic River in Connecticut.

Cornwall may share in a Connecticut Compensatory Restoration Fund (\$7.5 million from GE), or it may not—if the DEP decides to use the money elsewhere.

Reaction to the consent decree in our area is mixed. Some wonder why the EPA didn't do the cleanup itself and then bill GE, the polluter. Many are angered that negotiations and the consent decree were devoid of public comment, with no hearings until the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) arranged a meeting in Kent on January 4. Public outcry has resulted in an extension of the comment period until February 23.

The HVA has endorsed the existing decree because they wish to see decontamination begun. The Housatonic River Commission and the towns are pleased about the cleanup in the Pittsfield area, but have expressed doubts about the agreement as it pertains to Connecticut. The River Commission also wants the river tested for PCBs for the next 25 years. Furthermore, the commission and the towns agree that 1) since the \$7.5 million restoration fund is too small, all the dollars should be restricted to Housatonic River projects; 2) the DEP should not use such funds for its own administrative expenses; and 3) the DEP should have area representation on the Restoration Fund Committee.

While many understand the difficulties the EPA has in negotiating with GE, a powerful corporation with a record of environmental violations, they do expect their own DEP to do a better job of informing area citizens about the problems in cleaning up their river.

—Philip Hart, Housatonic River Commission

CCS Students Predict Future

The *Chronicle* visited CCS recently to query some first-, fourth-, and eighth-graders about the new millennium. This reporter reminded them that 100 years ago Cornwall students walked to one of the 17 schoolhouses that dotted the town—quite a change from the current CCS—and wondered how they envision the Cornwall of 2100.

FIRST GRADERS

Jeffrey Hammond: "You won't take school buses, you'll have a teleporter walkie-talkie and just say 'Teleport to school,' and one second you'll be standing in your kitchen and then, Boing, you'll be standing in school. Food will grow out of the ceiling of your house. You'll be, like, 'Oh, I like broccoli,' swish, here's a nice big piece of broccoli on the roof."

Arielle Betti: "People will live until infinity, or at least until they're really old, more than thirty. We'll have a robot for a principal that will walk all around the school. I hope there will be snow."

Isaac Pollan: "Playgrounds will have water slides and jet skis and swings will be soft cotton. The tooth fairy will bring huge money and Pokémon balls. To guard your

house, instead of cameras with those little eyes you'll have humongous worms."

Meghan Brown: "People will eat popcorn and meatballs and dress like hippies. I'd take a space ship to Jupiter and stay at a motel with my dog."

FOURTH GRADERS

Samantha Bate: "Girls will wear really, really hard dresses made of steel and boys will have hair that spikes out."

Charlie Fox: "You won't use lunch boxes anymore. Instead, you'll have pills and you sprinkle water on them and put them into a container in your own little microwave and press a button, and you'll have a whole meal, like hamburgers and french fries."

Molly Packard: "There won't be any homework. You'll have pens with microphones and you tell it what to write and it writes for you. There won't be any principal and you couldn't get in trouble."

Aron Dwyer: "Instead of hallways there will be little tunnels with openings into each room. We'll have computerized desks with built-in screens and keyboards. You'll draw on them instead of on paper and press a button to erase it. To get to school you'll step into a dematerializer. There'll be a hotel on the moon with a big air bubble around it."

EIGHTH GRADERS

Benjamin North: "A lot can happen in a hundred years. We'll probably have colonies on the moon and Mars. We'll have quicker, more efficient ways to learn, and technology will run our lives more than now. We'll have computers that are really easy for everyone to learn and cars that run on water."

Li Ming Dolan: "I had hopes something interesting would happen [re: Y2K], like school would be cancelled for a few months. In 2100 we won't go to school at all, we'll stay home logged onto computers 24 hours a day."

Shanna Pilgrim: "I think we'll still go to school because kids want to be with their friends. Clothes will get weirder and weirder, more glitzy."

Justin Julian: "I think it's pretty cool to be part of the next millennium and the class of 2000 at Cornwall. Life will be easier in the future, like there'll be heated roads so there will be less accidents. We can decrease hunger and homelessness but there will always be good and bad. We'll still have crime and lunatics. Things that seem impossible aren't. A long time ago people thought the things we have now were impossible to make, but we did. We always find a way."

—Jamie Monagan

Good-bye to Friends

Jacques Beckwith

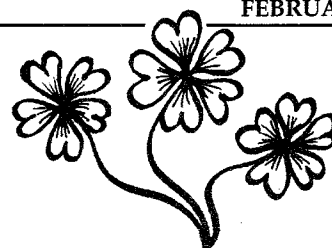
Katrina Bergen

Roxana Hammond

Nicholas Rondinone

Land Transfers

FSB Associates LLC to Appalacian Trail Conference, 10.6 acres of land on Kent Road for \$100,000.



Estate of Maye B. Ronshaugen to Judith Gates, house and land at 179 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for \$122,000.

Marc B. Porter to Frederieke S. Taylor, house and 1.26 acres at 56 Scoville Road for \$395,000.

Werner B. Pfeiffer to Hanna K. Grossman, 5.52 acres on Flat Rocks Road for \$45,000.

Werner B. Pfeiffer to Karen J. Greenberg, 2.12 and 2.05 acres on Day Road for \$65,000.

Herbert B. and June A. Van Sciver to Robert S. and Tonya Kalmes, house and 3.33 acres at 115 Kent Road for \$135,000.

Stephen M. Drezen, Franklin Moss, and Melvyn L. Toomey to Sylvan H. Rankine, 8.81 acres on Great Hollow Road for \$50,000.

Elizabeth Brown to Clyde P. Weed, house and 12 acres at 91 Pierce Lane for \$225,000.

David S. Mills to Eugene A. and Valene T. Cornelius, Lots 5 and 6, 1.29 and 1.01 acres on Kent Road for \$75,000.

Lois and Ronald Zandy and Emily Stanat to Cornwall Inn, Inc., inn and 3.18 acres at 270 Kent Road for \$337,000.

Michael and Eva Rex Vogel to Norman and Sandra Holman, house and 1.15 acres at 137 Popple Swamp Road for \$156,625.

Wendy Weinberg, Jr., to Darren L. and Caroline Marshall, house and land at 55 Kent Road for \$510,000.

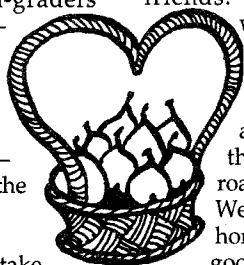
Rapping With Ridgway

Having run unopposed, and endorsed by both political parties, Gordon Ridgway was elected to a fifth term as first selectman.

Gordon recalls that eight years ago he took on his leadership role expecting to remain in office for a term or two, which had been the pattern for selectmen during the previous politically charged decades. Now, he is quietly going on with his job, business as usual.

To my question whether he felt he had any mandate from the people based on what had happened during his four terms, Gordon said, "It may be on what I haven't let happen"—namely, keeping issues from escalating, encouraging people to do positive things for the town, and trying to avoid "permanent antagonists" by listening to all sides of issues.

When I asked what his vision was for the town, he said, "Trying to keep it a rural community." Not a countryside, but a working/farming town, with people active in town groups and participating in their own government, thereby strengthening the sense of community. "People who come to Cornwall see such participation and join in. Most people like things the way they are in town, but we are not stagnating. We need more housing, more businesses, more jobs that are appropriate to the town."



To my question, "Do you consider yourself a leader or an administrator?" Gordon's answer was "half and half." He went on to say that the town government was, after all, "the largest business in town," responsible for the school, the infrastructure, the fire department, and the social services, including support for the child center, the library, and recreational activities. "What is best for the majority is my goal, determining what people can do for themselves and what they need help with, so that we can meet those needs."

Major satisfactions for Gordon are the many improved roads and bridges, the schools, and getting good people on boards and commissions. "We have more cooperation among boards here than in most towns."

Dealing with state mandates requires patience—and many trips to the Capitol. "In cooperation with other selectmen in the area and with the support of our local legislators, we have had more influence in Hartford, letting our needs and preferences be known." As a result, the town gets more financial support from the state and has better communication with agencies that can help the town meet its needs. On the issue of cleaning up the Housatonic, Gordon said, "We need to make sure that the fines paid by General Electric go to clean up our river, not the Naugatuck."

Ongoing local concerns include the elimination of pollution on the Neoweld properties, the placement (or exclusion) of telecommunication towers, Route 4 improvements, getting more school aid, and maintaining government and community services at a high level.

Gordon finds activities of independent associations in the town to be helpful. He acknowledges that the *Cornwall Chronicle*, now in its tenth year, merits special praise for informing people about events and issues, thereby encouraging increased participation in town activities.

We of the *Chronicle* modestly agree.

—Ken Keskinen

Bird Count: Some Surprises

This year we tallied fewer species, but it was a banner year for the numbers of birds. The counts of bluebirds, red-tailed hawks, pileated woodpeckers, and bald eagles were at all-time highs. On Cream Hill a bald eagle flew across our little motorcade as though it were asking to be counted. We also saw common redpolls, which I haven't seen in 25 years.

On the other hand, we missed many of the usual actors—horned larks, ducks, finches, sparrows, waxwings; even the chickadees and nuthatches were few and far

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Letters to the Chronicle

WE NEED YOUR IDEAS

During the Community Profile meeting in early November, interest in a Community Center for Cornwall was strong. A committee was formed, and has met several times. We have considered various places, plans, and programs. Some of us have visited community centers in neighboring towns; some of us have talked with the School Gym Committee, as well as Park and Rec.

We are looking for ideas and suggestions. What would you like? Give us suggestions, concrete or fanciful. Do we need: a place for morning coffee; a steam bath, billiard room, or skate board pavilion; a senior social club, film forum, or life drawing class?

Please send your ideas to Polly Tobin (672-6885 or PCTobin@hotmail.com) or to Dominique Lasseur (672-4419 or dlasseur@yahoo.com). And feel free to come to our next meeting at the West Cornwall Firehouse, 10 A.M., Saturday, February 12. —Susan Fox

GRAVELLY POSTMORTEM

The Strobel gravel bank fiasco is finally over after five years and tens of thousands of dollars of town funds and personal funds were wasted. We have restored the four-acre gravel area just as we had intended to do in the first place, when we purchased it in 1994. It is now a beautiful, fully restored grassy field overlooking the Housatonic River. The entire parcel was purchased on December 16 by the Appalachian Trail Trust and is now covered by a scenic conservation easement.

There was no pollution of the aquifer, no reduction of property values, no truck or school bus accidents, no silicosis poisoning from the dust... Did I miss anything?

During this five-year controversy and the several petitions which were signed by 160+ residents, only one person, long-time resident Art Lorch, had the courtesy and concern to come to us and say, "I heard these claims. What are you people doing?"

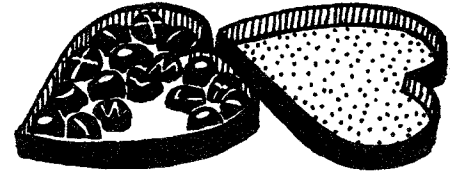
There is a lesson to be learned from this whole episode. Ask questions, find out the truth, and don't just respond to pressure groups.

Think of how many library books could have been purchased with the money the Planning and Zoning Commission spent on their lawyer, engineer, and town planner.

—Jackie Strobel, FSB Associates, L.L.C.

HELP FOR THE ORPHANAGE

For personal reasons, I have decided to postpone my return to Ghana until the end of February. The last day for toy, book, clothing, and medical-supply donations for the Frafraha Orphanage in Ghana is February 7. They can be dropped off at my home (96 Popple Swamp Road, Cornwall Bridge, CT 06754) or picked up by me. Monetary donations can be mailed directly to me until the end of the month. If you have questions call 672-4296. Thank you to everyone for all of the wonderful donations that have been received thus far. The children are going to be so happy. —Heather Dinneen



SPEEDERS TAKE NOTE!

I hate to say I told you so, but I did. A speeder in an SUV failed to negotiate that dangerous curve on Great Hollow Road and wound up in the hospital recently.

When will we learn? PLEASE SLOW DOWN!

Happy New Year.

—Dick Frank

SALT AND PEPPER AND PANCAKES

It's time again to thank the community for their financial support of the LaCasa Project—building homes for the poor in Northern Mexico. With your donations at the Salt and Pepper Concert last November and the Y2K Pancake Breakfast on January 1, we have reached 80 percent of our goal of \$3,680 needed for the material to build another house in June. —Jerry Blakey

HABITAT HAND-UP

The inserted page in the January Chronicle inadvertently left out Habitat for Humanity's need for volunteers. The purpose of Habitat for Humanity is to build housing in partnership with families who otherwise would not be able to own a home of their own—a hand-up, not a handout. Volunteers with experience in construction or carpentry are needed to build a house in Falls Village now, and a house in Salisbury this spring. Help is also needed for building committees, developing sites, selecting families, organizing volunteers, public relations, and fund-raising. Call Paul Baren, 672-6637.

—Bee Simont

GRATITUDE TO GIVERS

I'm writing to express sincere thanks to the many individuals, organizations, and churches whose contributions of gifts, food, and fuel brightened the holidays for their Cornwall neighbors in need. Your thoughtfulness was truly appreciated.

—Jill Gibbons, Cornwall Social Services

HELP FOR CARE GIVERS

If you are taking care of a chronically ill, elderly, or handicapped relative, there is an ongoing group meeting in Kent which may be helpful to you.

The group is sponsored by the Greenwoods Counseling Center, a nonprofit, nonsectarian counseling referral organization. The group meets on Monday evenings in Kent to share information, and to support and encourage individuals and families who have primary caregiving responsibility for a loved one. This is often a stressful and sometimes isolating role. Making connections with others who understand and have had experiences with the challenges of care giving provides an opportunity for psychological renewal and learning specific problem-solving skills. For more information, call me at 672-6386.

—Molly Hinchman, Group Coordinator

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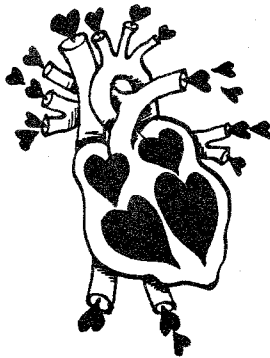
between. Because of the unseasonably warm weather and a good crop of berries, the birds that might have moved to Cornwall are finding plenty to eat where they are.

—Celia Senzer

Events & Announcements

Registration for Primary: The presidential primary elections will take place on March 7, from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. at the Town Hall for voters registered in the Democratic and Republican parties only. Voters not now registered in Cornwall must register prior to the primary in order to vote, and may do so at the Town Clerk's Office during office hours up until noon of March 6. Unaffiliated voters who wish to register with a party in time to vote in the primary must follow the same procedure and timetable. The registrars of voters will conduct a registration session on February 22 from noon until 2 P.M. at the Town Office. Questions? Call Town Clerk Cheryl Evans (672-2709), Jayne Ridgway (672-0279), or Anne Kosciusko (672-3169).

Dems to Discuss Candidates: At the next meeting of the Democratic Town Committee, on February 15 at 7:30 P.M. at the Town Hall, party members will examine and discuss the qualifications of the two Democratic candidates for president. Both Bill Bradley and Al Gore have their supporters among committee members, so a spirited discussion is anticipated. At the conclusion, the committee may decide to endorse one or the other, or to make no endorsement. All registered Democrats are encouraged to attend and participate.



Anniversary Time

This issue marks the *Chronicle's* ninth anniversary. That is over 100 consecutive on-time issues. Although the publishers, if pressed, could testify to a problem or two over the years, it's been a remarkably smooth run, thanks to the efforts of our hardy band of editors, writers and artists. Thanks are also due to you, our readers, who keep us going with your generous donations...

Child Center at Twenty-Five:

People may be surprised to learn that the Cornwall Child Center is now 25 years old. From the first handful of families who started the center to today's new facility, five staff members, and 45 children, we have come a long way—which means, suddenly, that we have a history that needs to be recorded.

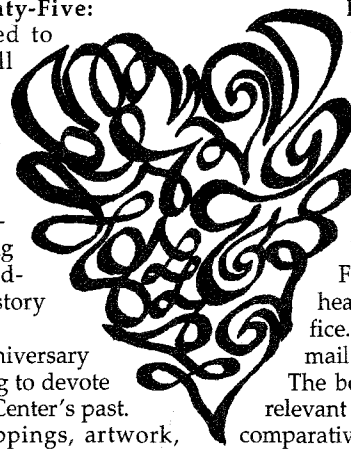
As part of the 25th anniversary celebration, we're planning to devote a newsletter to the Child Center's past. If you have photos, clippings, artwork, memories, or memorabilia to share, please call our historian, Ginny Potter, at 672-6191. Our editors will be contacting early Child Center alums, their parents, and former staff for their stories.

Also, we've decided to draw on Cornwall's talent pool to design a logo for the center. Draw an image you think might represent the center and give or mail it to us at 8 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Your entries can be as simple as a footprint or a stick-figure. Anything goes. Children are encouraged to submit. There will be a ceremony to announce the winner. Thanks to all.

Game Night at the West Cornwall Firehouse, sponsored by Park and Rec., will be on Friday, February 11, from 7 to 9 P.M. Bring your own games or use ours. Refreshments. Call Skip Kosciusko (672-3169) if weather threatens or you need a ride.

Works of Art on Paper: On February 6 at 2:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library, Lilly Hollander will give an illustrated slide talk on the care, maintenance, and restoration of valuable etchings, prints, documents, and maps. Lilly, a long-time Cornwallian, is a well-known paper conservator who has recently moved her studio from New York City to Cornwall. Lilly will discuss archivally safe storage methods and proper framing, and explain the cleaning and repair of paper. Her talk will include some history of paper and printing methods. The admission fee of \$10 will benefit the Cornwall Library. Sponsored by Friends of the Library.

Donate Blood: A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the UCC Parish House on Monday, February 28, 2-7 P.M. To make an appointment (suggested, but not required), call the church office (672-6840) between 9 A.M. and 1 P.M. weekdays.



Property Tax Appeals: Application forms for the Board of Assessment Appeals hearings to be held in March are available now from the town clerk or the Assessor's Office. They must be filed at the Town Office by Thursday, February 17, or post-marked by Saturday, February 19, according to state statutes.

For dates and times of the March hearings, please call the Town Office. Applicants will be notified by mail or phone of their hearing time. The board asks that any information relevant to making a decision (e.g., maps, comparative property data, realtor appraisals, etc.) be brought to the hearing. For further information, please call the Town Office, 672-2709.

Brush Burners Take Notice: Burning permit applications are now to be picked up at the Selectmen's Office. Approval on the day of burning must be given by Fire Marshall Stan MacMillan. Call 364-5758.

Art in Cornwall: At the National Iron Bank, the artist of the month will be Lee Rogers. At the Wish House, M. I. Cake's exhibit of "Constructed Images" will continue through February. At the Cornwall Library, the extraordinary show of masks has been held over until February 5. Beginning February 7, Susan Gallo will exhibit Spirit Stick sculptures, gathered, bundled, wrapped, twisted, and painted in honor of the human spirit.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

ILLUSTRATIONS Erica Prud'homme

FEBRUARY EDITORS

Peg and Ken Keskinen Carla Bigelow

MARCH EDITORS

Bee Simont Peg and Ken Keskinen

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143 CREAM HILL ROAD, WEST CORNWALL, CT 06796

E-MAIL: spenbarb@discovernet.net

FAX: (860) 672-6327

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