



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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"Chile" Weather

The three days of freezing precipitation that was "not rain, nor snow, nor sleet, nor hail," according to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, has put a chill on Cornwall's budget. Almost a quarter of the \$40,000 earmarked for the annual winter cleanup was expended on the 72-hour storm that frosted Cornwall during the first week of the new year.

Part of the problem is a substantial hike in the price of the salt/sand mixture spread on the roads. The cost of the sand, purchased from Segalla Sand and Gravel in North Canaan, has remained stable, but the price of salt, imported from Chile, has risen nearly 80 percent. At least the money was well spent as six fire and ambulance calls during the period were carried out without difficulty over streets cleared by the road crew.

Upcoming meetings include the Regional Public Safety Task Force, a cooperative venture of Litchfield County towns under the aegis of the Homeland Security Agency. Its aim is the improvement of region-wide response to emergencies by such measures as upgrading radio facilities, training first responders, establishing a regional emergency notification system, and equipping shelters. In connection with this program, Cornwall will be receiving a grant of \$25,000.

Plans are also afoot to establish a Junior VFD for volunteers between the ages of 14

and 18, or possibly younger. Members would not take part in heavy firefighting but would receive general training and might fulfill such duties as traffic direction, and equipment maintenance, on a day-to-day basis as well as in case of major emergencies.

No need for emergencies, however, to hear from the governor. The First Selectman's Office receives a daily fax from Governor Rell, even touching so personal a subject as her recent breast surgery. "When we got faxes from Governor Rowland," says Ridgway, "it was mostly to let us know they were cutting our funds." —Matt Collins

A Connecticut Notable Tree

Jim Prentice, who is sexton of the Cornwall Cemetery, received a letter last September from Glenn Dreyer, Director of the Connecticut College Arboretum. Mr. Dreyer had written to explain the reason for the enclosed Certificate of Commendation which was presented to the Cornwall Cemetery by The Connecticut Botanical Society for conserving a Notable Tree called the *plume sawara cypress*. Notable Trees are defined as either being among the largest of their kind or as having a documented relationship to an historic person, place, or event. Our *plume sawara cypress* is the largest such tree in Connecticut.

This interesting news aroused my curios-

ity, so through the Connecticut Botanical Society's website I was soon in touch with several members of the Notable Tree Committee. Gregory Kendall, also a member of the Connecticut Valley Mycological Society, was looking for morels in the vicinity one day and spotted the tree. He alerted Ed Richardson. Both men, "Measurers" for the Notable Tree Committee, met at the cemetery and, using the American Forests tree measurement system which includes a device called a clinometer, measured the height of the *plume sawara cypress* (76 feet), its circumference (12 feet 9 inches), and spread (42 feet). A smaller specimen, located only about 15 feet away, was undoubtedly planted at the same time in the mid-eighteen hundreds, probably by members of the White family, whose headstones are shaded by the trees.

This cultivated variety, imported from Japan, was a popular landscape tree at the time. ("Fine tree!" notes Mr. Richardson on his Big Tree Report for The Connecticut Botanical Society.)

The Notable Tree Committee, an offshoot of the Society, was begun in 1984 to educate the public about unusual trees in Connecticut—i.e., largest, rarest, oldest, or historic. Most Notable Trees are found on private estates, New England colleges, old institutes, and cemeteries where trees are protected and cared for.

(continued on page 2)

FEBRUARY 2005

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	2	3 	4	5
6 Jill Clayburgh and Sam Waterston 3 P.M. CCS Gym	7 Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	8  Film: <i>The Big Sleep</i> 2 P.M. Library † P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	9 ASH WEDNESDAY	10	11	12 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY Beginners Knitting † 10:30-11:30 A.M. Library American Girl Club 10:30 A.M. Library Poetry Reading 4 P.M. Library †
13 <i>Oasis of Peace</i> 11:30 A.M. UCC †	14 VALENTINE'S DAY Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House ABC Meeting 5:30 P.M. Town Hall	15 Deadline: March Chronicle Copy	16 	17 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	18	19
20 <i>Teaching Non-Violence</i> 11:30 A.M. UCC †	21 PRESIDENTS' DAY CCS and Town Offices Closed Red Cross Blood Drive UCC † Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	22 WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY CCS Closed 8 th Grade Pasta Dinner Wandering Moose †  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Board of Assessment Appeals Deadline †	23 8 th Grade Pasta Dinner Wandering Moose † Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	24 	25	26 Beginners Knitting † 10:30-11:30 A.M. Library
27 <i>Alternatives to Violence Project</i> 11:30 A.M. UCC †	28 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	Every Week This Month: Mondays: Teen/Adult Basketball, 7-9 P.M. CCS Gym; Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. UCC Sanctuary Tuesdays: Blue Mountain Satsang, 6:30 P.M. UCC Day Room; Teen/Adult Volleyball, 7-9 P.M. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Play Group, 10-11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC; Stretch Class, 5:30 P.M. Town Hall; Hot Chocolate Hour, after school, Library Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. UCC Day Room Saturdays: Chess Club, 10-11:30 A.M. Library; Ice Skating, 7-8 P.M. Hotchkiss School				

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

Our tree will soon be listed on their website: <http://notabletrees.conncoll.edu>, along with another tallest tree from Cornwall, a 106-foot black locust on Hautboy Hill Road. Glenn Dreyer's paperback book, *Connecticut Notable Trees*, available in the Cornwall Free Library, contains much information.

Recently, I received a package from Mr. Richardson. In addition to a letter, he included four of his brochures describing the trees in three parks and a cemetery in Hartford, and six detailed reports of other large trees in Cornwall. (One, on Lazlo Gyorsok's property, is the second largest white pine reported in Connecticut.)

"If you should ever succumb to tree madness," he wrote, "I would point out that we've never had a Notable Tree Measurer in Litchfield County. Nor have we ever had a female measurer. Think about it!"

P.S. I am.

—Carla Bigelow



Slip, Slide, Sled

"Sledding, oh my yes!" Fred Bate, Jr. was enthusiastically off and running. He remembered many an evening after schoolwork was done when he and others would head out sledding.

The most-used hill was the Sharon side of the river above Cornwall Auto Body. "We used to come down the road and across Route 7, then through the covered bridge," Fred remembered. Jack Preston says he never made it all the way through. Both of them used a spotter at Route 7 to warn them to roll off if there was traffic. Susie Williamson reminded Jack that building his house "ruined" sledding in the field there, even though Pat promised to leave the garage doors open for kids to slide through.

Fred went on to recall the "ripper" he and Ovel Degreenia built that was like a bobsled with four runners that would seat four or five kids. "Wicky (Earl Wickwire) would pull us up the hills with his Ford roadster and then down we'd go. There was one stout girl who always leaned the wrong way in a corner; she didn't get to ride often. Ovel was the primary driver, sitting up in front and pulling on two ropes to guide the thing."

Hills ridden included Cream Hill, from the Gold's farm to about Jan Tenney's

house, though they never could get all the way to West Cornwall; Great Hill; Essex Hill; and, at least once, down Beers Hill. That hill was the scene of an escapade recounted by Charlie Gold. When his great-grandfather needed to get to the train station in Cornwall Bridge but didn't have time to hitch up the horses, his son Ralph Beers volunteered to deliver him by sled. When things were whizzing by too fast, Dad put out his leg as a brake. He arrived in time to hop on the train, but had snow packed inside his pant leg up to his thigh.

Jack reminisced about alternative sleds—coal shovels and pieces of linoleum being high on the list. The author recalls shoveling snow onto the towpaths at Mohawk Ski Area and then riding the shovel down the slope, which Freddie Scoville affirms is still done.

Pat Hare and John Calhoun recalled sledding on Flexible Flyers behind the Library and on carefully manicured toboggan runs down the Hare's field from the house to the pond. But one never wanted to be in the front of the toboggan or there was a faceful of snow!

Gordon Ridgway remembers using his lunch box as a sled to speed down to school from Cherry Hill. More recently Irv Robbins' well-groomed, iced-down, 400-foot luge run has been open for day and night runs for three generations of kids.

Even the animals got in on the fun. Susan Fox swears that after sending the Frost's yellow lab, Thurber, down a hill on a saucer and onto a pond where he spun around wildly, he picked up the saucer, brought it up the hill and tried to get on himself for another run. In the '50s, Scampy the Airedale would meet all the village kids at the bus, eager to go sledding with them. But he couldn't walk after a while since so much snow stuck in his feet.

Many of the interviewees also recalled that sliding at school during recess was a common activity. The various additions to the school have covered the favored slopes. Advances in road care have removed the roads as primary sledding runs. The frequent scraping and liberal use of salt and sand as well as increased traffic have made it impossible and unsafe to recreate the runs of an earlier time. So grab a sled, find an open slope and make your own memories!

—Ralph Gold

Popple Swamp's Famous Goats

Popple Swamp Road is home to various goats owned by Rachel Gall and Bianca LaPorta. Rachel has five goats: two pure Saanens, two part Saanen, part Alpine-Oberhasli cross, and one Alpine-Oberhasli cross. Bianca has two goats: one Saanen, and one Toggenburg. Rachel's two full Saanens' names are Floppy Legs and Floppy Ears because they were born with a lack of Vitamin B. Her two Saanen-Alpine-Oberhasli crosses' names are Joy and Dove after soap names like their mother A-Jax, the single Al-

pine—Oberhasli.

Bianca's Saanen's name is Nilli and her Toggenberg's name is Chessie, short for Chestnut. Bianca keeps her daughter's retired show goats as pets and enjoys walking them down Popple Swamp, bringing along greens in case they stray.

On Halloween night in 2003, a bear attacked Rachel's goat Gaia. Gaia tried to protect the younger goats. Rachel wrote a song, *Comet*, about this incident with Gaia. The best line says "but the bear was not ramable and that was the day she died." Bianca saw the same bear earlier in the evening standing in her driveway. Rachel has not seen the bear again but she has had foxes in the field, too small to do any harm.

Rachel uses her goats for eating unwanted weeds like poison ivy and rosebushes. They are also used for keeping the cows in the field company. Before Rachel had a good fence, her goats would escape, stand on the railroad tracks and watch fishermen in the nearby Housatonic River. When her goats were kept at Alida Hare's pasture the goats got out and would get on Alida's roof. According to Alida they sounded like reindeer.

—Elizabeth Ridgway

Welcome

Will Augustus and Aidan John to Catherine and Christopher Zabriskie

Elise Isabella Lake to Kristen and Samuel Culbreth
Aramis Tristan to Sarah and Maurice Oyanadel

Good-bye to a Friend

Lynnerna Niebergall

Land Transfers

Estate of Roger Leete Ives, III, to Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc., 4 acres of land at Town Street and Coggswell Road for \$175,000.

Elsie F. Allen to Claudia Killackey, property at 268 Great Hollow Road for \$325,000.

The Center Holds

Cornwall, town of four cemeteries, three zip codes, and two sides of the lake, nurtures a certain free-spirited image of itself. We don't do centers very well. Senior center, teen center, town center? No. And yet the Cornwall Child Center is now celebrating a remarkable 30th birthday.

In 1974, the year the Child Center was born, the First Church of Cornwall wasn't "United," the Town Hall (gasp) was still sharing space with the old library, but the organizing committee for our first, state-licensed day care set an almost brazen goal: "To create a community-controlled and child-oriented center—a center which will be just that, the center of the energy and concern of this community for its children. The center can be a new strength, a strength which comes from unity of purpose and interaction."

One Center, then, but with a cast of hundreds. In those early days the Child Center

had to push back or move out of its home in the Parish House ten times a year, whenever events like the Rummage Sale or Harvest Supper came to town.

Money was scarce. High-flying 1976 salaries: Director, \$5/hour, teachers \$3/hour. An early fundraiser series, "Friday Night at the Movies: The Cornwall Child Film Festival," netted \$770.70. There was also the Child Center Home and Garden Tour, with watercress sandwiches provided by Dody Prentice and roast beef by Fred Bate, Jr. Some early board presidents: Donna Hoskins, Nene Pool, Teddy Bury, and Sarah Paul. Fast-forward to 1992, when the Board of Selectmen offered to lease the Center an acre of land for \$1 per year. Cheryl Evans organized a building committee; Denny Frost and Mike Root began to clear a site; and Jim Terrall and George Charleton volunteered as head builders to build the building designed by Connie Gordon. Many in-kind hours and items were given by town's trade people; Pat Mulberry designed an outdoor playhouse that Jim Prentice built; and on and on, countless donors and helpers, an old-fashioned barn-raiser of a project. The new building at 8 Cream Hill Road, which opened in 1995 with Pamela Brehm as director, represents the very "unity of purpose" of which the original organizers dreamed.

Today the Center serves 30 to 40 kids, depending on the year. A recent endowment campaign, to help make ends meet, finished with over \$300,000 in pledges for the Child Center. And most strikingly, former and current Board Presidents Jean Vitalis and Norma Lake, V.P.s Carla Bigelow and Terry Carlson, together with Pam Brehm and her staff, shepherded a three-year campaign to bring national accreditation to the Center.

For an institution dependent each year on the community, the Child Center is planning a celebration this spring, to be announced, as a thank you to the town for 30 years of love and trust. In "Cornwall years," 30 may pale before naturally ageless wonders like Baldwin Cave or Hurlburts and Golds, regenerating in perpetuity. But for a Center in a town of free spirits, 30 is a veritable Ming Dynasty. Happy Birthday CCC.

—Sandy Neubauer



Letters to the Chronicle

VANISHING SIGN

Forget the ghostly sightings at Dark Entry Forest! On Whitcomb Hill Road, we have a sign that was firmly bound into the earth at the end of our driveway that just walked away on Christmas Eve. It was only some 30 hours to full moon so perhaps it is quite understandable that a driveway sign would morph legs and leave its owners.

Earlier in the day, the sign was doing its duty by offering the following information on its body: Private Driveway - Dead End. The 24 inch by 18 inch white sign has a lovely picture of a scarecrow with a bird resting on one of its outstretched arms, which was painted by artist and neighbor, Scott Zuckerman.

If you see this wandering sign down on Route 7 or taking a break at the end of someone's lane, please notify us at DebGilbert1@aol.com and we will gladly come and get it. —DebGilbert

WE GOT GAME

We have the fever at our house. Fortunately, it doesn't require medicine or trips to the MD. Nothing Anne, Barbara, Willnett, and Charde can't cure. (The UConn Women's basketball team, for those few non-sports fans). I thought it would be great to drive in to Hartford to see the team live. After many searches on the internet, I discovered that there are tickets available. I figured it would be best to chat directly with the ticket agents. After many minutes and multiple menu options I doubted my choice. I did find a live voice and discovered tickets were not available the day we wanted, no contiguous seating available for the second-choice day (not recommended for the younger set) and another day the third tier had some seats. The operator had no clue when I referenced the high powered birding glasses.

Somewhat deflated but not willing to totally give up the game, I suggested to the clan something local. A quick call to the CCS box office revealed no-cost tickets available for all the courtside seats for the game that afternoon with



ample parking. We arrived somewhat late for the girls' game; however, the thrill of being courtside quickly embraced us. The girls showed lots of grit, skill, and overall pleasure of the game against the Giants of Sharon, although they did not win.

The boys were next and they battled hard to topple the Sharon Giants. My personal favorite home court advantage play was Will Kennedy with a break away. He cruised past an opponent while spinning a perfectly timed pass behind his back into the eager hands of Trevor Watts who lobbed it up for a basket. The boys won with lots of style, guts, and fun.

We may not get to see UConn play this year, but will return to catch the action courtside at CCS. See you there! Thanks to all of the players and coaches. —Jayne Ridgway

NEW FACES ON YOUR ROAD?

During recent months, four of the Housing Corporation's Parcel Program properties have gained new occupants. Jonathan Beardsley, Danielle Giulian, (the still adorable) Odin and two dogs are cozily packed into a trailer on their Lake Road parcel while they build something roomier. Down on Kent Road, Louise Levy is enjoying their former home, while Frankie Nickeson has moved into the house on Wright Hill Road. At the end of Masonville Road, Brenda Hall, Tina Lebeda, and their son are the first occupants of a house new to the parcel program, helping to bring it into the 21st century by rewiring, reconfiguring, and repainting. Back up on Lake Road, Cindy Kirk and Charlie Grivas hope to build on their lot this spring.

—Maggie Cooley

Events & Announcements

Board of Assessment Appeals: Any property owner who wants to appeal their October 1, 2004 Grand List assessment must file an appeal on a prescribed form. This appeal form is available from the Town Clerk's Office and must be delivered to the Town Clerk's Office or postmarked by February 22, 2005. Call the Town Clerk at 672-2709 for more information.

Park & Rec. will continue to sponsor/host ice skating at Hotchkiss School Saturdays from 7 to 8 P.M. Free skaters must wear soft hats. Teen/adult basketball, CCS gym, Mondays from 7 to 9 P.M. Teen/adult volleyball, CCS gym, Tuesdays from 7 to 9 P.M.

Land Use Office Hours: Effective January 21, the Land Use Office will be open on Friday afternoons from 12:30 to 2:30 P.M. The office will no longer be open on Friday mornings. Wednesday hours will remain unchanged: 8 A.M. to noon. Land Use Administrator Karl Nilsen is often out doing inspections, so it is best to call ahead to arrange an appointment: 672-4957.

Pasta Dinner to benefit the CCS eighth grade class trip to Washington, D.C., Tuesday and Wednesday, February 22 and 23 at The Wandering Moose. Seatings at 5:30 and 7:00 P.M., \$12 for adults, \$6 for kids under 12. Call 318-0107 (local) for reservations.

West Cornwall Video's Hours have changed. The new hours are Tuesday to Friday: 3 to 9 P.M.; Saturday and Sunday: noon to 9 P.M. Closed Mondays.

Child Center Auction, save the date! May 7, 2005—The Cornwall Child Center will celebrate its 30-Year Anniversary with a dinner and annual auction at the Torrington Country Club. Auction questions or donations, call Emilie Pryor at 672-4226.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, the show of paper doll houses fabricated by Ilisha Helfman and dreamy landscapes painted by Kathy Good will continue through the month.

West Cornwall Market is displaying photographer Asher Pavel's diverse work, and K. C. Baird, proprietor of the market, invites other artists to contact him if they would like to exhibit at the store in the future.

The Wish House is showing whimsical lexan trees constructed by Richard Griggs.

National Iron Bank will continue to show Harry Colley's photographs through mid-month.

The Outsiders Gallery will open after renovations are complete in early February (call for date: 672-6631), showing Kelly Gingras' personal collection of outsider art and Dana Gingras' sculpture and glass works.

New Books: The children's department at the Library has just received 70 new books from the Libri Foundation, which provides grants to small, rural libraries. The books were chosen by the Children's Librarian from a list of recent recommended and award-winning fiction and non-fiction. Come check out the new titles! Thank you to the Friends of the Library, whose fund-raising efforts contributed to the grant's funding requirements.

A reminder from the librarians: there might be some overdue books lurking under your bed, in a pile of papers or on the backseat of your car. Please round them up and bring them in!

Groundhog Day

An early spring sounds fine to us, so we will hope for a cloudy February 2 in downtown Punxsutawney, which doesn't mean it can't be sunny in downtown Cornwall. The best way to brighten our day at the *Chronicle* is to pop a check in the mail to help us cover our steadily increasing publishing expenses.

At the Library: Hot Chocolate Hour will begin Wednesday, February 2, and run for six weeks, a restful listening experience for third to fifth graders. Each week several chapters of an exciting adventure/fantasy book will be read, after a snack of hot chocolate and cookies. Bus transportation is provided from CCS, with parent pick-up at the Library at 4:15 P.M. A permission slip will be sent home from school.

Beginning Knitting will continue on Saturday, February 12 and 26 at 10:30 A.M. for adults and children ages seven and up. The one-hour session is led by experienced knitters who will advise and instruct as needed.

A Sweet Way to Help Tsunami Victims: American Girl Club cookie decorating and sale on Saturday, February 12 from 10:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. to benefit the Red Cross Tsunami Relief Fund. Give one to your Valentine!

Chess continues every Saturday morning at 10:00 A.M. Aficionados and debutantes welcome!

Film Classic *The Big Sleep* will be shown on Tuesday, February 8 at 2:00 P.M., once again weather permitting.

Property Tax Relief: Homeowners who were 65 or older by December 31, 2004, or those receiving Social Security disability payments, can apply to receive a credit on their property tax this July. To qualify for the credit, applicants must live in the home and must make no more than \$27,100 per year if single, or \$33,000 if married. Those who already receive a tax exemption for being a veteran of the armed services, regardless of their age, may also receive an additional exemption if they meet these income requirements. Homeowners must apply by May 16 at the Assessor's Office.

Babysitting Course: "Safe Sitter" course(s) to be offered in March and/or April for 11- to 13-year-olds. Contact certified instructors Brigitte Geyselaers at 672-3373 or Wynne Kavanagh at 672-6774.

International Dinner: On Saturday, March 5 the UCC Church School will host an International Dinner to benefit Heifer Project International. Two seatings: 5:30 and 7 P.M. \$25 per family. Individual price to be determined. For more details call the UCC at 672-6840.

Poetry Threesome: Ken Keskinen, Marie Prentice, and Dimitri Rimsky will read from their works at the Cornwall Library on Saturday, February 12, at 4 P.M. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library, and chaired by Phyllis Nauts. Refreshments generously offered, donations gratefully accepted.

Active Peacemaking will be the theme of three adult education sessions at the UCC on Sundays at 11:30 A.M. in February. On February 13, discussion will be based on a video presentation of *Oasis of Peace*, which is an intentional community in Israel in which Israeli and Palestinian families live, work, and educate their children together. On February 20, the speaker will be Rev. Allie Perry, peace and justice activist and teacher at Andover-Newton Seminary, who will speak on *Teaching Non-Violence*. On February 27, the class will be led by Ray Boucher, who is a participant in the Alternatives to Violence Project in this country and abroad; he will talk about his peace work in trauma healing in Rwanda and Burundi with the African Great Lakes Initiative. The class on February 13 will be held in the upstairs classroom in the church; the February 20 and 27 sessions will be in the Parish House. Call the church office, 672-6840, for more information. All welcome.

Red Cross Blood Drive, Monday, February 21 at the UCC Parish House from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. For appointments call the Blakeys at 672-6516. Walk-ins are welcome.

The Jam Session will continue Monday nights at UCC, beginning at 7:30 P.M. Bring your instrument or your voice — all kinds of music and musicians welcome. Call Nan Frost at 672-6013 for information.

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