



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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The State of Our Town

"Five undefeated soccer teams, low tax rates, and standardized test scores on the rise." If there was a quick pitch to be made for Cornwall, this was Gordon Ridgway's in the kick-off to his State of the Town address.

At the Cornwall Association's annual meeting, our first selectman made it clear that while instability of all sorts rattles the world around us, for the most part our little town, due to its strong sense of community, is holding steady.

Gordon stressed that community involvement is running strong in Cornwall and is a sign of a healthy town. He used the Agricultural Fair, the new Energy Task Force, and the Volunteer Fire Department as just a handful of examples of people pitching in on a wide variety of essential levels.

Over the past year, Gordon added, the town has received several state grants: one to improve the playing fields, another for the renovation of the Historical Society, and a third to help the facades of businesses in town as well as trying to slow traffic through both West Cornwall and Cornwall Bridge.

Gordon's address was not all good news, however. His talk was grounded in the reality of the moment. The challenges of the economic downturn were well acknowledged, and preparations for the likely austere times ahead are underway. Local initiatives include

a Food and Fuel Fund (tax-deductible contributions can be made to Barbara Cantoni, Cornwall Finance Officer, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753) to help families in need get through what is sure to be a pricey season.

We were also warned that in the months and possibly years ahead, state aid will tighten, especially affecting how much is doled out to our school. Again, Gordon stressed that volunteerism will be particularly important during these potentially hard times.

"The number one problem in town continues to be housing," Gordon reminded us. He gave a strong nod to Maggie Cooley, president of the Cornwall Housing Corporation, for the leadership she has provided. Cornwall is a town that other towns look to as an example of the importance of grassroots movements, especially in the area of housing.

Cornwall's excellent website stood high on Gordon's list as he ended his talk with another thank-you to the people of the town who keep this community spirited and healthy, even during the tough times that are steadily gaining on us all. —April Stevens

Be It Ever So Humble

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a married man in possession of a growing family is in want of a real estate broker. Hoping to spread out a bit, find a place with room to

stash all our junk, I asked Priscilla Miller of Bain Real Estate to delve into her Cornwall listings. Square footage, I stressed, was key. She came up with just the place for a guy who feels cramped in his current digs: Hill House, a swanky shack built by a tennis player who had hoped to put in a golf course but couldn't swing the permits. I figured I could pick it up for peanuts.

Space-wise, it seemed adequate: ten bedrooms; thirteen-and-a-half baths; indoor and outdoor pools; a home for my cat (the six-stall horse barn); garages for eight vehicles; needless to say, a tennis court; not needless to say, an inside basketball court; and 680 acres to keep pesky neighbors at arm's length.

Reminding Priscilla of the plummeting market, I asked for the best price.

"25 million," she said casually.

Some quick calculating warned me that this would increase my monthly mortgage payment to a bit over \$200,000, which is significantly more than I am currently paying. I inquired about renting it, a Lend-lease plan, but no dice—dough up front only.

"I can struggle along without 16-foot ceilings, faux marble, cherry paneling. I just need space. Don't you know of a big barn of a place?"

Her face lit up like a neon Lotto sign. Pinacle Farm was the perfect property: a 65,000 square-foot horse barn on 140 acres. No

(continued on page 2)

NOVEMBER 2008

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Village Meeting House; Men's Adult Basketball, 7 P.M. CCS Gym Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7 P.M. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Stretch Class, 5 P.M. Town Hall; Women's Adult Basketball, 7:30 P.M. CCS; Tai Chi, 7 P.M. CCS Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. St. Peter's Sundays: Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M. 672-0229 for location						1 Family Contra Dance 7 P.M. Town Hall †
2 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS	3 Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	4 ELECTION DAY VOTE 6 A.M.—8 P.M. Town Hall Election Day Soup & Bread Lunch 11 A.M.—2 P.M. UCC †	5 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 VNA Bend & Stretch Class 10 A.M. UCC Parish House	7 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	8 Old Style Life Skills Workshop 10:30 A.M.— 1:30 P.M. UCC Parish House †
9	10 Blood Pressure Screening Noon—1 P.M. UCC	11 VETERAN'S DAY Legal Holiday Closings Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	12 Seminar: Legal Issues for Seniors 11 A.M. Library † P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	13 VNA Bend & Stretch Class 10 A.M. UCC Parish House	14 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	15 Deadline: December Chronicle Copy Food Pantry Drive 9 A.M.—Noon Bairds † French Chic: Art of Decorating Houses 3 P.M. Library †
16 Iraqi Refugees Visit Cornwall 2 P.M. UCC Meeting House †	17 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	18 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	19 Workshop on Living Wills, etc. 9:30 A.M.—1 P.M. Library †	20 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. Cornwall Firehouse	21 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library Iraq War Moratorium Network: Jeff Bartos 7 P.M. Library †	22 Motherhouse Mother-Daughter Retreat 10 A.M.—3 P.M. †
23	24 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	25 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	26 Library Closes at 5 P.M. for Thanksgiving Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	27 THANKSGIVING 	28 Annual Talent Show 7:30 P.M. UCC (See Insert)	29 Library Reopens 10 A.M. Art Show Reception 3-6 P.M. Wish House † Art Show Reception 4-6 P.M. iO Gallery †
30						

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

house, but 50 deluxe stalls. That would mean everyone in my family would get 12 1/2 stalls to store their junk. Room beyond our wildest dreams.

"40-foot ceilings, one of the largest post-and-beam structures around," she agreed.

"I guess we don't really need beds, just some fresh straw," I reflected.

"There's a complete caretaker apartment," she explained. "No need to sleep in the stalls."

"Did they change the price after the real estate bust?" I asked.

"Yes, by ten million."

"Wow, that's for me! A barn reduced by ten million. It must be down to almost nothing."

"No, actually it recently went up from 25 million to 35 million."

"Well, I'll think about it," I lied, stealthily tearing up my change-of-address post cards.

—Matt Collins

Moose: Check ✓

In the fields around our house I have seen many animals, such as deer, a mother bobcat with her babies, bears, and owls, to mention a few. But there was one animal I had always wanted to see. On the morning of September 24, I finally got my wish.

My sister, Willa, and I were getting in the car to go to school when a friend pulled up. He told us to hurry down the road; there was something he thought we might like to see. We sped down Valley Road looking into the fields. Finally, in one of the last fields, we saw it: a moose! Our neighbors, the Givotovskys, some of them still in their pajamas, had beaten us to it and were already taking pictures. The moose was walking slowly across the field. It was huge, with antlers, which indicated that it was a male, better known as a bull. For a moment it walked toward us, giving us a small scare, but then it turned and headed into the trees. Now my list of animal sightings is almost complete, but I still want to see that elusive mountain lion!

—Sam Neubauer



A Challenge for Town Websites

Towns hate unfunded mandates (those statutes that require local governments to perform certain actions yet provide no money to pay for them). But certainly they're not all bad. A prime example of an unfunded mandate is a national election. We pay to administer it without complaint. Northwest Corner towns are now debating a controversial new mandate.

Buried in a recently passed state law on ethics reform was a provision that requires all town websites to post minutes of board meetings within seven days. It was effective October 1, and our check of Northwest Corner sites on that date revealed no signs of compliance, with the perverse exception of North Canaan, whose response was to simply suspend their site.

Kent has no minutes at all for 2008. Falls Village and Salisbury are reasonably up to date with the Board of Selectmen but have little else.

Cornwall's site also does not come close to the goal. The Selectmen and Board of Education are fairly current, but other boards haven't updated minutes in some time. Our website is unique in that it has no official connection with the town. It's run by a committee of the Cornwall Association and is designed by and maintained by Lazlo, who feels that the bill may not even apply to us. Mandate or not, he told us: "We'd like to have up-to-date minutes, and it has improved recently, but we can't post what we don't get."

Gordon Ridgway showed little concern about the law's impact here. "We have an amazingly informative site, run by volunteers, which is typical of Cornwall. Some clerks are also volunteers, which makes it hard to comply." Gordon also felt that there would be no enforcement unless someone had a freedom-of-information gripe.

Still, it is hard to understand why this requirement is so onerous. Karen Griswold Nelson, zoning enforcement officer and clerk for the zoning commissions, pointed out that she preferred to send approved minutes, which can delay things, but she conceded that it was not a real problem and that she sometimes fell behind.

Karen Bartomioli, who reported on this in *The Lakeville Journal*, told us, "The volunteer issue is really a non-issue; a lot of boards now have hired clerks. Getting minutes out is part of their jobs. Overall, they were contrite about having to be forced to accomplish what they have been meaning to do."

It's not clear how this will resolve, and perhaps additional pressure will come from the public or the press, for whom updated minutes are a great resource.

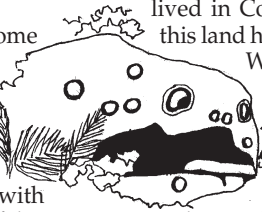
One thing did become clear to us in comparing websites: in both design and content, no town's site comes close to Cornwall's. It opens with Lazlo's gorgeous photos. Then you can click on Anne Baren's calendar, Richard Griggs's pictures, Brenda Underwood's profiles, the exchange, the marketplace, the current issue of the *Chronicle*, and much more. Karen Bartomioli agrees that it's the best: "It is actually fun to use because it's so easy to navigate. Its features are inspired; Cornwall's strong suit is all those talented folks. Oh, and don't quote me. (Just kidding. I never get to say that.)" —Ed Ferman

Coltsfoot Cows

Last week a small group gathered at the top of the Coltsfoot Valley to watch Dan Gracey and a few helpers herd his cattle down Pine Street, along Valley Road, and finally out into their new open pasture. Perhaps to some of you this is hardly news. But to others, the ones who stood there and many who have since noted the new occupants, this was a sweet moment in Cornwall. A rare moment, in fact, to see things as they had once been.

The great valley field, one of the town's loveliest views, has now stood for years as open grazing land to deer. But to anyone who has lived in Cornwall for, say, several decades, this land had always been dotted with cows.

Without the cows, something has been missing. But now, thanks to Dan, and Rob Lansing, owner and leaser of the property, we can stand up at the head of the valley again and gaze out at the small herd of deep-chocolate-colored American Milking Devon, knee-deep in grass, swatting at flies, chomping away, just like it used to be. —April Stevens



Good-Bye to a Friend

Janet Bane

Congratulations

Rusty Cheney and Anna Trentadue
Krista Ruut and Jay VanCoughnett
Martine Trittoleno and Jaime Longhi

Land Transfers

Evaldo Mendes to Countrywide Home Loans, Inc., foreclosure on property at 268 Great Hollow Road. Property was then transferred from Countrywide Home Loans, Inc., to Federal National Mortgage Association.

Francis M. Deluca, Trustee, to State of Connecticut, 249 acres on River Road and Music Mountain Road for \$3,300,000.

A Volunteer Job a Day

Unscientific reports have been floated about that say helping others is immeasurably better for people than vitamins. Since a healthy lifestyle is best established when a person is young, here are some suggestions about where Cornwall's youth can volunteer.

Perhaps the simplest way to lend a helping hand is by reaching out to townsfolk who are ill or housebound. A simple note or a planned visit can raise spirits and connect the generations. As one woman put it, "Whenever I received a note, it told me I was not forgotten." Our local worship communities keep lists of folks who would benefit from a planned visit or note: UCC, Peg Keskinen, 672-6486; St Bridget's, 672-6515; and St. Peter's, 672-6897.

Some of our young people volunteer their time with the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department. They attend drills or classes in safety. After age 14 and appropriate training, limited participation in actual emergencies can begin. Some junior members have already gone on to become active members of CVFD, eligible for the Hepprich Scholarship to attend college. There are two groups in the junior department. Kids ages 8-12 may become a junior if a parent is a member of CVFD who will attend with their child. Thirteen-year-olds may become junior members without a parent in the department. CVFD is ready for new members; call Gordon Ridgway at 672-4959.

The Cornwall Library recently recruited a fine group of youth volunteers. They are at work cataloguing and covering new books, working at the circulation desk checking

books in and out, and shelving the returns. Amy Buck reports that their newest recruits "are savvy with computers and quick to learn other skills, so we're finding that they make excellent volunteers." The Library is not looking for more help at this time, but keep an eye on their newsletter for when they may need new volunteers.

There are volunteer opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast, the animal lover, and even the over-extended young person. Cornwall Conservation Trust needs trail monitors. It's easy: just take some time to walk the property and its trails, clear stray branches, rake sections that need it, and report more serious issues. Call Emilie Pryor at 672-4226 or Rick Lynn at 672-6572. Animal lovers can contact Jim Levy at The Little Guild of St. Francis to find out ways to help our four-legged neighbors (672-6346). It is also possible to help even if your time is limited. Consider setting aside a portion of your allowance or earnings to donate to Cornwall's Food and Fuel Fund. Our social services director, Jill Gibbons, can provide more information at 672-2603.

Okay, kids can still keep taking their vitamins, but helping others builds character and skills through real-life experience. All this is only a phone call away. —*Deirdre Fischer*

History Here and Now

About noon on an overcast fall Saturday, the area near the National Iron Bank in Cornwall Bridge was crowded with cars. I encountered Jim Terrall, just come into town. He looked at all the cars. "What is this?" he quipped. "A run on the bank?"

No, the cars had nothing to do with the nation's wobbly finances. Mid-morning, the parking lot had been the starting point of a walking tour of Cornwall Bridge, the last of three town village tours sponsored by the Cornwall Historical Society (CHS). Jeremy Brecher and long-time resident Dody Clarke-Wolfe led over 30 walkers into the annals of an intriguing past, most of it down under the soaring, shadowing mass of reinforced concrete that overwhelmed the old town in 1930.

It's hard to imagine old-time Cornwall Bridge, before the Great Depression, before the construction of the big Routes 4 and 7 triangle. The main north-south road (dirt, of course) ran past the still-standing railroad station. Along or near this road were three general stores, a blacksmith shop (later garage), a hotel and tavern, an active Methodist church, a milk transfer station (farmer-to-railroad), and even a big vinegar factory. One could buy coal, feed, clothing, shoes, nostrums, and notions. Nearly nothing remains.

In the Northwest Corner, the mid-19th century was truly the Iron Age (note the name of our local bank). According to the map/brochure prepared by the CHS, "The Cornwall Bridge Iron Company, probably Cornwall's largest factory building ever, opened on what came to be known as Furnace Brook. [On the east side of the present Route 4, just above the town. Explore the massive stoneworks yourself.] The company dominated the village

Poem to the Chronicle

HALF-STEIN

An Odic Ruminaton
on the Workings of a Cow

*Sing Ho the Cow! (of genus Bos)—
For her this verse I now compose!
Her awkward frame has special parts
that challenge all creative arts.*

*Here my portrait has implied
the hidden stomachs beneath the hide.
The first compartment's called the "rumen"
(you won't find it in a human)
where bovines drop their mouthful grassy;
and when they feel both gross and gassy,
they begin to eructate,
and so the cud regurgitate.
Again they chomp the bolus lumpy
and send it down the channel bumpy.
Through stomachs (four!) it now will pass;
transformed, it finally plops on grass.
(For cows require no water closets
for all their various deposits.
They wear no dresses, pants or girdle,
and, tail-high, make pastures fertile.)*

*Behold each bag, so plump an udder—
the source of milk, ice cream, and butter.
Now when each cow emits her calf,
it also longs for half-and-half.*

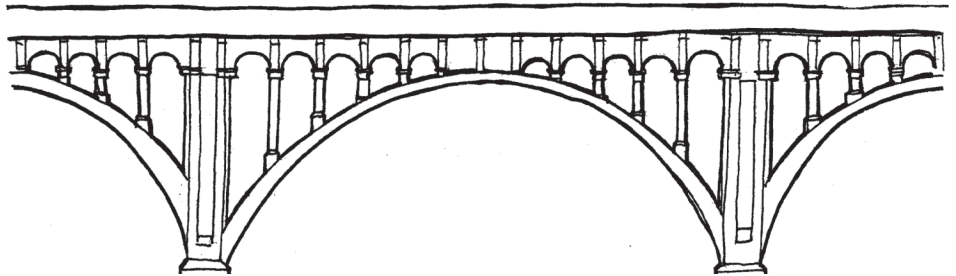
*Well-licked and nudged, it staggers up
on spindly legs to sip and sup.
Will it grow up? Will business zeal
see better bucks in cuts of veal?
Will agribusiness now take off its
calves and produce just for profits?*

*Oh, gone are Wordsworth's pipes and tabors,
and milkmaids who, at cowed labors
on shiny stools, with fingers tug
at every friendly dripping dug.*

*Now cows with flat triangle faces,
with flicking ears, with soulful gazes,
with swishing tails and well-tongued noses,
are hooked up snug to lengthy hoses.
With a hum and a thump and a quiet beat,
machines suck milk from each greased-up teat.
Yet cows still have those vital parts—
stomachs, uteri, bags and hearts.
They give us food, they keep us fed—Oh
joy to see them munch the meadow!*

*Sing Ho the cow! Sing Ho! Come boss!
It's she we praise for her super sauce!
Sing Ho the Guernsey! Ho the Jersey!
Sing Ho the Holstein!
End of versey.*

—*Ken Keskinen*



News in Brief

from 1833 to 1890 with its 31-foot-high furnace, tenant houses, and company store. It employed 100 workers and 100 animals [sic] and annually produced 3,000 tons of iron, largely for wheels for railroad cars."

A covered bridge, a little over 100 yards north of the present bridge, crossed the Housatonic. In the late 1920s, the state—foreseeing the problems of a one-lane bridge carrying Routes 4 and 7 traffic—developed plans for what is still the longest open-spandrel, reinforced concrete bridge in Connecticut. In 1930, this meant 200 days of noise, dirt, dust, and general confusion. The result: a lofty concrete span that overshadowed the old town and cut it off from commerce. Docent Dody: "My father claimed to be the first person to drive across that new bridge, on an old Indian motorcycle over a lot of planks."

The old covered bridge still carried local traffic until ice on high water took it out in 1936. Now the CHS carries whatever memories and records remain. The "info-map" brochures of Cornwall Village, Cornwall Bridge, and West Cornwall are available at the Cornwall Library.

—*Bob Potter*

- On the advice of the town attorney and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection following their discussions with Dan Cain's lawyer, the town has agreed to allow Mr. Cain to apply for a permit to burn brush at Hedgerows Farm this month with special, unique requirements attached. These include the posting of \$3,000 cash bond and inspection of burn piles by the fire marshal prior to burning. This reverses Fire Marshal Stan MacMillan's ban on any burning on the property as reported in the June *Chronicle*. The permit is renewable if all conditions are met. The town will refer any further violations directly to the DEP for action.

- The Energy Task Force continues its campaign to have Cornwall become the first town in the state to sign up 30 percent of its households for clean energy and claim the award: a 5kW solar panel system valued at \$50,000. We are now at 24 percent, or 156.5 households, the highest in the state, and need just 40 more to reach the goal of 196. For details and to enroll in the program: cwselectmen@optonline.net, 672-4959, or kfreygang@aol.com, 672-6010.

• Before you set off on a fall hike, be sure to check out the new Cornwall Conservation Trust website: cornwallconservationtrust.org, where you can download maps of their two public hiking trails and also a map of all protected property in town.

• A committee to set guidelines for applications from business owners for monies from the Small Town Economic Assistance Program's \$150,000 grant is being formed by the selectmen and will include P&Z member Rick Lynn, who has experience working on a similar grant in Litchfield. The independent committee will be responsible for the distribution and use of funds in the village centers and other areas of town and oversight of approved projects. "This is a win-win grant," according to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, who reports that he's already received six requests for projects. "The local businesses get facelifts and the local construction employment goes up. We hope to have guidelines established by next month and some work underway early next year."

• Local fundraising is holding fairly steady despite national financial turmoil. September and October were busy months for fundraising activities, and the bottom line is that Cornwall, with help from neighbors, gave generous support to four recent events. The Blair Brown and Sam Waterston reading on September 21 added \$6,546 to the Cornwall Historical Society's building renovation fund. The Cow Chip Raffle at the Ag Fair on September 20 netted \$1,283 for the Volunteer Fire Department. The Library book sale held on Columbus Day weekend took in \$2,300 for its operating fund. The house tour held October 11 raised \$17,500 for the Cornwall Housing Corporation.

—Audrey Ferman



Keep the Presses Rolling

As 2008 ends, donors to nonprofits will start choosing which causes and organizations will receive their dollars. The *Chronicle* respectfully submits that your donation will keep the paper publishing and the news of Cornwall before its citizens. In these times that's something to be thankful for.

Events & Announcements

Remember to Vote on Tuesday, November 4, 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. at the Town Hall. You may vote for president and vice president (but no other offices) *even if you are not registered*, by applying to the town clerk for a special presidential ballot up to and on Election Day. Contact the town clerk: 672-2709.

Election Day Soup and Bread Lunch: 11 A.M. to 2 P.M., UCC Parish House. Donations accepted. Proceeds go to the Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund.

Interior Designer and Antiques Specialist Florence de Dampierre will discuss her new book, *French Chic: The Art of Decorating Houses*, at the Library November 15, 3 P.M.

Motherhouse Events

• November 1, 7 to 9:30 P.M.: Family Square, Circle, and Contra Dance at Town Hall.

• November 8, 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.: Old Style Life Skills Workshop on using butchered "spare parts," UCC Parish House. Potluck lunch to follow. Registration required.

• November 22, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.: Mother-Daughter Retreat. Registration required.

For more information, fees, and to register: Debra@Motherhouse.us or 672-0229.

A Seminar on Legal Issues Facing Seniors will be held at the Cornwall Library November 12 at 11 A.M. The importance of having current health care instructions, powers of attorney, and other planning tools will be discussed by Michelle M. Liguori, elder care attorney, and Dolores R. Schiesel, former Kent first selectman. For details call Jill Gibbons, 672-2603.

A Food Drive to help restock the Food Pantry will be held Saturday, November 15, 9 A.M. to noon at Baird's General Store in celebration of Quinn Hedden's third birthday. Donations of non-perishable items such as canned goods, pasta, rice, cereals, household cleaning supplies, and personal care items are needed. Call Erin Hedden at 672-2917 for pick-up. Drop offs may also be made at Reilly's Egg Stand on Route 125.

Iraqi Refugees to Speak: Sunday, November 16, 2 P.M. at UCC. The refugees benefited from Cornwall's contributions to Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS), whose director, Chris George, will also speak. Information: 672-6797 or 672-6882.

A Free Workshop on Living Wills and powers of attorney will be provided by Cramer & Anderson, LLP, at the Library on November 19 from 9:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. Attendance at the workshop is by appointment only, and attendees will receive free living wills and powers of attorney to be executed the same day. Call 672-2603 for an appointment.

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, Virginia Pierrepont's show of photographs, *Ghastly Ghouls and Goblins, a Haunting Effect*, continues through November 6.

Beginning November 11, Don Bracken will exhibit some of his recent paintings.

The Wish House will host a reception on Saturday, November 29, from 3 to 6 P.M., for the works of artist Ben Hotchkiss and wearable art and accessories made by Carol Schneider.

At the iO Gallery, *Circus Freaks* continues through November. On November 29, a holiday show featuring local artists will open with a reception from 4 to 6 P.M.

Northern Exposure Photographic Gallery's exhibit *Seasons: A Passage of Time* continues through November.

Cornwall Iraq Moratorium Network: Friday, November 21, 7 P.M. at the Library. The speaker will be Jeff Bartos, Iraq veteran and member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. Information: 672-0183.

The 11th Annual Talent Show to benefit the Cornwall Library: Friday, November 28, at 7:30 P.M. at UCC. This year's emcee is Karl Saliter. See insert for details.

Twelve Colorful Photos of Cornwall's Barns will be featured in 2009 calendars available from the Cornwall Historical Society. On sale Thanksgiving weekend. Price: \$15. To reserve a copy: 672-0505.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER ISSUE

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DECEMBER ISSUE

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