



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 23 : NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 2013



Fire at the Castle

From his home on Everest Hill, Will Calhoun saw the billowing smoke on the morning of January 6 and made the initial call. A storage building beyond the south end of Valley Road was on fire. Supporting personnel and equipment from neighboring villages assisted our Cornwall crew. The stone and timber building was on the grounds of the 1920s-era castle now owned by Wall Street financier Alphonse "Buddy" Fletcher.

According to Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department Chief Earle Tyler, the building's stone walls and asbestos roof held the fire and heat until all reached a critical mass. Fighting the blaze was complicated by the inability of the fire trucks to pass safely over a temporary bridge to reach a convenient pond. The main bridge had been washed away some time ago, leaving only one option to the fire crews: laying one-half mile of hose and using portable pumps to draw water from a brook.

The building had been filled with various materials and contained a small apartment and unused dog kennels. No one was injured, although many of the firefighters were on the scene most of the day. Unofficial findings indicate that mice in the wiring may have been the culprits.

—Jeff Jacobson

Mohawk Invests In Winter

In early December, the *Hartford Courant* publicized the prediction of a group of Canadian climate researchers that all ski areas in Connecticut would be forced to close within a few decades. This was news to Mohawk Ski Area's owner Carol Lugar. Her recent five-year plan, far from showing signs of retrenchment, highlights several new building and operational enhancements. "Nobody's crystal ball works," Carol is quick to point out. But to hear her talk, the biggest challenge to skiing in Cornwall isn't global climate change, but human psychology.

Indeed, any warming trend may have less effect on Mohawk than other areas in Connecticut: Cornwall is in the highest corner of the state, Mohawk is the third highest peak, and often when it snows on the mountain it's raining on the Housatonic. During last year's warm winter, Mohawk's open days fell well within the range of a normal year—and significantly above other nearby ski areas. More problematic is the average skier's perception that if there isn't snow in the backyard, there's none up on Mohawk. Says Carol: "We had sufficient snow and good

conditions all season, but people didn't believe it!"

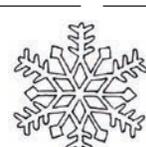
Stockpiling snow at every available opportunity is the key ingredient in Mohawk's operation. The crew takes advantage of any eight-hour window of below-freezing temperatures, except when very cold and dry air impedes efficiency. A deep layer of man-made snow lasts well into March. "We work harder because we're smaller," says Carol.

Carol describes Mohawk's current five-year plan this way: "We're looking to increase space and efficiency, not skiers." Square footage in the 1960s-era lodge has been eaten up over the years by gear, equipment, and rental operations. The lodge's streamside situation precludes expansion on site, so a new satellite building is planned for the Laurel Slope area—close to the ski area's historic Pine Lodge and original driveway entrance. New carpet and chairlifts should allow Mohawk to maintain a policy of "no lift lines."

Particularly emphasized in the five-year plan are children's and beginners' programs. In fact, ideas for the future (besides opening up some of the gorgeous cross-country ski trails at the top of the mountain with man-made snow)

FEBRUARY 2013

(continued on page 2)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 5:45–7 pm CCS Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6–9 pm Town Hall; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Thursdays: Toddler Play Group, 10:30–11:30 am Library		Saturdays: Park & Rec Skating, 7–8 pm Hotchkiss School Schmidt Rink Sundays: Meditation, 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672–0229			1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

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include a children's program center building.

Although "right now we prefer to put profits into the winter business," Carol has every intention of maintaining Mohawk's position as Cornwall's largest employer, warming trend or not. Among options considered and rejected as summer uses for the area: golf (terrain unfit) and mountain biking (tried and failed). Which leaves on the table one idea promoted by many customers but largely discounted by Carol, since it requires a "whole different infrastructure" for a short season of summer fun: waterslides.

—Paul De Angelis

A Descent of Redpolls

January 1, midmorning: River Road in West Cornwall village. Two very small, streaked birds with red caps, dark faces, and tiny bright yellow bills are on the tube feeder, munching black oil sunflower seeds like nobody's business. Wow, they're redpolls! What a wonderful New Year's gift for a birder! Although they have visited Connecticut in recent winters, really big flights are uncommon—like one that occurred during January of 1996—and I soon found out that they are being seen throughout the state. My pair of redpolls became eight to ten the next day, then 15 to 20 and 35 to 40 on succeeding days as "the news got around." On January 11, Joe Ellis on Town Street had 100-plus visit his feeder—and then leave abruptly—while a birder in Winchester reported over 200 on the same day!

Common redpolls (*Carduelis flammula*) are chickadee-sized and usually live in the far north, nesting at the arctic tundra edge of the boreal forest, then forming huge flocks in winter, casting about in undulating flight to find and feed on the seeds of catkin-bearing trees like birches and alders. When seed crops are poor, they irrupt into the northern states and become "wandering winter finches" along with pine siskins, crossbills, and pine grosbeaks.

A big flock of small birds energetically feeding in the crown of a white birch on a crisp winter afternoon may well be redpolls. At a feeder and enjoying them more closely—red-topped heads bobbing, minisquabbles breaking out all over, and noisy "eeeeeks" and "chit chit" call notes all part of the scene—they are a delight.

Both common and hoary redpolls have the distinction of being able to survive colder temperatures than any other songbirds and they are usually unsuspecting and even tame. Here in southern New England, they are also irregular, sporadic, unpredictable, and fleeting winter visitors, as well as being very much welcome!

—Art Gingert

Get Them Out of Town?

It's time we did something for seniors, and since the state government says it will provide buses free of charge, the Cornwall Committee for Seniors, working with Cornwall Park and Recreation, is planning a number of excursions.

The first scheduled road trip is to the 32nd annual Connecticut Flower & Garden Show (Love in Bloom) on February 21 in Hartford. "Seniors have been asking for trips," says Chairperson Jane Prentice, who hopes to organize similar field trips every three months.

Recent census data indicate that more than 28 percent of Cornwall's population is over 55, and the Committee for Seniors' goal is to "enhance seniors' lives in Cornwall." After a hiatus while the name changed and a survey was taken, the committee is working energetically to fulfill its goal, coordinating with the Cornwall Library for courses and with Park & Rec for sports-related activities. Stay tuned. According to Becky Hurlburt, Park & Rec director, her group "didn't hesitate" when the committee approached her with the idea of developing activities for Cornwall's seniors. One such is the informal luncheon originally suggested by Russ Sawicki and held every first Tuesday (alternately at the Wandering Moose and the General Store). Also, after last year's success, the second annual Valentine's Day Lunch will be held again at the Cornwall Inn and hosted by Park & Rec. Interested parties should contact Becky Hurlburt. Space is limited, so names will be drawn by lottery at the Park & Rec meeting on Feb. 4. (For mature audiences only: you must be 65 or older.)

Currently, the Committee for Seniors, which is officially a seven-member advisory group, has a make-up of only six (Jane Prentice, Mary Dzenutis, Margaret Haske, Robert Judge, Lucy Kling, and Bob Potter). Anyone interested in coming on board, please contact the first selectman, even if, as Bob Potter has said: "With a Judge and a Potter, who needs anything else?"

—Gregory Galloway

The Recipe Box

A friend of mine from Cornwall once looked inside my refrigerator and said, "I don't know how you Austrians survive past 40." She was referring to the contents—a pound of butter, half a dozen eggs, sugar, chocolate, cocoa, nuts, whipping cream. And I hate to admit it, but it was all for one cake.

The recipe came from an old, index-card-size wooden box of dozens and dozens of family desserts that my Viennese mother, Lilly, had inherited. She left it for me, and as

I was going through it, I realized the recipes date back to mid-19th century. I'm now the fourth generation to have it.

This box actually came across the ocean: in 1936 my Austrian grandparents emigrated to America by boat. Many of the boxes Europeans packed were mysteriously missing when they got to America. Fortunately for my family, a couple of them did actually make it—my grandmother was smart enough to wear all her jewelry, but why did she pack the recipe box? Was it as precious to her as the diamonds and pearls? Was it a way of holding on to something, anything, of the old world?

My great aunt Ella, born in 1883, taught my grandmother Lizzy how to make the desserts, and Lizzy continued the traditions. She could turn a ball of dough in the middle of our dining room table, stretch out a sheet so thin that I could read a newspaper through it. She taught my mother how to make these desserts, but Mom also had a terrific sense of humor; creative enough to take up a challenge from a fellow Cornwallian to create what is now known as Sieben Unterhosen Torte (Seven Pairs of Underwear Cake): seven layers of perfectly crisped meringue and layers of chocolate cream shaped like boxers, replete with buttons and zipper.

I know many Cornwallians, but I'm amazed when complete strangers meet me, recognize my last name, and say "Of course I remember your mother! She made the most delicious dessert..."

The further I delved into The Box, the more stumbling blocks I found: most of the recipes were written in German and in metric measurements, many were written in my great aunt Ella's spidery, faded handwriting, but worst of all, most of them didn't include directions. But just having The Box is my heritage.

Today I only make those artery-clogging cakes for special events, still using the old Austrian recipes. Someone insisted that I reveal at least one, and now that the holiday season is over, I'll give it to you: eat salad.

—Diana Hollander

Welcome

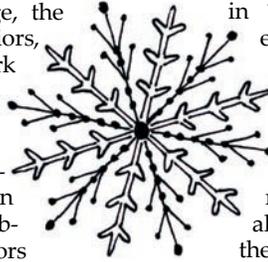
Lillian Ann Locher to Arianna and Brian Locher

Goodbye to a Friend

Nancy Ashton

Land Transfers

John Cichon, Paul Kennett, David Polke, Patricia Salvarezza, Antoinette Stowell, Theodore Symeon, Peter Scribner, and Thomas Roberts to Kent Land Trust, Inc., 69.474 acres bounding the Kent-Cornwall town line, for \$488,920 (also 151.459 acres in Kent and 20.669 acres in Warren for a total of \$1,700,000 in all three towns) Deborah S. Corwin (n/k/a Deborah L. Smith) to Elise Pettus, 1.75 acres with all improvements thereon at 26 Jewel Street, for \$162,500.



Cornwall Child Center Gets a Boost

At the annual New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast held at the UCC in Cornwall Village, delicious pancakes and sausages were served, while a large crew of volunteers cooked, cleaned, and served. Over 200 people attended the event, which this year benefited the Stephen Frost Memorial Scholarship at The Cornwall Child Center. Stephen Frost was a Cornwall teenager who died of leukemia. One of his last requests was that a memorial to help children be set up in his name. His parents, Charlotte and Denny Frost, carried out his wishes through this fund. The scholarship is in place to assist parents with the cost of child care at the center. Thanks to the efforts of those involved with the pancake breakfast, it now has funds available! (Another event in support of the Child Center, a winter social, is coming up on March 2. For details, see the insert.)

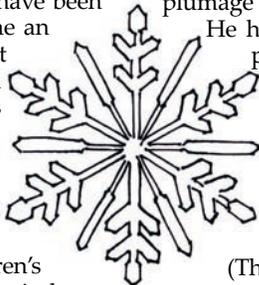
The Cornwall Child Center offers a toddler program, for children ages 1 to 3; a preschool program, for children 3 to 5; and the A.S.K. (afterschool kids) program, offered at Cornwall Consolidated School for children in kindergarten through fifth grade. The toddler and preschool rooms are open from 7:30 A.M. to 5 P.M. and the A.S.K. program from 2:55 to 5:30 P.M. If you are interested in applying for the Stephen Frost Scholarship, please contact Amy Bresson, director of the center, for more information. —Jen Nestler

Felix and the Pileated Woodpecker

It was my grandfather "Lawyer Sam" Scoville who got us all watching birds. Besides lawyering, Sam was a writer and an amateur naturalist. He died when I was 5, but by then the whole family was hooked. I read all his books: *Man and Beast*, *Lords of the Wild*, *The Out-of-Doors Club* and the rest. I grew up watching not only birds, but animals and snakes—everything in the whole big gorgeous natural shebang.

Five years ago, we took over the house that Sam built in Cornwall. One afternoon, watching the orange flash of a Baltimore Oriole high in our oak, it occurred to me that the bird's ancestors might have been watched by my own. It gave me an odd feeling. Of course I don't think my grandfather had anything to do with it, but I was pretty sure that, if Sam were around, he'd be delighted to see me watching.

This Christmas I gave Felix, my six-year-old grandson, a pair of binoculars and a children's bird book. We sat in the window overlooking the lake, leafing through the pages. He was keen, but I warned him that we might not see anything interesting at



3-ON 3-HOOPS

With several NBA scouts in the stands, seven teams hit the hardwood at the CCS gym on January 5 to participate in the first annual Cornwall 3-on-3 Basketball Tourney. The winner of the event was Sharon's Team RHL, which defeated the scrappy Cornwall Globetrotters in a tight 15-12 final. The Trotters were led by Coach Tom Baird, former CCS and Housy star Kyle Robinson, Dave Heacox, and Dan Riney. Fine play and excellent sportsmanship were exhibited throughout the day, and all hamstrings remained intact! Special thanks to Becky Hurlburt and Park and Rec. All participants look forward to an even bigger and better tourney next year!

—Jon Old



warmest clothes, gathering our music, and braving the cold to sing Christmas carols around the village.

This year we sang for almost three hours, stopping at 16 houses (eight of which were illuminated but empty), with three that invited us in for more singing, food, and good cheer. The warm fire, hot cider, and cookies warmed the younger set; those of us with—shall we say—more years of caroling under our belts enjoyed a little Christmas spirit to keep us warm.

Keep an eye (or rather ear) out for us next year; we always need a few good voices, but an enthusiastic audience also keeps us in good singing form! So when the days get darker again, start thinking of a few of your favorite carols to request when we appear at your door. —Maja Gray

HERALDS OF THE SEASON

Cornwall Village in wintertime seems like something out of a painting: snow piled on roofs, windows lit with candles, evergreens draped with lights. And if you look out your window on the right night, you might even find some Christmas carolers. Every year a group of hardy Cornwallites (usually including some Grays and Calhouns, with various friends) heralds the Christmas season by bundling up in our

QUERY ABOUT CORNWALL WOMEN FORUM

The Cornwall Historical Society is planning an exhibit about Cornwall women. Does anyone remember who videotaped the "Cornwall Women Tell How it Was" forum at the Cornwall Library on January 11, 2003? If so, please tell Jeremy Brecher at 672-6046 or jbrecher@igc.org —Jeremy Brecher

first. I was a little worried: beginners want showy, exciting birds, but what's usually around are crows and sparrows.

I heard a quiet, steady tapping, and I looked out. Ten feet away was a big black and white bird, clinging to the trunk of the ash tree, drumming his way towards dinner.

"Oh. My. Gosh," I said. "Felix! That's a pileated woodpecker!"

Felix looked out, wide-eyed.

The spectacular pileated is our largest native woodpecker, (except for the ivory-billed, which may or may not still be extant, deep in the southern forests). But the pileated is very extant up here.

"Pileated" means "crested," and his crest is scarlet, with a zany point on the end like a jester's. His bold black and white plumage is patterned like Venetian livery.

He has a long serpentine neck and a powerful bill. He eats boring insects, ants and grubs. You've seen the gigantic holes he makes, drilling for carpenter ants, but don't blame him for damaging the tree: ants have already hollowed it out.

He nests in trees himself. (Though once a pair of pileateds took over my bluebird box. They enlarged the entrance, but no matter how large it was they still couldn't fit inside. They were like giants trying to sit at a kindergarten table.)

Like most woodpeckers, the pileated is shy. I know they're around, but I rarely see one. So on Christmas morning I was thrilled to see it, the scarlet cockade, the Venetian livery, all of it.

"Fee," I whispered, "This is your first ten minutes of bird watching, and you're seeing one of the great American birds. This is almost a miracle."

"Yes," Felix whispered.

Of course I don't think my grandfather had anything to do with this, but it was funny, wasn't it? —Roxana Robinson

Cornwall Briefs

•**Conservation Trust:** Cornwall has hit the grant jackpot once again, this time to the mind-boggling tune of \$450,000. It comes from the state's Open Space Program and goes to the Cornwall Conservation Trust for the purchase and preservation of 84-plus acres of the Cooley Farm off Cherry Hill Road. The money is half of what the trust needs to make the \$900,000 purchase, and trust Chair Bart Jones said his group is seeking additional funds via the USDA's Farm and Ranchland Protection Act.

•**Truck 6:** The oddly decorated vehicle parked for weeks with a "for sale" sign in front of the Cornwall Bridge Firehouse has been sold to a buyer for its parts. The

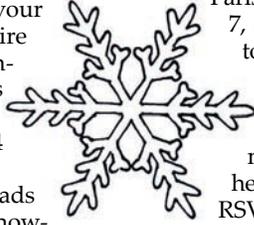
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\$826.51 paid for it will go toward a fund for a future ambulance. And, on the subject of ambulances, be extra nice to your friends in Goshen. Their fire department loaned us an ambulance for the two weeks ours was being repaired after it collided with a deer on Route 4 returning from a call.

•**Parking:** Is a no-no on town roads during and after winter snowstorms.

—John Miller



The AARP-Sponsored Program Decide-Create-Share will be presented by the Cornwall Woman's Society at the UCC Parish House on Thursday, February 7, (snow date February 14) from 10 to 11:30 A.M. In this session, women help each other plan: how to reduce health risks, pay for long-term care, prepare the home to meet future needs, and ensure health care wishes are followed. RSVP: 860-248-3089. Refreshments served.

Motherhouse Events

A Big Little Kids Dance, for younger kids and parents, will be held February 9 from 4 to 5 P.M. at the town hall, followed by a finger food potluck. Donation of \$10 per family. Tom Hanford (caller) and friends.

A Free Family Cow Forum will take place on Saturday, February 23, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the UCC Parish House (refreshments at 9.30 A.M.) To RSVP email Debra@Motherhouse.us or call 672-0229.

Native American Flutist Joseph FireCrow will give a benefit concert on February 10 at 3 P.M. at the United Church of Christ. See insert for more details.

A **Mardi Gras Pancake Supper** will be held at the UCC Parish House on February 12, 5 to 7 P.M. Menu: pancakes, maple syrup, sausages, and applesauce. Have fun with beads and mask making for all ages. Donations for a work trip to the Pine Ridge Reservation are welcome. No reservations necessary.

Cornwall Seniors 65 and Up are invited to a Valentine's Day lunch at the Cornwall Inn on February 14 from noon to 2:30 P.M. Buffet lunch, music, chocolate! Bring your sweetheart, or meet one there. Hosted and paid for by Cornwall Park & Rec. Seating limited, must RSVP by February 4 to Becky at prcornwall@gmail.com or 672-4071.

Free Energy Audits are Offered from the Cornwall Energy Task Force and statewide Home Energy Solutions (HES) Program. Pay \$75 up front for this \$750 value (all refunded for the first 25 households, \$50 to others.) Sign up at <http://bit.ly.com/cornwallhes> or call 1-888-403-3500. More info at cornwallctenergy.org. Last chance to attend a home energy audit demo is Friday, February 15, at 10 A.M. at 10 Pine Street in the village.

At The Cornwall Library

The fourth Winter Jazz Night hosted by the Friends of the Cornwall Library is scheduled for February 23 from 6 to 9 P.M.: music by Bob Parker's Jive by Five and fantastic southern and Cajun food. An original Robert Parker painting will be auctioned. Cash bar. Make reservations at the library or call 672-6874. Tickets are \$20 (or with a \$50 donation).

The winter film series kicks off on Saturday, February 16, at 7:30 P.M. with three documentaries celebrating Fred Astaire's career; also sweets to celebrate Valentine's Day. John Miller and Joy Boyum host. Suggested donation \$6 or \$10 per couple. Four more films coming up, with Ingmar Bergman's *Virgin Spring* on March 2.

Senior Bus Trip to the 32nd annual Connecticut Flower & Garden Show, Love in Bloom, in Hartford on Thursday, February 21. Depart at 9 A.M., return by 3 P.M. Admission is \$11, lunch can be purchased there, transportation is free. Must RSVP by February 11 to Becky at prcornwall@gmail.com or 672-4071.

A Winter Social to benefit the Cornwall Child Center will be held on March 2, 6 to 9 P.M. at the residence of Jeff and Gail Jacobson. See insert for details.

Applications For a Hearing before the Board of Assessment Appeals must be received by February 20. Hearings will be scheduled during March.

The Woman's Society, started in 1925, is seeking new members to carry the baton forward into its 100th year. Meetings are at 10 A.M. in the UCC Parish House on the first Thursday of the month. Call Brenda Underwood at 860-248-3089.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

THIS MONTH

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Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall

At the Cornwall Library, the Faces of India exhibit has been extended through February.

Caravan, at the Cornwall Bridge Gallery, will close with a celebration on February 15, 8 P.M. to midnight.

At the Souterrain Gallery, paintings by Jane and Nan Bevans will be shown through February 10. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, February 16, from 3 to 6 P.M. for the next exhibit: works by Polly Cook and Shaun MacDavid.

A **Pasta Bonanza Supper** on February 2 will be served from 5 to 7 P.M. Donations benefit the Heifer Project. Call the UCC church office for more info, 672-6840.

Dance Off Your Heifer Supper at the Cornwall Community Contra Dance on Saturday, February 2, at 7 P.M. at the town hall. Music by Still the Homegrown Band, calling by Patricia Campbell. All ages and left feet welcome. Donation suggested. For info, call Jane at 672-6101.

Monthly Senior Luncheon on Tuesday, February 5, from 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. at the Wandering Moose. Come meet representatives from the Chore Service, Friendly Visitors, and Garden Angels. No reservations necessary. Questions, call Jane at 672-6101.



Cold February Ahead

For what it's worth, the Farmer's Almanac is predicting a very cold and snowy February. So stir up the fire, and get your hand out of its mitten long enough to write the *Chronicle* a check. Thanks!

THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

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