Goodbye to a Friend: 2013

The year 2013 is now in the record books and your Chronicle, as Cornwall's newsheet of record, has tried to keep on top of things. Sometimes it's a month late, but eventually most of the news that's fit to print finds its way to your mailbox.

So, what will historians many years from now find in the 48 pages of the 2013 Chronicle?

The January issue reported that "it looks like the last chapter in the Rumsey Hall saga has gone to press." Andrew Hingson, like the last chapter in the Rumsey Hall Chronicle, as Cornwall’s newsheet, seems to have ended.

However, that same issue announced the $58,268 for demolition and other costs. The owner of record, had paid the town $58,268 for demolition and other costs. Perhaps the unplanned vacation helped the CCS boys basketball team win the Region One Championship for the third straight year, edging Salisbury in the final 37-36. With the melting snow came the rise of the Bonney Brook senior housing project in Cornwall Bridge. And Margaret Haske was named director of the Cornwall Library, replacing Amy Cad, who had resigned after seven years of cheerful service.

On May 7, the Region One budget was defeated in both Cornwall and the district, in what would turn out to be the first of seven referenda before a final yes. On a more positive note, May 11 saw the opening of the West Cornwall Farm Market for its seventh season.

Early summer seemed to bring a lull. Voters continued to trickle to the polling place for still more Region One referenda. Mohawk had closed; Hammond Beach opened. The general store in Cornwall Bridge, formerly leased by Dana and Louise Beecher, stood idle, awaiting extensive alterations and a new opening by Idella and James Shepard.

Bonney Brook Welcomes Residents

Cornwall’s Bonney Brook elderly housing complex in Cornwall Bridge welcomed its first five residents during the week of December 9. Will Calhoun, vice president of Cornwall Elderly Housing (CEH), owners of the facility, said the other five tenants would likely move in the following month. All residents have a Cornwall connection.

A former occupant of Kugeman Village is one of the new Bonney Brook residents, and finally, on October 17, the Region One budget passed on its seventh trial. Cornwall’s 165-108 approval was instrumental, as the six-town margin of yes votes was only 73. The Cornwall Country Market opened its doors on November 1 to rave Chronicle review.

And Gordon Ridgway defeated KC Baird to win his 12th two-year term as first selectman, Richard Bramley and Heidi Kearns joining him on that board. The December news? Well, that's in this issue. The Chronicle may be a month late, but maybe that’s a month to get things right.

—Bob Potter

### JANUARY 2014

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*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957*
(continued from page 1)

Calhoun reported. “That will open up an apartment at Kugeman for a new family—just the way it should work.”

Bonny Brook has 10 apartments; four on the ground floor and six on the second floor. In addition to a grand staircase, there is an elevator. Calhoun said a Tim Prentice mobile will hang in a cupola over the main staircase.

Each apartment meets HUD guidelines for size and other regulations including bathroom accessibility and safety. The apartments also have emergency call mechanisms should residents need assistance.

To learn more about Bonny Brook elderly housing, call Elderly Housing Management at 203-230-4809. —Asher Patel

Choo Choo

Pressure is mounting for the return of passenger service on the Housatonic Railroad between Pittsfield and New York City, via Cornwall. Standing in the way of this development, however, is a great bundle of ifs, whys and how muches.

The railway first came to town in the 1840s, opening a more prosperous future for the town’s economy. By the late 1940s, when this writer, then 6 years old, rode the train with a tag pinned to her jacket asking when this writer, then 6 years old, rode the train with a tag pinned to her jacket asking she be let off in West Cornwall, the train had been a lifeline. It took teenagers to high school, carried milk to New York City, and reunited families every summer weekend when the Friday evening “daddy train” arrived.

By 1971 the service didn’t make economic sense anymore and the passenger line through Cornwall was shut down. After the Housatonic Railroad began hauling freight there was a brief revival in 1983 as an excursion train carried tourists along the river bank. This service ceased not long after.

The current push to restore service surfaced back in July when Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick and his transportation chief rode a train from Sheffield to Pittsfield. Patrick, who has a summer home in Alford, saw “real potential” for economic gains and jobs in reopening the line to pass through the region over the first decade. About 610 jobs could be created.

Reaction in Cornwall has been mixed. Gordon Ridgway has attended meetings with state officials and supports the new line. He said that the state DOT seems freshly interested in greener transportation (bikes and rails). CONNDOT has set up a long-term planning initiative, TransformCT, which will be seeking community participation in setting regional priorities. The local COG has met with the planners several times.

Twenty residents of West Cornwall Village have signed a petition protesting more trains, citing damage to local homes and danger to residents, their children, and dogs. More trains would “negatively affect the peace and quiet and safety of our town,” they stated.

By contrast an online petition sponsored by Restore the NW CT Railway in Canaan, which supports the passenger trains, had gathered 2,261 signatures by mid-December. Thirty-five local businesses have declared their support.

“This is the right direction for northwest Connecticut,” the petition declares. —Lisa L. Simont

Held in Trust

Two woodland areas along Town Street will be protected by the Cornwall Conservation Trust (CCT) through actions taken by their owners at year’s end.

Roxana and Hamilton Robinson made it possible for the trust to buy 62 acres east of Town Street which includes stands of hardwood, pine woods, and a prominent ridge with rock outcroppings. The site offers panoramic views of Cornwall Hollow and Red Mountain. The Mohawk Trail (formerly part of the Appalachian Trail) crosses the property and can be reached going west from Johnson Road or south from Lake Road.

“I found this property to be one of the natural gems of Cornwall as I hiked over it in the fall. I even flushed a woodcock as I walked through some brush,” said Bart Jones, president of Cornwall Conservation Trust. “Future generations of Cornwall will be well served by conservation of this property thanks to the Robinsons and like-minded friends and neighbors.”

The Prud’homme family has donated to the CCT an additional 41 acres to be protected by a conservation easement. The land lies between Town Street, Lake Road, and Cream Hill Lake. The easement will protect the southwestern shore of the lake from future development. It also creates a 148-acre wildlife block a mile in length, connecting the trust’s 13-acre Dodd Preserve to its 90-acre Rattlesnake Road Preserve. Such linkages are a key objective in conservation. For more information go to: cornwallconservationtrust.org.

Bonnie VanGilder

Land Transfers

Faye Kling to Catherine Scallier, five acres of land with all buildings and improvements thereon, at 79 Todd Hill Road for $1,100,000.

Irving F. Robbins and Cynthia P. Robbins to Henry C. Russ and Julieann M. Russ, three acres of land on Town Street, for $92,500.

Our Housatonic: A Wild and Scenic Update

In April 2013, the Housatonic River Commission (HRC) held an introductory meeting at town hall to announce its support for a new proposal to seek National Wild and Scenic status for the Housatonic River from the Massachusetts line to Boardman Bridge in New Milford. The goal is designation as a Partnership Wild and Scenic River, with a limited administrative role played by the National Park Service.

There are two ways to achieve this designation: either by an act of Congress (the federal route) or an application by the governor to the Secretary of the Interior (the state route). Several commission members, including Vice Chairman Phil Hart, met with CT DEEP representatives in July seeking state support which met with a positive response. Phil will be attending the town plan meeting on January 25 to further discuss the issue. (See the E & A about the meeting.)

The commission is considering allying itself with a similar Massachusetts organ-
Consider the Knox Box . . .

Please!

A few years ago the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department (CVFD) urged residents to purchase a Knox Box for safety. The steel box, attached to the outside of the customer’s house, contains a key with instructions as to which door to use to gain access. In the event of an emergency, a signal goes out to Litchfield County Dispatch, which in turn sends a signal to the Cornwall fire truck that carries a master key to open the box at a given house.

Tom Barrett, CVFD treasurer, says that once the fire department is called, firefighters must gain entry into the house, locked or not, to assure the safety of place and persons, and cannot leave without doing so. Absent a Knox Box, the CVFD has to find the key holder or break down the door to gain entry.

According to Joyce Hart, a CVFD member and administrative assistant to the first selectman, the key holder often lives in Manhattan or Torrington and is either inaccessible or, if it’s very late at night, doesn’t want to be disturbed. As Joyce so aptly expressed it, a Knox Box is cheaper than a new door.

The box is a one-time expense of anywhere from $150 to $300 depending on how big a box you need. A sample box is available at the town hall for those who wish to check it out.

There are only about a half a dozen boxes installed in Cornwall. The CVFD is not happy about this; It would much prefer that people take the initiative to protect themselves and their homes.

The Knox Box can be attached to a locked gate as well as to the house itself. It can be hooked up to an alarm system should the owner have one installed but it is not necessary to have an alarm system to use the box. Examples of the various models of boxes, as well as contact information for the company, can be found at knoxbox.com.

—Jane Bevans

Town of Cornwall Taxes

The second half payment of taxes on the Grand List as of October 1, 2012 is due January 1, 2014. Supplemental motor vehicle taxes are also due at this time. Payments must be postmarked by February 3, 2014 to avoid interest.

Any tax bills not paid by February 3, 2014 will be considered delinquent, and interest will be charged at the rate of one and one half percent per month and fraction thereof (including January). This means that even if you pay on February 4 you will be charged for two months interest. No additional bills will be mailed for second installments. Please use the bill you received in July.

Taxes may be paid at the Tax Office on Mondays from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. and on

Letter to the Chronicle

BONNEY BROOK OPENS

The first five residents inaugurated the Cornwall Elderly Housing Corporation’s Bonney Brook by spending the night of December 12 in their new apartments. People were moving in as the board held a celebratory meeting in the second floor Common Room, and those pioneers would soon be joined by the occupants of the remaining five apartments.

Soliciting and vetting applicants has been carried out by our management company, which reports that there is a waiting list, and that all of those residents with signed or pending contracts have some kind of Cornwall connection: they are moving from another place in town, or they have relatives who want them living close by.

Because of the tightness of the building and rental schedules, and with winter upon us, formal opening ceremonies won’t occur until spring. Meanwhile, we intend to mount a selection of interior plans and photos at the town hall in mid-January. Bonney Brook now belongs to people getting used to their new homes, but you can have a virtual tour of the apartments by checking out this exhibit.

—Cheryl Evans, President

Cornwall Briefs

• Call It a Scoop: The Berkshire Country Store may just be back in business as early as late this month. A young Goshen couple, Ryan Craig and his fiancée, Natasha Travieso, will be the proprietors. Ryan, who worked at the store for six years as a teenager, said they would operate the place much the same as it had been, with a deli counter and interior tables, plus the typical convenience groceries on the adjacent shelves. Selling gas is a future possibility depending on finances, but the current out-of-use tanks will be pulled from the ground.

• Trinity Property: The Chronicle has learned that something may be in the works between Trinity Wall Street and the Cornwall Conservation Trust. It would involve several hundred acres of heavily forested, rocky, and steep undeveloped land priced in the neighborhood of $1 million. If things work out, perhaps as much as half the purchase price would come from a state grant, with the remainder sought from private donors. Our source tells us that at least some members of the
Trinity board of directors strongly favor keeping the land on the east bank of the Housatonic River away from developers and preserved in its current natural state. As for the big, hotel-like building and several smaller satellite structures on the Trinity property just south of West Cornwall, there is nothing new to report other than that they are on the market.

- **Appointments:** The entire Inland Wetlands gang has been reappointed: Steve Hedden, Bill Hurlburt, Adam Fischer, Andrew MacDavid, and alternates Jeff Lynch and Debby Bennett. Other appointees: Richard Bramley and Mark Hampson to the Economic Development Commission; Earl Brecher as representative to the Northwest Regional Mental Health Board; Charlie Gold, representative to the Torrington Area Health District; Mark Hampson, representative to the Northwest Regional Tourism District; Bill Dinneen and Wendy Kennedy to the Cornwall Grange Trust Fund Committee; Lynn Scoville to the Sydney Kaye Fund Advisory Committee; Joe Marchetti to Planning and Zoning; Joanne Wojtusiak as alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals; Ron Humrell to the Conservation Commission; John Sanders and Rocco Botto to Park & Rec.

There are still openings for two alternates on Planning & Zoning, two members for Park & Rec and one membership on the town’s senior committee. An opening on the Board of Finance will have been filled by the time you read this. A town historian is also needed. Those interested in the empty slots should contact the first selectman’s office at 672-4959.

- **Cell Towers:** It’s getting kind of tiring writing about the adventures of Verizon and AT&T as they contemplate where to put their towers, but it now looks like the latter is going for the town gravel pit off Route 128, which is near both the West Cornwall firehouse and Cornwall Consolidated School. Alternatives to the gravel pit will be presented by AT&T at a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen on Monday, January 27, at 7 p.m. at the town hall. The public is welcome. Snow date is January 28.

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**New Year’s Balm**

Did the envelope in last month’s *Chronicle* inadvertently slip out of your paper and into oblivion? Don’t panic: contributions are still being accepted at the usual address. Start out 2014 by fulfilling your resolution to keep the *Chronicle* going.

**Events & Announcements**

The New Year’s Day Pancake Breakfast will be held, as it is every year, in the UCC Parish House from 9 a.m. to noon. Buttermilk pancakes, sausage, Cornwall maple syrup, orange juice, coffee, cocoa, and tea will be on tap. This year’s donations will contribute to the preservation of the North Cornwall Meeting House.

A Diabetes Presentation sponsored by the Cornwall Woman’s Society will be at the Cornwall Library, Saturday, January 18, at 3 p.m. The diabetes epidemic in the United States and worldwide continues to grow unabated. It is estimated there are currently 32 million people in the United States with diabetes and 79 million with pre-diabetes. Anne Hummel, RN and certified diabetes educator, will speak about this public health problem and its effect on us individually and as a society. RSVP 860-248-3089. Snow Date: Noon Saturday, January 25

A Town Plan Review with the town’s boards and commissions will be hosted by P&Z Saturday, January 25, at 10 a.m. at the town hall. The focus will be on economic and development issues. The meeting is open for the public to participate as time allows.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will hold hearings by appointment in March 2014. Applications to schedule a hearing will be available at the town clerk’s office beginning January 2. Applications must be received by February 20. Applicants will be contacted to schedule hearings in March.

At the Cornwall Library

The winter film series begins with *The Bicycle Thief* on Saturday, January 11, 7:30 p.m.

Alice Wolf’s dance movie selection for January is *Bill T. Jones, Dancing to the Promised Land*. Wednesday, January 15, 7 p.m.

The family movie *How to Train Your Dragon*, based on the children’s book series by Cressida Cowell, screens Friday, January 17, at 7 p.m.

Author Beth Gutcheon will be at the library on Saturday, January 25, 4 to 6 p.m. for a literary conversation with Franny Taliaferro.

Park & Rec

Skating at the Schmidt Rink, Hotchkiss School, will be offered for eight consecutive Saturdays from 7 to 8 p.m. starting January 4.

The second annual 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament will be held on Saturday, January 18, at Cornwall Consolidated School. Trophies will be awarded. There will be three divisions: Men’s, Women’s, and Coed. All participants must be at least 18 years old. Teams must be registered by January 10. Registration cost is $20 per team. For more information, contact Becky Hurlburt at pchrono@cornwall.com or 672-4071.

**Art in Cornwall**

At the Cornwall Library: the exhibit Words and Pictures: Ink, Inc. Prints by Robert Andrew Parker will run through February 1. Some 20 books that Parker and the Salisbury-based typographer and printer Thomas Whitridge have produced together over the last six years will be exhibited. All the work is a combination of typesetting, printing, and drawing, with the distinction often blurred. An artists’ talk and reception is scheduled for Saturday, January 4, from 4 to 6 p.m.

At the UCC Parish House: an exhibit of works in mixed media by Deb Tyler titled Of Joy and Justice will be displayed. The opening will be on Sunday, January 5, at 11:30 a.m.

At the Southerain Gallery: the exhibit Visions of Earth, Trees & Skies with works by artists Cindy Kirk and Zejke Hermann will run through February 9.

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**CORNWALL CHRONICLE**

**cornwallchronicle.org**

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