**Contrast and Change**

Surely others beside myself have noted how the former Clark farm in East Cornwall epitomizes the change from our town’s nostalgia-burdened past to an uncertain future. Contrasting extremes now meet on the same piece of land, before our astonished eyes and in our fondest memories.

Harriet Clark, the last of a line to occupy the old homestead, died ten years ago at the age of 102. She grew up in a time when children were born at home and walked dirt roads to one-room schools. She went to church by horse and buggy. She watched Civil War veterans march in parades. Summers she picked berries and churned butter. Long winter evenings were spent sewing black hooks and eyes on cards with red thread—piecework for a Waterbury company that was literally farmed out. “I think we received about eight cents for a dozen cards,” Harriet wrote years later. “Am I still in Cornwall?” Dormers high above softly illuminate the perfectly designed, polished mahogany and black steel “stalls” as they converge in the distance. Big brass plaques carry the name of each horse: Jezebel, Nicolo, Gizmo. Clearly, every horse is an individual, and honored as such.

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That was 100 years ago. Today the former Clark farm is for sale. The price: $23.8 million—nearly twice the highest property sale ever recorded in Litchfield County. Needless to say, there’ve been some changes made.

Long loops of four-rail horse fence swoop around stone-free, sculpted pastures. If you’re lucky, a few of the 30 fine Friesian horses will be out munching the grass. I was unlucky. All I saw was a worker out picking up evidence that any animal had ever been there.

But the barn is the main attraction. (No, not “barn” but “Taj Mahal,” and not “stall” but “spacious stateroom”—each with its own outside patio.) Said to be the largest modern post-and-beam building in the United States, the “barn” is huge L-shaped structure, the two wings meeting in a four-story rotunda that includes an apartment topped by a gallery of antique buggies. To stand at one end of the longer wing and look down the football-field-long stretch of “stalls” is an experience never to be forgotten. “Am I still in Cornwall?” Dormers high above softly illuminate the perfectly designed, polished mahogany and black steel “stalls” as they converge in the distance. Big brass plaques carry the name of each horse: Jezebel, Nicolo, Gizmo. Clearly, every horse is an individual, and honored as such.

I went to Pinnacle Farm expecting to be critical. (After all, what could all this money...)

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**Don Reid Moves On**

Don Reid, Cornwall’s road foreman for the last 14 years, is retiring to assume a similar position in Salisbury. “Don’s been with us through floods, fires, and storms,” says First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, “and somehow he’s always been right in the middle of all of them. The town’s going to miss him, and we wish him well.” —Bob Potter
Through Lion's Mane

On Saturday, July 1, at 8:43 p.m., a moment after Larry Stevens’ Bottom brayed, one of the Cheneys’ donkeys answered from Jewell Street, and we knew Midsummer Night’s Dream was a critical success.

Larry was one of 36 players, most of them from Cornwall, who presented a four-day run of the Shakespeare classic, trimmed to a modest two hours, outside the Town Hall under the maple tree. Hampered by rainstorms and mosquitoes, the multi-generational cast, led by director Fred Thaler, played to happy crowds between June 30 and July 3.

Backstage, the inside of the show was fascinating. The real pros, like G. Fred Shepard (Theseus) and Kimberly Hoffmann (Puck), were near perfect on lines from day one. The young lovers, Nona LaPorta and Trey Hacker, Hannah Colbert and Dan Hare, were admirable, nimble, and full of fire. The Rude Mechanicals, who presented the Pyramus and Thisbe play at the end, were an odd bunch. Four of us were gray-haired ladies of a certain age whom Fred Thaler bundled together with Larry and Brien LaForge to become the players within the play. “What else was I going to do with you?” Fred said.

The Town Hall Players are well launched. The Board of Selectmen, the Cornwall Association, and the Cornwall Foundation gave key support right when it was needed. The old Town Hall, scene of many theater and cabaret evenings in years gone by, seemed to wake up and vibrate under the running feet of the youngest fairies. And Fred, with his lights, his theories, and ideas, was the genius behind it all. —Lisa Lansing Simont (Lion)

Land Transfers

Oscar Shamamian and Llewellyn H. Sinkler to Jonathan M. Jadow, property at 369 Cream Hill Road for $545,000.

Mary Alice Palmer to Nikolle M. Kuehnert and Ronnie P. Lizana, property at 128 Kent Road for $250,000.

Leonard P. and Jill M. Ciccarelli, Jr., to Sam M. Wee and Elizabeth Krent-Wee, property at 232 Kent Road for $450,000.

Robin Garsen Oz to Bruce A. and Marjorie F. Whiteford, property at 416 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike for $500,000.

Arthur Frederick Lorch to Town of Cornwall, 100.3979 acres on Kent Road for $540,000.

Arthur Frederick and Ellen B. Lorch to Christopher Hopkins, 13 884 acres on Kent Road for $70,000.

Arthur Frederick Lorch to Christopher Hopkins, 5.95 acres and buildings on Kent Road for $380,000.

Fredrick H. Jefts, Lonnie Jeffs Parillo, Andrew Jefts, and Barbara Jeffs to Keith C. and Giuseppina DiGiacomo Braun, property at 80 Lake Road for $300,000.

Ryan K. Clark to Frank L. and Rose A. Giambrone, property at 197 Kent Road for $370,000.

Darren Schneck to Mary Dzenutis, property at 10 River Road for $95,000.

William Kuskin to Louise Brown, property at 29 Pond Road for $60,000.

James C. Stemm to Jerome and Cynthia Cohen-Congress, 23 acres on River Road for $35,000.

Nancy Sayles Foundation, Inc., to Cornwall Conservation Trust, 180.795 acres on Route 128.

Annals of Cornwall

Hannah (Bradford) Sherwood Croner Baldwin (1748–ca. 1832) surely had one of the most eventful lives of Cornwall’s early settlers. She came here in about 1770 as a young single adult, either with or to join a married sister. The two were born in Kingston, Massachusetts, as fifth-generation descendants of Governor William Bradford. In 1758 they were orphaned in Maine, where their parents were murdered and scalped by Indians. The children were then sent back to Massachusetts to live with an aunt not much older than themselves, who already had a large family.
In 1772, Hannah was married in Cornwall to a widower, Ebenezer Sherwood. He died in 1785, leaving her with seven children and a farm. Their home was on or near the site of the new Cornwall Free Library building. She was remarried in Cornwall to a German ex-soldier who had deserted from the British army near the end of the American Revolution. She had a child by him, but she shortly divorced him for deserting her. She was probably our town’s first divorcée.

For a time, Hannah boarded “town charges,” i.e., indigents, including the last member of our Dudletown Dudleys.

She shortly married her third husband, a widower from Brookfield, Connecticut, who died in 1815. Hannah was back in Cornwall by 1819 and was re-admitted to the First Congregational Church. But shortly afterward, she was dismissed from the church by letter. She then moved to Nelson, Ohio, where Cornwall church records show that 40 persons from perhaps 15 Cornwall families had resettled in the 1812–23 period. They included her son Joshua, who had moved to Nelson in 1812. Hannah, together with Joshua and his wife and her mother, was among the 50 members listed in the Nelson church’s 1825 roster.

When and where Hannah died is not known. She was probably the woman between ages 80 and 90 who was recorded in Nelson by the 1830 census as a member of Joshua’s household.

What a life! —Michael Gannett

Go FISH!

“More people need rides now than did a few years ago,” says Joan Edler, who heads FISH, the volunteer organization that provides transportation to people in Cornwall. She told me that on some weeks eight or more people need rides to go to doctors and dentists or to the hospital for chemotherapy or to the food bank. Joan makes calls and juggles schedules to match a client’s appointment with a volunteer’s available time. She relies on about a dozen drivers who make trips to New Milford, Canaan, Sharon, Torrington, and sometimes even Hartford. She covers a lot of trips herself; last year she drove 1,600 miles for FISH.

The needs are much greater now than when Polly Calhoun called this writer 15 years ago to announce that she wanted me to take over the running of FISH. I asked, “What’s that?” She explained, and since it sounded like a worthy endeavor, and since no one would even think of saying nay to Polly Calhoun, I agreed to take responsibility for FISH and ran it for ten years before turning it over to Joan Edler in 2001.

We enlisted more volunteer drivers and took turns driving people. The volunteers use their own cars, and there are no fees involved (cost of miles driven for charity is tax deductible). It’s a delightfully simple service that is covered by your auto insurance, because you’re doing it for love, not money.

One gets to meet very interesting characters doing this work, and I heard many colorful opinions and stories over the years. People are full of gratitude for the service. New Englanders are traditionally reluctant to ask for help—Joan says they begin every call by saying: “I hate to bother you…” She says she feels very grateful to be able to fill a need when people require transport. More volunteers are urgently needed—call Joan at 672-6637 if you wish to help.

—Deirdre Fischer
Planning Cornwall’s Future is a new page on the website www.cornwallct.org, found under “What’s New.” The page will let Cornwall residents obtain information and views on how Cornwall’s Town Plan can and should be revised. Interested persons can read or download posted documents. David Grossman has updated the page with “Cornwall in the Zeros Decade,” an update of his “Cornwall in Context” written ten years ago. Information on posting and other regulations can be found on the website.

A Call to Artists: The Agricultural Commission extends a call to artists in all media for works related to agricultural themes and the preservation of open spaces. A special event will feature works with the Lorch Farm as subject. The exhibit will be hung in the Town Hall during the Ag. Fair, September 9. Call Cilla Mauro, 672-6969, for information.

Chamber Music Concert at Cream Hill Lake Association on Saturday, August 5, at 7:30 P.M. Performing will be Benajmin Wolff and musician friends from the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig. Please come on time and, if possible, bring a folding chair. Refreshments after the concert.

Cornwall Child Center: Fall registration on Thursday, August 31, from 9 A.M. to noon, or call Pam Brehm at 626-1289 to arrange another time. CCC opens for the school year on Tuesday, September 5, at 7:30 A.M.

Motherhouse Family Cow Workshop: Saturday, August 5, at Local Farm, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. Learn about caring for a cow, and try your hand at milking. Make butter, cheese, and ice cream. Stay on for a tour of area farms. $35/person or $50/family up to four. Questions? Call 672-0229.

Road Oiling: The following roads will be oiled during August: Whitcomb Hill, Mansonville, Flat Rocks, Pritchard, Day, Bald Mountain, Popple Swamp, River Road South, Brook, West, and Dark Entry. Residents are asked to be patient when roads are closed for brief periods.

Fleeting Thoughts

For many of us, August is the shortest month of the year. One day it’s July, and the next morning it’s Labor Day. August is just a few days of sun tan oil that help July slide into September. So if you intend to use the coupon below, grab a pen and do so now. The school bus cometh. Thanks.

The 46th Rose Algrant Art Show opens at the CCS gym on Friday, August 4, from 5 to 8 P.M. The works of over 40 Cornwall artists will continue to be displayed Saturday, August 5, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., and Sunday, August 6, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. A percentage of sales will benefit the Cornwall Free Library.

A Democratic Primary will be held on August 8 for the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and U.S. Senator. Polls will be open at the Town Hall from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. Absentee ballots are available at the Town Clerk’s Office, which is open from 9 A.M. to noon and 1 to 4 P.M., Monday through Thursday.

Art in Cornwall: At the Library, the exhibits of Asher Pavel and Nerv Dunn will continue through August 26. Beginning August 29, Nancy Daubenspeck and Robin Raderman will have a mixed-media show entitled Contemplative Works.

At the Insiders/Outsiders Gallery, Art for the Wild, works by Marjorie Strider and Scott Zuckerman, will continue through August 15. On August 19 there will be an opening reception from 5 to 7 P.M. for Master Pastellists of Connecticut, works by Frank Federico, Ranie Crawford, and Peter Seltzer.

The Wish House show of mixed-media works by Peter J. Ketchum will continue through August. Art at the Bridge, a new gallery at the Pink House in West Cornwall, will continue its exhibit of Contemporary Antiquarians through August.

The Cornwall Historical Society’s exhibit of works by Armin Landeck will continue through Labor Day.

Alex’s Lemonade Stand, hosted on July 1 by Reilly Hedden’s family and friends, received over $400 in donations to benefit pediatric cancer research.

After-School Help Wanted: The Cornwall Extended Day Learning Program is planning to hire an assistant. The hours available are Monday to Friday from 2:45 to 5:30 P.M. Please call Director Bethany Thompson for more information at 248-3009.

Grant Applications: The Cornwall Foundation is accepting applications for grants from Cornwall groups through August 31 for review during its September board meeting. Applications can be obtained at www.cornwallfoundation.com or in the Cornwall Library. For further information call Paul Baren, 672-6637.

Corning Day at Lake Compounce: August 22, with a rain date of August 24, sponsored by the CCS PTA. A discounted price of $18 per person buys a whole day of water slides and roller coasters. Also available is a ten-percent discount on food and souvenirs. Call Bethany Thompson at 248-3009 for more information or to make reservations.

Michael Pollan Will Read from his best-selling book The Omnivore’s Dilemma on Saturday, August 12, at 2 P.M. at North Cornwall Church. This will be his only area reading. His recent books will be available for purchase and signing. Admission is free, and refreshments will be served. Call the Library (672-6874) for more information.

Late Fee for Late Dogs: There is a one-dollar fine for each month past June 30, when all of Cornwall’s best friends were to acquire this year’s license tag. Only 75 percent have done so. Town Clerk Vera Dinneen will ask for a current rabies vaccination certificate and $19 ($8 if the dog is spayed or neutered), plus late fee.

Library Family Programs, Wednesday evenings at 6:30 P.M. for ages five and up. August 2: Pet Show; judges will award ribbons in all categories for real and imagined animals. August 9: Wolf Conservation Center program with a live wolf. August 16: Vegetarian Potluck Dinner—no paws, claws, or scales!

Park and Rec.’s New Website: Visit www.cornwallparkandrecreation.org for up-to-date information on events, to download a registration form, etc.

Library Reading: Alex Prud’homme, co-author of My Life in France with his aunt, the French chef Julia Child, will read from the book at the Library on Saturday, August 5, at 3 P.M. Refreshments will be served. For more information call 672-6874.