Whose Art?

Lights. Cam… Wait. Is it a plane? Is it a bird? No, it’s a Condor, an aerial rig up to 170 feet aboveground, providing a nest for lights to turn a Jewel of a street into a gem of a movie set glittering with our local acting stars in action. For several weeks in June, the action was generated by Cornwall resident Laurie Simmons, the internationally acclaimed visual artist and filmmaker, shooting My Art, her story about—no, not Superman—but a female artist of a certain age who comes to house-sit a friend’s small-town home/studio and finds her own work enriched by incorporating it into the Wandering Moose. Ingersoll reacted saying, “Our town is a living museum: anything we can do to bring light to and expose our iconic buildings and scenery for this film came from seeing the house.”

Simmons, a teacher of graduate-level visual arts at Yale, opens the film with her character Ellie at a goodbye party with her photography students. Parallels with Simmons’s life continue: her film exposes Ellie’s visual arts at Yale, opens the film with her character Ellie at a goodbye party with her photography students. Parallels with Simmons’s life continue: her film exposes Ellie’s artistic evolution as she inhabits new space and opens herself to being inhabited by new people. Robert Clohessy plays her friend’s landscaper; Russ Sawicki, the town restaurant owner; and Rebecca Sawicki, a waitress there.

Just a waitress? Well, here’s how the movie finds itself emerging from the larger frame of film history. The art this new space and talent inspires Ellie to produce is video performance incorporating these locals-playing-locals into shot-by-shot recreations of scenes from classic films like Morocco and The Misfits. Casting herself as both visual artist directing the photography of, and leading lady in the scenes, Simmons shoots video of waitress Sawicki now playing a restaurant patron fanning herself while Marlene Dietrich (Simmons), smoking, singing, and wearing men’s clothes, crosses the stage to kiss her on the lips. Simmons’s Ellie films Clohessy’s landscaper playing cowboy Clark Gable kissing divorcée Marilyn Monroe (Simmons) into staying in his small town.

“When you should be taking it off, you’re just putting it on,” says Sawicki, more used to musical comedy than precision-lit film, “being exposed to so many professionals and what other artists do.”

Sawicki was not the only young Corn-

### AUGUST 2015

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H2O: Quality Not Quantity

Some folks around here have been wondering if Cornwall is in any danger of having a California-style water crisis. Not to worry, First Selectman Gordon Ridgway says, not under current conditions. We can wonder about problems global warming will create. A 2010 Connecticut state report talks of the possibility of more frequent droughts and at the same time the possibility of more intense rainfall events! Nobody really knows what will happen, but for the present we have enough water for all our needs.

The main source of our household and gardening water is Cornwall’s numerous aquifers—water-carrying underground layers of sand, pebbles, and the like—replenished by rain seeping down from the surface. There are aquifers just about everywhere below Cornwall and especially along the Housatonic and Hollenbeck valleys. In drought years a few shallow wells run dry but never for long. We have enough water for our restaurants and Mohawk’s snow making. Gordon can even irrigate his plantings in the rare drought years.

For our recreational water we have Cornwall’s numerous rivers, streams, and lakes. We can swim in Mohawk Pond and Cream Hill Lake. Fishermen and boaters can also use the Housatonic.

In the old days Cornwall had gristmills, saw mills, a shear shop, and other small factories that were powered by water. You saw mills, a shear shop, and other small factories that were powered by water. You.

The closeness of the buildings in West Cornwall and the nature of the soil scarcely ever allow what nowadays are considered adequate septic systems. The septic systems of the buildings that are there now are grandfathered in, but according to Cornwall’s building code, a new building for more than one family will have to have an approved septic system.

Some TLC for the Old Meeting House

Some of you go there in the summer to congregate while others park up (quietly) outside for a Sunday morning loop walk. Some have been there to listen to Tom Walker read a wonderful Bylines Day story and some look forward to hearing the church’s acoustics by giving their lungs a workout singing candlelit Christmas
Eve carols. A few probably remember the mysterious bell ringer heralding in the new century on New Year’s Eve 1999. Whatever the occasion—weddings, memorials, lectures, or “sharings” of all sorts—the North Cornwall Meeting House is home to everyone and all denominations. And it needs a steeple and spire facelift. And a lot more.

Some facts: The church is old. It was built in 1826 and is still sporting the same steeple and spire. The church’s architecture is done in the style of Sir Christopher Wren, one of England’s most notable architects, who designed St. Paul’s Cathedral, among many other famous structures. Local architects concur that the structure is an “architectural gem” and some would argue it’s the “most beautiful building in Cornwall.”

The United Church of Christ (UCC) owns and maintains two churches, including the North Cornwall Meeting House, a parsonage, and a parish house, so its coffers are tapped.

Since 2013, a campaign led by the Friends of the North Cornwall Meeting House and the UCC in Cornwall has been underway to raise funds for much-needed preservation work. Aside from the steeple, a long list waits patiently to be attended to: roofing, siding, shutters, ceilings, walls—floors—nearly everything requires bolstering.

The UCC has been given a generous STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant. Additionally, renovation plans by a historical architect will help the project qualify for further state grants. Another encouraging development: a $50,000 challenge grant offered by an anonymous neighbor. Donations up to that amount will be matched dollar for dollar. But more funds are required to give this jewel in our town crown a new topper. To donate or for more information, please call Jim England’s most no table architects, who

With no more worlds to conquer
To live forever,
Carrying the bit of life home,
A thousand miles to the sea,
Perhaps only a smell
An infinitesimal bit,
In the ends of the earth
Taking a bit of life,
Lapping at the wreck,
The river, rapid, curling
Rapidly, curling
The path to graduation 2015
Soles scuffle as strapped-on platform shoes pave the way to the gym; onto the floor squawk neon blue sneakers under whispers of long chiffon skirts; turning the sharp corner around standard bearers in a shaft of door light and into the dim, theinkle of khaki, a last zip of mini-skirt all under fleeting cover of blue robe and gold tassels swinging to the right, Kaitlyn L. Buckley, Amelia Margaret Budny, Hope Carlson, Kit Ryan Fitch, Caroline Emily Hurlburt, Mitchell Peter Kosciusko, Manuella Matsudaira, Donovan L. McCray, Nicholas V. O’Neil, Lancelot Charles Oyanadel, Jasper

Christian Randall, Dean Louis Saccardi, Caleb Stephen Shpur, Olivia Rose Woods, and Sophia Katherine Woods walk straight up their final path onto the stage of Cornwall Consolidated School.

Our ceremony, recorded, struggles to sound; today’s technology stumbles. Then the experience of a long past and much practice moves in: voices of elders rise in song from the audience as the hands of Mrs. S. on piano smooth over holes in the canned music. The show moves forward as Principal Croft reminds the graduates to look back the way they came, smooth or rocky, that led them here today. Calling the names of their grandmothers in a long and winding list, Croft advises, “Keeping them in mind will help you reach your future. Part of your mission is to live for them and make them proud. Then they will follow you.”

Dean Saccardi, the first student speaker, takes up the emerging metaphor with his look back at “the long hike” it’s been for these eighth-graders: “At first we couldn’t even see the trail,” then notes how many other peaks to climb they now see from this vantage point, the top of CCS.

Croft, momentarily losing his way in the ceremony progression by jumping ahead to introduce the guest speaker, directs us back on course: awards to Manuela Matsudaira for Outstanding Academic Achievement, the VFW Citizenship Award to Dean Saccardi, the Dottie Hermann Memorial Award to Caroline Hurlburt. And, under your chairs! Gifts from the Parent Teacher Partnership, BOE, and CCS (If I Never Forever Endeavor by Holly Meade).

Again, Croft gracefully leads us back onto this road so well traveled: Kaitlyn Buckley, the second student speaker, challenges her peers to reach back for memories of bonding on class trips and of singing and playing on teams together and to reach forward for “opportunities that lead us onto the long path of growing up.”

This path becomes vivid to all with guest speaker Matthew Mulberry, CSS class of 2002, who now, after pursuing a B.A. from Susquehanna University and an M.A. from Budapest, works as program administrator for the Washington-based International Center on Non-Violent Conflict. Mulberry, intimately and often hilariously, re-travels his climb through the wilderness of coping with his learning disabilities in the first special education programs here at CCS and his wrestling with the old discipline program of “rap sheets on kids” bearing stars (material rewards) or checks: “CCS detention rates soared!” The attention of the graduates is palpable. Do they muse on the Coyote

The river, rapid, curling
Lapping at the wreck,
Taking a bit of life, An infinitesimal bit,
Perhaps only a smell
A thousand miles to the sea,
Carrying the bit of life home,
To live forever,
With no more worlds to conquer.

Going Home
(for Rusty Cheney)

The problem apparently exists in downtown West Cornwall where many septic systems are considered substandard and some houses and restaurants are limited on how they can solve their septic problems by small lots. So the Board of Selectmen, at the urging of P & Z, is planning a study that would seek a solution. (See H.O article above.)

• Why are trees along the railroad tracks dying? Town Hall suspects that herbicide spraying by the railroad may have something to do with it and there will be an investigation. Stay tuned for that one.

• In the works: The town is looking into the possibility of joining the Paint/Care State Program that would allow folks to drop off excess paint at our transfer station rather than lug it to a nearby

(continued on page 4)
An Apology

Last month the Chronicle published a blame-the-victim letter from a bear that had gotten into the town on one of those semi-annual collection cycles.

**Sidewalks:** We were supposed to get sidewalk links between the Bonney Brook senior housing building and the Cornwall Country Market and also a link connecting the Wandering Moose and the Pottery Store in West Cornwall. The town has a $70,000 grant from the state, but it’s apparently not enough to do the whole job. So, it’s either find some more $$ or cut back on the plan.

—John Miller

Events & Announcements

**Cornwall’s 275th Anniversary**, August 1 (rain date August 2), Cornwall Town Green
• 2 p.m. Grumbling Gryphons Theater Camp presents an adaptation of *The 13 Clocks* by James Thurber, illustrated by Marc Simont
• 3 p.m. Games for Kids by Park and Rec
• 3 p.m. “Discovering History in Our Cemeteries,” Panel Discussion at the UCC
• 3 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 6 p.m. Share a Story will record stories, Cornwall Historical Society, Library Meeting Room
• 3 to 4 p.m. Salisbury Band Hot Shots
• 4 p.m. Parade
• 4:30 p.m. Historical Remarks, Flag Presentation, Guest Speakers

**5 p.m.**

**275th Cornwall Anniversary Dinner on the Green**
• to 6 p.m. Share a Story (see above)
• 6-ish. Community Contra Dance. With music by Still, the Homegrown Band; H. A.T., featuring three rising CCS eighth-graders as warm-up band; and calling by Robert Livingston.

**Art in Cornwall**

Catherine Noren’s photo exhibit, “Kitchen Light,” continues at the Cornwall Library through September 12.

Sari Goodfriend’s exhibit, “Home & Away,” runs through August 7 at the Souterrain Gallery. “Paint the Town!” Sunday, August 9. A day-long event hosted by the Souterrain Gallery in collaboration with the HVA RiverFest. Artists of all ages and artistic backgrounds are invited to paint or recreate scenery of the Cornwalls in any medium. Drop off your masterpiece at the Souterrain Gallery by 2 p.m. An artists’ reception will be held from 4 to 6 p.m. The spontaneous exhibit will remain on display through September. For info contact Bianca at 672-2969.

**The Rose Algrant Show**: Friday, August 7, from 5 to 8 p.m., Saturday, August 8, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, August 9, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Cornwall Consolidated School (see insert).

**Motherhouse Events**

Saturday, August 8, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Local Farm: Yes! You CAN can! Harvest fresh veggies and herbs from the Local Farm garden. Learn how to use a pressure canner so you can eat local all year long! Potluck lunch included; $35/family. Must preregister with Debra@Motherhouse.us or 672-0229.

Camp Eureka is offering two one-day samples of camp experience. Camp In Ajam on August 4 and Camp Mil-Ka-Kow on August 25; for information call Debra at 672-0299 or CampEureka.us.

Meditation held Sundays at 1 p.m. and Thursdays at 4 p.m. All levels of experience welcome. Call Debra for location.

**HVA RiverFest.** The Housatonic Valley Association and the Town of Cornwall will host a Housatonic RiverFest in honor of the Town of Cornwall’s 275th Anniversary, Sunday, August 9, from 1 to 5 p.m. by the river in West Cornwall. The family-oriented day will feature games, live music, exhibits, and displays from a river outfitter and local organizations, fly-fishing and water-safety demonstrations, cookout, and art show.

The grand finale will be a “Funny Boat Float:” a paddle parade of homemade, decorated watercraft on a still-water section of the river. Distinguished judges will award prizes to winners of this non-competitive, fun flotilla. Come along! Make a float! For more information go to hvatoday.org or call 672-6678.

**CCT Guided Trail Walks.** The Cornwall Conservation Trust will offer a series of guided trail walks to showcase trails maintained by CCT and friendly to hikers of all ages. Hikes begin at 11 a.m. and last approximately 45 minutes. Hikes will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain and thunderstorms.

**Free Blood Pressure Clinic.** Monday, August 10, noon to 1 p.m. at the UCC Day Room. For information contact VNA Northwest at 860-567-6000 or vnanw.org.

**Senior Luncheon.** Newcomers always welcome for great food and fine company. At the Wandering Moose on Tuesday, August 11, from 11:50 a.m. to 1 p.m. No reservations necessary. Questions? Call Bob Potter at 672-6191.

**The Hevreh Ensemble.** Sunday, August 30, at 2 p.m. at the Cornwall Library. The compositions can best be described as “classical with a jazz/world music sensibility.** Concert will include a wine reception. Donation: $25. For reservations, call 672-6874 or cornwalllibrary@biblio.org.

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