CCS Principal Resigns

The Cornwall Board of Education announced that Principal Mike Croft has resigned effective August 8. Croft will move on to become assistant principal at Shepaug Valley School, where he had previously taught for nine years.

The board will begin its search for a new principal in spring 2020. It has retained Patricia Corvello as interim principal. Mrs. Corvello was principal at Southington Plantsville Elementary School and served as an English teacher and principal in Watertown and New Milford.

The Chronicle will have complete coverage of this and other news from CCS in our September issue.

—The Editors

Spirited, Civil, Serious

The town informational meeting this past June concerning the sewer proposals for West Cornwall had the possibility of becoming fractious, judging by signs around town beforehand warning of “millions in new taxes.” However, the well-attended meeting came off as an opportunity to hear different opinions in a spirited, serious, but civil atmosphere.

This was preparation for the town vote on July 26 about whether to spend up to $10,000 to apply for non-binding government grants to fund the project. Breaking news: at a packed meeting the vote was 164 in favor and 43 against.

The whole process started when the study committee appointed by the selectmen retained a wastewater management engineering firm, with the help of a government grant. The engineers focused on an area consisting of 65 mostly full-time dwellings, along with the businesses, in West Cornwall’s core. Their report found that the existing treatment and disposal systems contained a “significant potential to detrimentally affect the water quality of existing wells and the Housatonic River.” The main causes were the small lot sizes that prevail in the area, along with poor overall soil quality for leaching. These same conditions, in the judgment of the engineers, ruled out any meaningful or effective means for individual owners to solve the problems. Their recommendation was to install a combined gravity and low-pressure sanitary sewer collection and treatment facility, initially for a core area comprised of the business area along Route 128, and portions of Railroad Street and Lower River Road. Additional sub-areas were outlined for future inclusion as needed or desired. Waste water would be treated to “drinking water” quality before being discharged permissibly into the Housatonic River.

In the months after the report, the committee conducted further explorations, including viewing upgraded systems in Norfolk and Salisbury.

At the town meeting in June, First Selectman Gordon Ridgway recounted his conversations with potential businesses and noted that sewers would not solve all the problems of economic development, but that it would be hard to imagine such development without addressing this continuing issue. He suggested that Cornwall was better off arriving at its own solutions, than having solutions imposed by others when a problem does arise.

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**VOLUME 29 : NUMBER 7 AUGUST 2019**

### AUGUST 2019

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*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957* For additions and updates, visit www.cornwallchronicle.org
Various attendees took turns offering their views. Some objected to paying for something that benefited only a few residents, particularly irksome for those who had already gone to great expense to install or upgrade their private systems elsewhere in Cornwall. Also, in the past, some residents of West Cornwall had expressed satisfaction with their existing, still-working systems, and voiced doubts about whether a public sewer system will have the intended effect of attracting development. Then there is also the undetermined question of where a treatment plant would be located, although committee members who viewed the technology in operation elsewhere testified to its low visibility and quiet operation.

On the positive side, other speakers pointed out that West Cornwall is a business zone and the Covered Bridge is a main driver of tourism. Without a place to eat, more shops to visit, or even a place to use a bathroom, tourism suffers. Committee member Ian Ingersoll, whose commercial building has no water “in or out,” gave a brief rundown of the makeshift conditions existing in many buildings along “main street,” with shared water and septic across lot lines, or no septic, just antiquated cesspools still in operation, likely discharges into Mill Brook, and buildings with development potential for businesses. He called sewer installation the “right thing to do.”

A representative of River Alliance of Connecticut praised the great resource we have in the river and urged residents not to lose the reason people visit by waiting until phosphorous and nitrogen leaching, along with warming temperatures, cause algae blooms to appear in the river.

Phil Hart pointed out the state’s continuing interest in water quality, the past efforts involving PCBs, and that each town needed to do its part to mitigate pollution along its portion of the river.

Other comments or opinions centered on the need to view this as a town-wide infrastructure issue to be addressed, like roads and the school, not simply as a problem for the area directly affected.

—Tom Barrett

The Great Country Mutt Show Was Great

The Great Country Mutt Show on the Cornwall Town Green on June 22 lived up to its name. It was an extraordinarily entertaining event with 115 dogs, who were registered for the competition, and approximately 250 members of the human species in attendance. The Mutt Show was the kick-off event for the Little Guild’s long-range plan to build a bigger facility where it can rescue, shelter, and heal even more homeless cats and dogs. But by no means were all the dogs in attendance mutts. Pedigree canines participated as well, and we’re happy to say there were no class tensions between the two.

Television journalist Richard Schlesinger served as the ringmaster. Judges for the individual categories were Robert Levinstein and Alan M-L Wager of the Sharon Playhouse. Bunny Williams judged the two Best in Show. The winners were Matt Bowen’s Phoebe for Big Dog and Carrie Richard’s Lexi in the Little Dog category. The Joint Chiefs provided music. No, the set did not include “How Much Is that Doggy in the Window?” or Elvis Presley’s “You Ain’t Nothin’ but a Hound Dog”.

Unsurprisingly, one of the sponsors was former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. For many years our foreign policy has been going to the dogs. Congresswoman Jahana Hayes was in attendance, accompanied by a Great Pyrenees, a very useful companion for an acrimonious Congress. It was gratifying to note that the dogs all behaved very well. The humans were just a bit less orderly.

Individual competitions included Easiest Carry-On; Longest Ears; Shortest Ears; Waggiest Tail; Most Unidentifiable Mix; Best Powder Puff; Sweetest Pair; Best Trick; Dog That Looks Most Like Its Owner; and Most Unidentifiable Mix; Waggiest Tail; Most Unidentifiable Mix; Shortest Ears; Longest Ears; Easiest Carry-On; Longest Ears; Shortest Ears; Easiest Carry-On.

From the Floor to the Wall

On a late June morning, artist Jackie Saccoccio hoisted open the glass garage door on the side of her studio to reveal 21 large rectangular paintings in various stages of progress, all fixed in space, but pulsating with movement. She begins her paintings on the floor, pouring liquid paint mixtures onto flat canvas by hand and also using wet canvas as a tool to drip paint onto other canvases. “The pools of paint are manipulated to make webbings and diaphanous layers,” she explains. As they develop, she might superimpose more lines with brushes or oil stick. The final conglomeration of line and color draw upon her ever-evolving interests in portraiture, architecture, alchemy, collage, and etching techniques.

Saccoccio, who shows in galleries and museums in the U.S. and internationally, will present this new work in January at Van Doren Waxter gallery on the Upper East Side (owned by Cornwall native John Van Doren) and Chart, a Tribeca gallery whose ceilings can accommodate the tallest work she has made in her 30-plus years as an artist. “I started making larger works on canvas on the floor in my old studio (the former Yutzel’s Market in West Cornwall), but when I added the stretcher, I could not get them out of the door.”

Although she misses the great-for-painting light in her former studio, she loves the increased height and space in the new site, which sits in the corner of a meadow just over the crest of Cream Hill Road, that she and her husband, sculptor Carl D’Alvia purchased in 2014. They designed a 3,200-square-foot building with separate studios and shared storage and office areas. The exterior of the building is black corrugated metal, with a black metal roof, exposed steel support beams, radiant heat, and clerestory windows. From afar, it appears as an elegant over-sized shed. “We wanted it to look considered,” she says and to “look nice and situated and conducive to work.”

The artworks bursting forth suggest that the building has achieved that purpose since they set up shop in October 2018. Saccoccio also finds inspiration in her surroundings. “The land is so beautiful,” she says, “and a fox walked across the loading dock the other day. To watch the flowers swaying in the fields helps you clear your head out.” Saccoccio, D’Alvia, and their now college-aged daughter Anna Madalena moved full time to
Uprooting Addiction

Idyllic though they may be, the Northwest Corner’s hills offer no refuge from the opioid crisis that has gripped the nation. That’s just one of many truths that Cornwall resident and documentary filmmaker Tory Estern Jadnow addresses in her film *Uprooting Addiction*. Jadnow and Executive Producer Edie Schechter team up with licensed social worker Hope Payson to expose the roots of addiction as response to trauma among the members of Recovering Community, an area support group for addicts trying to stay sober and rebuild their lives.

In the movie, addiction expert Dr. Gabor Maté presents the idea that in many addicts the brain has been rewired by trauma, an argument that powerfully suggests that sufferers of opioid addiction need to be encountered with compassion. Scenes from Recovering Community discussions, along with poignant up-close-and-personal stories, expose the personal trauma intertwined with addiction that led those profiled in the film to seek support. The arboreal metaphor in the film’s title demonstrates Payson’s strategy of dealing with the roots of addiction rather than its branches for long term health. This method is depicted quite literally in sequences featuring group sessions.

Ultimately, *Uprooting Addiction* strikes a hopeful note. In consistently optimistic tones, the film contends that multiple pathways to healing are possible, whether in combination or pursued individually. These include both pharmacological and non-pharmacological approaches, and thus yoga, meditation, and mindfulness stand alongside suboxone and EMDR therapy. Fortunately, Estern Jadnow’s film gives cause for hope that those in recovery can find in the form of a supportive community. The film’s music and quiet guitar score perfectly underscore the message of calm support and embracing the present. Evan Estern’s cinematography lovingly caresses familiar area topography.

Erratics at Welles Preserve

On a steamy July morning, roughly 20 naturalists from all parts of Connecticut and of all shapes, sizes, ages, and outdoor-intelligence gathered to hike in Welles Preserves and gain crucial insight from Sachem Hawkstorm, chief descendant of the Schaghticoke First Nations and a direct descendant of the great Wampanoag Chief Wasanegin Massasot. This effort is part of the Cornwall Conservation Trust’s commitment to making town preserves ready for recreation and to make a connection to the stewardship of first people.

The added bonus of the hike was clearly having a mystery to solve, thus engaging this fairly diverse group of eager clue seekers: Is Welles Preserve the site of a bygone Native American settlement or not?

At the last minute, however, Sachem had to cancel so, in a quick pivot, trust outreach coordinator Katherine Freygang not only led us on this magnificent hike, but pointed out various elements of the terrain that caused her to suspect that maaay yyybe, just maybe, our very own Welles Preserve was once a Native settlement.

And why is that? According to Freygang, the hike has “a nice promontory where you can see a valley containing navigable water.” Check. This little swath of land off Town Street donated by the Welles family has the sweetest knoll overlooking Cornwall and if you peer down, you can eye a stream. “It’s also got a sharp face with a back area that can be defended,” continued Freygang. Check. There was definitely enough room to protect this jewel box of a crest from possible invaders, minus the comfy Adirondacks chairs and picnic table provided by the trust that allowed us to enjoy the re-freshments Freygang’s son Nate Flagg lugged up.

Stepping over logs and tramping through uneven ground, Freygang pointed out various flattened areas where a structure could have been erected. A trench or a crescent-shaped moat would be made to wick around the foundation.

OK, so what’s with the erratics and the special erratics, or large prominent boulders?

“Most glacial deposits are natural and have simply landed the way they’ve landed. These are called erratics,” said Freygang. “Others seem to have been placed in a special formation. You can tell because they are perched on one to three points and may have similar support stones under them showing intention. The formation relates to the stars and most likely serve agricultural purposes.”

Nature vs Native American-made?

“Perhaps,” said Freygang.

—Elizabeth England

Cornwall Briefs

- Roadwork Alert! Reclaiming and repaving is scheduled for the end of College Street near the Goshen border.
- The interior of the West Cornwall firehouse has been spruced up this summer under the guidance of Jim Terrall. This includes painting by member Pete Jacquette.
- Town caucus were held in late July to set the slate for November’s municipal

(continued on page 4)
(continued from page 3) elections (unfortunately too late to include the slate in this issue). If you wish to be added to the ballot, but are not endorsed by either party, contact Vera Dineen at the town hall, 672-2709.

— Susie Lilly Ott

Events & Announcements

For updates, changes, and additions, check the online calendar at cornwallchronicle.org or cornwalllibrary.org (it is the same calendar). And for reminders, see the Chronicle Facebook page.

At the Cornwall Library

There will be an Ice Cream Party on Saturday, August 3, at 1 p.m. for children who have successfully completed the Children’s Reading Challenge.

Film Screening on Friday, August 16, at 5:30 P.M. Tory Estern Jadow will screen her film Uprooting Addiction, a documentary film by Hope Payson and Tory Estern Jadow. The film highlights heartfelt stories of Connecticut residents with histories of trauma and addiction in different stages of recovery.

The library would appreciate donations of paintings, prints, pastels, photographs, and posters for their third annual Labor Day Benefit Art Sale. Artwork may be dropped off at the library any time during library hours, or picked up by a volunteer (email mhaskel@biblio.org or call 672-6874 to arrange). Proceeds of sales support the library’s programs for children and adults all year long.

The third annual Labor Day Art Sale. Opening reception Friday, August 23, from 5 to 8 p.m. Sale runs through September 1 during library hours. (See insert.)

Children’s Sing Along on Saturday, August 31, 10 a.m. A song and dance program with Jonny from the Music Cellar for families with children ages 8 and under. Bring your own drum if you have one. Sponsored by the Cornwall Library and the Cornwall Coop Farm Market. Let the library know if you will be attending, cornwalllibrary@biblio.org or 672-6874. Free, donations welcome.

Sewers

Sophisticated water and sewer systems date back to Ancient Greece, circa 18th century BC. Will West Cornwall’s system be achieved circa 21st century? If you keep us going, we’ll keep you updated.

Community Dance: Saturday, August 3, at 7 p.m. at the town hall. Music by Betsy’s Band and calling by Jim Gregory. Donation suggested. Contact debra@motherhouse.us or 672-0229. All ages welcome; no partner necessary.

At Hammond Beach

Stand up Paddle Board Yoga, Saturday, August 3, at 11 a.m.

Free Community Yoga, Saturday, August 17, and Saturday, August 24, at 9 a.m.

Live music with Jonny G and Ice Cream Sundaes, Saturday, August 24, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Craft Workshops for children at the Hughes Memorial Library. Saturday, August 3: Duck Puppets. Saturday, August 10: “Get into Shapes(s).” Saturday, August 17: Survival Bracelets. Saturday, August 24: Water Power. All workshops run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information contact Joe Brien; lostartworkshops@gmail.com.

Rose Algrant Show: Friday, August 9, through Sunday, August 11. (See insert.)

A Cornwall Music Weekend: Guitar and Vocal Workshops with Lorraine and Bennett Hammond. Saturday, August 10, at the town hall, open mic from 7 to 9 p.m. Sunday, August 11, at 2 p.m., concert by the Hammonds, jam session to follow. (See insert.) For more information, contact Jill Cutler at jill.cutler22@gmail.com.

Park & Rec Monthly Senior Luncheon will be held on Tuesday, August 13, at noon at the Parish House. Cost is $6. Please call/text Jen (480-0600) or prcornwall@gmail.com. Morning Coffee & Conversations will be held on Tuesday, August 27, at 9 a.m. at the Parish House.

Art in Cornwall: Tim Prentice’s exhibit of sculptures, “Gone with the Wind” continues at the Cornwall Library through August 17. At the Souterrain Gallery, “Cut and Paste: A Show of Collages” by Patrice Allison Gallerio. Artist’s reception Saturday, August 10, from 3 to 6 p.m. The Toll House Gallery in West Cornwall at the Ingersoll Showroom will continue to exhibit works by Don Bracken, Swede Ahstrom, and Ian Ingersoll.

Board of Education is hosting a picnic to say farewell to CCS Principal Mike Croft and hello to Pat Corvello. Thursday, August 22, from 5 to 7 P.M. at Hammond Beach. Pizza and ice cream will be provided.

Ballyhack Preserve Hike: Saturday, August 24, at 10 A.M. Peter del Tredici will lead a short hike highlighting this “Old Growth Forest.” Sponsored by the Cornwall Conservation Trust.

Looking Inside: A Tour of West Cornwall’s Old Buildings and Landscapes: Saturday, August 24, noon to 4 P.M. (See insert.)

The 14th Annual Cornwall Artists Open Studio will be held Saturday, August 31, from 1 to 5 P.M. For a list of participating artists, directions to their studios, and a map, visit cornwall.org one week before the event.

Cornwall Listings: Every Cornwall tourist attraction, inn, restaurant, business, and event is invited to set up its own free listing page on CTvisit.com. Its marketing system drives four million visitors a year to the site to plan trips. Please contact the Connecticut Office of Tourism at jean.hebert@ct.gov with any questions.

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