Cornwall’s Health Assister

As most of us know, 2014 is the year all U.S. residents not already covered by health insurance are mandated to purchase an insurance plan. What many of us may not know is that Cornwall has its very own official Affordable Care Act (ACA) “assister” who can help figure out the best coverage for you. Working out of her office at the former West Cornwall railroad station, Janet Carlson Sanders’ passion is to make sure anyone in the area applying by the March 31 deadline will “get the best possible outcome” for his or her particular situation. (After March 31, you’ll have to wait until next year’s open enrollment period, which runs mid-November through mid-January.)

As managing director of a marketing agency that primarily works with healthcare-focused companies, Sanders is familiar with the complexities of the healthcare system. A grant from Access Health CT funds her ACA assister job eight hours a week, though she puts in many more. She is one of nine assisters in Litchfield County, funds her ACA assister job eight hours a week, though she puts in many more. She is one of nine assisters in Litchfield County, and reports to a “navigator” based in Torrington who is an expert at understanding Medicare and Medicaid.

Sanders beams when she talks about the people she’s helped steer through the often confusing and sometimes balky state-run website—accesshealthct.com. After hours of training and filing of advisees’ applications, she has an instinctive feel for the ins and outs of the process.

Sanders extols the effects of the ACA’s requirement that insurance companies disregard any applicant’s pre-existing conditions: “One family was paying $4,000 a month due to a chronic disease and even then lived in constant fear of losing insurance. Now they’re paying less than half that amount.” She also likes to point to the many people who were unemployed and uninsured who have walked away from her office with free health and dental insurance from Medicaid. She acknowledges that for those with good incomes there are no truly “cheap” plans, but believes good deals are to be had in the new health marketplace.

A likely good plan, says Sanders, is one that meets three basic criteria: you’re sure you can afford the monthly premium; you’re likely to exceed the annual deductible; and you won’t be financially ruined.

if you have to pay the yearly “maximum out of pocket.”

Sanders has advice for all ages and income levels. For some young people in good health, so-called “catastrophic” coverage may be the best approach. For some older people, Sanders says there are ways to maximize coverage and save on premiums—whether a person is on Medicare or not.

For those exploring coverage options on accesshealthct.com, Sanders has some tips: Keep an exact record of your username and password, including capital letters. Make best estimates and answer all questions “Yes” or “No” never “I don’t know.” If you want to be considered for subsidies, you must answer yes when asked if you or anyone in your house needs help paying for healthcare. Participating provider (POP) plans are usually preferable to Health Maintenance (HMO) plans. If you get offered Medicaid, note that it includes dental insurance, and is free of charge, even if it does limit your choice of doctors. Otherwise to be eligible for subsidies consider a “qualified” plan. Make sure you pay your first premium immediately. If your insurance company is slow getting you documentation, call to confirm coverage and get your policy number for temporary identification.

(continued on page 2)
Four Corners’ Fresh Start
Ryan Craig, with his fiancée Natasha Traviaes and 3-year-old daughter Gianna, is exuberant as he shows off the spruced-up, repainted Berkshire Country Store. “We’ve returned to our roots,” he tells us. “I worked at Berkshire when I was in high school in 1997 through 2002 before heading out into the corporate world. The store will be very similar to what it was, but we’ll listen to what customers want. We hope to reinvest in the community.”

That reinvestment—the family has already spent a month and a half remodeling—is evident in the reconstructed coffee bar (of Cathedral Pines wood), the gleaming stainless deli area, turbo oven and prep counters, the huge stove where they’ll be baking fresh bread and pizza, the large grocery area (“we hope to carry local items”), and the refinished floors that match the bright new dining booths by the windows.

“After living away and working for others, I jumped at this opportunity to move back to Goshen, be my own boss, and spend more time with my family.”

And the whole family is here, in one way or another. When asked about decorations, Ryan shows us his varsity school letter—blue felt M for Marvelwood (his) and a red felt W for Wamogo (his father’s). And he plans to mount an antique terracotta lion’s head in the store; it was given to him by his late grandfather, who called him “Ryan the Lion” when he was a kid.

The store has had 344 “likes” on its Facebook page and has even had a few requests for employment. Ryan was about to extend a job offer to a young local who had asked: “Now, when was the last time you were hugged for just doing your job?”

Sanders will be offering health insurance assistance sessions this month at locations in Cornwall & Sharon. For information call 672-0043 x111 or email jcarlson@accesshealthct.com.

-Susan Fox

Goodbye to Friends
Teryl Joseph Roepecke
DeForest Benjamin, Sr.

Land Transfers
Hamilton Robinson, Jr. and Roxana Barry Robinson to Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc., property known as 94 Town Street, containing 62.365 acres of land, for $313,333.

Karen J. Greenberg to Leon E. Irish and Karla W. Simon, 10 acres of land with buildings and improvements thereon, at property known as 6 Day Road, for $650,000.

Landmark Trust (U.S.A.), Inc. to Big Pink, LLC, land with buildings and improvements thereon, at property known as 417 Sharon Goshen Turnpike, for $63,000.

Welcome
Benjamin Graeme Young
Wendy McFarlane and James Young

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Letters to the Chronicle

CIVIL WAR MATERIALS WANTED
The Cornwall Historical Society is mounting an exhibit about the Civil War from Cornwall’s perspective; 2014 marks the 150th year since the death of Major General John Sedgwick from a sniper’s bullet at Spotsylvania. We welcome the loan/donation of any letters, photographs, or other memorabilia related to the Civil War in Cornwall and its veterans. Call 672-0505 or email cornhistsoc@optonline.net.

—Barbara Gold, CHS

FABULOUS SHOW!
Going to three of my friends’ art openings in one week in January was an astonishing treat: I was dazzled by their endless creativity. Many know of Danielle Matier’s and Bob Parker’s shows, but the display Debra Tyler has mustered at the Parish House of the Congregational Church may have remained

under the radar. Her work ranges from papier mâché to silkscreen to linoleum printing, from a huge hanging head of the Blue Ox Babe, to the Local Farm Logo printed on ikat-patterned silk, to books, including flip books of photos of Garrick Dinneen, aged 14, with two young oxen, hauling firewood out of the woods at my place. I could see the occasion all over again. It is really an astonishing exhibit.

—Nita Colgate

INVITATION TO CURLING
As Cornwall residents and longtime curlers, we would be delighted to give you a tour of the Norfolk Curling Club, which has been rebuilt and opened after a total-loss fire a couple of years ago. With the Olympics coming up this month, now is a great time to familiarize yourself with the sport. Call us at 672-6546 or see Mike at Northwest Lumber.

—Mike & Diane Coe

Staying in Touch
During Storms
There are several ways Cornwall residents can stay in touch with town officials during severe weather. The town maintains a phone number list of residents who wish to be checked on—often those who have health or transportation issues. Call the selectmen’s office at 672-4959 to be added to this list.

The town also uses the State Alert Emergency Notification System. To receive these notifications by phone go to the ctalert.gov website and register yourself for the Cornwall alert system. Emergency notices will also be posted at the Cornwall Fire Department’s website, cornwallfire.org, as well as at cornwallnet.org.

If you have concerns during storms, call 672-4959. For emergencies dial 911, which will dispatch emergency help. Please make sure your house number is clearly visible for 911 responders.

—Gordon M. Ridgway, First Selectman

Cornwall Briefs

• PURA: That stands for Public Utility Regulatory Agency, the agency that told Connecticut Light and Power to begin “enhanced tree trimming” along several of Cornwall’s roads, including routes 4, 125 and 128. The purpose is to prevent trees from damaging power lines and causing blackouts in heavy snows and windstorms. The selectmen’s office said smaller power lines are particularly vulnerable to wind and ice. Homeowners are encouraged to notify the selectmen’s office of any problem trees adjacent to or on their property.

• The Cornwall Country Market has tested
its new 30 kilowatt generator and it proved to keep the store's entire electrical system functioning. The market will be able to operate as a center for shelter, food, and heat in the event of a major loss of power.

The Wandering Moose in West Cornwall has a similar large-capacity generator that also allows it to stay open in case of a power outage.

- 417 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike, popularly known as West Cornwall's Pink House, has been sold. The price: $63,000, and $35,000 went to the town for back taxes. The buyers: Libby Mitchell and her husband, Jim Herity. Their immediate goal: clean the place up and add a new coat of pink paint to prevent further deterioration of the building. Mitchell said the long-range plan is to turn the structure into "Big Pink LLC, the West Cornwall center for the arts," with programs in writing, painting, and music for adults and children.

- Bonjour Bonney Brook: The first days of the new year saw the first residents move into their new homes at Bonney Brook in Cornwall Bridge. Taking up responsibilities at the site was property administrator Al Stokes, who also works at Beckley House in Canaan. The settled folk of Cornwall extend a warm welcome!

- Appointment: Terry Burke of the Cornwall Bridge Burkes has been appointed assistant director of the town’s Emergency Management under director Nev Dunn. Terry said he would forego the usual car and driver that go with the position (just kidding).

Events & Announcements

Come out all you groundhogs to the Community Contra Dance on Saturday, February 1, at 7 p.m. at the town hall. Music by Still, the Homegrown Band, calling by Fern Bradley. No partner necessary, left feet welcome. Donations requested. For information call 672-6101.

At the Cornwall Library

The Saturday Winter Film Series continues February 1 at 7:30 p.m. with The Man in the White Suit, and Saturday February 15, with The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (refreshments served).

Family Movie Night, featuring Disney's Beauty and the Beast, will screen on Friday, February 21, at 7 p.m.

The dance movie Place, a duet by Mikhail Baryshnikov and Ana Laguna, will be shown on Wednesday, February 19, at 7 p.m.

A "carnival"-themed dinner dance with jazz by the Bob Parker band and southern food will take place on Saturday, March 1. Cost is $25/person and cash bar. Call for details.

Betty Krasne will be teaching an eight-week memoir-writing program beginning mid-March. Contact the library for details.

Art In Cornwall

At the UCC Parish House, Debra Tyler’s exhibit, Of Joy and Justice, will continue through February. Call 672-6840 weekday mornings for viewing.

Ellen Moon’s exhibition, In the Field, opens February 4 at the Cornwall Library. On February 15 at 4 p.m. an artist’s talk will be followed by a special reception to honor Ellen’s many years of curating the library’s art exhibits.

The Subterrain Gallery of the Wish House will show Art Among Friends, the debut exhibit of works by the acrylic paint group led by Alisyn Hamilton of Gaylordsville. Included are paintings by Cornwall's Ruthellen Griffin, Mary Gates, and Susan Gingert. Opening and artists’ reception are on February 15 from 3 to 6 p.m.

A Pasta Bonanza Supper will be served on February 8 at the UCC Parish House from 5 to 7 p.m. Donations benefit the Heifer Project International. Call the church office for information at 672-6840. (Gluten-free pasta served too.)

Free Blood Pressure Clinic on Monday, February 10, at the UCC Parish House from noon to 1 p.m. Sponsored by Visiting Nurses Association Northwest.

Band and Chorus Concert on Monday, February 10, at 11:30 a.m. in the CCS gymnasium. Performers from grades 6 through 8 of the six elementary schools of Region One will be conducted by Cornwall’s music director Alicia Simonetti-Shpur. All are welcome.

Senior Luncheon on Tuesday, February 11, at the Wandering Moose Cafe from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hot food and hot gossip at a cool price. No reservations necessary. Questions? Call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

The Pine Ridge Work Trip sponsored by the Cornwall UCC to build homes and enjoy a cultural exchange with Lakota people in South Dakota is planned for June 21 to 27. Adults and children age 13 or older (with parent) are welcome. Sign up deadline is February 15. Contact Micki Nunn-Miller via email at cornwallpastor@aol.com for more information.

Applications for a hearing before the Board of Assessment Appeals must be received by February 20. Hearings will be held during March.

Senior Bus Trip to the 33rd annual Connecticut Flower and Garden Show in Hartford is on Friday, February 21. Depart at 9 a.m., return by 3 p.m. Admission is $12 and lunch can be purchased. Bus transportation is free. Must RSVP to Becky Hurlburt by February 14 at prcornwall@gmail.com or 672-4071.

A Family Cow Forum will take place on Saturday, February 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the UCC Parish House. RSVP at farmer@locafarm.com or call 672-0229.

February Fests

February does its part to cheer the midwinter with a celebration of love and multiple presidential birthday salutes. So lift your pen, along with that glass of champagne, and write the Chronicle a check. Celebrate! And thanks.

—John Miller

February Fests

Bonner Brook:

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is $15 or more, we’d be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax-deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. PO Box 6, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be e-mailed to the publishers at: info@cornwallchronicle.org