Town Buys the Farm

“The final funds didn’t come in until two days before the deadline, so we were that close to not pulling it off,” Gordon Ridgway said. But on June 2, the town closed on the purchase of 100 acres of farmland on the east side of Route 7 for $540,000. Half the land is open, half wooded; 17 acres are in Kent.

The first selectman said that the sellers, the Lorch family, deserved credit for their patience and commitment to conservation. (Many years ago the family sold to the state some of the land that is now Kent Falls State Park.)

There were two other components necessary to complete the deal. Chris Hopkins simultaneously bought 20 acres across from the town land, along with a house and barns, for $450,000. He then signed a five-year renewable lease to manage and farm the town land under the supervision of the Agricultural Commission. He will pay $200 a year and be responsible for maintaining the land and barn, paying taxes, and providing insurance. In an important part of the lease, he gave to the town certain easements on his land: agreeing to keep it in agricultural use, not to subdivide it, and to preserve the house and barns. In Gordon’s words, “the entire environment there will be preserved.”

As for the fact that all except six acres of the land was already protected by the sale of development rights to the state, Gordon pointed out that this does not prevent unwelcome changes to the landscape. One needs only to look as far as the former Harriet Clark farm, where a barn the size of Rhode Island sits, to confirm that people do odd things with their land.

Is there any continuing criticism? “The deal is complex, but once you explain it, people usually see why it’s important.” And if they don’t? “Talk is cheap,” he said. He didn’t add—but we will—“and money talks.”

—Ed Ferman

Words and Awards

Cornwall Consolidated School’s graduation ceremony on June 8, held now by new tradition in the gymnasium, offered more speeches than usual. Because they valued each student’s perspective, teachers selected three graduates to comment on their CCS experience. Sabina Busby described the life values learned as a member of the championship basketball team; Trey Hatcher developed a metaphor of school as a dramatic production; and Mark Selino praised the school and staff for the second chance he received when he entered CCS in seventh grade. Finally, CCS alumna Tracy Gray offered “points of interest,” the last of which was an admonition to laugh daily; she reinforced her point with Groucho Marx glasses and moustache for each graduate.

Three awards were presented during the ceremony. Dylan Morehouse received the Dottie Hermann Memorial Award; Nestor Bramley accepted the VFW Citizenship Award; and Sabina Busby was recognized for outstanding academic achievement. Each class member also received a gift from PTA President Bethany Thompson. Sharon Sawicki was recognized for her volunteer work at CCS.

At a school awards ceremony in the morning, other awards were presented. The (continued on page 2)
Civic Club provided awards in art to Helen Prentice and Dylan Morehouse; in music to Rebecca Sawicki (instrumental), Kathleen Rogers (voice), and Dylan Morehouse (general music). In English, the Mark Van Doren Award for writing went to Rebecca Sawicki, and the Edna Peet Award for most improved in writing went to Shelby Baird. Sabina Busby received the science award; Rebecca Sawicki the social studies award; and Rebecca Sawicki the world language award. In math, Sabina Busby received the algebra award and Jessica Hurlburt the grade eight math award. The history award, provided by the Cornwall Historical Society, went to Nick Dzenitis. Well done, everyone! —Barbara Gold

Superior Recycling, Terrific Ladies

It’s the event of the summer. People save stuff for it all year long. Weekenders plan their vacations around it. It’s so popular that buyers start lining up at five in the morning to get in at ten. It raised over $20,000 for college scholarships last year. And it’s all run by 18 elderly women, about ten dependable young go-fers, and 80 to 100 volunteers.

Thalia Scoville, who has long been involved with the annual Woman’s Society Rummage Sale, knows that it is over 50 years old. Cilla Hart Mauro, who guards the Parish House by sleeping in her truck the night before the sale, agrees. “My son was in a play—the mailing you should recently have received from the assessor, asking you to correct or verify “field card” facts, is a key part of it. The August Chronicle will include a flyer with additional information, while a comprehensive booklet will be sent to all property owners in November. That’s when the notice of your new assessment will go out, too. So breathe deeply and remain calm: It’s fair, it’s logical, it’s state mandated. What’s not to love? —Maggie Cooley

Welcome

Henry Maryon to Tracy and Theo Spencer

Congratulations

Caryn Gregory and Paul Barber

Land Transfers

Bruce W. Berkman and Susan LaMonte-Berkman to Françoise Moully and Art Spiegelman, house and 5 acres at 155 Dible Hill Road for $326,000.

Connecticut Light and Power Company to Timothy L. and Anthony D. Locke, 1/3 acre on Lower River Road for $20,000.

Jonathan M. and Victoria Estern Jadow to Hamilton and Roxana Barry Robinson, Jr., 61.895 acres off Town Street for $100,000.

Katherine E. Gannett to Jack Zetkuli, 10.01 acres on River Road for $190,000.

Scott Cady Moves On

At last the many rumors have coalesced to fact: The Reverend Scott Cady is leaving St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church to assume a new pulpit in Manchester. We sat down with Scott to get some facts about that fact—and maybe some opinions as well.

CC: Scott, the why—or why’s—if your move is still in the rumor mill. Can you set us straight?

SC: Why move? Very few pastors spend their whole ministry in one place. In this case, I suppose there are three reasons. First, it is time for the congregation. After almost 22 years, St. Peter’s has received what I have to give, and has borne with my shortcomings too. Second, there’s a fine opportunity in Manchester for me to experience an entirely different kind of ministry, to try out a different leadership style, and to deal with a staff and a more urban community. And third, it’s a natural time for transition for our family as Maggie finishes up at Housy. My role as dad will be very different when she goes off to college in the fall.

CC: Is it true that you will continue to live in town and commute to Manchester?

SC: Yes, that’s true. The call I’ve accepted is for one year, to cover for a pastor on medical disability. Within the year, we’ll all know more about that pastor’s possible return to service, full or part time, and also about whether I really enjoy the big-church, urban experience. Amy will continue at the Library, and we will be as involved as we can be in local issues. The church in Manchester has a small apartment I can use to keep my commutes down to two or three per week.

CC: If right now your successor were to ask...
you for the “lowdown on Cornwall,” what might spring to your mind first?

SC: Lowdown on Cornwall? The community is certainly not just a sleepy little hill town. It’s lively and active, with a good mix of old-time agriculture to cutting-edge art to pretty much everything in between.

CC: What do you see as your career from now on? More writing? Traditional ministry?

SC: Career? I’m not able to predict. I do like writing and hope to do more. But I fully expect to focus on parish work until I retire. That may be another long-term call, or it may be a series of interim calls. I love parish ministry and intend to do it as long as I can.

CC: Scott, everyone in town seems to know you because of your ongoing civic concern. Why did you devote so much time and effort to this wider mission?

SC: What you call my “wider mission” and the more parochial mission are intertwined, especially in a town this size. As a Christian, my responsibility is to all my neighbors, not just the ones who show up on Sunday or share my theological perspective. Being an involved citizen is part of what it means to be a faithful Christian. I’ve tried to do that, and have enjoyed it very much.

CC: One last question, Scott. Each and every Cornwallian has a pet gripe about the town. For instance, my gripe concerns those people who park their cars at the dump and then proceed to sort their trash piece by piece as cars pile up behind them waiting. What’s yours?

SC: Gripe? My favorite aspect of Cornwall is the gnat. It irks me no end when this unique creature of God is maligned by Cornwallians and visitors alike. All this fascination with mountain lions tends to excite us, while we ignore or vilify our friendly little black flies.

CC: I’ll remember that, Scott. And thank you.

SC: And thank you. —Bob Potter

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

Letters to the Chronicle

GOOD CITIZENS
The Cornwall Village Improvement Society would like to make a plaque listing the honorees of the Citizenship Award of the Year given by the VFW on Memorial Day each year. We know the first award went to Doc Walker and the last one to Elizabeth Locke, but the between years are hazy. Anyone remembering winners and years please send the information to me at P.O. Box 202, Cornwall, CT 06753. Don’t be shy. Thanks.

—Lynn Cheney

AFFORDABLE HOUSING
The June issue of the Chronicle has a story about affordable housing in Cornwall. Last month, a front-page story concerned the Lorch Farm project. The conjunction of these stories shows how misguided the Lorch Farm project is.

The lament that Cornwall natives cannot afford to buy a house here has been continuous since I moved here almost 25 years ago. The Lorch Farm project will buy 100 acres of open land and keep it empty. With one-acre plots, that land could hold 100 houses. That would mean 100 homes, 100 new families, shelter for 200

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There’s even more good news: in this 25th year of Little League play in Cornwall, we have five more teams of youngsters playing baseball and softball on our new Foote Fields facility. We’re the envy of all the towns around.

—John Miller

Garlic Mustard
Last month I spent a morning pulling up an invasive weed called garlic mustard along Rattlesnake Road. It was growing among patches of spring wildflowers—trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpits, wood anemones, and toothworts. Little did I know how useful I had been! Several weeks later, an article by Henry Fountain appeared in The New York Times called “Garlic Mustard Casts a Pall on the Forest.”

Most of us are familiar with this biennial plant. (If you have any doubts, crush the leaves and sniff.) Garlic mustard’s early-spring growth allows it to dominate forest sites that otherwise would support native wildflowers. Its roots are thought to release chemical compounds that harm the soil fungi that help native plant roots take up water and nutrients.

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Dr. Kristina Stinson, a research associate at Harvard’s ecology and conservation research center, found that sugar maple saplings and other hardwood seedlings grow much more slowly in soil infested with garlic mustard than from mustard-free areas. It is now believed this plant can have a tremendous impact by changing the composition of our forests.

By early July, most garlic mustard plants can be recognized by their stalks of dry, pale-brown seed pods. (A single plant can produce thousands of seeds!) Still, it’s not too late to do your part. Grasp a garlic mustard stem at ground level and tug gently until the long root loosens from the soil. Don’t stop now. Help save our sugar maples! Tuck all your alien plants in a large plastic bag, tie it, and head for the Transfer Station.

—Carla Bigelow

SPRING GRANTS
The Cornwall Foundation is pleased to announce the distribution of five grants from its spring grants cycle, the Cornwall Historical Society, for badly needed repairs; the Cornwall Free Library for a new display case; the Town Hall Players for a special Shakespearean theater workshop; the Town of Cornwall toward the purchase of the Lorch Farm; and the United Church of Christ for its Adult Education program entitled Slavery: Then and Now.

Grants are made four times a year. To apply for a grant, visit www.cornwallfoundation.org or pick up an application at the Library.

—Jim Fishman

MEMORIAL DAY VOLUNTEERS
I would like to share my appreciation for the 17 young people who gave a slice of their free time to the Cornwall Free Library on Memorial Day. I was heartened by their response to my call for help at the book sale that day. I had more young people volunteer than I had time slots to fill! There is tremendous energy and good will among the youth in our town, so don’t listen to those naysayers who grumble about “the youth of today.” Your young people are terrific!

—Deirdre Fischer

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Events & Announcements

Live Raptors Show: Saturday, July 1, from 3 to 4 P.M. at the Insiders/Outsiders Gallery. Hope Douglas will show her raptors. There will also be a silent auction of works by Marjorie Strider and Scott Zuckerman as a benefit for the Connecticut Wildlife Rehabilitators Association.

Art in Cornwall: At the Library, the exhibit of the work of Hildreth and Lewis Daniel continues through July 22, with a reception on Sunday, July 9, from 3 to 5 P.M. Also, Asher Pavel shows Photographic Paintings Plus starting July 25, with a reception on Saturday, July 29, from 3 to 5 P.M.

The Insiders/Outsiders Gallery shows Art for the Wild, works by Marjorie Strider and Scott Zuckerman, July 1 to August 13, with a reception on Saturday, July 1, from 3 to 5 P.M.

At the Wish House, an opening reception will be held on Saturday, July 15, from 5 to 7 P.M., for Small Works of Profound Importance, mixed-media works by Peter J. Ketchum.

Art at the Bridge, a new gallery at the Pink House in West Cornwall, will host its inaugural exhibit of Contemporary Antiquarians in the month of July.

Chore Service Barn Dance: Saturday, July 15, from 6 to 9 P.M., rain or shine, at Olds Barn, 39 Jewell Street. Any questions, call 364-1003.

Motherhouse Old-Style Life Skills Workshop: Saturday, July 8, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., at Local Farm in Cornwall Bridge. Learn about caring for your cow. $35/person or $50/family. For information call 672-6874.

The 46th Rose Algran Art Show runs from Friday, August 4, to Sunday, August 6, at the new CCS gym. Hours: Friday, 5 to 8 P.M.; Saturday, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.; Sunday, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Dog Days...are upon us, defined as that sultry period between July 3 and August 11, when Sirius, the Dog Star, rises at the same time as the sun. Sinusly, one proven way to relieve the oppression is to write a check to keep the Chronicle going. Humidity transmutes to hope. The choice is yours. Thanks.

Folk Musicians to Perform: Lorraine and Bennett Hammond will give their third concert at the Town Hall at 3 P.M. on Saturday, July 29, featuring Lorraine’s original songs about growing up in Cornwall. Bring instruments and voices for post-concert singing. For information call 672-6874.

Planning and Zoning Forum: P&Z will host a forum on open space in subdivisions on Wednesday, July 19, at 7 P.M. at the Town Hall. Hear about regulations requiring applicants to set aside protected open space or pay a fee into a dedicated open space fund. Community input welcome.

Library Summer Program for Kids: “Paws, Claws, Scales, and Tales” starts on Wednesday, July 12, at 6:30 P.M., with a storytelling concert by Jay Mankit. Different programs for families will take place each Wednesday evening at 6:30 P.M. through August 16. Also, Leslie Elias will conduct a Peter and the Wolf workshop for children ages four to eight on Friday, July 21, at 11 A.M.

On August 2 there will be a pet show for animals both real and imagined. Entry forms, schedules, and reading logs are all available at the Library.

The Democratic Town Committee meets Monday, July 17, at 7:30 P.M. at the Library. Topics to be discussed include the progress of the Lamont-Lieberman primary race and the Chris Murphy vs. Nancy Johnson campaign.

The Annual Rummage Sale will take place on Saturday, July 15. (See insert in this issue.)

Chamber Music Concert at Cream Hill Lake Association on Saturday, August 5, at 7:30 P.M. Performing will be Benjamin 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.

Summer Road Work: In July, the paved sections of Flat Rocks Road and the north end of Town Street will be repaved. In August, Popple Swamp and Whitcomb Hill Roads will be resurfaced, as will town roads off Route 45. Thanks for your patience.

Combined Picnic Event: The Cornwall Community Picnic, sponsored by the Cornwall Association, and the July Fest, sponsored by Park and Rec., will be held at Foote Fields on Saturday, July 22, from 2 to 6 P.M. (rain date: Sunday, July 23). July Fest will provide the Inflatable Defender Dome, giant slides, and picnic food. Free hamburgers, hot dogs, and soft drinks will be served from 4 to 6 P.M. Bring your own chairs or blankets.

Children’s games, Cornwall Cup games, and family softball will start at 2 P.M. The West Cornwall Team will be managed by Phil and Joyce Hart (672-0247), and a combined Cornwall/Cornwall Bridge team by Ted and Donna Larson (672-4888). Call with your family line-up (ages 12 and up).

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.

The Interfaith Service on the Town Green, usually held in August, will not be held this year but will return in 2007.

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THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

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