Recovery in Sight Here

Cornwall’s economy is at least keeping pace with the nation’s slow recovery from recession—and there are some signs that it may be moving even faster. To take our economic pulse, I talked with a few key local players:

• First Selectman Gordon Ridgway was pleased that “We’re not shell shocked any more as we were when the recession hit us.” He sees this year as one of modest gains; at least vacant houses seem less of a problem.

• Assessor Barbara Bigos noted that vacant land sales are up from last year—four so far compared to only one before. House sales are roughly steady, going from 18 a year ago to 15 so far this fiscal year.

• Priscilla Miller at Bain Real Estate told us, “We’re not shell shocked any more as we were when the recession hit us.” He sees this year as one of modest gains; at least vacant houses seem less of a problem.

• Building Inspector Paul Prindle sees “Building Inspector Paul Prindle sees that house sales are up from last year. Me that house sales are up from last year. “Put on weight. Rainbow and brown trout both fishermen and trout. The fish have put on weight. Rainbow and brown trout are being caught 15 to 20 inches long.”

And so it goes. Some branches of our economy flourish; some don’t. All in all, it feels better than it did a year ago. Russ said, “The restaurant business is 5 percent ahead of their projections. Cornwall Bridge have only been operating for a little while. So far, they note that business is 5 percent ahead of their projections.”

• Dana Beecher and Louise Coogan-Beecher of the Cornwall General Store in Cornwall Bridge have only been operating since last July. So far, they note that business is 5 percent ahead of their projections.

• Russ and Sharon Sawicki at the Wandering Moose in West Cornwall have seen little change so far this year compared to last. Russ said, “The restaurant business tends to feel downturns early and comes out later.”

• Adam Franceschini, head guide at Housatonic River Outfitters, told me this looks like a very good year for them. A warm winter and early spring brought out both fishermen and trout. The fish have “put on weight. Rainbow and brown trout are being caught 15 to 20 inches long.”

And so it goes. Some branches of our economy flourish; some don’t. All in all, though, it feels better than it did a year ago. Let’s hope the uptrend continues.

—David A. Grossman

Here Come the Graduates!

With spring comes the bursting rite of passage… graduation! Transition at its most magical, with decisions about life and education—what’s next?

Thirteen eager and curious students will graduate from Cornwall Consolidated School on Friday, June 8, at 6 p.m. This year’s class is small and ready to be sprung… ready to conquer its next challenge. Ten of the 13 CCS graduates will head to Housatonic Valley Regional High School: Patrick Considine, Madison Frith, Jacob Hurlburt, Chelsea Kearns, Zackery Larson, Marina Matsudaira, Jamie Murphy, Brittany Pinette, Malcolm Scott, and Sam Thaler. Anna D’Alvia is headed to Italy for a year with her parents and will attend St. Stephen’s International School in Rome. Gian Kalmes will attend Kent School and Eve Labalme is headed to The Hotchkiss School. (There are no Cornwall graduates from IMS or WMS this year.)

Graduating from HVRHS on Friday, June 15, are 14 Cornwall students: Myles Clohessy (Central Connecticut State University), Brandon Coe (University of Connecticut), John Hare (University of Hartford), Brian Hurlburt (Florida Institute of Technology), Allison Lacko (University of New Haven), Sebastien Lasseur (Vassar College, N.Y.), Lizzie Morehouse (Western (continued on page 2)
Bonney Brook Advances
Senior housing in Cornwall Bridge moved another step forward in May when the state’s Bonding Commission approved $565,000 for the building project. This was the last piece of the $3.1 million budget, all of it coming from state or federal sources.

“We have the money,” said Cheryl Evans, president of the Cornwall Elderly Housing Corporation. “It just has to filter through to us.”

When the money is released, work will begin, perhaps in September, on the 10,781-square-foot building. About half the interior is dedicated to 10 apartments, each 540 square feet. The remaining area is taken up by common space such as hallways, a library, a large sitting and activity room, and a mechanical room.

Cheryl said the first stirrings of the need for elderly housing were in 1985 when the late First Selectman Patsy Van Doren began talking about how to care for Cornwall’s elderly, often single and in need of a safe place to live.

No applications for space in Bonney Brook are being accepted at the moment; however, town residents 62 years and older are welcome to express an interest to Cheryl at 672-0094.
—Lisa L. Simont

Putting on a New Face
Since the 2010 reopening of the Cornwall Historical Society building on Pine Street following an overall renovation, CHS’s focus has been on completing all of the interior details and, most importantly, getting on with one of the Society’s main missions: being the village storyteller and presenting well-researched and interesting exhibitions to the community.

Last year a plan was developed to make the Society’s front yard more inviting and to bring it up to the standards of the building itself. The existing asphalt walkway has been replaced with a classic brick walkway installed by John LaPorta. An elegant granite wellhead circa 1800 from the Dark Entry Forest area and donated by the Marola family of Litchfield has a featured position. A Rumsey Hall granite foundation stone, donated by Cornwall’s Greg and Natalie Randall, is now a footstep to one of the Cornwall Village Improvement Society’s wonderful wooden benches.

Financing for the facelift has come from the Village Improvement Society and a major anonymous donor. Kent Greenhouse has provided the overall plan layout. The work will be finished in time for the June 22 opening of the 2012 exhibit, “Out of the Woods: A History of Cornwall’s Forests.”
—Tom Bechtel

Land Transfers
Estate of Frank R. Trager and Estate of Marie B. Trager to Kevin P. Conway, property with improvements thereon at 72 Popple Swamp Road, for $340,000.

Frederick V. Bronner and Judith Starr Bronner to Michael Martin, 3.02 acres of land with improvements thereon, on the easterly side of Great Hollow Road, for $145,000.

Local Girl Makes Good
Sarah Calhoun, daughter of Nancy and John Calhoun and graduate of CCS, HVRHS, and Gettysburg College, put her environmental studies major to use working for Outward Bound and the Student Conservation Association. All was well, but she couldn’t find sturdy yet comfortable work pants that fit. So, what else (?), she started a business making pants for women who work outdoors.

Sarah moved to Montana, opened a shop, sat on various town committees, joined the EMT, and coached volleyball. She traveled throughout the U.S. and Canada selling her Red Ants Pants out of an Airstream trailer. The energetic young woman wanted to go to the next level so, what else (?), she decided to produce a music festival.

Last year 6,000 people came to White Sulphur Springs, Mont., to hear Lyle Lovett and other musicians for three days. This year Emmylou Harris is headlining the second annual Red Ants Pants Music Festival from July 26 to July 29.

All of this has led to many awards and accolades. Sarah was invited by the U.S. State Department to participate in an APEC conference for women in business hosted by Hillary Clinton. She has been to Washington, D.C., for an economic forum. She has been awarded Montana Entrepreneur of the Year and has received the national Small Business Association Woman in Business Champion award from President Obama. Sarah recently gave a TEDx talk. You may view it online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkJS40_30.

As her mother, Nancy, says, “It does take a village to raise a child and there is no better village than Cornwall.”
—Gail Jacobson

Preserving a Treasure
On Saturday, June 9, from 4 to 6 p.m., the old Congregational Meeting House in North Cornwall will open its elegant doors to the public for a guided tour of the premises and walkabout of its neighborhood. The Friends of the North Cornwall Meeting House, spon-
A SWEET SWEET PEET STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS
Chapter One—The Buy—Saturday, March 24.

Purchased one bright yellow bag of Sweet Peet at the Kent Greenhouse. Took it out of the car and left it by the side of my porch.

Chapter Two—The Loss—Monday, March 26.

Noticed that the Sweet Peet was gone; just gone! Looked all around the house and into the woods all around the house and no sign! Someone took away a 40-pound bag of Sweet Peet—must have seen it from the road and knew what it was. No sign of other damage. No drag marks or sign of Peet leaking, so couldn’t have been the bear. Creepy to think of someone at my house. Told many about the theft.

Chapter Three—The Dream—Tuesday, April 3.

Woke up thinking of the list of people I’d have to call to tell them that I found the Sweet Peet—I had put it in the shed! Cleared the sleep from my head and realized—I don’t have a shed!

Chapter Four—The Find—Wednesday, April 4.

Parked in a slightly different place to be ready to leave on an early morning trip. Sun shining on a bright patch of moss 50 yards up the hillside. No, that’s not moss. Out of the car, walk a bit, it’s yellow plastic? It WAS the bear! Must have picked the bag up in his teeth, rammed up the hillside, found the largest tree to hide behind, checked to see if I could see him, set it down, and dug in! Disappointed in the deceptive description—no honey! For me, such a relief. And very impressed with the toughness of the Sweet Peet packaging!

—Susan Gingert

Cornwall Briefs

• Master Stonemason John LaPorta is a very busy guy. You’ve already read about his beautiful brick walkway at the Cornwall Historical Society (see story above). Now here’s another LaPorta project down the road, so to speak: a stone wall to replace the ugly chain-link fence at the entrance to the Town Beach on Lake Road. There are two piles of large rocks inside the property awaiting the LaPorta touch.

• The CCS Art Department has itself a brand new printing press thanks to the contributions from Cornwall’s annual “Art at the Dump,” whose first print off the new press was a work by CCS first-grader Melody Matsudaia.

• Burn Permits: The Selectmen’s Office reports giving out a record number of these permits this year but notes that some people in town are unaware that you need a permit to burn brush. To learn more or obtain a permit call Joyce Hart at 672-4959.

• CEDC, which stands for the Cornwall Economic Development Commission (Todd Piker, chairman) is holding an open house with refreshments on Wednesday, June 6, at the Town Hall from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The program will include some of the plans the CEDC is considering to improve Cornwall’s business climate and to get feedback and ideas from the community.

• Mini Parks: That’s what the first selectman calls them, cute little patches in Cornwall where people can sit and enjoy the view and maybe take a picnic. There’s one on the Cornwall side of the Covered Bridge where plans call for adding a bench and a table or two and some fresh plantings. A second mini park would start from scratch on a patch of grass at the intersection of Great Hill Road and College Street.

• Tax Relief: Tax bills go out at the end of June, and we are reminded by the first selectman that Cornwall has a couple of options for people facing difficulty paying their bill: you may apply for a $200 reduction if your tax bill exceeds 10 percent of your income; also, if your bill exceeds 8 percent of your income, you may enter a tax-free deal with the town, which then takes a lien on your tax-abated property. The lien is eventually settled when the property is transferred (sold). Now, people, if you understood all of the above you are one smart cookie!

—Ann Schilling

Whether the Weather

This spring many of us were asking what will be the effect of the warm and dry winter we just had. Despite agreement about the long-term trend of the warm season coming earlier and lasting longer and the cold season being shorter, particulars about this summer in Cornwall are less sure. Down over the past 50 years indicating a steady advancing of spring weather and earlier budding and blossoming is borne out in pea shoots popping up in some of our gardens in April.

But what will the summer bring? The bug and pest populations are already evident. The lack of a prolonged freezing spell allowed ticks and mosquitoes, among others, to survive and multiply at a much-higher-than-normal rate. Additionally, the easy winter helped improve the survival rate of deer, field mice, and other small animals—all links in the tick chain. Local maintenance services have seen an increase in the number of requests for tick control around homes.

How might our farms and gardens be influenced? Warm conditions may produce a longer growing season, but soils dry out faster with these temperatures. Farmers, noting the decreased precipitation this year, are following a number of different paths. Some are hedging their bets by holding, rather than selling, leftover hay in anticipation of smaller yields this summer. Others are proceeding as normal and will make adjustments later, if needed. In all cases they started planting and harvesting earlier than usual. The old timers’ adage to “plant corn when oak leaves are the size of squirrels’ ears” eliminates the calendar and may be a surer way to gauge when to plant rather than depending on the date. The local lawn-care industry also geared up to start mowing earlier than usual this year.

Will there be cooling, quenching rains? As with most weather-related topics it is often a guess, and the only sure way to know is to wait and see. The trend may be for fewer but more powerful storms, but the tracks of hurricanes may change. So the best approach may be to prepare for the worst and hope for the best.

—Ralph Gold
Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall: A reception for Cathrine de Neergaard Fetterman's debut show of paintings will be held at the Library on Saturday, June 2, from 4 to 7 p.m. Her show will continue through June 23. Beginning June 26, the Library will feature an installation of kinetic sculptures by Tim Prentice with a reception and book signing of his new book, *Drawing on the Air*, on Saturday, June 30, from 4 to 6 p.m.

At the Cornwall Library:
The fourth in the raised-bed gardening series will be held Saturday, June 2, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Under the tutelage of Debby Bennett, the group will plant the second bed with plants that are best planted in early June. There will also be a demonstration of “Creative Food Gardens for the Patio.” On Saturday, June 16, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, there will be a diagnostic clinic where folks are invited to bring in their plant problems. Harvesting and succession cropping will also be featured.

The Library’s third Annual Garden Tour on Saturday, June 23, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. will feature four Cornwall gardens. The 5 p.m. cocktail party will be followed by a vacation raffle at 7 p.m. Offerings will include one week at a vacation home in Nevis, and stays at hotels in Charleston, SC, and New York City. For prices and contact information, see insert in this issue.

Wash and Nosh: The girls from the CCS softball team will be washing cars and selling yummy baked goods at the Cornwall Bridge Firehouse on Saturday, June 2, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Proceeds will go to the Center for Cancer Care in Torrington.

Motherhouse Activities:
June 2: Contra Dance with teaching caller Anne Banks and music by Still, the Homegrown Band, 7 p.m. at the Town Hall. For more info, call Jane or Jim Prentice at 672-6101.

June 9: OSLS Workshops with Debra@Motherhouse.us or call 672-0229. June 9: Big Little Kids Dance; especially for the younger crowd and their adults, 4 to 5 p.m. at the Town Hall with Tom Hanford teaching and calling the dances. To be followed by a finger-food potluck. $10/family donation. For more info contact Rachel at 860-824-8404.

June 16: “Keeping a Family Cow” (see insert in this issue.)

June 21: Free Summer Solstice Celebration at Local Farm. Potluck supper and campfire sing-a-long starting at 7 p.m. For more info call Debra at 672-0229.

The Cornwall Village Improvement Society will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, June 9, at 10 a.m. at the Town Hall.

Annual Community Beach Party: Park & Rec invites all Cornwall families to this event at the Cream Hill Lake Association (on Town Street) on Thursday, June 14, (the last day of school for Region One), from 5 to 8 p.m. Hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and beverages will be provided. Please bring a salad or side dish to share. The Cornwall Agricultural Commission will sponsor its traditional ice cream social. Lifeguards will be on duty.

Senior Survey: All Cornwallians over 50 are asked to complete the survey distributed with the *Cornwall Chronicle*. Additional copies are available at the Library. Deadline for mailing is June 15.

Hammond Beach opens for the season on Saturday, June 16. Hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week except during inclement weather. Swim team and swim lesson registration will be held the week of June 18 to 22 from 12 noon to 3 p.m. Swim lessons are free to town residents with a beach sticker. There is a small fee for swim team to offset expenses. Questions? Contact Tammy Decker at tdecker74@att.net.

Talk and Tea: “Out of the Woods” at the Cornwall Historical Society, 7 Pine Street, Sunday, July 1, 2 to 3 p.m. Exhibit Curator Raechel Guest expands on the stories, triumphs, tragedies, and puzzles of Cornwall’s forests over the centuries. (See insert in this issue for details of the show’s opening on June 22.)

The 7th Annual Cornwall Artists Open Studio will be held on Saturday, June 30, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For a list of participating artists, directions to their studios, and a map, go to www.cornwallart.org and click on “Cornwall Artists.” The list and map will also be available at the Library one week before the event.

June 1st for the Dogs: The state of Connecticut requires that all dogs six months of age or older be licensed annually or before June 30 in the Town Clerk’s Office in the town where the dog is owned or kept. Licenses will become available on June 1. A current rabies vaccination certificate must be submitted or be on file. Neutered or spayed dogs cost $8, and male or female dogs cost $19. For a neutered or spayed dog being licensed for the first time, a certificate from a licensed veterinarian must be presented. Penalties apply for late registration. If you register by mail, enclose a SASE for return of tag and license; otherwise the Town Clerk’s Office is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 to 4 p.m. Please notify the town clerk if your dog is no longer living with you so that he/she can be removed from the dog register.

The Cornwall Women’s Society Annual Rummage Sale is not far away. The dates this year are: Saturday, July 21, Sunday, July 22, and Monday, July 23. Almost everything accepted—clothes, collectibles, china, books, bicycles, beads, furniture, fans, and photographic equipment. (To see the detailed flyer, click on “Upcoming Events” at cornwallct.org.) For more information or if you would like to volunteer at this town-wide event, call Brenda at 248-3089 or Thalia at 672-6288.

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