Business: A Rumor and Some News

Reliable sources tell us there is some activity, meaning a potential buyer, for West Cornwall’s old Yutzler’s store, which has been rented by a succession of failed enterprises over more than two decades. First we heard a rumor that an art gallery was going in. Then we heard of a possible offer that hinged on satisfactory building and septic inspections. It could have been the art gallery person, but we don’t know for sure. We will continue to keep an eye out and an ear to the ground.

Gasoline has returned to Cornwall. Both stations—the Berkshire Store (see the story below) and Xtramart in Cornwall Bridge—got their pumps operational, as promised, by Labor Day weekend. In fact, Xtramart has got their pumps operational, as promised, by Labor Day weekend. In fact, Xtramart has got their pumps operational, as promised, by Labor Day weekend. In fact, Xtramart has got their pumps operational, as promised, by Labor Day weekend. In fact, Xtramart has got their pumps operational, as promised, by Labor Day weekend.

In other business news, Anthony (Tony) Frith, who has sold stone and tile out of his home since 2002, has rented the former Cornwall Electric space in the Cornwall Bridge Post Office building. He is currently renovating and expects to open his store about the beginning of October.

And, finally, word comes from K. C. Baird that his plan to expand has been moved up from five years hence to two or three years. This will include stretching the back of the store for more shelf space and furnishing tables in the front for breakfast and lunch customers to sit and eat…and sit.

—John Miller

Hughes Blues

Negotiations over the Hughes Memorial Library’s expansion of its land have been in stasis for almost a year. In the fall of 2007, the state awarded the Town of Cornwall a $200,000 grant for expansion and renovations to the old West Cornwall building. Connecticut Light and Power had indicated that it would sell the town enough land to augment Hughes’s tiny footprint for a septic system, so that it could serve as a community center. Plans have been drawn up and the tests done, but CL&P has changed its mind. “Right now we seem to be balking,” says Jerry Doolittle, board president.

Besides the Library, four entities have shares in the outcome: CL&P; the State of Connecticut, on behalf of its health code; the state’s Department of Environmental Protection, which has the right of first refusal on the CL&P property; and the Town of Cornwall. Alternatives have been explored. But by law, a non-flushing toilet must have running water in the room, and pumping out holding tanks is done only when an existing septic field fails. Even with other renovations, the building could not function as an active, small-town community center without facilities.

For the past three years, board members have been keeping Hughes open on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It must find a part-time librarian to take the Library under his/her wing.

There are hopes that State Senator Andrew Roraback and Representative Roberta Willis can do some magic in Hartford. “But it’s not clear,” says Jerry, “that the state can bend the law for a library in a town that has another one a few miles away.” To resolve the stalemate, a five-way conversation has to take place, says First Selectman Gordon Ridgway.

New Berkshire Store Opens


Slowly, but surely, the new Berkshire Store has opened its doors for business. “It’s taken longer than we thought,” smiled owner Carol Tyler, “but it’s worth it.”

Indeed, the floors are a mellow oaken gold, smooth and shiny; the walls—a lovely, friendly yellow that has made the whole place lighter and brighter. Crisp new curtains and long, wide counters surround the windows that look out at the intersection.

(continued on page 2)
The booths are gone, but tables may come.

Business is slowly picking up and, now that the deli is in operation, breakfast sandwiches and lunch goodies are being offered.

“It’s a comfortable fit so far,” says Carol, “so we’re not overwhelmed by trying to jump in all at once, but we’re getting closer to what we had in mind.” Hopefully, later on, they’ll be serving hot foods and salads in the deli, but each new step is developed slowly and carefully.

Carol, husband Earle, and son Jason Allen own the new store together, giving the term “mom and pop” new meaning, while grandmother Harri helps out quite a bit. They hope to hire more help as business warrants. For now, hours are 6 A.M. to 7 P.M. Monday to Friday, 7 A.M. to 7 P.M. Saturday, and Sundays 8 A.M. to 6 P.M. Except for expanding the existing apartments under the store into one larger space, there are no plans for further growth. New meat slicers, deli case, pots and pans, and ovens, to say nothing of the refurbished infrastructure, is not an inexpensive task. “We’re a small, family-run country store. That was what we wanted, and that’s what we’ll remain.”

Those of us in Cornwall say “Welcome” to the new owners.

“Good Luck! Glad you’re here.” —Jane Bean

A Portuguese River Runs Through It

In August, while the eyes of the sports world were turned toward China, a town in Portugal was the epicenter of youth fly fishing, and Cornwallian Danny Marino was there. It was the seventh FIPS-Mouche World Youth Fly Fishing Championship and the first competition for the lanky, home-schooled 15-year-old who was coached by Cornwall Bridge’s Housatonic River Outfitters.

In 2007, Danny was an alternate on the seven-man U.S. team. This year he was the youngest member of any of the eight countries’ participating teams. He led the U.S. team and placed a very impressive eighth overall. The town is considering adding an additional two units to the single CCS photovoltaic system earned as a result of residents’ signing up for green power. The one-time installation will save contractor expenses. It is hoped this system may supply as much as 10 percent of the school’s power, which currently costs about $3,000 per month.

The town has joined the Region One Fuel Consortium with neighboring communities to save by buying town fuel in bulk. Plans are being considered to save on diesel fuel by mowing roadside brush only once per year.

—Matt Collins

Cornwall’s Vanishing Elephants

Cornwall has voted increasingly for Democrats in recent elections. In sharp contrast, the number of votes cast in our town for candidates of the Grand Old Party has been shrinking. To balance my August Chronicle article on the Democrats, I looked at recent elections to see if there is a complementary pattern to the support shown by Cornwall’s Republicans.

The contests that seem most likely to reveal a clear trend are those for U.S. Congress and president. We have party-based elections for local offices like selectmen and P&Z, as well as for representatives to state-level government, but most of us see those as more personality-based than partisan. (For example, Republican State Senator Andrew Roraback has continued to win Cornwall’s favor, no matter how well or badly his party fares, or even what office he seeks.)

As of 2006, Cornwall had a smaller percentage of Republicans (39 percent) among our registered voters than did any other Northwest Corner town. In the congressional contest that year, things got even worse. Cornwall cast only 26 percent of its votes for Republican Nancy Johnson in her race with Democrat Chris Murphy. Johnson thus received fewer votes in Cornwall—both absolutely and by percentage—than in any other Corner town.

Two years earlier, in 2004, Cornwall Republicans rallied somewhat more strongly behind President George W. Bush in his re-election race with John Kerry. Bush got 296 votes here, 32 percent of the total. Nevertheless, our Bush backing was the weakest among Corner towns except for Salisbury, where he got only 31 percent of the vote.

In 2002, in the partisan race for a seat in Congress between two incumbents whose districts had been merged, Cornwall gave Republican Nancy Johnson nearly half (45 percent) of the total vote cast, compared to a bare majority (55 percent) for the loser, Democrat Jim Maloney. However, in the three-way presidential race of 2000, among George W. Bush, Al Gore, and local son Ralph Nader, Cornwall gave Bush only one-third (33 percent) of its vote.

It seems to me that Cornwall Republicans are a shrinking band that has been unable even to maintain a significant Republican town committee. In a paraphrase of what cowboy philosopher Will Rogers once said of the Democrats, they can now claim, “We’re not members of any organized party; we’re Republicans.”

—David A. Grossman

Welcome

Conor Aiden to Jessie and Michael Joseph, Jr.

Steven Michael to Valerie and Steven Barber

Lily May Beurket to Sheila Beurket

Good-Bye to Friends

John A. Galloway II

Louise M. Graham

Congratulations

Ariana Holmes and Brian Locher

Nikole Kuehner and Ronnie Lizana

Mindy Keskinen and Peter Hendrickson

Land Transfers

Robert F. Muller to Kathleen Hubers, land and buildings at 4 River Road South for $255,000.

Catherine Hanf Noren to Reginald Auchincloss III, land and improvements at 8 Town Street for $530,000.

Corinne L. Vahanian to John Nicholas Demos and Beverly Watkins-Demos, house at 35 Barn Road for $335,000.

Ruth L. Edmonds to Lydia L. Lewis and James F. Longwell, 1/50 interest each, land and buildings at 69 Scoville Road for $20,000.

Eat Your Weedies

While on a recent walk at Mohawk Pond, I was struck by the beauty of the native wildflowers that still cling to their homes while we humans march past and even over them in our hectic lives. I’ve encountered many of these plants within our town and even in my own backyard, but in more developed areas they are vanishing.

As an herbalist, one of my areas of interest, expertise, and responsibility is to protect the very plants I use. One of my favorite organizations, United Plant Savers, has established an “At-Risk” list and a grant...
program for members who establish Botanical Sanctuaries or Educational Medicine Trails on their lands. There is concern for the rapid decline of native medicinal plants like American ginseng, bloodroot, goldenseal, lady’s slipper orchid, trillium, as well as the popular echinacea.

Consumers are becoming savvy about the ways in which their herbal products are harvested. By reading the label, one can usually tell if a product has been made with cultivated or ethically wildcrafted ingredients. By avoiding products that have been simply wildcrafted (removed from the wild without being replaced), we are doing our part to preserve the remaining strains of wild plants.

Rather than engage in a frustrating battle to eradicate invasives, it’s good to know that there’s a more peaceful approach—simply eat your weedy. Garlic mustard is a delicious, garlicky-tasting green that, when young, can be added to salads and makes a great dip and even pesto. Consuming enough of this opportunistic herb may even keep mosquitoes away. Purple loosestrife has major antibacterial actions that combat infection while promoting healing. Japanese knotweed root is being used in formulas to treat Lyme disease, and I’ve even found recipes for its use in cake.

Bovine Boulevard
Thanks to a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Litchfield County, funded in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Debra Tyler’s cows will no longer sink up to their udders in mud as they cross Popple Swamp Road on their way to graze in Bart and Debby Jones’ meadow. A coarse gravel trailway has been laid across the marshy west shoulder. Grants of this type go to help conserve natural resources by preventing erosion and pollution while helping land remain agricultural. Debra’s grant also helped pay for a permanent fence around both the Jones’s pasture and the Rawls’s lot, as well as two more trailways: one just below the barn toward Route 4 and another between the Rawls and Bedell lots.

NRCS grants have helped Bill Hurlburt build a barn and fence in a pasture, and assisted both Dan Gracey and Chris Hopkins with fences and wells.

—Matt Collins

Events & Announcements
Night, by Elie Wiesel, will be discussed at a book club meeting at the Cornwall Library on Thursday, October 2, from 7 to 8 P.M. Pastor Steven Broers of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church will moderate the discussion of the famous Holocaust memoir. All faiths, ages, and viewpoints are welcome. Contact Pastor Broers at 672-6897 with questions or to express your interest in attending.

Art in Cornwall: Northern Exposure Photographic Gallery will open a new show, Seasons: A Passage of Time, at a reception on Saturday, October 4, from 3 to 6 P.M. The show will run through November 30. At the Cornwall Library, Dick Frank’s show of photographs will continue through October 7. Beginning October 11, Virginia Pierrepont will show Behind the Scenes on Halloween, photos of last year’s monster activities in Cornwall Village. An artist’s reception will be held on Friday, October 31, from 5 to 7 P.M. The show will run through November 15. The Library’s glass case will feature Masks from Around the World. The IO Gallery will host a reception on Saturday, October 18, from 5 to 7 P.M., for the opening of Circus FREAKS, a group show featuring circus-themed art by nine artists from near and far. Juggler Karl Saliter will perform.

Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held Saturday, October 4, from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., rain or shine, at the Torrington Water Pollution Control Plant on Bogue Road in Torrington. Electronic waste will be accepted at the same facility on October 18 from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Call 672-4959 to register for either.

Bend and Stretch Classes: An hour-long exercise clinic for older adults begins Thursday, October 9, at 10 A.M. at UCC. The classes, which are offered by VNA Northwest, Inc., aim to help older adults reduce the possibility of falls, the leading cause of death from injury in people over 65, by improving balance control, agility, proper movement, and bending and stretching for flexibility. The remaining classes will be held on October 16, 23, and 30, and November 6 and 13. Call VNA Northwest at (860) 567-6000 or (800) 752-0215 to register or to request more information. You may also visit www.vnanw.org.

A Child Center Celebration for the new addition and launching of the toddler program will be held on Friday, October 17. Wine, cheese, and fruit will be served at the ribbon-cutting ceremony from 5 to 7 P.M. at the center. All are welcome.

At the Cornwall Library
Story Hour at 1:15 P.M. on Fridays, October 3, 17, 24, and 31.

Taconic Learning Center’s Heroines of the 20th Century, taught by Al Dietzel, on Tuesdays from 2 to 4 P.M., October 7, 14, 21, and 28.

Columbus Day weekend book sale Saturday, October 11, from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M., and Monday, October 13, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Rev. Chris Webber will read from and sign his newest book, American Prayers, an interfaith collection, on Saturday, October 25, at 4 P.M.

Home Energy Audit: Quick! Jack Frost will soon be nipping at those especially valuable heating dollars that leak all winter from the cracks in your house. Batten your hatches now with an “energy assessment.” Professionals will visit your home and tighten things up for free or low cost depending on how you heat your home (free for gas, electrical, and limited income). Act now before you get frozen out of the waiting list. Call (877) 947-3873; press 1, then 1, then 4.

Annual Meeting and Hike of the Cornwall Conservation Trust welcomes all, Sunday, October 19, at 2 P.M. at CCS. Following a talk by Jeff Ward, forester with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, a variety of hike options will be offered into the Day Preserve across Route 128. Cider and snacks will be provided. For more information call Emilie Pryor at 672-4226.

Winter Heating Fuel Assistance is available. If you are in need or wish to make a donation to the Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund, contact Jill Gibbons at 672-2603.

Local Crafts and Food at Mohawk: The 19th Annual Fall Foliage Crafts Fair will be held at Mohawk Mountain Ski Area on October 18–19, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Admission is free. For more information call (800) 895-5222.

Halloween Gathering: Park and Rec. conjures all restless spirits to its annual conclave at the Town Hall from 5 to 8 P.M. on Friday, October 31, for food, beverages, and conviviality.
The Cornwall House Tour, featuring six wonderful homes, will be held on October 11 from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. for the benefit of the Cornwall Housing Corporation. Tickets for the tour and the reception afterward at the Cream Hill Lake Association are $35 and may be purchased at The Wish House, Cornwall Bridge Package Store, or by contacting wynnekavanagh@yahoo.com or at 672-6774.

Motherhouse Events

• October 4: Family Contra Dance at the Town Hall from 7 to 9:30 P.M. Suggested donation: $5/adult, $3/child. Call Rachel Gall, 672-6328, for more information.

• October 11: Old Style Life Skills Series workshop, In a Pickle? Jill Oneglia will explain the marvels of using lacto-bacillus to preserve food, improve health, and make delicious pickles, sauerkraut, and drinks. Taste herbs, begin your own, and take it home. At Local Farm from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. $35/family. Enjoy a pot-luck lunch with other participants.

• October 18: Free Autumnal We’d Walk with Alicia North of Northstar Botanicals. Get to know traditional medicinal herbs and wild edibles in their pre-winter forms. Gather for a pot-luck lunch and taste some! From 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., starting from the Local Farm barn. Reserve a spot in advance.

• November 1: Family Contra Dance at the Town Hall with the Walker Family Band playing and Jeff Walker calling, 7 to 9:30 P.M. Suggested donation: $5/adult, $3/child. Call Rachel Gall at 672-6328.

• Meditation for Mothers at 1:15 P.M. on Thursdays at St. Peter’s Church. All ages, faiths, and levels of practice are welcome. Contact Debra@Motherhouse.us or call 672-0229 for information on all events.

To Your Health!

The journal Science reports that psychologists at the University of Oregon have found that writing a check to a good cause activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure. If the last check you sent our way had no neurological effect, you might try writing a larger number after the dollar sign. Thank you. We’re only here to help—and we desperately need yours!

Old Soccer Cleats Are Wanted for players in need around the world. During October and November, CCS Roots & Shoots will be collecting new and gently used soccer shoes. Leave shoes at the school or call 672-6617, ext. 232, for more info.

Marriage Makes a Word of Difference, a film by Fran Rzeznik, produced by the Love Makes a Family Foundation, portrays the personal struggles and political challenges of Connecticut’s same-sex couples and their families who are fighting for the freedom to marry. It will be screened on Sunday, October 19, at 11:30 A.M. at the UCC library.

Elections for President, Vice President, Representative in Congress, State Senator, State Representative, and Registrar of Voters will be held on Tuesday, November 4, at the Town Hall from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M.

Two questions appear on the ballot. Voters will be asked if they are in favor of convening a state constitutional convention. This is a procedural matter regularly raised after a 20-year lapse. They will also have an opportunity to vote on a proposed amendment allowing 17-year-olds to vote in a primary if they will have attained the age of 18 by Election Day.

Voter registration applications are available at the Town Office during office hours. The registrars will hold sessions at the Town Hall on October 4 and 7 from 10 A.M. to noon, October 18 from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M., and October 28 (the cut-off date for registration) from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. Absentee ballots will be available from the town clerk after October 3. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9 A.M. to noon and from 1 to 4 P.M. An application must be submitted before a ballot is issued, so please don’t wait until the last minute, especially if there is mailing involved.

Imagining Peace, a work in progress by Emmy-award-winning filmmaker Lisa Gossels, will be screened on Saturday, October 18, from 6 to 7:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. The documentary follows six Palestinian and Israeli teenage girls who participate in a U.S.-based leadership-for-peace program. The film will be followed by a Q&A session with Ms. Gossels. For more information contact LGossels@gmail.com or Iraniere@yahoo.com.

A Tea to Welcome Newcomers to Cornwall and a “State of the Town” address by First Selectman Gordon Ridgway will highlight the annual meeting of the Cornwall Association on October 4, 2008, from 4:30 to 6 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. All are welcome.

The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 23, at 7:30 P.M. at the Gathering Room at CCS. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the annual reports of the town and all boards and commissions, and to discuss other business. Topics include a state grant to small businesses, adoption of a five-year capital plan, and the installation of solar panels at CCS.

The Cornwall Iraq Moratorium Network is sponsoring a demonstration against the Iraq War on Friday, October 17, at 5 P.M. on the green in Cornwall Bridge. Bring peace signs or use our art supplies to make your own posters and banners on the spot. Musical instruments are welcome to back up songs for peace. For information call 672-0183.

Walk-a-Thon: Come walk to raise funds for Darfur and the Cornwall Housing Corporation. Join the student body of CCS on Friday, October 17, at 1 P.M. for a one-mile, two-and-a-half-mile, or four-mile walk for a good cause. Questions? Call CCS at 672-6617.

Truckloads of Hardwood are available from the Town of Cornwall from time to time. This wood, consisting of trees and limbs felled by the road crew, may be large, unsplit pieces and usually unseasoned. Parties interested in a delivery can be placed on a list by contacting the Selectmen’s Office at 672-4959.