Schools Open with New Faces/Places

As Cornwall students at all levels enter school this fall, they will encounter new faculty, and at CCS, a newly renovated and enlarged facility.

CCS Principal Kathleen Fitzgibbons says, “The sails are up and the ship is sailing on. I spent a good first year listening, learning, and understanding, and now the teachers and I are really excited about going forward. The morale is up. Having a new school is icing on the cake.” Parents, students and townspople can anticipate a grand-opening event in mid-fall, once the finishing touches are put on the new gym and new school entrances. CCS enrollment stands at 140 this year compared to 153 last year. Twelve students will enter kindergarten.

Due to the largest staff changes in recent years, seven teaching positions opened up. Some current teachers are shifting positions to fill in vacancies and in three instances new teachers will be hired. Librarian Virginia Snowden, social studies and fifth grade teacher Robert Cuppola, PE teacher Micheline Guilmam, and computer teacher Suzanne Barber have left CCS for other pastures, and in Barber’s case, other countries.

Suzanne Barber have left CCS for other pastures, and in Barber’s case, other countries.

Because of changes made by Regional District #1, special education teachers Janet Hanna, Susan Hatcher, and John Marsiciano have been reassigned and are being replaced by school psychologist MaryLou Hunchak, part-time speech/language clinician Melissa Giusti, and special education teacher for grades six to eight, Sharon Russell. Aides Marie Gold and Michael Sterzl have taken positions elsewhere.

Dr. Gretchen Foster, the new principal at HVRHS, says her motto is: “Respect is everyone’s shared responsibility.” She invites all parents to a Meet the Principal and welcoming session at 7 P.M. on September 7. There will also be an open house on September 22. Approximately 20 freshmen from Cornwall will join the ninth grade class of 155 students. Of the 617 students enrolled in the high school, 71 are from Cornwall.

Children ages three to eight will be welcomed by the Cornwall Child Center to its programs which run from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., Monday to Friday. While returning director Pam Brehm looks forward to filling two teaching positions, she says the big news is that after a three-year process, the Child Center received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Says Brehm, “This accreditation assures the community that we offer developmentally appropriate programs for young children.” The certification is valid for five years. —Sally VanDoren

Diversity Saves Farms

As the state grapples with the vexing question of how to save farmland from non-agricultural uses, some farms in the Northwest Corner have already found the answer, and Buddy and Irene Hurlburt’s operation at Hauboy Hill Farm is a great model.

Faced with declining revenues from their herd of 90 cows, Buddy and Irene calculated that they could make more money from fewer cows by converting their milk house to a processing plant with bottling, milking, and cooling machines and then selling the milk directly to customers. They now have eight dairy cows, which will earn more money than the 90 cows ever did. Eliminating various middlemen is one of the answers.
to solving farm problems.

Diversifying by growing other crops is another part of the answer. The Hurlburts and their six children produce beef, pork, chickens, vegetables, and maple syrup on their 98-acre farm. All of these products, plus the milk, are sold at their farm stand on Hauftboy Hill Road. They do not use antibiotics, hormones, or pesticides. "We can’t say we are organic, but we are pretty darn close," Irene said. She also said that even though the farm stand was self serve, customers should call ahead, 672-4495, for meat or other special orders.

Buddy Hurlburt summed up the value of diversification and gave it a Cornwall twist. "People are hungry for fresh and healthy food so we offer it to them year round. We also cooperate with local businesses. For example, Gordon Ridgway sells corn that we grow at his stand." Hurlburt products can also be found at the West Cornwall Market and the Berkshire Country Store.

In the end, it is an obvious lesson: farmers who combine hard work, diversification, and cooperation are providing a model for saving Connecticut farms. Now it is up to you—buy local!

—Norma Lake

No-Snooze Town Nooze

This year the lazy, hazy days of summer were replaced by the busy, dizzy months of July and August. It was a summer of tying a bow on a number of initiatives:

Foremost was the 90 percent near-completion of the ambitious and agonizingly debated CCS building expansion along with its sizable rearrangements of space within and without.

For the recreation minded there was the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant for Foote Field improvements, including promised further STEAP moneys for a walking track (see page 4). First Selectman Gordon Ridgway predicts the much-needed parking lot will be complete by soccer mid-season.

This was also a summer of taking on challenges on the list is the support of our beleaguered farms. The annual Agricultural Fair, Chris Hopkins reports, is very much on track (see insert); our legislative representatives, Andrew Roraback and Roberta Willis, are scheduled to initiate legislation in January to “make farmland preservation a budget priority” and to help “connect those who wish to farm with the land that has been preserved” (to quote Andy), and our regional Future Farmers of America Alumni again sponsored the trip of a student to visit farms in other states. This year the state was Wyoming and the FFA member was Garrick Dinneen.

And Cornwall’s Diane Heiny, Geer’s Development Director, reported a conference to be held on October 16 at Geer Village on developing housing options for our growing population of elderly. Cornwall Housing, as part of NW Connecticut Regional Housing, is an active participant in this venture, and the Berkshire Taconic Foundation has advanced some seed money in its promotion.

And for those who have experienced increased traffic in West Cornwall and Cornwall Bridge centers, the selectmen are exploring some of the remedies that have been suggested. These include cross walks, flashing lights, radar patrols by State Police, and a shameful John Miller plan to put out rumors ofvoracious speed traps—troopers or no troopers.

On a kinder note, for the well being of both dogs and humans, dual-purpose fireplugs are slated for installation soon in West Cornwall Village.

And lastly, lest we think humans are in charge here, a warp-brained family of bats has taken to hanging upside down from our Town Hall rafters. Unprovoked, they swoop on our selectmen at their evening meetings and bomb the newspaper-covered office desks with droppings. Cute! First Selectman Ridgway has been informed that for $6,000 the bats can be persuaded to go away, at least temporarily. Obviously, this is a clear case of batmail. To date, our selectmen have not succumbed. That’s the good news.

—Scoville Soulé

Summer Bird Notes

In its third year, our town nest box project for the state-threatened American kestrel enjoyed continued success. Three pairs of these little falcons raised families during the late spring and early summer, although just one used a comfy kestrel condo, on a black locust tree at Hedgerows Farm. Three other boxes in prime locations were usurped this spring by nesting wood ducks and hooded mergansers, so two kestrel pairs in Coltsfoot Valley chose snags with natural cavities instead. With an additional three pairs of kestrels using our nest boxes in Sharon this year, we are hosting a greater concentration of this declining species than any other region in Connecticut.

The late spring and cool, wet summer has not been favorable for eastern bluebirds, with the number of nesting pairs and successful broods in Cornwall nest boxes below average this year. Perhaps a few pairs will bring off late broods toward the end of the summer. Catbirds, however, seemed to be everywhere, and red-bellied woodpeckers continue to increase. Likewise Cooper’s and red-shouldered hawks, and more sightings of black vultures too.

On August 1, a striking white great egret was on the river at Cornwall Bridge, enjoying some time away from the coast during its post-breeding dispersal. A canoe or kayak trip on the Housatonic before mid-September may reward one with lots of interesting avian companions, including swirling swallows, fly-catching cedar waxwings, migrating ospreys and nighthawks, “teenaged” common mergansers learning to fly, kingfishers, and a dozen or more great blue herons stalking the shallows. Good birding for all! —Art Gingert

Welcome
Asher Gragen Cook to Keri Black and Adam Cook

Good-Bye to Friends
Maxwell Charlton
Lee Day Gillespie
Joan Hall

Congratulations
Carl Gangloff to Helen Vanam

Land Transfers
Brae Group Inc. to Woodbury Mountain LLC, 109 acres on Pritchard Road for $570,000.
Robert S. Hare and Constance P. Hare to Victor J. Paolo, 24 acres on Poppel Swamp Road for $298,000.
John J. and Nancy E. O’Donnell to Philip Taaffe and Gretchen Carlson, buildings and land at 66 Cogswell Road for $475,000.

A Historic House in Transition

After four years of extensive renovation, the former John E. Calhoun house in Cornwall Village again will become a one-family residence. An original wood clapboard house overlooked the Calhoun farm. It burned down in 1911 and was replaced the next year by the familiar brick structure that stands today. The new house contained no wood framing, but was constructed with steel beams, concrete floors and terra cotta tiles to make it fireproof. Every downstairs room had an exit door to the outside. It had ten bedrooms, five servant’s rooms and six plus rooms on the first floor. In the early 1950s the house became the Marvelwood School’s main building, serving as the headmaster’s and business offices and housing some faculty and 22 female students.

Rick Wolkowitz, the owner and architect, oversaw the renovations. In its new reincarnation, 40 percent of the house has been torn down. The enclosed porches have been opened and a large brick porch added. The heating, plumbing, and electrical systems have been replaced. Remaining are the gracious rooms on the first floor, including the former billiard room; the original eight wood-burning fireplaces; the second floor Palladian window overlooking the valley; the elegant staircase; and the handsome crown molding and wood paneling. There are now four family bedrooms on the second floor and two spare ones on the third floor.

The house will be offered for sale this fall.

—Liz Fishman

Tennis Team Advances

Cornwall youth tennis players prevailed in their intermediate—18-and-under State division to secure a spot as Connecticut’s representative in the New England USTA Team Tennis Sectional tournament to be played at Choate School. The team includes Jamie Green, Mary Brunelli, Katherine Stewart,
Two Libraries
Cornwall has always had a strong affinity for reading and a love for its libraries, thus this update on their operations.

The Hughes Memorial Library, the little clapboard building just down the street from the Moose in West Cornwall, is alive and active and looking to the future. After ten years of service, Estelle Stetson has retired as librarian and has been replaced by Shirley Dearstyn, whose background includes head librarian at Hotchkiss Library in Sharon, librarian at Gunn Library in Washington, and assistant librarian at Salisbury School.

Hughes’s new hours are Fridays 4 to 7 P.M. and Saturdays 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Though readership is down, new books continue to come in regularly, adding to their collection of about 15,000 volumes. They have a cooperative relationship with the Cornwall Child Center, which involves the C.C.C bringing its young students down for some reading time and book borrowing. Supported mostly by volunteers and a good endowment, Hughes has discussed acquiring some of the CL & P land next door which might allow them to reconfigure their building to include a rest room and small kitchen. There are about three acres, but the town has the right of first refusal.

The Cornwall Free Library is supported largely by donations, but with some money from the state and the town. It is open Tuesday to Saturday. Two paid staff—Amy Worthington-Cady, the library director, and Amelia deNeergaard Buck, the children’s librarian—and 30 volunteers give time and effort to allow a full program to operate. Reading programs for youth, various meetings, and social events make use of the new building. Circulation is up by 2,200 from a year ago; there are 19,000 items in the collection.

Computers allow patrons to do research, web browsing, and check E-Mail. As of September 7, a new database system for cataloging books and tracking circulation will be up and running, which should make use of the electronic catalogue an easier and quicker process, a welcome relief from the slow, glitchy system of the past.

Were it not for committed volunteers, neither facility could offer nearly as many hours or programs as they do. Besides covering the circulation desks, volunteers put on children’s reading and craft programs, do tutoring, and coach a chess club (this last event to resume with the school year from 9:30 to 11:30 A.M. on Saturdays).—G. Scott Cady

Hatchet Job?
A good number of us heard highly informative talks by Brett Fromson about the Mashantucket Pequots’ casino at Foxwoods and by Lory Schiesel on the Schaghticoke Indians in Kent.

Fromson, a financial writer for the Washington Post, Fortune, and the New York Times, is the author of Hitting the Jackpot: The Inside Story of the Richest Indian Tribe in History. He thought he’d be telling a story of Indians pulling themselves up, but soon came to realize that it was a case of Americans reinventing themselves as Indians by pumping life into a tribe destroyed in the 18th century—the typical Pequot is from 1/64 to 1/128 Pequot—in order to obtain federal recognition. Their efforts paid off handsomely: the casino now takes in $1.2 billion a year.

Indian tribes all over the country are scrambling to follow in the Pequots’ footsteps. California has 60 casinos and cadres of gambling impresarios finance the federal recognition process, paying for top legal advice, because they stand to rake in so much money from their cut of casino earnings. The Pequots were financed by offshore Chinese interests; the Schaghticoke’s lawyers are paid by the creator of the Subway fast-food chain.

In the first instance, three prescription medications were taken ($100). In the second instance they took my camera, an Olympus Digital Super Zoom C730 ($700 value), a 6-string acoustic guitar (1990 Advanced Jumbo Gibson $2,500), At the bottom of that guitar’s unques- tionably ugly, tan guitar case there was much music, handwritten in pencil, of inestimable value, and irreplaceable. My parting with the latter just breaks my heart. For anyone who can remember that far back, the latter includes my arrangement of The Bramble and the Rose for guitar and two voices that was performed by John LaPorta and me.

The State Police suspect that my burglaries are connected to the burglary on Great Hollow Road that took place soon after my event where the thieves were apprehended. They “suspect” but they don’t know, which is why I hope my friends, my neighbors, and the Cornwall community will keep a lookout for those things that were taken from me, in particular my music.

—Joni Hinchman

ART GALLERY CLOSING
Cheryl Evans has closed the Cornwall Creative Arts Collection. During the four and a half years the gallery has been open it has meant a lot to Cornwall and to the artists of Cornwall. We understand that sometimes good things have to come to an end, but we will miss it.

—Hendon Chubb

Letters to the Chronicle
CHURCHES BEGIN NEW SCHOOL YEAR
September begins a new school year in our area schools. It also begins a new school year on Sunday mornings! Cornwall has several wonderful opportunities for Sunday education designed with folks of all ages and interests in mind. I encourage you and your family to participate in the worship and education offered at any of the four faith communities in town: The United Church of Christ, St. Peter’s Lutheran, All Saints Episcopal, or St. Bridget’s Catholic Church.

—Tracy D. Gray

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
United Church of Christ
BURLGARY ALERT!
Just in case this bit of news hasn’t reached everyone in Cornwall, there was a burglary at my little house on Valley Road, on July 4 or 5 while I was away, and again in broad daylight sometime between July 12 and 15 while I was at work.

In the first instance, three prescription medications were taken ($100). In the second instance they took my camera, an Olympus Digital Super Zoom C730 ($700 value), a 6-string acoustic guitar (1990 Advanced Jumbo Gibson $2,500). At the bottom of that guitar’s unques-

—Joni Hinchman

CORNWALL CHRONICLE
The Housatonic Swim League held its summer championships August 4 at the Town Grove in Lakeville. Ably coached by Kasey Rosenfield and Ashley Saunders, Cornwall...
swimmers did well in all age groups.

First-place winners in the freestyle event were Sam Green, Kathleen Rogers, and Caroline Kosciusko. Second-place winners were Katherine Stewart and Jamie Green. Other Cornwall winners were: Backstroke first place, Shelby Baird and Katherine Stewart; second place, Sam Green; third place, Zach Zuckerman, Erica Kavanagh, Nick Dzenutis, and James Gold. Breaststroke first place, Hilary Rogers, Erica Kavanagh, and James Gold; second place, Zach Zuckerman, Chloe Laigle, Sarah Mulberry, and Jamie Green; and third place, Alexandra Duffee.

Other races that had Cornwall winners were: Butterfly first place, Zach Busby, Shelby Baird, and Caroline Kosciusko; second place, Brian Hurlburt, Erica Kavanagh, James Gold, and Liz Sawicki; third place, Mary Kate Kosciusko and Ryan St. John. In- dividual Medley first place, Kathleen Rogers and Caroline Kosciusko; second place, Myles Clohessy, Erica Kavanagh, and Jamie Green; and third place, Mary Kate Kosciusko, kale Prentice, and Katherine Stewart.

—Norma Lake

Events & Announcements

Annual Blood Drive will be at UCC Parish House September 27, 1 to 5:45 p.m. Every two seconds someone needs a blood transfusion, yet fewer than five percent of people who are able to give blood actually do so. It’s easy to give. You must be 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds, be healthy, and willing to give an hour of your time. Please call Pat Blakey at 672-6516 or just drop in.

The Cornwall Free Library is happy to receive donations of all kinds of books (but please, no textbooks!) for their book sale in the fall.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will meet in the Town Clerk’s Office from 9:30 to 11:30 A.M. on Saturday, September 25 to hear appeals on motor vehicle assessments.

Labor

Labor Day is a holiday that is so recent in origin and vague in purpose that you should feel free to simply regard it as a last fling of summer. “Money Pitch” took last month off, but it’s time to get back to business and remind you that the Chronicle needs your donations—not to cover our labor (which is a labor of love, of course) but to pay our printing and mailing expenses.

A Town Meeting will be held September 16, 6 P.M., at Town Hall to authorize the advancement of $50,000 to install a walking track, fencing, and improvements at Hubbard Field; these funds to be totally reimbursed by a state supplementary grant. Town vote is dependent on prior approval by the Board of Finance at its meeting to be held that same evening at 7:30 P.M.

Good Year for the Rose Algrant Art Show: 50 exhibitors, instead of the usual 40, included old hands as well as newcomers. Paintings, sculpture, photography, political satire, and handiwork were displayed. Total sales of $12,786 surpassed average receipts of other years of $10,000 and will result in a donation of between $2,000 and $3,000 to the Fire Department’s Ambulance Fund.

Art in Cornwall: Diane Schapira’s show of sculptural ceramics and masks will continue at the Cornwall Library through September 25, as will the show of works by Ellen Moon and David Colbert. On September 26 from 2 to 4 P.M., there will be an opening of a show and sale of paintings and sculptures by Cornwall Bridge residents Lillian, Alice, and Irene Gross, three sisters whose lives were intertwined by their passion for the visual arts. All proceeds from the sale will benefit the Library.

At the Wish House, the exhibit of surrealist collages by M. I. Cake will continue through the month of September.

At the Outsiders’ Gallery there will be an opening and folk festival on September 4 from 4 to 7 P.M. featuring live music, juggling, and a painting demonstration by Douglas Truth. Other artists in the show are Norelle Gudaitis, Karl Saliter, Terry Moore, Kelley Moore, and Asher Pavel.

At the National Iron Bank, Jeff Jacobson will be exhibiting photographs of automibile parts.

The Hollaender Chamber Ensemble will give a concert of chamber music at the United Church of Christ at 4 P.M. on Sunday, September 19. The program will include Bach: Goldberg Variations; Piazzola: Four for Tango; Dvorak: Piano Quintet in A. This is the third Cornwall concert for the ensemble, which is directed by cellist Peter Sanders (nephew of the late Peter Hollander), a member of the New York City Ballet Orchestra. $15 admission, $10 for seniors and students. Call Lilly Hollander for information at 672-6888.

A Cornwall Companion is the title of an upcoming anthology of work from the last 14 years of the Chronicle. It includes stories, letters, and illustrations from 80 different writers and 27 artists (maybe you!). Watch the Chronicle and your mail for further news about the publication of this hardcover book, scheduled for October.

The Library Will Be Closed from Wednesday, September 1 to Saturday, September 4 to transfer records to a new database system and train volunteers in its use. It will reopen on Tuesday, September 7 at 10 A.M.

The Connecticut Civil Liberties Union film, Unconstitutional, an hour-long documentary on curtailment of civil liberties since 9/11, will be shown at the Library on Tuesday, September 14 at 7 P.M. Free.

Cornwall House Tour 2004 will be held on Saturday, October 9. If you are interested in volunteering for a morning or afternoon shift, please contact Joe Pryor at 672-4226. The proceeds will benefit the Cornwall Ambulance Fund.

Story Hours at the Cornwall Library will resume in October. We are considering combining kindergarteners with 3- and 4-year-olds in a session beginning at 1:30 p.m. Kindergarteners can take the bus from CCS to the Library. If you and/or your child would like to participate, please call Amy Buck at the Library 672-6874 to register and discuss which day works best for you.

The CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

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 $10 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. 143 Cream Hill Rd., West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be e-mailed to the publishers at elfhill@aol.com