A Million Smiles

Unless you’re an overworked hermit, you know by now that Jane Bean—wife of David, parent of Chandra, grandparent of Gabe and Eli—won $1,000,000 in the lottery last month.

Perhaps just as important is the way the town reacted. No envy. No malicious murmurs about idiot’s luck. No snickers that it was only $700,000 after taxes. No, just a great reaction.

Chandra, grandparent of Gabe and Eli—won $1,000,000 in the lottery last month. But the town really only cared about one person in particular: The Beans. Because the Beans have been richly rewarded.

Several days later, well over 100 registered Democrats and guests filled all available seats in the Town Hall to see who would gain the top spot on that party’s November ticket. Both candidates were nominated, and both spoke, as did several others on their behalf. The paper-ballot vote was close, with Gordon prevailing 65 to 51.

So when you go to vote on Tuesday, November 8, here are your choices for the Board of Selectmen: Ridgway and Hurlburt for first selectman; and Baird, Republican, Richard Bramley, Democrat, and Roger Kane, petitioning and unaffiliated, for selectman. From those five, the board will be made up of the winner for first selectman—Ridgway or Hurlburt—and the top two vote-getters among the three candidates for selectman AND the loser in the first selectman race. Confusing? (Read it again!) What happens if Ridgway, Hurlburt, and Bramley are the top three? The answer came from Bernie Liu in the office of Connecticut’s Secretary of the State: they cannot be seated as a Board of Selectmen, because all are registered Democrats, and the board must have minority representation. The third seat would then go to the person coming in fourth in the voting. It’s an outcome unlikely to occur, but we wanted to know just in case.

Finally, please save this date: Sunday, October 9, when the candidates will be on a panel sponsored by the Cornwall Association from 4 to 6 P.M. at CCS. They will each be making statements and answering your written questions.

—John Miller

It Gets Interesting

For the first time in many years, Cornwall has a hot race for first selectman. It pits seven-term incumbent Gordon Ridgway and retiring school board member Becky Hurlburt against each other. Both are Democrats, but Becky is running as a petitioning candidate. The race comes out of July’s contrasting party caucuses. Republicans met first with about 30 party members on hand and nominated incumbent K. C. Baird for selectman but no one for the top spot. There apparently was a movement among some Republicans to nominate Hurlburt for first selectman. If they had, others at the caucus were prepared to nominate Ridgway.

Confusing? (Read it again!) What happens if Ridgway, Hurlburt, and Bramley are the top three? The answer came from Bernie Liu in the office of Connecticut’s Secretary of the State: they cannot be seated as a Board of Selectmen, because all are registered Democrats, and the board must have minority representation. The third seat would then go to the person coming in fourth in the voting. It’s an outcome unlikely to occur, but we wanted to know just in case.

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—John Miller

SEPTEMBER 2005

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<td>18 Hollander Chamber Ensemble 4 p.m. UCC</td>
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<td>20 Red Cross Blood Drive 1:30–6:15 p.m. UCC Parish House</td>
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<td>Art Opening Reception 3–5 p.m. Library</td>
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<td>Green Party 7:30 p.m. Town Hall</td>
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*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957
† Details in Events and Announcements

For additions and updating, visit www.cornwallct.org
New teachers include P.E. teacher Aaron Boucher and Sarah Blexrud, sixth-grade social studies and math teacher, who is returning from maternity leave and replacing Clair Walton.

Pam Brehm, long-time director of the Cornwall Child Center, says she has enjoyed working closely with Fitzgibbons to make the relationship between the Child Center and the school a fluid one. “We share children and families with CCS,” says Brehm, “so we coordinate our activities and programs so they complement each other, rather than cause conflicts.” One example of their liaison is that Mrs. Burdick’s first-graders can be found on Friday mornings reading to the nursery children.

According to Brehm, the Child Center, which received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in June 2004, has had an increase in the number of inquiries from prospective parents in surrounding towns who are in search of a high-quality, accredited nursery program. Cornwall’s is exceptional in that it charges fees based on a sliding scale depending upon family income. Scholarships are also available. The Center serves children ages three to eight from 7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., Monday to Friday. As of June 2005, enrollment stood at 36.

Two Cornwall residents will be joining the staff at the Child Center this fall. One, Ania Utrata-Wynn, is returning from maternity leave. The other, Lesley Petersen, is the third alumna of the Child Center to return as a teacher in recent years.

At HVRHS, 35-year veteran Bunny McGuire, who just retired as executive secretary to the principal, will be replaced by Julie Lang. Principal Gretchen Foster, now entering her second year, invites the community to a welcoming session from 7 to 9 P.M. on September 6, which will be an opportunity for students and parents to learn about and become involved in a wide variety of activities. An Open House is set for September 21 at 6:30 P.M. Foster encourages those interested to find out more about HVRHS on the newly enhanced website: www.hvrhs.org. Of the anticipated 660 students enrolled at the high school this fall, 78 come from Cornwall. Cornwall sends 20 ninth-graders to join the incoming freshman class of 185.

The Flood of 1955
For those of us who have lived in Cornwall for 50 years, the past month marked an important anniversary. On August 12, 1955, Hurricane Connie came ashore in North Carolina and headed up to New England. Five days later, Hurricane Diane also moved up the coast. Connie dropped four to six inches of rain over southern New England, causing soil to become saturated and rivers to rise. When Diane hit, New England was bombarded over a two-day period with 20 more inches of rain. (Yes, 20! The Husatonic rose to a near-record level in places but, although West Cornwall was washed out, the river was not the cause. Fred Bate, whose meat market was in the path of the flood, vividly remembers that day. “It started to rain,” says Fred, “and how it rained; it came right down by the bucket. The Housatonic didn’t get that high, but what caused the problem were the small streams. At the foot of Dibble Hill Road where the bridge crosses the river, debris, including limbs and trees, jammed up under the bridge causing the water to flood back up Dibble Hill Road. When it broke loose, it was all downhill. It came right through the village and gouged out anything in its path all the way down to the river. Trees were upside down in the neighbor’s yard, and there was meat and equipment dumped in the gully in front of Bill Bierce’s store [formerly in the larger shingled house opposite the pink house in West Cornwall].”

Fred lost his shop in the flood, but he recalls that the community was very supportive. “Everyone pitched in with pies and shovels and chainsaws. The town formed a committee to assess the flood damage people had sustained, and then they doled out the money.” This was the worst flood in the history of the eastern United States. President Dwight Eisenhower declared Connecticut a disaster area. Cornwall was fortunate not to have lost any lives, but neighboring towns were not so lucky.

—Brenda Underwood

Land Use Issues
Preliminary plans for a road that would allow developers to build as many as eight very expensive homes on the 119-acre Furnace Brook Farm property were presented at a meeting of the selectmen in June. There’s not been a formal proposal to the Planning and Zoning Commission, and developers may not pursue that particular plan. But the scale and the cost to the town of servicing the road (with eight lots it would have to be a town road) provoked discussion at the Land Use Forum.

That preliminary proposal for a fancy subdivision underlines the importance of reviewing existing land use regulations for their currency and enforcement.

The Town Plan of Conservation and Development sets the framework guiding the evolution of land use regulations and thus the balance between private property rights and the community interest in preserving the rural nature of Cornwall, as well as in encouraging the local economy. The Land Use Forum (July) and the forum on Agriculture in Cornwall (August) signify the beginning of a dialogue on where people want the town to go. There will be more meetings in the autumn. P&Z will be announcing the formal start to hearings on the new Town Plan. Meanwhile, residents need to be active and vigilant. The issues at stake are major.

—Martha Loutfi

Welcome
Spencer Allyn to Jennifer and Joseph Markow
Elijah Luis Lopez to Chandra Castel and Luis Lopez-Caicado
Peter Michael III to Michele and Peter Gorat, Jr.
Caroline Elizabeth to Caryn and Paul Barber

Congratulations
Donna Murphy and Larry Rude

Good-Bye to Friends
Robert L. Ardizzzone
Amos Landman
Grace Woodruff

Land Transfers
William L. and Lynne Fox to Robert S. Rubin, 9,865 acres with cabin on Hollenbeck Road for $150,000.
Frederick N. and Sarah V. Patzman to Elizabeth Alexander and Titus Welliver, property at 56 Hall Road for $925,000.
James F. and Kathleen A. Lawson to Philip Taaffe and Gretchen S. Carlson, property at 52 Cogswell Road for $535,000.
R. Drew and Carol S. Ohmen to Annette Wuerensch, property at 141 Kent Road for $265,500.
Est. of Lynamnera R. Niebergall to Gary S. Guilm and Joseph C. Gemayal, portion of property in Cornwall at 378 Kent Road for $344,787.30.
Angela K. Dorn to Richard Ferraro, property at 191 Town Street for $525,000.

Deer in Cornwall
It is hard to believe that in 1897, nearly exterminated by wolves and mountain lions, only 24 deer were reported in Connecticut. Today, lacking those animal predators, there are well over 75,000 deer throughout the state.

In 1974 Connecticut passed the Deer Management Act, and in 1975 the first deer-hunting season was permitted on public lands. Cornwall is 25.6 percent state forest—a total of 11,556.36 acres. All except Mohawk Mountain (5,943 acres) are open to hunting.

Experts say that an adequate number of antler-less deer, both females and male fawns, must be harvested annually to reduce deer density. Usually, the removal of one adult doe during hunting season results in three fewer deer the following spring. As deer numbers decrease, the number necessary to be removed also decreases. In this way, hunting is controlled, from the initial phase when deer harvests are high to the maintenance phase when density is lower.

Studies have shown that the ideal deer density is 10 to 15 deer per square mile. Although Howard Kilpatrick of the Wildlife Division of the Department of Environmental Protection is reluctant to offer a specific count, aerial surveys, winter tracking, and designated routes suggest that our deer population is dwindling. One reason may be habitat change due to the sharp increase in
browsing, you can make changes in your
death, even though there may be more food
shrubs within reach. (Leadership in the
heavy snow on the ground, deer often “yard
most of the year, but in a severe winter with
possibility. Bucks and does herd separately
health of the herd. Harsh winters are another

me to hold my breath and step on the gas.
them, emit a biting, stinging stench that causes
them. They are part of a way of life. And they are
American dairy farm.
their dairy barns and manure pits or face a pos-
farmers the choice—which is no choice at all—of
month’s
was reminded of this by Bob Potter’s piece in last
Chronicle
. This promises to be an exciting season for Corn-
tions and reviewing the past projects and deci-
sions. Let’s discuss with one another and the
candidates what our town needs for the future.
 This promises to be an exciting season for Corn-
wall politics.
—Tricia Collins
FARM SMELLS
There are some smells, like skunk, for example, or
or wet dog, which I quite like in moderation but
which become obnoxious in concentrated doses. I
was reminded of this by Bob Potter’s piece in last
month’s Chronicle, about how the EPA wants to
eradicating the methane produced by cows, which it
claims is polluting the atmosphere, by giving
farmers the choice—which is no choice at all—of
spending untold thousands to hermetically seal
their dairy barns and manure pits or face a possi-
daily fine of up to $25,000, a measure that
would virtually sound the death knell of the small
American dairy farm.
 Now, I happen to like farm smells, all of
them. They are part of a way of life. And they are
not overpowering. At least they used not to be.
In recent years, though, I have become aware of
certain farms in the area which, when I drive by
them, emit a biting, stinging stench that causes me
to hold my breath and step on the gas.
What has happened to farming methods to
bring about this change? A friend opined that the
cause is the greater size of these farms and par-
ticularly the concentration of cows—and hence
their waste—in small areas, so that a smell which
is acceptable, even pleasant, in open fields becomes
noxious in confined spaces. The driving force is no
doubt profit, but at a cost to the air we breathe.
But whatever the cause, while I would not object
to something reasonable being done to deal with
this problem, for God’s sake, EPA, leave the old-

ART SHOW BREAKS RECORD
The Rose Algrant Art Show’s 45th exhibition surpassed all previous records, with sales of
$17,500. (Average past sales were $10,000.) There is no obvious explanation for the increase.
As usual, about half of the 45 exhibitors sold work, and no one item brought in a huge sum.
Was it the new location at the school, which provided good lighting and ample space and is on a
busy thoroughfare? It’s anybody’s guess.
—Bee Simont
YOU CAN HELP
Chronicle readers know that the Dunn family and the Connecticut EPA have been dueling over an oil spill.
Readers may not be able to help the Scoville cows, but they may be able to help the Dunns.
They have been billed $194,000 by an oil-spill clean-up contractor for state EPA-man-
dated work. The contractor’s bill, 21 pages long, claims that between March 23 and May 2 of this
year, three men worked daily on the site (the Rock Shop on Route 7, near the intersection with Route 45). The contractor claims that, during
that time period, there were only three non-working days—Good Friday and two

days the following week. The reality, some of us believe, is that little or no work was
done on most days.
If you traveled often past the site during that period, would you be willing to declare what you observed regarding the
extent (or lack) of such work? If you can help, please call Liane and Monte Dunn at 672-6975.
—Wm. Earl Brecher
A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at the UCC Parish House on Tuesday, September 20, from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. Drop in or call Pat Blakey at 672-6516 for an appointment. You must be over 16 years old, weigh at least 110, be healthy, and be willing to give an hour of your time.

The Clifton Read Fund: Residents of Cornwall in need of temporary rental assistance may find help from the Clifton Read Fund. Residents are asked to first consult Cornwall’s Social Services Office (672-2603) to determine other avenues of help. Social Services will then provide an application for assistance by the Clifton Read Fund.

The fund is administered in confidence by a three-person committee of the Cornwall Housing Corporation. It was established in 1984 in memory of Clifton Read, an original board member. Since its inception, private donations have sustained the fund. Contributions are welcome and may be sent to the Cornwall Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 174, Cornwall, CT 06796. Please label checks for the Clifton Read Fund.

ABC Meeting, Monday, September 12, from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M., at the Cornwall Inn. Carol Ebersol will talk about Alternative Ideas for Healthy Living. Open to the public.

Story Hour at the Library begins Friday, September 30, at 1:15 P.M. for ages 3 to 5. The program will run for eight weeks. Kindergartners may take the bus from school with their parents’ permission. Stories and activities; snacks will be served.

Don’t Miss Your Chance to Vote! Applications for an absentee ballot for the November 8 town election are now available at the Town Clerk’s Office. Electors may use an absentee ballot only if they will be unable to appear at the polling place on the day of the election for one of the following reasons: active service in the armed forces, absence from town during all the hours of voting, illness, physical disability, or religious tenets. Absentee ballots become available on October 8. However, if you are out of the country before this date, you may request a blank absentee ballot.

The Annual Cornwall Agricultural Fair will take place on Saturday, September 24, from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M., on the Town Green. For information, contact the Selectmen’s Office, 672-4959.

Author Roxana Robinson will read from her latest work, A Perfect Stranger: And Other Stories, at the Library on Saturday, October 1, at 3:30 P.M. The reading will be followed by a discussion and the annual meeting of the Friends of the Cornwall Free Library. Refreshments will be served.

In Court, a first-ever exhibition of original courtroom drawings by Marc Simont of the 1976 Peter Reilly hearing, opens Sunday, September 11, at 3 P.M. at Noble Horizons. Marc, Donald S. Connery (author of Guilty Until Proven Innocent), Robert Estabrook, and Peter Reilly will talk. Reception follows.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will meet in the Town Clerk’s Office on Saturday, September 24, from 9:30 to 11 A.M., to hear appeals on motor vehicle assessments. No appointment necessary.

The Cornwall Historical Society will share some treasures discovered during inventory in an exhibit, Look What We’ve Found, opening on Friday, September 16, from 4:30 to 6:30 P.M. Some of the items will also be displayed at the Agricultural Fair, during which the Society will show photographs from its collection of farms and farming.

The Cornwall Free Library is happy to receive donations of all kinds of books (but please, no textbooks!) prior to its book sale on October 7 to 9.