

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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ONE LANE

A Leap Forward for Affordable Housing

The Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) announced that it has purchased nine acres in Cornwall Bridge, which will eventually lead to an impressive addition to its affordable housing program.

The land is between Baird's and the Cornwall Bridge Firehouse. About 175 feet front on Route 7, with the rest stretching back up the hill toward Dark Entry Road. "There are a lot of nice features to this land, and it's wonderful to have a downtown site suitable for family or senior housing," said Maggie Cooley of CHC.

Early plans call for a total of four lots, three for parcel-program home sites and one for congregate housing with up to 10 units. The latter could be rental or ownership units and could combine family housing with some senior housing.

The Housing Corporation currently has 12 homes in its parcel program and 18 rental units at Kugeman Village, which is not ideal for seniors in that all the apartments save two are duplexes.

CHC bore the expense of initial site exploration. Percolation tests have been performed with the help of CHC board member Denny Frost.

At the closing on July 23, just before this

issue of the *Chronicle* went to press, CHC paid the \$250,000 purchase price with a combination of early leadership gifts and a bank line of credit. Input from most nearby landowners has been positive, and several neighbors, including the Bairds and Dusty and Sandy Sandmeyer, acquired adjoining land as part of the transaction.

Jim Levy, CHC's outgoing president, told us that talks with the owner, Bernice Merz, began as long as three years ago, when CHC was searching for senior housing sites. "It was a lengthy and complicated deal," Jim and Maggie told us, "and [First Selectman] Gordon Ridgway deserves a lot of credit for working with us and Bernice on the many details. Bernice is a real friend to the town and deserves thanks for letting the land go at a price that was below market."

The Housing Corporation will shortly begin a major fundraising campaign. The goal is to retire the bank debt incurred on purchase and to provide for such major site work as wells and driveways.

CHC was founded in 1988 and has long been a leader in the state in creating affordable housing. Jim said: "Maggie and I visit other towns to tell them about our program, which has turned out to be a model. A lot of communities talk about affordable housing, but I've come to the conclusion that there is

something unique about Cornwall that has enabled us to pull together to get it done."

-Ed Ferman

A Fertile Town-Planning Forum

When the City of New Haven held a forum to discuss its ten-year plan, four people showed up. On June 23, close to 70 people gathered in the CCS gym to learn how the next Cornwall plan is being developed and to offer their visions for Cornwall in 2020.

The town planning consultant, Tom McGowan, came up with some interesting figures: Cornwall had 20 fewer people in 2000 than in 1990; weekenders add an additional 600; 18 percent of the population made less than \$25,000; and the average age of the emergency service volunteers is 50 and on the rise. Cornwall has 29,760 acres, of which one-third is protected; 31 percent of our 4,000 acres of wetlands is protected.

After the initial presentation, P&Z chair Annie Kosciusko and McGowan divided people into seven teams, which came up with scores of ideas. People overwhelmingly wanted to keep Cornwall's rural character and felt strongly that Cornwall should be a place where people can afford to live. Many were disturbed by the vision of a Cornwall

(continued on page 2)

SATURDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY FRIDAY 4 W. Cornwall Farmers' **Every Week This Month:** 2 3 Market 9 A.M.-1 P.M. Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Vill. Mtng. Hse.; Men's Adult Basketball, 6:30 P.M. CCS Gym Get a Clue Rose Algrant Art Show Opposite P.O. † Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7 P.M. CCS Gym Reading Program 5-8 P.M. Wednesdays: Stretch Class, 5 P.M. Town Hall; Women's Adult Basketball, 6:30 P.M. CCS; Keeping a Family Cow 7 р.м. Library CCS Gym † Tai Chi for Beginners, call Dave Colbert 672-6726 for location and time 10 а.м.–1 р.м. Local Farm † Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 p.m. St. Peter's, call Debra Tyler 672-0229 to confirm t Rose Algrant Art Show Sundays: Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M. Debra Tyler 672-0229 for location 10 а.м.-4 р.м. CCS Gym -W. Cornwall Farmers Market 9 A.M.-1 P.M. 5 Circus Arts Camp Circus Arts Camp 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. Circus Arts Camp 9:30 а.м.-12:30 р.м. Circus Arts Camp 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. 9:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. CCS Gym † Opposite P.O. † Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Rose Algrant Art Show Canning Food Workshop 10:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. UCC CCS Gym † CCS Gym † CCS Gym † Agricultural Comm. 7:30 p.m. Town Hall 10 A.M.-2 P.M. Get a Clue CCS Gym † Parish House † Inland Wetlands Reading Program Art Reception 8 P.M. Town Hall 7 P.M. Library 5-7 р.м. Library † 15 Deadline: September Chronicle Copy 18 W. Cornwall Farmers' Market 9 A.M.-1 P.M. 12 14 17 13 16 **Blood Pressure Screening** Housatonic River Comm. Opposite P.O. † Film: The World Was Ours Noon-1 P.M. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. Get a Clue Cornwall Assoc. Annual UCC Parish House † Meeting 4 P.M. Library † P&Z 7:30 p.m. 3 P.M. Library † Reading Program VFW Post 9856 7 р.м. Library Art Reception 4-5 P.M. Town Hall † 8 р.м. W. C. Firehouse Wish House † Art Opening Reception 5–7 P.M. Outsiders Gallery 19 20 21 22 23 24 Chamber Music Concert 7:30 P.M. Cream Hill Lake Cornwall Day at Lake Public Hearing: Compounce † Water Rate Increase 25 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall 6:30 P.M. Town Hall W. Cornwall Farmers' Market 9 A.M.-1 P.M. Opposite P.O. † FARM IACHINER 26 27 28 (v) 29 30 31 Macbeth Auditions Cornwall Child Center Macbeth Auditions P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall 4-6 Р.М 6-8 P.M Registration 9 A.M.-Noon Town Hall † Town Hall † Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall 8 P.M.

W. C. Firehouse

(continued from page 1)

overrun by McMansions and the secondary homes of people uninterested in the life of the community.

Several groups said the plan should identify areas of particular agricultural, environmental, or historical interest and discourage development in those areas. One group proposed that the inevitable new houses be built in and near the villages and in cluster-zoned developments. Two groups suggested that P&Z regulations should include design control over the size and architecture of new buildings.

Ideas on how to ensure that people can afford to live in Cornwall centered on housing and jobs. Housing suggestions included half-acre zoning in some of the current one-acre areas, creating "mother-in-law" apartments, and more tax relief for lower-income households. One group suggested the town should work to attract small manufacturing and distributing businesses with, say, 10 to 75 employees.

There were concerns about the lack of a town center. Several groups talked about revivifying West Cornwall and establishing Cornwall Bridge as a destination, perhaps with galleries and a yoga center, to attract residents and out-of-towners.

The Town Plan has no legally binding force, but it guides town boards like the selectmen and P&Z when they are considering decisions that would affect the future of Cornwall.

—Hendon Chubb



Games, Food, & Fun

Co-sponsored by Park & Rec. and the Cornwall Foundation, with additional funding by the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department, the Third Annual Community Picnic provided a day-long extravaganza for the entire town. With the addition of North Cornwall/Yelping Hill, four teams vied for the coveted Cornwall Cup. This year West Cornwall emerged victorious. All teams were clad in colorful, zip-coded t-shirts designed by Becky Hurlburt. Meanwhile, at Foote Fields, three inflatable rides amused the children while everyone enjoyed food and drinks served by the CCS eighth graders. Donations collected will fund their class trip. The festivities ended with the contra dancers do-sidoing to the sounds of Deb Tyler's Homegrown Band. Everyone enjoyed a big slice of happy birthday cake baked by Irene Hurlburt, celebrating 75 years of service by the CVFD.

—Elizabeth England and Susie Lilly Ott

Local Girl Does Good

Stop by the Insiders/Outsiders Art Gallery in Cornwall Bridge and hear owner Kelly Gingras talk about her passion, that sector of the art world known as "self-taught" or—as Gingras calls it—"obsessive-compulsive, because of the outsider artist's nearly evangelical desire to produce, to spread the word about his/her work. Like the artists I show, I can't sleep or eat until I've learned everything about them and their craft."

Such was the case in February 2007 when Brooke Allen gave Gingras nine sacred wooden African grave-markers, or *vigango*, valued at roughly \$4,000-\$7,000 each, to sell.

"When I first googled 'vigango,' nothing came up," Gingras says. "I added the word 'Kenya,' and 40 pages flooded my system." Gingras read every page and then examined the sculptures in her living room. She saw

gresh EGGS

where the memorial totems had been ripped out of the ground. "You can see the soil line, the erosion of the wood on their bottoms. I could tell the totems spanned roughly 30 years of deaths."

When Gingras called Allen to tell her of the to-

tems' spiritual worth, she agreed that the vigango should be returned to their homeland. "Enormous value is placed on spirit markers in African culture," Gingras says with her customary intensity and frightening wisdom for someone so young. "Not only the deceased, but an entire family can be cursed if a vigango is stolen. I found stories in *National Geographic* about children of the deceased who were born deaf or blind after their relative's marker was taken. Stealing a culture's sacred artifact and then selling it for a profit? Neither I nor the Allens wanted any part of that."

Gingras then spent four months trying to get the vigango home. She called embassies in Kenya and the United States to no avail. Desperate, she turned to neighboring artist Todd Piker for advice, which came in the form of Patricia Johnson, a longtime friend. Piker says, "Pat knows everything about everyone linked to African-American culture both here in the United States and in Africa."

Johnson put Gingras in touch with former U.S. ambassador to Tanzania Charles R. Stith, who then contacted Peter Ogego, Kenya's ambassador to the United States.

"It takes a village," says Gingras. "Just as Tanzania and Kenya are neighbors, so are Todd, Pat, and I."

Gingras made national news when she drove the vigango to the United Nations on June 25 for a formal handing-off ceremony to Ambassador Ogego. —Elizabeth England

Rummage and Scrimmage

The Woman's Society's annual rummage sale was held with outstanding success at three sites in Cornwall Village and at the Mohawk Ski Area on Saturday, July 14 (plus half-price on Sunday and bag sale on Monday). Satur-

day brought blazing hot weather and the usual waiting lines from daybreak on, and a steady crowd of customers poured through all locations. With Priscilla Mauro in charge in the village and Thalia Scoville at the ski area, the sale was in experienced hands, and 82 volunteers and five salaried young people helped out. Scholarships from the proceeds will be awarded next spring.

—Ann Schillinger

Congratulations

Alexis Sullivan and Thomas Feely, Jr. Virginia Gold and Christina Danforth Katie Schultz and Daniel Martin

Good-Bye to Friends

Martha MacCracken Howard David J. Knox William E. Swift, M.D.

Land Transfers

Lawrence C. Sturges to Harry R. dePolo, 2 parcels totaling 1.077 acres on Route 128 for \$7,000.

Bernice H. Merz to Kent Road Associates, LLC, 0.734 acres on Kent Road for \$50,000.

Pauline L. Hayes to Sean M. Walsh and Julie M. Benedetto, buildings and improvements on 0.43 acres at 156 Kent Road for \$243,000.

Gary S. Guilman to Susan and Stephen Saccardi, buildings and improvements on 6.012 acres at 110 Warren Hill Road for \$555,000.

Please send us news of any out-of-town births, adoptions, marriages, civil unions, and deaths.

To Market, To Market...

The early bird gets the fennel...or the sugar snap peas in the case of Cornwall's fledgling Farmers' Market. On its first Saturday morning, vegetables virtually flew off the red-and-white-checked tables into the baskets and canvas sacks of morning shoppers. On a later Saturday a local was hawking his greens and home-made wine vinegar aged in oak casks.

Bianca Griggs of the Wish House made this venture possible through her hospitality (her front lawn and tents) and countless phone calls. "A farmers' market gives people another chance to connect," she says, "an opportunity to bump into friends and neighbors." She and her cohorts will be there each Saturday through the growing season nurturing the development of this market.

—Deirdre Fischer

Storm Stuff

Thunderstorms have been common this summer. The most damaging was an isolated "microburst" on June 28 that toppled a dozen large, old maple trees, mostly on Cogswell and Rattlesnake Roads. A garage was hit, and memorial plantings were blown about in the North Cornwall Cemetery. Luckily no one was hurt. Connecticut Light & Power, along with the Cornwall Fire and Highway Departments, worked into the night to get the roads open. This is the third time this year that a big, old, wonderful maple has clobbered a structure in town.

Residents are urged to consult a licensed arborist if you have such a tree near you. Also, downed power lines can still be energized and dangerous and should be avoided.

President Bush has declared that the storm that hit Cornwall on April 15 was a natural disaster. If your property was damaged, you may be eligible for financial assistance. Call the Federal Emergency Assistance Agency at (800) 321-FEMA. Your claim can include things like washed-out driveways that are not normally covered by insurance.

—Gordon Ridgway

Who Knew?!

The Cornwall Historical Society is bursting with treasures. Begun in the early 1900s by E. C. Starr, the collection has grown to include outstanding original documents, textiles and clothing, tools, an 1824 "friendship book" written by a Chinese man at the Foreign Mission School (used by an Amherst professor in a recent scholarly publication), a crock with "E. E. Wilcox & Son, Cornwall, Conn." on it, metal headpieces worn by a Cornwall Clark ancestor during the War of 1812, and much, much more.

But who knew? There's no space to exhibit, no space to do research, no "space to show the collection the way it deserves to be seen," as Dinny Greene, a board member, said. Enter Charlie Osborne, who got the board to draw up a strategic plan in 2004. Since then, a newly organized board has hired a professional curator, recruited many volunteers to work with her, and begun to plan for the expansion and reconfiguration of the very inadequate building.

The part-time curator, Jodi Polsgrove, began work in October 2004, funded by a grant from the Connecticut Humanities Council. She has brought a consistency to the work of organizing exhibits and cataloguing, and helped determine what to keep, what to deaccession, and how the collection should grow.

The plans for the building will triple the display space by expanding the back over the basement area and reconfiguring existing rooms. Downstairs will exhibit the huge collection of tools for shoemaking, woodworking, and farming. The expanded first floor will house a special Cornwall display, a library and research area, and a large exhibit/program room. Upstairs will have appropriate storage for the collection. (Among the items: a woman's everyday dress, with a



double layer of material around the bottom to make it heavy and therefore easier to shake mud off!)

The pro bono architects are Alec Frost and Rick Wolkowitz, and depending on fundraising, the board hopes to start renovation next year. The budget for the

Letter to the Chronicle



THE CCS PTA NEEDS YOUR HELP Fifteen years ago a group of parents

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¹ I spearheaded the playground project at CCS, and since then the equipment has hosted many a student. Unfortunately, the time has come to

replace the once-state-of-the-art equipment as it sends children to the nurse's office daily for splinter removal, and its parts, which are beginning to break, are not replaceable as they are no longer manufactured.

The CCS PTA would like to install new play-ground equipment but needs your help as the new equipment, supervised installation, and ground surfacing total approximately \$50,000. If you would like to support this project please send your donations to CCS PTA, Cornwall Consolidated School, 5 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796, or contact Bethany Thompson, CCS PTA President, at (860) 248-3009 or at thompsonfamily@optonline.net.

—The Cornwall Consolidated School PTA

project is \$600,000, of which \$150,000 has been raised from board members and leadership donors and \$250,000 from a state STEAP grant, leaving \$200,000 still to go.

The board is holding meetings to spread the word. As President Ginny Potter said at one of them, "Saving and sharing Cornwall's history is so important. It's been a long process, but things are really happening!"

—Phyllis Nauts

Priceless!

That's what Ann Cameron, a Dibble Hill resident, says about her Chore Service worker. Founded 15 years ago by Cornwall's Ella Clark, Chore is currently helping 24 Cornwall clients, who say things like: "It's meant everything to me. I've had help for years and years from it." "My worker does anything I need her to do, from driving, marketing, and going to the bank, to mending and gardening. She's priceless, and Chore is priceless."

Marie Trager said her worker, Charlotte Buck, did a terrific job weeding a 75-foot bed "choked" with weeds, making it "immaculate."

Twelve Cornwall workers earned a total of \$8,600 last year, and clients received a total of 1,322 hours of service. If you know of older or disabled neighbors who could use some help, or anyone who needs part-time work, call Ella at 364-1003. People pay what they can, and Chore pays the rest. You can help make up the difference by going to Chore's wonderful fourth annual dinner and square dance on Saturday, August 18, at Elaine LaRoche's barn in Sharon. Call 672-6608 for details.

—Phyllis Nauts

Cleaner and Greener

Cornwall's support of renewable energy has been growing since February when the town committed to the Clean Energy Campaign. Participants have increased from 25 to 41, including three businesses: the Wish House, In Pursuit of Tea, and Tim Prentice's Studio. The additional cost is minor, as Jane Bean will attest: "We have not had a huge rate hike since signing on. I even forgot we had." If 46 more households and businesses join, Cornwall will qualify for a free one-kilowatt solar

system to be used in a municipal building. To sign up, go online to Connecticut Clean Energies or get a signup form at UCC. Another good way to save energy is to use compact fluorescent light bulbs, available for \$2 each from Katie Freygang, 672-6010, or leave an order at UCC.

—Nora Prentice

Town Green News

In June, when Gregory and Natalie Randall bought the MacLean place south of the Cornwall Town Green, access to the property was an issue. The MacLeans used to go across the edge of the Town Green during their brief visits to Cornwall, but it turned out that they didn't necessarily have a legal right-of-way. In order to create year-round access, the selectmen and the Randalls have agreed to trade a small strip of land along Pine Street for a quit-claim renouncing any right the Randalls may have to use the Town Green as their driveway. The town has also approved a new driveway location opposite the Library. The trade will have to be approved by P&Z and then voted on in a town meeting in the fall. -Gordon Ridgway

Events & Announcements

Motherhouse in August: Keeping a Family Cow: Saturday, August 4, from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M. at Local Farm, \$35 per person, \$50 per family of up to four; Canning Food: Saturday, August 11, at the UCC Parish House from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., \$35 per family, call to register; Meditation for Mothers: St. Peter's Church, Thursdays from 1:15 to 2:15 P.M. (call to confirm) and 1 P.M. on Sundays (call for location). Questions? Call Debra at 672-0229.

Park and Rec. is sponsoring Circus Arts' Heidi Kirchofer and Joel Melendez of Matica Arts in a week of circus arts, August 7–10 from 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. at the CCS gym. The camp is \$90 per participant and is open to anyone eight years of age or older. To reserve call Bethany Thompson at 248-3009 or go to cornwallparkandrecreation@yahoo.com or www.maticaarts.com.

A Public Forum hosted by P&Z will be held at the Town Hall on Tuesday, August 14, at 7:30 P.M. to discuss the proposed zoning change for the five-acre plot surrounding the Berkshire Petroleum gas station. Come to learn more and voice your opinion.

Art in Cornwall: The Rose Algrant Art Show will be held at the CCS gym on Friday, August 3, from 5 to 8 P.M.; Saturday, August 4, from 10 to 4 P.M.; and Sunday, August 5, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Beginning August 7, the Cornwall Free Library will host a show of paintings by Nancy Daubenspeck entitled *Summer Lawns*. An artist's reception will be held on Saturday, August 11, from 5 to 7 P.M. The show runs through September 8.

The Wish House is hosting an opening reception on Saturday, August 18, from 4 to 5 P.M. for artist M. I. Cake's show *Action and Repose*. The exhibit will run through September.

Landscapes and Escapes continues through August 12 at the Outsiders/Insiders Gallery, then a group summer show will open with a reception on Saturday, August 18, from 5 to 7 P.M. This show will run through September.

The Cornwall Free Library will present *The World Was Ours, the Jewish Legacy of Vilna*, a documentary by Mira Van Doren, on Sunday, August 12, at 3 P.M.

The Cornwall Association will hold its annual meeting on Saturday, August 18, at 4 P.M. at the Library. Gordon Ridgway will report on the current state of the town, and Hector Prud'homme will talk about *Cornwall in 2050*. There will be a special award for a major contributor to the Cornwall community.

Blood Pressure Screening: Better safe than sorry! Have your blood pressure checked at UCC in Cornwall Village on Monday, August 13, from noon to 1 P.M.

Never Too Hot to Give

So you can't sleep. Breakfast is a bowl of ice cream. Nothing appeals more than a swim or that air conditioner you forgot to buy. The normal things of life disappear under the fog of 95-degree heat. Here's an idea! Take your checkbook to a shady corner with your favorite pen. When you're settled, use your best calligraphy to write a check to the *Chronicle*. It will make you feel cooler right away, and our Exchequer, which doesn't seem to feel heat but wilts during the summer nonetheless, will be refreshed. Thanks, and hope for rain!

Don't Share Your Diseases! Most people don't realize it, but public swimming places are breeding grounds for microbes, especially in hot weather. Please don't go in the water if you have a virus or germs.

Chamber Music: Galileo the scientist meets Ben Wolff's Renaissance Band at the Cream Hill Lake Association on Saturday, August 18, at 7:30 P.M. Come on time and bring a chair for an unusual and fascinating program.

Prescription Drug Help: There's good news for people who need help paying for prescription drugs. The Foundation for Community Health, a non-profit organization

dedicated to improving the health of

area residents, has a Prescription
Assistance Fund designed to help pay for prescriptions, premiums for prescription drug insurance, and/or co-pays. In order to be eligible for this program, household income must be at or below \$30,630 for a single person, \$41,070 for

a couple, or \$61,950 for a

family of four. Eligibility is redetermined every three months. Some drug companies offer patient assistance programs.

Cornwall residents seeking information on these and other assistance programs are urged to contact Jill Gibbons in the Social Services Office at 672-2603.

Farmers' Market: Be sure to visit the new Cornwall farmers' market (see article in this issue). Local farmers offer their produce on the lawn in front of the Wish House in West Cornwall every Saturday from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

The CCS PTA will be hosting Cornwall residents at Cornwall Day at Lake Compounce on Tuesday, August 21. The discount admission is \$18.25 per person, children two and under free. To reserve tickets contact Bethany Thompson at thompsonfamily@optonline.net or at 248-3009. Reserve by Friday, August 17.

The Town Hall Players will hold auditions for *Macbeth* at the Town Hall on Sunday, August 26, from 4 to 6 P.M.; Monday, August 27, from 6 to 8 P.M.; and Saturday and Sunday, September 8 and 9, from 4 to 6 P.M. The performances will be November 9–11 at the Town Hall. Questions? Call Fred Thaler at 672-0052.

Cornwall Child Center: Registration for the fall term is on Friday, August 31, from 9 A.M. to noon at the Center. The Child Center welcomes children between the ages of three and eight for educationally based play and enrichment programs. Call Pam Brehm at 626-1289 for more information.

Memoir-Writing Classes: Do you have a personal story to tell that you've been itching to write either for yourself or for your family and don't know how to begin the process? Well, help is on the way. The Cornwall Free Library is sponsoring a memoir-writing course that will run on eight consecutive Fridays from September 8 through October 26. The course will be taught by Kent resident Betty Krasne, a professor of English at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York (and the mother of Cornwall's Tom Levine). She has previously taught memoir classes with great success at the town libraries in New Milford, Kent, and Salisbury.

The classes will run from 9 to 10:30 A.M. and involve weekly writing assignments. The fee for the eight sessions is \$80, payable to the Cornwall Free Library. For more information and to register, call the Library at 672-6874.

Summer Road Work/Paving will be done in mid-August, weather permitting. Roads slated for resurfacing are Bolton Hill, College, Essex Hill, Everest Hill, Dudleytown, Great Hill, Great Hollow, Jewell, Rumsey Circle, School, Seeley, South, Twixt, and Valley. Be prepared for short delays and some slow traveling. If you have any questions, call 672-4959.

Correction: The price paid by David J. Hubbard to Anne A. Hubbard for land with buildings and improvements thereon was \$600,000 and not \$100,000 as reported in last month's *Chronicle*.

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