



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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2017, Year of Two Farm Markets

We are a little town, not in square miles, but in population. Despite such relative tininess, 2017 gave us two farm markets: the original on the Wish House lawn in West Cornwall and a breakaway on the village green. The former features Carol Bonci and her delicious focaccia and Judy Herkimer spooning out tastes of peach jam. The "green" market had Sweet Sue with her yummy baked goods, plus farmer-pol Ridgway hawking locally grown organic vegetables.

Russ Sawicki retired his Wandering Moose in February, but Pearly's Farmhouse Café run by Sean and Justina Aylmer opened in time for leaf season in October.

A water-septic study group produced a wastewater plan for West Cornwall that would include a 20,000-gallon tank for a "gravity and low pressure sanitary sewer with an enhanced treatment system." Estimated cost: \$3.86 million.

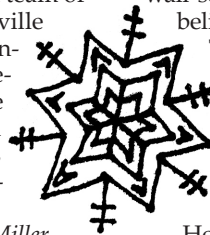
Slightly downriver we celebrated the reopening of Trinity Retreat Center with Joe and Heidi Rose as co-directors and the Rev. Daniel Simons for spiritual direction.

State fiscal problems hit us hard as our educational cost-sharing grant went from \$85,000 to a minuscule \$1,300. The state initially proposed towns pick up one-third of

their teacher retirement funds, but that cost was not in the final budget.

And there were these tidbits: the Little Guild had a great 2017 with new director Justin Vagliano at the helm; the HVA celebrated its 75th anniversary, and the CVFD its 85th; Animal Control officer Brad Hedden came to the rescue when an angry (rabid?) fox attacked Donny Bachman walking his dog; bears attacked and shredded the backseats of cars owned by Matt Collins and Bianca LaPorta; Natasha De Elye Cole won two medals in track at the Special Olympics in Austria, and a team of CCS students won the Lakeville Journal Quiz Cup after going undefeated in competition with Region One schools; and, finally, the annual Rummage Sale brought in better than \$36,000 to be used as gifts to high school graduates pursuing higher education.

—John Miller



A Corner Turned?

"How's business?" is a question often answered in Cornwall with pessimistic shrugs. No more. It seems we have turned the proverbial economic corner; at least that's the informed opinion of many business and civic leaders in Cornwall.

Anna Timell, long-time Planning & Zoning commissioner and co-chair of the Economic Development subcommittee, is knee deep in the 10-year state planning process. She believes it's too early to judge the impact of development efforts because in her words, "We just woke up!" She is a proponent of what she calls "radical thinking about zoning" that strikes a balance with the town's rural character. Among her priorities: ubiquitous high-speed internet access and the West Cornwall sewer project, the cost of which she believes should be shared by all. Tapping into her expertise as a doctor, Anna suggests a novel approach to our aging population: create service enterprises for the elderly right here that might even attract younger people as staff.

Bianca Griggs, owner of the Wish House, has a more hands-on approach to development. Having withstood ups and (mostly) downs in her business since 2001, she now sees some light on the horizon. She is optimistic that the re-opening of the Trinity Center can once again be a driver of her business, and calls the sewer project "a key to expanding West Cornwall." She believes that attracting and retaining people in town can lead it to a true economic

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JANUARY 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30-10 am Library; Mat Squad at 6:30 pm UCC; Karate, 6:30-7:30 pm Town Hall; Men's Senior Basketball 6:30-8:30 pm CCS ♦ Tuesdays: Pilates, 8:30-9:30 am Library; Zumba, 5:30-6:30 pm Library	1 ○ FULL ♦ New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast 9 am-Noon UCC Parish House	2 ♦ Inland Wetlands Agency 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	3	4	5	6 ♦ Historical Society Open on Saturdays thru 3/10 11 am-2 pm ♦ Winter Film Series <i>Seven Days in May</i> 4 pm Library ♦ Saturday Skating at Hotchkiss begins 7-8 pm ♦ Community Contra Dance 7 pm Town Hall
7	8 ☾ 4thQ ♦ Region One Bd. of Ed 6:30 pm HVRHS Library	9 ♦ Eco.Dev. Comm. 9 am Pearly's Cafe ♦ Monthly Senior Luncheon Noon UCC Parish House ♦ West Cornwall Septic Comm. 5 pm WC Library ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library ♦ Housatonic River Commission 7:30 pm CCS	10	11 ♦ Republican Town Committee Caucus 6 pm Library	12 ♦ Slide Show on Nepal 5 pm Library	13
14 ♦ Charles Bezzozi Opening Reception 11:30 am UCC The Bear Reality Talk 1 pm Library Democratic Town Committee Caucus 3 pm Library	15 M.L. KING, JR DAY ♦ Deadline: February <i>Chronicle</i> Copy	16 ● NEW ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	17 ♦ CCS Board of Education 4:15 pm CCS	18 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Library ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm Town Hall	19 ♦ Community Conversation: Education 6:30 pm-9 pm CCS	20 ♦ Special P&Z Meeting 10 am Town Hall ♦ Winter Film Series <i>State of the Union</i> 4 pm Library
21	22 ♦ ZBA* 7 pm Library	23	24 ☾ 1stQ ♦ Region One ABC Committee 6 pm HVRHS Central Office	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 ○ FULL	Every Week This Month: Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 5-7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; Stitch 'n Spin, 7:15-8:30 pm UCC ♦ Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30-9:30 am Library; Toddler Play Group, 10:30-11:30 am Library; Meditation, 4-5 pm call Debra 672-0229; Zumba, 5:30-6:30 pm Library; Mah Jongg, 7-9 pm Library call 672-6874; Adult Volleyball, 7-9 pm CCS gym ♦ Fridays: Yoga 8:30-10 am Library ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9-10:30 am Library; Meditation, 1 pm call Debra 672-0229		

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

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recovery. "Our work is far from done," she says, citing the scarcity of parking, toilets, and tourist information.

Another neighbor putting his capital on the line is Sean Aylmer, proprietor of Pearly's Farmhouse Café. Sean says his "warm welcome from the community" has included painting and marketing support as he and his wife, Justina, adjust to post leaf-peeper levels of business. They intend to focus on social media and outreach to local establishments like Trinity, Mohawk Mountain, and even the CCS. I, for one, particularly enjoyed one of their Thursday jazz nights, for which it may be almost mandatory to reserve a table in advance!

Cornwall Bridge Pottery owner Todd Piker has seen our town and his business change dramatically over the years. "The internet has created novel ways to reach new customers, and it's changed the face of retail forever," Todd told me. While he's proud of the wonderful support for his pottery among Cornwallians, times change and at press time a sale is pending on his building in West Cornwall. He points out the irony that some of what helps us retain our bucolic setting works against growth and the attraction of young residents and visitors: an anti Airbnb approach; a dearth of hotels/inns; few restaurants and stores.

Janet Carlson Sanders, current chair of the EDC, described current efforts to spur development. She points to the re-opening of the lumberyard in Cornwall Bridge, the vibrancy of the Country Store, Pearly's opening, and Trinity's comeback as examples. She sees the sewer project as "a great investment, giving rise to shops, restaurants, and even collaborative workspaces so people can live and work in close proximity." Pleasantly surprised with people's willingness to change with the times, Janet firmly believes that good economic news will continue.

—Bob Meyers

Hollywood on the Housy

The 14-foot rental truck loaded with a ton of movie-making equipment slowly turned right and crept up to Art Gingert's River Road house on the Saturday morning before Thanksgiving. The cold, gray morning was to be the start of a two-day rush to complete the filming of the horror picture, *The Heron*.

Anyone who knows Art understands the irony of making a horror movie in his house and gardens where the villain is a bird. Art is an ornithologist extraordinaire, teacher, wild-

life biologist, and has never met a bird or animal he didn't like. But no birds were harmed in the making of *The Heron*. The heron for this movie is actually a six-foot tall, oily looking, deranged, papier-mache and wire heron monster made in Brooklyn that came from the imagination of the writer and director of the movie, Josh Deane.

Deane and most of the 27 crew members are from the Brooklyn College Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema, and were filming *The Heron* in Cornwall. Four professional actors were involved. Amelia de Neergard's 16 acres of woods and fields on Essex Hill Road were used for several scenes over two days. Plus, Ms. de Neergard's house served as the de facto headquarters and overnight housing for 12 of the team. Coltsfoot Valley had a scene or two. Apparently even the director of a horror film cannot resist Coltsfoot Valley.

The Heron is Deane's fifth movie as writer/director (5181productions.com), and the final project for his MFA degree. The movie is somewhat autobiographical according to Deane, and deals with issues of family mental illness and pollution (the oily, deranged heron). "But ultimately it is about a family coming together through personal tragedy," Deane said. *The Heron* will premier at Brooklyn College in May 2018. "After that we will send it to as many festivals as possible," Deane said.

Producer Vickie Alvarez credits her childhood friend and associate producer Paper Buck, who grew up in Cornwall, for bringing the production to town. Ms. Alvarez said, "We were looking for a location that would look like a rural farm on-screen. Art's place quickly became the ideal location." Even the 1973 Chevrolet Suburban sitting in the driveway next door had a role in the movie. Deane said, "The Suburban had the perfect look to match our established design. Its color and style fit into the time period." As the owner of the Suburban, I was just pleased that it started on command and nobody choked on the exhaust fumes.

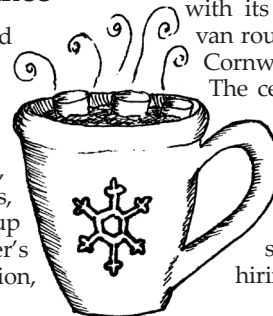
By Monday morning, after 26 hours of movie making on River Road, the truck was repacked along with the oily heron, and Gingert's kitchen returned to normal.

—Don Heiny

From Dylan to the Cosmos

The renovated and re-envisioned Trinity Retreat Center officially opened its doors in late October, and already it has brought new levels of activity to West Cornwall.

According to Director Joe Rose, Trinity will host any religious, nonprofit, or educational group retreat that aligns with the center's core values: faith, integrity, compassion,



Goodbye to Friends

Priscilla Hart Mauro
 Pamela Towill
 Forrest "Woody" Woodman

Land Transfers

Woodbury Mountain, LLC, Alphonse Fletcher and Chase Manhattan Bank to JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA, 75.06 acres at 85 Cook Road.

Bank of New York Mellon to M.L. Andrews, 1.039 acres of land with improvements thereon, at 259 Kent Road, for \$91,900.

Paul Biondino and JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA to Specialized Loan Servicing, LLC, property at 4 Frederick Drive.

Edward Dobbs, Trustee of the Dobbs Family Charitable Foundation Trust to the Cornwall Conservation Trust, two parcels of land (99.469 acres and 10.006 acres) on Johnson Road.

inclusiveness, social justice, and stewardship. "Retreatants" of all ages come either through outside organizations or sign up for programs originated by the center. During the school year, Trinity welcomes guests mostly on weekends, although over Thanksgiving it had 45 attendees for a week-long retreat created by resident Director Joe and the Rev. Daniel Simons.

The center's typical daily schedule includes morning and evening prayer; three meals and a snack; presentations, performances and/or workshops depending on the retreat's theme; and age-appropriate activities from yoga to sack racing to square dancing.

Upcoming retreats include: Learning to Breathe, Prayer Unplugged (a cellphone-and digital-free program), a recovery weekend, a Bob Dylan retreat, and God and the Cosmos during next August's Perseid meteor shower. Among the organizations holding retreats beyond Episcopal and Anglican groups are Tibetan Buddhists and the Christian education program Godly Play.

To date, nearly all of the retreatants have been members or associates of the center's generous parent, Trinity Church Wall Street, with the others having found their way to West Cornwall via social media, word of mouth, press coverage, or advertising. Demand for rooms has been higher than anticipated, and although the center's 16 employees already constitute a nearly full staff, Joe anticipates more local hiring, especially for the summer 2018 season. The center is already one of the town's largest employers.

Trinity has built multiple connections with its host community. A Trinity van routinely takes guests into West Cornwall for shopping and strolling.

The center actively seeks out local talent in the form of musicians, artists, and craftspeople for its presentations. Many of its kitchen provisions are farm-to-table sourced, and it will soon be hiring a farm manager to grow

its own food. In summer, the community will be invited to come watch outdoor movies on an inflatable 30-foot screen overlooking the river. Dangling in the not too distant future, we hope, may be some form of community day pass for selected retreats.

—Paul De Angelis

A Forest Full of Cats

Driving up Route 128 in mid-October, I saw an unusually large cat standing in a driveway. At second glance I realized it was a bobcat. Many Cornwall residents have had similar experiences. Martha Loutfi lives near Cream Hill Lake and reports, "I've had many bobcats playing in my yard there over the years, a pair resting after mating (multiple times)...mother and baby, family,... Perhaps the most fun was last summer—a mother and two young ones learning how to catch and eat small mammals; mother mostly lounging, sleeping next to a tree."

Adult bobcats, *Lynx rufus*, weigh between 15 and 35 pounds. They range from 28 to 37 inches in length. Bobcat coats are yellowish to greyish brown with dark spots. They possess tufted ears but their most distinctive feature is a "bobbed" tail about 6 inches long. Although they are several times the size of a domestic cat, they can be confused with a house cat, and, are sometimes confused with the much larger cougar.

Bobcats are reclusive and secretive, and most active at dawn and dusk. Their diet consists of small mammals such as rabbits and squirrels. Occasionally, they may eat small or sick deer, and they may also prey on domestic animals. They have large hunting ranges.

Bobcats have lived in Connecticut for thousands of years, but their numbers declined with destruction of forest habitat in the 18th and 19th centuries. Bobcats were hunted for sport and fur. The population was waning, and in 1972 the state classified the bobcat as a protected furbearer with no hunting or trapping season.

Because of the increase in forestland and hunting protections, the bobcat population has begun to increase. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) estimates the Connecticut bobcat population to be about 1,500 to 2,000 animals. The forested habitat in Cornwall is conducive to the bobcat population.

Bobcats and humans have relatively few conflicts. Gretchen Carlson reports that she regularly sees bobcats near Cogswell Road, and believes that her house cat was mauled by a bobcat. Fortunately her cat survived.

Rabies is uncommon in bobcats. But there have been instances of rabid bobcats attacking humans in recent years. Three women in Colchester were attacked by a rabid bobcat in January 2017.

DEEP has started the Connecticut

Letters to the Chronicle

WEST CORNWALL LIBRARY OPEN

Need a meeting space to conduct business, tutor a student or do a homeschool project? The West Cornwall Library, aka the Hughes Memorial Library, at 35 Lower River Road in West Cornwall, is open for business! The big room has been renovated and now has WiFi. The space is bright and free to Cornwall residents. Please call Libby Mitchell at 203-536-1712 to set up a time to come by and see if this location is for you.

—Libby Mitchell

SEWER STUDY FAILS TO ADDRESS ISSUES

The West Cornwall Sewer Study Committee has presented its report to the selectmen. While the goals of the study may seem laudable, the reality of the report contains many serious issues that have not been addressed.

First and foremost, the engineering report found existing groundwater and well water in West Cornwall as very acceptable. This finding is in direct contradiction of the committee's stated objective. Only a handful of properties would benefit from a sewer system. Those properties could better use individual treatment systems instead of a town-wide system. Most of the properties in West Cornwall have well functioning septic systems.

The benefits of a sewer system are being touted as a huge economic benefit to West Cornwall. The notion that dozens of new businesses will open in West Cornwall because of a sewer is exaggerated and unrealistic.

The proposed sewage treatment plant in a floodplain would ruin one of the most scenic open spaces in West Cornwall. The base \$4 million cost is very high, and even with the speculation that some grants might be found, the bulk of financing would fall on the residents of West Cornwall.

This report should be viewed with skepticism and needs to be reevaluated with a more objective analysis.

—Mark Wilson

DON'T SEND IT DOWN THE HOUSATONIC!

As a longtime resident/property owner on Lower River Road in West Cornwall and as a longtime river

advocate with 19 years as a Housatonic River Commissioner, I have comments about the location of a proposed sewage treatment facility.

The plan locates this facility at the Bend, a location once named the Garbage Hole on fishermen's maps of the Housatonic—the industrial site of a scissors factory and a foundry. Two giant gasoline/diesel tanks stood where the furniture factory is today and were used for fuels for trucks and large equipment in the time when lead and other toxic additives like MBTA were added to the fuel. This soil is so contaminated that the Housatonic Valley Association and the landowner, Eversource, haven't been able to reach an agreement as to who will be responsible for the property after construction of a parking lot, as well as improved drainage and river access despite lengthy discussions. Now the Septic Study Group wants to add a treatment facility to this property. NO! This is no place to dig a town sewer line and place a treatment facility.

The proposed system would be noisy and even noisier if the backup generator has to work during power outages. It could be smelly and unsightly. In this location it would greatly affect the neighborhood and shift the problems of a few downtown property owners onto their Lower River Road and Railroad Street neighbors.

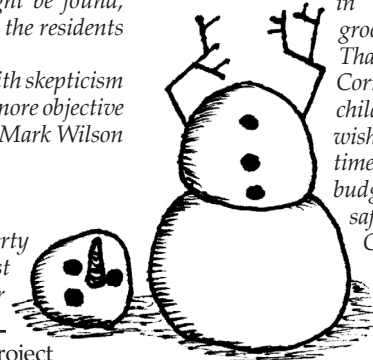
Any advocate for the Housatonic River would agree that any, even "treated" septic water, should not be going into the river.

—Lynn Fowler

SUSTAINING HOPE DURING BUDGET CUTS

Thanks to you, this holiday season 33 people in 14 households received grocery assistance for their Thanksgiving dinners at the Cornwall Food Pantry and 35 children had their holiday wishes come true. In these times when state and federal budget cuts threaten the social safety net, the people of Cornwall are sustaining hope for a brighter future.

—Jane Muir Sellery



Bobcat Project. The goal of the project is to learn about the diet of the bobcat, and the size and distribution of the bobcat population. The project hopes to collar and GPS tag 50 bobcats in 2017. DEEP also encourages citizens to report bobcat sightings. Information can be sent by email to deep.ctwildlife@ct.gov or posted on its Facebook page.

—Mark Wilson

Cornwall Briefs

- **Goals for 2018:** The Board of Selectmen welcomed Priscilla Pavel and set goals for the coming year (find them on cornwallct.org).
- **Fire Hydrant:** Jake Hurlburt fabricated and Josh Tyson installed a new source pipe in the Housatonic near the big bridge. The

spot and specs were provided by Mark Davis of Got Big Water. Davis, a retired firefighter, suggested using the river after the 2016 drought turned the town's fire ponds into mud holes. A win for CVFD.

- **House Numbers:** After years of pleading with us to post visible house numbers, the CVFD has designed dandy new signs. They're 6 by 12 inches of reflective green metal with white numerals. Order yours for \$20 at the selectmen's office.

- **Bridge News:** The Smith Place span over Mill Brook across from the post office in West Cornwall is crumbling and needs to be repaired. Roger Kane, our bridge wizard,

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and Dave Battista of Lenard Engineering have come up with several alternatives, including making it into a pedestrian bridge. That would leave four households stranded, so four new routes for autos have been devised. One would use the vestigial roadway that leads down to Railroad Square and up the hill behind the old Bate's Meat Market. Maps detailing the alternatives are available at the selectmen's office.

—Lisa L. Simont

Tax Collector Notice

The second half payment of taxes on the Grand List of October 1, 2016 is due January 1, 2018. Supplemental Motor Vehicle Taxes are also due at this time. Payments must be postmarked by February 1, 2018 to avoid interest. Any tax bills not paid by February 1, 2018 will be considered delinquent, and interest will be charged at the rate of one and one half percent per month and fraction thereof (including January). This means that even if you pay on February 2nd you will be charged for two months interest. No additional bills will be mailed for second installments. Please use the bill you received in July.

Taxes may be paid at the tax office on Mondays from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. and on Wednesdays from 9 AM to noon and 1 P.M. to 4 P.M., or sent by mail, addressed to: Cornwall Tax Collector, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753. Payments can also be paid by credit card or e-check by visiting the following website, www.cornwallct.org, but there is a 2.95% charge for this service. —Jean D. Bouteiller, Tax Collector

Events & Announcements

Also: check our Facebook page for event reminders and Cornwall updates

At the Cornwall Library

The Cornwall Library 2018 Winter Film Series opens Saturday, January 6, with *Seven Days in May* and continues on Saturday, January 20, with *State of the Union*. Please note new time of 4 P.M. Free. Suggested donation of \$5.

While You're Chipping Off That Ice

In January we drop into the rhythm of winter, coping with snow, ice, and power interruptions. Don't forget to send a check to the local paper of record: that's us.

On Friday, January 12, at 5 P.M. see and hear about climate change in Nepal with Ian Ridgway and Sam Weisman. Himalayan refreshments provided.

Connecticut Master Wildlife Conservationist Felicia Ortner will present a talk on "The Bear Reality" on Sunday, January 14, at 1 P.M.

New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast will be held in the UCC Parish House from 9 A.M. to noon. Donations benefit the Stephen Frost Scholarship Fund.

Ice skating Saturdays in January and February from 7 to 8 P.M. at Hotchkiss School Dwyer Rink (lower rink). Wearing a hat is a must! Bring your own skates.

Start the New Year on the right foot at the Community Contra Dance Saturday, January 6, at 7 P.M. at the town hall. Lively music by Still, the Homegrown Band with special guest caller. Donation requested. For more information call Jane at 672-6101 or go to motherhouse.us.

Cornwall in T-Shirts, the winter exhibit at the historical society, will be open Saturdays from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. during January, February, and until March 10.

Senior monthly buffet lunch will be held Tuesday, January 9, at noon. Cost is \$8/person. Must RSVP to Jen Markow at 672-4071 or prcornwall@gmail.com.

All Republicans welcome to the Cornwall Republican caucus on Thursday, January 11, at 6 P.M. in the Cornwall Library. Lite Bites will be offered.

The Town Hall Players is alive! and will hold an organizational meeting on Saturday, January 13, at 3 P.M. at the town hall. Whether your interest is acting, planning a production, tech support, marketing, or just supporting the revival of our community theatre, please come. All are welcome. For questions email Molly Hinchman at mmhinchman@gmail.com.

An exhibit of paintings by late Cornwall artist Charles Besozzi titled "Of Slavery and President Lincoln's Journey to End It," will be held in the UCC Parish House from January 14 until March 1, with an opening on Sunday, January 14, at 11:30 A.M. All welcome. See the exhibit weekdays from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., Sundays from 10 A.M. to noon, or by appointment by calling 860-960-3563.

All Cornwall Democrats are invited to the Democratic caucus on Sunday, January 14, at 3 P.M. at the library.

A community discussion on education's future in Cornwall will be held Friday, January 19, from 6:30 to 9 P.M. in the CCS gym. See insert.



The Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a special open meeting at 10 A.M. on Saturday, January 20, (snow date February 3) at the town hall to review the progress of planning in Cornwall.

Cornwall is embarking on being certified as a SustainableCT community through a new state program that embraces all your efforts to become "green" and suggests new and improved actions. See the new website SustainableCT.org for an overview and contact Gordon Ridgway or Katherine Freygang with your ideas. You will be hearing more soon about participation in Cornwall.

CCS's new after school care program runs four days per week at CCS and one day at the library from 2:55 to 5:30 P.M. under the direction of Patricia Vanicky and Roxy Hurlburt. CCS students aged 11 and under do homework, artwork, and crafts, play on the playground and in the gym, read, play board games, and more. Special programs for children are supported by the CCS Fund for Excellence. Tuition for regular attendance is \$10 per child per day with discounts for siblings and a maximum cost of \$20 per family per day. Children can "drop-in" and attend as needed for \$15 per day.

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