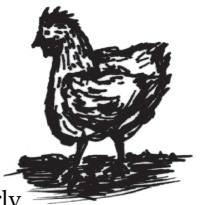




CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 22 : NUMBER 6 JULY 2012

Trinity Center to Close

One of Cornwall's oldest and quietest establishments will shut its doors on November 1. Trinity Conference Center will end its 97-year presence beside the Housatonic in West Cornwall. The center's owner, Trinity Church, at the head of Wall Street in New York, has decided it can no longer subsidize the present conference and retreat business.

Trinity Wall Street's rector, the Rev. Dr. James H. Cooper, said in a letter to the parish that closing the center will involve "a period of discernment" about the best use of the property and its facilities. Church officials have contacted First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, expressing a willingness to discuss the town's concerns regarding the future of the property. "There may even be advantages here," Ridgway said. "They're not just going to hang up a for sale sign and sell to the developer with the highest bid."

The property at the end of Lower River Road was operated as a summer camp for inner city children between 1945 and 1994 by the Episcopal Center Association at West Cornwall, an offshoot of Trinity Wall Street. Father Robert Griffiths led the camp during those years and when the church decided to close the camp facilities, Griffiths led the transition to create the retreat center for

religious groups and nonprofits. Jon and Wendy Denn have managed the operation for the past 18 years. The center employs seven full-time people and about 20 part-timers. All are being offered "end of service packages."

Nick Bruehl spent the summers of his childhood there, during the summer camp years. His father, Fritz, was assistant director and "just about ran the place," during the 1950s and 60s. Bruehl recalls hiking up the hillsides behind the camp, playing in the river, and camping out during summers that seemed to never end. "There were lots of buildings, including little cabins for the campers," he said. "The campers came up on the train to West Cornwall. Most of them had never seen the country."

Father Edward H. Schlueter bought the farm property beside the Housatonic in 1915 and opened a family-run camp for boys connected with Trinity Wall Street's missions on the Lower East Side. When Father Schlueter retired in 1945, Trinity Wall Street bought the property and expanded it to 300 acres. The conference and retreat facilities, and more land, were added in the 1980s and 1990s. The property is currently about 400 acres in size.

The center maintained its status as a not-for-profit business because it limited its

clientele to other similarly organized groups. It has been making a payment of \$20,000 a year to the Town of Cornwall "in lieu of tax."

When the doors close on November 1, that status may change and the property might be taxed, according to Cornwall's Assessor Barbara Bigos. She said that she has not done "a true appraisal" of the center because it has not been on the tax rolls. It is currently listed at a full value of \$6 million which will likely increase when Bigos gets a look at the interiors of the property's many buildings and facilities. If the zoning were to change to commercial, the value would be significantly higher.

—Lisa L. Simont

CCS Class of 2012

Opening the graduation ceremonies on June 8, Principal Michael Croft noted that most of the 13 graduates had walked the school halls since they were three feet tall! He went on to enumerate something special about each student, from memories to lessons learned to future aspirations.

Sam Thaler spoke for his class, acknowledging proud parents and grandparents and relieved teachers. Marina Matsudaira urged her classmates to commit to being lifelong learners in the spirit of

(continued on page 2)

JULY 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 ♦ "Out of the Woods" Talk 2-3 pm Historical Society	2 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	3 ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	4 ♦ INDEPENDENCE DAY ♦ Library Closed	5	6 ♦ Kid's Night Out: "Fly Away Home" 7 pm Library	7 ♦ Using Versatile Herbs 10 am-noon Library ♦ Alex's Lemonade Stand 11 am-3 pm ♦ July Fest noon-4 pm Foote Field ♦ Family Country Dance 7 pm Town Hall
8	9 ♦ Blood Pressure Clinic noon-1 pm Parish House	10 ♦ P & Z 7 pm Library ♦ Economic Development Committee 8 pm Town Hall	11 ♦ All About Bats Program 6:30 pm Library	12	13 ♦ Story Hour 1:30 pm Library	14 ♦ Juris Jurjevics Discussion 4 pm Library
15 ♦ CCT Hart Farm Walk 11 am ♦ Forest Animals And Birds 2 pm Historical Society ♦ Deadline: August Chronicle Copy	16	17 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	18 ♦ Start Lab Planetarium 6:30 pm Library	19 ♦ Toddler Story 11 am Library ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	20 ♦ Kid's Night Out: "The Sandlot" 7 pm Library	21 ♦ Annual Rummage Sale ♦ Tom Hanford 9 am-12:30 pm Farm Market ♦ Jelly & Jam Session 10:30 am-1:30 pm Local Farm ♦ Family Round Sing 7:30 pm Local Farm
22 ♦ Annual Rummage Sale	23 ♦ Annual Rummage Sale ♦ ZBA 7:30 pm Library	24 ♦ Committee for Seniors 7 pm Town Hall	25	26	27 ♦ Story Hour 1:30 pm Library	28 ♦ Yelpling Hill Anniv. Party 2-4 pm Yelpling Hill
29 ♦ CCT Rattlesnake Preserve Walk 11 am	30	31	Every Week This Month: Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6-9 pm Town Hall; Karate 6:30-7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Saturdays: Cornwall Farm Market 9 am-12:30 pm Wish House Lawn Sundays: Meditation, 1-2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229			

(continued from page 1)

CCS. The Board of Education presentation for volunteer work was given by board member Phil Hart to Jean Kearns, a parent extraordinaire who delivered hot soup for Monday lunches, kept score at games, and so much more.

Graduation speaker Gordon Ridgway, class of 1972, had stories and memories of his time at CCS, just as this class of 13 has its own. He spoke about the opportunities ahead, going on to "reinvent yourselves," and how an education received here will still be helpful many years hence. "You have a lot of potential—aim high—heads up!"

After the presentation of diplomas by Rachel Matsudaira, Rebecca Hurlburt, and Michael Croft, graduates and guests partook of a delicious spread in the Gathering Room, put together each year by the seventh-grade parents and students.

The 2012 Graduation Class: Patrick James Considine, Anna D'Alvia, Madison Frith, Jacob Flasch Hurlburt, Cian Rhys Scott Kalmes, Chelsea Marie Kearns, Eve M. Labalme, Zackery Theodore Larson, Marina Matsudaira, James Edward Murphy, Brittany Lynn Pinette, Malcolm Woods Scott, Samuel Jacob Thaler.

Graduation awards: Tim Naylor presented the VFW Citizenship Award to Jamie Murphy; Zejke Hermann was proud to give the Dottie Hermann Memorial Award to Chelsea Kearns; Stacey Marcin presented gifts from the PTA to each graduate; and Croft gave the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award to Anna D'Alvia.

Eighth-Grade Awards: Anna for art; Marina, Patrick, and Jamie for music; Chelsea and Zackery for physical education; Anna for the Mark Van Doren Award for English (best writer); Chelsea for the Edna Peet Award (most improvement in writing); Zackery for the Susan DelGREGO Award (most improved in reading); Jacob and Malcolm for social studies; Jamie for history; Madison and Marina for science; Eve, Anna, Marina, and Cian for world language; Sam for math; Malcolm for algebra; Marina for geometry; and Brittany for technology.

—Susan Gingert

Memorial Day 2012

North Cornwall: A cloudless blue sky, a temp of 73, just enough air to be called a breeze, and about 30 good people, many carrying flowers—that was the setting at 9 A.M. when Charles Gold began the first of Cornwall's observances at the North Cornwall Cemetery.

Gold started with some history. In 1868, what was then called Decoration Day was "designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating" the graves of soldiers lost during the Civil War.

Accordingly, that same year, Theodore S. Gold, his great-grandfather, led the first such observance in North Cornwall. Gold now represents the fourth generation of the family to continue the tradition—and he, himself, has been leading it now for 43 years.

The group—solemn yet smiling—moved slowly from place to place, where Gold would stop to tell facts, anecdotes, and oddities about soldiers whose names were on nearby stones. As "Decoration" has morphed into "Memorial" Day, so the ceremony has expanded to include all those who served their country in uniform: at last count 67 men and one woman.

West Cornwall: At 10 A.M., on the Cornwall side of the Covered Bridge, the Seamen's Memorial Service took place, attended in true Cornwall style by two chickens crossing the road after the parade. This

was followed by a three-gun salute as a wreath was lowered into the Housatonic River. In his prayer, the Rev. Scott Cady asked God "to so bless the world's people that one day, the stories of battles and bloodshed will be told only as distant memories to children who know only a world united in peace."

Cornwall Village: By 11 o'clock a large crowd gathered to share greetings and pay tribute to Cornwall's fallen servicemen.

Led by a group of local veterans, the parade marched past the Library to the Town Hall and Green: the Cornwall Consolidated School band; a long procession of youth groups; and, of course, members of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department and Ambulance Squad, with our shiny red fire engines and rescue vehicles.

Master of Ceremonies Ralph Gold introduced this year's recipient of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Community Service Award by saying that he was "born on the Left Coast and transplanted to Cornwall via Florida." Other clues followed. "It is a long list of accomplishments that gets him to our podium," said Gold, "including being a 25-year member of the Cornwall Ambulance Squad, an active member of Habitat for Humanity and director of the EMS Institute." In accepting the award, Dave Cadwell said, "It is my privilege to be here and it's an honor to be your neighbor."

In a rich voice that resonated around the Town Green, Sam Waterston, Cornwall's 2012 Memorial Day speaker, spoke of Major Gen. John Sedgwick and his horse Cornwall, and then read the Gettysburg Address. Quoting Jefferson's and Lincoln's famous line, "All men are created equal," he

exhorted his audience: "Don't just stand there, do something."

Cornwall's Memorial Day exercises may not be the largest in the country but a larger one could not generate more goodwill or pride. —Brenda Underwood and Bob Potter

Welcome

Zola Jayne Potter
to Robin Beebee and Dean Potter

Good-bye to Friends

Judith Starr Bronner
Robert M. Ives
Frank Stanejko

Congratulations

Cynthia Fee Matthews
and Walker Haven Von Berg

Christina Von Ziegessar
and Shane Glanville

Elizabeth Mitchell
and James Herity

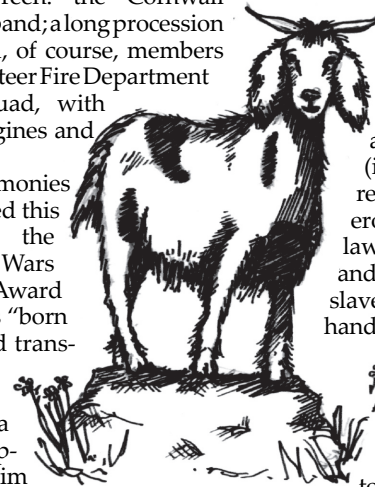
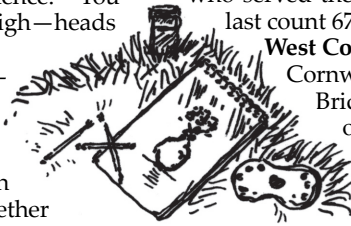
Land Transfer

Donald R. Betti, Jr. and Ginger M. Betti to
Charles G. Crane and Rachel P. Crane, 8 acres
with improvements thereon, at 259 Cornwall
Hollow Road, for \$388,000.

Slavery in Cornwall?

Cornwall has a lot of forgotten history. Most of us look upon the South as the upholder of slavery in the United States, but Connecticut was the most prominent slaveholding state in New England, and the last to abolish the system (in 1848). Slave ownership was respectable and widespread. Numerous ministers, public officials, lawyers, and doctors owned slaves, and Cornwall had its share of enslaved domestic servants and farm hands. The Connecticut "black code" of 1730, which formalized black and Indian slavery, was strict. Although it allowed slaves to testify in court, they were prohibited from leaving their town without a pass, and any violation of the 9 P.M. curfew was punished with severe whipping.

1774 was the high point for the slave population in the state: 5,085. After the Revolution began the number dwindled, but in spite of pressure from abolitionists, Connecticut had trouble getting rid of slavery. Three emancipation bills were defeated in the legislature before the Gradual Emancipation Act was passed in 1784, freeing black and mulatto children born after March 1 of that year at 25 years of age. It worked: 2,759 blacks were held in bondage in the state in 1790; by 1800, only about 200 remained.



Letter to the Chronicle

What was Cornwall's role in all this? In 1790, the earliest federal census, 11 white Cornwall men owned 19 slaves among them (including children). Ten years later the census listed only three owners and four slaves. A 1702 law made it difficult to emancipate slaves by declaring their last owner responsible for them for life, to save towns the expense of supporting the indigent. A release from the authorities was required, and one appears in our 1805 land records (slaves were property). "A certain Manslave named Obed, aged about twenty-five years," was freed by Ebenezer Birdseye, who would "hereafter be unconcerned and free from any interferences or interest."

Enslaved people were nameless and faceless in the census, but a 1788 state law, which banned the import or export of enslaved blacks, also required all owners to register slave births in their towns, giving us a rare glimpse of the human beings caught in the system. Here's one family in our vital records: "Edward or Ned, son of James and Patience, Negroes, was born at New Milford on the Ninth Day of March, A.D. 1789, all said Negroes being then the Property of Mr. Benjamin Buckingham, now the Property of Heman Swift Esqr. of Cornwall." There may be more information yet to uncover—stay tuned.

—Ann Schillinger

A Dump No More

When making a "dump run" I often am astonished and humbled at how much trash the Lady Wife and I can produce. After having spoken with Steve O'Neil, Cornwall's transfer station and recycling manager, I now have the same thoughts on a wider scale since annually we Cornwallians fill more than 125 large containers with refuse.

The operation that O'Neil runs with Ted Larson is extremely busy, important, and more than a bit risky. O'Neil tells how recently an unattended, idling car drifted backward and hit a container. The impact caused the transmission to shift into drive, and the car to move forward into another container. The ironic result was a car being totaled in the dump and a refocus on the Transfer Station rule about all empty vehicles having engines stopped and parking brakes engaged.

The pair is also stressing the importance of the posted 5 mile-per-hour speed limit. There is simply too much traffic, and too many people, for some of the speeds that are seen. Although kids are welcomed, as O'Neil sees the recycling aspect of the Transfer Station to be very educational, all children need to be supervised.

The facility earns approximately \$12,000 a year for the village general fund from redeemable bottles, aluminum, copper, brass, wiring, and even ink jet cartridges. To convert these materials to dollars requires a substantial amount of sorting

SNAKE EVICTED

Last week I was startled to spot a two-and-a-half foot snake slinking along the floor near a glass door in my living room. It had chestnut and black triangular markings on its back and a triangular head. I called Joe, the window washer who was nearby, for advice and assistance in removing the snake. When he reached toward it the snake opened its mouth as if to strike and vibrated its tail. Joe brought his cloth bag and I

and organization. Interestingly, no funds result from all of our paper trash as we do not generate the large volume necessary to interest commercial buyers. It seems that even redemption has its limits.

Our Transfer Station has a well-deserved reputation for its neat and tidy appearance. To sustain this look requires extra work, including Larson's geranium planting, which is much appreciated.

Certain aspects of the Transfer Station are so perfectly representative of our Cornwall uniqueness. On a regular basis discarded items of interest are stored for the annual Rummage Sale while others, such as walkers, are given to those who have a need. Then, of course, there is the Transfer Station Library, capably managed by Lin LaPorta. A nice touch, too, and a proper source of pride is that all station operating materials, from desks to pencils, come from "deliveries."

—Jeff Jacobson

Tax Office Going Greener

Taxpayers may now choose to pay their bills by the click of a mouse. The Tax Collector's Office is using a new service that permits payment by credit card or e-check. Also, there's an option to schedule automatic payments. Eventually, when the state statute permits, electronic billing will be available, and you can choose to say goodbye to all the paper. The fee for credit card payments will be 2.95 percent; the fee for e-checks will be \$1.95, clearly the way to go for large bills. To view or pay your tax bill online go to www.invoicecloud.com/cornwallct. Help save stamps, paper, and gas—go online.

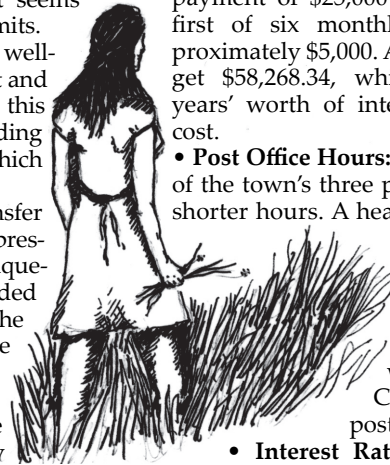
—Jean Bouteiller, Tax Collector

Cornwall Briefs

• **Rumsey Shrumsey:** Yet again we mention the once handsome New England palace on Bolton Hill Road, reduced now to a pile of bricks and the schoolboy memories of the ageless Tim ("I was once a border there") Prentice. Cornwall has started getting reimbursed

grabbed tongs from the grill to lift the snake. Together we bagged it and I dumped it in a ditch outside.

Later we identified the snake in Bill Beeman's snake book. It was definitely a copperhead which does live west of the Connecticut River but not often in Litchfield County, according to the book. Copperheads will enter through an open door. Ours may have been ajar. So keep doors closed and beware of unwanted reptiles. —Jean Vitalis



for the cost of the state-ordered demolition. So far we have received two checks from owner Drew Hingson, the first a down payment of \$25,000 and the second, the first of six monthly payments of approximately \$5,000. All told, Cornwall will get \$58,268.34, which includes several years' worth of interest on the original cost.

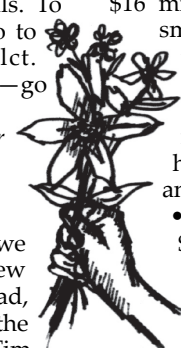
• **Post Office Hours:** It's in the works: two of the town's three post offices may go to shorter hours. A hearing is scheduled for August on proposed changes for Cornwall Village (four hours) and West Cornwall (six hours), with no changes in Cornwall Bridge. Keep posted.

• **Interest Rate Redux:** Cornwall's finance office reported some very good news just the other day. Remember the CCS addition of several years back? It included a handsome new gym and several other smaller improvements. To the delight of all of us it seems that Town Treasurer John Green and Finance Director Barbara Herbst went to the bonding bank and renegotiated the remainder of the mortgage from 4+ percent to about 2.5 percent. When all is done this brilliant financial maneuver will save Cornwall \$194,360.36.

• **Tennis Anyone?** This little note isn't about tennis but it does involve former tennis champion Ivan Lendl. He is no longer a Cornwall resident but still owns a formidable estate here that has been on the market for some years in the neighborhood of \$20 million. The recent reassessment upped the taxing value from \$12 million to \$16 million. Cornwall's Board of Assessment Appeals then lowered it back to the former figure. But now Lendl and his wife, Samantha, have gone to Litchfield Superior Court seeking further tax relief. The couple has been paying in excess of \$100,000 annually in real estate taxes.

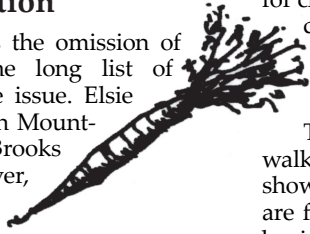
• **Town Budget:** It comes to \$4,055,147 for the fiscal year 2012-2013. But although Cornwall's grand list decreased by over 14 percent (from \$454 million to \$390 million), the mill rate went up from 12.40 to 14.66 to compensate.

—John Miller



Correction

The Chronicle regrets the omission of Elsie Pryor from the long list of graduates in the June issue. Elsie graduated from Indian Mountain and is headed for Brooks School in North Andover, Mass.



for children 18 months to 3 years on Thursdays, July 19, and August 2, at 11 A.M.

CCT Guided Trail Walks for Families:

The Cornwall Conservation Trust offers a series of guided trail walks suitable for all ages. The walks will showcase trails maintained by CCT and are friendly to the littlest of hikers. Walks begin at 11 A.M. and last approximately 45 minutes. (Walks will be canceled in the event of heavy rain/thunderstorms.)

- **Sunday, July 15:** Hart Farm Preserve. View lovely southern vistas from the top of Cherry Hill on this loop trail leading through woods and fields. Turn right at white sign three-fourths mile down Cherry Hill Road, park in mowed area.

- **Sunday, July 29:** Rattlesnake Preserve. View old stone bridges and a recent beaver habitat during this level woody walk. Park on Rattlesnake Road two-tenths of a mile from the intersection of Cream Hill Road.

Trail maps can be found at www.cornwallconservationtrust.org. Contact Kristen Bedell with questions: 672-6014.



to register, contact Leslie Elias at 672-0286 or email grumblingsgryphons@yahoo.com (www.grumblingsgryphons.org)

Renters' Relief Program: The Assessor's Office is accepting applications for the Elderly and Disabled Renters' Rebate Program through September 15, 2012. Applicants must be 65 as of December 31, 2011, or permanently disabled. Income limits for 2011 must be submitted with the application. For more information or to request an application, contact the Assessor's Office Tuesday and Thursday, 1 to 3:30 P.M. or Wednesday 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. or call 672-2703.

Tax Collection: The first half payment of taxes is due July 1, 2012. Taxes not in excess of \$100, and motor vehicle taxes, shall be due and payable in full on July 1, 2012. Payments must be postmarked by August 1, 2012, to avoid interest. Any tax bills not paid by August 1, 2012, will be considered delinquent, and interest will be charged at the rate of 1.5 percent per month and fraction thereof (including July). This means that even if you pay on August 2 you will be charged for two months' interest. No additional bills will be mailed for second installments; please use the bill you receive in July. Taxes may be paid at the Tax Office on Mondays from 1 to 4 P.M. and on Wednesdays from 9 A.M. to noon and 1 to 4 P.M., or sent by mail, addressed to Cornwall Tax Collector, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753. Taxpayers also have the option to pay online at www.invoicedcloud.com/cornwallct, but there is a 2.95 percent charge for this service, or pay with an e-check.

Events & Announcements

July Fest: All are invited, thanks to Park & Rec and the Cornwall Association, to this festive annual Community Picnic on Saturday, July 7, from noon to 4 P.M. at Foote Fields. Grinders, drinks, chips, and cookies will be served by the future CCS eighth-grade class. The event will feature a bounce house for kids of all ages, the "Cornwall Mile," fire truck hose down, and softball for the adults.

Art in Cornwall: At the Library, Tim Prentice's show of kinetic sculpture continues through July 28. Beginning July 31, Hendon Chubb's 2-and 3-D painted works will be featured.

At the Cornwall Library:

Alicia North will share tips on planning, growing, and utilizing versatile herbs from the garden to the kitchen and beyond on Saturday, July 7, from 10 A.M. to noon. Rain date, July 14.

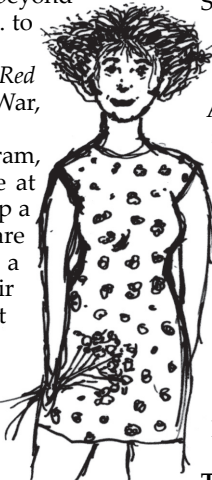
Juris Jurjevics will discuss *Red Flags*, his novel of the Vietnam War, on Saturday, July 14, at 4 P.M.

The summer reading program, "Dream Big, Read!" takes place at 6:30 P.M. on Wednesdays; pick up a detailed calendar. Children are encouraged to sign up for a reading record to document their time reading—and win a great prize!

On four July and August Fridays, at 7 P.M., Kids Nite Out will offer movies and popcorn for children 8 and up: July 6, *Fly Away Home*; July 20, *The Sandlot*.

There will be a story hour with crafts for children 4 to 8 on Fridays, July 13, and 27, at 1:30 P.M.

There will be a new Toddler Storytime



Family Day at CHS: From 2 to 4 P.M. on Sunday, July 15, the Cornwall Historical Society will treat everyone to a forest-related program at 7 Pine Street. Children's activities include arts and crafts, live animals from Sharon Audubon, and a variety of forest studies—even a free kit to help find the largest trees in Cornwall. The program coincides with "Out of the Woods: The Story of Cornwall's Forests," an exhibit that runs until October 28. For information call 672-0505

At the Farm Market July 21: Musician/artist Tom Hanford will be performing from 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. Please join the fun, free for all.

The Annual Rummage Sale will take place on Saturday, July 21, Sunday, July 22, and Monday, July 23. See insert for hours and details.

Grumbling Gryphons Theater Arts Camp will be held for 6-to 14-year olds from July 9 to 13 and July 30 to August 3. On August 3, at 6:30 P.M., a play and festivities will be held in the Town Hall followed by music and dancing on the Green. All are welcome. A special program for 2-to 5-year olds will also be offered. For more information and

Glow Little Glow Worm

July fields at night are a glittering circus of *lampyridae*, or fireflies to you and me. While you're watching this summer's light show, remember that a check to the *Chronicle* will keep our little glow warm. Thank you!

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

JULY ISSUE

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