CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 18: NUMBER 5 JUNE 2008

A Burning Matter

A long-running controversy over the burning of brush at Hedgerows Farm on Cream Hill Road in West Cornwall has raised questions as to whether the property will remain in its current ownership. Dan Cain, owner of Hedgerows, says that unless the ban on brush-burning imposed by Fire Marshal Stan MacMillan is relaxed, he sees no viable way to operate the kind of farm he wants. Cain put it this way: "If I can't farm here, I should pass on the responsibility to someone who can get along with the fire marshal."

Gordon Ridgway, Cornwall's first selectman, confirms that the fire marshal will issue no further burning permits to Cain for use at Hedgerows, a decision Ridgway fully supports. He notes that Cain and his employees have a long record of burning brush at Hedgerows without any permits or in violation of the terms of permits issued by the town. At a time when the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection—spurred on by federal air pollution control authorities—is questioning any open burning in the Northwest Corner, Cain's practices could impact the ability of other local landowners to burn brush, Ridgway says.

The first selectman notes that Cornwall issues hundreds of burning permits each year. Each places conditions on what may be burned

(in terms of log diameter or the size of brush piles). Permits also prohibit burning on any day when the fire marshal says that conditions are not appropriate. "We get almost no complaints about burning," Ridgway explained, "except for the many violations that involve Mr. Cain's farm." He also noted that every time there is an uncontrolled fire, or one violating the permit, the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department, staffed by volunteers, must turn out.

Cain responds that he has had no problems burning brush on his other farms in Goshen or in New York State or Virginia. He admits, though, that he was arrested by the state police last year for burning brush at Hedgerows in violation of his permit and had to appear in court and pay a fine. He blames his problems primarily on MacMillan's overly strict enforcement of the rules.

"Stan MacMillan has been Cornwall's fire marshal for over 15 years," Ridgway notes, "and he has always done a very good job for the town." A former chief of the Sharon Fire Department, MacMillan also serves as fire marshal for Sharon, Kent, and Falls Village.

When asked whether this conflict was likely to be resolved, both Cain and Ridgway responded that Cain's lawyer and the town attorney were talking. As the *Chronicle* goes to press, however, the Hedgerows burning ban remains in force. —*David A. Grossman*

IIINIE 2008

Congrats to Grads

commencement n. 1. *the act or process of beginning.*

Congratulations to the 46 students who call Cornwall home and who will begin a new chapter in their lives as they graduate from their respective schools.

On June 12 at 7 P.M., 20 students will be joining the ranks of alumni of Cornwall Consolidated School. Housatonic Valley Regional High School will welcome Forest Classey, Myles Clohessy, Brandon Coe, John Hare, Brian Hurlburt, Allison Lacko, Sebastien Lasseur, Lizzie Morehouse, Kale Prentice, Wilson Terrall, R. J. Thompson, and Ethan Tuthill. Andrea Bramley will be attending Oakwood Friends School. Daniel Hedden, Bronwen Kalmes, and Elizabeth Ridgway will all continue their education at Kent. Kyle Hurlburt will study at Oliver Wolcott, and Clotile Laigle will go to the Berkshire School. Dyllan Munson plans to attend Marvelwood. Laurel Woodruff is undecided. Graduating from Washington Montessori is Sarah Hubbard, who will continue her education at Millbrook.

Housatonic Valley Regional High School will graduate 19 Cornwall students on June 18 at 6:30 P.M. Continuing their education are Sarah Brown (St. John's University), Jonathan Coe (Syracuse University),

(continued on page 2)

JUNE 2008						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	Reg. One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Office	Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall	4	5	6	Hazardous Waste Collection 9 a.m.—Noon Falls Village † Mohawk Trail Maintenance 9 a.m.—3 p.m. † CHS Photos Opening 5–7 p.m. Wandering Moose †
8	9 Blood Pressure Screening Noon-1 P.M. UCC	10 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall PQ Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Cornwall Child Center Annual Meeting 7:30 P.M. 1 School Street	11	CCS Graduation 7 P.M.	13	14 FLAG DAY FOOD Glorious FOOD Festival, Library † Old Style Life Skills Workshop 10:30 A.M.—1:30 P.M. † Art Reception 5—7 P.M. iO Gallery †
15 FATHER'S DAY Deadline: June Chronicle Copy	16	17 Bd. of Selectmen 7 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	HVRHS Graduation 6:30 p.m.	Bd. of Ed. 5 p.m. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 p.m. CCS Library	20 Iraq Moratorium Gathering 6 p.m. Cornwall Bridge Green †	21 Cornwall Assoc. 9 A.M. UCC Day Room Electronic Waste Day 9 A.M.—1 P.M. Torrington W. Corn. Farmers' Market Opens 9 A.M.—1:30 P.M. 3rd Annual Open Artists Studio Day 1–5 P.M. †
22	23 Democratic Town Committee 7:30 p.m. Library ZBA 8 p.m. Town Hall	24 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	25 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	26	27	28 Motherhouse Mother- Daughter Retreat 10 A.M3 P.M. †
29	30		Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, Wednesdays: Stretch Class Thursdays: Meditation for N Fridays: Story Hour, 1:15 P.M	, 5 p.m. Town Hall; Women's Ad l lothers , 1:15 p.m. St. Peter's, call	ult Basketball, 7:30 p.m. CCS; Ta Debra Tyler 672-0229 to confirm	i Chi , 7 p.m. CCS

(continued from page 1)

Annelise Collins (School of the Museum of Fine Arts), Daniel Hare (Bowling Green State University), Elizabeth Kavanagh (Whittier College), Thomas Kennedy (Johnson and Wales), Caroline Kosciusko and Zach Sawicki (Springfield College), Samantha Bate and Ashley O'Brien (Northwestern Community College), Marcelo Gardin-Sorde (Federal University at Santa Catarina), Ryan St. John (SUNY-Cobbleskill), and Sarah Smith (Johnson State College). Stephanie Kearns is graduating as valedictorian of her class and will attend Merrimack College. Lauren Kendrick will work for a year and then attend art school. Charlie Fox will join his father in Fox Painting. Sean Murphy Saunders is undecided at this time. Adrian Refallo plans to enlist in the U.S. Army. Stacey Turbessi will work and travel with her dad's band.

Three students will graduate from the Forman School. Molly Packard will matriculate at Western Connecticut State University, and Tristan Woodruff will study at SUNY-ESF. Kimberly Gold is graduating as valedictorian of the class and has been accepted at Champlain College. Graduating from Hotchkiss are Hannah Colbert, who will attend Bennington College, and Mary Brunelli, who will attend Williams College. Eli Ingersoll will graduate from Salisbury and continue his education at the University of Vermont. Skylar Shapiro will graduate from Kent and attend Boston University.

As Henry David Thoreau advised an earlier group, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."

—Wynne Kavanagh

For Love of Prius

Ah, Prius owners—some wax lyrical: "I dance with the car, rather than drive it," says Katie Freygang, our Energy Guru. "Dance with the landscape, over the hill, let gravity pull the car down. And I have the strangest feeling: I think I'm invisible. No cop will stop me because I'm driving a Prius." Martha Bruehl, equally happy with her car ("one year old today!") finds it has slowed down her driving but "I feel very sporty as I take off in my little red car. And I feel that I'm doing SOMETHING for the environment."

Eddie Bigelow and Marc Simont admire the engineering. "It's the first modern car," says Eddie, "as efficient at high speeds as at low. And it's about time!" Marc says, "There's a simplicity and a soundness to the Japanese approach that carries through in the design. When Toyota came up with a car that got 40 mpg, I forgot all about Dauphines (my first love) and Alfa

Susan Gingert has also given up thinking of the Alfa she wanted when she was seven. Like Martha, she finds she drives "more responsibly now; if I gun it I only get 12 mpg as opposed to 44. And I can fit my bike in the back."

Don Bardot got 50 mpg on his Wethersfield commute. "The only problem I've had is that the Taco Bell window person didn't know I was there. The car's too quiet."

Actually, there are a few who don't love their Priuses. One is the Reverend Ledlie Laughlin, who says, "The body is too light and too low-slung for unpaved roads; the dashboard controls are confusing, as is vision out the rearview mirror. And it's awkward to attach the seat belt. Compared with our Subaru I give it a thumbs down." And Anthony Appio finds the car "not fun to drive, since I feel it is underpowered." He is also concerned about the disposal of batteries and the footprint they leave behind. Katie concurs. "Yes, there are apparently bad things about the batteries, including the working conditions in China where they are now made."

Susan delights in watching an episode of *South Park* (a television cartoon series) in which a self-righteous, egg-head "Pious" owner tickets SUVs in parking lots for "Failure to Care about the Environment." As Pious numbers increase, black clouds of Smug hover over cities with high concentrations of Piouses, and a Smug Alert is imposed.

Cornwall does not have the Smug problem yet—at least when it comes to Priuses; we don't score a heck of a lot higher with our ten hybrids than Salisbury, for example, with its twenty-two.

One factor militating against broader use of the Prius seems to be height. Our happiest owners are between 5'5" and 5'11". For those six feet and over, like Anthony, "Leg room is very tight."

Some who are particularly fond of the car and its air filter, Susan has discovered, are light of weight and under six feet. They are mice.

—Ella Clark

The Market Will Open

Good news! There will be a 2008 Cornwall Farmers' Market on The Wish House lawn. Motherhouse's Old Style Life Skills workshop Cooking by the Hearth provided the perfect atmosphere for the planning process. As Wyatt Whiteman bent to his aromatic tasks over the hearth on Fox Road, a group of committed planners began to generate this year's program. But one of the essential contributors, Mother Nature herself, was not available for consultation. See insert for information such as the exact opening date and produce possibilities.

Nonetheless, obviously motivated by the dilly beans they were munching—a tasty combination of Paley's green beans, Blakey's dill, and Ridgway's garlic—the group's commitment to continued success was clear. Anyone interested in contributing to the effort should contact Bianca Griggs at 672-2969.

-Sharon Dietzel

What Housing Crisis?

Is Cornwall's housing market facing the crisis trumpeted in the national press?
Even The Lakeville Journal in its May 15 issue headlined "Real Estate Doldrums Are Hitting [the Northwest] Corner." But that's not really the case here, according to Barbara Bigos, our town's assessor. What she has seen in the past year is a local housing market that ranges from quite warm in places to cool in others. But she sees no crisis, either in Cornwall or the other towns for whom she is the assessor, Salisbury and Norfolk.

Barbara notes that "high-end" houses in Cornwall, a category that she defines as ranging upward from \$800,000 to multimillion bucks, are doing well, whether measured in the number of sales or the prices these estates sell for. Most highend houses are bought by weekenders, and a fair number of them by people who count in euros or pounds rather than dollars.

"Low-end" houses, which she defines as selling from \$250,000 to \$500,000, are doing reasonably well, too, but with more modest gains. For the most part, these units are being sold and bought by year-round residents.

It's in the middle ground—houses selling from \$500,000 up to about \$800,000—that Barbara sees problems. She speculates that these "middle-market" houses may be a bit too pricey for year-round residents but not fancy enough for weekenders.

Interested in the numbers? There were five "high-end" sales here in the past year or so, and they averaged 17 percent above the value assigned by the assessor. In the "lower-end" market, there were also five sales averaging 5 percent over Barbara's estimate. Finally, the four "mid-market" sales just managed to beat her values by an average of 0.5 percent. Not great, perhaps, but not a crisis, either.

—David Grossman

Good-Bye to Friends

Nancy Nauts Dobbs Steven Charles Rudes

Congratulations

Yurian Giraldo and Paul Biondino III Eileen Rogers and Michael Redmond

Land Transfers

Frances Brandon-Farrow to Joseph Saluti, four parcels on Town Street and Yelping Hill Road, including property at 13 Yelping Hill Road, for \$2,681,000.

B.R.O.C. Enterprises, LLC, to G.A.G.S., Inc., property at 103 Cemetery Hill Road.

Carll A. and Jane Pallokat, and Lora P. and Carl R. Grantmeyer to Anna M. Timell, 2/3 interest in property at 278 Cornwall Hollow Road for \$200,000. Nancy M. and John E. Renzi to Anna M. Timell, 1/3 interest in property at 278 Cornwall Hollow Road for \$100,000.

Estate of John DeWitt Norton to Donald Garren, property at Dark Entry Forest for \$30,000.

Art Show Winners

Last month's Art at the Dump was a grand success. It made over \$800 to buy supplies for the CCS Art Department. First prize went to John Westberg of Milford for "I Am Lost" and "The Iron Chef." Cornwall's Gail Jacobson won second prize for "Light Up My Toes." Judy Fisher of Goshen won third prize for her "Wizard Chair." The Phillip Jones Award was won by Mary Kate Kosciusko for her "Peacock." —Richard Griggs

Of Birds and Birders

A small, devoted group of Cornwall birdwatchers keeps tabs on avian activities here. The Cornwall Birding Group (CBG) includes Art Gingert, Carla Bigelow, Jean Bouteiller, Joe Ellis, Celia Senzer, and many others. They share unusual sightings such as the eagles that come in winter to hunt for fish in the Housatonic.

This spring *the* birding hot spot in town was near the junction of Rattle-snake and Cogswell Roads in North Cornwall. There, on the Cornwall Conservation Trust's Rattlesnake Preserve wetlands, there is a marshy pond created by beavers. It attracts an amazing variety of bird life and is also a nesting ground for many species.

Among others, our expert birders have identified great blue herons (five on one occasion); American bitterns; Canada geese; many ducks, including wood ducks, green-winged teal, mallard, black ducks, and hooded and common mergansers; turkey vultures; northern harriers; osprey; a sandhill crane; and red-tailed hawks. As well, the marsh has lots of songbirds, including Magnolia and Palm warblers, redwings and other blackbirds, as well as a now-rare brown thrasher.

A year ago, bitterns were first seen and heard. They are hard to spot in the grass. This species is clasified as endangered in Connecticut.

Star of this year's migration was a sub-adult sandhill crane with a brown head (instead of an adult's red one). It lingered a day or so with the herons, then flew north, off to who knows where. Cranes usually live much farther west and are described as "casual or accidental" here. Thus, a "first" for Cornwall.

As one CBG member said proudly, "This wetland adds a lot to the natural richness of Cornwall at a spot where all of us can just stand and enjoy a new landscape."

—Hector Prud'homme

Town Budget Adopted

Without a question or dissenting vote, a town meeting held on Friday, May 15, and attended by about 20 residents adopted Cornwall's \$6,314,206 budget for fiscal year 2008–09. Shortly afterward, the Board of Finance set the tax rate at 12.05 mills, up from 11.9 in 2007–08.

—The June Editors



Letters to the Chronicle



TROUBLE IN WEST CORNWALL

Contrary to the May Chronicle article "River Rumors," there are concrete proposals for significant alterations in the river landscape of West Cornwall. While CL&P may not have any immediate plans to transfer ownership of the grassy parcel south of the Hughes Library on Lower River Road, the HVA plans to construct a facility at the bend of the river that includes a concrete and steel ADA-compliant fishing platform in the river, a rip-rap and geogrid boat ramp, a public toilet, and an ADA-compliant parking area.

Residents of West Cornwall are troubled about the implications of this proposal. There are concerns about aesthetic and scenic impact, increases in traffic, maintenance, ecological impact on the river bank, whether this is a suitable use of PCB cleanup money, and whether this is an appropriate location for such a fishing and boating facility.

HVA has not consulted with the residents of West Cornwall about their proposal, nor have they adequately addressed its implications. The people of West Cornwall are reacting to a detailed plan that could have a considerable impact on our village.

-Mark Wilson

SHOWDOWN ON SCOVILLE ROAD

Nearly 50 years ago my dad, Elmer Griggs, lived in retirement on Scoville Road. A good friend, Chad Docker, lived a quarter of a mile up the road, across from the house owned by Scoville Soulé.

On a cold, raw winter night about 2 A.M., Chad told Dad that he observed a flashlight flick in the house occupied in the summer by Annie Scoville. Dad told Chad he would check it out. He got up, dressed, put on an overcoat and scarf and overshoes, and walked down the road to Annie's house. Dad noticed the door was ajar and he called out, "I know you're in there and if you come out this minute I will never tell who you are." The person came down and Dad recognized him.

A considerable quantity of "loot" had been stacked outside, which presumably the person had intended to load into the vehicle parked around back. Dad admonished the person that if he ever heard of his burglarizing any other place, as a lawyer, he would do his utmost to send the perpetrator to the penitentiary. When we asked Dad to give us a hint as to who he had confronted, he would not even reveal the gender of the offender. Mom assured me he never told her. I never have known anyone with more decency, character or courage than Elmer Griggs.

—David Griggs

CCC AUCTION, YEAR 17

Many of you remember the first auctions and early days of the Cornwall Child Center when the center itself existed as a dream, then reality on Cream Hill Road. It's hard to believe that this year's auction was the 17th annual event, the results netting over \$36,000. These funds keep our wonderful center running and offering the highest quality nursery school program in the area. For non-Cornwallians it also might be hard to believe the continuing generosity year after year from so many individuals. Each and every item, volunteer hour, and winning bid combines like fibers in a blanket to create an amazing success. Many donors and volunteers have given each of these 17 years; mere thanks are inadequate. Together we create something that truly helps families with young children be able to live and work locally. We should be very proud.

–Emilie Pryor

IMPROVING RIVER ACCESS

At a special Board of Selectmen meeting on April 26 to discuss ideas for "The Bend" on the Housatonic River in West Cornwall, HVA presented a proposal. It was designed in response to requests for improved river access for Cornwall's Rescue Squad, for the disabled to share in the river's fishing, for an environmentally sound toilet for river users, and for solutions to the erosion problem.

Updated maps of our proposal are on file at Town Hall and HVA. Our plan is not final: it continues to be reviewed by the Housatonic River Commission. If the community does not support these uses at an open meeting we will writhdraw the proposal

withdraw the proposal. If accepted, the proposal that is being made by HVA, together with the Housatonic Fly Fishermen Association, would be funded by the Natural Resource Damages Fund—part of the PCB cleanup agreement between EPA and GE to enhance aquatic and recreation resources. This fund is separate from the on-going PCB cleanup plan and funding outlined in the agreement.

—Einar Lindholm, Board Member, HVA

Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall: Starting Tuesday, June 3, the Cornwall Free Library, as part of its *Food*, *Glorious Food* extravaganza, will exhibit artwork inspired by food from over 40 local artists. See insert for details.

At the iO Gallery, a new exhibit celebrating the female form in art entitled *Girls*, *Girls*, *Girls* showcases the talents of a group of women artists including locals Erica Prud'homme, Danielle Mailer, and Anique Taylor. An artists' reception will be held on Saturday, June 14, from 5 to 7 P.M. The show runs through July 20.

Through June, Northern Exposure Gallery continues to show *Town and Country*, a group show of photographs, which includes work by Lazlo Gyorsok and Martha Loutfi.

Trail Maintenance: Blue-Blazed Mohawk Trail maintenance from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M. on Saturday, June 7. Tools will be supplied for both heavy and light work. Bring lunch and work gloves. Rain or shine (but not in heavy rain). Meet at hiker parking lot on Route 4, east side of Cornwall Bridge. To pre-register, please contact Henry Edmonds at (203) 426-6459 or HEdmonds@aol.com, or Kim Herkimer at 672-6867 or aghiii@snet.net.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection in Falls Village on Saturday, June 7. Check under your sink and in your garage for cleaners, oilbased paint, turpentine, pesticides, herbicides, household cleaners, and hobby supplies. Propane tanks from barbecue grills are also accepted. No charge for drop-off, but pre-registration is required. Call the Cornwall Town Hall at 672-4929 by June 5.

Open Studio: The Third Annual Cornwall Artists Open Studio will be held on Saturday, June 21, from 1 to 5 P.M. For a list of the 20 or so participating artists, directions to their studios, and a map, go to www.cornwallct.org and click on "Cornwall Artists."

June Is Green

Really green, the trees cloaked in tints and tones of green that centuries of painters have tried to capture. No wonder people get married in June. If you're not involved in a wedding, you might take a moment to send some green to the *Chronicle*. A check will do, and please use the coupon below. Thank you.

A Cornwall Historical Society Photo Exhibit will open at The Wandering Moose on Saturday, June 7, from 5 to 7 P.M., with complimentary hors d'œuvres. The show will consist of old photos of West Cornwall, a number of which have not been shown before. That weekend the Moose will also offer a special menu featuring items based on recipes from the nineteenth century, when the covered bridge was built.

Motherhouse Events:

• June 14: Old Style Life Skills Series workshop, *Eggs-perience Chickens*. Learn about keeping chickens, from raising chicks to collecting eggs. See a variety of portable chicken houses. Prepare a live broiler to cook at home. 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. at the Local Farm barn in Cornwall. Bring a dish to share for a pot-luck lunch. \$35/family.

• June 28: Mother/Daughter River Retreat, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. A relaxing day of quiet activities for mothers and daughters to share on and near the Housatonic River. \$35/mother-daughter pair. Contact Debra@Motherhouse.us or 672-0229 to pre-register or for more info.

Renter's Relief Program: The Assessor's Office is accepting applications for the Elderly and Disabled Renter's Rebate Program through September 15, 2008. Applicants must be 65 as of December 31, 2007, or disabled and receiving Social Security disability support. Income limits for 2007 are: married \$36,500; single \$29,800. Income, rent, and utility statements for 2007 must be submitted with the application. For more information or to receive an application, visit the Assessor's Office Tuesday through Thursday from 1 to 4 P.M. or call 672-2703.

Tax Relief Programs: There are two Cornwall tax relief programs: (1) If you face difficulty in paying your tax bill, you may apply for a \$200 reduction if the tax exceeds 10 percent of your income; (2) If your property tax bill exceeds 8 percent of your income, you may enter into a tax-free condition with the town, which then takes a lien on the tax-abated property. That lien is eventually settled when the property is transferred. Requests must be filed with the Selectmen's Office by June 15. For more details contact the Selectmen's Office at 672-4959.

Solstice Peace Vigil: Join others on the Cornwall Bridge Green on Friday, June 20, at 6 P.M. to protest the Iraq War and sing the praises of peace at an event sponsored by the Cornwall Iraq Moratorium Network. Bring songs, musical instruments, your family and friends, and your own colorful peace posters (or pick up one of ours). For information call 672-0183.

Dog Licenses: Connecticut state law requires that all dogs six months of age or older be licensed annually on or before June 30 in the Town Clerk's Office. Licenses will become available on June 1. A current rabies vaccination certificate must be submitted or be on file. Neutered or spayed dogs cost \$8, and male or female dogs cost \$19. For a neutered or spayed dog being licensed for the first time, a certificate from a licensed veterinarian must be presented. Penalties apply for late registration. If you choose to register by mail, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of tag and license.

Rose Algrant Show: If you are an artist 21 or over, living in Cornwall, and want to exhibit at this year's show scheduled for July 25, 26, and 27, call Phyllis Nauts at 672-6608 by June 15.

Meditation Group: The Cornwall Friends (Quaker) Worship Group invites all interested persons to join us. There are no requirements beyond an interest in shared silent meditation and/or worship. The group meets for about 45 minutes on the first and third Wednesdays of every month in the parlor at St. Peter's Lutheran Church. All are welcome, whether you attend regularly or sporadically. For more information call Peg/Ken Keskinen at 672-6486.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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