



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 23 : NUMBER 10 NOVEMBER 2013



Selectmen Candidates Speak Out

A crowd of more than 50 gathered for the Cornwall selectmen candidates' forum on Sunday, October 20, at the Cornwall Consolidated School gymnasium. There were no heated exchanges, no gaffes, just honest observations on the issues that confront small towns—the local economy, the downward trend of our school population, recreation, the future of the Trinity Conference Center property—all interspersed with some good-natured humor.

Edward Dorsett moderated the forum. For a little more than an hour, Democratic incumbents First Selectman Gordon Ridgway and Selectman Richard Bramley and Republican candidate for first selectman Kenneth "K.C." Baird (also currently seated as selectman) and the newcomer, Republican candidate for selectman Heidi Kearns, took turns in the spotlight.

When asked how to improve the local economy, Ridgway pointed to the new Economic Development Commission (EDC) now in place and which he helped form. He spoke of the website for visitors and the site for local contractors. Bramley echoed Ridgway's comments, saying that the EDC now gives town businesses a place at the table. He also noted that our recent Corn-

wall Days was sponsored by the EDC and received seed money from the town, the Cornwall Foundation, and the Cornwall Association. Baird said he would like to promote Cornwall more, encouraging tourism and bringing families in to spend money. He'd like entrepreneurs to take up space in some of the empty buildings in West Cornwall. Kearns added that she would support the EDC and that she would make sure that zoning regulations were updated for the benefit of home business owners.

The best use for the vacant Trinity Conference Center, just recently announced for sale, was pondered by the candidates. Baird envisioned use of the facility somewhat like Geer Village, which opens its doors to local groups for use. Kearns, a current Planning and Zoning Commission member, was advised not to answer by the town attorney. Bramley explained that the large tract had three components: a "commercial kernel" in West Cornwall, a preservation piece, and a housing piece. He added that since it is a private property Cornwall could only provide guidance to any future owner. Ridgway said he sees

any future sale as a great opportunity and noted that the Castle, another large tract, is also for sale. Ridgway pointed out that Trinity has been engaged in a dialogue with both the EDC and the Cornwall Conservation Trust.

For those who missed the exchange, it was filmed by the Civic Life Project and can be seen at www.civiclifeproject.com/index.php. It will also be aired on Cablevision Channel 5 on November 2 at 9 A.M. and November 4 at 4 P.M. —Pam Longwell

Walking Cornwall

If you are a walker, Cornwall is a paradise. The Appalachian Trail and the Mohawk Trail run through Cornwall, there are state parks, multiple preserves, and wooded walks. And if these are not enough, there are the roads.

Annie Kosciusko, Nancy Van Doren, and Martha Bruehl decided on a goal for the summer and being avid walkers, they set themselves a challenge: to walk all the roads of Cornwall. The three women knew that if it was going to be a viable and enjoyable project, they needed to plan it. Annie printed out sections of the map of Cornwall from the Cornwall website and they diagrammed their walks so that they would not have to repeat too many roads.



NOVEMBER 2013

(continued on page 2)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Yoga, 5:45–7 pm CCS; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym ♦ Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6–9 pm Town Hall; Women's Basketball , 7:30 pm CCS gym ♦ Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Toddler Play Group , 10:30–11:30 am Library; Yoga , 5:30–6:30 pm Library ♦ Fridays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library ♦ Saturdays: West Cornwall Walks , 12:30 pm Wish House ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; Meditation , 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229; West Cornwall Walks , 12:30 pm Wish House					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

And they started walking—from four to seven miles a day, five days a week, in all weather. “We usually walked in the morning,” said Martha, “or at sunset when it was cooler.”

“We were surprised by the extensive number of hills,” said Annie. “The hills are really dramatic in Cornwall.” Since the town has about 20 roads, each with the word “Hill” in its name, the women undoubtedly had quite a workout. “Great Hill Road, Bald Mountain Road, Whitcomb Hill Road, and Beers Hill on Popple Swamp Road are intensive.” The *pièce de résistance* of intensive Cornwall walks, however, was Dudleytown Road—a road without the word “Hill” in its name. “Dudleytown Road is probably the toughest and Whitcomb Hill Road the longest.”

One of the surprising things they found was that many roads came to an abrupt end. “It was just fascinating,” said Annie, adding that she was disappointed that the roads hadn’t been continued.

“The most beautiful walk was along Swift’s Bridge Road to the Housatonic,” said Martha, adding that it would make a lovely place to have a picnic.

Did they run out of things to talk about? Never! “We solved all the world’s problems, talked about our children and what our next challenge would be.”

The three women kept a log and have made a Facebook page titled “Walking Cornwall” where visitors can see photographs of the walk. “People who no longer live here love it,” said Annie, as they can see the changes as the season progresses.

Walking Cornwall took approximately six weeks with two weeks off for vacation. They started at the end of June and finished at the end of August with a stop of a few days for Nancy’s shin splints—from walking down Whitcomb Hill Road—to heal.

—Brenda Underwood

Region One Update

The seventh vote was the charm for proponents of the Region One school district budget for fiscal year 2013 to 2014.

On Wednesday, October 17, Cornwall was among three of the six towns comprising the Region One school district that passed the proposed budget. Cornwall voters approved the budget 165 to 108. Region wide, yes votes outnumbered no votes by 73.

With the budget now passed, the issue that remains for residents of Cornwall is how best in the future to fill the position of representative to the regional school board. (Currently, Phil Hart holds the position through 2014.) According to First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, the position can be filled by appointment or by election. Either

method is legal, though the town currently makes the appointment via the Cornwall Board of Education. Residents may, in the future, choose to alter this process by bringing a request to town meeting, but the issue came too late for inclusion on the agenda of the October 25 town meeting. With Phil Hart on the board through November of next year, the town has time to figure out the procedure, says Ridgway. He adds that the board of selectmen thinks this is appropriate for town consideration after all the details of the process are learned. A related issue is how best to synchronize the staggering of terms with the other towns’ representatives. Should Cornwall decide to switch to electing its representative, one option would be to make a temporary appointment for 2014 through 2015, and then elect a representative in 2015.

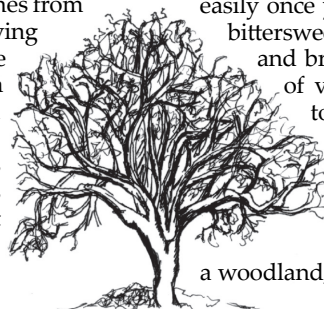
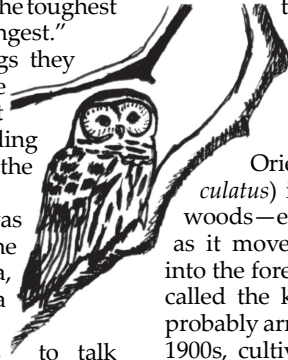
—Pam Longwell

Battling Bittersweet

Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) is the scourge of the Cornwall woods—engulfing everything in its path as it moves from sunny roadside edges into the forest. Among botanical types, it is called the kudzu of the north. The plant probably arrived here sometime in the early 1900s, cultivated by passionate gardeners seduced by its abundant yellow and red berries—the same berries that still seduce us when we put them on our Thanksgiving tables. Unfortunately, bittersweet is also attractive to birds that readily eat the brightly colored fruits and disperse the seeds they contain across the landscape.

Being a vine, oriental bittersweet lives what I call a parasitic life style—it invests very little of the carbohydrates it produces into building a self-supporting trunk the way trees do, but instead it produces twining stems that can climb tall trees, take over their structure, and eventually pull them down. As the stems wrap themselves around the trunk of its host, they slowly choke it to death like a botanical boa constrictor. It is a classic example of a strangling vine that gets established along the sunny borders of open habitats and spreads into the interior of the forest from the edges. Under the right conditions, such vines can completely transform a woodland into a “vinescape.”

Getting rid of oriental bittersweet once it has become established on your property is no task for the faint of heart. My experience in this regard comes from dealing with plants growing along a woodland/pasture edge near the top of Cream Hill where I have been hand pulling it for many years. The main thing that makes bittersweet hard to control is that any piece of root left behind after pulling a shoot out of the ground will give



Congratulations

Mary Greene and Patrick Mahoney
Jane Maloney and David Hall, Jr.

Goodbye to Friends

Margaret Scoville Griggs Longwell
Victoria S. Marks
Jim Trowbridge

Land Transfers

Nancy J. Lacko to Jeffrey Ward and Kathryn Sandmeyer Ward, 5.25 acres of land with residence and improvements thereon, at 45 Pierce Lane, for \$350,000.

Nancy J. Lacko to Jeffrey Ward and Kathryn Sandmeyer Ward, 6.23 acres of land on Pierce Lane, for \$100,000.

Richard C. Sachs and Daniel B. Eshom to Matthew R. Jacobus and Ann Virginia Jacobus, land together with buildings and improvements thereon, known as 282 Town Street, for \$436,500.

Christine Ho-Kelleher, Trustee to Jiwon Lee, 16.24 acres and improvements thereon, known as 120 Great Hill Road, for \$380,000.

rise, Medusa-like, to numerous suckers all along its entire length. To put it another way, if you pull the shoots out of the ground without getting all the roots, you’re actually propagating it.

The best way to avoid this calamitous situation is to make sure you do your pulling in spring or summer when the ground is moist and the roots have not yet established a firm “grip” in the soil. With minimal exertion, the stems—with their shockingly orange roots attached—come up easily in May and June, but in August and September they often break off at ground level, leaving the roots behind. The goal of all this effort is to exhaust the root system; and the earlier in the season you go after the plant, the more effective hand pulling will be.

For large stems, a half inch or more in diameter, I usually cut them off with a small folding saw, leaving behind a “handle” of stem about a foot long. After clearing away the ensuing tangle of stems and leaves, I use this handle to pull the roots out of the ground, loosening them up as I go with a shovel to prevent premature breakage. The good news, and there’s not much of it, is that bittersweet roots typically grow shallowly—within a couple of inches of the surface—and they come out of the ground easily once you start pulling on them. The bittersweet battle requires both brains and brawn and it takes several years of vigilant (and vigorous) pulling to clear an area of the plant.

The ultimate technique for maintaining control of bittersweet is to convert the infested area from edge habitat to something else: if it’s a woodland, then pull or cut the stems and

let the trees grow up and shade it out; if the area is open and rocky, then annual brush hogging will keep the plant in check; if the area is relatively flat, then it can be converted to lawn and regular mowing will eliminate it. Clearly bittersweet will always persist around the edges but with vigilance it can be controlled. The key is to become obsessive about pulling the plant out of the ground whenever you see it—put down that coffee mug (or beer bottle) and rip those suckers out of the ground whenever you see them.
—Peter Del Tredici

November: Transition to Winter

November; the name derives from being the ninth month of the ancient Roman calendar. After the addition of January and February, the position changed but not the name. We know November for Thanksgiving, declared a national holiday 150 years ago this very month by President Lincoln. This year marks 50 years since the assassination of President Kennedy, and the 150-year anniversary of the Gettysburg Address.

In a more current and practical sense, November is a transition month for seasonal change. By now we realize that yes indeed, summer sped by, and we are quickly approaching winter. No time to pull the covers over our heads; there is much to do. Gardens are put to bed, wood is stockpiled, the town garage is loaded with salt and sand, along with a pile of sand for residents' use. Buddy Dawson at Hall's Garage reminds us that it is a good month to check the car before the snow and freezing rains of winter arrive. Water added to a radiator during the summer will compromise the abilities of the antifreeze. All weather tires should be checked for wear. Rusty brake lines, older batteries, and well-used belts and hoses are subject to failure in the bitter cold. Windshield wiper blades and washer fluid also need attention. With all chores completed, a meal on the table, family and friends gathered, we give thanks for this time to prepare. And if we were in the Southern Hemisphere we would be transitioning into spring...
—Diane Beebe

CCS Prepares for Emergency

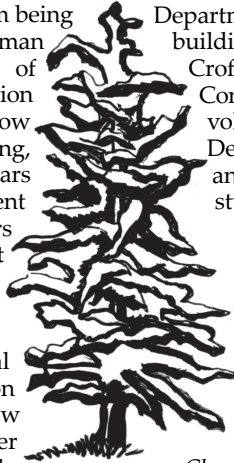
On the morning of October 2, there was an evacuation at the Cornwall Consolidated School. Not a real emergency, just a drill. A practice evacuation, if you will. Several types of drills are practiced at the school, from lockdowns to fire drills to evacuations. All are done in an effort to keep students and staff members aware of how to handle certain situations should an emergency arise. This particular drill was a hypothetical propane leak.

The drill began at 8:45 A.M. when the

"call" went out. By 8:48 A.M. everyone was out of the building, and at 9:02 A.M. school buses arrived to pick up 135 people (students and staff members). The buses were loaded and on the way to an off-site facility to allow the emergency personnel to check the school and clear it for re-entry. The buses with students returned at 10 A.M.

In an interview with Principal Croft, he stated that the drill went very, very well, thanks to the adults and students who understood the situation. The students were great, following directions and doing as they were instructed. This was a good test for the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department to be able to get into the locked building (as it is locked all the time).

Croft offered thanks to the CVFD, the Connecticut State Police, parent volunteers, town officials, the Department of Homeland Security, and of course, the well-behaved students.
—Erin Hedden



Cornwall Briefs

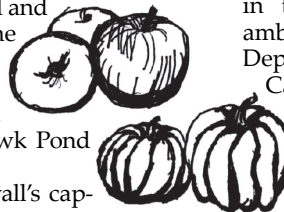
•**Town Report:** The current 2012/2013 edition is available at a variety of locations: town hall, transfer station, library and all three post offices, and the town website.

•**Pickle Factory Redux:** The *Chronicle* story last April about a future pickle vat on the Trinity Conference Center property in West Cornwall turned out to be nothing but a rumor. Truth be told, rumor is too weak a label. Better to call it an outright lie dreamed up by an April editor. Now comes word that the owner, Trinity Wall Street, is putting the almost 500-acre property on the market. And if only this column was for the next April *Chronicle* we would tell you that Yale and UConn are in a bidding war in hopes of creating a new woodsy satellite campus on the shore of the mighty Housatonic. No word at press time on either a price for the property or where it is being marketed. Town Hall was under the impression that conversations were ongoing between Trinity and the Cornwall Conservation Trust and Cornwall Economic Development Commission.

•**Cornwall Bridge Post Office:** Doug Wachtel, the nice young man who has graced the counter of the Cornwall Bridge Post Office for the past eight years, is leaving for a supervisory post in Torrington. Our new postmaster is Brad Milanese who hails from Torrington. We will miss Doug but will give Brad our usual Cornwall welcome.

•**Four-way Sign:** You'll find it at the intersection of Great Hill and College Street, a handsome wood post created by neighbor Ted Hein that directs drivers to such nearby places as Mohawk Pond and the ski area.

•**In Our Future:** Cornwall's cap-



Letter to the Chronicle

SHARING A FAMILY FAVORITE

I discovered this recipe in an issue of Cook's Illustrated magazine I happened to be reading on my lunch break. I love sweet potatoes and decided to give it a try for supper that same night. It was an instant hit! I decided to bring the casserole to Thanksgiving at my parents' house as my offering, and my family fell in love with it as much as I did. It's now a regular offering at holidays and is always well received. Below is the recipe with a few changes to ingredients and procedure to suit my taste.

—Meredith Gray

Sweet Potato Casserole

7 lbs sweet potatoes (each about the same size so they roast evenly)

Poke potatoes with a fork, place on a baking sheet lined with foil and roast at 400 degrees for 45 minutes to one hour. Potatoes should be easily squeezed with a pair of tongs. Let cool.

Streusel:

1/2 c. all purpose flour

1/2 c. dark brown sugar, packed

1/4 tsp. salt

5 tbsp. unsalted butter, slightly softened, cut into chunks

2 c. chopped pecans

Combine all ingredients into a bowl and blend with a pastry cutter, or your hand, to form a crumb topping (or pulse in a food processor for the same result) Set aside.

Filling:

5 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

4 tsp. lemon juice

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg

1/2 tsp. pepper

granulated sugar, to taste (I use a 1/4 c.)

4 large egg yolks

1 1/2 c. half and half

Once the sweet potatoes have cooled slightly, add them to a large bowl and mash. Add in all of the filling ingredients except for the half and half until well blended. Then stir in the half and half slowly, until it's incorporated. Spread the sweet potato filling into a buttered 9 x 13 baking dish. Sprinkle the streusel over top of the filling and then bake at 375 degrees for 40-45 minutes. Crust will be somewhat brown and the filling will have puffed around the edges.

ital budget includes money for a new, four-wheel-drive, one-ton truck that will come in handy when big snows hit our most challenging roads which, we are told, include Dudleytown and Dark Entry. Also in the town's future (2015) is a new ambulance for the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department. A committee headed by EMS

Captain Zach Sawicki has been appointed to research potential vehicles. The CVFD has also been putting funds aside to help pay for it.

—John Miller

No Questions, Only Food

The Cornwall Food Pantry, an ancillary arm of the Cornwall social services office, is housed in a discreet location at the rear of the United Church of Christ (UCC) on Bolton Hill Road in Cornwall Village. It provides non-perishable foods, dish and laundry soap, toilet paper and shampoo—and sometimes even pet food. Usually, fresh eggs, veggies, and meat are available too.

The pantry has helped many people through intermittent difficult times. Anne Scott, the volunteer facilitator of the pantry, says that unexpected medical or car-related bills are often at the root of temporary hardships. There are regular pantry users, but many come only once or twice when bills overwhelm them in a given month. Scott says that if a little extra food will relieve an immense stress or help feed your children, then the pantry is worth a visit. There is no paperwork to fill out, there are no questions to answer and there is no “means” test.

The pantry is currently supported by generous and ongoing donations from many individuals, and through all of the churches in town. If you are able to give, donations may be dropped off Monday through Friday inside the back door of the UCC. When asked what is needed most, Anne said, “Everything!” She suggests that when you shop, choose an aisle and pick out what you can afford on that trip from that one aisle. All items are important and very much appreciated. The pantry is open 11 A.M. to 12 P.M. on Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment. Please email Cornwallfood@optonline.net or call 672-0595.

—Micki Nunn-Miller

Serve Your Community

You may have seen them march, or you may have used their services; you may have even won their cow chip raffle! This group of dedicated individuals, your volunteer firefighters and emergency medical services team members, is seeking new recruits. Men and women, 18 years of age and older

Hunker Down

November can really make you sit up straight. Gone are the summer’s easy delights; in their place come gales of bad weather intended to stiffen our spines for the winter to come. Never lose heart. Keep the *Chronicle* coming by writing a check and thanks!

who are interested in serving the community, are welcome to join. Training is provided and applications can be picked up at the Cornwall Town Hall. Training drills are held every Wednesday evening at the West Cornwall Fire House at 7 P.M., except the last Wednesday of each month when the all-member department meeting is held at 8 P.M. —Diane Beebe

Events & Announcements

Cornwall Conservation Trust: Deeply Disturbed, The Emergent Forests of the Future, a talk by Peter Del Tredici, Saturday, November 2, at 4 P.M. at the town hall.

Motherhouse Events

Family Country Dance, Saturday, November 2, at 7 P.M. at the town hall with National Heritage Fellow Dudley Laufman teaching and calling to music by Still, the Homegrown Band. Donation \$3-5/child and \$5-10/adult. For information, call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

An Ornamental Experience, Saturday, November 9, from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. Make festive seasonal items. Potluck lunch. Suggested donation: \$35/family. Write lifeskills@motherhouse.us or call Debra Tyler at 672-0229 to register and for location.

At the Library

Come help close up demonstration garden Monday, November 4, from 9:30 to 10:30 A.M. Celebrate and discuss future programming. Refreshments served.

The family movie series continues with *The Fantastic Mr. Fox*, based on the Roald Dahl story, Friday, November 15, at 7 P.M.

The dance movie series continues Wednesday, November 20, at 7 P.M., title to be announced.

In a change with tradition, the library will be open the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 29.

Election Day Lunch: Tuesday, November 5, from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the United Church of Christ Parish House. Soups, rolls, desserts, and coffee or tea available. Donations benefit the Cornwall Food and Fuel Bank.

Public Meeting on Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan: Residents’ input sought regarding storm and natural hazard damage and in developing prevention/mitigation plan: Thursday, November 7, at the town hall. Or, participate via online survey by visiting www.surveymonkey.com/s/northwestcplans.

Senior Events

Bus to Wadsworth Atheneum, Thursday, November 7, from 9:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Bus departs UCC parking lot, Bolton Hill Road.

Luncheon, Tuesday, November 12, from 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. at the Wandering Moose Cafe. No reservations necessary. For more information, call Jane at 672-6101.

Fair Trade Crafts Sale: Saturday, November 16, 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M., St. Bridget Church Hall. Crafts made by artisans in Third World countries, who are paid a fair wage for their labor, will be for sale.

Art in Cornwall

At the Souterrain Gallery: Near and Far, Objects & Places, works by Barbara Stone, Cheryl Evans, and Connie Steuerwalt continues through November 24. Visions of Earth, Trees & Skies, works by Cindy Kirk and Zejke Hermann, opens Saturday, November 30, with artists’ reception from 3 to 6 P.M.

At the United Church of Christ Parish House: Images of the North Cornwall Meeting House continues through November (except Saturdays), 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Mexican Flowers, Day of the Dead; jewelry by Ann Spence, is at the Cornwall Library from October 29 through December 14 with an artist’s reception Saturday, November 2, from 4 to 6 P.M.

United Church of Christ Christmas Fair: Spaces available for Saturday, December 7, for local craft and artisanal food vendors. For information contact Marianne Winslow at mariannechills@gmail.com.

Time Change: Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 3. Time to “fall back” and rejoice in the temporary feel of an extra hour.

.....

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

cornwallchronicle.org

THIS MONTH

Hector Prud’homme V, Illustrations
Pam Longwell and Diane Beebe, Editors

NEXT MONTH

Annie Kosciusko, John Miller and Maja Gray, Editors
townhill@optonline.net, jlms6493@gmail.com
or maja.gray@gmail.com

MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein

CALENDAR EDITOR Louise Riley
calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

CIRCULATION Nan and John Bevans
Denny Frost

DIRECTORS

Paul De Angelis, PRESIDENT
Annie Kosciusko, VICE PRESIDENT
Pam Longwell, SECRETARY
Tom Barrett, TREASURER

• Tom Bechtle • Audrey Ferman • Edward Ferman
• Erin Hedden • John Miller
• Jonathan Landman • Lisa L. Simont
Tom and Margaret Bevans, FOUNDERS

THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is \$15 or more, we’d be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. PO Box 6, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be E-mailed to the publishers at: info@cornwallchronicle.org