



CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 21 : NUMBER 9 OCTOBER 2011

Irene's Visit

Hurricane Irene came to Cornwall on a Sunday to pull things apart, but she brought us together. Cornwall did evacuate one resident, and she was ready to go. "I could hear the brook getting higher on Sunday morning," Marion Blake told me, "and I was a little worried because in '55 it came into the cellar. Then at 9:30 there was Gordon Ridgway with Ted Larson, who said, 'I am here to invite you to stay at our house in the village.' I spent a pleasant day there. At about 5:00 Gordon said that the water was starting to recede so I could come home. It was a joyous day."

Ted's daughter Marissa remembers a somewhat more dramatic scene: "The whole valley flooded up. It looked like snow. And there were whitecaps!"

Not everyone's experience was as peaceful as Marion Blake's, but even Tim Locke of Lower River Road in West Cornwall felt lucky. That night, when Mill Brook was at its height, he heard boulders, some perhaps three feet in diameter, rolling down the stream bed, "clashing like giant marbles." The bridge to his house was left "hanging by a thread." Nonetheless, Tim felt that there was "manufactured hysteria" around the hurricane.

The brook, which plunges 700 feet down from Cream Hill to the Housatonic, doubled

its width, collapsed the road, and washed away part of Michael Trapp's riverside garden. Michael reported that the water "claimed about 20 feet of land."

The town's response was swift. (See "Storm Statistics.") Fire Chief Earle Tyler said, "We keep practicing. It's great when we can finally use this and have it all work." Scoville Soule, with twice-flooded basement and dead furnace, was one grateful recipient of this help. "The town—and neighbors—rallied around, helping every inch of the way."

Down at Dark Entry, a tree and downed wires prevented Anne Chamberlain from using her car for four days. "So I switch to 'camping mode.' But candlelight dinners are very nice. And the silence, except for the noisy generators."

The generator bunch was happy. Anne Zinsser told us, "Having one eases things. I rejoiced when morning came and NO trees had fallen." Marc and Bee Simont and their cat Sophie reported feeling "a little smug" about their generator. And a resident of Lower River Road, the last to be energized (after no power for a week), declared that getting a generator ten years ago was "the smartest thing we ever did."

Farmers suffered. Gordon Ridgway told us, "What with the late start and the August drought and then seven Irene and seven

Lee inches of rain, it's been a tough growing season. Tomatoes blew apart. Corn and other vegetables are under water." Fred Scoville reports silage in the field knocked over. Marianne Pirota of Gunn Brook Farm stands to lose 15 acres of hay.

Natural realms were not as affected. According to Art Gingert, "Most young birds had fledged. Muskrats and beavers would be swimming around not caring about their lodges. Redbacked salamanders, red efts, toads, and wood frogs benefit from the moisture. And the trout should be doing well because they don't have to gasp for oxygen in the streams. They're probably down in Long Island Sound by now."

—Ella Clark

Storm Statistics

When Hurricane Irene blew into Cornwall August 27/28, the town's fire, ambulance and road crews were prepared. Fire and EMS crews had met Friday and Saturday nights to discuss preparations; citizens with 672 phone numbers received Reverse 911 calls instructing them to call the West Cornwall Firehouse if help was needed. What follows are some facts and figures collected by First Selectman Gordon Ridgway about the damage and our town's response.

(continued on page 2)

OCTOBER 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6-9 pm CCS; Karate 6:30-7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Saturdays: Cornwall Farm Market, 9 am-1 pm Wish House Lawn Sundays: Meditation, 1-2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229						1 ♦ Country Dance 7-10 pm Town Hall
2 ♦ "The Epidemiologists View..." 2-3 pm Library ♦ Cantus Excelsius 7:15 pm North Cornwall Meetinghouse	3 ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Bd of Selectman 7:30 pm Town Hall	4 ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	5	6 ♦ CCS Closed Teacher Workshop	7 ♦ CCS Closed Teacher Workshop ♦ Special Town Meeting 7:30 pm CCS Gathering Room	8 ♦ Book and Bake Sale 9 am-3 pm Library ♦ What's In A Pickle? 10:30 am-1:30 pm Local Farm
9	10 ♦ Columbus Day CCS, Town Hall Closed ♦ Book Sale 10 am-3 pm Library ♦ Wreath Making Workshop 12:30-2:30 pm Local Farm ♦ P & Z 7 pm Library	11 ♦ VNA Fall Prevention Clinic 10-11 am UCC Parish House	12	13	14 ♦ Family Round Sing 7:30-9 pm Local Farm ♦ CCS Walkathon 1 pm	15 ♦ Jeremy Brecher Talk 4 pm Library ♦ Deadline: November Chronicle Copy
16 ♦ Michael Gellatly Art Reception 3-5 pm Library	17	18 ♦ VNA Fall Prevention Clinic 10-11 am UCC Parish House ♦ Board of Ed 4 pm CCS Library	19	20 ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	21	22
23	24 ♦ ZBA* 7:30 pm Town Hall	25 ♦ VNA Fall Prevention Clinic 10-11 am UCC Parish House	26 ♦ CVFD Meeting 8 pm West Cornwall Firehouse ♦ Parent Child Reading Group 5:30 pm Library	27	28 ♦ Annual Town Meeting 7:30 pm CCS Gathering Room	29 ♦ Fred M. Sander Talk 4 pm Library
30	31 ♦ Park & Rec Halloween Gathering 5-8 pm Town Hall					

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

• From 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. volunteers at the West Cornwall Firehouse answered 75 calls. Among them:

- 18 flooded basements
- 20 trees on wires
- 17 roads blocked by water
- 6 requests for a check on neighbors
- 3 dams/ponds overtopping.

• At 7:30 A.M., First Selectman Ridgway declared a state of emergency.

• Six bridges were covered by water.

• In addition to volunteers at the two firehouses, others were on stand-by with radios in East Cornwall, Cornwall Village, and Cornwall Hollow.

• One car and one house were damaged by falling trees.

• By Sunday night Cornwall was 100 percent out of power. Power was restored to the three villages, the school, and the firehouses by Monday night and to most of the rest of the town by Wednesday; the last restoration was noon on Friday.

• The bridge on Lower River Road lost two-thirds of its abutment. Four homes were stranded, but homeowners had been warned to move their cars earlier.

• Total rainfall was estimated between 6 and 8 inches.

• There was no huge sustained wind, but a strong gust came through at the end of the day.

• The Berkshire Store, the Cornwall General Store, and the Wandering Moose provided food for the volunteers.

—Barbara Gold

State of the Town

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway delivered his "State of the Town" address at the annual meeting of the Cornwall Association Saturday, September 10. Newcomers to Cornwall were invited to learn about Cornwall from leaders of various town organizations (who vastly outnumbered their "new audience") and Ridgway.

In his remarks Ridgway noted that Cornwall now is wet; he mentioned the Reverse 911 calls to citizens in preparation for Hurricane Irene and the new fire department website and emergency management director. Second, Cornwall continues to be green; new solar panels will soon appear outside the town offices and on the gathering room roof at CCS. Third, Cornwall is challenged; for the first time in 100 years the census reported a reduced population, and that population is aging.

Finally, Cornwall is engaged; our community is self-reliant and offers many talents. Ridgway thanked the newcomers for joining that community and encouraged them to become involved. —Barbara Gold



New Inland Wetlands Regs

Aside from some minor adjustments over the last few decades, Cornwall's regulations governing its inland wetlands and watercourses have undergone no significant updating since the 1970s. Because every Connecticut town's Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA) is technically an arm of the state's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, local regulations are expected to match those of the larger agency. In some important ways, Cornwall's have not. After committee work sessions and consultation with Town Attorney Perley Grimes, the agency recently created an extensively revised set of regulations.

On Tuesday, September 6, Cornwall's IWWA held a public meeting to present these revised regulations. The hearing was then closed; and after a brief discussion, a motion to adopt was passed. Since no town meeting is required, the regulations become effective in October; the adopted copy will be filed with the Connecticut DEEP for its final review.

Cornwall Land Use Administrator Karen Nelson outlined several important ways in which the new regulations differ from the old. First, the agency added an "upland review area" clause that grants it jurisdiction over activities that have an impact on areas within 150 feet of wetlands and watercourses and also over activities in areas that are *beyond* 150 feet of wetlands and watercourses if there is the possibility of a negative impact downstream. Second, while the "use by right" of residents to pursue activities associated with farming and timber harvests without interference is noted, the IWWA now has the ability to monitor related "use by right" activities that might affect people and land downstream. Finally, the agency restates the desirability of low-impact development (LID) for Cornwall.

So why are these regulations important to Cornwall? To quote from the document itself: "The preservation and protection of the wetlands and watercourses from random, unnecessary, undesirable and unregulated uses, disturbances or destruction is in the public interest, and is essential to the health, welfare and safety of the citizens of the state."

Transcripts of the hearing, along with copies of the new regulations, will be available at the Land Use Administrator's office in the Town Hall. —Tom Bechtle

A Summer's Bounty

The 20th annual Ag Fair on September 10 was all about the tastes and colors of late summer enjoyed on a perfect sunny day.

Growers of all ages presented a mouth-

watering display of tomatoes (on their way out of season) and squashes (on their way in). In the animal pens were two little burros who endured kisses on the nose from small children. The pretty brown calves nearby slept on clean hay and probably wondered what the fuss was all about.

Cornwall's craftspeople demonstrated and displayed their stuff. Sue Fox and Bianca LaPorta were throwing pots on the Town Hall lawn. St. Bridget's Church parishioners were selling carryalls in handsome fabrics.

Abby Larson won first prize in the whipped cream and bubble gum contest: first you slurp up the cream, find the gum and then chew like mad to blow a bubble.

Town Clerk Vera Dinneen and her Warren counterpart Joanne Tiedman were spinning lambs' wool into yarn. "We're trying to think of a name for this," Vera said. "The Twisted Clerks... something like that."

In the lobby of Town Hall Cilla Hart Mauro, a founder of the Ag Fair, sat with her brother Phil to talk to all comers about the fair and about Cherry Hill Farm where they had both grown up. The photographs on display showed Cilla and Phil with their extended family working the farm over many decades.

The two Harts could watch the fair out the wide-open doors of the Town Hall, out in the perfectly blue-skyed day where a tradition of Cornwall's agricultural past and present was in full swing.

—Lisa L. Simont

Welcome

Linus Job Schillinger to Carly Jacobs and Ted Schillinger

Congratulations

Cynthia Kirk and Charles Grivas

Megan Alecandra Cadwell and Matthew Ernest Lane

Land Transfer

Louise C. Levy to Joyce Pequignot, buildings and improvements only (excluding the land itself), at 257 Kent Road, for \$119,912.09

School Days

Before he welcomed the first student on opening day Michael Croft, the new principal at CCS, had to contend with fire (minor, contained), earthquake (from the state of Virginia), and wind and rain (Hurricane Irene). In fact, Irene caused a day's delay in the school's opening.

Undaunted, Croft remains determined to keep his ears and eyes open as he adjusts to his new position. He believes he has the



luxury of being patient while he learns because CCS is staffed by competent, creative people. He asserts that he will not be patient with himself, however, as he addresses his major challenge of learning the culture of primary grades, with which he acknowledges he has no experience. He taught in a high school of 2,000 students and a shared middle school/high school of 600 before coming to CCS with its 106 students; he jokes that his next assignment may be in a one-room schoolhouse. When asked why he left the classroom to become an administrator, he became serious. He believes that the administrator determines the morale, priorities, tone, and allocation of resources in a school; and he believes he can do that well.

The new principal will institute a pilot program: middle school students will engage in an Inquiry Program which will culminate in an eighth-grade independent study. New English teacher Tara Roby will coordinate the work. Each eighth-grader will choose an area of content and a specific question to pursue. The Cornwall Consolidated School Fund for Excellence (CCSFFE) is providing \$75 per student; each one will have to present a budget for his/her grant. Volunteer consultants will be solicited from the community. Final projects will be presented to the students' parents, peers, and teachers.

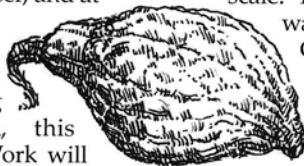
Croft, who is the son of educators and is married to an educator, brings to Cornwall energy, enthusiasm, and determination to maintain the "great institution" he leads in CCS. And twice a week, one of the next generation of Croft teachers joins him on his journey: two-year-old Jonathan rides to the Cornwall Child Center as father and son sing about "Jon's school" which is "next to Daddy's school." On alternate days, look carefully—you may see the principal pedaling the last few miles from Washington (CT) to Cornwall on his bike.

More CCS news: Each summer the CCSFFE provides a grant for a teacher to study or pursue an interest that will enrich his/her teaching. This past summer, middle school social studies teacher Will Vincent travelled some 10,000 miles over two and a half weeks visiting Civil War sites. He returned with photos and posters that he will incorporate into his eighth-grade class.

—Barbara Gold

Cornwall Briefs

- **At the Dump:** Fred Bate III has retired from his job as Transfer Station assistant after 11 years as both manager and second-in-command. The Board of Selectmen has hired Ted Larson to take Fred's place at the cardboard baler, on the skid steer, and at the handle of the compactor.
- **Going on Four Years:** The Great Hill and Great Hollow stimulus-funded resurfacing project has stalled again, this time for the winter season. Work will



Letters to the Chronicle

LOOKING FOR CLAYTONS

The Historical Society is holding a collection of family photographs found in a piece of furniture donated to the Rummage Sale. The names 'Chas. E. Clayton' and 'Mary Elizabeth Clayton' appear on the photos, which date from the early 20th century. Can anyone identify this family? We will be happy to release the photos to the right claimant.

—Ann Schillinger, Member of the Board

HELP GIVEN, HELP WANTED

Hurricane Irene was kind to us from a first responder point of view. We were not overwhelmed as our colleagues were in Vermont and the Hudson Valley. The First Selectman's Office used Reverse 911 to alert people about the town's response to the hurricane. And the fire department was manned from early morning through evening the day Irene hit the Northeast.

We can't always count on being spared. Most of the time, we have warning of a major weather event. Our goal is four days before the event arrives to have an event-specific plan in place, which will be reported on the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department website.

We need a civilian emergency response team

begin in May 2012 for a June finish. So slowly grind the mills of state funding approval that Cornwall has spent 36 months on these two miles of road.

- **A Lesson Learned:** The books are closed on the Freedom of Information (FOI) complaint brought by former Highway Foreman Rick Stone against the Board of Selectmen. The commission met in Hartford on August 24 and confirmed the finding of the hearing officer to deny the complaint. But town boards and commissions have been instructed to attend FOI workshops so that open meeting rules and executive sessions will be better understood.

- **Cornwall Historical Society:** The Connecticut League of History Organizations has given an Award of Merit to the CHS for its 2010 exhibition Visions and Contradictions: The Foreign Mission School, 1817–1826. But that's only half of it. The American Association for State and Local History gave a national award for the same exhibit, saying that the project "demonstrates the highest professional standards."

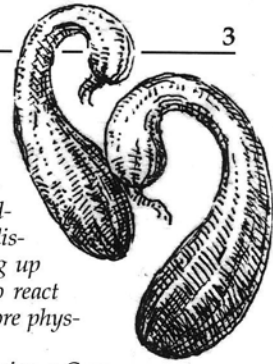
—Lisa L. Simont and John Miller

Apocalypse When?

At its epicenter in Virginia, the August 23 earthquake measured 5.8 on the Richter scale. In Connecticut, the evidence was less compelling, though the Capitol in Hartford was evacuated and play was delayed at the New Haven Open. Here in the Northwest Corner, the most vivid test-

(CERT): people to staff a temporary shelter, distribute commodities, and manage a disaster data base, freeing up our first responders to react to emergencies and more physically demanding jobs.

Please consider joining a Cornwall CERT team by going to our fire department website (www.cofdept.org) and signing up. We will have an orientation to talk about the various jobs and functions. For questions, please email me: nevtond@gmail.com —Nevton Dunn, Emergency Management Director



HELPING HANDS

Cornwall did receive a lot of damage from the storms of Irene and Lee. We are fortunate to have many people trained and able to respond to these emergencies. I am also thankful for neighbors who continually looked after each other. Another fine way to support Cornwall residents is to donate to the Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund (send checks to Town Treasurer, PO Box 97, Cornwall, 06753) which currently has a low balance as winter approaches.

—Gordon M. Ridgway

imony came from "siwanoy" on the Cornwall Community Network: "I felt my chair vibrate, saw the flat screen in the room shimmer, and saw the rocker actually rock. No sound whatsoever."

Down at the Wandering Moose, Liz Sawicki was out on the terrace when it happened. "In my head, I shouted 'Earthquake!' But you can't yell out loud when there are customers."

The end of the world seems to have been postponed once again.

—Franny Taliaferro

Summer Sports

Cornwall is a fine place to live if you like to stay active in sports. The swim team held its own in individual meets against our neighboring towns with an especially strong group of age 10 to 12 girls, but the lack of swimmers in the oldest divisions hurts in the championships. The number of children available for only part of the summer means the core group must be flexible and strong in all strokes.

The Cornwall Roadkill, the youth tennis team, also had another winning year. It won the Litchfield County 18 & under intermediate championship and went on to place third overall in the state competition. Audrey Ellen never lost a match and young Charlie Van Doren also played remarkably well. Todd Piker teaches about 50 to 75 children every year through town and club tennis, and the successes continue to add up.

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The final competition of the summer was the Cornwall Harvest Sprint Triathlon. Fewer people participated this year, but the hardcore participants were more serious than ever. Everyone was extremely complimentary about the course and event. The men's winning time was 115.32 won by Roger Kimball, and the women's winning time was 137.42 won by Nora Hulton. The top team, Team Picorpo, came in at 127.29. Now you can train knowing the times to beat. —Lynn Cheney

Events & Announcements

Motherhouse Activities

October 1, from 7 to 10 P.M. at Town Hall, Family Country Dance with Peter Stix teaching and calling, Still the Homegrown Band playing. \$3 per child, \$5 per adult. For more information, call Jane or Jim Prentice at 672-6101.

October 8, from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. at the Local Farm barn. (What's) in a Pickle? workshop with Alicia North. Potluck lunch. \$35 per family; pre-register.

October 10, from 12:30 to 2:30 P.M. at the Local Farm barn, Baling Twine Wreath Making Workshop. Basic materials provided. Bring ribbons and dried flowers to decorate. Free; call to sign up.

October 14, from 7:30 to 9 P.M. at the Local Farm barn. Family Round Sing; free.

For more information and registration, call Debra Tyler at 672-0229.

Cornwall Historical Society will present epidemiologists Dr. Julie Schillinger and Professor Denis Nash, who will deliver "The Epidemiologist's View from the Trenches," Sunday, October 2, from 2 to 3 P.M. at the Library. Refreshments.

Cantus Excelsius: All are welcome at candlelit choral vespers sung by this a cappella group at the North Cornwall Meeting House, Sunday, October 2, 7:15 P.M.

Art in Cornwall

At the Cornwall Library, Michael Gellatly's artwork will be on display starting October 4. A reception for the artist will be held Sunday, October 16, from 3 to 5 P.M. The show runs through November 5. The glass

The Evenings Close In

Autumn is a feast of color and crisp air, book sales, and piles of wood for evening fires. While in that cozy glow, you might compose a nice check to the *Chronicle*. Thank you!

case holds an exhibit of photographs by Alden Weigold through October 22. From October 25, Dorothy Lapham Ferriss' 1920's covers and illustrations for *Vanity Fair* will be in the case.

Hendon Chubb's "Rugs and Hangings" stays at the Wish House through October.

Special Town Meeting has been called for Friday, October 7, at 7:30 P.M., in the gathering room of CCS to approve funds to replace the bridge on Lower River Road.

At the Library

Columbus Day Weekend

Book and Bake Sale opens Saturday, October 8, to early birds, 9 to 10 A.M., for \$10; 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., free. Monday hours: 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. (\$5 a bag from noon to 3 P.M.) Book donations up to Friday, October 7. No textbooks, journals, magazines, or encyclopedias.

Saturday, October 15, at 4 P.M., Cornwall writer, activist, filmmaker, and historian Jeremy Brecher will discuss his newest publication, *Banded Together: Economic Development in the Brass Valley*. Copies will be available for purchase and signing.

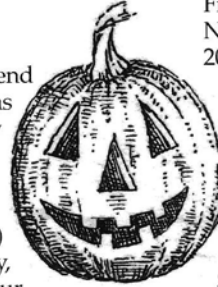
Saturday, October 29, at 4 P.M., Cornwall author and editor Fred M. Sander, M.D. will lead a discussion on the book he recently edited, *Created In Our Own Images.com: W.S. Gilbert's Pygmalion & Galatea*—an introduction to the art, ethics and science of cloning. Copies will be available for sale and signing.

The Parent Child Reading Group (for grades 5 and 6) will gather on Wednesday, October 26, at 5:30 P.M. Call Amy Buck at 672-6874 for the book title.

Absentee ballots become available October 10 during office hours from the Town Clerk. The cut-off date for registration is November 1 for the election on November 8.

Fall Prevention Clinic (formerly known as Bend & Stretch) will be offered by the VNA Oct. 11, 18, and 25, from 10 to 11 A.M., in the UCC Parish House. Participants will learn how to reduce the possibility of falls. No charge; wear loose, comfortable clothing.

Annual CCS Walkathon starts at 1 P.M. at the intersection of Cream Hill and Cogswell roads on Friday, October 14 (rain date October 21). Participants can walk one, two-and-a-half, or four miles. Money raised will be shared among all grades, the CVFD, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. To pledge, call 672-6617.



Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day: Saturday, October 15, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., Torrington Water Pollution Control Plant, Bogue Road. Pre-registration is required (672-4959). Details at the First Selectman's Office.

Annual Temporary Trail Closure: A section of the Mohawk Trail, from the entrance at Dark Entry Road, Cornwall Bridge, to the Cornwall Village trailhead on Jewell Street, will be closed temporarily from sunset Friday, October 21, to sunrise Monday, November 7. Questions: Henry Edmonds 203-426-6459; Kim Herkimer 672-6867.

Annual Town Meeting will be held Friday, October 28, at 7:30 P.M., in the gathering room at CCS. The agenda includes a review of the annual report and voting on the five-year capital plan.

Park & Rec will host a Halloween gathering at the Town Hall on Monday, October 31, from 5 to 8 P.M. Soups, salads, sandwiches, and beverages will be provided.

Disaster relief for damages sustained as a result of Hurricane Irene is available through FEMA for individuals and businesses. Registration must be completed by November 3, 2011; details for registration are available in the First Selectman's Office.

No Reverse 911 call to your house? The Reverse 911 data base includes only traditional wire-line telephone numbers. If you have another kind, you can register your number for emergency notification by signing up at www.ctalert.gov.

A \$3,000 scholarship and transfer station makeover are the first-prize award from WeRecycle to the Connecticut transfer station that collects the most electronic "waste" during the month of October. See Steve O'Neil at our transfer station for details.

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