



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Rumsey: Is the End Finally Near?

NOTICE: "This structure is unsafe and its occupancy has been prohibited by the Building Official." So reads the sign now posted in front of Rumsey Hall, the first step in finally resolving the long and sad saga of this once impressive building.

Following a year of discussion among the owner, building official, and first selectman, the situation recently came to a head after The Cornwall Village Improvement Society voiced its concern in a letter to the Board of Selectmen. "The building must come down responsibly," the letter from CVIP president John Hubbard stated. "To neglect the danger is bordering on negligence."

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway said that the next step in securing the building is to build a six-foot fence around the front porch and main entrance; if the owner, Andrew Hingson, does not comply with this order, the town will do so.

Demolition will be a more complicated process, but according to Building Official Paul Prindle, "the grace period is over" for Hingson and "the building must come down."

Either the owner complies with the demolition order or the town must step in. During Hingson's 14 years of ownership, Rumsey has deteriorated into a danger-

ous eyesore, and his ability to remove it is questionable. (He did not return a phone call asking for comment.) The town attorney is researching the procedure for the town to demolish the building and recover the costs from the owner.

"We're hoping to expedite a town meeting to discuss the issue and approve the expense as early as mid-September," Ridgway said. "Our goal is to take it down sometime this fall."

Rumsey Hall, a landmark Greek Revival structure, was given by Nora Wise to the town in 1987 and, in an initial vote in 1990, came close to being renovated into a new town hall. Tim Prentice, who led the effort that came within an eyelash of saving the building, said recently, "We lost an opportunity then to celebrate our past and provide for the future."

A two-year-long emotional and political debate followed between those who advocated saving Rumsey or at least retaining the property and those—including the Board of Selectmen—who saw the property as a liability. "Rumsey was too big and expensive for our needs and had been damaged in the 1989 tornado," Ridgway said. "Plus our finances were stretched back then." In 1993 voters rejected either renovation or replacing Rumsey with a new building, this time by a

two-to-one margin.

In 1996 the selectmen put the two-acre property on the market; Rumsey together with the gym building behind it. They received only one offer, Hingson's for \$150,000. A town meeting unanimously approved the sale, as even those who valued Rumsey's history and architecture were won over after hearing Hingson's promises to restore Rumsey and use it as his principal residence.

The choice back then was to accept his offer or bear the costs of repairing or demolishing the building, a choice that in hindsight some probably wish we could make again.

—Audrey and Ed Ferman

Major HUD Housing Grant

Thanks to a recently acquired grant of \$1.5 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) continues to move closer to its goal of a 10-unit affordable housing for the elderly complex on Route 7 between Baird's and the Cornwall Bridge Firehouse. Preliminary site work on two Parcel Program lots is also going forward, built higher up on the same property off Dark Entry Road. These additions to CHC's present housing stock will raise its total holdings to 13 single-family home ownership lots scattered around town and 28 clustered rental

(continued on page 2)

SEPTEMBER 2010

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 P.M. CCS Gym. Wednesdays: Stretch Class, 5 P.M. Town Hall; Tai Chi, 6 P.M. Call 672-0064 for location; Women's Basketball, 7:30 P.M. CCS. Sundays: Meditation, 1-2 P.M. Call Debra for location, 672-0229.			1	2	3 CCS Closed	4 Robert Cronin Art Reception 4 P.M. Library Art Opening Reception 4 P.M. Lady Audrey's Gallery Community Contra Dance 7-9:30 P.M. Town Hall
5	6 LABOR DAY CCS and Town Hall Closed	7 Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Commission 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	8	9 ROSH HASHANAH	10	11 Cornwall Sprint Triathlon 8 A.M. Cream Hill Lake Assoc. Bd. of Assessment Appeals 9-10 A.M. Town Office Cornwall Agricultural Fair 10 A.M.-4 P.M.
12	13 Blood Pressure Screening NOON-1 P.M. UCC Region One Bd. of Ed. 6 P.M. HVRHS	14 P&Z 7 P.M. Library Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	15 Deadline: October Chronicle Copy	16 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library VFW Post 9856 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	17	18 YOM KIPPUR CHS Cornwall Village Tour 11 A.M. CHC Public Meeting on HUD Grant 11 A.M. Town Hall
19	20	21 Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	22	23 SUKKOT	24 VFW Post 9856 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	25 Cornwall Association Annual Meeting 4 P.M. Library
26	27 ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall*	28 Red Cross Blood Drive 1:30-6:15 P.M. UCC Parish House	29 Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	30		

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

Birdbrain Magic

(Inspired by an article in The New York Times: "To Remember Seed Caches, Bird Grows New Brain Cells.")



Intelli-gents and ladies, too,
Especially those with high I.Q.,
Bow humbly down upon your knees:
Your mind's outdone by chickadees.

These birds with nary twitch or strain
As soon as autumn stirs their brain
Grow brand new nerve cells in their head
To replace old ones that are dead.

They're cells that keep the memory keen
Inside a structure seldom seen
That's called the "seahorse" of the brain
(Or hippocampus, to be plain).

It's in the circuit for "recall"
Which chickadees build up in fall
Lest they forget where they have stored
Their winter's food, a scattered hoard.

No grown man, beast, or other fowl
That o'er this planet's earth doth prowl
Can grow new nerve cells after birth—
'Tis a birdbrain feat of priceless worth.

—Larry Pool (1995)

(continued from page 1)

units in two Route 7 locations.

Financing these new CHC ventures will be a combination of loans, solicitations, and grants, the greatest portion of which is the HUD grant. An application to the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority is also being submitted to acquire additional funding to assist with site design and construction. (CHFA has not yet been heard from.)

At present the land for the project has been bought and the Planning and Zoning Commission granted approval of a three-lot subdivision in June 2009. Additional zoning approval will be sought for all three lots as each is developed.

Housing Corporation president Mag Cooley told us, "CHC has set an informational meeting at the Town Hall at 11 A.M. on September 18 to describe what the HUD grant makes possible and to generate suggestions from the community at large."

—Scoville Soule

Cell Tower Decision Looms

On July 20 the nine members of the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) who will decide whether to approve a new cell tower blew into town like a summer storm. After an inspection of the site and two sessions of hearings at the Town Hall, they departed, leaving many questions and some resentment in their wake. The deadline for their decision is November 2, but Derek Phelps, CSC's executive director, told us that it could be made by mid-September.

In a last-minute development, on August 19 the town filed a brief with the Council, asking that the Verizon application be denied. The brief contends: A.

That absent a title search or survey there is a cloud on ownership of the access road, and B. "Insufficient information was provided by Verizon to allow the town and public to participate in a meaningful way in the hearing." In response to questions raised, Verizon continually stated that such concerns "would be addressed after the site was approved."

If approved, the 110-foot high tower will rise on a ridge 2,200 feet north of Popple Swamp Road (a large sign is now posted indicating the site).

At the evening session, CSC heard several speakers who oppose the project. Fred Thaler and Kathleen Mooney, the closest neighbors, had asked in a letter that Verizon and CSC work with town government to establish coverage with the least amount of impact. "I do not wish to be collateral damage in advancing a technology that is considered outdated in Europe," said Mooney. Peter Kalmes spoke in favor of the tower on grounds that safety trumped environmental concerns.

Some opponents were later upset at CSC's chair Dan Caruso, who was accused of bullying witnesses. After hearing complaints, State Senator Andrew Roraback and Representative Roberta Willis wrote to Caruso, saying, "Citizens participating in the public hearing process, for whom this may be an unfamiliar experience, are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect." The problem may have been that witnesses were used to participating at town meetings rather than a formal hearing. Other observers were far less critical. "He was brusque, but people were emotionally involved and rambling, and he pushed them to make their points as the evening wore on."

At the afternoon session, the council spent two hours grilling a panel of engineers representing Verizon Wireless. Here are some of the many issues raised and the panel's response.

- Visibility: not a big concern since the area is heavily wooded.
- Using a "stealth" design (25 percent of all towers are disguised, usually as trees): "We wrestled with that but decided against it since the tower would rise only 20 to 40 feet above the tree line."
- Will other carriers share the tower and if so, would its height be increased?: AT&T has expressed interest and probably it would go higher.
- Number of trees to be removed: 77.
- Wind speed it could withstand: 80 mph. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway, recalling the 1989 tornado, said this could be inadequate.

Ridgway raised some additional concerns, including runoff and the steepness of the access road, which exceeds the 15 percent permitted by P&Z. The response was that reducing the grade would mean making the road wider and longer, with additional environmental impact.

Ridgway asked if there was a master plan for our area. The surprising answer

was no. You would think that there might be such a plan, given our increasing dependence on mobile phones (which have morphed into mobile computers), and that e-readers (Kindles) and tablet computers (iPads) use the 3G cellular system to access books, newspapers, and the Internet.

However, it was clear that coverage holes would remain even with this tower and that more towers would be required to fill those holes, though exactly how many and where remains to be seen. "This is just the first act," Ridgway said.

—Ed Ferman

Welcome

Evan Joseph Fasciano
to Diane and Joseph Fasciano
Samuel Sy Ellis Cooper
to Claire Ellis and Chad Cooper

Goodbye to Friends

Marie B. Trager

Land Transfers

Margaret D. Cooley, Alford W. Cooley and Susan Dalton Cooley to Antonio Weiss and Susannah Hunnewell, two parcels of land with appurtenances thereof at 82 Cherry Hill Road for \$900,000.

JPMorgan Chase Bank to Darius Mody, land and improvements thereon at 12 Burlwood Lane for \$235,000.

Estate of Helena B. Petracek to Malka A. Percal, Trustee, 5.06 acres and buildings thereon at 297 Sharon Goshen Turnpike for \$242,000.

Clifford K. Jones and Berkshire Bank to JPMorgan Chase Bank, NA, foreclosure on property at 75 Todd Hill Road.



A Canine Mixer

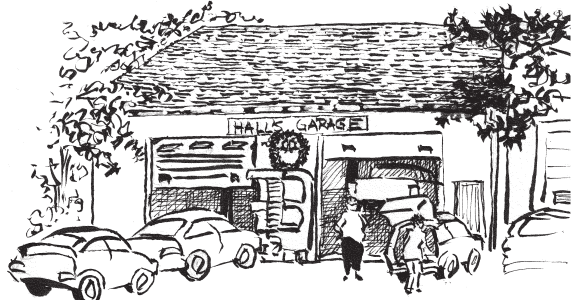
On a sunny July Sunday morning I accompanied Archie, my golden retriever, to a social gathering hosted by Dyna Gannett, an Airedale, and the Little Guild of St. Francis. The event took place in the beautiful gardens of Katherine and Michael Gannett. The only thing missing was a row of portable hydrants. This mixer was part of the Little Guild's 50th anniversary celebration. About 35 dogs and 50 humans participated. Because of the recession, the Little Guild has many more animals for adoption than usual and the mixer raised awareness of the need for its services.

According to Barbara Brown, a trustee of the Little Guild and the organizer of the event, its purpose was to bring together country dogs, who may not be as socialized with other canines as their city cousins. A nice idea but Archie was having none of it. He knows that neither city nor country dogs carry treats, so he was schmoozing with humans, sniffing their pockets and offering his paw unsolicited. The other dogs seemed to socialize with each other just fine. Were they

also conversing about cell phone towers, real estate, and their best friend? The dogs were very well behaved. Your correspondent saw only one instance of inappropriate first-date behavior.

There were games for the dogs as well as a wading pool that was commandeered as a sauna by Darby, an Australian cattle dog. Nikona, a husky, won the dunking-for-hot-dog-treats competition, eating seven in 20 seconds. There was also a contest to catch *muttzarella* cheese. Archie excelled at scarfing up the dog hors d'oeuvres on a table. The canine mixer was a great success, though if your dog needs socialization, adopting a companion from the Little Guild might be best.

—Jim Fishman



Hall's Turns 60

When the *Chronicle* asked me to write a story on one of Cornwall's oldest family-owned businesses, I was sure I would be interviewing Reilly Hedden about her lemonade stand. But it turns out that Hall's Garage has been around a trifle longer.

Three weeks shy of his 90th birthday, Byron "By" Hall recounted the origins of the three-generation dynasty of car mechanics. Back from Germany after World War II, his older brother Percy went to work for the Warren McArthur (later Aerotherm) Corp. in Bantam, making seats for airliners. He then joined Mohawk Ski Area in its earliest days, but by the 1950s was fixing cars in the garage behind Makitis' store at North's Corners (now the Berkshire Country Store).

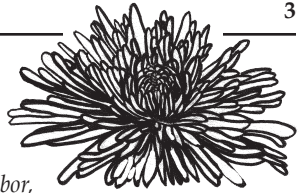
It was in the mid-50s that By helped Percy build his house on Hall Road, just down the hill from an old smithy. The house's garage with an outside pit was the new location for car repair until, in 1952, a purpose-built structure was erected on the present site.

Percy had an open-door policy toward local kids like Lynn Fowler, Doc Simont, Ralph Gold, and Dusty Sandmeyer, who learned the automotive ropes working on their own cars under his tutelage. In return for tools and guidance they would do chores around the garage.

Percy's son Dave took over in 1984 with wife, Donna, keeping the books. During his tenure, the garage expanded to five-and-a-half bays, including one for bodywork, but wasn't too big to tend to the occasional sick lawn mower.

In 2007, the torch, or more properly the wrench, was passed to Dave's son Dave (Junior) with sister Danielle in the office. There, as often as not, he and mechanic Buddy Dawson are to be found diagnosing an auto-

Letters to the Chronicle



GRYPHONS CELEBRATE

On August 12 Town Hall resounded with the lilting tunes of Kreol melodies from Haiti as campers put on a delightful performance celebrating 30 years of Grumbling Gryphons Theatre. A 12-person oil spill engulfed magical mermaids whilst a gigantic puppet of the Green Man (made by Ellen Moon and Tim Prentice) led everyone to the Green where all danced together in joyous celebration! It was a gem of a Cornwall evening.

—Laura Tyson

if he was a neighbor, colleague or friend, please share your stories with us. Call CHS (672-0505) and leave your name and number, or email cornwallorallhistory@gmail.com and we will get in touch with you. We will be gathering oral histories during the fall.

Thanks,

—Dinny Greene, President
Cornwall Historical Society

MEN IN SUITS

When I think of the full house at the Sweet Peat hearings and before that the crowd of Cornwall people filling the courthouse in Litchfield for Hunt, I wonder what has happened to our sense of empathy for and within our community. Very few people attended the cell tower meetings, mainly the people living near the proposed site. Who did fill Town Hall were men in dark suits, organized to get their proposal through. They didn't seem concerned about us. It was scary.

What about the concerns of Popple Swamp people? Don't we care? Where will the next tower be? Will they be put up responsibly? (I think of BP, etc.) Are there safer designs? Will our environment be hurt? Could it make us sick?

—Anne Zinsser

HELP FOR HISTORY

The Cornwall Historical Society needs your help. Our 2011 exhibit will focus on Dr. Brad Walker, Cornwall's remarkable resident doctor for over five decades. Using the story of Dr. Walker's life and practice, our exhibit will look at the changes in rural medical practice, from the single GP, common when he first arrived here from Yale Medical School, to the specialization and centralization of medical care today.

CHS wants to record the community's recollections of Dr. Walker. If you or someone in your family was a "Dr. Walker baby" or his patient,

motive cough or sputter with a computer, a far cry from the days when their grandfather tuned Tim Prentice's Model A with a practiced ear and a screwdriver. —Matt Collins

Rattlesnake Preserve Walk

After weeks of hot smothery air, the day of the Rattlesnake Road Walk came as a relief; cool and dry and breezy. The 14 hikers who arrived for the Cornwall Conservation Trust's (CCT) third guided trail walk of the summer were in fine spirits as we set off behind our guide, 15-year-old Olivia Scott, who took up a leisurely pace with her walking stick, hiking boots, and cowboy hat. She was followed closely behind by four-year-old Percy Bedell, our hike leader, whose mom, Kristen, a board member with CCT, helped organize the walks. Percy kept us well entertained along the way with a terrific discussion on toads, dead trees, and shoes, which then took a wild segue onto the topic of the film *Madagascar*.

This is the first summer CCT has sponsored these family walks and the Rattlesnake Road Walk had the best turnout yet. The first hike, Welles Preserve, was cancelled due to rain but will be rescheduled for some time this fall. A walk through the Hart Farm Preserve promises to be another fine morning of walking, chatting, and admiring some of Cornwall's finest views.

The Rattlesnake walk was a lovely one, meandering easily through pine forest, crossing several old and beautiful stone bridges

and walls, and leading to the opening of a beaver pond and its surrounding habitat. Olivia also pointed out to us the mysterious sight of an old claw foot bathtub plunked in the middle of woods. Perhaps a place for cattle to drink from at one time? Or, more Cornwellian, a tranquil and reclusive setting for a long soak? The looping walk along the trail was under an hour, a perfect way to meet new friends and start the summer day.

Cornwallconservationtrust.org, CCT's website, is worth a visit, not only to read of plans for future events like these walks but also to see a list of the CCT's preserves.

—April Stevens

Cornwall Briefs

- Display Racks: Eight of them, made of wood and measuring 36 by 55 inches, should be in place at strategic spots around Cornwall some time this month. The handsome racks will hold such things as maps of town walking tours created by the Historical Society and brochures from local businesses. Expect to see them at the Library, Mohawk, Town Hall, Berkshire Store, Cornwall Inn, and as yet undetermined places in West Cornwall. They will all have an illustration by Marc Simont of a 19th century gathering of the Board of Selectmen near the covered bridge after the painting *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Edouard Manet. The racks were made possible by a \$4,000 grant from the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area.

- School opened on Monday, August 30, and the tentative enrollment is 115, down from last year's 120. The kindergarten will have 11 students, up from eight, and the eighth grade 14, up by one. New teachers are William Vincent, language arts, grades 6 through 8 and social studies grades 7 and 8; Paul Honig, math and algebra grades 7 and 8. And our old friend Jandi Hanna returns as the school speech therapist.

- The Primary: Cornwall voters usually turn out in good numbers but not so on August 10. Only 34 percent of registered Democrats and 25 percent of Republicans voted. In the major races, Dan Malloy beat Ned Lamont 80 to 67 in the Democratic primary for governor and Linda McMahon beat Rob Simmons 34 to 20 in the Republican primary for Senate.

- Fund Raising: The Cornwall Woman's Society reported this year's Rummage Sale took in more than \$24,000. After modest expenses, 95 percent of the funds will go as gifts to students to further their education. The remainder is donated to various worthy causes in the community. The Friends of Rose Algrant Art Show had sales of \$18,224 and from that, \$3,644 or 20 percent, was donated to the Cornwall Child Center.

- Junior Tennis: This year's USTA Junior Team, the Cornwall Roadkill, tied for first in the Litchfield County I8I Division and finished a remarkable second place behind Bloomfield at the State Championship held at Cheshire Academy in early August.

—John Miller



Jams and Jellies

Apricots, peaches, pears, crabapples, raspberries, gooseberries, rose hips—they're all ripe and ready for conversion into delicious concoctions to put up for the cold weather. While you're boiling down the peach jam, lick your sticky fingers and write the *Chronicle* a check. Thanks!

Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall: At Lady Audrey's Gallery, the juried art competition, "Summer on the River," will open Saturday, September 4, with a reception from 4 to 6 P.M. The show will run through October 1.

The Cornwall Library will host a reception for Robert Cronin's show, "New Paintings," on Saturday, September 4, from 4 to 6 P.M. The show ends September 25. Beginning September 28, Maggie Cady will exhibit her work titled, "Funkified Nature."

D. Edward LaPorta's artwork will be at the National Iron Bank for the month.

The Wish House will continue to show Nan Bevans' paintings through September.

Community Contra Dance: Saturday, September 4, 7 to 9:30 P.M. Town Hall. Bill Fischer calling. Suggested donation: \$3, children; \$5, adults. Information: Jane Prentice 672-6101

The Board of Assessment Appeals will meet Saturday, September 11, between 9 and 10 A.M., at the Town Offices for the purpose of hearing and acting on appeals regarding motor vehicle assessments. No appointment is required. There will be no other time for hearing such appeals. The Assessors Office will answer any questions you may have about the process.

Cornwall Sprint Triathlon: September 11 at 8 A.M. at Cream Hill Lake Association. Registration and details at www.cornwall-childcenter.org. Compete as an individual or as a relay. Locally harvested prizes will be awarded. Proceeds will benefit the Cornwall Child Center.

The Farmers' Market will be held at the Ag Fair on Saturday, September 11, and in West Cornwall all other Saturdays through October. For safety reasons, please avoid parking on Route 128 directly in front of the market.

A Guided History Tour of Cornwall Village focusing on the sites of the Foreign Mission School buildings and events will be led by Ann Schillinger on Saturday, September 18, at 11 A.M. Meet at the Society, 7 Pine Street. The current exhibit, "Visions and Contradictions: The Foreign Mission School, 1817-1826," is open to visitors through October 11 on Saturdays 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. and Sundays and holidays 1 to 4 P.M.

Cornwall Association Annual Meeting will be held at the Cornwall Library Saturday, September 25, at 4 P.M. It will include a Newcomers Tea and Gordon Ridgway will give his State of the Town address.

A Blood Drive will be held on Tuesday, September 28, from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Call 1-800-Red Cross to make an appointment or just walk in.

The Cornwall House Tour will happen on Saturday, October 16, 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. For more details visit cornwallct.org or call 672-6774.

Calling Cornwall Artists: The fifth annual Cornwall Open Studio will be Saturday, October 23. If you are interested in participating, contact Dave Colbert at ourmaridog@yahoo.com or 672-0064.

The 19th Annual Cornwall Agricultural Fair will be held on the Village Green Saturday, September 11, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. (See insert.)

Housing meeting: Learn more about the \$1.5 million Housing Corporation HUD grant (see page one). Saturday, September 18, 11 A.M. Town Hall.

Correction: In answers to Cornwall Trivia in the August issue, it turns out that Garrick Dinneen was also a state champion tractor driver.



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