

RNWALL CHRONIC



Compassion and the Law

On April 7, Superior Court Judge Robert Brunetti granted jail-free "accelerated rehabilitation" to Hunt Williams. A packed Litchfield County courtroom erupted into cheers and applause for Hunt, whose "crime" had been to provide his terminally ill friend John Welles the means he asked for to end his suffering.

Judge Brunetti admitted that he would not want to have faced the decisions that Hunt had to make for his friend. He added that his sentencing also took into consideration the extraordinary support given Hunt by his many friends, including more than 200 character references and the support of over 100 Cornwall citizens who showed up at all three of Hunt's court appearances. Judge Brunetti admitted that he was "splitting hairs" in his narrow interpretation of the law specific to this case.

A significant consequence of this courtroom drama has been the Cornwall community's outpouring of togetherness in rallying around one of its own-and doing so with thoughtfulness and respect for the law and its procedures.

As for Hunt, his three months of anxiety are over. The affection and support he experienced from his community, he says, has "eased his mind." He has no regrets.

Cornwall politics? Would you agree that our recent history—the last decade or so—has been rather dull? Few surprises. Lots of crossover endorsements and crossover voting, too. Friendly, yes. Civilized, of course. (We are not Falls Village!) However, there's an election coming up, and it could turn out to be a hot one.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway has announced he will seek an eighth two-year term. Fellow Democrat Becky Hurlburt says she will leave the Board of Ed to challenge Gordon in the party caucus in July. Both Gordon and Becky have let it be known that, should they lose at the caucus, they will run independently as petitioning candidates.

Meanwhile, Republican K. C. Baird says he will run for another term as selectman. He added that his party doesn't have a candidate for first selectman, and that maybe, just maybe, they might endorse Gordon.

That's not all. Ken Keskinen (Green Party) says he is retiring from the Board of Selectmen. And if you're not already confused, unaffiliated voter Roger Kane says he will leave the Board of Finance to make a run for selectman as a petitioning candidate. The Democrats have no candidate yet for selectman but are looking for one.

Keep in mind that the Board of Selectmen

is made up of the first selectman and the two highest vote-getters among the other candidates. Should she lose the top race, Becky said, "I'll deal with that when I have to." Asked the same question, Gordon said, "It's something I'm not considering. I'm not running for selectman." —John Miller

Budget Vote Set for May 20

The cost of running the Town of Cornwall in fiscal year 2006 is projected to be \$5,571,198, an increase of 7 percent over last year. The vote on the budget will be held at a town meeting on May 20 at 7:30 P.M. in the Gathering Room at CCS.

The Board of Selectmen's budget, at \$1,369,451, reflects an increase of \$101,181, or 8 percent, over last year. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway explained that "for the past few years we have tried to hold everything down, but the cost of things we depend on has risen so much the increases are necessary." He referred particularly to the cost of health-care insurance for town employees, up 25 percent over last year. The cost of salt for snow removal, fuel oil, and gasoline has also gone up significantly.

The Board of Education budget, at \$3,409,289, will be 7 percent higher than last year. The portion that pays for CCS comes to \$2,059,651, and is up only 2.6 percent. The major budget impact will come from Region One.

—Scoville Soulé, Ken Keskinen MAY 2005 Jor budget impact will come from Region One. (continued on page 2)						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	Agricultural Comm. 7:30 p.m. Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30 p.m. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 p.m. Town Hall Mosaic/Tile Project 3 p.m. CCS †	3 School Budget Referendum Noon–8 P.M. Town Hall Inland Wetlands* 8 P.M. Town Offices	4	5	6	7 Mother-Daughter Retreat 9:45 A.M3 P.M. † Annual Cornwall Child Center Auction 5:30 P.M. Torrington Country Club †
8 MOTHER'S DAY Seventh Annual Bird Walk 7:15–8:45 A.M. †	9 Blood Pressure Screening 3–4 p.m. UCC Parish House ABC Meeting 5:30 p.m. Wandering Moose Youth Safety Coalition 3 p.m. Town Hall (p.3)	10 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	11	12	13	14 Cornwall Association 9 A.M. UCC Day Room Art Reception 5–7 P.M. Outsiders Gallery †
15 Deadline: June <i>Chronicle</i> Copy	Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	17 PM Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	18	Bd. of Ed. 5 p.m. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 p.m. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 p.m. W. C. Firehouse	20 CCS Walk-a-Thon 12:30 p.m. † Town Meeting 7:30 p.m. CCS Gathering Room (p.2)	21
Covered Bridge Slalom Race 9 A.M. † Sexual and Reproductive Rights 2 P.M. Library †	ZBA 8 p.m. Town Hall*	24 Spring Concert 7:30 P.M. HVRHS Auditorium	Green Party 7:30 p.m. Town Hall	26	27 Thurber Celebration 5–7 P.M. Cornwall Historical Society †	28
29 年 日本	Memorial Day Services:† N. Cornwall Cemetery 9 a.m. Covered Bridge 10 a.m. Parade and Ceremonies 11 a.m. Cornwall Village, Annual Carnival follows, UCC grounds	31	Every Week This Month: Mondays: Teen/Adult Basketball, 7–9 p.m. CCS Gym; Jam Session, 7:30 p.m. UCC Sanctuary Tuesdays: Teen/Adult Volleyball, 7–9 p.m. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Play Group, 10–11:30 a.m. Playscape/UCC; Stretch Class, 5:30 p.m. Town Hall; Tai Chi for Beginners, 7:30 p.m. CCS Gym Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 p.m. UCC Day Room Fridays: Story Hour, 1:15 p.m. Library Saturdays: Chess Club, 10–11:30 a.m. Library			

(continued from page 1)

If the regional budget is approved by referendum on May 3, Cornwall's share will come to \$1,349,638, 14.7 percent more than last year. The number of HVRHS students from Cornwall has increased from 62 to 73, and tuition will be \$14,141 per student next year.

The school's budget is affected by some of the same factors as the selectmen's budget. Health-care insurance is a special problem. The boards of the towns in Region One are making a concerted effort to find ways to reduce this expense in the future.

Cornwall's capital budget will increase by \$60,000, largely due to the increased cost of materials for road maintenance.

On a more positive note, there has been an increase of 5.17 percent in the Grand List this year, as compared to only 2 percent in most recent years. With this jump in Cornwall's tax base, and without tapping into the municipal reserve, the Board of Finance is considering an increase of 0.8 mills (3.8 percent) in property taxes. This would result in a tax rate for fiscal year 2005-06 of 21.8 mills. This means that a "typical" residential property assessed at \$200,000 would incur \$4,360 in taxes next year, compared to \$4,200 in the current year.

Selectman Ridgway, noting that any increase in the mill rate could be a hardship to some people, said that "we are now on a 'pay as you go' basis." –Celia Senzer

The Worden Memorial Plaque

Maybe you've noticed it. The home-made brass plaque on the wall beside 145 Great Hill Road has been dulled by age, but if the light is right, you can make out some of the words. The hand-drawn letters spell out "Alvin H. Worden" and "July 30, 1944." This winner of a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star died nearly two months after D-Day and is buried in St. Laurent, France.

Michael Gannett reports that he once asked the late Harriet Clark about the plaque. She said that young Worden had grown up in the little house inside the wall and that his father had worked the Clark farm during the war. Alvin's mother and two sisters lived there, too, which must have made the place crowded, since it isn't big enough to garage an SUV.

Harriet told Michael that the elder Worden was addicted to patent medicines. In those days, these were mostly alcohol. But she had to keep him on the place. She was teaching down in Danbury, and on the weekends she brought home the medicine bottles she found in the pharmacies there. She didn't have much of a choice, she told Michael.

Worden could handle the horses for plowing and do other necessary farm chores at a time when most able-bodied citizens were off fighting the war.

It's easy to imagine a boy growing up on that hill, learning the landscape, finding blackberries to eat,

and bagging small game with a boy's gun. Maybe the old man got to be too much, and he ran off and joined up far away from here. Whatever happened, young Alvin isn't recorded on any local military records, and his only memorial is the one on the wall there.

Harriet remembered that the elder Worden had died by the end of the war and that his wife and the two girls moved back to New York State, where they came from. For years, Alvin's mother returned to Cornwall on Memorial Day. She decorated the plaque and left a little flag in the holder fixed to the wall. He must have been the light of her life.

—Lisa Lansing Simont

Vote on State Grant

At the town meeting on budget adoption at 7:30 P.M. on May 20 in the Gathering Room at CCS, there will also be a vote on a grant proposal. The meeting will be asked to approve an application to the state for a grant of \$200,000. The selectmen's plan is to use \$150,000 of that amount for land acquisition and improvements at a site adjacent to the Hughes Memorial Library in West Cornwall. The other \$50,000 will be used to maintain and upgrade the playing fields at CCS. —Gordon Ridgway

House Prices Are Rising

Is there a housing bubble? And, if so, has it reached Cornwall? The answer to the bubble question may not be clear, but it does appear that Cornwall house prices have been rising by more than 20 percent a year.

In the 12 months from April 2004 to March 2005, there were 19 residential property sales recorded by Town Assessor Barbara Bigos. The average sales price was \$450,450. The same 19 properties had been assessed at an average of \$169,200 at the time of Cornwall's last revaluation on October 1, 2001. Based on the state law that says assessments should equal 70 percent of market value, the average market value of the 19 properties in 2001 would have been \$241,700. These recent sales reflect an average increase of 86 percent during the roughly three years since the last revaluation.

To calculate what these recent sales prices might imply for your own property, multiply your assessment (available on the Grand List at the Town Office) by 2.66. This factor takes into account both the 70-percent ratio of assessment-to-market value and the three-year increase of 86 percent reflected in recent sales. Thus, for example, a "typical" Cornwall house and lot assessed at \$200,000 may well be saleable for as much as \$532,000 today (\$200,000 x 2.66). Of course, you won't know what price your house will actually bring unless you put it up for sale, and most of us would probably rather stay right where we are.

There is also a downside to the rapid increase in property values. For one thing, it doesn't benefit those residents who rent, rather than own, houses. For another, it means that families of moderate income who would like to live in Cornwall, including some who grew up here, will find it increasingly difficult to purchase houses. —David A. Grossman

Welcome

Henry Maryon Spencer to Tracy and Theo Spencer Thea Sedgwick West to Kathy and Phill West

Good-bye to a Friend

Ann Woolsey LaFarge

Congratulations

Caryn Gregory and Paul Barber

Land Transfers

Bruce W. Berkman and Susan LaMonte-Berkman to Francoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman, house and 5 acres at 155 Dibble Hill Road for \$326,000.

Connecticut Light and Power Company to Timothy L. and Anthony D. Locke, 1/3 acre on Lower River Road for \$20,000.

Jonathan M. and Victoria Estern Jadow to Hamilton and Roxana Barry Robinson, Jr., 61.895 acres off Town Street for \$850,000.

Katherine E. Gannett to Jack Zetkulic, 10.01 acres on River Road for \$190,000.

Precious Cargo

Have you noticed the valuable freight being trucked through Cornwall since September? Five days a week the deep, throaty growl of diesel engines resounds, as the drivers of six huge vehicles thread them through Cornwall's narrow, twisting lanes. Little thought is given to these conveyances, although no Brink's truck can compete with their priceless contents. They are easily distinguished by their sunny yellow paint job and flashing red lights.

I hitched a morning ride with school-bus driver Ellen Underwood and rode shotgun on the afternoon drop-off run with eightyear veteran driver Tony Sterzl, accompanying them from their pre-departure check of lights, tires, etc., to the company-mandated end-of-run search for tiny sleeping bodies. Had it not been for their amiable conversation (eyes always on the road, though) I would have been bored out of my gourd...which is just what the Laidlaw Bus Company and the drivers want, and what this year Cornwall will pay a cool \$200 grand for-no excitement.

The kids can take a lot of credit for how smoothly and quietly things go. Except for an occasional command to sit down, little disciplining was required, and rowdyism was minimal, a change from my antediluvian school-bus days when we were heavily into the Blackboard Jungle motif. One reason may be the ubiquitous umbilical cords con-

nected to CD players. Gazing rearward from my seat at all those little tousled crania with their headsets, it was easy to imagine myself in Mission Control.

But if 99.9 percent of the trips are uneventful, it is due mainly to the sure touch of the drivers. Some glitches, of course,



The government, however, is working to make the trips more challenging. New EPA regulations limit idling time to three minutes, requiring the drivers to set off on their winter routes with frigid motors protesting and defrosters working feebly. Still, the crew of drivers, which also includes Larry Moran, Jenna Pakula, and newcomer Anita Morin, always seems to cope, and, like their chilly busses under the new edict, they rarely lose their cool—even when careless motorists ignore their flashing lights, which happens to each driver on an average of once a month.

So when you're snug in your bed on a snowy morning, postponing your chores until the roads thaw out, think about these intrepid souls setting forth to battle the elements, and next time you see them going by, give them a thank-you wave. They deserve it.

—Matt Collins

Substance Abuse Among Teens

The Youth Safety Coalition, formed by the Cornwall selectmen to focus on substance abuse and the needs of teens, met on April 13. Speakers were Cynthia Bianchi, Housatonic Youth Service Bureau; and Jacquie Rice, HVRHS math teacher, swim coach, and president of the Salisbury Volunteer Ambulance Squad. Handouts included guidelines for teen parties and a list of resources for families of teens.

Ms. Rice told of the medical dangers of alcohol abuse to young people from her vantage point as a member of the ambulance squad. Because their bodies are immature, teens are more vulnerable to alcohol's effects and are more likely to take dangerous actions when drunk, especially driving under the influence. The depressing effects of alcohol on heart and lungs can also cause serious harm.

Ms. Bianchi stressed that substance abuse by teens is a significant problem, even in well-to-do rural towns. She rejected the notion that drinking is a "rite of passage," not a matter for serious concern. Be-\

matter for serious concern. Because youth today are more affluent and often have more freedom than in earlier generations, the danger of their engaging in substance abuse is higher. Nationally, children are experimenting with alcohol and marijuana at earlier ages, placing themselves at greater risk of more serious involvement.

The Coalition will meet next on May 9 at 3 P.M. at the Town Hall. All are welcome. —Hanna Grossman

Letters to the Chronicle

HEARTFELT THANKS!

The verdict is known, the dust has settled, but I continue to reflect on this community that we live in. No town could possibly have shown more support to an individual and an issue than you did. On three court days you took time from jobs, businesses, and personal schedules to pack the courtrooms to overflowing—to make a civil and dignified statement of support and unspoken protest. You wrote over 200 letters of support (and reading those copies has been a humbling and moving experience). You made many morale-building calls, and immediately established a more-than-adequate defense fund! In the near future we will have another "gathering" to continue to remember John Welles and to celebrate. For now-THANK YOU CORNWALL!!

–Hunt Williams

SPECIAL MAN, SPECIAL PLACE

The successful outcome of Hunt Williams' case is a reflection of the efforts of a special community. The over 200 letters, defense fund, court support, legislative efforts and thoughtful media interviews all illustrated the unique nature of this case and our town. The judicial system paid attention to our efforts.

The values of caring and commitment are, of course, embodied by Hunt. There could not have been an easier person to support. Fellow townspeople returned his service to them. This behavior does not happen everywhere.

As events unfolded, the final outcome was uncertain until the judge's thoughtful ruling. Yet the community support for Hunt was never in doubt. The story went out with Cornwall offering unique insight in the national debate of end-of-life issues. Support from "greater Cornwall" stretching to California and beyond came pouring in. The community and the judicial system worked. Now we can all enjoy our return to anonymity and this beautiful spring.

—Gordon M. Ridgway, First Selectman



SOMEONE'S COMING TO OUR TOWN??

What's that you said, honey? No way...Charles and Camilla coming to Cornwall, Connecticut, eating fish and chips at the Wandering Moose. Just wait until I tell Mum when I call her on Sunday. I guess it wouldn't be good form to tell them about the wedding breakfast Peggy McEvoy and I had the last time he got married! No need to tell him I forswore all foreign potentates when I became an American citizen. So, he's coming later this month. What's the date today.... Mr. Miller, you are a scalawag!

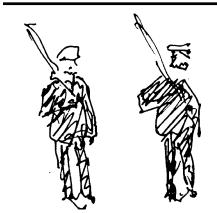
—Karen Beattie

ON RATTLESNAKE POND

This is the time of year when I stop at the Rattlesnake Road Pond at every opportunity to see what's new. Friday, April 8, was particularly rewarding. I saw a pair of common mergansers, a pair of green-winged teal, a couple of pairs of hooded mergansers and several single females (they must have laid their eggs and their partners departed), a pair of kingfishers, a pair of bluebirds, two great blue herons, grackles, wood duck (in the back), mallards, one black duck, a song sparrow, Canada geese, and, best of all, an adult osprey sitting in a tree right next to the road. That week I also saw four turkey vultures and two black vultures on the edge of the pond.

Carla Bigelow noticed many dead fish along the edge of the pond and called the DEP for an explanation. Apparently, the last heavy snowfall prevented sunlight from penetrating the ice. As a result, aquatic plants and algae were unable to produce oxygen through photosynthesis. The lack of oxygen killed the fish. According to Bill Foreman of the DEP, it is not an uncommon event in shallow ponds. A big loss to the fish and a big gain for the vultures—and, possibly, the osprey.

—Celia Senzer



Events & Announcements

The Second Annual CCS Walk-a-Thon will take place on Friday, May 20, at 12:30 P.M. This year the students have chosen to support "Doctors Without Borders" ("Médécins sans Frontières," or MSF). Proceeds will be divided equally between MSF and the eighth-grade trip fund. Walk or make a donation. The Walk-a-Thon begins at the intersection of Cream Hill and Cogswell Roads. For more information call Bente Busby at 672-2543.

Child Center 30th Anniversary Auction will be on Saturday, May 7. Mohawk was not available this year, and so the festivities will be at the Torrington Country Club, Route 4, 250 Torringford Road, Goshen. The silent auction and previews begin at 5:30 P.M., the live auction at 7:30 P.M. Hors d'œuvres, \$20 per person. Hors d'œuvres, dinner and wine, \$50 per person. There will also be a cash bar. On-line bids from the catalog of items at www.cornwallct.org are welcome. For more information call Sandy Dolinsky at 672-0129, or visit the Cornwall Package Store for a printed invitation.

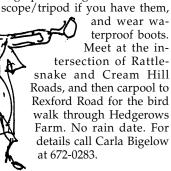
Art in Cornwall: The Outsiders Gallery will host an opening reception with music by Kevin Marquis on Saturday, May 14, from 5 to 7 P.M., featuring the paintings of Robert Andrew Parker, Douglas Truth, and Paul Graubard. The show runs through May 31.

At the Cornwall Free Library, Lazlo Gyorsok's show of photographs entitled Portraits and Other Animals continues through May 14, and starting May 16, the Library hosts the Seventh Annual CCS Student Art Show.

The Wish House continues to show Danielle Mailer's cut-outs and home accents through May.

The National Iron Bank is showing Gary Barron's architectural renderings of New York buildings and Harold Brien's pastels and watercolors.

The Seventh Annual Spring Bird Walk, sponsored by Park & Rec., will take place on Sunday, May 8, from 7:15 to 8:45 A.M. It will be led by Art Gingert, our resident naturalist and photographer. Bring binoculars and



Taps

Of all the information in this issue, the least useful may be this: the Army is the only service that still uses bugles to sound the haunting melody that you will hear on Memorial Day (the other services use trumpets). Still, it's information, and that's our job. Your job is to support us by sending in a donation. Thank you very much.

Tsunami Relief: The United Church of Christ's offer to match donations (up to \$10,000) for tsunami relief in Southeast Asia is open until June 30. Over \$18,000 has already been raised. To contribute, send a check, payable to "UCC in Cornwall" and marked "Tsunami Relief," to P.O. Box 35, Cornwall, CT 06753. For further information call the church (672-6840) or Paul Baren (672-6637).

Bradford Scholarship: Any Cornwall student planning to enter UConn in Fall 2005 may apply. One award will be given, running for all four years of college. A letter of application and two letters of recommendation must reach the Bradford Scholarship (c/o Cornwall Board of Education) by May 25. Criteria include grades, extra-curricular activities, community service, goals, and creativity.

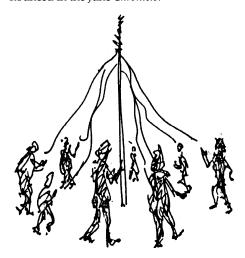
Memorial Day: On Monday, May 30, at 9 A.M., Charles Gold will lead a service at the North Cornwall Cemetery. Bring flowers to decorate graves. At 10 A.M., the Seamen's Service will take place at the Covered Bridge. The parade and ceremonies start in Cornwall Village at 11 A.M., followed immediately by the annual carnival held on the grounds of the United Church of Christ. Enjoy food, fun, and games hosted by UCC and the Cornwall Child Center.

Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Cornwall resident Jill Sheffield, president of Family Care International, will deliver a talk entitled The State of the World's Women at the Cornwall Free Library on May 22 at 2 P.M. The topic will be the outlook for family planning.

Whitewater Race: The Covered Bridge Slalom Race, sponsored by the Housatonic Area Canoe and Kayak Squad (HACKS), will be held on Sunday, May 22, at 9 A.M. in West Cornwall. Advance registration required; entry blanks available from Clarke Outdoors (672-6365).

New Website Pages: The Cornwall Website is adding two new pages entitled Cornwall Profiles and Cornwall Artists. Profiles will feature interviews with Cornwall residents, mainly seniors, whose background and activities are of interest. Artists will be a page of pictures and background, or of links to the websites of artists residing in, working in, or showing in Cornwall. Artists: send your website address to www.cornwallct.org.

Thurber Celebration: The initial event of the Cornwall Historical Society's summer Thurber Celebration will be a reception at the Society's building on Pine Street on Friday, May 27, from 5 to 7 P.M. Cartoons, books, photographs, and other Thurber-related memorabilia will be on display in the meeting room. Other Thurber events will be announced in the June Chronicle.



A Mother-Daughter Retreat will be sponsored by Motherhouse on Saturday, May 7, from 9:45 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. Activities include origami paper crane-making, maypole dancing, spring greens harvesting (and eating!), a peace meal, and a sing-along. Come learn about Mother's Day and celebrate the bond between mother and daughter. Call Debra Tyler for reservations at 672-0229.

Create a Tile for the Mosaic/Tile Public Art Work project for the CCS entrance on Monday, May 2, at 3 P.M. in the CCS art room. The 40-foot mosaic/tile ribbon will be unveiled at an alumni and community event Sunday, June 5, at 4 P.M. Volunteers are needed to help grout the mosaic and tile. Sponsored by the CCS Fund for Excellence. Contact Catherine Tatge at ctatge@tatgeprod.com or 672-4419.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

MAY ISSUE

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