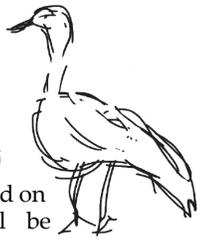




CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 22 : NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 2012

Library Moves On

"The Cornwall Library Board and Library Director announce that Amelia de Neergaard will rejoin the library staff as Children's Program and Art Coordinator."

This statement reversing the dismissal of the children's librarian was released in late July, just after the August *Chronicle* had closed. The statement went on to say:

"This agreement was reached following a review by the Personnel Committee of the facts and discussions with all concerned. The parties acknowledge that the termination was the result of misunderstandings and missed opportunities for constructive communication. None of the actions taken by the parties were intended to impugn anyone's good faith or integrity. The Board Chair and the Library Director have apologized to Ms. De Neergaard. The Board, the Library Director and Ms. De Neergaard have agreed to work together to ensure that the Library continues to serve the needs of the community."

The *Chronicle* met with outgoing president Barton Jones, incoming president Marnell Stover, and Library Director Amy Cady after the announcement. They refused to elaborate on the statement or comment on the actions leading to the agreement except to say, "Look, honest people make mistakes. We made one and corrected it in what we feel was a careful and professional

manner." The personnel committee (Jones, Arleen Barrett, and Franny Taliaferro) worked with both parties' legal counsels to come up with a settlement that all involved feel is fair.

When asked about the protests that greeted the initial decision, Jones said, "I responded personally to all criticism that I received, but we are limited in what we can say publicly about an employee."

They said that the major lesson learned is that "we have focused on fund raising and delivering programs and not enough on personnel."

The library is close to taking on a consultant who will review all tasks currently performed. This will include job descriptions and employment policies. Current policies fail to make clear that employees may be terminated at any time with or without cause.

De Neergaard will return September 4, working fewer hours, and will continue to run children's programs. But she will not be replacing Ellen Moon, as was reported in the *Lakeville Journal*. Moon has served as the volunteer art curator, an important function that has been shared by only two people in the last 40 years. "Hildreth Daniel did it for 25 years and got me involved 15 years ago," Moon said. "I'm finally retiring in December."

Amy Cady commented on how much Moon will be missed. "She's spent more hours than anyone would expect and done a fantastic job." —Ed Ferman

Yelping Hill's 90th Anniversary

On July 28, intrepid Cornubians braved the flash flood watch to visit the Yelping Hill community on the occasion of its 90th anniversary. The open house included socializing at Yelping Hill's community lodge, the Barn, a tour of the MacCracken family house, Fridstol, and an exhibit on the community's history and lore in the recreation hall, the Hayloft.

The Yelping Hill community was founded by a group of six families (Canby, Dodd, Kunkel, MacCracken, Smith, and Trowbridge), all close friends, many of them faculty families at Vassar or Yale, and several of them related. As Marion Canby, one of the founders, later recalled, they wondered, "Couldn't we find a few wild acres somewhere and share expenses and responsibilities? We would want something personal, yet allowably different for each family—could individual living be attained in communal conditions?" To answer that question, in 1921 they bought what was

(continued on page 2)

SEPTEMBER 2012

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 Town Hall; Karate 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Thursdays: Toddler Play Group 10:30–11:30 am library Saturdays: Cornwall Farm Market 9 am–12:30 pm Wish House Lawn Sundays: Meditation, 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672–0229						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
◆ Heating Oil Coop Meeting 4 pm Library	◆ Bd of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ◆ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	◆ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall				● NEW ◆ Agricultural Fair 10 am–4 pm Village Green
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	◆ Blood Pressure Clinic noon–1 pm Parish House ◆ Democratic Town Committee 7:30 pm Library	◆ Economic Development Committee 8 pm Town Hall	◆ Republican Town Committee 7 pm Library			◆ Bd of Asse. Appeals (Motor) 9–10 am Town Offices 4thQ ◆ Keeping a Fam. Cow 10 am–1 pm Local Farm ◆ Let's Get Growing 10 am–noon Library ◆ Woodland Walk w/Jean Bouteiller 2–3 pm ◆ Artists Rec. Virginia Kindred 5–7 pm Library ◆ Deadline: Chronicle Copy
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
◆ Let's Get Growing Rain Date		◆ Board of Education 3:30 pm CCS Library ◆ Bd of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall		◆ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Town Hall ◆ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CANCELLED		☾ 1stQ ◆ Cornwall Assoc Mtg and Newcomers Tea 4–6 pm Library
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
		◆ Committee for Seniors 7 pm Town Hall	◆ CCS Lobster Order Deadline	◆ Red Cross Blood Drive 1–6 pm UCC Parish House	◆ Public meeting: Region One concerns 7 pm Library	◆ Sally Cook Book Signing 10 am–12:30 pm Farm Market ◆ Bluegrass, Brats & Brew 6–9 pm Olds Barn
						○ FULL 30

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

known as “the old Yelping Hill Farm” and the next summer established what in those days was called a “summer colony.”

All the land in the colony—originally about 100 acres—was owned in common by the Yelping Hill Association, whose members were the original six families and others later invited to join. Each family had a 99-year lease on a four-acre building site. (Today there are 24 leaseholds on about 375 acres.) Community decisions were made by a general meeting of all Yelping Hill members. Yelper Ruth Adams, designer for Vassar college but pioneering woman architect on the side, laid out the community and served as architect for most of the original houses, as well as overseeing the conversion of the Barn into a community center.

For the first 25 years, the entire community ate together daily in the Barn. Yelping Hill at that time was something of a literary colony, frequented by the guests of Henry Seidel Canby, the moving spirit in starting Yelping Hill, who was the founder of the *Saturday Review* and the Book-of-the-Month Club. A remark by Robert Frost on the Barn porch illustrates the high tone and fervent seriousness of those days. Asked by a passionate young Whelper, “Oh, Mr. Frost, what do you think of the sunset?” Frost is said to have replied, “I never talk shop after dinner.”

Yelping Hill has continued to have a dense internal social life and a wide range of informal activities. Signs on the bulletin board over the decades have announced a steady stream of country dances, sings, star gazes, homemade skits and plays, charades, movie productions, races, talks, art shows, concerts, potlucks, souvlas, and other community activities. The 90th anniversary history exhibit and the 25 or so volumes of the Yelping Hill Archives record them down through the years. —*Jeremy Brecher*

Goose Goose Duck

If you drive up Town Street from the lake, just before you reach Scoville Road you enter dangerous territory. The Scoville farm house stands on the right, and across from it, in a field on the left, stands the duck pond. The traffic between the house and the duck pond is serious. I don't know if you've ever had to stop your car for the goose parade, but I have. There is no way through.

The geese belong to Thalia Scoville, widow of my cousin Ralph. She has lived in that house for decades but can't remember when she first got the geese. They're not exactly pets, they don't have names. But they aren't used for eating either—too much grease, says Thalia, and too tough. The eggs aren't taken either. “They lay them in such

big clutches you never know which egg is fresh,” she says. Really, the geese are kept for parades.

Thalia's geese are tall and handsome, brownish grey with darker trim. Their long necks, erect carriage, and heavy bodies mark them as domestic; their coloring suggests descent from the European greylag. (This was the goose made famous by its decision to call Konrad Lorenz “mom.”) They move slowly. I won't use the undignified word “waddle” because they are nothing if not dignified, but they shift from side to side as they walk.

There are about 15 of them now. On a hot day they cluster, squatting comfortably in the dusty barnyard, or on the lawn under a tree. Some sit, some stand. One may balance on one foot, doing goose yoga. They're relaxed, until, mysteriously, the moment arrives. The geese look around jerkily, giving little bugling trills. They stand and gather, then, honking companionably, they begin the parade, as though an inaudible whistle was blown.

Down the driveway they go. The ducks and guinea fowl follow, caught up by the excitement. The honking is muted and melodious, like jazz musicians jamming on oboes.

At the road the geese walk single file. Bobbing heads held high, yellow webbed feet turned in, they march majestically across Town Street. Traffic comes to a halt. Once a police car arrived during the march. The policeman honked. The geese honked back. He turned on his circling light. The geese ignored him. He turned on his siren. The geese maintained a steady goose step. Their mission was to reach the other side of the road, not to get caught up in altercations about right of way.

On the far side they scramble up the bank, surprisingly awkward. A wing or two flaps out for balance.

The pond is calm and empty. By now the ducks have also gained the far side, guinea fowl scuttling behind them. One by one the geese cross the grass to the pond. With a heavy fluttering rush they launch themselves into the water. Suddenly graceful, they float, their long necks erect, their snobbish heads aloft. They look down at us over their yellow bills, like dowagers looking over their lorgnettes.

They have arrived. They are superior. They've accomplished their mission. And we are allowed to drive on up the road.

—*Roxana Robinson*

West Cornwall Style

(This is the sixth in a series about longstanding Cornwall businesses.)

Danielle Mailer bought a dress at the Wish House in West Cornwall and wore it to a recital, where she was amused to see the soloist wearing the same dress. Lib Tobin and Leslie Middlebrook Moore have a

Welcome

Emma Quinn Lizana
to Nikolle and Ronnie Lizana

Goodbye to a Friend

Rose A. Burgdorf

Congratulations

Jennifer Consolato and Christopher Lanza

Melissa Bermudez and Peter Cusack

Alexandra Collins and Tom Naor

Land Transfers

Linda S. Malone to Raymonde S. and Terence F. Burke, land with buildings and improvements thereon, at 95 Kent Road, for \$349,000.

Mark Zielke to James Detterick, 11.158 acres of land with improvements thereon, at 109 Dibble Hill Road, for \$750,000.

Estate of Christian D. Zenk to Ocwen Loan Servicing, LLC, land with buildings and improvements thereon, at 43 Town Street, for \$391,674.35.

Kathryn R.H. Green to Grant Aram Hanessian and Anne Dinah Schwartz, a dwelling at 61 Barn Road, for \$725,000.

similar story. So do Roxana Laughlin and Pam Wilson.

Bianca Griggs, who owns the popular clothing and accessories store near the Covered Bridge, is not a clairvoyant, alas. But she is highly regarded for her fashion sense, good taste, and reasonable prices in everything from women's and children's clothing to small household items and funky toys. She is also a world-class wrapper.

When you walk into the Wish House, you're met with a burst of color, which includes Griggs herself, a petite redhead in a brightly hued outfit, with a big smile and an ironic sense of humor. Born in Berlin, she first came to the United States and Cornwall when she was 19 as an au pair to the Geisser family. She went back and forth between the United States and Germany as visas permitted, earned a degree at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, did some costume design, and in the last three days of one of her visits, met Richard Griggs. They were married in 1994 in Cornwall.

Griggs got a job at the Wish House and when the owner moved away, she bought the store with much-appreciated help from the Geissers. With no retail training and no one to show her the ropes, she had to educate herself about buying, inventory, marketing, and finances. But she built the store into a stylish destination for locals, weekenders, and visitors to the Northwest Corner.

She turned her back room into a gallery to feature local artists and writers (with very good hors d'oeuvres at the openings,

we might add). Eventually, the couple bought the property as well, which has a gallery space below the store and two rental units.

Griggs was instrumental in starting the Farm Market, which now draws crowds on the store's front lawn to buy locally produced goods every Saturday in season. She is also active in the West Cornwall Village Improvement Association.

What has been her greatest challenge? The recession, of course, which has hit her business hard, and the occasional shoplifters. But Griggs has that figured out as well: a sign in the dressing room says, "Shoplifters will be composted."
—Carol Schneider

Access Road or Bridle Path?

The town has been petitioned to designate that portion of the Old Poughkeepsie Turnpike called the "Bell Road Extension" as a public hiking trail, bridle, and bike path. Bell Road Extension is the steep dirt road off Popple Swamp Road that will serve as the access road to Cornwall's proposed new cell tower.

The document was circulated by Matt Collins and signed by 212 Cornwall residents. His accompanying letter says, "There is a pressing need for action as Ralph Gulliver, the owner of an adjoining property, has posted No Trespassing signs at the entrance to the road."

Collins said, "The main purpose of the petition is to ensure public access to the road; it's the only direct road access to the Housatonic State Forest."

The selectmen acknowledged receipt of the petition at their August 6 meeting and said it raises questions. The town has not maintained the road for years, but has it been abandoned? Collins argues that it is still a town road. If it is on private property, will the town set a precedent by allowing public hiking, etc.? The petition has been sent to Town Attorney Perley Grimes, who believes that ownership of the road is a complicated can of worms.

In October 2010, following contentious hearings, the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) approved Verizon's application to construct a 110-foot cell tower off Popple Swamp Road.

There was a fair amount of opposition in town to a tower in this location, and Grimes filed a brief asking that the application be denied, on grounds that the hearings were unfair and that "there is a cloud on ownership of the access road."

If anything comes of the petition, it is not clear what effect it might have on the cell tower project: probably very little, since CSC seemed indifferent to access road ownership.

Before construction begins, CSC must approve a Development and Management Plan, to include a site plan and a survey, and the town will have an opportunity for input. Verizon attorney Ken Baldwin told

Comments: Rescue Dogs

WALLY AND PINKY

Kudos to Jeff Jacobson for his timely story on "Used Dogs" (August issue). While these guys may be "used," they're certainly not "used up."

Don Bachman and I are on our fourth "rescue" dog here in West Cornwall, where mixed-breed, mellow mutts mingle with blue-blooded adoptees. From Henry to Kenny, through Wally and Pinky, they've all been perfect pets: unaggressive, appreciative of the life we've been able to give them, and great kissers. Our two most recent adoptees—



Wally and Pinky—were found wandering the streets of Bridgeport collarless, underweight, and on the fast track to one of the state's "kill pens." It's hard to say who was luckier (them or us?) that their long journey brought them "home" to this dog-friendly town.

To add one thought to Jeff's article: I'm told that the situation with "used cats" is an even tougher sell for the shelters, so I urge all of you feline fans: Take the plunge!
—Tom Bechtle

GUY AND DOLLY

Rescue pet politics demand careful diplomacy. One hot May afternoon, my wife, Catherine Noren, and I visited a rescue pet event, hoping to adopt a puppy. We did this without approval from our cat, Dolly Pardon, (ASPCA, class of 2000).

All the puppies were gone, but we kept returning to one soulful-eyed hound from Georgia with red tick fur and a quiet manner (which proved pure salesmanship). We named him Guy.

Genetically various, Guy is one quarter American foxhound, one quarter Great Pyrenees, one quarter Norfolk terrier, and one quarter miscellaneous. His busy schedule includes greeting walkers with his helicopter tail, chasing herons and patrolling for snakes. Try his blog if you prefer to visit online: <http://philosophydog.blogspot.com>.

Dolly feels zero solidarity with her fellow rescuee, who is a smelly, obnoxious nuisance, and a terrible hunter to boot (time to catch a chipmunk: Dolly, 10 seconds; Guy, still waiting). Bribery keeps Guy treating Dolly well. But bristling neutrality is as warm as she gets.
—Brian Thomas

us, "Verizon has now authorized its engineers to proceed with the work to prepare the Development and Management Plan."
—Ed Ferman

Cornwall Briefs

•**Trinity Property:** It is prime Cornwall land, 462 acres just south of West Cornwall village: a conference center, four houses, a chapel, three or four outbuildings, roads, hiking trails, hundreds of feet of riverfront, and adjacent to state forest land. I could go on but you get the point. The grand old Trinity Church (Episcopalian) of New York City has owned the property for almost 100 years but will soon put it out of the conference center business.



With that in mind, the church sent four representatives to Cornwall in August to consult with First Selectman Gordon Ridgway. He said they are not committed to selling the property in whole or in parts but wanted to talk about its possible use. It was, according to Ridgway, "a friendly and upbeat" meeting that touched on a variety of possibilities. The church reps are hoping for future meetings with local conservation, housing, and business groups. Trinity Church is one of New York City's biggest landowners, with a real estate portfolio said to be worth an estimated one billion dollars.

•**The Primaries:** Just over 50 percent of Cornwall's eligible registered voters turned out, and our results matched the overall

outcome. Since I'm a Dem I'll be polite and go with Republican results first: for the U.S. Senate, Linda McMahon, 66, Chris Shays 27. Her opponent in the general election will be Chris Murphy, who got 184 votes to Susan Bysiewicz's 13. In the contests to replace Murphy in the Fifth Congressional District, Republican Andrew Roraback got 72 votes to a combined 25 for the other three candidates. Roraback's Democratic opponent will be Elizabeth Esty, who got 161 votes, to Chris Donovan's 29. And in spite of the endorsement and robo calls from Bill Clinton, Dan Roberti got nine—that's right—nine votes.

•**CCS:** Cornwall kids are back in school as of August 27 and administrative assistant Patty Rovezzi filled us in with some numbers: there are 102 students, down four from last year, and the incoming kindergarten has 12, up five from last year. There is one new addition to the staff: Karen Lindstrom, school psychologist.

•**Lucky 13:** That's the number of recent Cornwall high school graduates who are getting \$2,000 education gifts toward the first year of college from the Woman's Society. The funds come from the ladies' annual rummage sale which this year collected \$32,071 before expenses.

—John Miller

Yellow Medicine Dancing Boy

The birth of a white buffalo calf is so rare that the odds are one in 10,000,000. Such

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(continued from page 3)

odds were met in Goshen this summer for farmer Peter Fay. He quickly relayed the news to one Cornwall couple (who wish to remain anonymous) who quickly understood its sacred significance in Native American beliefs. They in turn relayed the news to their Lakota friends of 30 years in Wanblee, S.D. (This is the site of the Pine Ridge Reservation, visited by Cornwallians for the past few years.) So fortuitous was this occurrence that the White Mouse family and their circle of friends and relatives from California to Rhode Island traveled to Cornwall at the end of July for a weekend-long celebration.

Marian White Mouse learned about the birth of the calf while participating in a multi-day Sun Dance ceremony in South Dakota. The timing of the birth during the Sun Dance made this an especially positive augury for White Mouse. White Mouse, 50, had only heard about white buffalo from her grandparents, and she described her participation in the Cornwall and Goshen ceremonies as "surreal." About her time in Cornwall specifically she says, "I love that area...being there and having the rain, I was in heaven."

The ceremonies preliminary to the naming in Goshen, as well as the feast following, all took place in a private Cornwall location. The calf's name, Yellow Medicine Dancing Boy, was actually determined here in Cornwall.

The White Mouses are unique because they have maintained their songs and ceremonies despite obstacles like government efforts to eradicate traditional practices. A federal ban prohibiting practice of these ceremonies was only lifted in 1978.

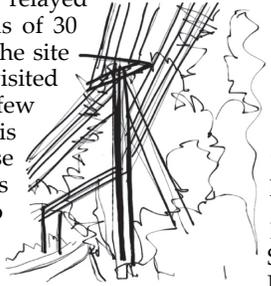
—Pam Longwell

Events & Announcements

Heating Oil Coop Panel Discussion: Sunday, September 2, 4 P.M. at the library. Learn about the pros and cons. Information: Katherine Freygang, Energy Task Force, 672-6010.

Putting It All Together

This issue of the *Chronicle* is in your hands because its readers have donated the funds to keep it coming month after month. We don't own TV stations, satellites, and soccer teams to pay the bills. We count on you. Thank you!



At the Cornwall Library

Virginia Kindred will show architectural works beginning September 4. An artist's reception will be held on Saturday, September 15, from 5 to 7 P.M.

Toddler Play Group begins Thursday, September 6, 10:30 to 11:30 A.M. for parents and their children ages 18 months to pre-school. Call 672-6874.

Let's Get Growing: Saturday, September 15, 10 A.M. to noon (rain date September 16). Learn how to extend the harvest with winter protection.

Motherhouse Activities

Saturday, September 1, 7 P.M., Family Country Dance, Town Hall. Caller Pete Stix and music by Still, The Homegrown Band. Donation \$3-\$5/child, \$5-\$10/adult. Information: Jane Prentice, 672-6101.

Saturday, September 15, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., Keeping A Family Cow Workshop. Potluck lunch. \$35/person, \$50/family (up to four members). Information/registration: 672-0229 or farmer@rlocalfarm.com.

Cornwall's 21st Annual Agricultural Fair: Saturday, September 8, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Village Green. Food provided by CCS eighth-graders. Volunteer Fire Dept Cow Chip Raffle, lots more. See insert.

Democratic Town Committee: Monday, September 10, 7:30 P.M. at the library.

Republican Town Committee: Wednesday, September 12, 7 P.M. at the library. CRTC Forum: KC Baird discusses the offices of selectmen. Discussion: Future of Trinity Conference Center. All welcome.

The Board of Assessment Appeals will meet Saturday, September 15, 9 to 10 A.M., at the Town Offices for the purpose of hearing appeals regarding motor vehicle assessments. No appointment is required. There will be no other time for hearing such appeals.

Cornwall Historical Society Talk and Tour "In the Woods": Saturday, September 15, 2 to 3 P.M. Meet at 54 College St. to walk a private woodland and learn its history from Jean Bouteiller and Susan Kelsey. Reservations required: 672-0505 or cornwallhistoricalsociety.org.

Cornwall Association Annual Meeting and Newcomers Tea: Saturday, September 22, 4 to 6 P.M. at the library. Selectman Richard Bramley will speak on developments in town, Richard Schlesinger will give an overview of the business

environment followed by updates from heads of town organizations and CCS. Upcoming forums will be discussed.

Lobsters to Go: Order by Wednesday, September 26, for pick up at CCS October 6, 4 to 6 P.M. \$15 cooked or uncooked, prepaid. Send check and order to: CCS Eighth Grade, 5 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall 06796. Email: ccs8thgradelobsters@gmail.com

Red Cross Blood Drive: Thursday, September 27, from 1 to 6 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. For information and appointment call the Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE BLOOD. The need is especially great at this time; we hope to make this drive one of the best.

At the Farm Market: Book signing, Saturday, September 29, 10 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. with Sally Cook for "Yankee Miracles: Life with the Boss and Bronx Bombers" by Ray Negron and Sally Cook.

Bluegrass, Brats & Brew: Saturday, September 29, 6 to 9 P.M., 39 Jewell St. Live Music by Still, The Homegrown Band. \$25 pp or \$35 at door. To benefit the Cornwall Child Center. For reservations please call Karolene Carlson at 672-2205 or email karolenecarlson8@gmail.com

Want to Be a Justice of the Peace? If you are an unaffiliated voter or member of a minority party, contact the Town Clerk's Office for an application, to be returned by November 1. The town clerk is charged with appointing 19 people to join the 19 Democrats and 18 Republicans who were endorsed by their party caucuses in May to serve a four-year term beginning in 2013.

At the transfer station: Be sure to check with attendants prior to dumping any bulk waste material. The long-standing policy of paying with cash or check before unloading will now be strictly enforced.

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CORNWALL CHRONICLE

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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