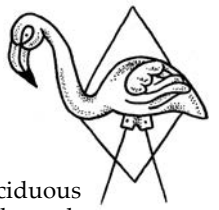


# CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 27 : NUMBER 7 AUGUST 2017

## Smoldering at the Roots

On July 3, I took a hike with Gordon Ridgeway and a group of young CVFD members to the site of the Cornwall Flat Rocks fire that burned from mid-September through mid-December of last year. In total, the fire impacted over 400 acres of state-owned forest, making it one of Connecticut's largest fires in recent years. Drought conditions during last summer set the stage for the lightning-ignited blaze, and its remote location made it difficult to control once it got started. Only heroic efforts by numerous local and state firefighters for three months kept the fire from spreading into residential areas.

My main interest in visiting the site was to see how the fire had impacted the forest and to speculate on what it might be growing there in the future. As a specialist in the subject of how trees recover from traumatic injury (disturbance ecology), I was particularly excited by the opportunity to see firsthand how Cornwall forests responded to the fire. After a 15-minute hike on an abandoned town road, we came to an edge of the burn where a firebreak had been estab-

lished. The first thing that stood out was the "patchiness" of the burn. In some places, we found wavy trenches radiating out from the bases of trees where the topsoil had been burned away to the depth of six to ten inches. Some of the trees in these burned areas were completely dead, while others had lost their lower branches, but their crowns were still alive. Whether the tree was alive or dead seemed to depend on how long and how deeply the fire had burned at the base of the tree.

What the future holds for the surviving trees is uncertain and varies by species. For the evergreen hemlocks, which were common in the area, the prognosis is not great given that most of them were already damaged by the hemlock woolly adelgid; for white pines, their limited ability to sprout from the trunk makes them particularly vulnerable to fire

damage. As for the deciduous trees—oaks, maples, birches—the length of their future survival will probably be proportional to how many of their buds leafed out this spring. The good news is that many of them were producing vigorous, green sprouts from their bases that have the potential to develop into replacement trunks. Remarkably, there were places where the vegetation—including small saplings—was undamaged by the fire.

Mountain laurel was the most common shrub in the understory of the burned area; the dense tangle of branches that it typically produces made it difficult for the firefighters to reach the blaze: it's not for nothing that loggers call such thickets "laurel hells." While most of the laurel was burned to a crisp, some plants were sprouting vigorously from the base while others showed no signs of life. So the laurel will come back, but not as densely as it had been originally. Near the edge of the wetland that bordered the burned area, highbush blueberry stems were charred, but sprouting from the base like the laurel. On higher ground, witch hazel bushes were also making a comeback via basal sprouts. To my eye, witch hazel and laurel will be big winners in the fire lottery.

The bottom line on the impact of the fire

(continued on page 2)



## AUGUST 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> Mondays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Mat Squad at 6:30 pm UCC; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall; Men's Senior Basketball 6:30–8:30 pm CCS ♦ Tuesdays: Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library ♦ Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 5–7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; Stitch 'n Spin, 7:15–8:30 pm UCC		<b>1</b> ♦ Inland Wetlands Agency 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>2</b> ♦ Ice Cream Party Kids' Summer Reading 4 pm Library	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> ♦ Hevreh Concert 5 pm Prentice Barn ♦ Community Contra Dance 7 pm Town Hall
<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> ♦ Full Moon Drum Circle/Water Blessing 7–9 pm Local Farm ♦ Cornwall Ag. Advisory Committee 7:30 pm Town Office	<b>8</b> ♦ Monthly Senior Luncheon Noon Library ♦ West Cornwall Septic Committee 5 pm Ingersoll's Shop ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 5–8 pm Trinity Center	<b>12</b> ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 10 am–5 pm Trinity Center ♦ Cornwall Conversation Populism 5 pm Library ♦ Bat Count/Pot Luck 6:30–8:30 pm Local Farm
<b>13</b> ♦ CCT Summer Walk 9 am–Noon Trinity Center ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 10 am–Noon Trinity Center	<b>14</b> ♦ Free Blood Pressure Clinic Noon–1 pm UCC ♦ Park & Rec. 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>15</b> ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ <b>Deadline: September Chronicle Copy</b>	<b>16</b> ♦ Bd. of Finance 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>17</b> ♦ Cornwall Conservation 7 pm Library	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> ♦ Children's Summer Camp Session 2 begins Library	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> ♦ Cornwall Business Assoc. 9 am W. Cornwall Library ♦ Community Pot Luck /Softball 6 pm Foote Field Gazebo	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> ♦ Margarita Party Adults' Summer Reading 5 pm Library	<b>26</b> ♦ Women's Equality Drum Circle 7–9 pm Local Farm
<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> ♦ ZBA* 7 pm Library	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Every Week This Month:</b> Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Toddler Play Group, 10:30–11:30 am Library; Meditation, 4–5 pm call Debra 672-0229; Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library; Mah Jongg, 7–9 pm CCS gym ♦ Fridays: Yoga 8:30–10 am Library 7–9 pm CCS gym ♦ Saturdays: West Cornwall Farm Market, 9 am–1 pm; Co-op Farm Market, 9 am–12:30 pm ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; Meditation, 1 pm call Debra 672-0229	

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

is that it will increase the overall patchiness of the forest. Some areas will be dominated by shrubs and trees that have sprouted back from their bases, while areas where the topsoil was not totally burned away will become the domain of fire-scarred survivors. Those areas where the fire intensively burned the topsoil away and killed most of the trees will likely become home to a new generation of oaks, maples, and birches that will hopefully seed this fall, assuming weather conditions are favorable to their germination in spring. The Flat Rocks fire has essentially "reshuffled" the forest such that a new mosaic of plants will develop that reflects the variation in fire intensity as it burned across the landscape.

—Peter Del Tredici

## Cornwall's Own Antiques Road Show

The Cornwall Woman's Society Rummage Sale held annually in July has changed enormously over the years. Started in 1925 as a committee of the United Church of Christ and known as the Ladies Aid, it sold hand-knitted items, baked goods, and held a raffle. In the intervening 92 years, it has grown from a simple morning sale to a three-day extravaganza of iconic proportions.

One thing that hasn't changed is the camaraderie and goodwill engendered by this annual event and the buzz of excitement at seeing the novelty and variety of donations. Rummage sale stalwarts, some of whom have been volunteering in excess of 50 years, can relate tale after tale about the evolving tastes, trends, and trinkets donated over the years.

As boxes are unpacked, volunteers will often gather around the latest mystery donation. Several years ago, they puzzled over the purpose of a delicate whisk with in-turned prongs made from a single piece of bamboo. Long-time rummage sale volunteer Ann Schilling soon discovered it was a *chasen* and used for stirring powdered tea in the Japanese tea ceremony.

One-of-a-kind donations such as the *chasen* run the gamut, be it an Afghani pakul hat or a taxidermy pheasant, an antique powdered sugar sifter or a diamond ring, a collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century glass negatives or a commemorative medal dated 1946 honoring a French battalion.

During the late 1970s, volunteers would more likely unpack a set of puffy hair rollers after the craze for "big hair" had run its course. One could chart the fashions and trends of a country by rummage sale donations.

One popular activity for parents at rummage sales is outfitting their children for the next year. Cornwall Woman's Society President Ann Hummel remembers one year when they were able to provide a complete set of clothes for a young boy attending a wedding. It included a suit, a shirt and tie, and even shoes and socks. "He looked very smart," said Ann.

And, sometimes the society gets more than it bargains for, such as money left in donated pocketbooks, wallets, and clothing. Or a live donation. This past rummage sale Gail Dolan, a volunteer of many years, let out an almighty shriek as she opened a box to find a nest of baby mice.

But, as much fun as volunteers have, they never lose sight of their mission: working to benefit Cornwall's children and our community. Janet Savin, a volunteer since 2008, says, "All the departments seemed to hum along seamlessly." After volunteering for a while, Janet realized what an asset the rummage sale was to Cornwall beyond the funds raised for educational gifts and local causes. "Closets get cleared, paraphernalia gets recycled, treasures and bargains are discovered, and friendships made." Cornwall's own antiques road show is our town at its best.

—Brenda Underwood

## Paintings in Progress

On a recent July morning in Cornwall Village, artist Carroll Dunham greeted visitors on the lawn of the three-acre compound that he and his wife, artist Laurie Simmons, have repurposed over the last ten years into an art-making campus.

The three-story red brick Georgian Colonial was built for the Calhoun family in 1910. In 1956, the Marvelwood School was founded in the Village and used the main house for administration until 1995, when the school relocated to Kent. "I like knowing that these buildings were part of a school," says Dunham, "and I like the feel of the campus. I like pushing that idea and having more areas with different functions." Entering the side porch, where his daughter Grace was playing with their collie puppy and her sister Lena's poodles, Dunham passed through the central hallway where his black painted stainless-steel sculptures are on display. Says Dunham, "Most of the space in this house is devoted to work." The basement serves as art storage and the third floor is his drawing studio where he keeps his drawing archives in flat files and "goes up there to get away."

Dunham's commute takes him past their vegetable and flower gardens to a gravel driveway next to a large grey stucco barn that once housed the school cafeteria, now his main studio. Simmons's studio is in the adjacent room, the old school kitchen.

## Good-bye to Friends

Christine Bizier-Waldron  
Marie L. Colley  
Norman Dorsen  
Anna Hall

## Congratulations

Jennifer Kenniston and Theodore Larson

## Land Transfers

Francis X. Saunders to Bank of New York Mellon, land with improvements thereon at 259 Kent Road.

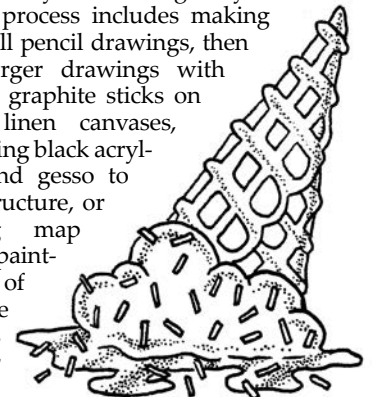
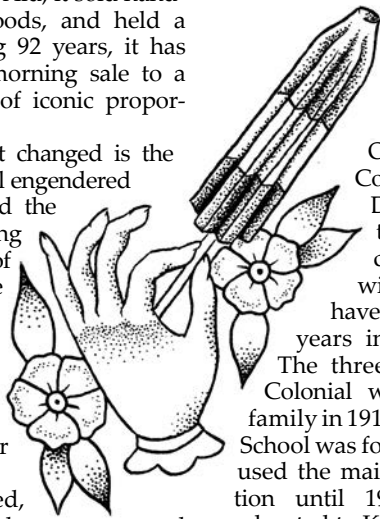
Sandra G. and Peter K. Oliver to Donald S. Hedden IV and Shannon Nicole Swann, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 77 Hollenbeck Road, for \$230,000.

Michael Lefkowitz and Tatiana Nizguretsky to Elizabeth Silkes, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 233 Sharon Goshen Turnpike, for \$580,000.

Susan Thistle, Trustee of the Mary B. MacCracken Trust, to James F. Siekmeier and Catherine V. Tall, buildings and improvements only at 17 MacCracken Road, for \$165,000.

Figuring out how to use this space, Dunham says, "has been a process for the last eight years, and Laurie and I are just now starting to understand it. It was "chock-a-block full of stuff left over from all the other Marvelwood buildings...lab tables, desks, windows." Among other renovations, they have torn up the linoleum floor, retaining the exposed cement, and have removed the Sheetrock to replace it with new pine walls and open support beams.

This flexible division of the space allows for the creation of many work areas. In one, a desk is covered with postcard-size drawings stored in glassine sleeves. These, Dunham explains, are not specific studies for the paintings he is working on for an upcoming show in his New York gallery, but are part of the process of exploring his current subject matter, which he describes as "men hitting each other with clubs." This imagery continues that of the group of paintings he showed recently in his L.A. gallery. His multi-fold process includes making lots of small pencil drawings, then making larger drawings with pencil and graphite sticks on prepared linen canvases, then applying black acrylic paint and gesso to create a structure, or underlying map for a new painting. Six of these large paintings in similar





stages of development lean against the walls of the studio, awaiting the final phase of the application of colored acrylic paint. Dunham is energized by the challenge of this new work and says, "I get excited about cramming these guys into the limited condition of the canvas."

Having given up his New York studio in 2008 and being no stranger to small town Connecticut life, (he was born in Southbury and raised in Old Lyme) he says that for him Cornwall is a good place to work without too many distractions. "Everyone tells me that I have been very productive." When asked if his surroundings have influenced his work, which in recent years has included increasing references to nature and animals, Dunham says, "I can't tell until much later down the road what the work has to do with my real life...trees, hills, dogs, birds...I don't deny there is a psychologically personal history and emotional layers to things that can be unpacked, but those are not the first things that come to mind."

—Sally Van Doren

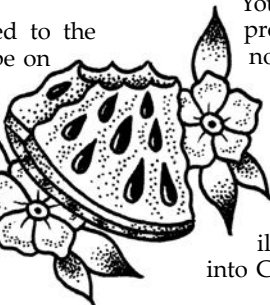
### Hot Dog Man Comes to Town

He grew up in Falls Village and now lives in Millerton. He graduated from Housatonic Valley Regional Regional High School where he played halfback to KC Baird's quarterback on the football team. Settling in New York City, he ran his own construction company for 25 years. Next came several years in the food business as a chef specializing in vegan/veggie dishes. Last month he arrived on the Wish House lawn selling hot dogs out of a circa 1908 antique cart.

He is Kevin McCracken, a relatively young man of 58 years with a rather gentle personality for a hot dog hawker. Kevin offers the all-beef variety, and because Cornwall has a bunch of weird eaters, he invented a sort of veggie dog with ingredients like carrots, tamari, chipotle, onions, and maple syrup in a bun. And to show how weird we are, he made 16 of them one Saturday and sold them all in 45 minutes.

The antique cart had been sitting in the cellar at nearby Clark Outdoors for at least a decade before they loaned it to Kevin. It has a propane heater that cooks the franks in water and heats the buns. Kevin also offers condiments such as sauerkraut, onions, sweet relish, and mustard.

Kevin McCracken (not related to the Yelping Hill MacCrackens) will be on the Wish House lawn offering his hot dogs Wednesday through Sunday from 11 A.M. to 4 P.M. And, yes, he is a resident member of Ye Olde Farmers' Market Saturday mornings in West Cornwall. —John Miller



### Where Have All the Young Folks Gone?

To grow up in a small town is one of the best experiences a child could hope for. Now if that small town is Cornwall, well, then I can say with confidence it is the best experience and will say so for the rest of my life. I moved to Cornwall in 2008 and am a proud graduate of the CCS class of 2015. Now I am a junior at Housatonic Valley Regional High School and, looking back over my short time here, I can see everything that Cornwall has done for me. From fostering a love for skiing through Mohawk Mountain and its free after-school ski program, or providing the generous tennis program at the town courts, or offering first-job opportunities gardening at an organic farm, Cornwall has been the cornerstone to most everything I will do.

Now I am lucky enough to take my involvement with this town to a new level, as I am a volunteer intern at the Cornwall town office. While here, I will be devoting much of my time to Cornwall's greatest menace: children—or really, lack thereof!

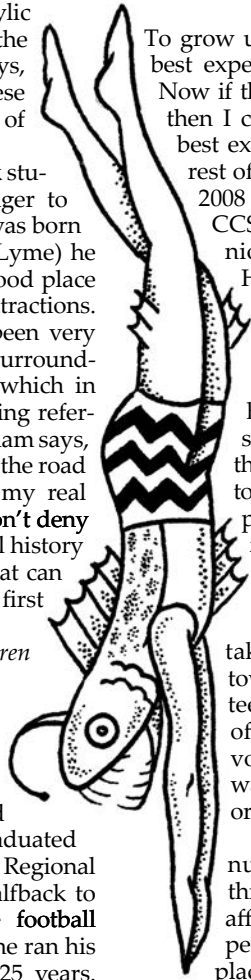
As many know, the declining number of youth is a problem throughout Connecticut; but it is affecting small towns like ours especially. While Cornwall is a great place to grow up, it may not offer the same draw to our eager young adults. Since 2000, the population of Cornwall has stayed relatively the same; however the residents seem to just be getting older. With age may come wisdom, but this demographic trend does not help out our town's diminishing local businesses or our school's dwindling number of students.

So, as the number of children and young adults decline, we can either sit and watch or put our heads together and figure out how to have more youth in Cornwall. Whether it's by keeping the young adults we have or by attracting new families with kids, Cornwallians must face the burden of this small-town issue together.

Thus I am here to ask for feedback from the people of Cornwall and prospective residents (young or old), as well as to report back to you and the town on what I hear and what we might do about it.

You may ask, "If this is such a problem, why are we just starting now?" Well, already Cornwall's

Economic Development Commission has been and is currently hosting entrepreneurs and professionals for a few years now, especially those who are young or have families, to encourage them to move into Cornwall. They introduce them



to the website (explorecornwallct.com) to convince them that Cornwall has the space and resources to accommodate their businesses and families. By gaining just a handful of new businesses, Cornwall can create jobs for more citizens, grow economically, and fill our schools again.

With your help I want to make Cornwall home to a new wave of eager young people, to give them the chance to experience all Cornwall has to offer, as I have experienced myself. So contact me regarding this youth issue in Cornwall; I would love to hear your thoughts. You can reach me via phone at 860-671-1360 or at dsaccardi@hvrhs.org.

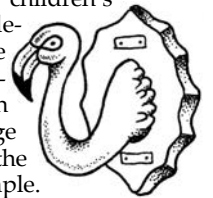
—Dean Saccardi

### Reading Challenges at the Library...

...mean fun, not obstacles! Last year the library initiated the children's reading challenge to encourage kids to come into the library and find something to read. There were maybe a dozen or so participants. This year over 30 children signed up.

According to Margaret Haske Hare, our librarian, they then engage in a "simple process: each child gets a "check" for visiting the library and taking out a book or books." They get credit for visits, not the number of books they take out. This system simplifies record-keeping because those readers range from being read to, to reading adult books. As Margaret says, "How do you compare the books? You can't." So the point is, if a child visits the library five times during July, he or she gets an invitation to an ice cream party and receives a small prize.

Margaret thinks the picture of the ice cream cones on the flyer was what enticed adults to ask (sort of half-joking) if they could participate in the children's reading challenge. She decided to quickly arrange an adult reading challenge from July 1 through August 25. This challenge is a little different from the children's, but still simple.



Sign up. Each time you come into the Cornwall Library, tell the librarians at the circulation desk how many books you have read. They will keep track; and, on August 25 at 5 P.M., the library will host a Margarita Party for all participants and award a prize of two Millerton Moviehouse tickets for the person who has read the most books.

The real prize is getting to know the library and reading great books.

—Catharine Clohessy

### Cornwall Briefs

•**Tanker Town:** Our new \$380,000, 3,000-gallon tanker is in place in the West Cornwall Firehouse where CVFD members spent much of July training in its use. The old tanker, by the way, is being housed in

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(continued from page 3)

Cornwall Bridge, making us a two-tanker (and safer) town.

•**Grand Slam:** We are a bit late with this but the first-ever grand slam hit by our town's Little League team came off the bat of Russell Sears in a 14-3 demolition of rival Lakeville a couple of months back. Our team, which included kids from Sharon like young Sears, had previously lost twice to Lakeville. Call it revenge! The setting was Foote Field.

—John Miller

## CVFD Activity Report

As always, Cornwall's Bravest have been hard at work, keeping our town safe and well. Starting with this issue, the *Chronicle* will report on the number and nature of the calls the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department and EMS teams responded to in the past month. Raising awareness is but a token of thanks for all that they do for us.

—12 medical emergencies

—1 motor vehicle accident

—1 lightning strike to a tree

—3 wires and/or trees down

—2 false alarms

—6 training sessions

—Memorial Day traffic management

CVFD Tip of the Month: **NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON TRAFFIC**—Always walk on the left facing traffic. Drivers may be distracted (or just plain bad drivers). It's safe and it's the law.

## Events & Announcements

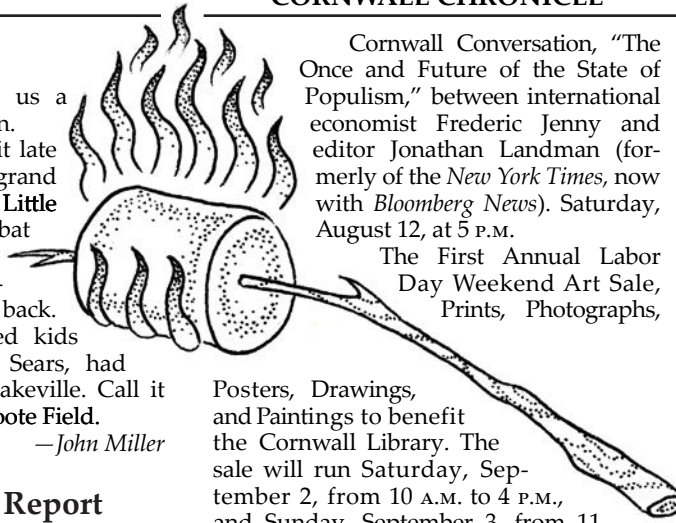
### At the Cornwall Library

An ice cream party will be held for children who met the summer reading challenge on Wednesday, August 2, at 4 P.M.

A Margarita Party will be held for adults who met the summer reading challenge on Saturday, August 25, at 5 P.M.

## Coming Next Issue

Dining (or not) in Cornwall, How to Handle a Falcon, the Video Guy, Second Most Expensive House in Town, and much more. Don't miss it! And why would you? We send it to you for free—donations welcome.



Posters, Drawings, and Paintings to benefit the Cornwall Library. The sale will run Saturday, September 2, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M., and Sunday, September 3, from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.: opening reception Friday evening. Donations of art are gratefully accepted through August 20. Proceeds will benefit programs and services provided by the library.

### Art in Cornwall

At the Souterrain Gallery: the exhibit "Mighty Minis," works by 30 artists from all over, curated by Suzan Shutan, will be on display through September 10.

**Hevreh Ensemble Fundraising Concert** at the Prentice Barn, 129 Lake Road on Saturday, August 5, at 5 P.M. The requested donation of \$45 includes a wine reception. For reservations: 860-435-2144 or hevrehmusic@gmail.com.

**Community Contra Dance:** Have a hot time in the old town tonight! Saturday, August 5, at 7 P.M. at town hall. Live music by Still, the Homegrown Band and Friends, and special guest caller Bob Livingston. All dances taught, all ages and left feet welcome, no partner necessary. Donation requested to pay the caller. More information: motherhouse.us.

### Motherhouse Events

All events are at Local Farm, 22 Popple Swamp Road. Register at motherhouse.us or call Debra at 860-671-7945.

August 7: Full Moon Drum Circle and Water Blessing from 7 to 9 P.M.

August 12: Bat Count potluck from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M.

August 26: Women's Equality Day Drum Circle from 7 to 9 P.M.

**Senior Luncheon:** Newcomers always welcome for great food



and fine company at the air-conditioned Cornwall Library, Tuesday, August 8, at 12 P.M. There will be a buffet lunch, so RSVP is a must. Questions? Call Jen Markow at 672-4071 or email prcornwall@gmail.com.



**The Rose Algrant Show:** Friday, August 11, from 5 to 8 P.M., Saturday, August 12, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., and Sunday, August 13, from 10 A.M. to 12 P.M. at the Trinity Conference Center, Butler Hall (see insert).

**CCT Summer Walk Series 2017:** Take a morning hike at your leisure up the Trinity Retreat Center Riverside Trail after viewing the Rose Algrant Show. Sunday, August 13, 9 A.M. to 12 P.M.

**Community Potluck Picnic:** Bring a dish and play pick-up softball, Foote Field Gazebo, August 23, at 6 P.M. Cornwall Ag Commission, in appreciation of the CVFD, will provide grills, drinks, plates, and utensils. Questions? Call Bill Dinneen 672-0035 or Garrick 860-318-1306.

**Back-to-School Program** is looking for assorted school supplies to fill backpacks obtained from the Salvation Army for elementary, middle, and high school children in Cornwall. No crayons needed for younger kids, but more items necessary for boys than girls in the upper levels. Gift certificates for families to shop for new school clothing also welcome. To donate, bring items to Cornwall Social Services, 26 Pine Street, or mail to Jane Muir Sellery, Back-to-School Program, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT 06753.



## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

cornwallchronicle.org

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