



CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 24 : NUMBER 7 AUGUST 2014

Common Core Sense at CCS

Hartford Courant headlines blared “Some Parents Say No To Their Kids Taking Smarter Balance Test.” Bloggers posted “Those aren’t guinea pigs, those are our children.” Some schools resorted to bizarre bribes to get students to show up for the “field tests” this spring.

“We didn’t have to deal with anything like that,” CCS Principal Mike Croft says. CCS met this frenzy with calm advice to “eat a healthy breakfast” on testing day and with year-long, interest-driven projects that kept Cornwall kids focused on testing themselves and their world.

Last August, eighth-grade students began the “Explorations” class, led by social studies instructor Will Vincent, in partnership with the CCS Fund for Excellence. Students understood that their projects would culminate in a presentation assessed by a rubric that, according to Croft, is “tightly correlated with the speaking and listening standards of the Common Core.” Each student decided on a topic to research. For example, Eliana Calhoun chose to find out how to compose instrumental/vocal music. Pat Kennedy investigated the workings of generators. Ella Hampson pursued inquiry into veterinary science. All students had to read for information (a key requirement of the Common Core) to produce

a written proposal (writing with evidence to persuade being another Core standard) in order to gain approval and funding for necessary materials from the Fund for Excellence board. Imagine, as Principal Croft asks, what skill and real-world appreciation it takes from a young person “to craft a letter requesting money from somebody he or she doesn’t even know!”

Then, students had to revise their proposals per the board’s suggestions before receiving support to go forward. Eliana acquired “Mixcraft” software for her music

project. Olive Cowan received funds for patterns and material for her dressmaking venture. Each student was then matched with a mentor from the community with whom to partner towards presenting the fruits of research and practice at the end of the year. During a whole day of formal performance in front of next year’s eighth-graders, family, mentors, and other community members, these young scholars showed us how to perform a physical examination on a dog, how to rebuild a generator motor, how to compose music, how to design a house—to describe only a few.

Instructor Vincent notes, the “Explorations” projects demand that students meet 20 key Core standards in the language arts strand alone. But they also challenge students to identify real interests, to make decisions they will have to live with, to work both independently and interdependently: when critical thinking skills practiced in school get real-life application, abstract standards take on concrete, palpable form. As Will Vincent says, these projects present “the possibility for students to access elements of a future career” and so, smartly balance the frenzy now surrounding the under-vetted standardized tests.

Testing, testing?? Or, Cornwall common sense for the Common Core.

—Catharine Clohessy



AUGUST 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6–9 pm Town Hall; 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; Mah Jongg 7–9 pm Library; Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym ♦ Fridays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library ♦ Saturdays: Farm Market, 9 am–1 pm West Cornwall ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; Meditation, 1–2 pm call Debra 672-0229					1	2
3 1st Q ♦ CCT Guided Trail Walk 11 am Hare Preserve	4 ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	5 ♦ Committee for Seniors 7 pm Library ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	6 ♦ Gov. Dannel Malloy 6 pm Town Hall	7 ♦ S'mores Night 6–9 pm Hammond Beach	8 ♦ <i>The Adventures of Pinocchio</i> 5 pm Town Hall ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show Opening 5–8 pm CCS	9 ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 10 am–5 pm CCS
10 FULL ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 10 am–Noon CCS	11 ♦ Blood Pressure Clinic Noon–1 pm UCC	12 ♦ Rep. Primary Election 6 am–8 pm Town Hall ♦ Senior Luncheon 11:30 am–1 pm Wandering Moose ♦ Author's Talk: Elizabeth Fishel 4 pm Library ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library	13 ♦ Creativity in Later Life Workshop 4 pm Library ♦ YA Writers' Workshop: Greg Galloway 7 pm Library	14 ♦ YA Writers' Workshop: Greg Galloway 7 pm Library	15 ♦ 7:00 pm : <i>Despicable Me</i> Family Movie- Library ♦ Deadline: September Chronicle Copy	16
17 4th Q ♦ CCT Guided Trail Walk 11 am Welles Preserve ♦ S. Waite Rawls III Talk 2 pm Town Hall ♦ Senior Social 4–6 pm Library	18 ♦ Water Sports Day Noon–3 pm Hammond Beach	19 ♦ Cornwall Day 11 am–8 pm Lake Compounce ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	20 ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	21 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Comm. 6:30 pm Town Hall	22 ♦ Artist's Reception: Hilary Cooper 5 pm Library	23
24	25 NEW ♦ ZBA* 7:30 pm Library	26 ♦ Committee for Seniors 7 pm Library	27	28	29	30 ♦ Book Signing: Valorie Fisher 3–5 pm The Wish House
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*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

For additions and updating, visit www.cornwallchronicle.org

The Art of Brendan O'Connell

Brendan O'Connell is not your run-of-the-mill well known artist. He's self taught and never went to art school. He started out supporting himself as a street artist in Europe, doing caricature portraits in front of Notre Dame and other tourist attractions in France, Italy, and Spain while painting abstracts on the side. When his serious paintings began to sell, he returned to the States, married fellow artist Emily Buchanan and, about 15 years ago, came to Cornwall.

About ten years ago Brendon did a series of pictures of the spaces in Walmart stores. Unexpectedly, Walmart became intrigued by the idea and invited him to paint in Walmart stores all over the country. Fame and fortune followed. Last year the *New Yorker* did a long profile on him; he has appeared on the *Colbert Report*; galleries and collectors are enthusiastic; large companies commission new work from him.

Recently Brendan has turned his attention to painting the things that are on the Walmart shelves. His heart has always been in his abstract painting, so he may depict Coca-Cola bottles more or less as they are; but he may paint a cleaning detergent so that it is a scarcely recognizable mass of bright colors.

Brendan is passionate about art in education. He feels that most of the time schools treat art as something nice to have instead of seeing that the creativity, problem solving, and innovation involved in art should be a core element in education. He feels so strongly about this that he has created an organization called Everyartist, which sponsors a day of art creativity in schools throughout the country. Last year almost a quarter of a million students in 46 states participated. This year he's shooting for half a million.

—Hendon Chubb

"Everyone Knew Someone..."

We've gotten used to thinking about our nation's wars as a series of great battles fought by great men. It's really the stories of the ordinary men who left a place like Cornwall to fight far away which reveal the most profound history.

When the Civil War was fought 150 years ago, the town was alive with opinions about the rights and wrongs of that terrible conflict. An estimated 181 local men enlisted in the Union Army; 52 of them never came home, one of them Gen. John Sedgwick, the highest-ranking officer on the Union side killed in combat.

In planning the current Cornwall Historical Society exhibit, director and designer Raechel Guest has found the stories of these lives in published records and in letters and diaries. We are lucky to have such articulate observers as the Rev. Stephen Fenn who wrote about local southern sympathizers: "[We had] a little

bit of excitement about taking down a secessionist flag in N. Goshen. [There] has been a small one in Cornwall...a small boy was sufficient to capture that."

Most Cornwall men were mustered into the 19th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, which became a heavy artillery outfit in 1863. They were just about everywhere there was fighting: up and down the Appalachian spine, at Richmond, and finally at the Appomattox surrender in April 1865. The men endured bad food, dreadful wounds, imperfect care in the military field hospitals, and disease, always disease. The men captured and imprisoned usually starved to death or died of illness.

The costs of the war were felt at home in Cornwall. The wives, mothers, and sisters waited for news from letters and newspapers. The women knitted and sewed shirts to send to the front. And waited and waited. Widows struggled to survive. Families were shattered (at least three marriages dissolved), and now and then people just disappeared and never came home. Some men who fought endured bouts of weeping and depression, a condition then called "nostalgia." Their damaged lives were one of the hidden costs of the war.

No American war has been more enthusiastically memorialized. A visit to the Sedgwick Memorial in Cornwall Hollow tells that story. —Lisa L. Simont

How Old Are You Now?

The West Cornwall Covered Bridge is old enough to rest on its piers and not worry about whether it is 150 years old or 158. Town historian Michael Gannett did a lot of research in preparation for creating his booklet, *A Historical Guide to the West Cornwall Covered Bridge*, published in 1988. His conclusion was that the bridge was built in 1864. That makes for a 150th recognition due this year, 2014.

For a number of years it was thought the bridge was built in 1856, and in 1956 Cornwall had a big party. There were speeches, a parade with floats, and music and dancing. Bringing a piano into the bridge had started earlier; an old 1947 newspaper clipping reports "bridge becomes a ballroom."

Gannett's research found references to the bridge in both Sharon and Cornwall 1864 town records. Also a notice in the August 1864 *Litchfield Enquirer* reported that "The bridge...at West Cornwall is completed and open for travel...[and] said to be the best bridge on the river." It was built using the patented design of Ithiel Town that became popular because of its strong, straightforward construction.

Over the years, of course, the need for repairs was ongoing. Incidents, such as a 20-ton truck loaded with road oil plunging

through the deck in 1943, and a hay wagon's load that ignited inside the bridge, caused some damage. The bridge was largely rebuilt in 1947. Other accidents were averted. In 1961 a huge ice jam filled the river and threatened to take out the structure. Dynamite south of the bridge at the bend in the river was effective, and happily, the water and ice level dropped immediately.

In 1968 the state took over its ownership, and the next year engineers stated the bridge should not only be replaced, but in a different location.

At once a "Save the Covered Bridge" committee spoke up for repair, not replacement. Eventually Gov. Ella Grasso intervened. The new plan was to jack up the bridge two feet and insert a steel deck under the wood planking to give strong support to the roadway. The restored bridge opened in 1973, with Gov. Tom Meskill first across in a 1931 Ford. All 184 CCS children walked to the village to witness the celebration.

Some repairs to roof, siding, and deck were made in 2000. As with any structure, there is always something to fix. But when you're 150 years old, that's expected. And our bridge is doing fine. —Ginny Potter



Welcome

Hunter Wayne Poling
to Jessica and Michael Poling

Congratulations

Anna Tucker Greene and
Carlos Javier Velasaco Rivera

Caroline Claire Calhoun and
Declan Patrick Curtin

Virginia Alden Gold and
Christina May Danforth

Land Transfers

Wesley A. Hallock, et al to the Bank of New York Mellon, Trustee, property known as 11 Furnace Brook Road.

Jessica Marshall and Peter Belhumeur to Anne E. Kreamer and Jane K. Meyer, Trustees, land with improvements thereon at 38 Popple Swamp Road, for \$750,000.

Arthur Scott Kegelmann and Debreh J. Gilbert to Andrew N. Stathopoulos and Philippa Durrant, land with improvements thereon at 140 Whitcomb Hill Road, for \$395,000.

Down the Rabbit Hole

To paraphrase Lewis Carroll: "Down, down, down." I am falling down the rabbit hole of native plant gardening and "either the well is very deep or I am falling very slowly." It began, I think, with the discovery of a small patch of pink lady slippers in the woods

behind the house. To stumble unexpectedly upon these pale and fragile plants in the midst of the dark mossy woods was a secret magic; a treasure glimpsed briefly at the time of the spring ephemerals. Once I swooned for the lady slipper, the velocity of the fall accelerated: clove-scented rhododendron, purple and white trilliums, and most dramatic of all, bloodroot raising ground with its startlingly white flower bud furled in one green palmate leaf.

The assemblage of plants in each season is an essential part of Cornwall's treasured charm. No one of these species stands alone but is interconnected into a rich diversity of plants unique to Cornwall. So it has been with a gnawing sadness that I have watched the changes that have occurred to this diversity over the past 25 years; the encroachment of phalaris reed, garlic mustard, bittersweet, barberry, and phragmites. Each invasive species devours the space and resources needed for their native counterparts. Fighting invasives seems a monumental and tiresome pastime. But if the alternative is to lose what is so remarkable, then I guess I'm in for the fight. And you might want to be too. (Consider that UConn scientists recently uncovered a connection between the presence of barberry and higher numbers of Lyme-carrying ticks.)

Change is inevitable, but being good stewards of our own small plots of land can help our native populations hold their ground. If you're interested in bolstering Cornwall's natural assemblages here are a few things you can do: 1. Plant native: in your border garden, in your meadows, in your woody shady areas. 2. Buy your native plants from highly reputed native plant centers like Massachusetts's Project Native (projectnative.org) or New England Wetland Plants (newp.com—it's not just for wetlands!). 3. Keep your own acreage as free of invasives as possible by pulling barberry and garlic weed and clipping bittersweet at its base. It's important to dispose of your pulled and clipped invasives properly. There are several ways to do so, but one easy way is to pile them in one area of your property where you can keep an eye out to make sure they do not resprout or reseed; placing a tarp over the pile helps ensure they don't spread. Look at invasivespeciesinfo.gov for more information.

—Heidi Cunnick

The Bad News Bears

In April of last year Phill West filmed a young bear circling his house on Cream Hill Road. It appeared to be about two years old with a beautiful glossy pelt and had been spotted by a large number of people and their dogs. Don Bachman and Pinky, mercifully on a tight leash, met the bear at about 6 P.M. near a neighbor's house. Pinky barked bravely, but the bear shrugged off

this threat and finished up the birdseed. This year a bear actually tried to get inside John Miller's house.

There's no consensus on what works best to scare a bear. A wide array of bells and whistles are used. There was quite a discussion on the Cornwall Community Network about what John Miller could do if his bear returned. Carol Goodfriend wrote, "Anton Bruckner 7th Sym[phony] 1st movement begins with the double basses playing a very low, loud passage. It scares the hell out of the bears; they go galumphing off."

The DEEP says bears usually avoid people. But the availability of food near homes can cause them to grow habituated to humans and disturbances such as dogs and other noises. To avoid attracting bears, remove bird feeders from late March through November. If a bear visits a bird feeder in the winter, remove the feeder. Add a few capfuls of ammonia to trash bags and garbage cans to mask food odors. Keep trash bags in a container with a tight lid and store in a garage or shed. Do not leave pet food outside overnight or put meats or sweet-smelling fruit rinds in compost piles. Lime can be sprinkled on the compost pile to reduce the smell and discourage bears. Thoroughly clean grills after use or store in a garage or shed. Never intentionally feed bears.

Art Gingert recalled a conversation with Paul Rego, DEEP's bear man, who told him that because of warming winters, bears can be out and about 365 days a year. It takes a seriously cold winter to induce them to hibernate. Rego says that if a bear tries to get into a house (like John Miller's), you should call him at 860-675-8130 and he will deal with it.

—Lisa L. Simont with Heidi Kearns

[Editors' note: Last August we offered a poem by Mark Van Doren. Here is a poem by his son.]

What's Serious

After coffee at his birthday party,
Aged sixty-five, he entertains his
guests
With amiable impersonations, each
Funnier than the last. It is years
since
In a Polish ghetto sealed against
escape
He counterfeited documents for those
Who came and went among the
Partisans.
Now an architect, he recently
Directed renovations for a woman,
Much displeased by various details,
Who is indignant at the patient
smile
With which he suffers her
complaints—as if
She thinks and all but says, he
hasn't got
The sense to understand what's serious.

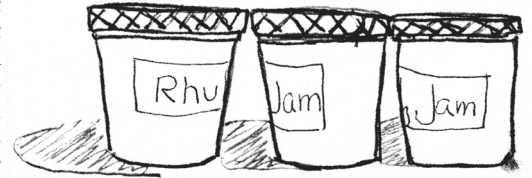
—John Van Doren

Letter to the Chronicle

"SMILE" FOR CORNWALL

If you buy things from Amazon, you can help your favorite Cornwall nonprofit by signing up for Amazon Smile. With Smile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will contribute half a percent of the purchase price of almost anything you buy (Kindle Books seem to be an exception) to the charity of your choice, and of course, I hope you'd choose CORNWALL CHRONICLE INC. It's easy to sign up. Go to smile.amazon.com and follow the instructions. When they ask for your charity, enter it and the money will start flowing. Nothing else changes; the site will be the Amazon site with a note that you're supporting the charity on top. Be sure to use Smile if you want the money to go to the charity. The easiest way to do this is to put Amazon Smile on your bookmark toolbar. That way you won't absentmindedly go to the regular Amazon.

—Hendon Chubb



Cornwall Briefs

• **New Town Tent:** It finally arrived, and you can see it (blue and white) in use at the Rummage Sale. If not, look for it in September at the Ag Fair. Its \$2,200 cost was paid for by the Sydney Kaye Fund.

• **Look for Route 4** between Cornwall Bridge and the Village, also known in some quarters as Furnace Brook Road, to be a one-laner with a traffic light for a short distance while a small bridge is repaired by the state. The contractor from Watertown said the work would begin any day and should be completed by winter.

• **And While You Are** swimming, canoeing, paddling, and fishing in Cream Hill Lake this summer, the Cream Hill Lake Task Force is busy studying that body of water. It is "mapping plant and animal species and checking water chemistry. We are doing this," members reported, "not because the lake is in trouble but to ensure it stays healthy." The task force members ask the public to "look for our posters and answer our questions."

• **The Next Town "Issue":** It's pretty certain that Cornwall's first cellphone tower will eventually be constructed at the town gravel pit off Route 128 and Dibble Hill Road. And last month we mentioned that AT&T was considering a space off Dark Entry Road in Cornwall Bridge for a second tower. Cornwall Conservation Trust hasn't stepped in on this one, but the Weantinogue Heritage Land Trust has. These guys are saying such a tower would be visible from

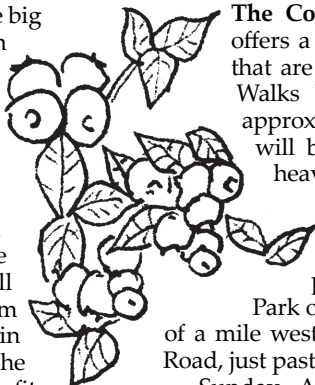
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a variety of locations: the center of Cornwall Bridge, the boat landing at Housatonic Meadows State Park, the road heading east across the cement bridge over the Housatonic, and "a significant stretch of the Appalachian Trail." The Board of Selectmen (and woman) thinks the situation calls for further examination and discussion.

•**Valley 5K:** What was called the first annual Run the Valley 5K was held in Cornwall Village in July and attracted over 150 participants, including some big running clubs from out of town and a woman said to be one of Princeton University's top middle-distance runners. However, the winner was our own Rocco Botto, member of the CVFD, father of a beautiful little girl, and all-around good guy. And two other members of the department, the aging but still beautiful Bill Lyon and Tom Barrett, finished first together in the 70-and-over category. The event raised \$5,350 to benefit PharmaCares, a nonprofit that helps veterans and other Americans get affordable health care.

—John Miller



Events & Announcements

At the Cornwall Library:

Elizabeth Fishel talks about her book, *Getting to 30: A Parent's Guide to the 20-Something Years*, Tuesday, August 12, at 4 P.M. Free.

Sondra Zeidenstein, poet, presents a workshop on creativity in later life on Wednesday, August 13, at 4 P.M. Free.

Author Greg Galloway leads a short writing project with feedback on August 13 and 14 at 7 P.M. \$15 fee.

Family Movie shows *Despicable Me 2* on August 15, at 7 P.M. Refreshments. Free.

Kids' Camp with activities and books of the Civil War era will be held August 19 to 22, from 1 to 4 P.M. \$10 fee.

A reception for artist Hilary Cooper will be held on Friday, August 22, at 5 P.M.

In Memory Of

Last issue's listing under "Goodbye to a Friend" of Princess the Crow may have baffled some. She died at Sharon Audubon but was born and raised in West Cornwall. For her full story, visit our website, click on Archive, and see the October 1996 issue. Donations to the *Chronicle* in memory of Princess will help keep us flying.

The Cornwall Committee for Seniors has rescheduled its meeting from Tuesday, July 29, to Tuesday, August 5, at 7 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. The regular August meeting is still on for Tuesday, August 26.

The Cornwall Community Contra Dance at Town Hall on Saturday, August 2, at 7 P.M. will feature old-time music by Still the Homegrown Band with calling by Anne Banks. All dances taught; donation requested. For more information call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

The Cornwall Conservation Trust offers a series of guided trail walks that are great for hikers of all ages. Walks begin at 11 A.M. and last approximately 45 minutes. Walks will be canceled in the event of heavy rain/thunderstorms.

Sunday, August 3: Hare Preserve. Hike CCT's newest trail around a charming pond and natural sculptures.

Park on Popple Swamp Road, 2/10 of a mile west of the intersection of West Road, just past house #38.

Sunday, August 17: Welles Preserve. Hike up Bloody Mountain to spectacular views of Cornwall Village. Park on Town Street, 4/10 of a mile from the intersection of Route 128. Trail maps, with parking locations, can be found online at cornwallconservationtrust.org. Contact Kristen Bedell with questions at 672-6014.

The Rose Algrant Show: Friday, August 8, from 5 to 8 P.M., Saturday, August 9, from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., and Sunday, August 10, from 10 A.M. to 12 P.M. at the Cornwall Consolidated School (see insert).

Grumblin' Gryphons, Friday, August 8, at 5 P.M. at town hall. *The Adventures of Pinocchio* performed by young people from the Gryphons' theater arts camp. Following the performance there will be stilt walkers, jugglers, and hula-hoopers, music, and the Giant Green Man Puppet. Potluck dinner and refreshments to follow.

Free Blood Pressure Clinic: Monday, August 11, noon to 1 P.M. at the United Church of Christ Parish House. No appointment necessary. For information call VNA Northwest at 860-567-6000 or go to vnanw.org.

Senior Luncheon: Beat the heat, meet, and eat, Tuesday, August 12, 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. at the Wandering Moose. Questions? Contact Jane Prentice at 672-6101 or cornwallctseniors@gmail.com.

Park & Rec: Cornwall Day at Lake Compounce, Tuesday, August 19, 11 A.M. to 8 P.M. (rain date Wednesday). Cost: \$24, no charge for children under 3. For more information email prcornwall@gmail.com or call Becky at 672-4071.

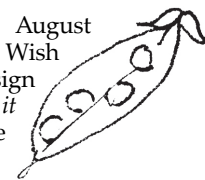
Summer Senior Social Sunday, August 17, from 4 to 6 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. Music by the Bob Parker Quartet with cool libations and tasty pickings. For mature audiences only. Sponsored by the Chore Service and Park and Rec. Questions? Contact Bob Potter at 672-6191.

The Cornwall Historical Society presents American Civil War Museum co-CEO S. Waite Rawls III on Sunday, August 17, 2 P.M., at town hall. Rawls will discuss the Battle of Cold Harbor, the most devastating battle for Cornwall's troops. Admission and refreshments free.

Art in Cornwall:

At the Cornwall Library: Light Reflections, an exhibition of photographs by Martha Loutfi, will be on view through August 16. Faces and Flowers, works in watercolor, oil, and clay by Hilary Cooper, opens August 19. Artist reception Friday, August 22, from 5 to 7 P.M. Photographs by Cornwall students at HVRHS are at the teen center of the library. The Souterrain Gallery features works by Harvey Offenhartz through the month of August. The National Iron Bank will exhibit works by Peter Barrett.

Book Signing: Saturday, August 30, from 3 to 5 P.M. at the Wish House. Valorie Fisher will sign her new book *I Can Do it Myself*. Proceeds benefit the Cornwall Child Center.



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