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The  
*Cornwall's*  
issue



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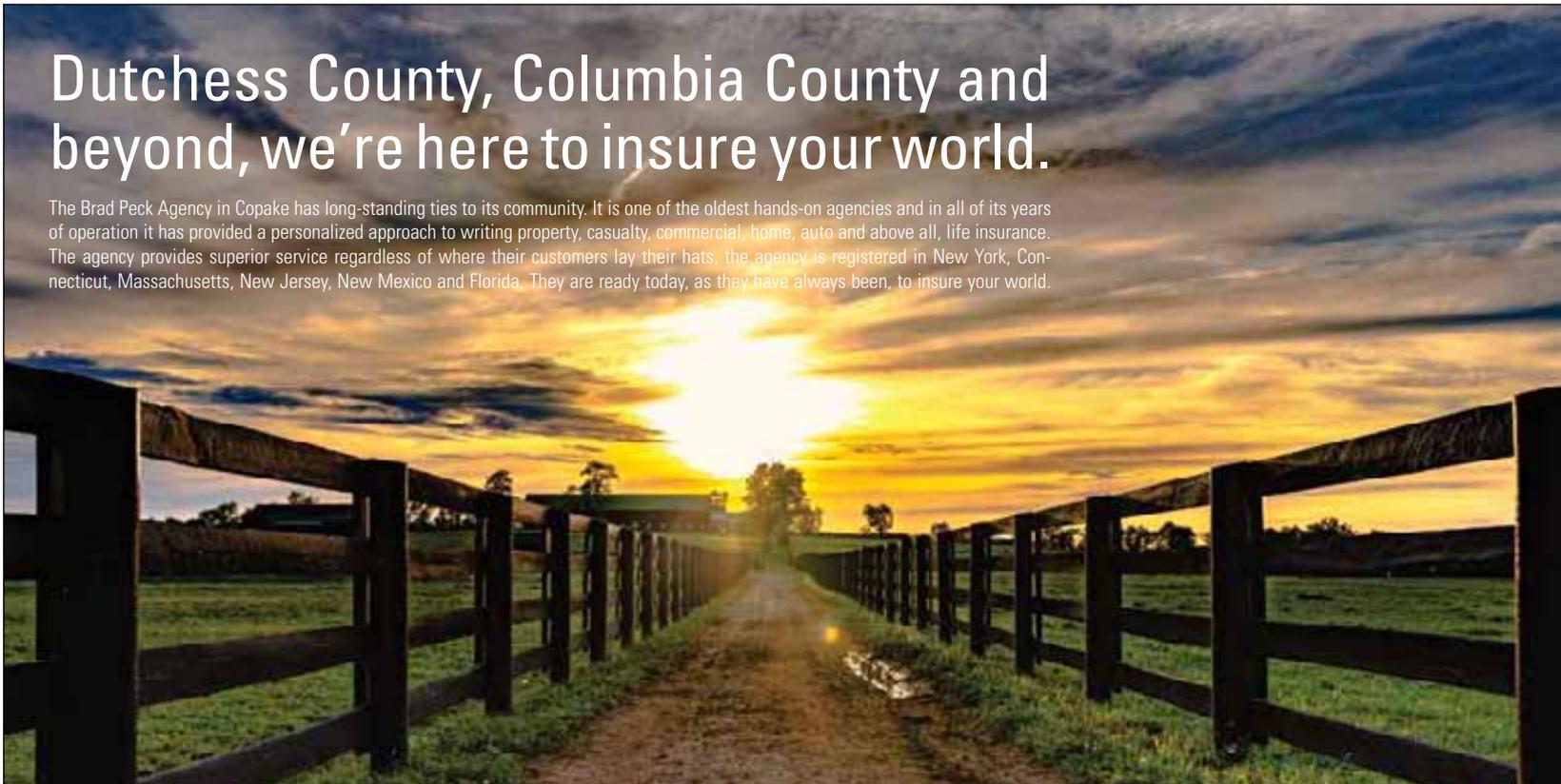
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## THE CORNWALLS IN CT

This issue is devoted to a little corner of Connecticut that is dotted with Cornwalls: Cornwall Bridge, East and West Cornwall, Cornwall Hollow, and Cornwall Village. Twice a year, in April and October, we devote an entire issue to a town or village or township within our distribution area. Thus far we've featured Millerton, NY; Salisbury and Lakeville, CT; Hillsdale, NY; Great Barrington, MA; and Hudson, NY. The reason for doing this is to bring attention to a place that is full of history, stories, people, businesses, and curiosities. Last fall, after our Hudson issue came out, I was speaking with one of the ladies who works at my daughter's day care in Lakeville and she didn't know that this is my magazine, but she was saying how she and her husband had driven up to Hudson for the day after reading all about it in this magazine. The stories that they read made them excited enough to go and explore the City of Hudson for themselves. I thought that that was so wonderful!

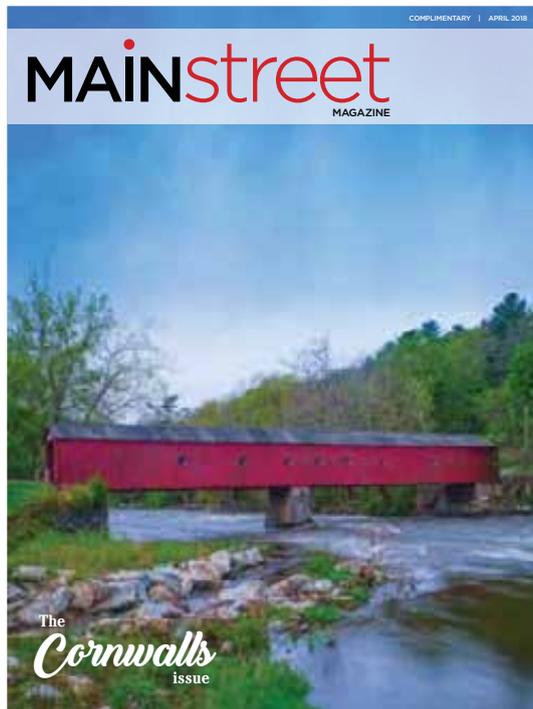
As some of you may know, the area that the Cornwalls cover in Connecticut is not large. However, the stories that my writers have written to share with you are spectacular! There is a wonderful artists' community within this area, there are many amazing entrepreneurs who are thriving and excited about what they are doing, and there is also great history to be found there, and then there is of course the Housatonic River. The Cornwalls are well-known for their natural beauty and the beautiful Housatonic is certainly a part of that.

But I will admit, when we began working on this issue, I didn't know too much about the area that I set all my writers off to discover. So I was very eager to learn about it and I was quite excited to read the stories that are to be found in this issue. The one main thing that I took away from all of the stories is that the folks who live and work in the Cornwalls truly love it there! That made me even more excited about having devoted an entire issue to this not-so-large segment of Connecticut.

I hope that all of our readers enjoy learning about the Cornwalls, and perhaps some of you may be enticed to go and visit the numerous Cornwalls to see the covered bridge, to eat at Pearly's (where I am definitely going now!), to check out the many artists who work and create there, and to support the growing businesses in the region.

One of my favorite sayings is, "Love where you live" and that might just be the mantra of the Cornwalls! Enjoy.

— *Thorunn Kristjansdottir*



APRIL 2018

The picturesque Cornwall covered bridge.

Cover photo by  
Lazlo Gyorsok

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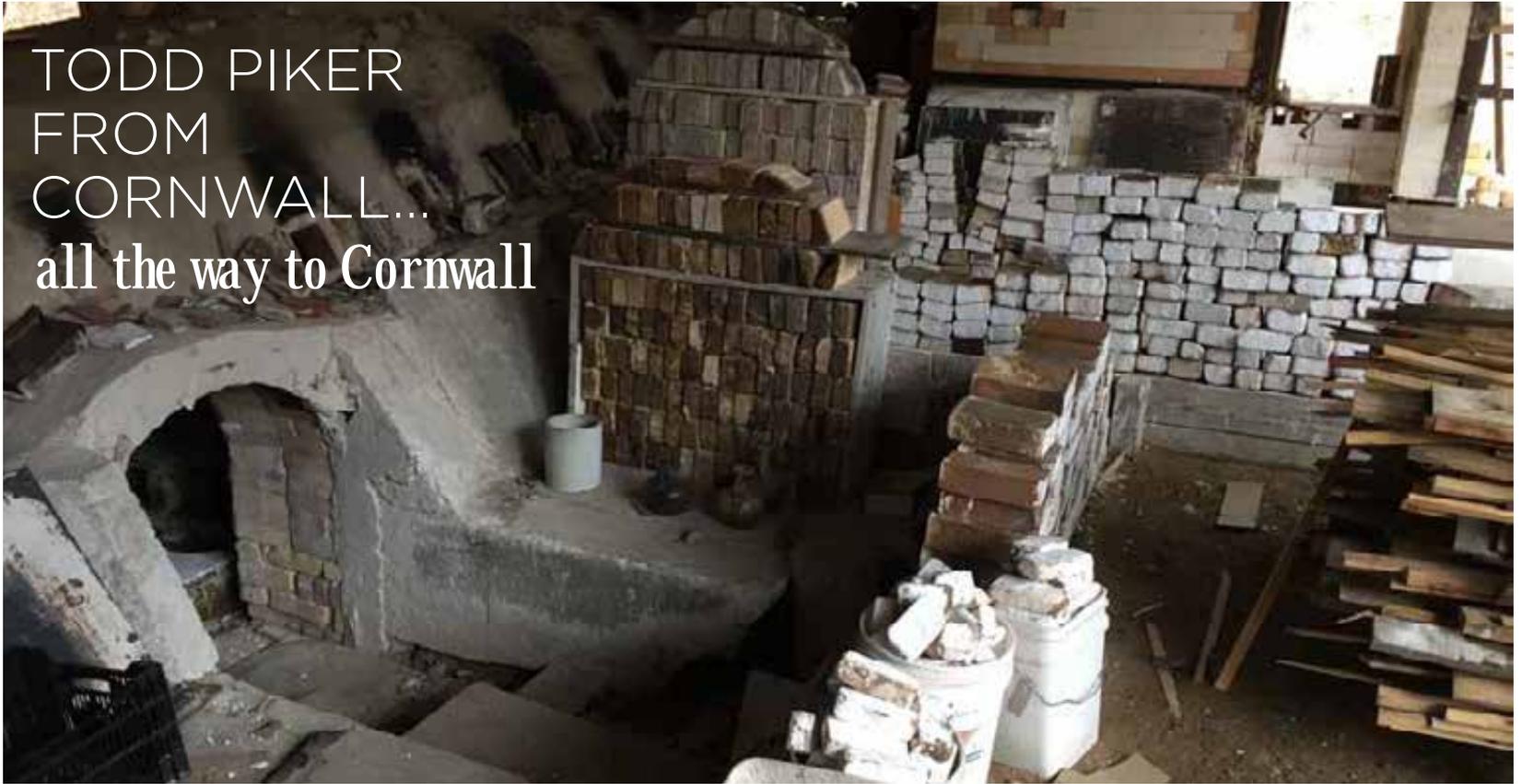
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# TODD PIKER FROM CORNWALL... all the way to Cornwall



By CB Wismar  
arts@mainstreetmag.com

“I don’t think you choose pottery. It chooses you.”

Todd Piker is a gentle soul, and his revelation carries the modest sense of a person who can look back on a full life and feel comfortable where the road has taken him.

Pottery chose him, early on, and has never abandoned him. From apprentice to urban transplant to local businessman to respected artist and mentor, Todd has embraced the journey with as much intensity as he leans into a whirling mound of clay and turns it into something of graceful beauty.

To be certain, that road has had its busy intersections and blind curves. Growing up on Long Island, he attended the George School near Philadelphia, a celebrated Quaker boarding school that counts among its illustrious alumni Stephen Sondheim, Julian Bond, Blythe Danner ... and Todd Piker.

## Discovering pottery

It was during a summer study tour that Piker first seriously encountered pottery in a two-week immersion at a studio at Ways Mills, Quebec. “As a high school student I had an interest in pottery and discovered that I could enroll for a two-week course

at the Rozynska Pottery and study with Wanda Rozynska.” The lifestyle appealed to him, the magnetic draw of working in clay surrounded by like-minded individuals seemed in direct contrast to the competitive crush of a “climbing and clawing” career in the city.

So it was, that armed with a high school diploma and the encouragement of his parents, Todd Piker came to an intersection and turned toward England. He had applied to be an apprentice with one of the most celebrated studio potters in the fine English tradition.

Michael Cardew had been the first apprentice of the man credited with being the “father of contemporary British pottery,” Bernard Leach. Cardew had distinguished himself both in his native England and in Africa where, as the Blitz forced potteries to shut down their kilns lest the heat signals attract night time bombing raids, Cardew had enhanced his glowing reputation.

Accepted by Cardew to apprentice in the Wenford Bridge Pottery in Cornwall, England, Todd met and became fast friends with Cardew’s other apprentice, Svend Bayer. By Todd’s description, Bayer was a “natural” and his presence prompted Cardew, the master, to greater artistic heights. “In that short year when I was resident as apprentice #2, I sat at the foot of

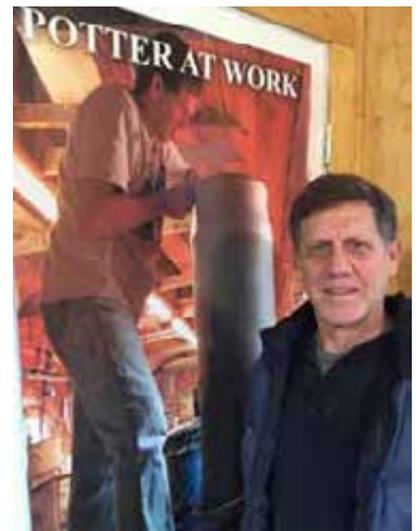
the Sorcerer, but was schooled by his apprentice.”

## Apprenticeship year over. Now what?

Apprentice year completed, Piker returned to the US to try his hand at getting his college degree. His student days at Antioch College in Ohio were very short. Back in New York City with a study/internship with *Newsweek*, he sampled the journalism and publishing worlds, abandoning his connection with Antioch and taking up full-time residence in Manhattan where he both worked and enrolled at Hunter College. The time he had spent with Cardew, allowing his spirit to meld into the ways of clay continued to haunt him, however, and while other attractions would take Todd off in new directions, the underlying hunger to be a potter remained a constant.

More important than both his work and his study and his explorations, during this period, Todd met someone who would change his life. Ivelisse Clemente Perez was first a friend of Todd’s younger sister, Kim. Even as he was working in Cornwall, England, Kim visited him and was filled with stories of her new friend – a girl whose background could have hardly been more different than their own.

On his return to the United States,



Above, top to bottom: Todd Piker’s kiln. Todd Piker.

Todd and Ivelisse met for the first time ... and the connection became as tightly bound as the glaze and clay in a high-fired piece of pottery. He had met the love of his life, and years and miles and adventures could not derail the inevitable. They spent time together ... they spent time apart ... but Todd is very clear about the relationship that has lasted through years of marriage, rearing two daughters, and exploring where the journey has taken them. "She's my rock," he says with a casual emphasis that would indicate he came to that realization long ago and has only found the years have confirmed that fact.

**Cornwall to Cornwall**

The completion of the journey from Cornwall to Cornwall became complete in 1974 when, in partnership with his father and the supporting presence of his dear friend Svend Bayer, the pottery at Cornwall Bridge began to emerge as the realization of a dream.

The rural Cornwall location afforded Todd easy access to the vast amounts of wood required to fire a large kiln. In the 70s there were several saw mills nestled in the Litchfield Hills, each one trying to find ways to dispose of the slabs generated when giant trees were squared in order to cut boards.

The design for the kiln had grown out of dreams and drawings that Svend had begun while they were both apprentices in England. In a true moment of serendipity, the tons of fire bricks required to build the giant arched Sino-Korean inspired anagama tunnel kiln were sitting, idle only an hour away from where Piker's kiln was

to be built. Rather than a crippling expenditure of \$50,000 to acquire the specialty brick, \$700 of trucking and hours of back-breaking labor liberated the bricks from being bulldozed into a river and brought them to Cornwall.

Todd and Svend set to work to not only build the kiln, but to create hundreds of pieces of "kiln furniture," the shelves and supports on which their pots would rest during firing. Then, there was the creation of the pots, themselves. Both trained by Michael Cardew, the work reflected his influence and their desire to create utilitarian pieces that would find daily use in the homes of their patrons.

With great anticipation, pride, self-assurance and bravado, the wood at the mouth of the new kiln was lighted and the first firing began. Todd tells the result of that endeavor most succinctly: "After 57 hours of continuous stoking during an unexpected deluge of rain from a passing hurricane we stopped this first effort when we realized all of our remaining wood was soaking wet. During the firing we had watched in horror as pots loaded in the kiln exploded and entire stacks of brick and homemade shelving vanished in a single instant."

Not a great start. But, it was far from the end. Days later, having slept, taken some nourishment and corrected the errors, patched the broken pieces and reordered the contents, they re-fired the kiln. Success is often hard to come by, but each successive firing provided additional learning, tempering, and encouragement.

With the clear, intense focus of creating pieces that people will use, Todd's work has gained wide acceptance and been offered on some of the grandest retail stages. White Flower Farms provided his first major client, followed by Macy's, Bloomingdales, and other high profile retailers.

There was also his own retail venture – the shop in West Cornwall that started in 1984 and became a destination for both local customers and travelers who wandered up and down Route 7. Though the building has recently been sold and Cornwall Bridge Pottery is morphing into a new and quite exciting future as the home of the Institute for the Discovery and



Above: Todd Piker's finished pieces. Below, left: Todd Piker firing his kiln.



Examination of Artistic Sensibility (IDEAS), Todd's pottery remains a constant with assistants and visiting artists working side-by-side with the master, creating elegant, utilitarian pieces and firing in the great anagama kiln that continues to produce wonderful work. A visit to the pottery is an adventure in itself, and the interested are always welcome.

There is an unwritten rule in many sophisticated pottery cultures – notably Korean and Japanese – that it takes generations to become a potter, not years. Todd Piker may be a notable exception to that rule. From the first explorations, experiments, disappointments and disasters, he emerged a widely recognized and respected artist. Svend Bayer returned to England, apprentices and assistants have come and gone, the kiln has been repaired and re-built, recipes for clay and glazes have been refined and refreshed ... and Todd Piker is a man in full – a potter. ●

*Explore Todd Piker's work at [www.cb pots.com](http://www.cb pots.com) or visit his studio on Route 7, just south of Cornwall Bridge.*

*Are you an artist and interested in being featured in Main Street Magazine? Send a brief bio, artist's statement, and a link to your work to [arts@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:arts@mainstreetmag.com).*

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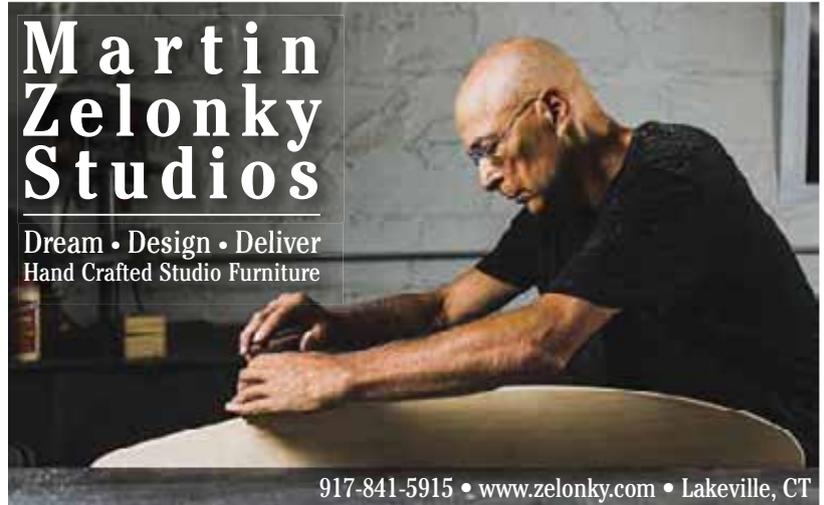
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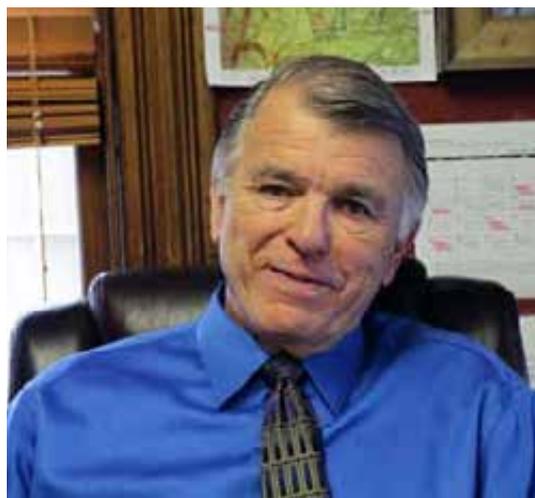
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## friendly faces: meet our neighbors, visitors and friends



**Samantha Sheldon** is a sophomore at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. She is a hard-working student, focused on balancing her athletics and academics. Samantha plays soccer during the fall, and she looks forward to starting her first year of tennis this spring. “Both of these sports give me the opportunity to stay in shape and socialize with friends. They offer such a fun environment.” In her free time Samantha enjoys spending time with family and friends, as well as prioritizing school work and time management. As a Kent, CT, native, Samantha also takes time to appreciate the area. Her favorite things to do in Kent are taking a stroll around town and stopping by the coffee shop. “Although it is a hike to get to school, I am thankful that I live in such a rural town. Kent is located in a really pretty area.”



**David Bain** has been selling real estate in the Northwest Corner for 44 years, and he runs Bain Real Estate’s three offices in Kent, Sharon, and West Cornwall, CT, with his partner and son-in-law, Chris Garrity. “What has given me the most pleasure is solving real estate needs for both sellers and buyers. The constant meeting of new folk and trying to find a match that would fulfill their dreams keeps my days exciting, varied, and fulfilling.” Besides meeting and working with people, David says one of the best things in working in the hills of Northwest CT is getting to know the houses, the neighborhoods, and walking the land. When he isn’t focused on real estate, you’re likely to find David in the garden and enjoying the life he shares with his wife Debbie, their nine children, nine grandchildren, and their dog Maya.



**Natalie Conklin** prides herself on good, old-fashioned customer service when it comes to her customers’ banking needs. With 11 years of banking experience, Natalie joined The Bank of Greene County at its newly opened Copake, NY, branch. “This new role is extremely satisfying in that I can help someone, be it creating a savings plan for their future or maybe the purchase of their first home.” After her drawer is balanced after a day at work, Nanny Natalie enjoys spending time with her grandchildren Hunter, Haley, and Brooke as much as possible. Natalie is also well-known for her baking talents and the most decadent chocolate mousse cake you will ever taste. Born in Sharon, CT, Natalie moved to Copake over 32 years ago where her home has great views of the Taconic Mountain Range, a view that never gets old, she says.



**Scott D. Conklin** has been involved in funeral services since 1993, becoming licensed in 1996. Today Scott is the funeral director/owner of Scott D. Conklin Funeral Home in Millerton, NY. “The thing that brings me the most satisfaction is being able to help families through some of the most difficult times in their lives; the loss of a loved one.” Outside of work Scott enjoys spending time with his family and friends, picnicking, and hiking at Kent Falls. Born and raised in Dutchess County, Scott lives in Dover where he serves as a volunteer fireman and secretary at the local fire company. “I enjoy tinkering with classic cars and putting the top down on my Jeep when the weather is nice. I like living in the Hudson Valley and it’s an honor and a privilege to serve families in the Tri-corner area.”



**Stephen Sperduto** has a background in commercial photography, and as a result he learned how to frame his own pieces almost 40 years ago. He continued framing as his creative outlet after leaving the world of photography, and he uses his gallery space, Housatonic Fine Art & Custom Framing in Cornwall Bridge, CT, to display the different framing techniques. “I love the design aspect of framing. The options are endless and I feel my photography eye helps compliment my framed pieces.” Originally from Westchester County, NY, Steve used to visit the area often and always loved it, deciding to make the move permanent ten years ago. “It’s so beautiful here and I’m proud to work with the local community, too.” In his spare time Steve loves to play golf at the Hotchkiss School golf course a few days a week, ride bikes, read, watch movies, and enjoy the quiet country life.



**Sara Murphy** started working at Salisbury Bank & Trust Company about three years ago. Two-and-a-half years of those years were served as a teller in the Millerton branch, but in August of 2017 Sara became an Assistant Trainer – traveling to all of the branches and helping train all new tellers that start working at the bank. Her contagious smile and bubbly personality reflects in everything she does. “I love getting to train my fellow colleagues, helping others achieve their goals, and growing relationships with the people in the community. It is such a rewarding feeling.” Sara also considers herself an outdoors kind of girl. She enjoys hiking, going to Kent Falls, spending time with family and friends, as well as cooking, baking, and driving through the scenic Tri-state area that we are all so fortunate to live in.

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L to R: Image by Gala Narezo; student pianist: Hotchkiss Dramatic Association



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# Making dreams come true

MICHAEL TRAPP IN CORNWALL, CT

By Christine Bates  
christine@mainstreetmag.com

*Main Street talked to Michael Trapp, landscape architect, interior designer, and antique dealer, just after he returned from his winter shopping trip to Europe and Southeast Asia. (Follow him on Instagram if you want to see what he was buying.) His West Cornwall store, situated between the rail tracks on one side, and Italianate gardens and the Housatonic River on the other, is a house of mysteries and stories from exotic lands.*

## Michael, you're a well-known designer. What kind of clients wouldn't appreciate your style?

Lord and Lady Tidy Paws. I have way too much patina. I would characterize my style as curious.

## I can tell this will be a fun interview. How did you find this house in West Cornwall?

In 1990 I was living in Gaylordsville south of Kent and doing antique shows all over. Friends were looking at property and by default I found this. I've been renovating for 28 years and counting.

## Has Cornwall changed since then?

Not really. Some aspects are different. Cornwall has tried to change itself many times but it remains pretty much the same while many of the surrounding areas have changed a lot. Artists and writers have always been attracted to the space and privacy of Cornwall.

## Where do you go on your shopping trips?

I close the store from December through March and travel to Europe (Italy, France and Portugal), Morocco for textiles, and then to Southeast Asia in Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. I have friends to visit everywhere, agents who work with me, and dealers that I know. This trip my finds included indigo textiles from Laos and Ming plates from a shipwreck near Sumatra.

## How would you describe your business? What do you do?

I try to make people's dreams come true. Everything I do is design – whether it's antiques or architecture – it's the same sensibility. I listen to the client and make their home the best it can possibly be. Since I'm dyslexic I have an excellent acoustical and visual memory. Clients come to me by word of mouth, and before the Internet almost everyone who came here was recommended by someone. It's amazing how people find me. The majority of my clients are private individuals who need assistance with the interiors or exteriors of their homes, or their landscaping. And I do some commercial work for restaurants and hotels, like The Inn at Pound Ridge.

Landscaping is about 60% of my business with exteriors, and interiors around 30%, and 10% from retail customers in the antique shop.

## Who are your clients?

I only work for nice people – never movie stars, I don't envy their life. The client and I must be able to communicate openly and honestly. It's not anybody's fault if the chemistry is not there. If I feel I can't work with someone I try to explain the reason directly and recommend someone else.

## How did your career happen?

I studied Landscape Architecture at Ohio State – a major that combined art and architecture. I had a 4.0 average in horticulture, and my parents were both gardeners. I started in the antique business with \$20 and a junk store in Ohio when I was living in a stone house with no heat and no electricity. Flea market clients and other dealers suggested that my taste level was too sophisticated for Ohio and told me to move east.

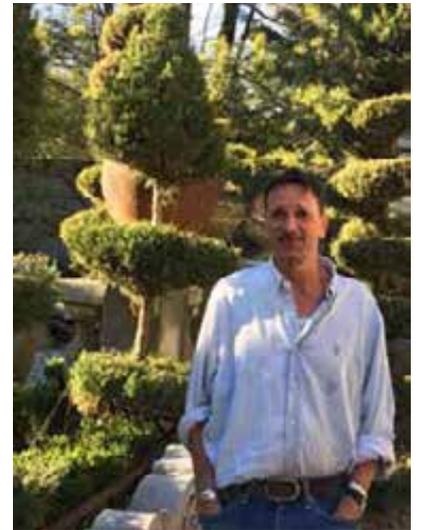
Russell Carrell, who was an early antique show organizer, found me at the Brimfield, MA, flea market and wanted to bring a younger point of view to his shows, like the Winter



Antiques Show in New York. My booth display and merchandize was distinctly different. Other traditional dealers would say, "Did you see what that kid from Ohio brought in?" I had architectural elements mixed with 18th-century English china. From that beginning clients started asking me to decorate whole apartments. Then when I moved to Cornwall a friend asked me to design a teahouse. It all just happened.

## Do interior designers have to enjoy shopping?

Of course! Finding authentic, exquisite objects is a big part of being an interior designer. You can't be afraid to make a wrong decision. You wouldn't get punished even if you do and if it's wrong you can always paint it or give it away. I only buy what I like and don't pay attention to trends. For example, mid-century modern really doesn't interest me. It's harder and harder to find really cool stuff that is affordable. I used to buy at auctions, but now you're competing with the whole world.



Above, top to bottom: Romantic, Italian-inspired garden and lap pool designed by Michael Trapp. Photo by Erick Owen. Michael Trapp in his Italianate garden behind his shop in West Cornwall. Photo by Christine Bates.

Continued on next page ...



Above: Michael Trapp's exterior design melds pool and garden. Photo by Erick Owen. Below, right: Alliums, wisteria, and lilacs create a lavender corner in Michael Trapp's West Cornwall garden. Photo by Michael Trapp.

**How has the market changed since you started antiques?**

When I began as a dealer, original Roman and Greek sculpture were cheaper than 19th-century copies. Early on in Gloucester, MA, I was offered a trunk of 16th-century Italian canvases for \$120. At the time I couldn't afford them. During *perestroika*, when the Baltic States opened up, there were exquisite chandeliers available. I would buy a couple, sell them and buy more. They're all gone now. There's no longer any Dutch colonial furniture left in Indonesia. In Istanbul, exquisite textiles coming out of Iran and Uzbekistan used to be available, but now the Jewish weavers have all moved to Israel and we're left with rugs from China.

**What's your average day like? Could you explain how you work?**

I love what I do so it doesn't matter that I work seven days a week. Typically I get up around 4:30am and get to the shop by 7am. I work until around 6pm. Then I have dinner with a friend and start all over again the next day. I enjoy my work and taking the time to do it well.

Typically I'll start a project with sketches and line drawings on graph paper. If required, someone else

converts them to CAD CAM on a computer. I have three crews that have worked with me exclusively for years. They handle the actual building and landscaping. For some clients I handle everything from soup to nuts, designing the house, exterior and interior, including furnishings and doing the grounds. One has to walk the land and feel what it tells you. It is wise to follow its lead and take that direction. If required I work with specific engineers, but very infrequently with architects.

There's no standard way that I charge clients. Sometimes it's as a percentage of the cost of the job. Or fees can be a set as an hourly consulting fee. You just have to be very clear up front and make sure that your billing is scrupulously correct. It's the unattractive side of the business.

**Is it true that people don't want antiques anymore?**

Absolutely not true. Yesterday two women came to my warehouse and bought every piece of 18th-century French furniture I had. People want authenticity and beauty, which is unusual and hard to find.

**Are you active on the Internet? What about Houzz?**

Houzz? What is Houzz? I spend no time on the Internet. I'm too busy. I send images to my assistant and she posts them on Instagram, our website, Facebook, etc.

**What's the worst aspect of your business?**

People not paying. People stealing your ideas. People stealing your things. This can really get you upset and chew up your time. You have to learn from the school of hard knocks. At the very beginning of my career in Ohio I lived in a old house without electricity or heat for seven years. No one had lived in this house since the Civil War. It was all I could afford. The rent was \$15 in the winter and \$30 in the summer. I worked as a chef in a restaurant and my annual income was \$1,200. I was really poor. That has made me very conscientious about money. I'm very careful about everything.

Also you always doubt your ability to come up with a brilliant idea. To maintain your reputation you always have to outdo yourself.

**Do you have advice for aspiring designers?**

The passion for this profession comes from within and it's hard work. My advice is to work hard, be honest, and treat everyone equally. Education and apprenticeship can provide structure and discipline. Travel, look, explore, see, study. I've always been captivated by fallen civilizations.

**What is your favorite place to travel?**

Indonesia with its myriad of languages and religions and overlapping influences is my favorite place. There are leftover objects from animists, Hindus, Islam, and colonialists. There has been trading there for over a 1,000 years.

**What do you read when you travel?**

I like to read murder mysteries by authors like Ian Rankin, PD James, and Jo Nesbo. •

*To learn more about Michael Trapp and his business, you can call (860) 672-6098 or visit him at 7 River Rd, West Cornwall, CT, or online at michaeltrapp.com. His West Cornwall store is now open on weekends.*





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# Chocolate

## SHEET CAKE WITH COCONUT FROSTING

By Jessie Sheehan  
info@mainstreetmag.com

As anyone who knows me well will tell you, when it comes to cake, I am all about Duncan Hines and Betty Crocker. But not in the way you think: I don't actually buy a boxed mix when making a cake – although I'd be thrilled to come over and have a slice, if you've baked one and want to share – but I do try to replicate the flavor and texture of one when preparing one from scratch. Moreover, if I am out and about and eating cake, I always hope the person who has baked it has done the same.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that this recipe for chocolate sheet cake, thickly frosted with billowy, marshmallow-like coconut frosting, is not for the faint of heart (a.k.a. those that prefer their cake made with an alternative flour, in small, delicate unfrosted slices, with a berry or two on the side). This cake has a deep chocolate flavor (and color), is very moist, and has a soft, pillow-y crumb. The frosting is very sweet, somewhat sticky, and the combination of the two reminds me of a Hostess Suzy Q (a coveted after-school treat from my childhood that I haven't had in a million years).

### Like, how about now?

I love the combination of coconut and chocolate, but if you do not, substitute vanilla extract for the coconut extract in the cake and in the frosting do the same. Truthfully, though, the coconut flavor is subtle, so if you're on the fence, give it a try. I'd love to tell you to make this cake for your Easter Brunch, but alas, Easter came early this year. But I will tell you this: the cake comes together quickly, in one bowl, and the frosting is a seven-minute frosting – meaning, quite literally, that it'll be done in seven minutes.

That's a long-winded way of saying, make it whenever the feeling for an old-school, over the top, slice of cake hits – like how about now?

### For the cake:

2 cups cake flour, sifted  
3/4 cup Dutch-process cocoa powder, sifted if lumpy  
3/4 cup light brown sugar  
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 3/4 teaspoons baking powder  
1 teaspoon table salt  
1 egg  
1 egg yolk  
1 tablespoon pure coconut extract, or vanilla extract  
3/4 cup vegetable oil  
1 1/4 cups buttermilk  
3/4 cup boiling water  
1 tablespoon espresso powder

### For the coconut frosting:

3 egg whites  
1 1/3 cups granulated sugar  
2 teaspoons light corn syrup  
1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar  
1/4 teaspoon table salt  
1/3 cup water  
2 teaspoons coconut extract, or vanilla, or more to taste  
1 cup sweetened shredded coconut, toasted, for decorating

### For the cake

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease a 13x9x2-inch pan with cooking spray or softened butter. Line the pan with parchment paper and grease again.

Add the flour, cocoa powder, brown sugar, granulated sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle



attachment and mix on low speed until combined.

In a small bowl, add the egg and yolk, coconut extract, oil, and buttermilk and whisk until combined. With the mixer on medium-low speed, slowly pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. Beat until incorporated, scraping down the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.

Combine the boiling water and espresso powder in the same small bowl, no need to clean it, and add to the batter in the mixer bowl. Mix again on medium speed for 30 seconds, until smooth. The batter will be quite thin.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake on the middle rack of the oven for 30 to 35 minutes, rotating at the halfway point. The cake is ready when a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Let cool completely in the pan.

### For the frosting

Place a large heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water over medium-high heat. Do not allow the bottom of the pan to touch the water. Add the egg whites, sugar, corn syrup,

cream of tartar, salt, and coconut water. Using an electric hand mixer, beat the egg white mixture on high speed until stiff and glossy, about seven minutes. Remove the bowl from the saucepan of hot water, add the coconut extract, and continue beating for another two minutes. Use immediately, spreading thickly and decoratively on your cooled chocolate cake. Slice the cake using a sharp knife dipped in hot water for the cleanest slices, wiping the knife clean and re-dipping it each time you make a cut. This cake is best eaten the day it is made. •

*Jessie is a baker and cookbook author; you can learn more about her through her website [jessiesheebanbakes.com](http://jessiesheebanbakes.com).*



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# A little different: LIFE AND REAL ESTATE IN THE TOWN OF CORNWALL, CT

By Christine Bates  
christine@mainstreetmag.com

When asked what is special about the Town of Cornwall and all its Cornwallian hamlets – East Cornwall, Cornwall, West Cornwall, Cornwall Bridge, and Cornwall Hollow – most people say the same thing, “It’s quirky, artistic, very private and very hilly.” Some add that that Cornwall is also outdoorsy and sporty with fishing and rafting on the Housatonic River that borders the town on the east, swimming at Cream Lake, and skiing at Mohawk Mountain, one of the oldest ski areas in Connecticut.

## A tolerant community

Cornwall has been a second home destination for over a century, welcoming artists, intellectuals and independent thinkers who have been accepted and integrated into community life. Many second home families, like the famous Van Doren clan of quiz show and poetry fame, have been there for generations. Visit the town’s website which documents active involvement in town government and volunteer groups. The list of 12 civic organizations, town committees, commissions, and task forces seems to involve every one of the roughly 1,400 residents. It’s a town that takes pride in itself.

“We don’t have time for separate groups of people,” commented Gordon Ridgway, who has been the Town Selectman for the last 26 years. “The families that buy homes here are very low key, and never rub their money in your face. They like being outside, gardening, and hiking. It’s a pretty tolerant place. Everyone here is a little different. Cornwall doesn’t have flash. Some people might be bored here.”

Priscilla Pavel, a broker with David Bain, who lives in Cornwall agreed. “Cornwall is welcoming to all especially ‘eccentrics.’ When the town dump (a.k.a. Transfer Station) is a networking center, what would you expect?”

## State forests and parks total 23% of Cornwall property

Out of Cornwall’s almost 30,000 acres more than 19,000 acres is forest or devoted to some form of agriculture according to Jo Anne Dodge, Cornwall’s Associate Assessor. The State of Connecticut alone owns over 7,000 acres of Cornwall, about 23% of all property. Considering the low population, lack of industry, exempt properties, and a dedicated town school, the property tax mil rate of 16.12 is an admirable accomplishment – more



Above: Boating on Cream Lake in West Cornwall is a favorite summer activity. Photo by John Harney. Left: This house at 14 Ford Hill Road with an asking price of \$475,000 is below the current median listing price of all houses for sale in Cornwall. Photo courtesy of Ira Goldspiel of Sotheby’s International.



than Sharon but below that of neighboring Canaan/Falls Village which has an even greater percentage of exempt properties.

## Strong sales

In a real estate market with only 1,435 parcels of property it’s not wise to draw any definitive conclusion from activity in a single year; however, looking at actual residential sales (see chart) since 2007 it’s pretty clear that median prices of homes sold have declined from the peak of the housing bubble when the median (midpoint) Cornwall residence sold for \$900,000.

Encouragingly, 25 homes closed in 2017 and 24 in 2016, the highest number of sales in the last 11 years.

“Last year total sales volume in all of Litchfield County was up by 3%,”

Continued on next page ...

**RESIDENTIAL SAKES CORNWALL, CT 2007-2017**

|                            | 2007      | 2008    | 2009    | 2010    | 2011    | 2012    | 2013    | 2014    | 2015    | 2016    | 2017    |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| # houses sold              | 12        | 13      | 12      | 11      | 15      | 21      | 18      | 20      | 16      | 24      | 25      |
| Total \$ sales \$ millions | \$14.4    | \$8.2   | \$4.3   | \$5.6   | \$10.0  | \$10.8  | \$9.1   | \$8.4   | \$7.8   | \$9.0   | \$11.3  |
| Average price \$000's      | \$1,196.2 | \$636.2 | \$369.2 | \$506.1 | \$661.4 | \$512.1 | \$504.1 | \$419.3 | \$486.1 | \$372.7 | \$453.6 |
| Median price \$000's       | \$900.0   | \$440.0 | \$400.0 | \$420.0 | \$375.0 | \$345.0 | \$450.0 | \$389.5 | \$220.0 | \$300.0 | \$220.0 |

Data from Connecticut multiple listing service. Does not include sales closed between private parties.



Above: This 5,000-square-foot home on Dibble Hill embodies the outdoorsy and creative aspects of Cornwall living. Photo by Anne Day courtesy of Elyse Harney Realty.

according to Ira Goldspiel with Sotheby's International, while Cornwall rose by almost 25%.

In the first two months of 2018, seven homes were sold at a median price of \$400,000 and average price of \$428,000 as the Cornwall market appears to continue to strengthen in the mid-price range. The total sales volume and average price in 2017 was affected by the \$4.2 million sale of a majestic stone house at 56 Whitcomb Hill Road with 80 acres originally listed in 2016 for \$5,595,000. Like

other markets in our area, million dollar sales have become less frequent with none in 2016 and only one in 2015 compared to five in 2007.

**Average listed price is \$2.2 million**

The spring listing season has not yet arrived and Cornwall like other markets has low inventory

(see chart). There were 26 Cornwall homes listed for sale in February with a median price of \$650,000 – nearly triple last year's median price sold. The average price of a whopping \$2.2 million is partially attributable to two \$15 million dollar estates located on 5 ½ Mile Road with substantial land and incredible views. In fact out of 1,267 homes listed for sale in all of Litchfield County these two homes are the most expensive listings and are two of the top four taxpayers in Cornwall. Interestingly, the asking prices of the properties, \$16.5 million and \$19.75 million, are more than double their assessed values!

Pinnacle Farms, the property that pays the most taxes in all of Cornwall with an assessed value of \$8.3 million, is also on the market for \$17 million, although not publicly listed. It includes a 65,000-square-foot post and beam stable with every equine amenity, 140 acres, and no house. And Cornwall's very own castle, Hidden Valley, at 61 Castle Road, which was listed briefly in 2013 for \$8.85 million, is now owned by a bank and may come back on the market this spring.

There are only 11 houses for sale under \$500,000, as of this writing, in Cornwall. The very recently listed home at 14 Ford Hill priced at \$475,000 is "The perfect getaway surrounded by protected land," according to broker Goldspiel, who expects it to sell quickly. At the over one million dollar level, 117 Dibble Hill Road listed by Elyse Harney at \$1,345,000 with its pond and party barn exudes the sophisticated, bucolic spirit of Cornwall.

**Frustration and high expectations**

As spring approaches there are buyers frustrated with the lack of alternatives, and hopeful sellers. "It's an exciting and busy market," according

to veteran broker David Bain. "Some houses that have been on the market for over a year are now getting offers and disappearing." What the Cornwall market does need is more inventory of less expensive houses to sell to full-time residents. Let's see what spring brings. ●

*Check out our previous article on The Con-fusing Cornwall's in the March 2015 issue of Main Street Magazine online at [www.mainstreetmagazine.com](http://www.mainstreetmagazine.com). In addition to writing for Main Street since it's launch, Christine is a real estate agent at Best & Cavallaro.*

**SECRETS OF CORNWALL**

Litchfield County with 193 residents per square miles is the least densely populated county in the state. The Town of Cornwall has only 30 people per square mile and three post offices.

Cornwall has designated 21 residents as Justices of the Peace. They can all perform wedding ceremonies.

Mohawk Mountain ski area was a pioneer in the making of artificial snow.

The Town of Cornwall's website links to over 50 resident artists and writers.

Cornwall Consolidated School K through 8th grade school has only 78 students and a student teacher ratio of 6 to 1!

Cornwall residents are highly educated with 55% of the population holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

The average household income is \$75,000. Only 3% of residents live below the poverty line.

Cornwall's highest population was 2,051 reached in 1850.

**HOMES FOR SALE IN CORNWALL, CT FEB. 2018**

|                                   |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Total # homes for sale            | 26             |
| Total \$ of listings              | \$57.1 million |
| Average price                     | \$2.2 million  |
| Median price                      | \$650,000      |
| # under < \$500,000               | 11             |
| \$ of listings                    | \$3.4 million  |
| % of all listings                 | 6.00%          |
| # listings >\$500,000<\$1,000,000 | 6              |
| \$ of listings                    | \$4,347,000    |
| % of all listings                 | 7.60%          |
| # listings over \$1,000,000       | 9              |
| \$ of listings                    | \$49,304,000   |
| % of all listings                 | 86.40%         |

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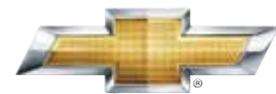


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# Pearly's Farmhouse Café is on the map



By *Dominique DeVito*  
*info@mainstreetmag.com*

I'd been given the heads-up about Pearly's Farmhouse Café by a West Cornwall insider. "Check it out," she said, "Everyone is going. The food is great and there's a real sense of community. Oh," she added, "and the owner's story is really interesting." Great food, community-oriented, and an interesting story? That's a home run in this writer's book.

On a seasonable, partly sunny Wednesday afternoon in February, I had an appointment to talk to Sean Aylmer, the owner of Pearly's, at around 3pm, when the restaurant would be closing for the day. True confession: I'd never been to West Cornwall – and even on a late winter day accentuated in gray and brown, I could see the appeal of the area.

There's a distinctly New England feel to this corner of Connecticut, there's a bit of a wild vibe, too. One minute the road opens up before you with pastures stretching to the horizon, and the next you're navigating a winding road flanked by woods. And then, there it is – the landmark covered bridge that brings you into West Cornwall. Constructed in 1864, the bridge, painted a bright barn red and only 172 feet long, is like a front door of sorts, welcoming you to town.

## Welcome to Cornwall, Pearly's will welcome you!

And just to the right, after getting through the bridge, is Pearly's Farmhouse Café. There's nothing fancy about the outside of the place, but you can't miss its big sign with the name in friendly script as if to say, 'Come on in!' So I parked, and I did. Go in.

Inside, the space is airy and elegant. There's lots of light to welcome you. The walls are a calming shade of pale gray, and the floors and tables are a rich, dark, warm wood. There are booths and square tables and a round table – choices to make anyone (and everyone) comfortable. A self-serve coffee area greets you by the entryway, and you can get a fresh cup to stay or to go.

## Busy, busy

I arrived after 2pm so I could have something to eat before talking to Sean, and I thought by that time there wouldn't be many people in the restaurant, but there were. The café was nearly full, and the diners were diverse and included families, seniors, guys in jeans, and women in business attire. A big smile and a menu accompanied me to a table by the window with a view of a small patio, where I could imagine diners soaking up the summer sun in a few months.

I turned my attention to the menu. I was hungry and everything looked good. Really good.

Pearly's Farmhouse Café lunch menu has classic comfort food selections – burgers, paninis, wraps, and even pizzas – featuring the usual mouth-watering ingredients, like bacon, cheese, roast beef, avocados, mushrooms – you get the idea. And while any of these would please me (and anyone I would typically have with me on such an outing), I was looking for something a bit more distinctive. And I found it. A Maple Sausage Ricotta Pizza, with Italian sausage, caramelized onions, maple-infused ricotta, and a provolone mozzarella cheese blend, drizzled with real maple syrup.

It came to the table soon after I'd ordered. The crust was thin and speckled with corn meal, crispy dark in some places, golden brown in others, loaded with sausage and cheese and caramelized onions. It was delicious, with lots of salt and spice from the sausage, gooey goodness from the cheese, and a slight sweetness from the onions and a hint of syrup. Still delighting in a bite, chef Sean came out to tell me he had a burger on the grill and would need a few more minutes before we could talk.

I had noticed that while I was indulging in my pizza the restaurant had as many people coming in as going out – even though it was nearly 3pm. I jumped on the opportunity to order dessert, too, and was just scraping the last traces of fudge sauce from the plate upon which my chocolate

lava cake was served when Sean reappeared. Perfect timing.

## Found it on craigslist!

What do you ask a chef/restaurateur who obviously has a good thing going and whose smile is as wide as a dinner plate? My first thought was, "How did you get here?"

His entirely unexpected response was, "I saw it on craigslist." Sean continued, "I've been in the restaurant business for years, and my wife and I had been looking for a place to call my own for about a year and a half. I didn't even know where West Cornwall, CT, was! We were living in Marlborough, CT, and I had lived outside of Boston for many years. But we had to come take a look."

"We drove over the bridge, parked, took pictures – which is what all visitors to this place do – and we wanted something to eat. The building was right here, ready to go practically. We thought it would be perfect."

Sean and Justina made an offer and were soon leasing the space formerly known as The Wandering Moose. "I've been in the restaurant business for 30 years, selling to restaurants for the last five," Sean told me, "and I've been emphasizing destination for restaurants. I took my own advice."

Continued on next page ...

**“All in; with boots on the ground.”**

Sean and Justina were able to get started with renovations and adjustments to the space in September, opening as Pearly’s Farmhouse Café a mere month later, in October. That gives you an idea of what Sean can accomplish when his heart is in it. He explained that another big part of who he is is a Marine, and, as such, he understands discipline and goals. “All in; boots on the ground” is how he described it to me.

“You learn discipline in the Marine Corp,” he says. He was in the Marines for four years, plus six years in the Reserves, with three years of active duty for a total of 13 years. “The Marine Corp gave me a set of rules to live by,” he explained.

As for inspiration for the cooking? “My mom,” he says without hesitation. “She taught me how to cook and said, ‘Someday there won’t be someone to cook for you,’ so I took it to heart.”

**Eat well, live well**

Is Pearly Sean’s mom’s name? “Pearly was actually a neighbor of ours. A chicken farmer,” Sean continued, “who had a great way with browning turkey skin. So any time we cooked chicken, we did the skin his way, or

‘à la Pearly’s!’”

One day in the Marines, 23 years ago, I was decorating a cake for someone and I decorated it with the name Pearly’s on it.” He has a picture of that cake framed and hanging up in the restaurant.

I ask Sean about the development of his menu. “My philosophy is written on the board behind the counter,” he says, pointing to the middle of the room. On the blackboard, in big letters, are the words *Eat well, live well*. “That’s what it’s all about for me. I want people to come for the food. Let me give you an example,” he says, sharing with enthusiasm, “for the margarita pizza, the roasted garlic oil is made with real roasted garlic, which also goes in the aioli. The blend of mozzarella and provolone has a distinctive taste for pizza, giving it a bit of sharpness. Slices of fresh tomato blanket the top. The crust is hand-stretched on cornmeal, and fresh basil goes on top.”

“But I want people to feel at home, too,” he says. “I’m putting in shelves over there that I want to make into an area where local writers can share their work, finished or in progress. I display the works of local artists on the walls. I want the restaurant to be home for all ages and appetites. I saw a couple hesitating over the breakfast



Above: The interior of Pearly’s. Below, left and previous page: A sampling of the beautiful and delicious food that Sean will serve you at Pearly’s. Photos courtesy of Pearly’s.

menu one morning, so I came over to talk to them,” he continues, “and they were vegan. I offered them homemade oatmeal and a fresh vegan hash I concocted, and they were delighted.”

**Food, glorious food**

We talk about my maple sausage ricotta pizza, which I rave about. I ask him about his favorites, or signature dishes. “The eggs benedict,” he says. When I look at the breakfast menu, I can see why. Pearly’s has six variations on the dish, from the classic (with Canadian bacon and Hollandaise sauce) to an Irish Farmer (with corned beef), a Goat Farmer (with baby spinach and goat cheese, see picture to the left), and even a Lobster Benedict (with sherry-infused Hollandaise).

“Also,” Sean notes, “my Western Omelet has marinated flank steak in it. I mean, when the settlers established themselves out West they had cattle, not pigs. Why is there ham in a Western Omelet?” Good point!

His pulled pork sells out instantly whenever he makes it, so it’ll soon become a fixture on the menu. And there’s the Green Monster burger, another Pearly’s classic, generously topped with avocado and jalapeño (as well as bacon, lettuce, tomato, and roasted garlic aioli).

I should have ordered that, I think to myself. Or come for breakfast. Yes, all these delicious options give me many reasons to come back. It’s obvious from the steady stream of

people on even that late Wednesday afternoon that folks around here are coming back. Sean is in the kitchen every day they’re open, from early in the morning until they close. Pearly’s was part of a segment on CT Perspective TV about different cuisines in the state. It aired on March 11.

And Sean and Justina are as busy outside the restaurant as in it. They’re new to the area, so that’s been an adjustment. And they welcomed their second daughter together on January 7, Sean’s third girl. “I have a one-month-old, a 20-month-old, and a 13-year-old,” he beams. Like West Cornwall itself, at Pearly’s there’s a sense of timeless commitment to quality, a calm sophistication, and a hint of something wild being tamed. Eat well, live well, indeed. Make reservations on the weekend. And don’t forget to take a picture next to the bridge. •

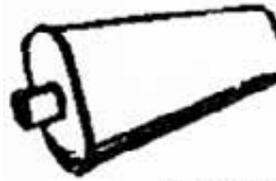
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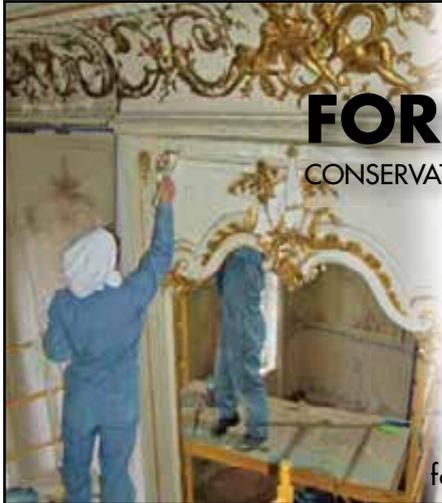
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# Cornwall & its economic growth

By Janet Carlson  
janet.carlson@oneeleven-group.com

The town of Cornwall has existed since 1740. As recalled by long-time residents, there have been boom times as well as bust. Dominated by small businesses, you tend to personally know from whom you make purchases, sandwiches to summer houses alike. The most recent economic depression impacted our town, along with many others in the region. In response, the Selectmen created an Economic Development Commission (EDC) to support community priorities and opportunities. I have proudly sat on the board for six terms now, serving as Chair for three of those years. The Board has gone through its growing pains, trying to determine how best to assist the town and promote its economic growth. Fortunately, we have great material with which to work!

## Here's what you need to know

Cornwall is set in the foothills of the Berkshire Mountains, with the Housatonic River running alongside, and a marvelous, often instagrammed covered bridge acting as our gateway. With hundreds of square miles of natural beauty, outdoor recreation abounds, and residents are incredibly open-minded and kind. Community involvement is a deep part of the fabric of this town. Annual fundraisers such as the Women's Society Rummage Sale, Art at the Dump, and Rose Algrant Art Show benefit various civic organizations. We have an A+ rated elementary school known for stellar academics packed with amazing arts, music, and cultural activities along with plenty of playtime – out-of-doors, of course!

Currently, we have 149 businesses operating in Cornwall, from package stores to specialty shops, farms and delis to craftsmen studios. There's a

family-friendly ski mountain and the town is well known for being populated with artists, writers, actors, and marketing professionals.

The EDC set lofty goals early in its existence, creating a website, branding the town as one ripe for exploration (and moving to!), and focusing on attracting new business while supporting those existing. The budget for the EDC has grown each year, enabling the group to tackle grander ambitions.

## 2018 objectives

In 2018, our objectives are to help revitalize the town by attracting newcomers. We're aiming for five new families and three businesses. We hope to accomplish this with the launch of a social media and PR driven "Consider Cornwall!" ad campaign, along with an overhaul to the EDC website. You can also expect our support of key town projects, such as a water/septic facility, NW Connect (high speed fiber optic/cell service), Town Plan, and the Bend Project (allowing direct river access). There's plenty about Cornwall to brag about, and we look forward to communicating its excellent resources and possibilities.

In the last year alone, the town saw plenty of encouraging signs that the EDC's early efforts have had a positive impact. For example, eight new children enrolled at Cornwall Consolidated School, including tuition-paying children from outside the district. The school's website was revamped to fit with town branding and make it easier to update, with a social media calendar created to encourage frequent updates. Seven new families moved here, and we've seen lots of interest from young families – particularly from Brooklyn – in making the leap to living here.

After a devastating fire a few years back, Northeast Lumber triumphantly re-opened, along with Trinity Retreat



Photo: Lazlo Gyorsok

Center and Pearly's Farmhouse Cafe. In 2018 "The Shops at the Bridge" will open in the fantastic building formerly housing Cornwall Pottery. It will boast two retail spaces, a large collaborative workspace and a revamped salon for Housatonic Hairworks. A mobile beer canning operation has come to town, along with the attention of a high end, luxury hotel developer. A donut and coffee shop is possibly in the works. There are business spaces, both for rent and for purchase in Cornwall and the town is committed to working with any business wanting to come to Cornwall! Stay tuned ... this town is once again on the rise!

## What they're doing

To attract more families and business to Cornwall, the EDC crafted a business/family focused infographic that was distributed to area realtors and interested parties. The infographic visually demonstrates why a family or business might want to relocate here. A similar tourism infographic and an updated business booklet will be developed for 2018.

Cornwall has started hosting seasonal "Strolls" coordinated by the EDC and the Cornwall Business As-

sociation to invite people to uncover Cornwall. Over 220 people participated in last year's Winter event!

For people seeking a life/work balance, there is truly no better place than Cornwall. The town actively seeks to assist new businesses, providing help with business plans, coaching and grants, along with GoFundMe support and other means of raising capital to nurture fledgling companies. Families are embraced and welcomed and young people will find a supportive and caring community.

I moved here with my young family eight years ago from Brooklyn, NY, relocating my advertising and marketing agency, and moving employees. It was a challenge, but we were offered all kinds of assistance to make our transition smoother. My business, my family and my employees have thrived here and I can't imagine living anywhere else. •

*Janet Carlson is the CEO of One Eleven Group and the Chair of the Cornwall Economic Development Commission.*

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# FISHING ON THE HOUSATONIC

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

It's a beautiful stretch of water, stunning in its beauty. Slow moving as it flows south from Massachusetts then tumbling fast over rocks and creating large swirling pools. Those pools harbor some of the most sought after sport fish in New England; rainbow, brown, and brook trout.

These mighty aquatic battlers draw anglers from all over the East Coast and beyond who come in search of a strong fight and the chance to land a trout that can push close to two feet in length.

The Housatonic River in Cornwall, CT, is one of the most productive stretches of the river. It is an acclaimed trout fishery whose stature has only been enhanced over the years. It has been written about in countless publications, from *Field and Stream* to *Men's Health*.

## Fishing memories that last a lifetime

Rob Nicholas is a veteran fishing guide who lives near the river. Each spring through fall he brings his clients to spots that will produce memories to last a lifetime. He knows the river like the back of his hand. The pools where most fish congregate away from the swift water have been given names by fishermen over the

years that only add to the charm and lore of the experience on the Cornwall stretch of the Housy.

"I would say the setting is impressive. The scenery is beautiful as the river twists and turns its way through the lower Berkshires. The river is diverse in that it has all water types in a short stretch of river, from deep pools to long riffles, runs, and pocket water. This diversity creates places for trout to hide and feed depending upon the time of year and water flow. Trout, for example, might move into shallow water to feed during a good mayfly hatch, but retreat into deeper water to rest. The other great thing about the river is the bio-diversity and bio-mass in the river. There is a lot of food, from insects such as stoneflies, mayflies, caddis and midges, but also baitfish, crayfish, scuds, and hellgrammites."

Fishing guide Greg Lethbridge adds his thoughts on the lure of the Housy in Cornwall: "What makes this stretch of river such a good trout fishery is the diversity of the water," Lethbridge opines. "There are some amazing runs to nymph and following those runs are equally as good dry fly water where you can take advantage of many different hatches from big stone flies, an assortment of mayflies, caddis, and midges. And if you enjoy throwing 'chicken on a hook' (streamers) there is plenty of bait fish and an amazing amount of crawfish in the river that the trout are almost always willing to eat."

Another guide, Matt Swett concurs that the river is rich in trophy fish because of the abundance of food that allows the fish to grow big and feisty. "There is a huge amount of food for trout to feed on; mayflies, caddis flies, stone flies, midges, and crawfish. There's plenty of great water to fish and crowding is never an issue. Whether you're fishing nymphs, dries, or streamers, there's water for



all styles. Floating the river is the best way to experience all the Housy has to offer. The scenery is beautiful, especially during the fall foliage."

## Favorite spots

Although there is a lot of great water above the fly fishing-only section of the Housatonic River, the Cornwall section is Lethbridge's (and his clients') favorite area to fish. "It starts in 'Dun Rollin' and makes its way down to Carse Brook before heading down to 'Cellar Hole.' From Cellar Hole you start into 'Rainbow Run' and then into 'The Flats' before coming into a couple more runs before the campground."

Lethbridge says anglers, when floating the river, find themselves in another run that brings them into "Split Rock" just above the wonderfully nicknamed "Turnip Island."

"On the bottom side of Turnip Island is 'Sand Hole,' which brings you down to 'Two Car,' 'One Car,' 'Monument,' 'Corner Hole,' and 'The Park.' The fly fishing-only zone ends

Continued on next page ...

Above: Jan Paul Musico with a hefty brown trout. Bottom left: Brad Fulkerson with a palomino rainbow trout. Photos courtesy of Rob Nicholas and Greg Lethbridge.





Above: Josh Ash with a carp. Bottom right, Roy Wilkin with a rainbow trout. Photos courtesy of Ron Nicholas and Greg Lethbridge.

at the cement bridge and there you will find ‘Church Pool’ and Furnace Brook.”

Nicholas believes the main section of the river that is best to fish is from “Push ‘em Up Pool,” which is about one mile above the covered bridge down to the state park in Cornwall Bridge. “Some of the best pools are Monument Pool, Two Car Hole, Sand Hole, Split Rock, Cellar Hole, Carse Brook Pool, Dun Rollin, ‘Garbage Hole,’ ‘The Elms,’ ‘Doctor’s Hole,’ ‘The Abutments,’ and Push ‘em Up.”

**Visitors from all over**

Lethbridge says most of his clients are from the New York City area, “But we see a wide range of people from all over the country. The Housatonic is a unique river, being one of few in the Northeast to offer guided float trips.”

Nicholas has guided people from all over including Vermont, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, and many other states. “I have a client who comes from New Orleans every year.”

Swett has also guided anglers from around the US, with a majority being from the Northeast, but he adds, “I’ve even had a few from Europe.”

According to Lethbridge, trout fishing on the Housy is very seasonal due to the fact that it is “big and wide, relying on Mother Nature for its water supply.” As for the best trout fishing, from April to the middle of

June it is a good rule of thumb for the first part of the season, and then from September to late November or early December for the second half of the prime trout fishing time. “We do fish the river all summer, we just put away the 5-weight rods and move onto the 7-weight and heavier rods to fish for smallmouth bass and northern pike. That fishing picks up in June and goes through the whole season to December.”

Nicholas says the best trout fishing is from April to mid-June and from early September to late November. As Lethbridge mentioned, the bass and pike fishing is good in July and August, “but the water is too warm to trout fish at that time.”

**“...he was this big!”**

As for the size of the fish being caught, Nicholas recalls a couple of years ago when his party landed a rainbow trout weighing around eight pounds “but that was unusual.” Most of the trout are from 11 to 14 inches in length with some from 16- to 18-plus inches.

“For the most part,” says Lethbridge, “you see a mixture of fish from ten inches to about 18 inches, and once in a while you will hook into a slab 20-incher.”

Swett has had successful trips as early as late February, early March. “Once the water temperatures get into the upper 60s we focus on smallmouth and pike. High water temps will stress trout.” He has seen a

21-inch brown trout caught, with the average fish being 11- to 14-inches. “But, it’s not uncommon to catch 15- to 18-inch fish.” While there are “brookies” in the river, the most common trout caught are browns and rainbows.

**Collaborating guides**

An indication on just how good the fishing is on the Housatonic can be seen in the number of guides that ply the river. Nicholas is pretty much a full-time guide and travel consultant (he’s been to South America often in search of trophy fish), but most of the other guides are part-time and work in harmony with one another to bring their clients the best experience possible. After all, you don’t travel from New Orleans or Europe to go home not having landed a trophy-sized trout or enjoyed wildlife frolicking beside the river as you glide smoothly past in a canoe or raft.

“I work with other guides that have boats and know the river well,” says Nicholas. “I refer a lot of business away these days because my regular clients keep me busy.”

Lethbridge says, “Like most of the guides on the river, I guide part-time. I guide every weekend and I can fit trips into my schedule during the week with a little notice.”

Guides have to be ready. After all, when the action heats up on the river in Cornwall there are plenty of anglers to please, and the beloved Housy never fails to please. ●



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# Jacque & Tom Schiller

AT HOME IN CORNWALL

By CB Wismar  
info@mainstreetmag.com

When Tom and Jacque Schiller took occupancy of their log cabin near Cream Hill Pond, Tom decided to step outside on the porch, just to take a nice, clean breath of air. “It sounded like we were right near a freeway ... the traffic noise was unbelievable.”

For a kid who grew up in Los Angeles, the sound of the freeway was as ubiquitous as the smog that hangs over the city.

As Tom soon realized, however, there is no freeway crossing from North Cornwall to West Cornwall, girdling the pond. It was the wind in the tamaracks that dot the “woodland retreat” he and his wife, Jacque, had just purchased. “That’s when I realized we were home,” Tom offers with the hint of a smile.

## Forget London, Copenhagen is where it’s at!

Tom is used to smiles, mostly the ones he evokes from other people. After high school – he attended legendary “Pali High” in the Pacific Palisades section of Los Angeles – he went to Copenhagen. Why Copenhagen? “Everybody else was going to London,” he says with the deadpan expression of a natural comedian.

Son of a legendary Hollywood comedy writer – his father, Bob, was

a writing genius behind *I Love Lucy*, *The Bob Cummings Show*, *All in the Family*, and *Maude*, among others, Tom was in love with film and wanted to craft his own reputation. It wasn’t television he was interested in. It was film.

In Denmark, Tom learned the many aspects of film making from Academy Award-winning documentary producer Robert Snyder. Through Snyder, Schiller made the acquaintance of many notable writers, thinkers and artists, including Charles and Ray Eames, Buckminster Fuller and Henry Miller, the controversial author of *Tropic of Cancer* who became the subject of Tom’s first documentary film.

Armed with legitimate film credits, a great sense of comic timing, and the ability to write well, it was time for Tom to return to the States and settle in New York. While there, it was another function of friends introducing friends that he met one of the titans of American television – Lorne Michaels.

## Saturday Night Live

Michaels had this idea: live sketch television placed in one of the worst time segments on network television – 11:30 PM on Saturday night. The monitoring services all agreed. At that



Above: Jacque and Tom Schiller. Below, left: Tom Schiller holding the SNL EMMY. Photo courtesy of Tom Schiller.

hour, only insomniacs were watching television – not a very sought after demographic segment.

As an original occupant (some might say “inmate”) of the Writers Room on the 17th floor of the NBC Building in Rockefeller Center, Tom quickly found his stride amid the likes of Al Franken and Bill Murray. “The pressure was pretty intense. There’s a new show every week ... and it’s got to be good.” And, good it was. By the second year of its airing, Saturday Night Live (SNL) had attracted not only a loyal, sought-after audience, but the fawning attention of the critics. When the show’s first EMMY was awarded, it was Tom who held the coveted statue while the rest of the writing team held on to Tom.

## Enter Jacque

The weekly grind of turning out brilliant sketch comedy and short films to fill the insatiable appetite of SNL took its toll on many of the brilliant writers and comedians who were attracted to the show. When Lorne Michaels stepped aside for several seasons, the Writers’ Room witnessed a changing



Continued on next page ...

of the guard. Tom felt the burn out and returned to his roots as a film director ... this time to take up his position in the high-pressure world of television commercial production.

As a freelance director, it was up to Tom to build his contact list, which meant meeting and greeting the various ad agency creatives who populated "Madison Avenue" shops – businesses that were scattered in both midtown and downtown in and around Greenwich Village.

It was at an agency presentation that a bright, energized, and very talented young lady was sitting across the table. She had a sense of humor to match Tom's comedic persona. "I thought he was funny ... a little strange ... but funny," admits Jacque who has a strong creative streak all her own.

**From deep in the heart of Texas**

Growing up in Seguin, Texas, with a population of 25,000 (and the birthplace of singer/songwriter Nanci Griffith and Baseball Hall of Fame Negro League pitcher "Smokey" Joe Williams) Jacque traveled to Austin to attend the University of Texas, graduating with a degree in advertising and creative writing. "When we graduated, my friends and I flipped a coin – New York or LA?" The coin landed on New York, and Jacque was off to The Big Apple to find her way. "I worked at a small agency downtown ... that's where I met Tom," she recalls. "He was our creative consultant."

The two creative personas seemed well-suited for each other. As their relationship grew, Jacque recalls one moment that was a major milestone – the kind of experience that creates a

lasting bond. "We were having dinner at Asti – a wonderful Italian restaurant that's sadly no longer in business." Jacque recalls the moment in vivid detail. "Tom decided to serenade me, right in the restaurant." The song of choice? *The Yellow Rose of Texas*. Clearly, this relationship was meant to last.

**SNL - the second time around**

When Lorne Michaels returned to SNL, so did Tom, lending his comedic writing and filmmaking skills (Schiller's Reels) to the show and coming up with a feature film concept that he wrote and directed for MGM. "It was the time around *Days of Heaven*, which had cost the studio a fortune," recalls Tom. "They were looking for lower budget films to regain their footing, and Lorne ended up with a five picture deal."

Of the five anticipated films, only one was produced – Tom's epic *Nothing Lasts Forever*. "It was never actually released," offers Tom, with a unique pride of authorship. "It's become something of a cult film that appears on late night Dutch television and shows up every once in a while at film festivals."

The magic of Schiller's films has not been lost on the broader audience. His cinematic exploits have been celebrated in print with the writing of *Nothing Lost Forever: The Films of Tom Schiller*, written by Michael Streeter, who, as a young man, caught one of the late-night screenings of Tom's film on Dutch television, and became an avid fan.

**Life in the country**

Jacque and Tom's move to Cornwall had many of the elements of migrations from New York City to the Litchfield Hills. "We spent weekends in the Hudson Valley for several years until someone suggested we look for a place in Cornwall," Tom



Above: Tom Schiller's drawings of Cornwall, CT. Below, left: Jacque Schiller's drawing of a tick, and her belief that "The only good tick is a dead tick."

admits. As for Jacque, "This is such an incredible place, we just loved it as soon as we saw it."

The love affair with the area has blossomed as both Jacque and Tom continue to discover that occasional trips to New York, mini vacations in nearby destinations and resorts can be easily accomplished while still enjoying the pastoral lifestyle.

While Tom works on a new project that he keeps under wraps until it is more fully formed, Jacque is readying a manuscript for a children's book on design to be published later this year by Clarion Books, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Both of them are contributing original drawings to *Cornwall Chronicle*, a local newsletter.

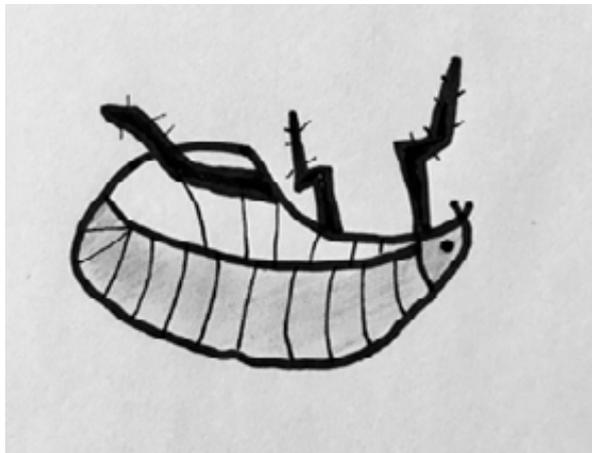
And, then there's their love affair with the town. As Jacque succinctly put it in an open invitation to serve as a resource for those exploring the cluster of Cornwalls: "Aside from its natural beauty and agricultural heritage, I am very proud of Cornwall's history and continued interest in arts and literature. Its Rose Algrant

Art Show will be celebrating its 59th year exhibiting local artisans and we will also be participating in this year's NW CT Arts Council *Open Your Eyes Studio Tour* this summer." Jacque has stepped up to support the town, not only as a volunteer for the Rose Algrant Art Show but also serving on the Economic Development Commission.

As winter reaches into spring, the Schiller house continues to be a repository of creative thinking and imaginative energy. The player piano that figured prominently in Tom's feature film shares the great room with his three EMMY awards that sit high on a shelf, surveying the comings and goings. It's likely that the elevated perch is a safe one as Sugar Toonis, a formidable cat, deigns to share the log cabin with Jacque and Tom.

"We love it here," confirms Jacque. And Tom, being the perfect gentleman, nods in agreement. ●

*To learn more out about Tom Schiller, visit his website at schillervision.com. To learn more about Jacque Schiller, you can email her directly at jqlhynn@mac.com.*





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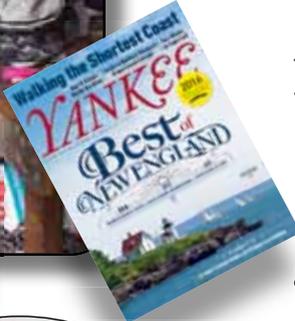

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# Cornwall's Foreign Mission School: Lessons from the past

By Mary B. O'Neill, Ph.D.  
info@mainstreetmag.com

While the small towns in Connecticut's Northwest Corner are long on natural diversity, they're often short on diversity of other sorts, especially when it comes to race and ethnicity. The faces we see in our stores, playing fields, houses of worship, and restaurants are predominantly white, with a smattering of black, brown, and tan.

Yet there was a time early in the 1800s when Cornwall was practically teeming with diversity, all concentrated around its village green. It was here that the Foreign Mission School, which in some circles came to be known as the Heathen School, was founded and operated from 1817 through 1826.

Over the ten-year period of the school's operation almost 100 boys and young men – Native American, Asian, Pacific Islanders, Europeans, and Latin Americans – speaking over 20 languages, lived and learned within the school's compound and farm in Cornwall Village.

Let's put that in perspective. In the early 19th century, the population of Cornwall was approximately 1,600 people, almost exclusively of white English descent. Fast forward to today and according to December 2017 Census data, Cornwall has a population of 1,336 people – 96.5 percent white, 1.6 percent Asian, and 2.4 percent identifying as Hispanic ethnicity.

## Haystacks to steeples

The school's beginnings can be traced up Route 7 to Williamstown, MA. It's there that a group of staunchly Christian Williams College students held a clandestine meeting behind a haystack during a dramatic thunderstorm. This Haystack Prayer Meeting, as it came to be known, marked the birth of a brotherhood dedicated to furthering foreign missions and spreading salvation to non-Christian, "uncivilized" people throughout the world.

In 1810, they went on to form the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) that sent missionaries to far-flung destina-

tions such as India, Burma, Palestine, and closer to home to Native American tribes.

## We're on a mission from God

John Demos, in his book *The Heathen School* describes that this period of religious fervor and social conformity in early 1800s New England had roots dating back to the late 1600s, when Puritan immigrants from England began focusing on the Millennium, or the second coming of Christ and his 1,000-year reign on earth.

By the 1700s, infant America was believed to be exceptional, worthy and blessed – the perfect setting for spiritual perfection. It's here that the source of "American exceptionalism" can be traced. Later in that century, with our independence from England, the belief only deepened that America was fertile soil for a paradise on earth and a perfect home for the Savior.

Concurrently, world trade was flourishing, particularly with China and other parts of Asia. Hawaii, known then as the Sandwich Islands, was a convenient midway point for ships and their men. This increased exposure to non-Western race and culture only deepened the perceived need for mission work and saving souls.

## American efficiency

In the early 1800s the model of sending white missionaries to foreign countries was deemed to be unwieldy and inefficient. There had to be a better way. ABCFM decided it would be more effective to recruit young non-Christian, non-white men from other countries to attend mission school in America. This way they could be properly educated in a wide variety of academic subjects and directly exposed to Christian ways and habits. Along with theological and spiritual training, intellectual breadth and civilized Western manners were corollaries to salvation.

While at such a school, these mission students would be encouraged and given opportunity to speak their native tongue, so when their education and spiritual training were



Above: Foreign Mission School Model. Courtesy of the Cornwall Historical Society.

complete they could return to their homeland and begin mission work.

In addition, white Yankee would-be missionaries would be part of the school. They would be trained alongside the foreign students to gain familiarity with other cultures and better prepare American missionaries for placements abroad. Yankee students could also help educate their less cultivated peers and provide a shining example of civilized and pious living.

## Sold, to the most fervent bidder

In 1817, Cornwall had outbid other towns for the honor of hosting this first-of-its-kind mission school. An aggressive fundraising campaign was launched on a local, national, and international scale. This was, even by modern standards, remarkably successful. The breadth of support from all corners illustrated the zeal for this missionary cause and fervent belief in its need.

The school's mission statement captures that urgency:

*Designed, as it is, to fit young persons who come to this favored land, from amidst the darkness and corruptions and miseries of paganism, to be sent back, to their respective nations with the blessings of civilized and Christianized society; with the useful sciences and arts; with the purifying light of salvation; with*

*the elevating hopes of immortality; the relative importance and eventual utility of this infant seminary can hardly be too highly estimated.*

## Casting the net

The first "scholars" were identified – five young men from the Sandwich Islands. At the end of summer there were 12 students from Hawaii and India, as well a Native American and two Yankees. Their language ability, previous schooling, age, moral temperament, and intellectual capacity varied widely, making it difficult to find a point of intersection for educating them. This was to continue as a problem for the school's entire life.

The school's success seemed to peak in the spring of 1818. New students from Hawaii, China, Pacific Islands, and Germany arrived. However, in the years to come most of these students would be dismissed for a variety of reasons, often having to do with a lack of aptitude for the task of saving souls.

## Native son

Recruitment then turned to the Native Americans of the Southeast, especially Cherokees from Georgia.

Continued on next page ...



Above: Fundraising promotional material, 1822. This print of four Hawaiian students, created from a painting by Samuel F. B. Morse, from the Foreign Mission School were printed in bulk and sold to raise funds for the Foreign Mission School. Courtesy of the Cornwall Historical Society.

These students were different. On the spectrum of civilization toward white Christian perfection, they were already part of the way there, and ideal candidates to be “finished” at the Foreign Mission School.

The boys were recruited from Brainerd, a Protestant mission “feeder” school in Georgia. They had already demonstrated academic and spiritual potential in their time at Brainerd. These students aged in their teens, much younger than previous recruits, and instead of being economically disenfranchised, many were mixed-race from powerful and wealthy Cherokee ruling families. Some owned plantations, ironically fueled by the labor of black slaves, and successful businesses back in Georgia.

**Star-crossed lovers**

One of the unintended consequences of the Foreign Mission School was the romantic alliances that formed between two of its star Cherokee pupils and the daughters of Cornwall school officials. These forbidden relationships sorely tested the school’s purpose and reputation.

Cherokee students John Ridge and Elias Boudinot formed attachments to Sarah Northrup and Harriet Ruggles Gold. These tortured love stories cast light on the tensions that existed at

the time between race, salvation, and what it means to be fully human.

Demos explores how perception of race in colonial America changed over time. Beginning with John Rolfe and Pocahontas, the resistance to racial mixing was overcome by love and willingness to receive Christianity. Demos describes that other races or ethnicities were viewed as inferior due to

cultural reasons, not inherent flaws in humanity.

**Noble savage to redskin**

Early on, Native Americans were viewed as “noble savages.” While they had numerous admirable traits, their lifestyle was perceived as crude – but fixable. With education they could be civilized to the standard of white English settlers. Demos explains, “These hopeful expectations were framed by a belief in the underlying unity of mankind. Humans of every type were thought to have descended from a single act of creation...; differences among them reflected environmental pressures, not biology or genes.” A “great chain of being” connected life from the lowest forms to the Almighty.

By the early- to mid-1700s this view had deteriorated. No longer a matter of progressing from a perceived inferior cultural position, race – other than white – was viewed as an inherent defect. Demos writes, “...pigmentation, behavior, social position, and inborn character were increasingly seen as linked.”

Efforts to civilize and assimilate Native peoples to white standards became priorities, with the alternative being extermination. Paternalism and prejudice informed relations with Indian tribes. This view of white European American superiority had

infused the mission movement and contributed to the extreme disapproval faced by these two pairs of lovers by their families, Cornwall neighbors, and the larger the mission community. It’s one thing to educate and convert heathens, it was another to have them as a son-in-law! It was these relationships, combined with other events in the larger mission movement, that ushered the demise of the Foreign Mission School.

Reactions by the women’s families were a blow to Ridge and Boudinot and their Cherokee tribe back in Georgia, who saw themselves as every bit the equals of their white Christian neighbors to the north. And although the couples ultimately married and by all accounts experienced happy unions, the road to their marriage vows, and their lives under the removal acts and broken treaties of the US government were tragic and illustrative of attitudes toward race and ethnicity that have often prevailed to this day.

**Days of future past**

Today, Cornwall and its neighboring towns face large challenges of increasing outmigration and racial and ethnic diversity. These facts are documented in Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation’s *Community Crossroads* and Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation’s *A Closer Look* data-driven reports. Both examine trends and trajectories that will impact the economic and societal health of this region. Both document the challenges faced by the small homogenous towns in the Northwest Corner, which will see an increase of diversity in the coming decades.

*A Closer Look* documents assert that two-thirds of cities and towns in their tri-state study area will experience a decrease of white residents and an increase in non-whites, with a net population loss. *Community Crossroads* estimates that Cornwall, on its present trajectory, will lose 33 percent of its population by the year 2040. This mirrors similar trends in neighboring towns.

In a comparison of the years 2010 and 2015, Northwest Connecticut’s white residents decreased by four percent, while black, Hispanic, and

Asian population increased by 61 percent, 13 percent, and 11 percent, respectively. Even though this change is more prevalent in towns like Torrington, the pattern is clear.

**Raising questions and consciousness**

This makes the history of this country and the lessons of the Foreign Mission School even more relevant. In its Introduction, *Community Crossroads* asks what your town will look like in 20 years. “Will it be a community that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and economic wellbeing for all?”

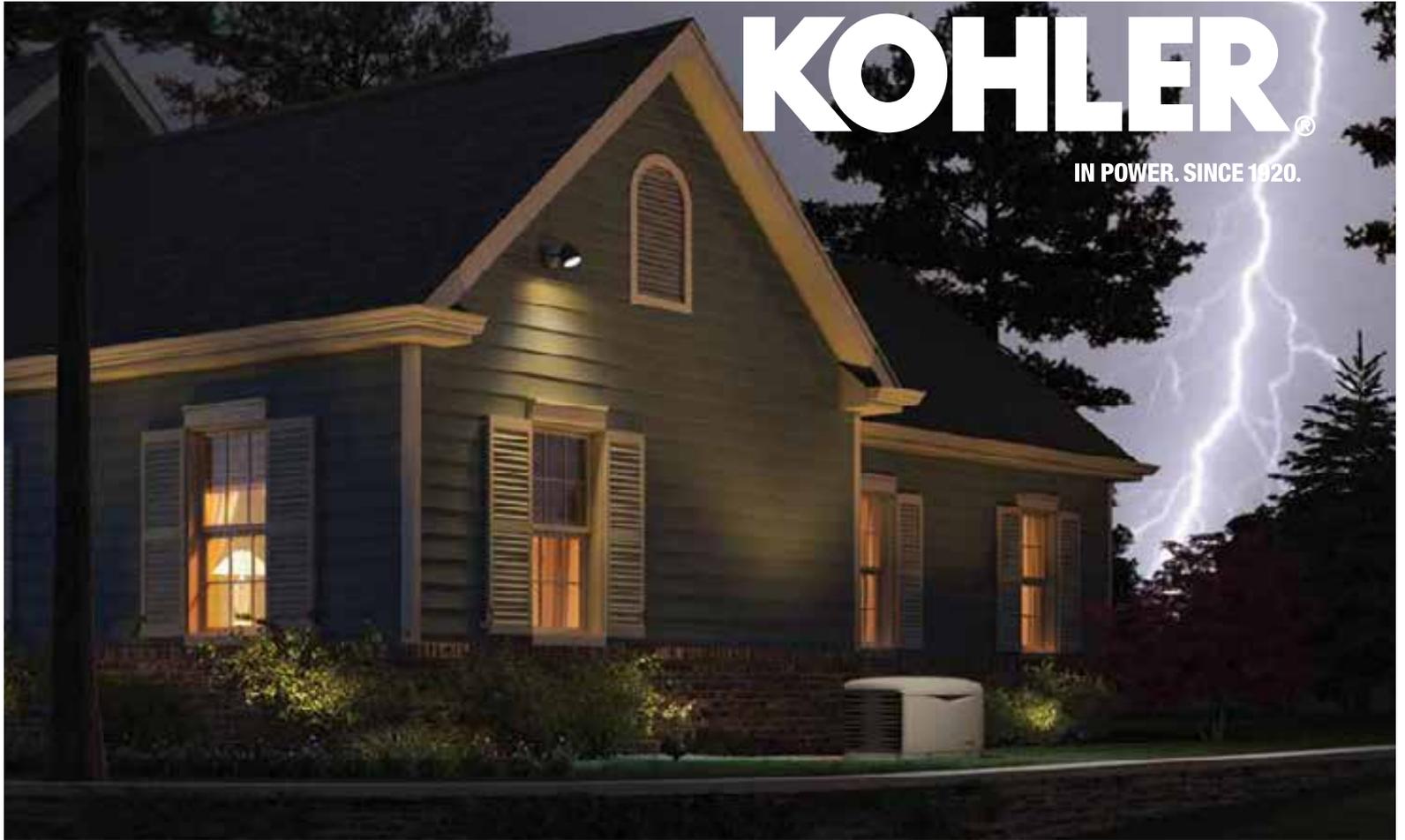
How will we greet the “other” who will increasingly arrive in our towns? Will we hold them to implicit standards of civilization that led up to the establishment of institutions like the Foreign Mission School, which admittedly was a product of its time? Have we truly and deeply evolved in our definition of what it means to be American beyond that of white and Christian?

Importantly, will we learn from historical experiments, like the Heathen School, so that we embrace the diversity that can, from the data in these reports, help stem the population and economic losses we are headed for with a business-as-usual attitude?

Economic incentives can often be the catalyst for moral change. And an awareness of our history, for better or worse, can help unearth our unconscious biases toward difference. We have a fascinating historical legacy in Cornwall that can help point the way to a future that builds on this region’s considerable strengths and corrects the errors of the past. ●

*For more information about Cornwall’s Foreign Mission School, visit the informative online exhibit of the Cornwall Historical Society at [www.cornwallhistoricalsociety.org/omeka/exhibits/show/fms](http://www.cornwallhistoricalsociety.org/omeka/exhibits/show/fms). You can also read The Heathen School by John Demos or the National Historic Landmark Nomination for the Steward’s House of the Foreign Mission School at [www.nps.gov/nhl/news/LC/fall2015/StewardsHouseFMS.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/nhl/news/LC/fall2015/StewardsHouseFMS.pdf).*

*To access the two reports mentioned in this article, visit [www.northwestcf.org/community-crossroads](http://www.northwestcf.org/community-crossroads) and [www.berkshire-taconic.org/bLearnAboutBTCTCF/OurInitiatives/ReportACloserLook.aspx](http://www.berkshire-taconic.org/bLearnAboutBTCTCF/OurInitiatives/ReportACloserLook.aspx).*



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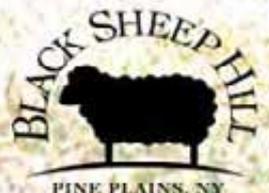
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# Cornwall Hollow

*in my mind*

By Ian Strever  
[info@mainstreetmag.com](mailto:info@mainstreetmag.com)

By my estimation, I spend about five or six hours a year just clarifying where exactly I'm talking about when I'm talking about Cornwall.

"Cornwall Bridge. You mean where the covered bridge is?"

"No, that's West Cornwall. Cornwall Bridge is where Route 7 crosses over the river. That big concrete bridge."

Then there's Cornwall Center.

"You mean where the Wandering Moose used to be, right? Near where the Farmer's Market is?"

"No, that's West Cornwall, too. I mean over by the soccer fields – near that big valley. On the backside of Mohawk Mountain."

"Oh right. Cornwall Hollow."

"No..."

And on and on. So for the good of all visitors, let me explain what I mean when I talk about Cornwall Hollow.

## Cornwall Hollow

Cornwall Hollow is more of an idea than a place. Okay, it is a place, too, and it does appear on maps;

one lifelong resident described it to me as the area primarily bisected by Route 43 on the eastern side of town. But the Cornwall Hollow in my mind traces back to an exhibit in, of all places, the Peabody Museum in New Haven, CT.

In 1944, nature artist James Perry Wilson was contracted by the museum to develop a series of dioramas like the ones he had created for the American Museum of Natural History in New York, but depicting natural scenes from around Connecticut and North America generally. Wilson, working with museum directors and the Director of Zoology, Stanley C. Ball, identified locations around the country that would be celebrated in his artwork, which blends painting with taxidermied specimens and faux flora to create an especially life-like, three-dimensional work of art.

Perry's method was exacting, even down to the geometric layout of the space. He devised a grid method of organizing the diorama that not only lent itself to verisimilitude, but enhanced the viewer's experience of the artwork. He produced numerous studies of the areas he painted, and eventually a scale model of the entire diorama that he would then

transfer to the final installation. The Cornwall installation is a brilliant explosion of color, replete with a whitetail deer that peers through the glass before a backdrop of fall foliage that aprons the distant Berkshire hills. Working in tandem with the museum's Chief Preparator, Ralph Morrill, to gather the specimens, the resulting display straddles the line between scientific curio and work of art. The effect is nothing short of spellbinding.

## A timeless exhibit

Visiting it again this February, I met with the current preparator (and Wilson biographer), Michael Anderson, who is responsible for the upkeep and preservation of the displays. He reviewed the work with me, pointing out the blending of three scenes in the panorama, the seamless blending of foreground and background painting, and his painstaking efforts to keep the forces of decay and climate at bay. Over the years, he has replaced millions of leaves, even pioneering a 3D printing technique to facilitate the process.

The result is a timeless exhibit

Above: The Peabody's *Forest Margin* diorama captures the drama of a brilliant fall day in Cornwall Hollow. Photo courtesy of Yale Peabody Museum.

Continued on next page ...



Above: Wilson made several trips to Litchfield County to produce studies for his work. This is the gridded landscape that would ultimately be the backdrop for the diorama.

that, at least on the day I was there, continued to captivate young and old. A cornucopia of fauna populate the diorama, inviting patient observation in the mode of a “Where’s Waldo” book: twenty-six animals lurk among the leaves and stones, and everything from mink to the diminutive Saw-whet Owl reward the observant viewer. Most of these specimens were gathered from around Connecticut and taxidermied by Morrill, and although most have been replaced over the years, his perfectly preserved stag from the hills of Cornwall abides; there is even extant film footage of Morrill loading and unloading it in his woody wagon to authenticate the specimen.

As we talked, I connected anew with the piece. In the far left corner, I recognized the unmistakable profile of Mt. Everett as seen from the top of Roberts Hill in Goshen, a view I first encountered as a Scout at nearby Strang Scout Reservation. Tucked behind the sugar maple on the right, I saw a stream I think I have seen while riding my bike near Everest Hill in Cornwall Center. The diorama is really an apocryphal scene comprised of three locations in Cornwall, although the primary vantage point is from behind a stone wall in a field on Roberts Hill. Suddenly, however, this orchestrated scene assumed a familiarity I only associate with great drama. There was an undercurrent of truth to it that captured my sense of Cornwall Hollow as a place.

**Today and in actuality...**

What I didn’t see were the places I now associate with the name Cornwall Hollow. I have run, ridden, and hiked through parts of Cornwall Hollow, which, like the

aforementioned resident, I understood to skirt Route 43. On either side of the road, most of the area is swamp, deeded farmland, protected state forest, or vacation homes. It can be an eerie place for its utter silence. On one run, it was so quiet I could hear my footfalls on the pavement. While there are working farms there, the surrounding hills absorb much of the sound, and the Hollenback River and the swamps it feeds prevent much further development.

Unlike the diorama, there are no great vistas, but lots of quiet forest, some of which is designated state land. The Mohawk Trail passes through the area, allowing visitors to experience the same kind of quietude captured in Wilson’s work: a sparkling rill, a flitting squirrel, some deer dashing over a stone wall.

This is not a place for those who like destination hikes with vistas,

waterfalls, or named peaks, but if you are looking for a pleasant walk in the woods with opportunities for spotting elusive wildlife, it is worth the trip. The Peabody Museum was prudent in selecting this space as a representation of the diverse ecosystems that exist in the northwest hills. The “Forest Margin” as it is called straddles that space between untamed woods and cultivated farmland that supports herbivorous fauna such as deer, tree-dwelling rodents such as squirrels, and omnivorous predators such as foxes that hunt along the stone walls that designate the borders. Wilson’s work manages to capture the tension between these occupants as well as the natural beauty of the larger vistas.

While visiting the Peabody, I took a moment to reconnect with Wilson’s other works, and discovered one I had forgotten: a bog meadow that recreates one found on Canaan Mountain, about five miles from Cornwall Hollow. I’m not entirely sure what place this one depicts, either, but I am looking forward to trying to find out. After all of my research, I’m probably further from being able to define Cornwall Hollow in geographic terms, yet I am much closer to it as a place than when I began. •



Above: The woods of Cornwall Hollow provide plentiful shelter for wildlife and a young forest that reflects the influence of agriculture on the area.

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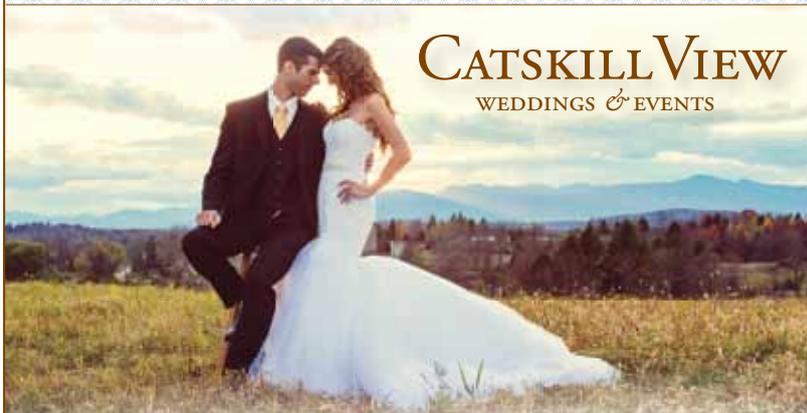
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# The Cornwall Country Market

By John Torsiello  
info@mainstreetmag.com

When I visited the Cornwall Country Market's owners, James and Adela Shepard, James quickly said, "You really can't write about Cornwall and not write about the Market."

True enough.

The market, located a stone's throw from a bridge that spans the mighty Housatonic River in what is known as Cornwall Bridge (as opposed to West Cornwall, where the famed covered bridge stands) is the social hub of this small town.

Conversation among neighbors and friends resonates through the building's historic interior at all hours of the day, especially during the morning. That's when the "regulars" roll in for breakfast and lunch-on-the-go and retirees and the older crowd hashes out political and social issues and attempts to decide the fate of their town government.

"Especially during the off-peak months we pretty much know everybody by their names when they walk in," said James Shepard, who, along with his wife, renovated and reopened the store in 2013. "And we know pretty much what every one of them would like to order from the deli. Then the older guys come in and have coffee in the side room and talk about all kinds of topics. There is even one gentleman who came here every day that we were closed for renovations asking when we were going to reopen. And he's here every day now."

## A market, not a general store

The down home comfort of the market (it's not a general store, says James Shepard), is exactly what the Shepards envisioned when they purchased the building upon the advice of James' stepfather, Otto Kaletsch, a 50-year resident of nearby Sharon who had close ties and knowledge



of Cornwall.

"This is what we wanted to do when we decided to move from Boston where we were living," explained Adela Shepard. "We were going to do the same thing in Oregon where I grew up and when this opportunity presented itself we said why not. It has the small town charm and sense of community that we were seeking. We like to think that we are a part of that now."

When the Shepards renovated the store they paid homage to its storied past, while updating it to make it a place where customers could enjoy superlative deli delights as well as all kinds of locally sourced products, from maple syrup to vegetables during the summer.

## A little bit of history

According to the Cornwall Bridge Market website, what was once known as H.W. Breen's General Merchandise Store was first built in 1835 in Cornwall Bridge by William H. Breen near the east end of the old Covered Bridge. Little is known about the history of the

original general store, although the nearby covered bridge was washed away in a flood in the 1930s, perhaps precipitating a move to higher ground.

In 1931, his descendent Harry Breen built a store on a new highway where the present day steel bridge was constructed. The store was ran by the Breen family until 1940 when it was sold to Spencer Monroe and Howard O'Dell, Jr., and was operated as Monroe and O'Dell's General Store until Monroe bought out O'Dell and ran the store as Monroe's General Store for the next 30 years. A sign from the time it was Monroe's General Store hangs on a wall inside the Market.

In 1972, Monroe sold the store to Ed Baird who continued to run it as Baird's General Store, Baird's sons, K.C. and Tom, took over the store from their father and continued to operate it until 2010 when the building was leased to Dana and Louise Beecher who renamed it the Cornwall General Store.



Above, top to bottom: The Market's exterior when it was owned by H.W. Breen. The Market's two proud owners and operators, James and Adela Shepard.

Continued on next page ...



Above: The Market's interior, paying homage to its vast history as both a business and an establishment within the community while providing their customers with an array of food choices. Below: An old image of the Market's exterior when it was Monroe's General Store. Images courtesy of the Shepards.

**The market got new owners and a major make-over**

When the Shepards were looking for an ideal location to realize their dream of operating a country market and deli, James' stepfather took a pragmatic approach. He felt that for an independent market to prosper, they could not deal with the multitude of problems that had plagued the Bairds and Beechers. The store's well water was running extremely low, the electrical system was in a bad state, and the furnace was old. The logical solution would be a complete renovation prior to reopening the store.

Otto Kaletsch invited the Shepards for dinner one night and pre-

sented his idea. He said he would purchase and renovate the building, and the Shepards would invest their savings to "re-imagine the interior for the next generation."

The website reported that in June of 2013 the town came to say goodbye to the old building and give the Beechers a "rousing send off." Construction started the following week with extensive demolition. What was originally expected to be a three- or four-week renovation turned into a massive five-month affair.

The entire store was brought down to studs and rebuilt with a more open floor plan, new shelving, two new Americans with Disabilities Act compliant restrooms, and a brand new porch with a handicapped ramp to improve accessibility for all patrons. The store reopened on November 1 of 2013, much to the delight of the Shepards and the community.

**There's a busy season**

The Shepards continue to make their reborn Market a place where the community, and the many tourists that come to town in the late spring through fall, feel comfortable ordering up a sandwich or other deli items and hanging around for an hour or more. There's a little area with picnic tables to one side of the Market and plans are to expand the outside area this year.

"We are very busy in the summer and fall months," said James Shepard. "We might do 900 orders in a day. During the month of February, it's mostly locals that come in and we'll do around 300 orders a day. But I always say it is those regulars that come all the time that pay my bills. We would be nowhere without them."

**Community contributions**

The Shepards are such an integral part of the town's everyday life that, while not members of the volunteer fire department, they do serve in an important capacity whenever there is a serious fire in town.

Related James Shepard, "We have gotten woken up at 1:30 or 2am at our house by firemen saying that they need food and drink for the people battling a fire. So, we get up and get the coffee brigade going."

There's also their own form of community outreach and compassion that the Shepards occasionally practice at the Market. They may overlook a bill hanging on wall that is jokingly called "The Wall of Shame" if they realize there are extenuating circumstances involved in the customers' inability to quickly pay the debt.

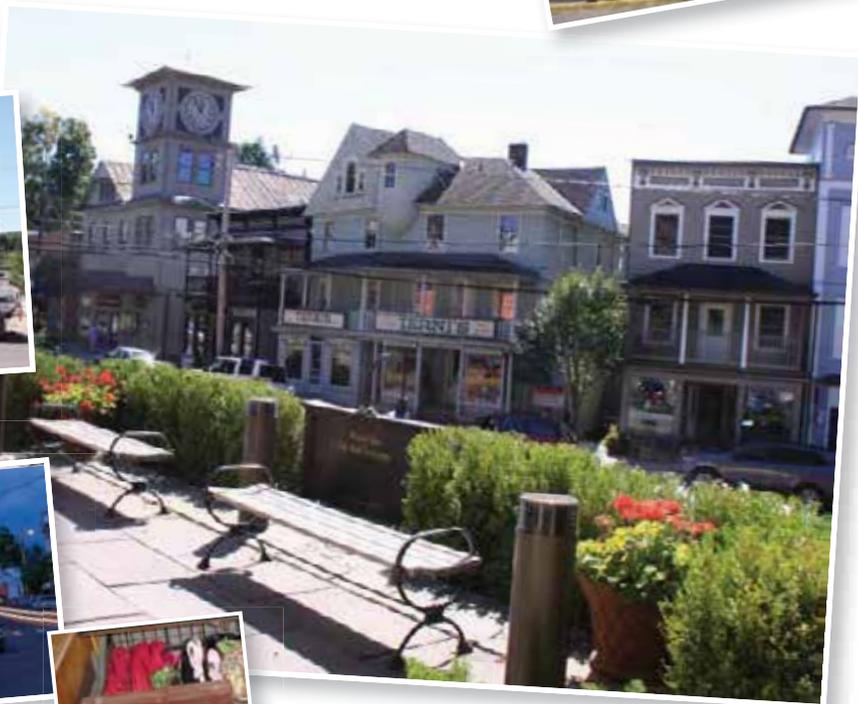
"It's the way an economy and community is supposed to run," says James Shepard. And an indication of a simple, caring way of life that has been lost in many cities and towns. But not in Cornwall, due in part to James and Adela Shepard and their Country Market. •

*Visit the Cornwall Country Market in person at 25 Kent Rd S, Cornwall Bridge, CT or online at [cornwallcountrymarket.com](http://cornwallcountrymarket.com), or give them a ring at (860) 619-8199.*



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*Photos by: Olivia Markonic, Bruce Valentine, Heather Lee, & Ashley Kristjansson.*

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# Will some of your trees be a pain in the ash?

By Michael Nadeau  
men@michaelnadeau.org

There has been a lot of hub bub lately about scourges on the earth of all kinds – from super hurricanes, pandemic strains of bacteria, to exotic invasive plants and insects – all poised to wreak total destruction on their respective victims. Sure enough, some of this is at least partially true. But when each plague *du jour* is scrutinized, we can then separate the honesty from hyperbole.

As an example, let's have a look at our native ash trees (*Fraxinus*). There is no doubt that these trees are under heavy attack by an exotic invasive insect appropriately named the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), appropriate because they feed on ash – our three native species of ash (white, green and black), and many more species of ash trees in North America that are not indigenous to Connecticut; all North American species of ash are susceptible to EAB. Perhaps you've heard about it? Of course you have. It's one of the scourges *du jour*.

## About EAB

EAB was first found in Michigan in 2002. Since, it has spread to 31 states and the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, and Quebec. Its origins are Asian. EAB has killed hundreds of millions of ash trees and is boring its

way through the Northwest Corner as we speak. I say boring because that is exactly what the larval stage of this insect does; it bores through the layers of wood just under the bark, making exquisite s-shaped tunnels as it feeds. These layers contain some of the vascular system (the veins) of the tree. The feeding activity of the EAB as it tunnels across these veins disrupts the flow of life-giving sap in the tree, much like a bridge that is washed out renders a road useless.

The larvae then pupates and metamorphoses into beautiful iridescent green beetles that chew D-shaped exit holes in the bark and fly off to mate and lay eggs on more ash trees to continue the cycle. Once ash trees become infested and die, they are rendered useless as timber for wood products because the wood is weakened and brittle, which renders the trees prone to breakage and in many cases more dangerous and expensive to remove.

Furthermore, the spread of this voracious exotic opportunist is increased by the inadvertent movement of infested firewood and other wood products from infested to non-infested areas. For this reason there is a statewide quarantine on the movement of firewood into and out of Connecticut.

## Ash Yellows

If that weren't enough, ash trees have been plagued by a disease syndrome named Ash Yellows, which can weaken ash trees, rendering them more susceptible to secondary invaders such as EAB. Ash Yellows was first found in the Northeast back in 1985, so it has had some time to do its damage. The droughts we have been experiencing, and other "global weirding" weather patterns of late, all contribute to lower vigor in ash and other trees as well. Alarming, forests in our corner of the state may contain as much as 20% ash species due to our limy soils which ash prefers.



Above: Adult Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) on chewed ash leaf. Below, left: Serpentine trails chewed under the bark by the larvae of EAB. Photos: PA Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources.

## The positive side

That's the negative side of this story. Now let's have a close look at the other side of the story – the positive side. There has been gloom-and-doom predictions of all types pertaining to plants that have fortunately not lived up to their billing. Remember Sudden Oak Death – the rapacious disease that was going to kill every oak across the land? How about the Viburnum Leaf Beetle? The Asian Lily Beetle? The Asian Longhorned Beetle? The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid? The Beech Nectria Canker? I can go on, ad nauseam, but I won't.

To be clear, some of these menaces have caused severe damage and death and are at our doorstep and can rekindle into the latest epidemic at any time. The point I'm trying to make is yes, there are real threats, but Nature is resilient. Life is billions of years old – that's a whole lot of natural selection. Look at the American chestnut and elm trees. The chestnut is killed by blight down to its roots, but its roots survive! You can find remnant trees out in the woods, sprouting, and some even producing fruit. They want to be here; they want to survive. And they will, given enough time, probably a long time. And the elms have taken a devastating hit, but just

marvel at all the beautiful specimens that adorn our backcountry roads. Some elms seem to have resistance to Dutch Elm Disease. Dead? Gone? No way!

## EAB resistance

Let's get back to our ash trees. I am hearing the call of well-meaning souls advocating for eradication of ash trees "before it's too late." Too late for what? Too late to allow the 1-4% of ash trees that has survived in the midst of heavy EAB infestation to lead the way? These are the survivors, the trees that carry the EAB resistance in their seeds. If we act rashly we risk losing the genetic material that is necessary for the long-term survival of *Genus Fraxinus*. Some say eradication is the only way to stop the spread of EAB. Folks, we are not going to stop the spread of EAB. Even if we cut down every last ash tree, chip and burn them to cinders to be sure we have destroyed virtually all of the hapless freeloaders, we will have missed two, somewhere. And as Noah's Ark proved, that's all you need.

Okay, 1-4% isn't very good odds, but do you have a better plan? Ahh, a

Continued on next page ...





Above: Stump of an ash tree, cut down because of bug damage. Photo istockphoto.com contributor SBSArtDept.

plan. We all like a plan. First off, EAB doesn't waste its time on young trees (<2 cm), so sapling regeneration has a bright future. And don't think Mother Nature is taking this assault lying down. There are three species of parasitoid wasps (biocontrol agents) being released that are targeted to slow the spread of EAB. Dr. Claire Rutledge and colleagues at the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) in New Haven have been releasing wasps since 2013. Several species have been found to have established in the state, with more species and releases scheduled for the near future. It won't save the large ash trees but it should control EAB as the ash saplings regenerate. This is very good news and reason for hope!

### Protection

Further, cultural practices that improve the vigor of our trees, like watering during dry periods, spreading compost and wood chips out to the dripline of the branches to encourage a soil microflora that is beneficial to ash trees, then plant native woodland groundcovers under ash trees (or any kind of tree) that pick a fair fight with the ash trees for minerals and nutrients instead of life-sucking, resource-guzzling turfgrass, to name a few examples.

Next, identify those ash trees that are of high value and protect them with a natural and organically acceptable insecticide derived from the seed

of the Neem tree called TreeAzin. ([www.bioforest.ca/UploadedFiles/files/US%20TreeAzin%20Specimen%2003-31-17.pdf](http://www.bioforest.ca/UploadedFiles/files/US%20TreeAzin%20Specimen%2003-31-17.pdf)).

It has the lowest measurable toxicity of all other insecticides registered in CT for control of EAB. Be aware that even though it is organically acceptable by USDA standards, it is still an insecticide and may have detrimental side effects on beneficial organisms. Studies are ongoing to determine if TreeAzin is or is not harmful to pollinators. According to Dr. Kimberly Stoner at CAES, bees and other pollinators collect pollen from ash trees, so it is important to consider the long-term effects of treatment.

TreeAzin is injected into the trunks of ash trees by a qualified arborist and is mixed and distributed with the natural sap in the tree to all parts of the plant. When EAB larvae eat the treated wood they die and mature females have fewer offspring after ingesting treated leaves. It is very effective in controlling EAB and saving ash trees. One application can last up to two years, one year where EAB pressure is heavy. Unlike the rest of the insecticides registered for use in Connecticut for EAB control, the EPA product label for TreeAzin does not state any toxic effects to pollinators, primarily because it has not yet been determined. ([www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem\\_search/ppls/082996-00001-20090529.pdf](http://www3.epa.gov/pesticides/chem_search/ppls/082996-00001-20090529.pdf)).

TreeAzin is applied after ash trees have leafed out and well past the flowering stage; therefore there is minimal risk of it accumulating in tree pollen

produced during the flowering stage in the first year following application. The science is unclear if there is enough TreeAzin in the pollen during the second year to harm pollinators. ([www.barnesinc.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/0025\\_001.pdf](http://www.barnesinc.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/0025_001.pdf)).

### Other insecticides

The other insecticides that are registered for control of EAB in CT (neonicotinoids, or emamectin benzoate) could potentially taint tree pollen with pollinator-killing poisons, poisons that are highly toxic to our honeybees and many native pollinating insects, poisons that can last years and years from a single application.

Research shows when ash trees are protected for four years the EAB crisis passes and the trees can then continue to grow and provide all the ecosystem services they do, for free. After this period, constant vigilance and treatment when needed will be the watchword. Two big gifts we get from ash trees and trees in general: oxygen to breathe and facilitating CO<sub>2</sub> absorption through photosynthesis to store excess atmospheric carbon. This has a direct impact on Global Climate Change by storing CO<sub>2</sub> directly into the soil where it can remain stable and be used by plants. What's more, treating an ash tree to preserve it is far less costly than removing and destroying the tree. To find out if your tree is worth saving check out the handy tree value calculator here <http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/treecomputer/>.

As a last resort, unprotected trees that will pose a definite hazard,

should they become infested with EAB, ought to be identified and monitored for signs of early infestation and removed as soon as possible thereafter. It is good to have a plan and the resources in place before this crisis hits. Woodlot owners concerned about losing a cash crop may want to have most of their ash trees selectively harvested, leaving some high-grade trees to provide seeds of the highest genetic integrity, for future generations of seedlings.

Just like people, trees are innocent until proven guilty. Let's think wisely and act with humility, for our ash trees are marvelous living beings and deserve more thought than the well-meaning but ill-fated chainsaw approach. Yes, it looks like most of our ash trees will go the way of the American chestnut, so prudent planning is imperative. But remember, some will survive ... if we let them. Please don't be a pain in your ash's arse. •

*Michael Nadeau is a CT Licensed Arborist, and the owner of Wholistic Land Care Consulting, LLC. To learn more, visit [www.michaelnadeau.org](http://www.michaelnadeau.org) or email him at [men@michaelnadeau.org](mailto:men@michaelnadeau.org).*

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## INSURING YOUR WORLD

Legal entities – one of the most common errors when insuring real property is making sure the insurance company is insuring the correct entity. A great example is when a person purchases a property and their attorney recommends that said property be placed in a LLC for liability reasons. This is a common practice, yet if the insurance carrier is not made aware of the LLC and the individual occupant is listed as named insured, there is NO coverage should a loss occur for the LLC for either property or liability since the LLC is not named on the policy. This also happens frequently when a person places their home's deed in a "family trust" – it is imperative that the trust be added to the policy so that the trust can receive the claim settlement check should a property loss occur or liability claim be brought against a trust or LLC. The insurance company can't provide a defense for an incorrect legal entity. These seemingly simple transactions need to be made on the actual policy in question to insure appropriate coverage if a claim should arise. So, review your policy for accuracy and avoid unpleasant surprises!



Kirk Kneller  
Phone 518.329.3131  
1676 Route 7A, Copake, N.Y.

**Brad Peck, Inc.**

## SIMPLY STATED

A group of shoppers wanders into a gallery and peruses the paintings, sculpture, carved wood pieces, and ceramic bowls displayed. One of them offers up the ultimate exit line: "I can buy this stuff at Crate & Barrel."

And the group moves on.

Yes, it's absolutely true that Crate & Barrel (or Pottery Barn, IKEA, or any number of retail chains) sells ceramic bowls, wooden utensils, pictures framed to hang on a wall, and figurines to adorn a shelf. There is quite a difference, however, between the stacks of soup bowls, bins of wooden cooking spoons, and framed prints of Monet's *Water Lilies* ... and both art and craft.

Artists spend days, sometimes lifetimes, creating unique pieces. Paintings, sculpture, carvings, woven fibre pieces, hand-built ceramics – each one is the only one. It is a piece of art. Craft is that wonderful transitional space where a well-designed piece of art is replicated by hand and standardized. The potter creates a hundred coffee mugs. The carver turns out dozens of wooden spoons. Consumer goods take those crafted pieces and translate the size, weight, color and pattern into an item that can be created by machine. The human element is gone. The salad bowl you buy can be an everyday item that is purely functional. Alternately, it can be a craft-made piece that makes your table unique simply because it wasn't mass-produced. Or, the bowl on the table can be a work of art – one-of-a-kind that speaks clearly about your taste and sense of design.

Choose well, and enjoy your collection for what it says about you.

### KATHY WISMAR STUDIO

8 Landmark Lane in the Kent Green Shopping Area, Kent, CT 06757  
703-795-5017 kathywismarstudio@gmail.com

## Preparing for chicks: setting up your brooder

A brooder is simply a small home for your chicks to help meet their needs and keep them safely contained as they grow. Your brooder ought to provide approximately one square foot of space per chick, and should be at least 12-15 inches high so they cannot escape easily.

### To take proper care of your chicks, your brooder will need:

- **Bedding:** Pine chips, clean sand, paper towel, shredded newspaper, and burlap are suitable. Avoid cedar chips or other aromatic wood chips, as they can be toxic. Also, do not use whole sheets of newspaper, as they are not absorbent and can cause leg and foot deformities in growing chicks.
- **Heat source:** Choose a higher voltage lamp or electric heating panel that will supply sufficient heat, and position it above one side of the brooder, leaving an unheated area for chicks to retreat as they warm up. Be sure the heat source is safely positioned, however, so it is not a fire hazard either to the bedding or the side of the brooder.
- **Water:** Young chicks need a fresh, clean supply of water daily. A water dish should not be very deep or else chicks may accidentally drown.
- **Feeder:** Use a slightly raised feeder so the chicks will be less likely to walk through the food and potentially contaminate it with shed feathers, dirt, or feces.
- **Thermometer:** As chicks grow, they will need less supplemental heat, and keeping the temperature in a good, consistent range will keep the birds warm without overheating or becoming chilled. Check the thermometer regularly throughout the day.
- **Perches:** As chicks get older, they will instinctively look for perches. Providing a few perches for the young birds will help them sharpen their perching skills and may minimize the risk of escapes as they attempt to perch on the lip of the brooder. Position 2-5 inches above the bedding for birds to use.
- **Cover:** A screen cover will provide good air circulation to keep the birds comfortable while preventing any escape attempts. Covers will also keep inquisitive pets or marauding predators away from the vulnerable young chicks.

Phone 518-789-4471  
Route 22 Millerton, NY  
www.agwayny.com



## Don't let the practice of going out to see art go extinct!

Why would you want to go out when the weather is bad, or when the sun is hiding, or your energy is lower due to the weather? Plus, our computers and our phones bring everything to us, so we become even less inclined to budge. Everything is brought to us, that is, except for fully sensory experiences. Enter, the art exhibition.

As a partisan visual arts professional, I increasingly feel empathy for the artist who may only be wishing for a physical audience, let alone sales. It is well known that galleries and museums are expected to put countless hours into their web presence to make sure the art is being done its justice, but the true justice done for art cannot come by way of a computer image facsimile (unless that is what the art means to address).

There are critics these days who feel comfortable looking at exhibitions online and tweeting about it. We know social media is a great tool, but is this the extent of engagement an artist should get for putting in years to bring their work to the public sphere? And what about older, secondary market treasures by deceased artists? They are not here to see the day that their legacy is flippantly consumed in the palm of one's hand via Instagram.

So here is the advice: Use your legs, lungs, and eyes to go look at art! At odds with today's habits, countless artists, museums, galleries, and not-for-profit organizations continue to put in the long hours to bring together an artistic experience for the public. It is because we believe that art needs to be engaged with, it is the core of its purpose.



12 Old Barn Road | PO Box 99 | Kent, CT 06757  
860-592-0353 | www.eckertfineart.com | gallery@eckertfineart.com



## Whiting Mills

Artists, artisans, and shops. (860) 738-2240. 100 Whiting St., Winsted, CT. [whitingmills.com](http://whitingmills.com)

Eva and Jean Paul Blachere purchased the Whiting Mills complex of historic buildings in 2004, an old and historic mill building in Winsted, CT, and converted it into workspaces. Its 56 tenants include artists, photographers, craftspeople, small businesses, and manufacturing. Their semi-annual Open Studio events enjoy a reputation for being a destination for the public to enjoy meeting resident and guest artists at the Whiting Mills. In 2006, the nationally acclaimed American Mural Project purchased two of the buildings for its future home, scheduled to open in 2018. In November of 2017, the Connecticut Economic Resources Center and Northwestern Hills Region recognized Whiting Mills for its contribution to the economic growth of the region and state. Over the past several years, Whiting Mills has broadened its reach far into southern and eastern CT, the Berkshires in Massachusetts, and White Plains, NY. Whiting Mills has become a destination for the public to see a wide variety of artistic creations during the entire year. The management of Whiting Mills is truly dedicated to being a part of the creative community and not just the “owner of the building.” They create a total experience that can be seen as visitors explore the many hallways and studios, especially at Christmas when the entire interior is decorated for the season with lights, ornaments, Christmas trees, and more.



## House of Books

Kent's literary landmark. (860) 927-4101. 10 North Main Street, Kent, CT. Follow us on Facebook. [houseofbooksct.com](http://houseofbooksct.com)

Before becoming the third owner of the House of Books (HOB) in May 2013, Robin Dill worked for the previous owners for nine and a half years. HOB is a full-service independent bookstore and has a wide variety of books on all topics. “I’m regularly told we have the best History section of any bookstore in the area and in March of last year *Connecticut Magazine* named HOB one of the ‘10 Best Independent Bookstores in the State.’” If the book you are looking for isn’t in stock, they can quickly get it, usually in just a couple of days. HOB also has an eclectic Used/Antiquarian section supplied by Richard Lindsey of Kent. In addition, HOB also carries art/office supplies, is a designated UPS Shipping and Drop Off location (which allows them to ship books to customer near and far), fax and copier services, has a large selection of greeting cards, candles and gift items. “I am thrilled to be celebrating the store’s 42 years in business this coming October. Reading is such a life-affirming experience – allowing you to enter so many different worlds, walk in many different shoes, and connected to many different topics and subjects.” This is what helps Robin remain optimistic about bookstores and continues to encourage folks to read to inform themselves, entertain your imagination, and experience the world through someone else’s heart and mind.



## Cornwall Plumbing & Heating, LLC.

Reliable plumbing and heating services. (860) 672-6350. PO Box 82, Cornwall Bridge, CT. [cornwallp-h.com](http://cornwallp-h.com)

Cornwall Plumbing & Heating, LLC has been a local and reliable plumbing and heating company since 2008. They’re excited to celebrate their ten year anniversary in April and to continue supporting the community. Joey Rogers and his team of techs and office staff are happy to help with your project or problem. They cover all plumbing, heating, air conditioning, solar thermal, gas piping, well and water treatment systems, and more. Cornwall Plumbing & Heating is available for services on residential and commercial systems, covering the entire Northwest corner of CT and Dutchess County, NY. Each tech has their strong suit and they are matched with each job. They enjoy helping their customers and educating them on new products, as well as taking on the challenge of solving problems on existing systems. They even take the time to provide you with three options for repair, including pricing for any situation, this way there are never any surprises at the end of the job. Most of their higher options include a five year warranty. Cornwall Plumbing & Heating is proud to be an “Excellence dealer” for LG Air conditioning products, Viessmann heating equipment, and AO Smith water heaters, to name a few. Call today to discuss your next project, and don’t forget that someone is on-call 24 hours a day should you have an emergency! You can count on Cornwall Plumbing & Heating, LLC time and time again.



## Something to Crow about Dahlias

Seasonal potted and rooted plants. (860) 672-3515. 34 Furnace Brook Road, Cornwall Bridge, CT. [somethingtocrowaboutdahlias.com](http://somethingtocrowaboutdahlias.com)

With spring in the air and summer right around the corner, we naturally think of the vibrant colors Mother Nature offers, and flowers and other beautiful plants are no exception. Amanda Chase feels the same way and started Something to Crow About Dahlias in 2001. For seventeen years and counting, she has operated a very small farm, growing about 2,500 plants and 200 varieties all grown in Northwest CT. Amanda sells cut dahlias in season and tubers (root stock) year round (which can also be ordered by mail). Some potted plants are for sale if you prefer to start with a potted plant, but hurry because they sell out quickly! In addition, Amanda will also be offering premium fresh-cut dahlia blooms for every occasion. Freshly picked daily, they are available in almost every color to compliment your needs. The farm is open during bloom season, which, depending on Mother Nature, is late July until frost, which is usually early October. It’s best to call ahead if you plan on picking up flowers or they can be delivered for a nominal fee. “I love what I do and it’s very rewarding to see the joy these beautiful flowers and plants bring others.” As each growing season passes, Amanda would like to continue expanding the growing fields to produce more root stock, as well as cut flowers.

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