

THE REAL ESTATE WATCH

Gaylordsville...\$2,450,000

A 1790, 12-room, 5-bedroom, 5 1/2-bath Colonial on 47.12± acres. Listed at \$2,800,000. Period on the market, 4 months. Taxes, \$10,940. Brokers, Klemm Real Estate; Wm. Paul Dooley Real Estate.

Woodbury...\$825,000

A 1795, 9-room, 3-bedroom, 3-bath Colonial with 6 fireplaces, screened porch, stream and meadow on 19.54 acres. Listed at \$850,000. Period on the market unavailable. Taxes, \$6,712. Brokers, Klemm Real Estate; Portfolio Properties.

New Milford...\$390,000

A 1983, 7-room, 3-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath Cape on 0.93 acre. Listed at \$379,900. Period on the market, 1 month. Taxes, \$4,518. Brokers, Settlers & Traders Real Estate; Country Living Associates/Westport.

Burlington...\$366,500

A 1982, 7-room, 3-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath Contemporary with fireplace and brook on 1± acre. Listed at \$379,500. Period on the market, 2 days. Taxes, \$4,266. Broker, Marrin, Santore & Tyler Inc.

Goshen...\$327,500

A 1977, 7-room, 3-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath Ranch with fieldstone fireplace on 0.86 acre. Listed at \$369,900. Period on the market, 3 1/2 months. Taxes, \$3,579. Brokers, Hiltz & Bowling Real Estate; Coldwell Banker Bredice & Dean.

Watertown...\$255,000

A 1917, 7-room, 4-bedroom, 2-bath Colonial on 0.32± acre. Listed at \$262,000. Period on the market, 3 months. Taxes, \$2,744. Broker, Klemm Real Estate.

New Milford...\$220,000

A 1929, 2,161-sq.-ft., 2-room, 2-bath former church and day-care center with steeple on 0.52 acre. Listed at \$275,000. Period on the market, 5 months. Taxes unavailable. Broker, Settlers & Traders Real Estate; Coldwell Banker.

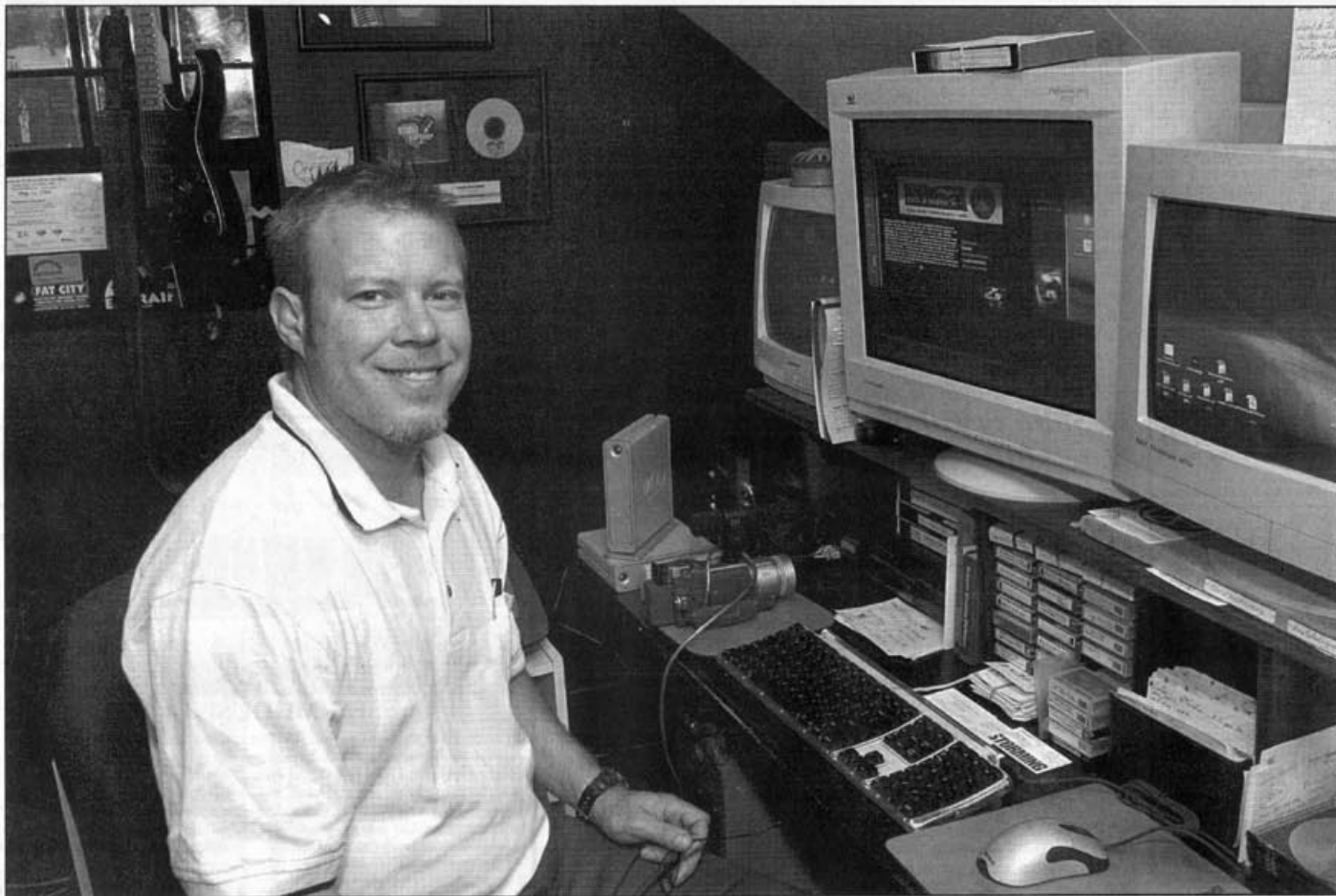
Torrington...\$135,000

A 1937, 6-room, 2-bedroom, 1-bath Cape. Listed at \$134,900. Period on the market and taxes unavailable. Brokers, Columbus Realty; Marrin, Santore & Tyler Inc.

Goshen land...\$120,000

A 1-acre parcel at Woodridge Lake. Listed at \$149,000. Period on the market, 5 months. Taxes, \$927. Broker, Portfolio Properties.

Sales samplings provided by area real-estate firms. Market samplings gleaned at random from listings.



Doug Branson in his Kent studio.

Robin Gourd

A Kent Man Puts Media in Digital Formats

By BOB DEAKIN

Some of the barns in Litchfield County still hold hay, but so many others have become workshops for those with creative minds. Doug Branson of Kent can be found in such a place, leaning over a Macintosh computer with a synthesizer behind him and an army of guitars hanging on the wall nearby.

"I create digital media," he said when asked for a simplified explanation of what he does for a living. "I can do it through radio, television, film, print and the Web."

He divides his business into three entities: one for video, another for virtual tours on the Web and the third for music.

Rather than keeping a narrow focus on each service, he considers himself a producer. He firmly endorses networking, particularly within his own community, and is spending his time getting to know what talents are hidden in Litchfield County and beyond.

Nearly every question about his services leads to an endorsement of someone who has tried it before, or someone else who can help make it better.

"Artists and the people I've worked with often have a lot of great ideas that they never implement, or they have a tough time," he reasoned. "I'm hoping that with the new communication techniques we're using in new media that there's nothing that people do that

other people shouldn't know about."

He has renovated a barn on his property, which also contains one of the oldest homes in Kent, and equipped it with a digital production studio. Far

'I create digital media. I can do it through radio, television, film, print and the Web.'

—Doug Branson,
exit4music.com

from being a sterile environment of computers and fluorescent lights, the comfortable room with the big fluffy

couch also works as a small recording and composing studio.

Mr. Branson can often be found lugging a Cannon XL1S mini DV camera—broadcast quality—around, recording an event to be put together as part of total multimedia package.

He recently captured the ArtDogs benefit in Kent, featuring an all-star lineup of artists putting their talents together for a common cause. At the unveiling of a roomful of colorful sculptures of dogs, he came with the camera, took shots of each of the works, interviewed the artists and sponsors and produced a half-hour presentation to preserve the event for posterity, complete with original background music and a

Continued on Page Twenty-One

Music, Video and Web Tours From a Studio Based in Kent

Continued from Page Nineteen
tastefully designed cover.

Mr. Branson also recently became involved with several local chambers of commerce and a visitor's bureau to offer virtual tours. He has shot extensive digital video footage of local roads and scenic areas to make available on the Web. A potential visitor who wants to take a look at Mohawk Mountain before making the trek from far away can simply click on a virtual tour and decide for themselves where they want to go.

In the coming weeks, he is to embark on an experimental plan to digitally videotape a fly-over of the Kent area for bigger and better views.

"It's an easy way for people to take a look quickly at points of interest because traveling around here, it takes a while to get places," he said.

Mr. Branson's primary focus is on multimedia, particularly the post-production end, recording voice-overs and audio and video overdubs, but he can handle most aspects of audio recording as well.

For the singer/songwriter finally ready to lay down tracks for a high quality demo tape, Mr. Branson's small studio is ideal. He has a wall of CDs recorded by local musicians

at his studio, and if the project grows beyond his scope, he has close ties with a fellow studio owner with a more room, instruments and even musicians if necessary.

He sympathizes with those caught in the corporate downsizing trend, but experience has taught him to value the worth of the individual.

"An office that used to have 20 people now has 10. When people are finding that point in their life where they're trying to re-define, well how do you tell people what you do?" he asked, describing a position he was once in. "Why tell them? You can show them also."

He showed footage of a recently produced industrial video, hawking the advantages of a new product line.

"Here's a guy who has a great idea and is taking it to the next level," he said, showing a video demonstration he shot of a new children's puzzle, backed with music he composed and recorded. "He's created it, manufactured it and produced it and now he is distributing the information on it through new media."

The new media to which he refers is MP3s on the Web and digital

video shown on laptops at an inventors' convention. He can put the source material on CDs, DVDs, Digital Audio Tape (DAT), VHS, audiotape or in various formats for the Web, including graphics and old photos. Old analog tapes can be transferred to new digital sources, or the bulk of material can be blended into one format.

"I hope to repackage things that people have that have not been marketed yet and get them out there for the masses," he said, noting that

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—Doug Branson,
exit4music.com

could be anything from Super 8 films from the 1960s to VHS tapes from the 1980s.

He maintains several Web sites of his own and can provide an all-encompassing digital media extravaganza, but finds more and more that clients want to control and update their own sites without the use of an outside service. He focuses his efforts on the virtual

tours to plant on other Web sites and his refers to the business by the name of Exit4multimedia Group (www.exit4music.com).

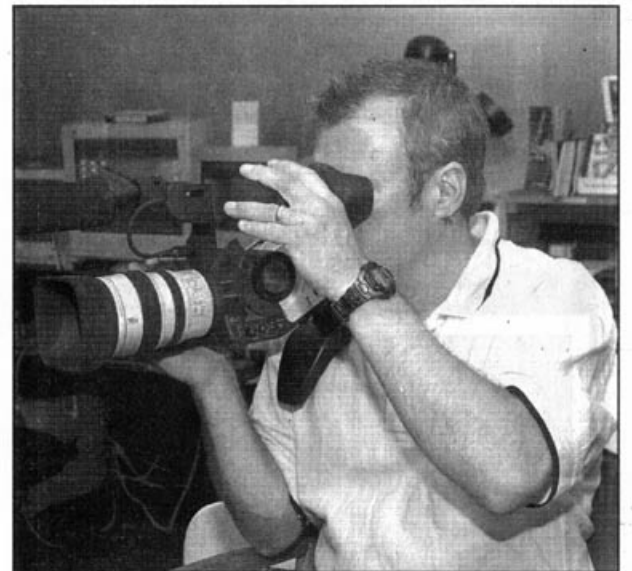
Mr. Branson's wife, Christine, grew up in the house and the family has resided there for six years. Now 42, he is originally from the Philadelphia area and still does a fair share of work there, and in Stamford, but eventually wants to concentrate his work locally.

Affable, with a strong core of friends, two young children in local schools, a profound love for music and the arts, Mr. Branson's strong grasp on technology may have him in the right place to benefit himself and the community in years to come.

He writes music for his own pleasure and for work, playing guitar, keyboards and several other instruments, and is a member of the Connecticut Songwriters Association.

A project Mr. Branson has been working on involves old video footage from the 1980s of his days creating and selling art in the South Street section of Philadelphia with his late friend, airbrush artist Michael Tancredi, who was killed in a car accident in 1991.

The two were best friends and part of a group of street-wise artists. Mr. Tancredi was particularly well known in the Philadelphia area and in the local music scene. Mr. Branson's hope is



Doug Branson with a camera in his Kent studio.

Robin Gourd

that the finished product will show the life of a group of up-and-coming artists, musicians and performers in the late 80s and early 90s, and create interest in his late friend's work and life.

"We were living on South Street, during the MTV generation," Mr. said. "We got out of art school (Art Institute of Philadelphia) in 1984

and we were a big part of it. This is going to be reality in a rough way, but I feel that I'm obligated to show people about Michael's life."

For those looking to explore their own creativity on any scale, his facility and a network of associates may provide an option without leaving the beauty of the countryside behind.



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ONE DOLLAR

A NEW CONNECTOR FOR NEW MILFORD TOPIC OF SESSION

Officials Urge Patience, But Several Residents Are Already Critical

By EMILY M. OLSON

NEW MILFORD—Members of the public got their first look at a proposal for an east-west connector road—from Route 7 near Boardman Bridge to Route 202—at a meeting Tuesday.

The meeting was organized by members of the Economic Development Commission and the Planning Commission and was attended by about 60 people, including many residents who live in neighborhoods that would be affected, along Aspetuck Ridge, Merryall and Paper Mill roads and Route 202.

PowerPoint Presentation

Consultants from Wilbur Smith Associates of New Haven gave a PowerPoint presentation, displayed maps of the proposed bypass meant to reduce traffic congestion in the town center, and answered many questions during more than two hours of discussion and comment.

New Milford hired the consulting firm to conduct the analysis last spring, soon after the Planning Commission considered the public works department's proposal for a connector and amended the town's Plan of Conservation and Development to allow the plan to be designed.

Century Brass Factor

A primary reason for considering the bypass at this time is the town's ongoing effort to clean up and market the sprawling former Century Brass mill, located on Boardman Road and Aspetuck Ridge Road, for future industrial or commercial development.

Building the proposed connector, which would be about three miles long, would divert at least 42 percent of the traffic from the downtown area, the study concluded.

The proposed connector would start at Boardman Bridge, which

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Six Fatalities In Accidents

Accidents in several different Litchfield County towns between early last Saturday morning and Tuesday resulted in the deaths of six people, with the greatest loss occurring on Route 133 in Bridgewater, where a mother and her two children were killed.



Cancer survivor Garrett Semenez, 5, gets a ride from his father, Eric, at last weekend's Shepaug Relay for Life in Washington. Additional photographs on Page Thirteen.

Robin Gourd

REG. 14 BUDGET REJECTED AGAIN

Margin Growing Wider; Bethlehem Resolute

By AMY MULVIHILL

WOODBURY—It's been one step forward and two steps back for the Region 14 school district this year, and this week's budget referendum continued that trend.

The school district, which serves Bethlehem and Woodbury, held its fourth budget referendum Tuesday, only to see the \$25.02 million proposal rejected by an even wider margin than was the previous budget, which was \$34,295 higher.

The latest budget represented an increase of \$1.15 million, or 4.82 percent, over last year's spending plan.

Tale of Two Towns

As has been the case every time since the original May 4 referendum, Woodbury voters approved the budget 905 to 866, although this week's result

Annual Butterfly Count Soars Over Record for NW Corner

By ASA FITCH

FALLS VILLAGE—Early last Saturday afternoon, some men and women gathered near a row of parked cars at an inconspicuous entrance to Robbins Swamp Wildlife Management Area in Falls Village to have lunch. It was a hot, sunny day, and most of them wore wide-brimmed hats and rough clothing. Many carried mesh hoop nets perched on long metal posts. One man examined a gilded moth dancing nervously in a clear plastic vial.

Species-Rich Region

It was the middle of an annual butterfly count headed by Dave Wagner, an entomologist and biology professor at the University of Connecticut. Mr. Wagner and the count's 22 other participants had been hard at work all morning, looking for butterflies to add to a tally meant to gauge both population and species diversity in Northwestern Connecticut, one of the most species-rich regions in New England.

Scientists use the data collected in



A northern metalmark.

Waramaug Deal to Give More Access to Boaters

Allows 20 Boats Per Day; Warren, Washington, Kent Must Approve

By E.L. LEFFERTS

WASHINGTON—After roughly a decade of debate, and sometimes controversy, the three towns bordering Lake Waramaug—Kent, Warren and Washington—have reached a proposed agreement with the state Department of Environmental Protection allowing for more public access for out-of-town boaters.

The agreement, which must be ratified by voters in the three towns, appears to represent a victory for the forces seeking to preserve the lake, which is surrounded by a narrow road giving way to a beautiful, dramatic landscape studded with high-end homes.

The Out-of-Towners

According to the document, no more than 20 motorboats owned by those who live outside the three towns may be on Lake Waramaug on any given day, and they are all subject to inspection for environmental

fitness at the Washington boat launch before entering the water.

Of the total of 20, 13 launchings shall be allocated to campers at Lake Waramaug State Park in Kent, but the boaters must still have their watercraft checked at the town facility.

\$25 Fee

The remaining seven non-resident motorboat launchings will be permitted on a first-come, first-served basis.

An unlimited number of car-top boats, or watercraft with no greater than 12 horsepower outboard motors transported on top of, or in a car or pickup, are also allowed. They are also subject to an environmental inspection, however.

An annual launch fee of \$25 must be paid before any motorboat can touch the water, and an additional \$5

Continued on Page Three

A Lease Is Signed for Effort In Torrington on Stowe Site

By SOPHIE NYE

HARTFORD—At a gathering Monday in the Connecticut State Library, supporters of the Beecher House Society celebrated as they took the next step in finding a home for the disassembled house where Harriet Beecher Stowe spent her early childhood.

Chandler Saint, president of the Beecher House Society, signed a 99-year lease for a 90.75-acre parcel of land attached to the University of Connecticut campus in Torrington, where a museum honoring the Beecher family's legacy is to be created.

'A Perfect Home'

Stowe, the author of the seminal anti-slavery work "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was the daughter of preacher Lyman Beecher.

"We have found a perfect home and a perfect partner in the city of Torrington," Mr. Saint said after an extended round of applause in the

wake of the signing, which came after several years of Mr. Saint attempting to pursue his plans in Litchfield amid considerable controversy.

'Couldn't Be Happier'

"We couldn't be happier," he added before paying the nominal, \$1 rent. There was no mention Monday of how much the project would cost, or of potential sources for the funds.

Speakers at the ceremony emphasized the educational aspect of the house. The Beecher House Center will be undertaken in partnership with UConn and the Gilder Lehrman Center at Yale University to create a center for the history and teaching of equal rights, which will include the reconstructed Beecher House.

The leased site for the center is for property near the James Brown birth site in Torrington, which will also be incorporated into the partnership's

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On Rowland Front, a New Twist for Litchfield

By E.L. LEFFERTS

LITCHFIELD—Former governor John Rowland got into trouble for issues linked to his family's Litchfield cottage, and now it appears that another Hartford official may be in hot water for talking about the fallout from those issues—in Litchfield.

June Speech

A speech given in early June at the Litchfield Country Club by Alan Plofsky, executive director of the state Ethics Commission, has inflamed commission members, who are seeking to chastise him, regardless of the opinions of the attorney general and the new governor, M. Jodi Rell.

Only days after Attorney General Richard Blumenthal advised the state Ethics Commission that his office would not represent it in an effort to discipline Mr. Plofsky, commission members decided to hire an outside attorney to handle the personnel matter.

Last week, Mr. Blumenthal informed the commission that its proposed disciplinary action would be "ill-advised and illegal."

Risking Damages

The attorney general also noted that the action could damage the commission's credibility, that it might put the state at risk for monetary damages and that it could foster "an apprehension and aura of retaliation against public officials who provide information or comment on issues of public concern and importance."

Despite this opinion, the commission met last Friday and went into executive session without citing its reasons for doing so, as required by law. During their time out of the public eye, commissioners voted to hire an outside attorney.

Mr. Plofsky had already engaged Hartford lawyer Gregg Adler to represent him in the action.

By Monday, governor Rell had

learned of Mr. Blumenthal's concerns about the matter, and she shot off a letter to Ethics Commission chairman, Rosemary Giuliano, ordering the commission to "immediately rescind all decisions that did not adhere to the law in all respects."

In light of Ms. Rell's current focus on encouraging ethical behavior, she said the actions of the commission should "be above reproach and withstand the most stringent scrutiny."

The commission, in an unannounced meeting June 29, had voted to suspend Mr. Plofsky without pay—at a personal cost of more than \$4,300—for his speech.

Mr. Blumenthal noted in the letter

he sent to Mrs. Rell Monday that the commission appears to have violated Mr. Plofsky's right to due process, as he was never notified in writing of the charges against him or given a chance to defend himself. It was also doubtful that the June 29 meeting was legal, according to the attorney general, as it takes six members to constitute a quorum and only five were present.

'No Dispute'

"Here there can be no dispute that the former Governor's actions discussed by Mr. Plofsky were of obvious public interest," Mr. Blumenthal

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