

# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 1: NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 1991



## Elections

The elections were almost four weeks ago, and the results were reasonably well covered by the daily and weekly press. They got the winners, the losers and the numbers straight. But now we've had time to sit back and digest the outcome and compare it to elections past.

In general the results were a smashing victory for the Democrats, who rarely win contested races. In 15 contests, the Democrats won 11, probably the most impressive showing by the party in this century.

Gordon Ridgway was elected First Selectman by a comfortable 175 votes. He will be joined on the Board by two newcomers, Democrat Dave Williamson and Republican Bill Hurlburt. The three of them constitute the youngest Board in memory, averaging just under 35 years in age. The incumbent Town Clerk, Barbara Dakin, collected 461 votes on both the Republican and Democratic lines. The closest contest was a one-vote squeaker for a four-year term on the Board of Finance. Carol Lugar (R) took the race by one vote — 348 to Democrat Charles Osborne's 347.

This result was ratified during a Nov. 11 recount ordered for two Board of Finance races — Lugar v. Osborne and a second contest for a six-year term between Peter Hammond and incumbent Chairman Thalia Scoville. Although Thalia picked up one vote in the recount, Peter prevailed by 298 to 291.

Democrat Pat Blakey won a head-on contest for the Board of Education. Hendon Chubb was the highest vote-getter in a contested race with 498 for a seat on the Board of Finance. Alice Cadwell finished strongly with 481 in a six-way race for four seats on Park & Rec.

The highest vote-getter was Anne Chamberlain (511) running unopposed for Zoning Board of Appeals.

The election shows that it is probably the independent voters who now control the outcome. In 1976 there were 859 registered voters — 405 Republicans, 241 Democrats, and 213 independents. Just 15 years later we've added 33 voters for a total of 892, but Republicans are down to 297 (a drop of 108), the Democrats have 286 (a modest gain of 45) and the independents have 309 (a big gain of 96).

This year 656 people voted in person and 111 by absentee ballot.

	NO. REGISTERED	NO. VOTED	%
Republicans	297	267	.898
Democrats	286	262	.916
Independents	309	238	.770
TOTALS	892	767	.861

The total, 86%, was the highest in a non-Presidential year in anyone's memory. Of course, our town usually has the highest voter turnout in the state.

For the first time two voting machines were used at Town Hall. The second had been there as a standby in case the first broke down, but voting was so heavy in the morning hours that election moderator Don Bardot decided to use both machines.

— John Miller

## Town Street Tussle II

The Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) is going ahead with plans for an "affordable" house on Town Street despite a threat of legal action to block the project. The decision was taken at a Nov. 14 meeting of the CHC board, when members voted to accept the one-and-a-half-acre plot originally offered to CHC by the late Joe and Ann Blumenthal, and now owned by Ella  
*(continued on page 2)*

# DECEMBER 1991

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> Kent Singers 3pm Salisbury Schl. Chapel p. 4	<b>2</b> FIRST DAY OF CHANUKAH Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Off. 	<b>3</b> Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Christmas Fair 10am-2pm First Church p.4
<b>8</b> Agricultural Advisory Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse Kent Singers 3pm & 7pm New Milford Congr. Church p.4	<b>9</b> Plan. & Zoning 8pm Town Hall	<b>10</b> Dem. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall Hous. Riv. Comm. CCS Lib. 7:30pm Arthur Goetz paintings Corn. Lib.	<b>11</b> Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall	<b>12</b> Board of Ed. 4:30pm CCS Library Corn. Housing Corp. 7:30pm First Church Fiber Arts Guild 7pm W. Cornwall Pottery Store	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Bd. of Select. 8pm T. Hall or off.* Z.B. of Appeals 8pm T. Hall or off.* HVRHS Bd. of Ed. HS Library 7:30pm	<b>17</b> Nuclear-free Zone Comm. St. Peter's 7:30pm	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Town Meeting* 7:30pm Town Hall re: Inland Wetlands	<b>20</b> Christmas Carol Sing 7:30pm Town Hall p.4	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> FIRST DAY OF WINTER	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Holiday Dance 8pm CCS p.4
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	In addition to their regular monthly meeting, the selectmen will meet all other Mondays at 7:30pm  Town Hall or office. * Ice Skating every Monday at Salisbury School indoor rink from 7pm to 8pm. \$1 per person, children 5 years and under free. Soft hats required.			

LQ	NM	FQ	FM
27	5	14	21

\*Check time and place at Town Office.

(continued from page 1)

Clark. Clark, who was at the meeting, said, "I very much want to do this."

The board's action came five days after a lively meeting at Town Hall, attended by some sixty people, at which CHC's plans for the Town Street site, as well as its overall program, were hotly debated. Near the end of the two-hour session, Jeffrey Gordon, a Town Street resident, asked whether the CHC planned to ignore questions that had been raised, and simply press ahead. CHC president Ken Keskinen replied that the board would certainly consider these questions, but felt it must move ahead promptly. "I'll see you in court," Gordon said angrily. Questioned later about what legal action he meant to take, Gordon said, "I couldn't comment on that."

At the Town Hall meeting, Town Street resident Ralph Brown drew one of the few laughs when, after noting that the CHC is thinking of making the Ella Clark site available to Habitat for Humanity, he asked what would prevent the corporation from turning over a lot to "an association of retired hit-men." Peter Ebersol, CHC's treasurer, replied that any organization getting land from CHC must be approved by the town.

The main thrust of the criticism, however, was aimed at a 1989 decision by the Planning and Zoning Commission; this allows CHC, as Cornwall's designated affordable-housing "facilitator," to offer qualified applicants building lots as small as one acre even in areas zoned for three and five acres. (The Clark site is in a three-acre zone.) Gordon and other critics of CHC argued that this opens a dangerous breach in the town's zoning regulations. "Why don't you go to areas where there's one-acre zoning and buy property there?" John Harding asked. Bea Simont, CHC's secretary, replied that most one-acre plots are in commercial areas, and are more expensive. Ken Keskinen said that CHC's ability to make use of smaller lots enables more people to donate land for affordable housing.

At the meeting on Nov. 14, Keskinen said CHC had several options. It could, for instance, abandon the project altogether, or it could ask Ella Clark to give CHC a three-acre lot — an option that he said would be "unfair and presumptuous." The board agreed, and the vote to accept Clark's gift as originally offered — subject to the required approval by P & Z — was unanimous. Discussion of whether the site should be turned over to Habitat was put off until the board's next meeting, on Dec. 12.

— Spencer Klaw



## Of Golf Balls and Gold Watches

The principal business of the November 18 meeting of the outgoing Board of Selectmen, which was attended by all the members of the old and new Boards, was a friendly good-bye to First Selectman Dick Dakin and Selectman Steve Hedden, who are leaving the Board. For this last meeting, Dick turned the chair over to Steve, who has been a selectman since the 1970s. Gordon Ridgway, on behalf of the new selectmen, presented Dick with a dozen golf balls and Steve with a gold watch. Rita Quinn, Jack Forster, and Ken Keskinen expressed their appreciation from the audience.

In other business, the Board unanimously appointed Bill Lyon to a vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Commission, Blaine Matthews and Vera Dinneen as alternates on the Commission, Steve Hedden, George Brown, Charlie Osborne, and Art Lorch to four-year terms on the Inland Wetlands Commission, Bill Hurlburt to a two year term as the representative of the selectmen on the Commission, and Robert Mott as Dog Warden.

The new board will hold more Selectmen's meetings. In addition to their regular meeting at 8 p.m. on the third Monday of each month, they will hold special meetings on the rest of the Mondays. One reason for the change is to increase office hours for citizens to talk with the Board about their concerns. — Hendon Chubb

## Finance Board Elects Officers

On November 21 the new Board of Finance elected Ralph Gold as its chair and Pat Bramley as its clerk. It also expressed appreciation for the work of outgoing chair Thalia Scoville and its sense of loss at her departure.

There was extended discussion of relations with the Board of Education. Ralph emphasized the value of working cooperatively, and Carol Lugar, who represents the Finance Board at Board of Education meetings, supported him. She passed on the Education Board's request for a resolution opposing a proposed Federal law that would pressure schools to provide unemployment pay to part-time employees during the summer. It passed unanimously. There was enthusiastic response to Ralph Gold's suggestion that the Board of Education be invited to appoint a representative to Finance Board meetings. And it was agreed that in order to make the budgeting process friendlier for everyone the Board would start consulting with both the Education Board and the Selectmen in February rather than trying to cram everything into March. — Hendon Chubb

## Rebuilding After Fire

Furniture-maker Ian Ingersoll plans to rebuild the parts of his Shaker furniture business that were destroyed in the disastrous Election Day fire. "I want to do it as quickly

as possible," he said. "There are nine families that earn their living off this business."

The fire apparently started when a spark from an incompletely extinguished cigarette adhering to the shoe of an employee ignited the highly flammable lacquers in the finishing room. It quickly spread, but firemen contained the blaze, saving the historic toll house. "In addition to a lot of furniture," Ingersoll said, "I lost 15 years' worth of photographs, irreplaceable books, and other research material, but thanks to the valiant efforts of the fire department many of my records were saved. And best of all, we lost no people."

Will he make any changes in the operation of the business? "We're not going to use nitrocellulose lacquers in the future. The Shakers didn't need them. So we can do without them." — George Kittle



## Welcome

Daven Natverlal Patel to  
Anjuben Natverlal Magenbhai &  
Natverlal Dalpatbhai Patel

## Congratulations

Andrew H. Gow & Cynthia A. Adams

## Goodbye to Friends

Charles M. Scranton Mary O. Doyle  
Thelma May Clarke

## Land Transfers

Pete T. Rich to Peter and Bente Busby,  
a lot on Pritchard Road.

Philip S. Bishop to Paula F. Puerto,  
Yutzler's Country Store.

Ruth Spiegel to Timothy R. Walther, a  
lot and buildings at Kent Road and Warren  
Hill Road.

Nancy C. Robertson to Caryn Johnson,  
a lot, house, and barn on Cream Hill Road.

## Fungus Pontis Cornwallis

A walk in the woods with a six-year-old is always a surprise. When our grandson Ben visited us in Cornwall for a week at the end of the summer we worried that our Eastern woodlands would be too tame for a Rocky Mountain boy — Ben and his parents live in Salt Lake City. But not so: our walk in the woods became a great adventure, a hunt for mushrooms.

For almost 20 years now I have been haphazardly foraging in the woods around our house for chanterelles, which are easy to identify and delicious to eat. But chanterelles are rare and my success has been limited. Ben introduced me to a new approach: hunt for all kinds of mushrooms, not to eat but to show to grandma and try to identify in "the book."

This proved to be a perfect no-lose game. There were plenty of fungi around. It was fun digging them out and filling plastic bags. And, best of all, grandma was unreserved in her praise for our daily collection that we spread out on the dining table for identification.

There were three groups of fungi: gilled, boletes and "others." The gilled were the largest group and most difficult to identify. It includes the amanitas, one of whose species is so deadly, if eaten, it is called the "destroying angel." The idea of poisonous specimens heightened the excitement (not that we thought of eating any) and produced remarkable cooperation in hand-washing before meals.

Instead of gills, the boletes have tubes, the mouths of which (called pores) form the underside of the mushroom cap. While they include poisonous species, they are a more benign genus than the gilled. One variety we found is called "old man of the woods."

Our "other" category was the most challenging. It included what were clearly members of other genera, like the polypores whose conks grow on old or dying trees, puffballs and, if lucky, chanterelles. But "other" also included specimens that did not match any picture or description in "the book." What is this strange one? we wondered. Were we on to something big? Could we be holding in our hands a new species — *Fungus Pontis Cornwallis*?

— Bill Nimkin

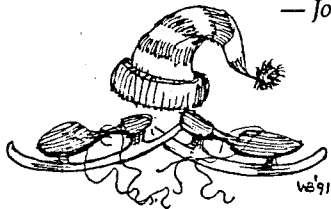
(Ed's note: "Grandma" is Jean Nimkin. "The book" is *Mushrooms of North America* by O.K. Miller).

## Mushrooms & Mushfacts

For many years Cornwall's resident expert on the good and the bad of the mushroom species was the late Dody Prentice. You just took your specimen over to Todd Hill Road and Dody would tell you. We have heard that H. Chubb, M. Rubin and J. Beckwith are in the know, so to speak, but until one of them steps forward to claim Dody's title the word on mushrooms is CAUTION.

Now, one person who found a lot of good stuff is none other than Anne Chamberlain. Anne walked out her front door one recent day and found hundreds of mushrooms growing where a woodpile had once been. She checked, and they turned out to be delicious and safe honey mushrooms. Anne also spotted a massive fungus growing on a dead tree as she walked to the Dark Entry Forest pond. It was an oyster mushroom, another excellent variety, with a smoky flavor and a consistency, according to one neighbor, of a rubber chicken.

— John Miller



## Letters to the Chronicle



### RESPECT BLUMENTHAL WISH

*I've always thought that last words or wishes were pretty sacred. The wish the Blumenthals made prior to their deaths was a very generous and thoughtful one. It was made to benefit some person or family with a deep desire to work and live amidst these hills in the security of their own home.*

*I do not believe the true issue of the Town St. conflict is the three-acre zoning. I believe it has to be more in line with the low-income housing title and the shantytown stereotype.*

*The working population here actually make a pretty fair wage for what the employers can afford to pay. There just is not balance in what income we create for ourselves and the reality of the "unreal" real estate market which others created for us.*

*We who are seeking these affordable housing opportunities are the carpenters, the gas pumpers, the toilet cleaners and house painters, the caretakers of your homes and our elderly, the firefighters and ambulance drivers. We cleaned up the storm damage and keep the weeds from growing under your feet.*

*The Blumenthals wished to make a dream come true for one of these people — to make an impossibility possible.*

*It is truly a shame that the opponents of this generous act have such fear of the common man.*

— Alicia Eaton

### COUGARAMA

*In answer to Barbara Klaw's question about (mountain) lions — yes, I have seen a mountain lion sitting in our front yard on Route 7 South, just looking around. I didn't quite believe my eyes and then it stood up and walked into the woods beside our house. It too was a very large, tawny cat with a long tail. It was beautiful. We also spotted one chasing deer across the street from us. Our three sons have also spotted a black bear on property behind our house. It's very exciting.*

— Carol Kesl

*This summer I saw a mountain lion as I was driving west on Route 128, having just left the intersection of Routes 4 & 43. It was around five o'clock, the road was in shade and lined with dense vegetation. An animal with a long, thin body and long tail began to cross the road from left to right. I stopped my car (there were other cars behind me and on the eastbound side of the road) and watched as the lion crossed over. It was carrying something in its mouth which it dropped — probably because of the distraction of the cars. From my driver's window I could see a big kitten, very immature, but definitely a*

*feline baby. It was a tawny brown, about 10 inches long and looked well fed. The kitten crawled away to the left side of the road. No further sign of parent or child. End of sighting. (I hope the two were reunited.)*

— Judy Parker

### DICK, THALIA, STEVE — THANKS

*This election year there were in nearby towns examples of the bitter smear politics that plague us at national and state levels. Cornwall is fortunate to have people serving it who put the town's interests over personal or partisan ambitions. Thalia Scoville, Steven Hedden and Dick Dakin are leaving the offices they have held for many years. I would like to thank them for their positive contributions on behalf of all of us.* — Gordon Ridgway

### SUPPORTING A FINER COMMUNITY

*I hope that the people who are protesting the affordable housing site on Town St. will be able to find reassurance in their dialogue with the CHC, can find that their concerns and fears are being heard, and have, in fact, been considered as the CHC studied the issue.*

*It is my strong conviction that there is potential value and richness in a variety of points of view, talents and expertise. By supporting the efforts of CHC to assist people who would otherwise be unable to establish homes here, we are supporting a finer community.*

— Anne Chamberlain

### ELECTION DAY FIRE

*Seventy-odd firefighters from some seven towns came to control and extinguish the Ingersoll fire on election day. No fewer than eight people who were helping in one way or another were also on the ballot.*

*I guess there have to be winners and losers in every election, but I don't think there is any doubt that Cornwall was a winner. Thank you to all candidates and firefighters.*

— David Cadwell

### FRANKLY SPEAKING

*It seems that our letter in the October issue of The Chronicle has borne fruit. It was merely our intention to open a dialogue in the town about the Cornwall Housing Corp.'s activities and have some questions answered. Please let us comment on some of the statements made.*

*Firstly, it should be noted that we were early contributors to Habitat for Humanity some years ago when President Carter issued his appeal. Secondly, we would hope that John Miller knows us better than to think we are negative on this issue. Thirdly, Mr. Heaney must be aware that we all work hard in and for our communities wherever they may be, and we would still happily give up some couch-potato time to discuss Cornwall's future. Fourthly, we absolutely agree with Gordon Ridgway.*

*PLEASE, let's not make this a "WE VS. THEM" issue! It would be nice to pat each other on the back for a job well done. Let's just make sure all the i's are dotted and the t's crossed.*

— Suzanne & Dick Frank

### The Dump — A Valediction

The closing of the dump and the emergence of the ecologically correct transfer station over the past two years leaves a gap in our lives. Once there was adventure (even violence) at the dump when people went at night to shoot rats or when there were good pickings to be found. In short, the place was an outlet for some of the town's darkest passions; it kept us mentally healthy for years.

The town has had many solutions to the problem of waste disposal. Back when our grandfathers thought "politically correct" meant voting for William Howard Taft, trash was pushed down the river bank, flung into gorges or burned. Who knew they were laying the groundwork for the death of the planet?

Among my own oldest memories is the nightmare vision of the pig behind Rumsey who ate the garbage brought to it by people in the Village, among them my grandmother, Martha Hubbard. This pig was the size of a Buick. Its stinking flanks heaved with pleasure as it crashed into the insufficient fence baying for our offerings. My grandmother, not otherwise noted for bravery, clucked and chirped at the pig as she poured the garbage over the fence. And I, four years old, clung to her skirts and hid my face. I can still hear this slurping, grunting monster tucking into the potato peelings. I can still remember what it feels like to be really scared, and with good reason.

Back in those days garbage was part of life; the dump — even that pig — celebrated death and rebirth. The transfer station is a better solution, of course. It may sanitize our trash but not our memories. — Lisa Lansing

### P & Z Gives Ingersoll Nod

Ian Ingersoll's application to rebuild his furniture-making shop was approved at the November P&Z meeting. Because the burned building was non-conforming in setback, the regulations require him to reconstruct as exactly as possible, using the same foundation. He said that this site would no longer be used for spray finishing or storage of flammable products.

The Commission received two special permit applications: To establish a saw-



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We welcome other contributions, too, large or small.

mill for limited commercial use by Charles Besozzi; and to create an accessory apartment by T. Roepke and M. Hasselberg. Both applications will have a public hearing at the regular meeting in December.

The Commission received notice of two lawsuits appealing the decision to grant a special permit for Larry Stevens's sawmill. Atty. Tom Byrne will represent the Commission. In early December the decision by the Superior Court is due on the legality of the amendment to the P&Z regulations regarding the specifications for sawmill operation.

The Little Guild of St. Francis's noise problem was taken up. P&Z first became aware of this through Johan Winsser's letter in the *Chronicle*.

The clerk of the P&Z has communicated with the canine control officer as well as with the managers of the shelter. Furthermore, a letter has been sent to the Board of the Guild, pointing out their inadequate response to such complaints, and warning the Board that their permit will be invalidated if the permit conditions are not quickly and satisfactorily met.

The Planning and Zoning Commission wants all townspeople to know that any observed infractions of permit conditions can be reported (in writing) to the Commission so that appropriate action can be taken.

Before adjourning, the members gave special thanks to Jerry Blakey who has "retired" from P&Z after 12 years. His going will make a change; his clear thinking and good humor will be missed. — Ginny Potter

### Events & Announcements

**Christmas Concerts:** The Kent Singers are giving three concerts this month, on Sunday Dec. 1, at 3 p.m. in the Salisbury School Chapel and on Sunday Dec. 8, at 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the New Milford Congregational Church. The program for all three concerts is the same: *The Story of the Birth of Our Lord* by Heinrich Schutz and *Gloria* by Francis Poulenc.

Now, there are 10 special reasons why we are particularly crazy about the Kent Singers: sopranos Susan Fox and Nora Horan, altos Lisa Lansing, Joan Hinchman, Marie Prentice and Beth Samuels, tenors John LaPorta, John King and Jimmy Whiteside, and basso John Hinchman.

Need we say more except that to get tickets call 927-3886 or buy them at the door.

**Christmas Fair:** We have lots of nice traditions and one of them is the annual Christmas Fair run by the Women's Society of the United Church of Christ. Always takes place on the first Saturday after the Thanksgiving



weekend, and proceeds benefit the scholarship fund and other philanthropies. The date is Saturday, December 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the First Church, where you can purchase wreaths, plants, new children's clothes, knit and sewn articles, decorations, baked goods, books, toys and other good stuff. And if you get hungry, lunch is available. P.S. The wreaths go fast!

**Christmas Carol Sing:** Park & Rec. will hold its Christmas Carol Sing on Friday, December 20 at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. The singers will be accompanied by Lee Collins and the Salisbury Band Christmas Brass and Hot Chocolate Society. Refreshments will be served and most certainly hot chocolate.

**Holiday Dance:** Get ready for a BIG HOLIDAY BASH in Cornwall on Sat. Dec. 28th at the Consolidated School. The hottest band in the Northwest Corner, "Fly By Night," (featuring Cornwall's own Don Bracken on the guitar) will be there to set you stompin' with rock & roll, blues, and popular dance tunes. The festivities, which are sponsored by Park & Rec, begin at 8 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for kids.

**Housing Needs Survey:** Copies of the Housing Needs Survey prepared for the Council of Governments are available in the Cornwall Library.

**CCS Playground Fund:** Anyone interested in donating money toward the development and enhancement of the CCS playground should make a contribution to the "CCS PTO Playground Fund" and send it to Cornwall Consolidated School, Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Contributions are tax-deductible.

**To Hunt or Not:** If you are a hunter or just don't want to be hunted, you can get a booklet at the Town Hall that will tell you all the dates and regulations.

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