

# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 3: NUMBER 10

NOVEMBER 1993

## Housing Opportunities

"It's possible for everybody to buy a home," declared Representative Mary Ann O'Sullivan at a housing forum she sponsored on October 6 in Cornwall. The 64th District representative was accompanied by area bankers and by officials from the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority and the Farmers Home Administration who shared their information and advice with area citizens.

The bankers noted that interest rates were the lowest they had been for years; they urged interested home buyers or builders to come in and talk to the "sympathetic ears" of local bankers who could offer flexibility and the individual attention free of the red tape of governmental agencies.

Carol Montesi of the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority outlined the services of her agency that helps low- and moderate-income families with low down payments and low-interest mortgages. Emergency mortgage assistance and re-financing guarantee programs are also available where necessary. Senior citizens can get loans to renovate their homes to include an apartment for their own use, thereby permitting them to continue living in their communities. Montesi said that

CHFA's program helps 59,000 first-time buyers across the state to get homes. Income limits are established by individual counties and are coordinated with home costs.

Chris Higgins of the Farmers Home Administration outlined the federally subsidized loans (with no down payments) to low and moderate income families in rural areas who wish to buy homes. Here too, flexibility in helping individuals meet obligations is offered.

Representative O'Sullivan urged those seeking homes to be "tenacious and persistent" and to get in touch with the various agencies and banks to find out about the available opportunities.

Cornwall citizens will find information about the foregoing opportunities on the information table in the Town Office.

— Ken Keskinen

## Building Boom Continues

The agenda for the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on Oct. 12 listed nine building projects, including a new house, all of which were approved.

Michael Degreenia, the applicant for the house, is the first to be granted a permit for building on his chosen site among the

five Cornwall Housing Corporation lots on Pierce Lane. This represents a real accomplishment for all those involved with creating affordable housing in Cornwall.

— Ginny Potter

## Mohawk Gears Up

While still recovering from the devastation of the tornado three years ago, Mohawk Mountain Ski Area is looking forward to its 48th season this winter.

According to Carol Lugar, president, "We can now see the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel. Our debt service on the cost of tornado repairs is now manageable." Last season helped greatly, as it was one of the best on record with 112 days and 89 nights of skiing. The area recorded just under 100,000 skier visits, 26 percent of which were for night skiing.

The mountain bike program was a highlight of summer weekends. Both bikers and on-foot visitors used the chair lifts to view the scenery and get access to forest trails for hiking and biking.

The cooperative program with Cornwall Consolidated School is expected to continue this coming season. Last season about 140 children participated, receiving supervised professional instruction.

— Stephen Senzer

# NOVEMBER 1993

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDED OCTOBER 31 Set clocks back one hour	<b>1</b> ☞☞ Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall*	<b>2</b> ELECTION DAY Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall Agr. Adv. Comm. 7:30pm W. Cornwall Firehouse	<b>3</b> W. Cornwall Merchants Assn. 10am Cadwell's Ethics in America 7:30pm UCC†	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Pie Sale 8am-noon Baird's Store (p.4)
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> P&Z 7:30pm Town Hall Skating Mondays 8-9pm Salisbury School Rink (p.4) ⚡	<b>9</b> Park & Rec 7:30pm Town Off. Hous. River Comm. 7:30pm CCS Lib.	<b>10</b> Rep. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall CCS PTO 7:00pm CCS Library Ethics in America 7:30pm UCC†	<b>11</b> VETERAN'S DAY  Thanksgiving Assembly CCS 1:30 (p.4)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Poetry Reading 8pm Cadwell's Fire Dept. Ball 8pm-1am Mohawk Mt. Ski Lodge (p.4)
<b>14</b> Robert Steck talk Cornwall Library 4 pm (p.4)	<b>15</b> ⚡ Cornwall Lib. art show Nick Jacobs Photos HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7:30pm HS Lib. Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall*	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Bd. of Ed. 5pm CCS Library Cornwall Housing Corp. 7:30pm UCC†  Bd. of Finance 7:30pm CCS Library	<b>19</b> Travelog 7:00pm CCS Library (p.4)	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> ZBA 8:00pm Town Hall*	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> THANKSGIVING	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>				
					    LQ    NM    FQ    FM 7    13    21    29	

\*Check time and place at Town Office. † United Church of Christ



### A Bit of Americana

On Saturday, October 16 at 10 a.m. sharp, auctioneer Phil Jacquier began selling the contents of Harriet Clark's Cornwall farm, which dates from 1865. Buyers bid on the large collection of farm equipment and household items, both old and new.

The big attraction was an almost new tractor which sold for \$10,000. An antique fly-catcher — using honey and a screen to trap the flies — was a big hit, and so was a charming alphabet sampler dated 1722 which sold for about \$200. And there were literally hundreds of other things.

Cornwallians were pleased to be mingling with what seemed like the whole town, and were grateful to Harriet Clark for sharing her treasures.

— Mary Ellen Geisser

### Raccoon Update

In spite of the scarcity of raccoons in Cornwall these days, Department of Environmental Protection wildlife biologist Paul Rego warns that the rabies epidemic isn't over, and we should continue to be cautious.

Raccoons are obviously "not as abundant as they were" a year or so ago. Road kills are rare, families are seldom seen scurrying across the roads at night, and the damage to corn crops has dropped off. Veterinarian Gordon Johnson of Lime Rock reports that since spring, pets brought in because of raccoon bites have been "practically a non-issue."

According to Rego, however, the apparent scarcity of the creatures might be deceptive. There is such a heavy acorn crop this year, he said, that raccoons can get their fill in the woods, and don't need to nose around gardens or compost piles.

There are different strains of rabies, Rego explained, and the strain carried by raccoons can be transmitted to other species, but not easily. Coyotes appear to be totally unsusceptible to this rabies strain, and there have been a few, but not many, cases among foxes, skunks, woodchucks, cats, and dogs.

The normal pattern of an epidemic, Rego says, is to drop off after three or four years, and then to continue at a low, much less scary level. In the meantime, however, we are warned not to unbolt cat-doors into our houses, and not to cozy up to visiting raccoons.

— Barbara Klaw

### Triumphs on the Track

Earl C. Thitchener, Jr., 21, of Cream Hill Road, Cornwall's only active stock-car

racer, has won a shelf-load of trophies in his second year behind the wheel. In 22 races on the five-eighths-mile dirt track at Lebanon Valley, New York, competing against an average of 10 to 15 other drivers, Earl brought home 10 trophies. One was for an outright win, and the others for second, third- and fourthplace finishes.

Earl, who drives a red '78 Malibu 350, began racing last year in the rookie division at Lebanon Valley. He did so well that he was able to move up this year to the track's highest division, designated — no one has ever told Earl why — as the Dirt Legal Division. Races are held on Saturday nights, from April through September, and are usually 10 laps long. Drivers reach a top speed of 110 to 115 miles per hour.

Earl says the hardest thing to learn was "to get through the corners without sliding around. You can spin out and hit the wall." Once in his first season, after being crowded by another car, he did smack into the wall, causing heavy damage to his car but none to its driver. Earl says the most exciting thing about racing is "being out front — being out there. It's a lot of fun."

Earl's father, who himself had an outstanding 20-year career as a stock-car racer at tracks all over the Northeast, helps his son work on the car. Both are employed by the Torrington Company — Earl senior as a machinist, Earl junior as a plater, putting chrome plating on bearings.

— Spencer Klaw

### A Good-Natured Town Meeting

The town meeting on October 22 was a good-natured affair. The town report was received with only one question. A few citizens made thoughtful suggestions about the five-year plan. Dudleytown Road South was renamed Bald Mountain Road.

The liveliest part of the evening came when First Selectman Gordon Ridgway offered a motion to let the selectmen look for a buyer for the Rumsey buildings, subject to careful attention to the town's needs. He explained that they could explore a sale on their own but they didn't want to proceed unless the town was behind them. Phyllis Nauts offered an amendment to exclude the Rumsey Gym, but after P&Z Chair Ginny Potter said the lot probably couldn't be subdivided and others argued for giving the selectmen flexibility, Phyllis's amendment was rejected and Gordon's motion passed, in each case with a just few nay votes.

— Hendon Chubb



### Welcome

Meghan Elizabeth Brown to  
Maureen Donovan and Thomas Brown.

Alexander Nelson North to  
Mark and Alicia North.

Sorry Susan! It was not Sally Lilly who produced John DeVecman Ott as we announced last month but Susan Lilly and David DeVecman Ott.

### Goodbye to a Friend

Virginia A. Smith

### Land Transfers

Michael Hunt to Laura Tyson, house and land on Popple Swamp Road for \$123,000.

John and Bianca LaPorta to Judith MacNeil, house and land on Popple Swamp Road for \$115,000.

Roger Jackson to Valerie T. DiMaria, house and land on Whitcomb Hill Road for \$310,000.

Estate of Diane D. Stearns to Sherry Bronfman, house and land on Town Street for \$337,500.

Carl W. Yutzler to James and JoAnn Newman, house and land on Tarradiddle Lane for \$108,000.

Richard and Dolores Kesl to Roger Jackson, land on Rt. 7 for \$65,000.

John K. M. and Arthur C. Dutton to Mary Ellen Geisser, land on Town Street for \$352,000.

### GE, PCBs and the EPA

In 1991 the Environmental Protection Agency issued an order for General Electric to gauge the damage to the Housatonic River from the dumping of PCBs into the river from their plant near Pittsfield. Because both Massachusetts and Connecticut were unhappy with GE's slow pace, this order was recently tightened to make the company complete the investigation sooner and also to set priorities as to which clean-up areas should be worked on first. A meeting was held in Cornwall Town Hall on October 19 to present this new agreement to the public.

But problems still exist. First, the technology for working on the PCB problem is sketchy and second, contamination of the river from old dry dump sites continues. The river awaits answers not now available. How, one asks, does one apologize to a river?

— Philip W. Hart

**Candidates Respond to Chronicle's Questions**

**Gordon Ridgeway answers:**

1. Why do you want to be first selectman?  
 I have enjoyed the last two years as first selectman. I have had the opportunity to work with many people to improve the town. Solving problems, from blizzards to day care space, with good teamwork is satisfying.

2. List in order your first three priorities in the job.

a) Municipal buildings: Long neglected code work on the Town Hall and Highway Garage has been accomplished. The next big steps I would like to see are: a modest addition to the current town office, the selection of a new owner for Rumsey Hall, and increased use of the Rumsey Gym.

b) Continued careful repair of the town's roads and bridges.

c) State mandates: I will continue to work with fellow elected officials for relief from the burden of unnecessary regulations. I will also work with the Board of Education on Cornwall's response to the statewide desegregation plan.

3. What will you do to improve the town's fiscal situation?

Careful financial planning by town boards has put Cornwall on a firm financial foundation. We have responded to state aid cuts and a flat tax base by decreasing spending and increasing efficiency before raising taxes. We also have carefully spent revenues to make needed investments to keep the town moving forward.

4. What are your hobbies?

Collecting farm equipment, swimming in Cream Hill Lake, and gardening.

5. What's the latest book you've read?

THE GREAT AMERICAN TOMATO BOOK by Robert Hendrickson.

6. What's the last movie you've seen? Did you like it?

The Marx Brothers A NIGHT AT THE OPERA. I enjoyed it and found some important guidance for my next term.

7. What would you do in the evening if you had your choice and expense was no object?

I would take a home-grown picnic to a Cornwall hilltop and watch the sun set with my wife Jayne and a handful of friends.



**Mandates**

The state of State mandates, unfortunately, has not been resolved. At the October 4 Board of Selectmen meeting, Rep. Mary Ann O'Sullivan and State Senator M. Adela Eads were in attendance as a nice gesture to Cornwall residents. They agreed that it is unfortunate that there are more financial burdens for the town, but that there was nothing they could do at this time except to keep an eye on things in the state legislature.  
 — Kelley Ireland

**Ray Augustyn answers:**

1. Why do you want to be first selectman?  
 My talent, skill and training are management and administration. A perfect match for the role of first selectman who serves to implement the Board of Selectmen's and the town's policies and programs. My many friends in the Town of Cornwall have helped my family during our years here and I wish to offer my ability to them.

2. List in order your first three priorities in the job.

a) 94/95 Town Budget. Immediate requests to all departments, boards and commissions for detailed funding levels for the coming year. Close scrutiny of each line of the requests to insure need. Implement an annual allotment system to plan for capital expenditures.

b) Clean up old business: salt shed, recycling contracts, building repairs, Rumsey building proposal, etc.

c) Review all current management policies and systems to ensure appropriate control and efficiency.

3. What will you do to improve the town's fiscal situation?

a) General Government - Priorities in Question 2 address this process.

b) Education - Support and assist the Cornwall and Regional Boards of Ed. in their efforts to minimize overhead and ensure that efficient delivery of learning is accomplished. Work to ensure that our role in the educational equalization process is fully utilized so that bureaucratic needs don't override students' needs. Develop a Regional Selectmen's Lobby to combat in the General Assembly the State Board of Education's moves to limit local control of education.

c) States Mandates - Improve communication lines with our General Assembly representatives so we may become active in the legislative hearing process and have the opportunity to speak against mandates prior to their enactment. Too often we learn of these after passage when it is difficult if not impossible to fight them.

4. What are your hobbies?

I play golf, engage in water sports, sing with the HousaTonics Barbershop Chorus, watch my kids play organized sports and read when I get a chance.

5. What's the latest book you've read?

Summer's OFFICIAL AND CONFIDENTIAL: THE SECRET LIFE OF J. EDGAR HOOVER.

6. What's the last movie you've seen? Did you like it?

I don't attend the movies very often. I last saw SON-IN-LAW. I enjoyed it thoroughly.

7. What would you do in the evening if you had your choice and expense was no object?

A fine dinner out at a great restaurant followed by dancing.



**Letters to the Chronicle**



**WELL DONE!**

As the '93 elections draw near we are eager to learn "who will be the next" to fill various town government slots. I would like to take this opportunity to thank one of the soon to be "used to be" elected volunteers who has given many hours to Cornwall.

Lynn Cheney has served on and chaired the Board of Education for the past several years. This is not always a popular role to fill, but the job has to be done and Lynn has done it tirelessly, with conviction, and with considerable grace under pressure. Thank you, Lynn. Well Done!  
 — Becky Williams

**OOPS!**

When she received the last Chronicle with its candidates' insert, Joan Thitchener, our fine Park and Rec. chairman running for reelection, exclaimed "Are they trying to tell me something?" Not at all, Joannie, you're definitely in the race, it's just that the gremlins that spook even double-checks were working overtime that day. With a big apology for the slipup, here's what the bio would have said:

**Joan E. Thitchener:** Joan is currently chairman of Park & Rec having served on this commission for 7 years. She is also a member of the Republican Town Committee. She operates a beauty shop out of her home where she lives with her husband and two children. She also bakes birthday and wedding cakes in



her state-licensed kitchen. Presently Joan attends Naugatuck Valley Comm. Tech. College, where she is studying for a degree in food service management.  
 — Jack Forster

**GOODBYE AND THANKS**

It all feels so quick. I sold my house and moved into a new apartment in Litchfield all in the same day. In the past few weeks I've had time to reflect on life in Cornwall for me in the past 13 years.

The years have been filled with solitude, beauty, blizzards, beautiful full moons, owls calling at 3 a.m., and of course a tornado, but mostly my life was filled with caring and honest people, neighbors and business folks that add to the specialness that Cornwall embraces.

I'm lucky my grandmother Elsie Hartmann still keeps the home fire tended to on Great Hollow Road. I say goodbye and welcome to Adam and Deirdre Fisher and Grandmom Marie who now make their home on Great Hollow Road.  
 — Diane M. Alessi

**Cornubia Hall Recital**

Soprano Lee Dougherty and pianist Anne Chamberlain, a performing team known throughout the United States and in Europe, gave a recital on October 3 at Cornubia Hall.

A striking figure in a floating green and orange creation, Ms. Dougherty at once made the audience feel her communicative powers. Witty and amusing in some Schoenberg songs, mysterious and passionate in works by Ned Rorem, she then turned to some French love songs by Debussy, Faure, Duparc, Poulenc and Bizet and sang them as if she owned them — sure, sensual and shimmering with feeling. She ended on a lively popular note with Gershwin, Porter and Sondheim.

Anne Chamberlain showed the taste and willingness to subordinate her virtuosity to the singer — supporting, following, helping and abetting her — thus presenting to her friends yet another aspect of her musical sensitivity.

This lovely interlude was enhanced by the sun glinting on the Cornubia pond, the leaves gently falling and "the sky above the roof so blue, so calm" as one of the songs put it. — John Zinsser

**Wolff's Botanical Paintings**

Illustrator Barbara Wolff is exhibiting watercolors on paper, mostly botanicals, at the Cornwall Free Library. Her experience in scientific and medical artwork shows in her concern for detail, accuracy and realism. Yet creativity doesn't suffer in this fine group of paintings. Wolff applies color, shading, shape and layout to beautiful effect.

Pay special attention to "Meadow Saf-ron," which you'll see if you look over the shoulder of the librarian. This beautifully colored plate includes interesting text from a 1633 herbal. — Alfred Bredenberg



**L A R G E**

OR

SMALL

We welcome all contributions\* to the *Chronicle*. Send yours today!\*\*\*

A \$10 contribution will get the *Chronicle* mailed to an out-of-town address. Other contributions welcome.

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**Without Sin at the Library**

A large crowd gathered to hear Spencer Klaw talk about his new book, *Without Sin*, in the third talk in the Cornwall Library's Sunday afternoon series. He was interviewed by John Zinsser, and spoke eloquently and movingly of the 19th century utopian experiment at Oneida, where men and women shared sexual partners in what they called "complex marriage", shifted jobs frequently to avoid boredom, put on plays and concerts, and were extremely successful financially. The community lasted 30 years, an extraordinary achievement in a time when utopian schemes often hung together for only a year or two.

Copies of the book are available from Phyllis Nauts (672-6607) at \$25 (bookstore price) and \$10 of the purchase price will be donated to the library. — Phyllis Nauts

**Events & Announcements**

**Firemen's Ball:** The annual ball will be held at Mohawk Mt. Ski Lodge on Saturday, November 13. Hors d'oevres between 8 and 9, dancing from 9 to 1 to the music of the Justin Tyme Band. B.Y.O.B. (bartender provided to do the mixing).

**Pie Sale:** The Ladies Guild of St. Bridget Church will hold their annual Pie Sale on Saturday, November 6 from 8 a.m. till noon at Baird's Store, Cornwall Bridge. Proceeds to benefit the needy.

**Buy a hat:** CCS eighth graders are raising money for their school trips by selling their popular Cornwall hats. Anyone interested in purchasing a hat may do so from any eighth grader, Cornwall Bridge Pottery, New England Catering and Food, Marvelwood Bookstore or at the CCS Main Office.

**Thanksgiving Assembly:** The CCS Thanksgiving Assembly will be held on Thursday, November 18 at 1:30 in the CCS Gymnasium. It will feature the CCS Band/Chorus and is open to everyone.

**Skating anyone?** Ice skating at the Salisbury School Rink will begin on Monday, November 8 and will continue every Monday evening until February 28. Donation \$1.00. Note the new time: 8-9 p.m.

**Travelog:** Park & Rec wants you to share your travel experiences in *Travelog*, a monthly informative experience for the whole family. The first *Travelog* will be given by John and Anne Zinsser about Alaska, on November 19 at 7 p.m. in the CCS Library. Future *Traveloggers* are Tom Bechtle (Ireland) and Marc Simont (Spain). Free. Refreshments. For children 10 years and older.

**Volunteers Needed:** Women's Emergency Services, a domestic violence agency serving the Northwest Corner, is seeking volunteers to provide hotline counseling, do legal advocacy and provide other needed services for battered women and their children. For information, call the WES office at 824-1080 or 824-1491.

**Looking to sit:** CCS Parent Teacher Organization is seeking donations of an old comfortable full-size couch, two comfortable chairs, two or three table lamps, and an area rug (5'x8'ish) to furnish the new Family Resource Center at CCS. Pick-up of items can be arranged. Please call Kathy at 672-6617 if you can help.

**Spanish Civil War Memories:** Robert Steck of Lime Rock will be the speaker at the Cornwall Library at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 14. Steck will talk about the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, a group of Americans who volunteered to fight on the side of Spain's Republican government against the fascist forces of General Franco. Himself a veteran of the brigade — he spent 17 months in a Franco prison camp — Steck has interviewed more than 120 fellow brigade members about their experiences. His talk will be illustrated, and guitarist Roger Chappell will sing a selection of war songs celebrating the cause of Spanish democracy. Everybody welcome.



**CORNWALL CHRONICLE**

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