



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 7 : NUMBER 11      DECEMBER 1997



## Where Were the Voters?

By now, gentle readers, you must be aware that *The Lakeville Journal* got a lot of it (the election results) wrong. The excuse was that its figures came from *The Waterbury Republican*, so the *Republican* must have gotten it wrong too. Good heavens! What's a person gonna do with these daily and weekly newspapers? I guess you have to be a monthly to get it right. Here goes...

The biggest news is that the voter turnout in Cornwall was lower than in any year since Judy Gates began keeping close tabs back in 1971. Only 430 voted (one absentee ballot was disqualified) out of 965 registered, which comes out to 44.6 percent. It's the first time our vote has been under 50 percent. In fact, the previous lowest vote on record (since '71) was 61.35 percent in the municipal election of 1981. The most plausible explanation for the lack of interest would seem to be that the top six spots on the ballot were uncontested.

Democrat Gordon Ridgway won a fourth term as first selectman. Because Gordon was unopposed, the two incumbent selectmen, Democrat Earl Brecher and Republican Jack Preston, were winners, as were Tax Collector Helen Migliacci and Town Clerk Cheryl Evans. The latter two are Republicans who were cross-endorsed by the Democrats and, in fact, got substantially more votes on the Democratic line. Hendon Chubb, a Democrat who was un-

opposed, is the new town treasurer.

Democrats won the two races for Board of Finance. They were incumbent Peter Hammond (278 votes) and Celia Senzer (245), defeating Republicans Denton Butler (149) and Roger Kane (136). Each party won an alternate seat on the Board of Finance: Republican Don Bardot (218) and Democrat David Grossman (273). Three seats were open on the Board of Education and they were won by Republicans Barbara Gold (264) and Katherine Gannett (246), along with Phil Hart (238), an independent running as a Democrat. Gannett and Hart were incumbents.

The one open spot on the Board of Assessment Appeals was won by Republican David Hurlburt (248) over Democrat David Samson (144). Two seats on Planning and Zoning were taken by Republican Anne Kosciusko (221) and Democrat incumbent Doc Simont (209). Republican Rick Lynn (199) and Democrat Patrick Mulberry (166) trailed. Two seats on the Zoning Board of Appeals were taken by incumbent Democrats Anne Chamberlain (258) and Phyllis Nauts (224) over Republican Janet Gold (217). And, if you're still with me, all six candidates for Park and Rec. were elected: Erin Cole, Skip Kosciusko, Brian Kavanagh, Craig Simons, Sharon Sawicki, and Skip Hunt.

Congratulations to all! —John Miller

## Statistical Feast

For the benefit of those who haven't read the latest *Cornwall Town Report* (available at the Town Office and the Cornwall Library), here are some plums extracted from a rich statistical pudding. During the year ended June 30, 1997:

- The 52 members of the fire and ambulance divisions of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department responded to 207 calls—86 fire calls and 121 calls for emergency medical services.
- Enrollment at the Cornwall Child Center was at a record high—39 children from 31 families.
- Planning & Zoning "saw more activity than at any time in recent memory," receiving 53 applications and holding 12 regular, 5 special, 11 subcommittee, and 12 planning meetings, as well as 8 public hearings and a large public forum.
- The Grand List total as of October 1, 1996, was \$176,334,280, up 1.9 percent from the previous year.
- "Cornwall, home to approximately 1,800 garbage producers, discarded 976 tons of municipal solid waste, of which 29.3 percent was recycled. The remaining 642.58 tons was chauffeured to and cremated in Hartford's waste-to-energy plant." Recycled, in many cases profitably, were 46 tons of glass, 133

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## DECEMBER 1997

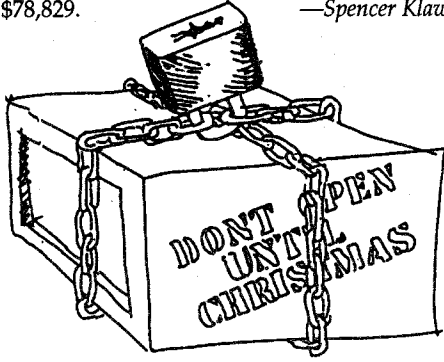
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	<b>1</b> Dec. Art Show, Nat. Iron Bank Corn. Br., Harry Colley (p.4) Park & Rec. Gift-Making Workshop 10 to noon, W.C. Firehouse (p.4) Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Skating Salisbury School Rink 7:30-8:30 P.M.	<b>2</b> Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. Town Office	<b>3</b> Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall Preschooler Bedtime Stories 6:45 P.M. Library (p.4) Cub Scout Parents Meeting 7 P.M. UCC Day Room	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Kent Singers, 8 P.M. Canterbury School Chapel New Milford (p.4)	<b>6</b> UCC Christmas Fair 10 A.M.-2 P.M. and Quilt Raffle 1:30 P.M. UCC Parish House (p.4) Beer & Wine Tasting Benefit Extras for Kids 5-7 P.M. Tavern at the (Cornwall) Inn (p.4)
<b>7</b> Kent Singers 3 P.M. Kent School Chapel (p.4)	<b>8</b> P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	<b>9</b> Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	<b>10</b> Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall CCS PTA, 7 P.M. CCS Library	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Park & Rec. Game Night 7-9 P.M. W. Cornwall Firehouse (p.4)	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> Caroling and Tree Lighting 5 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	<b>15</b> Deadline for January Chronicle copy Corn. Lib. Art Show Ellen Berland through 1/10 (p.4) Region One Board of Education 7 P.M. HVRHS Library	<b>16</b> Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	<b>17</b> Cornwall Play Group 10 A.M. St. Peter's Stretch Exercise Class 5 P.M. Town Hall	<b>18</b> Cornwall Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	<b>19</b> Preschooler Christmas Stories with Jane Prentice 10 A.M. Library (p.4) Cub Scout Pack 15 7 P.M. CCS	<b>20</b> Cornwall Association 4 P.M. Town Hall Christmas Pageant 7:30 P.M. UCC
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Office	<b>23</b> HANUKKAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN  School Half Day—Holiday Recess Begins	<b>24</b> HANUKKAH  Candlelight Services 5 P.M. and 8 P.M. North Cornwall Meetinghouse	<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse (tentative)	<b>31</b>	School Back in Session January 5, 1998		

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tons of newspapers, 77 tons of junk mail and scrap paper (hauled away to Marcal's toilet paper factory), and 68 tons of scrap metal and tin cans.

- The Board of Selectmen met 52 times.
- Calls to Animal Control involved "64 dogs, 26 raccoons, 8 cats, 4 horses, 4 cows, 4 pigs, 3 bears, 3 bobcats, 2 deer, 2 skunks, 2 porcupines, 2 rabbits, 1 coyote, 1 fox, 1 turtle, 2 bats, 1 crow, and a partridge in a pear tree."
- Uncollected taxes as of June 30 totaled \$78,829.

—Spencer Klaw



### Finding Muff's Successor

The Region One Board of Education has begun the search for a new superintendent to replace Marvin (Muff) Maskovsky who retires in June 1998. It has hired ASAC (Administrative Search Advisors of Connecticut) to administer the project. A search committee is being formed composed of two members from each of the region's school boards. Input will also be sought from communities, teachers, and administrators.

At its December meetings, each town's school board will hold a forum for residents to respond to three questions: 1. What are you looking for in a superintendent? 2. What are the strengths of the district? 3. What are the issues/problems the next superintendent will have to face? The results will be compiled by ASAC and presented to the search committee in January.

The Cornwall meeting will be on Thursday, December 18, at 5 P.M., prior to the board's regular meeting, in the CCS Library. Interested parties are urged to attend.

—Katherine E. Gannett

### Cable Service—What's New?

The quarterly meeting of the Laurel Cablevision Advisory Committee was held in mid-November and the most important bit of news was a unanimous motion "urging and advising" the cable company to begin offering WNET (Channel 13), the PBS station out of New York. This would be in addition to Connecticut Public Television (CPTV), which carries the Lady Huskies basketball games. Many people have asked for WNET because it carries a number of arts programs that don't make it to CPTV. The company said it would look into it. One problem is Laurel's inability to get a quality feed from WNET. The other is that CPTV tries to discourage cable companies that service Connecticut towns from carrying what it feels is fund-raising competition. The Laurel repre-

sentative seemed to indicate both these "problems" could be solved. Laurel's cable lines now run past 36,000 homes in the seven towns it covers. Of these, 28,000 take the service.

—John Miller

### Number, Please

There weren't any buttons to push. There wasn't even a rotary dial. All you did was lift the receiver off the hook and wait for the pleasant voice, "Number, please."

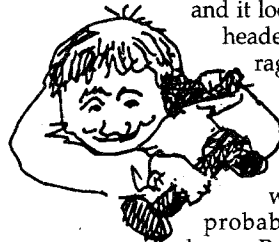
Then, if you wanted Ralph Scoville, you said, "Eight-seven ring one two." Or if you wanted Ray Hart, "Two-three ring two." You heard the operator at the manual switchboard on Pine Street (in the present Hanna-Butler house) make the connection and ring the number. Finally, if you got through, you heard another click and a "Hello."

Of course sometimes it didn't happen that way. You took the receiver from the old vertical black phone to find that someone else was on the party line. The honorable thing to do was hang up. But some lines had a party who habitually listened in. And it was tempting at times.

I remember once as a little kid listening to some amorous swain propose marriage to a young lady who was staying on Yelping Hill. Another kid was with me, and it was hard to stifle our giggles as we struggled for the receiver. The declaration of love went on and on and on: life would be meaningless without her, the union seemed already ordained in heaven, her beauty and spirit left him helpless to do other than plead his case, etc. She remained noncommittal and monosyllabic, as I remember, and I have no idea what happened. Probably my mother was heard at the front door and we hung up with guilty faces.

Listening in wasn't the only feature of the old Cornwall exchange. People who remember back 50 years or more recall several real advantages. According to Ralph Scoville, if you hurried for the phone but didn't quite make it, you could ask the operator, "Who was that who just called us?" Ed Whitcomb, in his days as Fire Warden, could pick up the phone and say, "Plug me into my crew." Presto—an emergency conference call.

Polly Calhoun once called her parents' house in Cornwall Plains, to be told, "I'll ring 'em, but you're outa luck. They just went by, and it looked as if they were

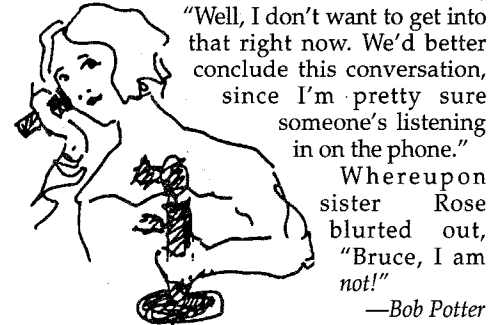


headed for Cobleigh's [garage]." There are many stories of people asking for a number and being told that so-and-so wasn't home but probably at this-or-that house. Pat Blakey remembers that you could even call the operator and transfer your calls to another number for a time.

In the very early days, the local operators answered all kinds of questions: "I forgot to wind my alarm clock. What time is it?" "What's playing at the movie in Canaan to-

night?" Little by little, however, SNET began to crack down on such amenities. According to Mary Cahill, the only Cornwall exchange operator now still in town, the switchboard got busier and busier after World War II. Two operators were hired during the day, and before long even that step wasn't enough. In 1952 the Cornwall exchange was closed, and the town became ORleans 2 (i.e., 672) on rotary dial phones. Cornwall was the last town in the state to get rotary dialing.

No one will ever know the true extent of listening in, but maybe that will be what old-timers remember the longest. Bob Beers tells a story on his aunt Rose. Cream Hill was then the three-two line. Bruce Hubbard had a big white house toward the base of the hill, and his sister Rose lived in a summer cottage a few houses up. The two rings, three (Bruce's number) and one three (Rose's number), sounded much alike. The line also had a party—here nameless—who listened in much of the time. Once Bruce said to a caller,



"Well, I don't want to get into that right now. We'd better conclude this conversation, since I'm pretty sure someone's listening in on the phone."

Whereupon sister Rose blurted out, "Bruce, I am not!"

—Bob Potter

### Welcome

Annabelle Luisa to Susan and Greg Choa  
Ann Rebecca to Laura and Adam Volinski

### Congratulations

Michele Marie Kearns to Peter Michael Gorat

### Land Transfers

Kirwin Realty to Margaret Jene Maag, house and 52 acres on Route 45 for \$350,000.

Cornwall Limited Liability Co. to Charles E. and Kathi Ramos, 3 acres on Twixt Road for \$40,000.

Rogers Charitable Remainder Trust to Cornwall Conservation Trust, 17 acres on Cogswell and Rattlesnake Roads for \$120,000.

### Honoring Roxana

It was a glorious October day, with the afternoon sun pouring in the windows of Cornubia Hall. There, as part of its annual meeting, the Cornwall Association presented its yearly award to Roxana Hammond, who was on hand to receive it.

The award, given for long service and generosity to Cornwall, was presented by Tim Prentice, an old friend who is the association's vice president. In his presentation, Tim particularly cited Roxana's donation of land for the town beach, and her continuing generosity in lending Cornubia Hall for art and yoga classes, concerts, meetings, and memorial services, among other uses.

The ceremonies ended with a serenade to the award winner by Anne Chamberlain at the piano and Lee Dougherty, a soprano—performers who were to give a concert at Cornubia the following day.

—Charles Osborne

**Problems With Plastic**

Consumer lethargy, a surplus of virgin material, fluctuating legislation and enforcement policies, and a supply that exceeds demand have made it difficult for Cornwall to recycle plastics other than numbers 1 (soft drink bottles) and 2 (milk jugs, detergent jugs, shampoo bottles). Of five plastics recyclers contacted via the Department of Environmental Protection, the consensus was that manufacturers are presently finding it cheaper to purchase virgin material than to buy post-consumer plastics reduced to resin form.

Last August the Master Garbologist of Monterey, Massachusetts, could no longer find a market for plastics 1-7, which it had been hauling away free. OBEX of New Haven will take all grades of plastic, as well as lids, styrofoams, and bags. But this results in trucking fees, and OBEX will not pay for the materials (which are converted to plastic lumber). Also, an extremely large amount of electricity is required to process the plastic.

Solutions: Glass containers, when broken up, are much cheaper to transport and are a stable renewable. If you bring your own shopping bags, many supermarkets will give you a credit of four cents a bag. Surf the net for trends in plastic recycling and look for specific markets. The Town Hall is receptive to all recycling information.

—Elizabeth Tobin-Terrall  
Recycling Coordinator



**Water Contamination Near Neoweld**

As part of the Superfund program, there is an ongoing investigation of two former Neoweld factory sites in Cornwall Bridge. Superfund is a federal program to clean up hazardous waste sites around the United States.

In April 1997, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) started testing the wells of residences closest to the facilities at 8 River Road and on Kent Road (Route 7). Lead was found to be present in the water of one residence on River Road, although it is possible this came from the pipes leading from the well.

Tetrachloroethylene, a solvent commonly used in the dry cleaning industry and also as a metal degreaser, was found in the water at a home near the Kent Road facility at levels which require action. This residence is now



**Letters to the Chronicle**



**A MOST SPECIAL VIEW**

The Cornwall Conservation Trust would like to publicly thank James and Eleanor Rogers for making it possible for us to purchase their land at the corner of Cogswell and Rattlesnake Roads, near the North Cornwall Church. The Rogers' offer to sell and then return the remainder of the proceeds for church maintenance and Trust activities, combined with the generosity of Cornwall citizens, has made it possible to leave a permanent gift to our children of the church's beautiful surroundings in North Cornwall.

We hope all of you will take a moment to look at this special view and realize that for generations to come it will look just as it does now. The Trust is presently putting together a land use plan for this parcel in keeping with its current uses and condition. We would welcome any input to the process or contributions for its upkeep. Again, thank you to the Rogers family and all the others who made it possible.

—Ralph C. Gold, President

**A FITTING TRIBUTE**

Congratulations to the Town of Cornwall for dedicating our "yearbook" [Cornwall Report] to the memory of Bessie Blake and Harriet Clark, and to Lisa Lansing Simont for her nice tribute on the back cover.

—Ann Peterson

**ANOTHER CAVE MEMORY**

The article and letter about Baldwin Cave in the November Chronicle brought another memory to mind. The cave also figured in a video of Jesus's life made about 1975 by the church school of the United Church of Christ. The children involved (I hope I haven't missed any!) were Steve Beers, Lori Blakey, Andrew Dakin, Faith Daley, Celia Frost, Jay Gagnier, Alexandra and Caroline Paul, and Penny Sheldon, all sixth or seventh graders.

The children were very serious about this project. Our video started out at the sand pile of

the town garage. Jesus climbed the pile and disappeared over the top—going into the wilderness. Different scenes then showed the money lenders, Jesus healing and speaking, Palm Sunday, and the Last Supper. As I remember it, Bob Tankersley, Jim Simpson, Pat Blakey, and I were the adults used as extras to depict the disciples. Each child had a chance to be Jesus.

The telephone pole opposite the church driveway was the place of crucifixion. Penny Sheldon (the smallest and lightest) was Jesus at this point and stood on the footrests of the pole. A kitchen stool and some gymnastics were involved. Jesus was then wrapped in a linen cloth. The best stone tomb area that was thought of was Baldwin Cave. There was a wonderful narrow opening, very dark and cave-like, with plenty of craggy rocks around the entrance. The boys, in Roman helmets, heroically "tried" to move a huge boulder across the entrance. The next scene was of the two Marys finding the tomb empty and going in and out of the cave weeping.

—Charlotte Frost

**SUPERLATIVES FOR STETSONS**

A public appreciation of the work done for the Hughes Memorial Library in West Cornwall by librarian Estelle Stetson and her unbilled and unpaid husband, Bob, is well deserved. In addition to scouring local book sales for bargain finds to update the collection, Estelle and Bob have literally scoured shelves and floors, repaired and reinstalled light fixtures, and done much more to create a welcoming reader's resource.

Thank you, Estelle, for steering my nine-year-old away from Babysitter's Club folderol and toward C. S. Lewis and Madeleine L'Engle, and for the preschool program you created. Thanks to you both for revitalizing and expanding the Hughes Library. I urge Cornwallians to visit on Tuesdays from 4 to 7 P.M. and Saturdays from 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

—Jamie Monagan

being supplied with bottled water by DEP. Eventually the state will install a filter system to remove the contaminating substance.

In a letter to Richard Burkhart, the current owner of the Neoweld properties, DEP noted that the source of contamination had not been confirmed. The letter stated: "Due to Neoweld's past historical waste handling practices, and soil sampling results indicating that tetrachloroethylene is present in on-site soils, it is likely that the department will pursue an agreement with you to conduct a study." The study will presumably ascertain the source of the tetrachloroethylene and produce a plan for its removal or to prevent spreading contamination.

—Celia Senzer

**Library Trustees Move Ahead**

At a recent meeting the Cornwall Library Board of Trustees heard initial progress reports from the three task forces formed on October 9. Lead negotiator David Grossman said that his group had been gathering information and working on a negotiating approach with the Cornwall Limited Liability Company and the Board of Selectmen. Both boards hope for an agreement before the end of this year.

John Calhoun, speaking for the Building and Long Range Planning Group, proposed and got approval for hiring a firm to do structural, mechanical, and electrical studies

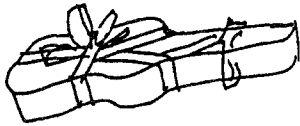
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that the group feels are needed for Monroe-Bodkin. Four additions to the committee have been made—Jill Bryant and Pat Blakey for their experience as librarians, Brian Kavanagh for computers, and Nancy Calhoun for her work with the CCS Library expansion.

Lisa Simont outlined a three-part capital campaign (to start immediately to accommodate those who wish to take advantage of recent stock market gains). She said that 100 percent support by both the Library and the Friends of the Library boards is anticipated.

—Anne Baren



## Events & Announcements

**911 Numbers:** The Board of Selectmen reminds us that 911 numbers, at least three inches high and clearly visible from the road, are not a matter of choice but a matter of law. The town has given Fred Bate, Sr., the task of checking numbers and the authorization to levy a \$10-per-week fine on those who continue to flout the ordinance. "The town is always looking for new sources of revenue," says Gordon Ridgway.

**Bedtime Stories:** The Cornwall Library story hour program will end the fall series with bedtime stories and poems on Wednesday, December 3, at 6:45 P.M. Please wear pajamas, bring your teddy bear, and stay for dessert. The winter program will start on January 9.

A special program of Christmas stories will be given by Jane Prentice on Friday, December 19, at 10 A.M.

**Storm Emergency Call List:** The town is now updating and developing the call list for use during severe winter storms. Last year a team of volunteers called and checked in on a number of our neighbors, and found some in need of deliveries or evacuation. If you would like to be listed—or know of someone who should be—please contact Jill Gibbons, Municipal Agent for the Elderly, P.O. Box 205, Cornwall, CT 06753. Provide name, address, phone number, and a relative or friend to call if the listed person cannot be reached.

## Year-End Giving

Many of you make two gift lists in December: relatives and friends who expect holiday stuff, and organizations that need your help. The holiday gifts are fun, but the donations are equally satisfying (and tax deductible). We skipped our big insert appeal this year, but please don't forget the *Chronicle* when you do that important second list.

**Gift-Making Workshop:** Park & Rec. is calling all elves to a workshop for children in grades K through 3 on Monday, December 1, from 10 A.M. to noon at the West Cornwall Firehouse. Materials and supplies (and a snack), age appropriate, will be provided, and all participants will make and wrap two gifts. Space is limited to 24. Call 672-6865 or 672-6546 to register.

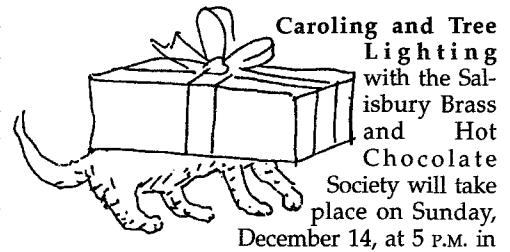
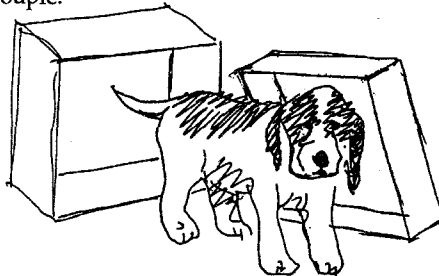
**Art in Cornwall:** In December, Harry Colley will be showing photographs of local landscapes at the National Iron Bank in Cornwall Bridge. At the Cornwall Library, Harvey Offenhartz's show of pastels continues until December 13, and Ellen Berland will be exhibiting oil paintings from December 15 to January 10.

**Eighth Grade Special:** The 1998 graduating class at CCS is selling wood-fired stoneware mugs made by Cornwall's Todd Piker. These handcrafted mugs with the CCS 1998 logo are a limited edition. For only \$10 you can purchase yours at the CCS office or the Cornwall Bridge Pottery Store. Proceeds will benefit the eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C.

**Winter Parking:** In November the Board of Selectmen passed a prohibition on parking that interferes with snow plowing. Vehicles must be parked at least six feet (ten is better) from the road. Plowing can occur at any time and includes setback plowing in clear weather. State statutes empower the town to remove vehicles parked in violation of its regulations.

**Basketball Dates:** Park and Rec. announces the weekly schedule for playing basketball from December through the first week in February at the CCS gym. Time for adults is Monday, 7-9 P.M.; for boys, Tuesday and Wednesday, 5-6:30 P.M.; and for girls, Thursday, 6-7:30 P.M. There will be adult coaches for the boys and girls teams. Call Erin Cole at 672-2917 with questions.

**Cornwall Extras For Kids** will host a Beer and Wine Tasting on Saturday, December 6, 5-7 P.M. at the Tavern at the (Cornwall) Inn. The usual glamorous crowd will be there, along with the fantastic hors d'oeuvres, the lavish libations. Join us! \$20 for one, \$30 per couple.



**Caroling and Tree Lighting** with the Salisbury Brass and Hot Chocolate Society will take place on Sunday,

December 14, at 5 P.M. in

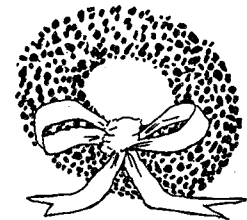
front of the Town Hall. A special guest has been invited, and refreshments will be served. Dress warmly.

**The Kent Singers'** holiday concerts will feature Palestrina's *Missa Brevis*, some carols arranged by England's John Rutter, and Gerald Near's *Cum Novo Cantico*, as well as a sensuous *Ave Maria* by Franz Biebl. Concert dates are Friday, December 5, at 8 P.M. at the Canterbury School Chapel in New Milford and Sunday, December 7, at 3 P.M. at the Kent School Chapel. Tickets are \$15 at the door and \$12 reserved in advance. Call Marie Prentice at 672-6261.

**UCC's Christmas Fair** on Saturday, December 6, from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the UCC Parish House will feature crafts by Cornwall artisans as well as children's shopping and gift-making rooms, fresh green wreaths, holiday foods, and a hot lunch. Tickets will be on sale for the Sandmeyer quilt, to be raffled at 1:30. To reserve a wreath, call Joan Edler at 672-6789.

**V.F.W. Post 9856 Cornwall** has awarded its annual scholarship of \$250 to Jonathan Daley of West Cornwall. A freshman at UConn, he is studying environmental/computer science.

**Game Time:** Park and Rec. is sponsoring a Game Night, with refreshments, at the West Cornwall Firehouse on Friday, December 12, 7-9 P.M. Bring your own games, or use those we provide—Monopoly, Scrabble, etc.



## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

ILLUSTRATIONS Tim Prentice

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143 CREAM HILL ROAD, WEST CORNWALL, CT 06796

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FAX: (860) 672-2643

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