CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 31 : NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 2021

"Clicks and Mortar" At the Cornwall Library

The state-ordered shutdown of its building last March forced the library to find new ways to serve the community at a time when its traditional in-person activities were severely restricted. Board and staff acted quickly. By early May, presentations, discussions, and other regular library happenings were up and running on the internet using nascent video-conferencing technology.

"Zoom" has by now become the library's most reliable, dynamic tool for delivery of a wide range of new content. In mid- January, the organization hosted its largest audience ever for a virtual event, a screening and conversation on the film *The Music of Regret*, hosted by Laurie Simmons and Lena Dunham. The months ahead will see an even more ambitious agenda of online programs aimed at keeping people connected and entertained. A two-part series on birding, a program on local farming that includes a look at the revived Cream Hill Farm, and other forays into the worlds of science, nature, and history are scheduled. Of note is an upcoming "Cornwall Conversation" panel on the impact of technology on daily life featuring Ed Greene and Frédéric Jenny. Spring plans include expanded programs for children and a series on poet Emily Dickinson. A program of local garden visits will continue in June as part of the annual "Books and Blooms" event. To support its growing technological needs, the library has two new part-time staffers helping out: photographer Sari Goodfriend, who is working on promotional content, and technologist Ben Lesch, who is handling online programming tasks and managing the renovation of the library's database.

Meanwhile, to plan for increased post-Covid use, the board used the 2020 shutdown to accelerate the completion of numerous building refurbishments, all funded with the proceeds of last year's 150th anniversary appeal. Upgrades included conversion of a corner of the children's section into a newly enclosed meeting room; new sofas, cabinets, and DVD racks; and new computers and printers. Improved video and sound systems have been added to the main library hall for large meetings and events. Additionally, two glass display cases have been installed on either side of the window in the new Bee and Marc Simont Conference Room, which right now contains a pottery display of recent works by three Cornwall potters: Jane Herold, Sanah Petersen, and Todd Piker. Looking forward, the library will have rotating displays several times a year of both man-made and natural objects of interest to the Cornwall community. The first is titled "Works on Paper" by Robert Andrew Parker.

Check the printed *Chronicle*, *Chronicle* website or library website (cornwalllibrary.org) for more information. Most events are free.

— Dan Hubbard

— The Enquiring E-Mailer (Redux) —

The question of the month was: What is your prediction for 2021 on any Cornwall-related matter? The editors anticipated a balance of serious and not-so-serious predictions, which was the case. Returns were scant however, no doubt due to the mind-numbing effects of news-bingeing, or perhaps it was the anticipation of a Covid vaccine needle stick. Here they are:

Pinnacle Farm will become the new home of one of the country's most unusual zoos. The Sanctuary for Rescued Animals will relocate to the 65,000-square-foot barn. Its 200 animals include foxes, deer, an elderly

(continued on page 2)

FEBRUARY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Region One Board of Education Meeting 6:30 pm Zoom	**2** Cornwall Reads Great Fiction: *Anna Karenina* 4–5 pm Zoom Inland Wetlands/Water Courses Meeting 7 pm Zoom Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Zoom	**3**	**4** Special Meeting of Planning & Zoning 6:30–8:30 pm Zoom	**5**	**6**
7 Gardening in Winter with Bosco Schell and Page Dickey 3 pm Zoom	**8** Park & Recreation Meeting 7:30 pm Zoom	**9** Cornwall Reads Great Fiction: *Anna Karenina* 4–5 pm Zoom Waste Water Committee 5 pm Zoom P & Z Commission 7 pm Zoom Housatonic River Commission Zoom 7:30 pm	**10**	**11** Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting 10:30 am Zoom	**12**	**13**
14	**15** PRESIDENTS' DAY ◆ **Deadline: March *Chronicle* Copy**	**16** Cornwall Reads Great Fiction: Roxana Robinson on *Anna Karenina* 4–5 pm Zoom Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Zoom	**17** Mind Health during COVID Heather Dinneen & John Simoncelli 7 pm Zoom	**18** Board of Finance 7 pm Zoom	**19** ◆ Deadline for 2/26 Heat & Eat at UCC ◆ Red Cross Blood Drive 1–6 pm Trinity Retreat Center	**20** Winter Birds in our Backyards 4–5 pm Zoom
21	**22** ZBA* 8 am–5 pm Zoom	**23** Cornwall Reads Great Fiction: Roxana Robinson on *Anna Karenina* 4–5 pm Zoom Economic Development Commission 7:30 pm Zoom	**24** Region One ABC Committee 7 pm Zoom	**25**	**26** ◆ Heat and Eat at UCC 5–7 pm	**27** Technology and Artificial Intelligence with Ed Greene and Frédéric Jenny 5 pm Zoom
28						

Every Week This Month:
Fridays: ◆ Post Card Writing for Justice and Peace,
10:30 am UCC Parish House

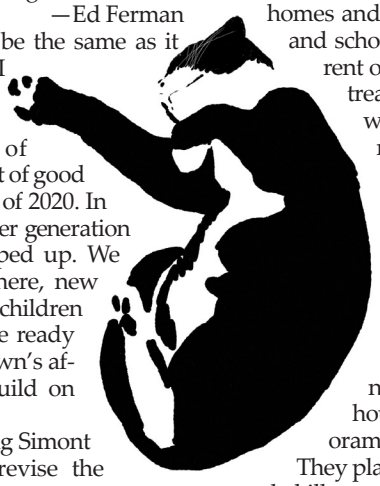
Event Online
◆ Event In Person

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

lion, an elephant with an injured trunk, "Totter," a three-legged giraffe, and "Porgy," a two-legged donkey who uses his front hooves to roll around in a goat cart.

—Ed Ferman



Will anything ever be the same as it was at the end of 2019? I think not and that's a fine thing. In spite of the ruthless horror of the Covid-19 virus, a lot of good is rising from the ashes of 2020. In Cornwall, a new, younger generation of volunteers has stepped up. We see new faces everywhere, new householders whose children go to CCS and who are ready to take a hand in the town's affairs. And 2021 will build on this promising start.

—Lisa Lansing Simont

P&Z will hastily revise the town plan to discourage young people and families from moving to town, as inventory of homes for sale drops to zero and town resources become strained by folks fleeing cities bereft of restaurants, theatre, and yoga studios. —Sidney McMurdo

The big sellers at the next Woman's Society Rummage Sale, whenever it is, will be the bed quilts made from all those zany, imaginative, politically correct/incorrect, and whimsical cloth face masks no longer needed—or wanted. —Tom Barrett

Kim Kardashian and Kanye West will offer to purchase the renovated Castle to serve as headquarters for West's 2024 presidential campaign. —Jim Fishman

A progressive group of vendors will leave the two existing farm markets to establish a third market in Cornwall Bridge. It will be called the Intersection Farm Market: see their website at intifa.com.

—Sebastian Beach

2021 will bring new people to town, more baby carriages, and increased home businesses. The town-wide vote for the West Cornwall water project will have a positive outcome. —Gordon Ridgway

Cornwall will still be above sea level.

—John Bevans

Russian hackers will be found under the Covered Bridge. —Angela LaRosa

The Cornwall cow chip contest is delayed because the cow selected, a Guernsey named Ivanka, has constipation, but the always-prepared fire department feeds her a bowl of Miralax, after which she performs so well that the department fears it will owe more money than it collected. Just then a PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) patrol arrives on the scene, whisks Ivanka to the Little Bovine Guild, and tells the crowd that next year they better use a human in place of a cow or else. —Jim Fishman

Cornwallians (the Cornish) will now be called Cornwallites, so we can be like our northern neighbors, the (biblical) Canaanites. — Arleen Gagnon

Now Full-Time Residents

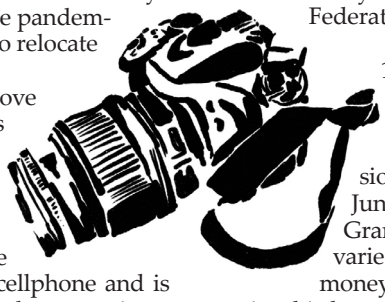
With the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic, families have begun taking up permanent residence in Cornwall. In the past few months, many city dwellers have purchased homes and begun new jobs for themselves and schools for their children. Some current owners as well, who had been retreating to the countryside only on weekends and holidays, have moved their offices and businesses to Cornwall and are intent on staying.

Helen and Erik Tietz are a self-assured, yet unassuming couple from Long Island City who bought a property in East Cornwall in 2013. While searching throughout northwest Connecticut, they chose the second house they looked at for its panoramic views and structural potential. They planned to utilize Erik's professional skills as an architect and fabricator to remodel on the weekends, then return to the city and work; Erik at his own design studio, Helen for a financial consultancy. After two years of planning and hard work, they paused to have a child and named him Otto.

When they finally found time to earnestly explore Cornwall and its people, three years had flown by. With a one-year- old boy in tow, they were generally welcomed wherever they went. After first getting to know their neighbors better, new vistas quickly opened up around town.

In the past they were spectators at the Memorial Day parade and carnival, but new acquaintances were now multiplying fast and they continued to meet others throughout the summer at shops and farmers' markets. Helen, who loves tennis, found the village courts convenient and the other players inclusive and accommodating. They became involved with the land conservancy, concurring with its convictions and impressed with its commitment. As Otto grew older, he became a regular at the library and its children's activities.

The longer they spent all their free moments in Cornwall, the more the Tietzes considered moving here full time. Erik truly enjoyed working on the house and could utilize some extra hours during the week if they weren't travelling back and forth from the city. Helen could play tennis on mild evenings and Otto wouldn't have to lament abandoning his forts in the woods every Sunday afternoon. Then the pandemic struck and the decision to relocate was made for them.



For Otto, now 5, the move was not hard. He misses his city friends, but has started kindergarten so that loss has begun to subside. Helen instantly built the core of her home office around laptop and cellphone and is now functioning well in the home environment. Erik has opened another shop in the area and is currently architect and designer for the new restaurant in West Cornwall.

They knew living fulltime in the country would be different and required an extra degree of self-sufficiency, both physically and emotionally. The pandemic has imposed a forced lesson in that for everyone. Perhaps the Tietzes and those others who like living out in the sticks were slightly better prepared for it. —*Bill Goulet*

Good-bye to Friends

Ruth Baird
Paul Baren
Susan Jane Bohlin
Amanda Chase
Stephen Henry Senzer
Warren "Chipper" Wood, Jr.

Land Transfers

Robin Vogel to Jane Amelia Carlen, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 7 River Road South, for $275,000.

Estate of Richard S. Ford to Richard J. Ford, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 78 South Road, for $400,000.

Benedetto, Hayman & Gallucci Associates, LLC to Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc., 66.11 acres of land on Johnson Road, for $465,000.

Thomas G. Wolf to Baxter Wasson and Lauren Taggart Wasson, 10.234 acres of land with improvements thereon, for $800,000.

End of an Era?

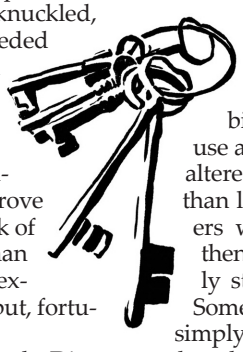
Cogswell Road, late September: low sun, nodding goldenrod. A car passes—a convertible, horn blaring, occupants attentive astern. Then a whirring sound; a gust as scores and scores of wheels pass; clicking gears and ratcheting hubs; bright jerseys and tan legs and flashing chrome.

"They'd blast through like half a dozen tractor trailers," recalls Richard Bramley, of the swarming packs of cyclists who competed in the Northwest Connecticut Bicycle Road Races. The races were held entirely on the roads of Cornwall every September from 1981 to 1988. Organized by the Cornwall Republican Town Committee, the events raised money for its congressional internship program (non-partisan). The races were co-sponsored by regional cycling clubs (often the Exposition Wheelmen of Manchester, Connecticut), and sanctioned by the United States Cycling Federation (USCF).

From 150 participants in 1981, the races grew to over 300 men and women from all over New England and New York. Fourteen divisions ranged from amateur Juniors to USCF-registered Grandmasters. Race mileage varied from five to 46. Prize money reached $1,000. As early as its third year, the event served as the

New England Road Race championships.

Groups of volunteers—Republicans, Democrats, independents, children, dogs—directed the riders safely through corners and junctions. Townspeople sold food, T-shirts, and homemade apple pies served with cheddar cheese. They drummed up publicity and sponsorships; swept roads and treated injuries. And, white-knuckled, they piloted the cars that preceded each peloton through hill and dale.



"Before we knew it, the lead rider would be upon us," says Tim Coffin, who, as a boy, monitored the pack as father, John, drove their green Fiat. "I rode in the back of the car as a spotter, and more than once prepared for taking an unexpected passenger over the trunk, but, fortunately, it never happened."

Charles Yohe—who, with Ursula Dinneen was a prime mover of the event—concurs: "The pro racers averaged 20 miles per hour on the course, with the downhill run from Cogswell—and especially Wright Hill—reaching speeds in excess of 50. I recall driving the pace car for the pro race one year and it was a definite rush, speeding toward Route 128 while blasting the horn to warn the marshals we were coming."

The race circuit began and ended in front of the town hall. From the village, racers toiled up Cemetery Hill, rolled through the blinking light, and headed out Route 43 toward Cornwall Hollow. At Lake Road they turned left and climbed though cooling pines and past Tim Prentice's shimmering meadow.

Racers reached the apex on Town Street, where the Ridgway farmstand is, and began a winding descent: right at the North Cornwall Church, left at the Scotts' pond, and down past Richard, gamely stopping traffic on Route 128 ("hours of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror," he reports). On past the old grange on Route 125, then briefly west on Route 4. At the post office (06753), riders banked hard onto Jewell Street, and finished with a sprint back up Pine Street—or, for the elite racers, three more laps of the same course.

Sam Adams and his family (then of Cornwall, later Kent), were marshals at the infamous corner of Cogswell and Wright Hill roads. "It was thrilling watching those packs of riders—tucked low, bunched together—bombing down the hill," says Sam. "They must have been more than a little surprised they weren't heading straight, but making a sharp left. "One rider took the turn too fast, went over the guardrail, and fell bloodied to the grass. He immediately began swearing "loudly, repeatedly." The Adamses rushed to render first aid. "My bike, my bike!" the racer moaned. "It's %#&@ing ruined!" Phill West remembers some lower-speed crashes. He was one of a cadre—Charlie West, Seth Wilson, James LaPorta, Phil Williams, Luke Robbins—who put local knowledge to use as racers. One year, the course was altered owing to paving work. Rather than leave the village to the north, racers wheeled down Valley Road and then cornered sharply onto the bitterly steep grade of Everest Hill Road. Some, unfamiliar with the new route, simply rolled to a halt and tipped over when they found themselves in the wrong gear. "I remember making sure that I changed into the right gear even before turning the corner," Phill recalls. He still has the trophies to prove it.

The tortuous and quiet roads of Cornwall seem a natural venue for human-powered racing machines, but the origins of the race are now obscure. How was the connection first made, in 1981, between the Republican Town Committee and serious bike racing? Better remembered: the spectacle of the peloton, the piquancy of crashes, the hubbub on the green. Photos show crowds as thick as Memorial Day at the finish line, with Selectman Dick Dakin speaking among hay bales and pumpkins on a flatbed trailer. Grimacing racers sprint along Pine Street under mighty trees lost in the tornado of July 1989—the disaster that spelled the end of the bike-racing era in Cornwall.

—Dean Potter

CVFD Count for the Last Three Months

38 emergency medical calls
10 false alarms
4 motor vehicle accidents
2 mutual aid/neighboring towns
1 chimney fire
1 basement pump out
1 gas leak
1 power line down

"Fixing" the House of the Seven Gables

When artist/architect Tim Prentice was a senior at Yale University, his English teacher, whose name is sadly forgotten, realized Tim suffered from dyslexia. This brain/eye condition was little understood then, and many worthy students lost their way in school.

"I was not a student of distinction," said Tim. School had always been hard. "My professor knew that writing and spelling and even reading were not my strong points. And, my senior thesis was looming."

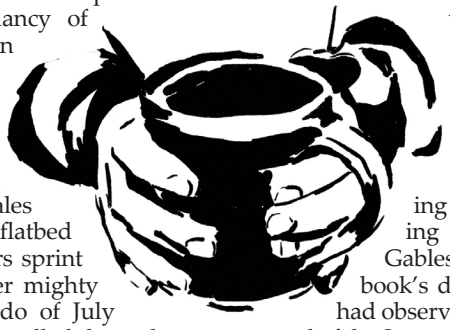
Instead of finding him a tutor, or just passing him on, Tim's professor had a stroke of brilliance: maybe Tim could do his senior thesis on the house featured in Nathanial Hawthorne's 1851 novel *The House of the Seven Gables.*

Why that novel? Who knows? Perhaps the professor was aware of the discrepancies between the house described in the novel and the house as it stood on Salem Harbor, Massachusetts. Maybe he saw in Tim, as a budding architect, an ability to sort it out; to see things differently.

So, Tim took on the project with great excitement. After getting the assignment and reading the novel, he went to see the House of the Seven Gables in Salem, Massachusetts. Built in 1668 for Captain John Turner, the house/museum still sits on a corner lot in Salem.

Tim realized there were "mistakes" in the novel's description of the house and the house itself. "It was actually a very simple design. Why would he do that?" Tim mused. Hawthorne was born in 1804 in a house just adjacent to the Turner house, which by then was owned by Hawthorne's second cousin. He was very familiar with the Seven Gables. "It didn't affect the novel. Why would Hawthorne describe the light coming into a room at a certain time of day when it couldn't have happened in real life? Except for the geometry of the building, the design was simple and Hawthorne had spent many hours there." A question never answered.

My assumption, from a reader's point of view, is that the house took on the mood of Hawthorne's book. Often somber, always a little dark, the House of the Seven Gables symbolizes the characters in the book. But, we'll never know.



Tim spent every waking moment during his spring break building a model of the Seven Gables House. Relying on the book's description and what he had observed, he built a scale model of the Seven Gables so detailed it had trees and bushes around it. His teacher was thrilled, and maybe a little startled, that this young man, who would later become an architect of great repute, had built a model so accurate, with no written plans, except for what he'd read and seen for himself. He didn't even take photos of the house, so when he built the model it was from memory only.

"My teacher was never my mentor, and I feel terrible I can't even remember his name. But the fact that he had this idea for me to try is pretty amazing. A part of me will always thank him for his insight into my struggles with dyslexia, and giving me this chance. It turned out well."

—Jane Bean

Cornwall Briefs

• **Hang on to your stuff**, as the Woman's Society has some time before having to decide "go" or "no go" for this summer's rummage sale.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

• **Behind the scenes,** budgets are being prepared by the various departments, committees, and boards for presentation to the Board of Finance this month, while the West Cornwall Sewer Septic Group makes plans for a mid-year referendum on the sewer proposal, to be preceded by informational presentations. The *Chronicle* is on the case. Btw, the offer is still out there to put [your name here] on the system in return for a generous donation.

• **Do the "Cornwall Walk"** is now more than ever a popular activity, but please walk (or run/jog) towards oncoming traffic—except on a sharp curve—not with your back to it, as we still see happening. Rule is different for bikers, who go with traffic flow. It makes sense that you want a chance to get out of the way of the distracted or lane- weaving driver.

• **Coyote News**: The next four to six weeks is mating season for coyotes. The males can get particularly aggressive, so avoid letting your pets outside alone and keep your dog in sight when out for a walk. Reports say it's unwise to have fun imitating the distinctive coyote call, as you might attract a curious pack of them; keep your yip howls confined to the shower. *—Tom Barrett*

Events & Announcements

During this time of social distancing on account of the Coronavirus, the Chronicle *will be posting important updates, information about online events, and reflections on the moment on our Facebook and Instagram feeds. Readers can also find our web-exclusive reports posted directly on our website at cornwallchronicle.org.*

Elderly and Totally Disabled Homeowners Program applications for a property tax abatement must be submitted to the town assessor's office between February 1 and May 15. Applicant must be a Cornwall homeowner, at least 65 years old, or 100 percent disabled. The income limits for this program are: single—$37,600, married couple—$45,800. Contact the assessor's office for an application: 672-2703 or cwlassessor@optonline.net.

The Cornwall Planning and Zoning Commission has scheduled a Zoom meeting on February 4 from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. with the intent of having all the town boards in one place at one time to explain their plans for 2021. The Implementation Task List, which is available on the town website, names the individuals and organizations partnering with the town in its ten-year Plan of Conservation and Development. They will present their initiatives in some format at the meeting. A Zoom agenda with call-in numbers is posted on the town website.

Covid vaccine information for seniors 75 and older is available at 877-918-2224 from 8 A.M to 4:30 P.M. or 24 hours online at tinyurl.com/y2sth4g4. The direct link is called VAMS Vaccine Administration Management System. Gov. Lamont expanded the Phase 1B vaccination group in mid-January to include those 65 and older and that should be implemented soon. The Senior Goshen/Cornwall Bus and the Geer Bus can be used to transport anyone to vaccine locations. To schedule either bus call 860-824-7067.

At the Cornwall Library

All events are free of charge and presented on Zoom. Registration in advance for each required on the library's website: Cornwalllibrary.org.

Roxana Robinson leads an ongoing discussion of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* Tuesdays through March 9 from 4 to 5 P.M. Donations welcome.

From their greenhouse, Bosco Schell and Page Dickey discuss indoor gardening in winter. Sunday, February 7, at 3 P.M.

"Mind Health During Covid 19" is the topic for Heather Dinneen, Cornwall social services director, and John Simoncelli, director of Greenwoods Counseling Referrals, as they discuss shared challenges in Cornwall and the resources available to address them. Wednesday, February 17, at 7 P.M. Co-sponsored by the Cornwall Association.

Sharon Audubon Society is co-sponsoring "Winter Birds in our Backyards: Feeding, Observing, and Preserving" on Saturday, February 20, 4 to 5 P.M. Interactive and ideal for outdoor lovers of all ages.

On Saturday, February 27 at 5 P.M., as part of the Cornwall Conversations series, Ed Greene, (senior counsel at Cleary/Gottlieb and senior lecturer at Columbia Law School), along with Professor Frédéric Jenny, (chairman of the OECD Competition Committee), will discuss "Artificial Intelligence: what it is all about, what it can be used for, how does it change the economy, and what are its limits and its dangers."

Blood Drive at Trinity Retreat Center is on February 19 from 1 to 6 P.M.

The Cornwall Internet Survey has been completed by 256 residents as of mid-January. All residents are requested to fill one out at tinyurl.com/CornwallInternetSurvey. Having more participants means better information for Cornwall's Internet Committee on internet and cell service usage.

Appeals of real estate assessments dated October 2020 will be heard by the Board of Assessment Appeals in March. Applications for a hearing are available by contacting the town clerk's office and must be returned before February 20. Approved applicants will be contacted by the BAA.

UCC Heat and Eat soup, bread, and dessert will be sold on February 26 with a 5 to 7 P.M. pick-up at the UCC Parish House. Pre-orders only by February 19 at 672-6840 or office@uccincorwall.org.

Wiser Thinking

It's hard to be happy about February, especially in a Covid-19 year. Let's look on the brighter side and remember the month contains Valentine's Day (candy hearts that say "luv you" or "fax me"). There's also 28 days in which to celebrate the *Chronicle's* 30th birthday by writing us a lovely check. Thanks!

CORNWALL CHRONICLE
cornwallchronicle.org

THIS MONTH
Tom Barrett, Bill Goulet, and *Annie Kosciusko,* Editors
Charlotte Jacobus, Illustrations
Adam Van Doren, 30th Anniversary Illustrations

NEXT MONTH
Paul De Angelis and *Elisabeth Kaestner,* Editors
pdabooks@optonline.net or ekstudio@optonline.net

MANAGING EDITOR *Ruth Epstein*

CALENDAR EDITOR *Chris Gyorsok*
calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR *Valorie Fisher*
valorie@valoriefisher.com

CIRCULATION *Robert Adzema, Nan* and *John Bevans*

DIRECTORS
Paul De Angelis, **PRESIDENT**
Annie Kosciusko, **VICE PRESIDENT**
Ann Gold, **SECRETARY**
Tom Barrett, **TREASURER**
Kerry Donahue • Erin Hedden
Juergen Kalwa • Jonathan Landman • Bob Meyers
Jacque Schiller • Lisa L. Simont
Tom and Margaret Bevans, **FOUNDERS**

THE CHRONICLE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is $15 or more, we'd be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. PO Box 6, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be E-mailed to the publishers at: info@cornwallchronicle.org

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

30th Anniversary

The Man Who Invented the *Chronicle*

It's history, the invention of the *Cornwall Chronicle,* that is. The inventor was the late, great Tommy Bevans, not a writer himself but a very creative guy when it came to design and ideas. After all, Tom was a natural, having designed books and book jackets for years at the publishing giant Simon & Schuster.

Before I get to the *Chronicle*, let me tell you about Tommy, the athlete. I'll tell you about his tennis, but first a memorable touch football game. Former Cornwallian Neal Hurwitz was calling the plays. "Tommy you go left. John go right. Go about three yards and crisscross." Well, folks, we did just that and collided. Except Tom was much shorter and tougher than I. Down I went in rib pain. Out of the game for a week or two. Tough Tommy went on playing. He may have been relatively small, but he was short and strong.

Now to Tom, the racquetman. He was not a gifted tennis player, but boy, was he inventive. One invention was adding four inches to his conventional racquet. And was he proud of those four inches. He may not have been accomplished, but he held his own by hitting crazy forehand chopshots that broke me up when I first saw one. "What's so funny?" he asked. I was so dazzled I broke into laughter and couldn't hit a return.

So now, my introduction to the *Chronicle*. I stopped by one day at the Bevans' abode on Cream Hill. Tom left the living room and came back with a dummy of the CC. It looked almost exactly like the town monthly we've come to love now for three decades. My reaction: loved it, but who's going to have time to edit it? Turned out a lot of us made time. Margaret Bevans, for one, a professional editor. People like John Zinsser, head of *Readers Digest Condensed Books*, known as "Johnny Scissorhands" by *Chronicle* writers because he often trimmed their stories.

Also Charley Osborne, a writer and editor for *Life*, Ed and Audrey Ferman, who edited and owned *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and yours truly, who wrote for the *Miami Herald* and NBC. Then other early contributors like Lisa Lansing, Bob and Ginny Potter, Scoville Soule, Ken Keskinen, George Kittle, Ella Clark, Phil Hart, and Hendon Chubb. Meanwhile, Tommy and Margaret did all design and production, work now handled by paid professionals.

When Tommy and Margaret could no longer continue, Bobby and Spencer Klaw became the heart of the paper for many years. Spencer had been editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* and Bobby was an editor of *American Heritage.*

And let's not forget all the talented artists who contributed, led in the early years by Marc Simont, Tim Prentice, Cynthia Kirk, Ellen Moon, Erica Prud'homme, Bill Beecher, Don Bracken, Bob Parker, and many others.

But it was Tommy who started it all. Bless him and our memories of him.

—John Miller

Old Cornwall

What connects you to a place are family stories. My mother was a storyteller and so was her mother. Alice Scoville Barry was born in 1911, and Katharine Trumbull Scoville in 1876, so their stories hark back awhile.

Cousin Niles Scoville was a sexton at the North Cornwall Church. When he heard that the opera singer Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, was coming to New York, he decided to go down to see her. His wife, Maria, disapproved. "If you go down to listen to that sinful show lady," she said, "I'll never speak to you again." Niles went to see Jenny Lind, and Maria never spoke to him again, though they spent the next 30 years in the same house. When Niles was dying, Maria handed him a note, but he shook his head and closed his eyes. Family stories are important because of the way they're told: the meaning is in the delivery. My mother ended this with a somber look and a slow headshake. It was a warning, though I wasn't sure if it was against foolish promises or opera, or family bullheadedness.

My grandmother Katie married "Lawyer Sam" Scoville, who was the cousin of "Farmer Sam" Scoville. Once a name gets into the Scoville family, it has a hard time getting out. Samuel and Jonathan, Ralph and Fred, Roxana. Except for Woodchuck. I know of only one Mrs. Woodchuck Scoville. She lived up on Yelping Hill, and had the misfortune to drive her mare past Cousin Sam's farm on a day when his stallion was having lustful thoughts. He broke through the fence, and Cousin Sam had to go out after them both.

One day Katie and Lawyer Sam were with Cousin Sam in his buggy, going down the steep part of Golds' Hill. Suddenly the "holdback" on the harness broke, and the buggy rammed into the horse's rump. The horse bolted. Cousin Sam tried to slow him as they careened downhill; all Katie could think of was the sharp turn at the bottom, and the rocks beyond. But just before they reached Rattlesnake Road, the horse stopped dead. The rim had come off the wheel, and the weight of the buggy had driven the spokes into the ground like stakes. It was over.

My mother had a favorite story about the Covered Bridge. Her beau, George Cadbury, and his brother Chris came visiting. Alice's cousin Nana—Roxana Scoville (Hammond) made up a foursome. The Cadburys took the girls out driving. The girls insisted on sitting in back, so the boys were in front as they headed for the bridge. Just before they entered, Alice and Nana decided to slip off and hide, imagining the boys' surprise at the other end. As the car lumbered slowly through the dark, the boys also decided to slip off, imagining the girls' surprise as they rode past. Instead, they saw an empty car bump slowly towards Sharon. When she told this story, my mother shook with laughter.

When I was little, West Cornwall was a hotbed of commerce. Yutzler's was run by Arlie and Fred, who wore clean white aprons tied around their waists. Arlie ran the register. He was kindly, wiry, and energetic. He wore glasses and tucked a pencil behind his ear. Fred was stout and taciturn, dark haired, red faced. He lifted the glass bell and cut wedges from the huge round of Cooper's cheese, and wrapped them in heavy white paper. We bought our grocer-

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

ies from them, but we bought our meat from Fred Bate, who was lean and handsome, with bright blue eyes and lank blond hair. He wore a pink-stained white apron and held a gleaming cleaver.

Down the street was the dry goods store, and below that, of course, was the Covered Bridge.

Every time I drive through it, I remember my mother's story, the empty car bumping slowly through the dark.

—Roxana Robinson

How We've Changed

We often remark that the design of the *Chronicle* has scarcely changed since the first issue. However, the content and editorial direction of the first years are very different from current issues.

To explain this, I need to go back to the decade before we began: the distant 1980s. There was little or no media coverage of town affairs, no town website, no Richard Griggs videos, *no internet* (didn't happen until the early 1990s). In short, no one knew what was going on, sometimes even members of town boards. I served on two zoning boards in those years. The chair of ZBA was a genial man who looked at meetings as an interval between cocktails—several apparently—and dinner. Our sessions were short and confused. The P&Z board was often more like a sitcom than a board meeting. The chair had narcolepsy and sometimes fell asleep, pauses filled in by a long-winded oldtimer who told personal stories about the owners of every property on our agenda. Somehow, we muddled through and got essential business done.

Our brilliant friend and founder, Tom Bevans, noted this darkness and confusion and came up with the idea of a town newspaper. Although Tom was primarily a designer, he and Margaret also set the editorial tone, which was: "cover the *news*."

There was no fancy writing and few feature stories in those early issues. We published mostly short, factual pieces about town board meetings, budgets, municipal elections, fees for bulky waste, and other useful stuff. Board members often wrote about their own activities, something strictly forbidden by current guidelines.

What would Tom and Margaret have done with a long story counting all the chickens in town (May 2003) or an electrifying piece about the love affair between Wendell Willkie and Irita Van Doren (February 2019)? The chickens might have flown, but the love affair might not have. Margaret Van Doren Bevans was Irita's daughter.

As the years went by, the paper's team of editors and writers grew more numerous and varied. The town website offered minutes of meetings and eventually videos. And so our content moved away from covering routine business toward more feature stories of lasting interest: profiles, articles about our history, our social and natural landscape, and of course our animals, wild and domestic. More than routine business is covered in a fairly new section, "Cornwall Briefs," and important stuff like referendums and zoning changes gets our full attention.

If you go to our website archive and scroll through the early years, you'll see one feature that has largely disappeared: letters, in some issues a full page of them. It's not entirely clear why we no longer receive these, but it's probably due to the growth of social media. Who has the patience to write a letter and wait weeks for it to appear in print when a comment can appear instantly on the Cornwall Community Network or Facebook (soon perhaps to become Nosebook, Eyebook, and Earbook).

And so we roll along, reliably if not so merrily last year, changing somewhat with the times, but staying with our original mission to publish a monthly non-partisan independent paper about the town we love. *—Ed Ferman*

Winter Clothes: The Warm Bottom

My six-year-old visiting granddaughter brought her clothes to my room to dress in the morning. On went a pair of underpants, six square inches of flowery cotton; a pair of jeans; and a T-shirt emblazoned with the warning "I'M HOT." The entire dressing process took three minutes.

Rather too many years ago, when my sister and I were her age, we lived under the dictates of Dr. Holt's *Care and Feeding of Children*. He advocated the warm bottom. So, when the November winds swept up Cream Hill, our winter underwear appeared and was placed on chairs beside our beds. In the morning chill, we began at the top of the heap and worked our way down.

First, we pulled over our heads a long-sleeved cotton undershirt, three buttons at the neck. Then came the Ferris waist, a vest-like garment hung along the bottom with rows of bone buttons, some on tapes. To this armament we attached in the following order: a pair of long underpants of the same heavy cotton, then a wool flannel petticoat over which we hauled bloomers that matched the stiffly starched dress that was to cover our bulging selves. Often another petticoat, white cotton embroidered along the bottom, added a touch of elegance to those bloomers. Then came the hand-knit stockings, worked painfully over the long johns and up over the knees. High shoes, buttoned or laced (we alternated each year), were guaranteed to create a scratchy condition that was only relieved each night when we restored circulation by rubbing our lacerated ankles. The dresses that covered this sartorial munificence could scarcely be buttoned around our buried waistlines.

My granddaughter doesn't know the meaning of that T-shirt message. WE WERE HOT. *—City Lansing 1911–2002*

***Editors' Note**: The author, Lisa Lansing Simont's mother, wrote this in 1994 about a time around 1917. The sister mentioned is the late Lydia Wolf*

Last Milk Run at Scoville Farm

On Saturday, September 9 [2006], as children ground corn and tumbled over hay bales down at the Ag Fair on the town Green, Ralph Scoville rode along with the last load of cows to a dairy in Farmington. "I wanted to see where they were going," he told me the next day. "I'm glad I went. It's a good farm. I could tell just from the outside. If the outside's sloppy, inside will be sloppier. This place was neat, the white of the cows was white. And the man brought me peaches. Our cows couldn't have gone to a nicer place."

A hundred years ago, Theodore Gold cited the dairy in Cornwall as furnishing "a product which would allow of transportation and which, with beef and pork, has continued to be the main reliance of our farmers for supplying their outside wants." Commercial dairy farming in Cornwall soon surpassed beef and pork production.

Scovilles have been dairying here since 1780. In the old days, farms had been more diversified, Ralph told me. "They usually had a few sheep, as well as the milk cows, and some pigs, maybe a beefer. They had orchards, raised their own vegetables. Everyone had barrels of cider."

Ralph and Thalia went into dairying with two horses and two cows, and gradually built up the herd to over 40. "There were about 17 small dairies in Cornwall then, down from the 40 or so of our grandparents' day." It was back-breaking work, particularly in the beginning, not the least of which was the cutting and hauling of heavy chunks of ice to cool the milk in 40-quart cans. The farm, along with Thalia's work as a night nurse, put their children through college. "The

kids always helped out," said Ralph, "doing farm chores before and after school. And Fred and his family have always been faithful. But there hasn't been any money in dairying for some time."

The demise of the small dairy in the Northeast has been in part due to a biological phenomenon: cows that produced 3,000 pounds of milk annually in 1900 now produce 17,000. This, coupled with the need for economies of scale, has driven many cows west, especially to California. Three dairies remain in Cornwall: Hautboy Hill, Local Farm, and Stone Wall Farm, all of which produce specialty dairy products in the form of raw milk or ice cream.

"We took the low milk prices as long as we could," said Ralph's son Fred, who graduated with a degree in animal husbandry from the University of Connecticut. "With about 45 milkers at our peak, we couldn't compete with the big farms. We'll still be baling hay and cutting corn and raising pigs, and we'll be going into beef cattle more—Angus and Simmental. But the real money around here now is in landscaping."

At one o'clock on Sunday afternoon, September 10, the milk truck came for the last time to the Scoville Farm. The white hose writhed with sucked milk. "You must see a lot of farmers getting out of dairy," I said to the affable Agri-Mark driver.

"Yes," he said. "We see far too many of them." He looked toward the barn and finished coiling the hose. "Couldn't ask for nicer people." —*Ella Clark*

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the October 2006 issue of the Chronicle. *Of the three farms mentioned in the article, the former Stone Wall Farm remains as a working dairy farm, under new ownership as Calf & Clover Farm. Fred's son Frederick Ralph Scoville III owns and runs his own landscaping business. Frederick Ralph Scoville IV, age 1+, is too young to contemplate career choices.*

Be It Ever So Humble

Humor from the archive: November 2008

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a married man in possession of a growing family is in want of a real estate broker. Hoping to spread out a bit, find a place with room to stash all our junk, I asked Priscilla Miller of Bain Real Estate to delve into her Cornwall listings. Square footage, I stressed, was key. She came up with just the place for a guy who feels cramped in his current digs: Hill House, a swanky shack built by a tennis player who had hoped to put in a golf course but couldn't swing the permits. I figured I could pick it up for peanuts.

Space-wise, it seemed adequate: ten bedrooms; thirteen-and-a-half baths; indoor and outdoor pools; a home for my cat (the six-stall horse barn); garages for eight vehicles; needless to say, a tennis court; not needless to say, an inside basketball court; and 680 acres to keep pesky neighbors at arm's length.

Reminding Priscilla of the plummeting market, I asked for the best price. "25 million," she said casually.

Some quick calculating warned me that this would increase my monthly mortgage payment to a bit over $200,000, which is significantly more than I am currently paying. I inquired about renting it, a Lendl-lease plan, but no dice—dough up front only.

"I can struggle along without 16-foot ceilings, faux marble, cherry paneling. I just need space. Don't you know of a big barn of a place?"

Her face lit up like a neon Lotto sign. Pinnacle Farm was the perfect property: a 65,000 square-foot horse barn on 140 acres. No house, but 50 deluxe stalls. That would mean everyone in my family would get 12 stalls to store their junk. Room beyond our wildest dreams.

"40-foot ceilings, one of the largest post-and-beam structures around," she agreed.

"I guess we don't really need beds, just some fresh straw," I reflected.

"There's a complete caretaker apartment," she explained. "No need to sleep in the stalls."

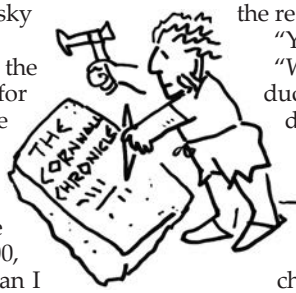
"Did they change the price after the real estate bust?" I asked.

"Yes, by ten million."

"Wow, that's for me! A barn reduced by ten million. It must be down to almost nothing."

"No, actually it recently went up from 25 million to 35 million."

"Well, I'll think about it," I lied, stealthily tearing up my change-of-address post cards.



—*Matt Collins*

Letters to the Chronicle

A DOVE IN THE HAND (May, 2000)

With the coming of spring there is increased activity among the birds outside the kitchen window. Our lunch was interrupted the other day by a loud thump, which left a wet spot on the glass and a dove with a broken neck on the lawn. As I was heading for the woods with a shovel in one hand and the still warm dead bird in the other, I recalled a time at the Goshen Fair when I watched a chicken judge evaluating a small hen. I could see the breast feathers move as the judge palpated with experienced fingers. The hen gave soft muffled squawks, and the old man had a far-away look. I put aside wicked thoughts when I realized he was checking her for the pot and trying to decide what color ribbon to give her. I was about to put my dead dove in the hole I had dug when I noticed how easily the feathers came off. To make a long story short:

In a small pan over medium heat put olive oil, chopped onion, and carrot. Put in bird and brown on both sides. Reduce heat to low, add red wine and chicken broth. Cover and simmer until tender, adding wine and broth as needed to keep from sticking. Serves one small person.

—Marc Simont

A CREAM HILL LAKE MONSTER?

Random reports of animal sightings (bears, catamounts, bats, coyotes, etc.) in and about Cornwall seem to bespeak the need for an inquiring association to organize the growing body of research. A cogent argument for such a society is the likelihood that future sightings might challenge local scientists in ways heretofore undreamt of.

These thoughts surfaced with recent news reports of a great orm, or vertebrate worm, akin to the Loch Ness monster, reported to reside in Canada's Lake Okanagan. Dubbed Ogopogo, this large serpentine creature is a marine cryptid (hidden animal) alleged to belong to what researchers are calling "a distinct...species of presently indeterminate class." Like its possible relative Nessie, Ogopogo is remarkably elusive and has never been more than vaguely glimpsed.

Members of a prospective Cornwall Cryptid Sighting Sodality, when not tracking down bear scat and bobcat spoor, could begin to investigate the possibility that an orm—naturally much smaller than its Canadian or Scots kin—might be hiding among the fronds deep in Cream Hill Lake. Naming this creature could be a challenge: Ogopogo comes from native legend; Nessie is a kind of British endearment. "Creamie" seems demeaning, somehow. Any ideas?

—Charles Osborne (January 1993 issue)

A FINAL NOTE

My brother-in-law left me this note last Thursday:

"Dear Tommy,
I can explain everything.
Spencer."

This is the best offer I've had in a long time. Unfortunately, I've been unable to reach him by deadline. Details in the next issue.

— Tom Bevans (February 1991 issue)

A Cornwall Companion

Editor's note: Lest our offerings this month seem to be bragging about our writers' abilities, here's an "unbiased" review reprinted from the January 2005 issue.

I confess to feeling a certain skepticism on learning that the *Cornwall Chronicle* had seen fit to publish (between hard covers no less) an anthology of its best articles and

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

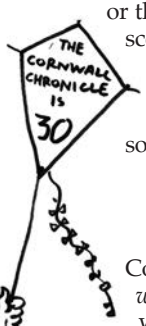
drawings. Don't get me wrong. I've always enjoyed the *Chronicle*, and never more so than now, when we live 2,991.6 miles away from Baird's (according to MapQuest) and even further from the dump. Cornwallians turn out not to be the most assiduous letter writers, alas, so the *Chronicle* has become our primary source of Cornwall news. (All it's missing is a gossip column—Lib? April?) These days our local newspaper is the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and anyone who's tried to read that windy rag knows it can't hold a candle to Cornwall's *Chronicle*.

But still, an anthology?! Even the most devoted students of Cornwallalia—even Jim Terrall or David Grossman—couldn't bear to relive the Rumsey Hall saga, or the CCS expansion saga, or—my personal favorite—the gravel-pit-on-Route-7 saga. The *Chronicle*'s coverage of these stories was unbeatable, it's true, but these are some soundly sleeping dogs you definitely don't want to poke. And yet if you left out such world-historical Cornwall episodes, would there be anything left to anthologize?

Plenty, it turns out. *A Cornwall Companion* is an unexpected delight. The editors—Spencer Klaw and Ed Ferman—wisely stepped over the sleeping dogs of past controversy, settling instead on pieces that capture the rhythms of Cornwall life (and wildlife) both now and then. The volume offers up a wonderful trove of Cornwall history—Phil Hart's superb entries gradually build up a detailed sepia picture of the town's agricultural heyday—and by the time Ken Keskinen's final page of doggerel has rolled around, you have a portrait of a small New England town at the end of the 20th century changing in response to muffled offstage forces, as slowly as it possibly can.

The fatal tendency of small-town journalism has always been toward nostalgia and gushy nature writing, neither of which, thankfully, the *Chronicle*'s editors have ever displayed much patience for. The *Chronicle* has always preferred to traffic in fact rather than sentiment, whether the subject is rocks, gnats, black bears (these last two topics receiving easily as much ink here as all the selectmen combined) and mountain lion spottings (a subject on which Hendon Chubb steadfastly refuses to let wish get the better of verification). Facts generally prove sturdier than sentiment, which probably helps to explain why this anthology holds up as well as it does.

That said, for the expat Cornwallian like myself, reading *A Cornwall Companion*—which is to say, reading Phil Hart and Carla Bigelow, Lisa Simont, and George Kittle, and all the many bylines with "Scoville" at one end or the other, is to risk a dizzying descent into homesickness. You can hear the very creak of the floorboards at Baird's in these pages, and I'm reminded just how sorely I miss the place.



—Michael Pollan

Beaten by a Century

Cornwall's first paper, the *Cornwall Star*, was a weekly, later a biweekly, published in 1880 and 1881 by Joseph Ernest Whitney while home on vacations from Yale, and by Edwin Dennis Cole, a Cornwall job printer. An issue consisted of four 5 ½ x 7 ½ pages devoted to social notes, humor, some news, and one page of advertising. Among topics appearing with some consistency were: the First Church, baseball, and the Cornwall-Cornwall Bridge telephone line, Cornwall's first. Examples of its humor:

"There was a small boy had some powder.
And in trying to make it go louder
He succeeded so well
That his friend couldn't tell
His remains from a dish of clam chowder."

"After watching archery practice, Mrs. Malaprop innocently remarked that the ladies were getting very arch with their bows."

—Michael Gannett (March 1991)

Going to Hell on Dibble Hill

There is an old story that on Dibble Hill, that region of wonders, there was a remarkable cave, situated "somewhere back of Ann Delaney's." Near one corner was a hole of unfathomed depth. Many efforts had been made to find bottom there, but all experiments seemed to prove the uselessness of the attempt. A stone dropped into the opening could be heard bounding and rolling for an indefinite distance, at first producing a series of sharp metallic sounds, culminating in a prolonged roar. Some believed this to be an opening to the infernal regions, and wild stories were told of strong blasts of sulphuric air blowing out of the place and extinguishing torches, of strange and fiendish shrieks heard there at midnight, and strange apparitions appearing and vanishing in this place...The majority of our townspeople have always believed that his Satanic Majesty had private communication between Dibble Hill and his headquarters...

—a note from the past
The *Cornwall Star*, October 1880

Now, where do you suppose that hole might have been? Readers' suggestions encouraged.

Half-Stein

An Odic Rumination
On the Workings of a Cow

Sing Ho the Cow! (of genus Bos)—
for her this verse I now compose!
Her awkward frame has special parts
that challenge all creative arts.

Here my portrait has implied
the hidden stomachs beneath the hide.
The first compartment's called the "rumen"
(you won't find it in a human)
where bovines drop their mouthful grassy;
and when they feel both gross and gassy,
they begin to eructate,
and so the cud regurgitate.
Again they chomp the bolus lumpy
and send it down the channel bumpy.
Through stomachs (four!) it now will pass;
transformed, it finally plops on grass.
(For cows require no water closets
for all their various deposits.
They wear no dresses, pants or girdle,
and, tail high, make pastures fertile.)

Behold each bag, so plump an udder—
the source of milk, ice cream, and butter,
Now when each cow emits her calf,
it also longs for half-and-half.
Well licked and nudged, it staggers up
on spindly legs to sip and sup.
Will it grow up? Will business zeal
see better bucks in cuts of veal?
Will agribusiness now take off its
calves and produce just for profits?

Oh, gone are Wordsworth's pipes and tabors,
and milkmaids who, at cowshed labors
on shiny stools, with fingers tug
at every friendly dripping dug.

Now cows with flat triangle faces,
with flicking ears, with soulful gazes,
with swishing tails and well-tongued noses,
are hooked up snug to lengthy hoses.
With a hum and a thump and a quiet beat,
the machines suck milk from each greased-up teat.
Yet cows still have those vital parts—
stomachs, uteri, bags and hearts.
They give us food, they keep us fed—Oh
joy to see them munch the meadow!

Sing Ho the cow! Sing Ho! Come boss!
It's she we praise for her super sauce!
Sing Ho the Guernsey! Ho the Jersey!
Sing Ho the Holstein!
End of versey.

—Ken Keskinen (1923-2011)

Editor's note: This poem originally appeared in the November 2008 Chronicle.