



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 6 : NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 1996



## Library Summit

In a special meeting on December 3 the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Trustees of the Cornwall Library Association will address the need for more space for both the Library and town offices.

The meeting follows from the Library trustees' expressed preference for staying in their present building, and will consider the feasibility of on-site renovation and expansion. No doubt other options will be brought up, such as a move to Monroe Bodkin, the former Marvelwood library/classroom building (see *Letters*, p.3). The meeting will be at 7:30 P.M. in the CCS gym, and is open to the public.

—George Kittle

## Wolves, Coyotes, Coydogs

It's a lovely thought, and an easy mistake, but sorry folks, those wolf and coydog sightings around town are most likely coyote sightings. I've just gotten off the phone with Scott Smith, a wildlife biologist (and coyote expert) for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and he filled me in.

First of all, coydogs haven't been around this area since the mid '70s, when female coyotes started expanding their range and wound up here without any males in tow. Having no choice among their own species, they mated with male domestic dogs, pro-

ducing what were called coydog pups. Soon enough, however, male coyotes arrived and, given a choice, coyotes mate only with their own kind. The few coydogs that were produced didn't survive well, as, interestingly, they were born with domestic dog reproductive systems, causing them to bear pups during winter months. Most of these coydog pups were unable to survive the cold.

A wolf sighting would be just as unlikely as a coydog, according to Smith. The nearest wolves are in Ontario, Canada, and Minnesota. Although there is talk of reintroducing them to the Adirondacks, wolves aren't expanding their natural territory southward. In any case, they would not easily survive in an area like Cornwall because they are not resourceful in dealing with humans, whereas coyotes adapt well to populated areas.

To the eye, at least as far as coloring goes, a mistake between the two species might be easy to make. Both vary from red to gray to all black. The similarity ends there, however. Coyotes generally weigh 35-40 pounds (though Smith has seen one weighing 50 pounds), whereas wolves weigh in on the average at 100 pounds. Coyotes also keep their tails down when running. Wolves hold them straight out.

In sum, when in doubt, think coyote.

—April Stevens

## Gravel Mining: Stay Tuned

"Why are we here?" asked Leonard Blum, attorney for songster James Taylor and Kent Road resident Peter Stiglin. His question was not rhetorical; he referred to a renewal of FSB Associates' efforts to obtain Planning & Zoning sanction for mining gravel on the Strobel property along Kent Road in Cornwall Bridge.

Many of those at the November 12 public hearing also wondered why the mining issue has surfaced again. As they saw it, the matter had already been settled.

In June, the commission rejected an application from FSB, partly because it felt the application lacked wording requiring a fairly tight FSB mine operation, with strict time limits and oversight provisions. Also a factor was a barrage of voluminous and eloquent objections to the project from neighbors along Kent Road. These ranged from warnings about traffic dangers—heavily laden trucks entering Kent Road—to health concerns (airborne dust), to worries about falling property values. Following rejection of the

(continued on page 2)

## DECEMBER 1996

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Corn. Br. Natl. Iron Bank Dec. Art Show, Scott Zuckerman Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	3 Special Meeting: Bd. of Selectmen & Library Trustees 7:30 P.M. CCS (above) Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. Town Office Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	4 W. Cornwall Merch. Assoc. 10 A.M. Hedgerows	5 HANUKKAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN Open Forum on Town Plan 7:30 P.M. CCS (p.2)	6 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	7 UCC Christmas Fair 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. Parish House (p.4) The Kent Singers 7 P.M. St. Joseph's Chapel Kent School (p.4)
8 Bob Kilham on Bears 3 P.M. CCS (p.4) The Kent Singers 3 P.M. First Cong. Church Washington (p.4)	9 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	10 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	11 PTA 7 P.M. CCS Library	12 Cornwall Housing Corp. 4:30 P.M. Kugeman Village	13 Preschooler Story Hour 10 A.M. Library	14
15 Note: Deadline for December Chronicle copy. Caroling and Tree Lighting 5 P.M. Town Hall (p.4)	16 Art Show, Nick Jacobs Photographs, 12/16-1/11, Library HVRHS Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Library Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	17	18	19 Bd. of Education 5 P.M. CCS Library Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	20	21 Christmas Pageant 7:30 P.M. UCC (p.4)
22	23 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	24	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27 Tom Walker reads from <i>The Wind in the Willows</i> 4:30 P.M. North Cornwall Church (p.4)	28 Cornwall Association 4 P.M. Town Hall
29	30	31				

\*Check time and place at Town Office

(continued from page 1)

application, the Strobels filed an appeal in Litchfield Superior Court.

Many of the same people who had been on hand in June were prepared once again to air their objections. They were present in November because the Strobels, seeking a possible settlement, had brought forward a document, called a "stipulation for judgment," amending the original application. The document offered a compromise: P&Z would accept the stipulation, which stated many of the terms and conditions deemed absent from the original application, FSB would end its legal action, and mining would proceed.

When the commission had dutifully listened one more time to objections to any mining on the FSB site from the many in opposition—and to two in favor—it heard from attorney Blum. Assailing the stipulation, which he said "changed nothing in the application," he dropped his bombshell: if the commission voted to accept the stipulation, he would file a petition to join the legal action as an "intervenor," representing not only Taylor and Stiglin, but a number of other Strobel neighbors.

A stipulation only works if all the parties agree to it. By intervening (with court approval), Blum would create a whole new party emphatically not in agreement—one, moreover, that might initiate brand-new litigation.

After discussion, the commission saw this pretty clearly. Obviously, accepting the stipulation would not have the desired effect: settlement of the legal action. A motion to reject the stipulation, duly seconded, was unanimously carried, and the latest episode in the mining story came to a close. It may have been significant that the whole proceeding—hearing, discussion, and vote—took a mere two-and-a-quarter hours. But the larger drama may be far from over.

—Charles Osborne



### Smoke Signals

Two fires were extinguished in Cornwall in recent weeks, both incidents pointing up the importance of correctly installed smoke detectors.

At 2 A.M. on Saturday morning, November 16, a smoke alarm at the Cornwall Consolidated School alerted Fire Chief David Williamson, who was promptly on the scene directing Cornwall volunteers as well as mutual-aid forces from Goshen and Falls Village. The fire was limited to the steam boiler, and smoke damage was confined to the basement. According to Fire Marshal Stanley

MacMillan, the source of the trouble was a tripped circuit breaker that prevented water from being pumped into the boiler, causing it to superheat. Why a low-water safety switch failed to operate is still a question, but the automatic smoke alarms certainly prevented much greater damage.

Very early on October 30 at 199 Cream Hill Road in the home of the Haddon family, a chimney fire swept into an internal wall by way of an old wood-stove port. In this case, too, Chief David Williamson was first on the scene (it was, as it turned out, the house his mother was born in), and he summoned Goshen and Falls Village. In what is being called "a good save," damage from fire and water was kept remarkably low, especially since smoke alarms weren't in operation.

State regulations, in place since 1994, specify smoke alarms (hard-wired to electrical power with battery backups) on each floor and in each bedroom of all new constructions and renovations. For those of us with simple battery-powered alarms, the lesson seems clear enough: make sure your smoke alarms work by replacing batteries *every* year. Those whose homes are without any alarms should call Fire Marshal MacMillan (364-5758) for advice.

—Sandy Neubauer

### More Mean Than Median

Cornwall gets little state aid because its mean income is very high, despite the fact that its median income is quite low. The *mean* is the average income, calculated by dividing the total income received by all residents by the number of residents. The *median* is the midpoint—that is, the income level that half of all households receive less than, and the other half more.

On a mean basis, Cornwall ranks extremely high. It is the 15<sup>th</sup> wealthiest town in the state. In the Northwest Corner, only Salisbury and Sharon rank higher. However, the picture for median household income is sharply different. On this score, Cornwall ranked 134<sup>th</sup> out of 169 towns in the state, putting it in the *lowest 25 percent* of all Connecticut towns.

Cornwall's high mean income figure is largely due to the presence here of some very high-income households. The low median figure reflects the fact that at least half of all residents have quite modest incomes.

This sharp mean/median difference creates problems for our town. This is because the state's school-aid formula—like most other state-aid formulas—is based on mean, not median income. Thus, the aid formula treats a town like ours as if every resident were wealthy.

A measure of the way the aid formulas work to Cornwall's disadvantage can be seen in the 1995 figures for state aid per capita. Cornwall, despite ranking 134<sup>th</sup> in median income,

close to North Canaan's 149<sup>th</sup> rank, got only \$252 per person compared to North Canaan's \$782. The difference stems from the fact that North Canaan ranked low on mean as well as median income.

—David A Grossman



### Welcome

Matthew Thomas to Peter and Peggy Allen

### Good-bye to a Friend

Richard Ulrich

### Congratulations

Susan Vita to Robert Benedict

Michele Kelley to Nigel Laurer

### Forum on Town Plan

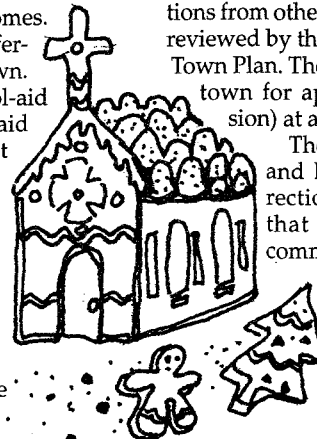
As part of the process of updating the Town Plan as required by state law, the Planning and Zoning Commission is holding a town-wide forum on Tuesday, December 5, at 7:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Consolidated School.

Following a brief presentation of the planning process and its objectives, forum participants will break into small groups to generate ideas for the revised Town Plan. They will consider such questions as the following: What kind of community do we want for ourselves and our children? How can we best use our land and resources? What procedures and regulations will be needed to help us achieve our goals?

The entire group will then reconvene to share ideas and to consider possible priorities for implementation. These ideas, along with background research and recommendations from other group meetings, will then be reviewed by the commission as it revises the Town Plan. The plan will be presented to the town for approval (or for further revision) at a hearing.

The Town Plan for Conservation and Development will set the direction for decisions and actions that will affect our future. The commission urges all to take part in its planning sessions. For more information on times and places of meetings, please call P&Z clerk Maggie Cooley at 672-4957.

—William Lyon, Chairman



## How We Voted

Although we still had the highest voter turnout in the Northwest Corner, almost ten percent fewer Cornwall voters went to the polls in November than in 1992, the last Presidential election year.

On Election Day we had 991 registered voters, of whom 730 voted in person and another 105 by absentee ballot, bringing the total to 835, or 84.3 percent. In 1992 the figure was 93.85 percent, the highest since we began keeping track about 25 years ago.

All the winners, including President Clinton, carried Cornwall except Republican Rep. Nancy Johnson, who won an eighth term in the Sixth Congressional District by a hair but lost here to Democrat Charlotte Koskoff, 392 to 378. Koskoff won two other towns in the Northwest Corner: Falls Village (by one vote) and Norfolk.

President Clinton defeated Bob Dole in all seven towns by 49.1 percent to 36.4 percent. It was about the same in Cornwall: Clinton with 49.2 percent to Dole's 32.4 percent. Ross Perot got 9.9 percent of the vote in the seven towns with a flat 10 percent here. Ralph Nader got only 3.6 percent of the area total but 7 percent in Cornwall.

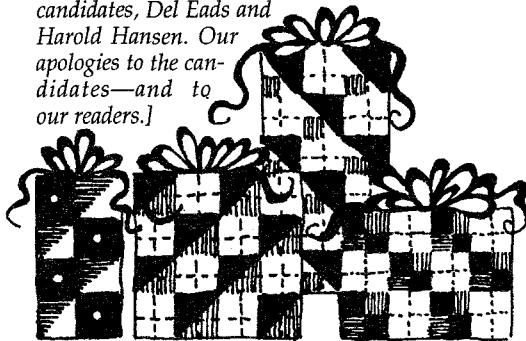
In the race for the 30<sup>th</sup> Senate District, Republican incumbent Del Eads easily won another term in her race with Democrat Harold Hansen, but Hansen did better in Cornwall than in other towns. Overall, Hansen won only 40 percent of the vote, but got 47 percent in Cornwall.

In their third contest for the 64<sup>th</sup> House District, Republican incumbent Andrew Roraback handily defeated Democrat Mary Ann O'Sullivan. In their two previous races O'Sullivan easily carried Cornwall, but this time she lost to Roraback 455 to 339.

The totals for Registrar of Voters were 425 for Democrat Jayne Ridgway and 334 for Republican Lisa Cruse. Both were elected.

—John Miller

[Editors' note: Because a line was inadvertently dropped, last month's pre-election story made it appear that Nancy Johnson and Charlotte Koskoff were running for State Senate, not for Congress, and omitted the names of the real State Senate candidates, Del Eads and Harold Hansen. Our apologies to the candidates—and to our readers.]



## Have You Noticed?

You know the giant Ian Ingersoll Shaker rocker down on the Cornwall Bridge green? The quilt and the bales of hay are gone and in their place is a giant straw man with spectacles reading a book. It is the work of art stu-

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## Letters to the Chronicle

### TO OUR AMBULANCE SQUAD

On October 27, a beautiful sun-filled Indian summer day, a friend and I went for a hike in the Mohawk State Forest near my home. I go often to the woods, and often alone, to find peace and comfort.

Today, within minutes of an insect sting, I was collapsed on the leaf-littered forest floor, my blood pressure falling, unable to help myself, trying to stay conscious. I am an RN. I knew this was anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction, but I could not believe this was happening, not to me. I heard my voice, far away, telling my friend to go, run, call 911. Tell them I need epinephrine, please, please...

Then I waited, alone. At times my eyes opened to deeply blue sky, bright sunlight on the few pale leaves clinging to branches high overhead. Each breath became an effort. A sick sweat crawled on my face while an endless tape played over and over in my brain, "Please get here, just get here, get here."

Then I heard your siren in the distance. I heard your running feet in the dry leaves as you rushed to help me. I felt the jab of the life saving epinephrine injection, heard the hiss of the oxygen mask.

And I heard your voices, some of neighbors, some of friends. I heard your concern, felt your care and your hands as you worked together to lift and carry me to the ambulance. You knew what to do. Today I was not alone. You got here.

I am a nurse. I work often, as you do, helping others in crisis. Now I know why we do what we do. Now I know there is no way I can thank you for being there, for giving your time, your training, for your care.

I can just thank you. Thank you.

—Evelyn Gelerter

### THE LIBRARY IS US

The problem of what to do about the Cornwall Library is a very important issue to those who love books and reading. There are two different schools of thought—those who think the Library should stay where it is and those who think it has a better future in the former Marvelwood School library. I look forward to discussion of these options at every level, including town meetings, to see what is best for the town.

We should all have a say about what should be done, because the Library belongs to all of us. While the Library considers itself to be a private institution, it cannot easily separate itself from the community. Our Library is now in a space partnership with the town in the Town Hall/Library Building (which is owned by the town), and, whatever it does in the future, funds for its expansion or any other development will have to come from the town and its interested citizens. That means that the Library Trustees, financially dependent on the town and its citizens, will have to pay close attention to what they have to say.

The Trustees must also understand what is important about a library. Is it the building which houses the books? I don't think so, though of course there must be such a building. Is it the

Board of Trustees? No, it certainly is not, though of course there must be such a body. It is, I deeply believe, the community which uses the library, in conjunction with the books which are its heart and soul and brain. It is to our Cornwall community that everyone has a sacred responsibility. The community must be in on every decision, every idea, every option, and every move, and all participants must pay close and respectful attention to the community's wishes. Only in that way will the correct solution be reached.

In the recent past, town decisions have often been made for financial reasons. We must be sure, here, that we get the best financial deal, taking advantage of all possibilities so that the Library, wherever it resides, does not tax the public purse or private purses unnecessarily or too heavily.

It is encouraging to hear that the Selectmen and the Trustees of the Library will meet on December 3. The meeting will be open to the public. That sounds like a good start. —John Zinsser

### ANOTHER LOOK, PLEASE

I'm an avid book lover and a Friend of the Cornwall Library, so I can't understand why the Trustees recently turned down the chance to buy the former Marvelwood library building at the low price of \$195,000. With over 6,000 square feet, it would make a spacious library, solving our present and future space needs much more economically than remodeling the present building. It would also alleviate the long-term conflict over space for town offices. I hope the Trustees will take another look at this promising solution before it's too late. —Julia Scott

### THE BEAR FACTS

We on Cream Hill are accustomed to large black critters at the roadside, but early one evening we had a surprise encounter near the intersection of 125 and 128 across from Pete Hayward's hill.

Hugging a tall pine was a bear cub in what appeared to be his "teen years." He seemed almost as curious as we were, but this protective mother cautiously looked about before allowing blond heads out the window to gape.

The luscious inky-black fur and quizzical expression were almost more than we could bear; however, Yellowstone memories kept us in check. We remained seated, in awe, as he turned and ambled up the hill, most likely in the direction of his mother.

My cubs and I headed home. —Lisa Cruse

### MINT-FLAVORED TENNIS BALLS\*

Though stacks of Xmas catalogues, Forsooth, they make your mind down-bog, Give thanks to dear old L. L. Bean For a cheery gift that's sweet and clean.

It's for your dog on tennis court To make him winner at this sport; No other gift your dog enthalls, Like six mint-flavored tennis balls.

—Larry Pool

\*From the L. L. Bean Christmas catalogue, p.181.

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dents at the Salisbury School who made it out of straw, tree branches, and chicken wire. Ian says the chair will be covered with morning glory vines next summer. Meantime, thanks to the Salisbury kids. It looks great.

—John Miller

### Walker's Wild Works

Tom Walker, who first exhibited here in 1969, has lit up the Cornwall Library with a new show of his vibrant paintings. Created on found objects, such as shoe boxes, styrofoam plates, and tomato cartons, these expressionistic works combine bold line with a fiery palette of hot reds, yellows, and greens, reminiscent of the painter Red Grooms.

Many of the subjects are abstract depictions of primitive forces of nature such as bursting volcanoes, wild skies, and swirling winds—some of which are fearsome. Serpents and other creatures seem to ooze from Walker's unconscious with a marvelous freedom and spontaneity. Now thru December 14.

—Adam Van Doren

### Teachers, Board Reach Accord

The Cornwall Board of Education and the Cornwall Teachers' Association have reached a tentative three-year contract agreement, narrowly avoiding costly arbitration. The agreement includes a 2.9 percent increase over the 1996-1997 salary base; individual raises are to be determined by the Teachers' Association with the approval of the Board. The teachers have agreed to surrender their current Blue Cross/Blue Shield indemnity plan for a less costly one, with premiums to be paid by the Board.

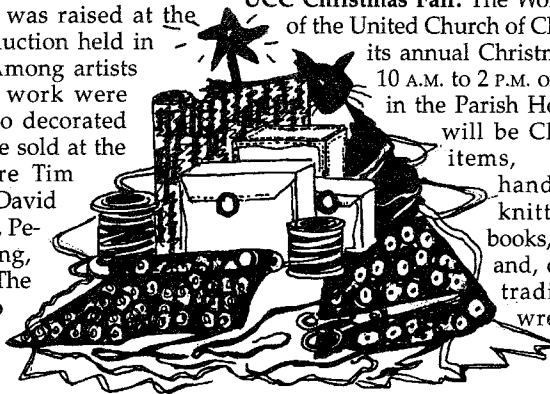
"It would be inappropriate to talk about details at this point because the contract has not yet been signed," said Board Chairman Katherine Gannett. "Once it has been ratified by both parties, which I hope will be soon, it will be made available in the town office for all to see."

—George Kittle

### Habitat Auction \$\$\$

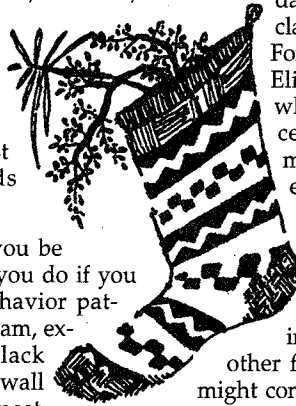
Approximately \$25,000 was raised at the Habitat for Humanity auction held in Kent on November 2. Among artists who contributed their work were seven Cornwallians who decorated wooden frames that were sold at the event. The artists were Tim Prentice, Don Bracken, David Colbert, Michael Gellaftly, Peter Busby, Kate Freygang, and Whoopi Goldberg. The money will benefit two local chapters of Habitat for Humanity.

—Barbara Klaw



### Events & Announcements

**Welcome to the 'Net:** The Friends of the Cornwall Library will sponsor a series of courses introducing users to the fascinating intricacies of the Library's new computer system. Expert Al Bredenberg will be among the instructors who will guide beginners and intermediates in the use of Windows '95, in using CD-ROMs for research, and, of course, in the art of cruising the Internet. Sign-up sheets and a comment book are available at the Library. "Let us know what you want to know about the computer and we'll do our best to provide it," says Friends Board President Lisa Lansing.



**Bears, Bears, Bears:** Should you be afraid of them? What should you do if you meet one? What are their behavior patterns? Find out when Bob Kilham, expert on the New England black bear, gives a talk at the Cornwall Conservation Trust's annual meeting at CCS on Sunday, December 8, at 3 P.M.

**Winter Rules:** Remember to park your cars at least six feet from the edge of town roads, so the crew can plow. In effect through March.

**The Kent Singers** will set the holiday mood with two Christmas concerts: on Saturday, December 7, at 7 P.M. in St. Joseph's Chapel of the Kent School; and Sunday, December 8, at 3 P.M. in the First Congregational Church on the Green in Washington. There are six Cornwall singers in the group: Susan Fox, Honora Horan, Lisa Lansing, Marie Prentice, Ann Schillinger, and Julia Scott. For the concerts, Music Director Susan Loyd Wiles has chosen music by Bach, Britten, and Finzi, as well as carols. The chorus and soloists will be accompanied by a small string orchestra with harp and percussion. Tickets are \$10 in advance (call 672-6261) or \$12 at the door. Children under 15 are free when accompanied by an adult.

**UCC Christmas Fair:** The Woman's Society of the United Church of Christ will hold its annual Christmas Fair from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. on December 7 in the Parish House. For sale will be Christmas gift items, decorations, hand-sewn and knitted gifts, books, baked goods, and, of course, the traditional fresh wreaths. Lunch available at noon.

**Caroling and tree lighting** with the Salisbury Brass and Hot Chocolate Society will take place on Sunday, December 15, at 5 P.M. in front of the Town Hall. Refreshments will be served. Dress warmly.

**Aerobic classes** are now being added to the list of PTA-sponsored adult classes held at CCS. They will meet Mondays and Thursdays, 6-7 P.M. The cost: \$50 for ten classes, drop-ins \$6, first class free. For registration and information call Elise Meneshian, 672-6001. Meanwhile, Martha Cheo's highly successful Tai Chi Chuan classes are meeting this year on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30. They cost \$35 per month (first class free). Call Martha at (914) 677-0304.

**Fruit Sale:** The PTA is expanding its annual citrus sale to include other fruits and nuts. A 15-pound box might contain tangerines, clementines, navel oranges, pink grapefruit, pears, apples, and grapes. As in the past the money raised will be used to further the PTA's goal of a new CCS gymnasium, specifically for feasibility studies, a building plan, and seed money for fund-raising. Orders must be received by December 9. Delivery date is December 16. Call David Samson at 672-6797.

**A Christmas treat** for the family will be offered by the Friends of the Cornwall Library on December 27 when Tom Walker repeats his popular candlelight reading at 4:30 P.M. at the North Cornwall Church. This year Tom will read "The Wild Wood" and "A Visit to Mr. Badger," from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*. Tom is a 30-year veteran of the Living Theater. The reading is free and all comers are welcome to share the warmth of the season in this old-fashioned way.

**Christmas Pageant:** The annual community Christmas Pageant will take place at UCC on Saturday, December 21, at 7:30 P.M. All are invited. Refreshments afterwards at the Parish House.



### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

ILLUSTRATIONS Cynthia Kirk

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