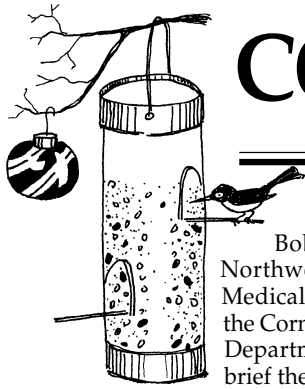


CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 14 : NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 2004



Be Prepared

Bob Corrigan of the Northwest CT Emergency Medical Council met with the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department last month to brief them on preparing for disasters, including winter storms. Bob's advice: Be smart about planning ahead and maintaining family disaster kits in case of power outages and extended emergencies. Plan for a workable and safe source of heat, and store up food, water, and necessary medicines. Keep a battery-powered radio ready.

David Williamson, Assistant Fire Chief, adds his own eight tips for winter survival: 1) Replace batteries in smoke and CO2 detectors; 2) Have and practice a fire evacuation plan for your home; 3) Keep a dated list of doctors and medicines on the refrigerator door; 4) Service the furnace annually; 5) Clean chimneys every year; 6) Clean dryer flex hose annually; 7) Plan for disasters and have supplies on hand; and 8) Keep a list of emergency phone numbers—911, relatives and friends—in a place everyone can find.

Please call Joyce Hart (672-4959) if you would like to be on the winter telephone call list for storm emergencies.

—Gordon M. Ridgway

Crossing Guardedly

Crosswalks are coming to Cornwall. A new crosswalk in Cornwall Bridge, running from Baird's General Store to Northwest Lumber, is already in place. It's hoped it will slow the cars that have been barreling through on Route 7.

So I decided to test it out. First, I drove up to the crosswalk, slowing down as I felt cars should. The car behind me honked in protest. More than that, it put on a flashing red light and the State trooper inside pulled me over and asked me why I had slowed down. When I said I wanted to look at the crosswalk, he responded irately, "Where is there a law that says you have to stop for a crosswalk without anybody in it?" When I responded that I was checking out the walk for a story I was writing, he grunted and drove off.

Later, I tried the crosswalk on foot. I walked out a few steps onto the striped pavement; the oncoming car didn't slow down at all. On my next try, I got most of the way across; this time, the oncoming car graciously came to a near stop. So I figure you've got a 50/50 chance.

Yet to come is another crosswalk in West Cornwall, to run from the West Cornwall Market/Post Office parking lot across to somewhere near Barbara Farnsworth's

bookshop. This one is still in the planning stage, with the selectmen scheduled to meet soon with State DOT officials to get their input as to the safest location. Good luck!

—David A. Grossman

Gymnastic Memories

Have you seen it? The new gym?

"Eye-opening," say some who have. "Jaw-dropping," say others. We'll all be able to see it on December 19 (see page 4). And people who remember the old original CCS gym will marvel at the contrast.

When Cornwall Consolidated School opened in 1940, the so-called gym was an awkward, standard square (the extension on the east, making the room a rectangle, would have to wait for years). Basketball nets were mounted flush with the north and south walls, making lay-ups risky. But this didn't really matter. Dr. W. Bradford Walker, the respected town and school physician, believed that basketball was too strenuous a sport for kids of grammar-school age. (Not till 1943 did he relent, and then only for 10 to 15 minutes of play.) Moreover, the school had no physical education teacher or classes; in fact, no supervised sports of any kind. Interscholar sports were still in the future.

(continued on page 2)

DECEMBER 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Jam Session, 7 P.M. UCC Tuesdays: Blue Mountain Satsang, 6:30 P.M. UCC Day Room Wednesdays: Play Group, 10-11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC Stretch Class, 5:30 P.M. Town Hall Thursdays: Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. UCC Day Room			1	2	3	4 Child Center Holiday Wreath Sale 9 A.M.-2 P.M. Baird's Store† Annual Christmas Fair 10 A.M.-3 P.M. UCC† Kids' Knitting Class 11 A.M. Library
5	 6 Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse  Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	7 HANUKKAH BEGINS AT SUNDOWN Classic Films Program 2 P.M. Library † Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	8	9	10 Story Hour Holiday Party 1:15 P.M. Cornwall Library	11 Corn. Association 9 A.M. UCC Day Room American Girl film Samantha 12:30 P.M. Library † Artists' Reception 5-7 P.M. Library †
12	 13 Blood Pressure Screening 3-4 P.M. UCC Parish House ABC Holiday Party Meeting 5:30 P.M. Cornwall Inn CCS Grades 5-8 Winter Concert 7 P.M.	14 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	15 Deadline: January Chronicle Copy CCS Grades K-4 Winter Concert 7 P.M. Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	16 Red Cross Blood Drive 1:30-6:15 P.M. UCC † Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	17	18 Annual Christmas Pageant 7:30 P.M. UCC †
19 Christmas Bird Count † Open House CCS Gym 1:30 P.M. †	20 Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS	21 WINTER BEGINS	22 Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	23 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall CCS Early Dismissal 1 P.M. Holiday Recess Begins	24 Library Closed Annual Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols 5 and 8 P.M. North Cornwall Meeting House	25 CHRISTMAS DAY 
26 KWANZAA BEGINS  Boxing Day Reading by Tom Walker 4:30 P.M. N. Cornwall Meeting House †	27 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	28	29	30	31	NOTE: JANUARY 1: Pancake Breakfast 9 A.M.-1 P.M. UCC† Library Closed Cornwall Taxes Due

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

What was the gym used for? Mainly for class plays and school assemblies. These always began with enthusiastic singing of the school song (long forgotten), accompanied by a teacher at a loud upright piano (long gone). The stage curtain was in place and worked fine, but the back of the stage had been left unfinished—just two-by-fours and unpainted boards. Every December students tacked chicken wire to the wood, then went across the road to cut small hemlock boughs, which were woven into the wire. At last came that special day when the curtains opened on a solid backdrop of velvety green, broken only by 14 huge letters: MERRY CHRISTMAS. The room smelled like heaven.

Today we have by-the-book fire marshals, and we put higher value on inclusiveness. Progress is progress, and who's to complain? But the past as it happened was not always all that bad.

—Bob Potter



Voters Turn Out Big

Election day was busy in Cornwall; 798 persons voted on machines and 154 absentee ballots came in. This was 91 percent of registered voters, a participation rate high even for Cornwall. In addition, 14 special provisional ballots were cast. Another sign of the high level of interest was 25 first-time voters, mostly 18- or 19-year-olds, but also including two newly naturalized citizens.

Cornwall's vote for president went more than 2-to-1 for Senator John F. Kerry over President George W. Bush (625 to 296). Ralph Nader got 13 votes and other minor party candidates an additional 10 votes.

U.S. Senator Chris Dodd received 590 Cornwall votes to Jack Orchulli's 250. Theresa Gerratana edged out Congresswoman Nancy Johnson, 437 to 417. (Cornwall was the only Northwest Corner town to defeat Johnson.)

State Senator Andrew Roraback, who faced no major party opposition, got 598 votes, while State Representative Roberta Willis overcame Michael Lynch, 605 to 264.

—Hanna Grossman

Cats and Fishers

In recent months, Cornwall cat owners, bemoaning the disappearance of their pets, have blamed their loss on the reintroduction

into the area of the once-rare fisher. For more than 100 years, these small weasel-like mammals had been gone from the Northwest Corner because of loss of habitat and excessive trapping. In the years since they were reintroduced in 1989, they have thrived and now can be found in forests all along the Connecticut/Massachusetts border. Recently, Cornwall resident Carl Hermann picked up a young fisher that had been hit by a car on Furnace Brook Road.

Fishers are relatively small animals. Females are roughly six to eight pounds, while males reach nine to 14 pounds at most—which brings me to the point of this article. "Yes," says fisher expert Peter Faccio from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, "some fishers are capable of killing house cats, but cats are relatively sparse prey compared to the much more abundant birds, squirrels, rabbits, frogs, snakes, chipmunks, deer mice, and meadow voles."

Fishers are opportunistic hunters that primarily locate prey by zig-zagging through likely spots, especially areas of thick cover such as brush piles or stands of saplings and conifers. They are constantly on the move between these patches of prey habitat within their territory whose location they apparently remember and visit regularly. "The only time they seem to stalk prey is when they find a porcupine in a vulnerable spot," says Mr. Faccio. "If a fisher does kill a house cat, it cannot carry it away, let alone drag it very far."

So who or what are the most likely culprits of house cat disappearances? In order of frequency, the list is (1) the ubiquitous automobile; (2) coyotes, which are bigger, stronger, probably smarter and more widely distributed than fishers (State Biologist Paul Rego says some are now hunting in pairs); and (3) fishers.

Keep in mind that fishers and coyotes are primarily active at night. If your cat is outdoors at night, the chances of it entering the food chain increase dramatically—alas.

—Carla Bigelow

A Gallery for Local Artists

After the lamented closing of Cheryl Evans' Cornwall Arts Collection, the town didn't have a gallery focusing on Cornwall artists. But now The Outsiders Gallery, a showcase for local painters and sculptors as well as for modern folk art from all over, has opened in Cornwall Bridge.

Kelly Gingras, the owner, started a dozen years ago as a collector of contemporary folk art, which is often called outsider art. In the late 1990s she opened a small museum in Litchfield to show some of the outsider artists she admired. Soon she was selling as well as exhibiting their paintings. And then she found herself interested in local artists who weren't outsiders but had what she saw as a fresh vision.

Alas, she didn't find Litchfield a very nourishing place for art, so she closed the gallery and this summer reopened it in Cornwall Bridge just where Route 45 turns off

from Route 7.

There aren't many folk artists in the Northwest Corner—they mostly live in the South—but she is open to other local artists as long as they have a refreshing way of looking at things. As Kelly puts it, the artists she's attracted to may be trained, but they try to remain raw.

You can see what she means in her current show. The artists range from Robert Parker and Marc Simont to 16-year-old photographer and hat-maker Lucia Martin. (Possible Conflict of Interest Alert! Both my wife Phyllis Nauts and I have works in this show.)

—Hendon Chubb

Welcome

Haley Rose to Theresa and Kenneth Considine
Autumn Elizabeth to Carrie-Ann and Jason Beeman

Good-Bye to A Friend

David Young

Land Transfers

Alicia Eaton and Cornwall Housing Corp. to Frances Mary Nickeson, buildings and improvements only at 5 Wright Hill Road for \$110,000.

Fire and Cinders

At the selectmen's meeting on November 1, two new civic milestones were discussed.

First, the half-mile long cinder walking track at the Foote Fields recreation site is done and ready for use. The cinders are really made of rock dust.

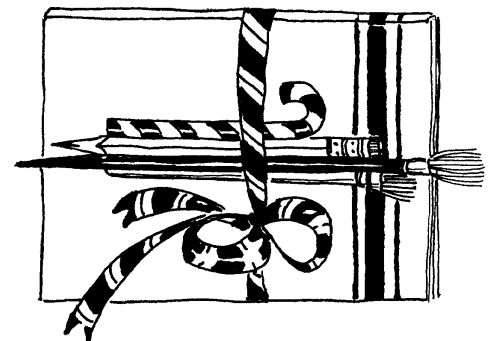
Second, progress is being made on helping reduce fire insurance rates for businesses and residents in West Cornwall. A "fire hydrant" will be installed by next spring near the covered bridge. It will include a sizeable pipe extended into the Housatonic River. The Fire Department will be able to extend their hose into the pipe and draw out ample supplies of river water. Inland Wetlands has approved the installation.

—David A. Grossman

Recording Cornwall's History

Aunt Millie's coming to visit. Where on earth did you put that awful vase she gave you for your anniversary? Well, your house may be cluttered, but it's nothing compared to the problem faced by the Cornwall Historical Society. Over the years, they have collected literally thousands of items of historical value, and it's hard to be certain where—or even what—some of them are.

The Society's answer to this conundrum is to conduct a complete inventory of its collec-



tions. It is expected to take several years, says Jodi Polsgrove, who has been retained as a consulting curator to lead the process. She will be assisted by CHS board members and other volunteers. On November 12, nine of them gathered around a table in the living room of the CHS headquarters on Pine Street in Cornwall Village for their first training session.

Jodi, who has two master's degrees, including one in History Museum Studies, Cooperstown Graduate Program, explained that their task was to go "wall to wall, and find everything." Each item will be tagged and numbered, its dimensions and other characteristics will be recorded on a standard work sheet, and then it will be photographed. Both paper work-sheets and a computer record of the Society's pieces of furniture and objects ranging from muskets to paintings, books, and photographs, will be created.

This will not be the first time Cornwall's historical material has been recorded. Jodi showed the volunteers a dusty notebook hand-written by Reverend Edward C. Starr about a century ago. And it may not be the last time, either, but the plan is to create a process by which all future acquisitions can be recorded as they come in.

Perhaps you gave Aunt Millie's vase to the Historical Society. One of these days they'll know for sure. —David A. Grossman

Gifts of the Season

As winter begins, a thousand residents of Litchfield County are seeking both shelter and food. Others, on low incomes but with roofs over their heads, face a struggle to heat their homes with oil priced at \$2 per gallon.

If you are a Cornwall neighbor in need, and you heat your home with wood, a phone call to Jill Gibbons, Cornwall Social Services (672-2603), will put you in contact with donors of seasoned wood and others willing to deliver it, all at no cost.

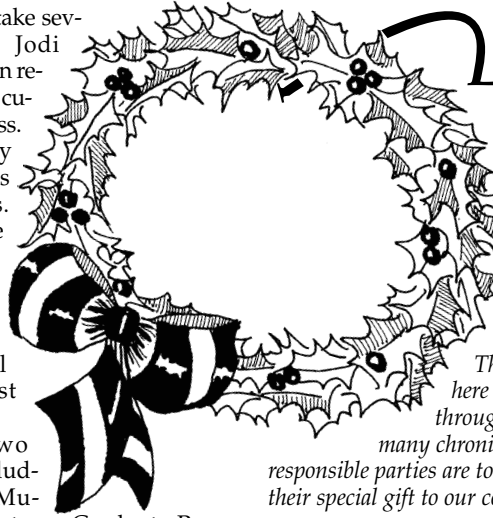
There is another important recent addition to the local social safety net. Significant help is available to pay for medical prescriptions (including co-pays). This can also be arranged through Jill's office. Ask her about The Foundation for Community Health Fund.

For those who are able to give help, here are some local organizations to which you can contribute with confidence:

FUEL: Northwest Corner Fuel Bank, P.O. Box 385, Sharon, CT 06069.

FOOD: Cornwall Food Pantry and Fuel Fund, c/o Jill Gibbons, Social Services, P.O. Box 205, Cornwall, CT 06753.

RENT: Clifton Read Rental Assistance Fund, Cornwall Housing Corporation, c/o Jerry Blakey, P.O. Box 174, Cornwall, CT 06753.



Letters to the Chronicle

CORNWALL COMPANION

I urge all Cornwallians to buy a copy of A Cornwall Companion. It is good to have all of our unique recent history recorded in one place.

The rich texture of life here bounces off the pages through the reflections of the many chroniclers in our midst. The responsible parties are to be congratulated for their special gift to our community.

—Gordon M. Ridgway

HALLOWEEN IN THE VILLAGE

Halloween numbers have been rising annually. The weather was mild and trick-or-treaters were out en-masse. I counted 127 children who came to my house in Cornwall Village in a two-hour period. Most were polite and thanked me, sometimes at parents' prodding, for which I thank you parents!

I appreciate that there was no property damage, little litter, and lots of fun. The next day I enjoyed the trees festooned with disposable prayer flags. The most clever costume was a cardboard car carried on a boy's shoulders, his eyes peering through the windshield and with flashlights for headlights. Please, can we make more creative outfits next year? A "Jack-in-the-box" and a Crayola crayon are still in my attic, and I remember a Cheney son was a walking book years ago!

—Ben Gray

IN THE AFTERMATH

If the political pundits are right, the Bush Administration prevailed November 2 on the basis of its appeal to our "moral values." And since Cornwall voted 2:1 against Bush, this theory presents a disturbing possibility we probably don't want to get into.

But, wait a minute. Whose moral values are we talking about? Those who see gay marriage as a threat to the institution of conventional families? Or those who view the interfering of government in the love between two members of the same sex as an unconscionable intrusion? Those who look at war as a curse on mankind? Or those who view pre-emptive "shock and awe" as legitimate and noble?

The morality of statecraft comes in so many different shades as to be indescribable and its

MONEY: The Johnson Fund, c/o Thalia Scoville, 256 Town Street, West Cornwall, CT 06796 or The Deacon's Fund of the UCC, 8 Bolton Hill Road, Cornwall CT 06753.

Other places to give to or which give aid include: OWL's Kitchen, c/o Joan Groves (435-4929), The Chore Service, P.O. Box 385, Sharon, CT 06069, or (my personal favorite) The Community Soup Kitchen, 220 Prospect Street, Torrington, CT 06790. —Earl Brecher

attempted measurement meaningless. No wonder the pollsters were consistently wrong.

In my opinion, the Bush victory over Kerry is far better explained as a victory of certitude over vagueness. Right or wrong, Bush was decisive on such issues as committing our troops and resources overseas, tax cuts, and education; whereas Kerry's caveats on these same issues were complex and confusing. Bush's core message was "Stand with me." Simple. Understandable. Kerry appealed to the disenchanting but failed to advance enough of a core message to sway the undecided. "Help is on the way" just didn't cut it.

We may be politically fractured on our definition of a good many "moral values" here in Cornwall, but one we hold in common is our moral duty to think independently and back up our convictions at the polling booth. Our 91% turnout November 2 attests to our togetherness on this one.

—Scoville D. Soule

FAMILY VALUES

As an objective reader, I just wanted to offer my congratulations to all involved in the creation and production of A Cornwall Companion. As I read it, I am happily reminded of the events that triggered the articles and letters, the friends and relatives who wrote the articles, and even at times, what I was up to when I first read the articles themselves in the Chronicle.

Several things appeared to be immoral in my family when I was growing up. Neither of these were gay marriage or a woman's right to choose. I gathered that it was immoral not to read before going to sleep and it was immoral not to open your window in your bedroom at night. A Cornwall Companion has helped me maintain my family values. Given that I have about two minutes of reading in me at night before falling asleep, I can usually complete at least two Chronicle selections. And as I read about colder winters and snow plow crews and storms, I don't feel so chilly.

—Susan Klaw

WALKING VALLEY ROAD

Valley Road from our house northward to the bend by the bridge over the brook is roughly the distance along the stretch of town houses on Rue Jacob. Paris in autumn can't compete with Cornwall. Parc Monceau and the Gardens of the Luxembourg pale in color by comparison. Walking Valley Road is one of the pleasures of living in Cornwall.

—Jack Bryant

The Big Black Bird

If you should be driving down Warren Hill Road (also known as Route 45) toward Cornwall Bridge and look to the right just as you get to Pritchard Road, you'll see a big black bird, a really great, great blue heron. The bird's presence is courtesy of sculptor Peter Busby, who says the big fellow doesn't plan to migrate south for at least the next few months.

—David A. Grossman

Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall: At the Cornwall Library, the current show of works by Kelly Gingras and Amelia de Neergaard will continue through December 4, as will the exhibit in the glass case of objects relating to the preparation of tea. Beginning December 7, the Library will feature the oils of Jane Bevans, while the case will display Debbie Jones' Christmas ornaments made over the last 25 years. There will be an artists' reception on Saturday, December 11 from 5 to 7 P.M.

At The Wish House, the show of silk kimonos by Carol Schneider and silver jewelry by Elizabeth Kaestner will continue through December.

At The Outsiders Gallery, the Holiday bazaar of works by 20 local artists will continue through December.

At the National Iron Bank, Karin Smith of Kent will be showing digitally enhanced photographs during the month of December.

New Gym Open House: Cornwall's newest community space will be open to visitors on Sunday, December 19, 1:30 P.M. at CCS. A hot shot contest will be held, so BYO basketball and join us for music and fun.

The Christmas Bird Count will be held on Sunday, December 19. Enjoy the winter landscape and count birds with Celia Senzer and Carla Bigelow. Call 672-6898 in advance or 489-1235 on the day for information as to meeting places. The area covered is from the Sharon side of the Housatonic to Cream Hill Road, Town Street and north just beyond Music Mountain Road. Anyone willing to do a feeder bird count, call Celia at 672-6898.

Easy Giving

If you would like to send anyone a gift subscription to the *Chronicle* (\$10 a year) or a copy of *A Cornwall Companion* (\$20, see insert), just send us the address and a check and we'll be glad to send a card announcing your gift.

The Community Christmas Pageant will take place at UCC on Saturday, December 18 at 7:30 P.M. The pageant, a long-standing Cornwall tradition complete with carols, readings, and a multitude of angels and shepherds of all faiths and ages, will be followed by refreshments in the Parish House. Snow date: December 19. All welcome. Call Charlotte Frost, 672-6323.

New Year's Breakfast at the UCC Parish House: Buttermilk pancakes with Cornwall maple syrup, sausage, cereal, milk, juice, and coffee will be served from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Donations once again will benefit the La Casa Project, which builds homes for the very poor in northern Mexico. Through the donations to this breakfast, and other generous contributions, 30 people built two houses this past June.

Social Services Table at the UCC Christmas Fair on December 4, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. People will be given the chance to volunteer and make donations. Many programs will be represented by fliers, and some will send representatives to answer questions. Call the church (672-6840) or check the Cornwall website for specific organizations and times that their representatives will be there.

Benefit at Baird's General Store: Unique holiday arrangements, swags, centerpieces and boxwood trees will be for sale on December 4, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M. Proceeds to benefit the Cornwall Child Center. Questions? Call Karolene Carlson 672-2205.

The American Girl Club will host a Cornwall film premiere of *Samantha: An American Girl Holiday* on Saturday, December 11, 12:30 to 2 P.M. Children and their dolls are invited to come and watch the film and enjoy refreshments. Sponsored by the Cornwall Free Library and Park and Rec.

Boxing Day Reading: Tom Walker will give his traditional Boxing Day reading (selections from *Stuart Little* this year) at the North Cornwall Meeting House. This candlelit event begins at 4:30 P.M. on December 26. Sponsored by the Friends of the Cornwall Library. Free, donations gratefully accepted.

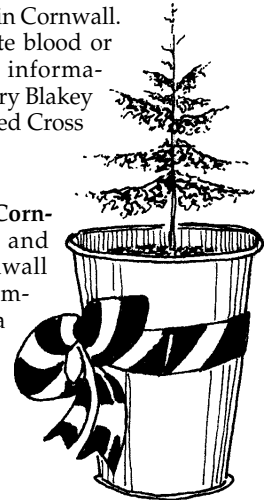
Food Drive: Cub Scout Pack 15 is collecting for the Cornwall Food Pantry. Donors may leave canned food and dry goods at the Selectmen's office. Call 672-4959 for details.

Winter Parking: The Board of Selectmen reminds all residents that vehicles should not be parked on town roads during snow storms. Plowing can be difficult enough without the distraction of parked cars.

Wednesday Night Hours at the Library: In order to serve Cornwall residents who want to come by after work, the Library will be open on Wednesdays 12 to 7 P.M. beginning January 5, 2005. Now, dads, take the opportunity to visit the Library with your kids—help them with homework, research a paper, search the Internet, find a great book to share. If anyone is interested in volunteering on Wednesdays between 5 and 7 P.M., please call Amy Cady at 672-6874. With several volunteers, you would only have to do one evening a month.

A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held on December 16 from 1:30 to 6:15 P.M. at the UCC Parish House. Walk-ins are welcome; however, to avoid a possible wait, please call to schedule a time. Allow one hour in all. Donors must be 17 years old, weigh at least 110, and be in good health. We need a good turnout (about 50) to ensure that a drive will continue in Cornwall. To register to donate blood or to request further information, call Pat and Jerry Blakey at 672-6516 or the Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE LIFE.

Classic Films for Cornwall Classics (60 and over). At the Cornwall Free Library, December 7, 2 P.M. Bring a friend. We have the goodies. Call Amy Cady, 672-6874.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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