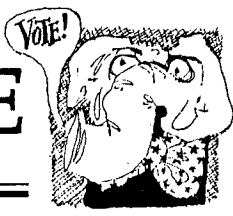




# CORNWALL CHRONICLE



VOLUME 1: NUMBER 10 NOVEMBER 1991

## Tussle on Town Street

A plan by the Cornwall Housing Corporation (CHC) to provide affordable housing near the north end of Town Street — one house on a one-and-a-half-acre site — has drawn sharp criticism from four neighboring landowners.

The protesters are Peggy and Ralph Brown, Tinka and Allan Denenberg, Susan and Eugene Flamm, and Vivian and Jeffrey Gordon. At a meeting with CHC directors, and in subsequent letters to CHC president Ken Keskinen, they argued that, among other things, the projected housing would impair the area's quiet rural atmosphere and depress property values. They also complained, as the Browns put it, that "at present, at least, the project does seem to be being imposed on the neighborhood against its will."

The Town Street site was part of the property of Joe and Ann Blumenthal, who expressed a wish before their death last year that it be made available to a family who could not otherwise afford to live in Cornwall. The Blumenthals, who also left approximately \$150,000 to the town for affordable housing, died before the transfer of the site could be effected. But Ella Clark, who bought the Blumenthal property, has

enthusiastically agreed to honor their wish.

Normal CHC procedure would be to offer a 99-year free leasehold on the property to an eligible person or family of moderate income — not more than about \$51,000 for a family of four. However, CHC is exploring the possibility of giving the site to Habitat for Humanity. Using volunteer labor and donated money and materials, Habitat would build a house on the property and turn it over, with a zero-interest mortgage, to a low-income family — the ceiling for a family of four would in this case be about \$21,000 — who would agree to contribute 400-500 hours of labor toward building the house.

Among the points made by one or more of the four neighboring landowners were these:

- That a less isolated site, nearer to stores and other facilities, would be more appropriate for a low-income family.
- That Planning and Zoning's decision in 1989 to permit affordable housing on suitable sites as small as one acre regardless of existing zoning restrictions was a bad mistake, undercutting the vested rights of property owners in 3- and 5-acre residential zones.
- That this change in zoning reg-

ulations opens the way to undesirable mass construction by unscrupulous developers.

In a letter to the landowners, Ken Keskinen, who was a close neighbor of the Blumenthals and is co-executor of their estate, said that while Town Street is "my neighborhood too," there is "a larger neighborhood of Cornwall that has come to be equally important to me."


The CHC will hold a public meeting at the Town Hall on Saturday, Nov. 9, at 10:30 a.m., to answer questions about the Town Street property — it is expected that a site plan will be ready by then — as well as about the CHC's overall program and general land-use issues. — *Spencer Klaw*

## Shame, Shame!

It is reported in the *Hartford Times* that 'hordes of men' were led up to the polls and a democratic majority of 73 was made Republican. This sounds a little odd to us, for if the census can be relied on, there isn't one fair sized horde in the whole town. Moreover, that this town ever had a real democratic majority remains to be proved. Bribery has so long controlled our local politics, that party principles are entirely ignored by a large number of voters, and promi-

(continued on page 2)

# NOVEMBER 1991

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY  | THURSDAY  | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY  |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Some copies of the newly distributed Cornwall Report are missing pages 3 and 4 and 69 and 70. Anyone with a defective copy can pick up a replacement at the Town Office.<br>Ice skating begins Nov. 11 (soft hat required) at Salisbury School indoor rink every Monday from 7pm to 8pm.<br>PUC hearing on Haystack Cable TV line extension. |   |  | LQ<br>28   | NM<br>6   | FQ<br>14   | FM<br>21  |  |
| 1  | 2<br>Dem's pot luck dessert 7:30pm<br>Cadwell's (p. 4)  | 3<br>Domestic violence lecture 11:15am<br>First Church (p. 4)<br>Repub. Election party 3-5pm<br>Cadwell's (p. 4) | 4<br>Park & Rec. 7:30pm Town Off.  | 5 ELECTION DAY<br>Nuclear-free Zone Comm. St. Peter's 7:30pm  | 6 11am & 6pm<br>N. Canaan Town Hall<br>Inland Wetlands 8pm Town Hall*<br>Tinka Denenberg paintings, Corn. Lib. | 7<br>Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall*<br>Preschool Health screening CCS (pg. 4) | 8  |
| 9<br>Cornwall Housing Corp. 10:30am<br>Town Hall (above)   | 10 Agricultural Advisory Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse<br>HVA Auction, viewing 2pm<br>auction 3:30pm<br>Litchfield Inn | 11 VETERANS' DAY<br>Ice Skating (see above)  | 12 Plan. & Zoning 7:30pm Town Hall<br>Dem. Town Comm. 7:30pm Firehouse<br>Hous. Riv. Comm. CCS Lib. 7:30pm | 13 Book fair.....<br>Rep. Town Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall<br>John Miller's documentary on Humphrey Bogart 7:30pm CCS Lib. | 14 Book fair.....<br>Fiber arts meet. 7pm Ingersoll's Town St. (p. 4)<br>Board of Ed. 4:00 pm CCS Lib.         | 15 PTO Book Fair CCS Nov. 13, 14 & 15   | 16<br>Firemen's Ball<br>Mohawk Ski Lodge 8pm-1am (pg. 4) |
| 17   | 18<br>HVRHS Bd. of Ed. HS Library 7:30 pm<br>Bd. of Selectmen 8pm Town Hall                                     | 19<br>Nuclear-free Zone Comm. St. Peter's 7:30pm   | 20   | 21<br>Bd. of Finance 8pm Town Hall<br>Mun. Bldg. Comm. 7:30pm Town Hall*  | 22   | 23  |  |
| 24   | 25<br>Z.B. of Appeals 7:30pm Town Hall*   | 26   | 27<br>Ecumenical serv. 7:30pm First Church (p. 4)  | 28 THANKSGIVING<br>               | 29   | 30  |  |

\*Check time at Town Office.

(continued from page 1)

ment democrats say that an unbiased vote would result in favor of the republicans. The statement that at the recent election votes were openly sold at auction may be true and may be false; It has been flatly contradicted. But the fact that many votes were openly sold is so notorious that a denial would be ridiculous.

- From the Cornwall Star, 1880

### Fees for Bulky Waste Disposal

At their meeting on October 21, the selectmen wrestled with how to dispose of bulky waste, things like shingles and mattresses that aren't covered by the town's regular waste-disposal contract. Although the actual cost can't be estimated yet, this disposal is going to be expensive. To help pay for it, the selectmen decided in a split vote, with Dick Dakin and Gordon Ridgway in favor and Steve Hedden opposing, to start charging for bulky waste brought to the town landfill (and shouldn't they come up with a new name, now that the landfill is closed?). Fee schedule, effective December 1, is: mattresses and box springs, \$5; small-pickup loads, \$10; large pickups, \$15; low-body trucks, \$20. — *Hendon Chubb*

### \$3.2 Million Plan OK'd

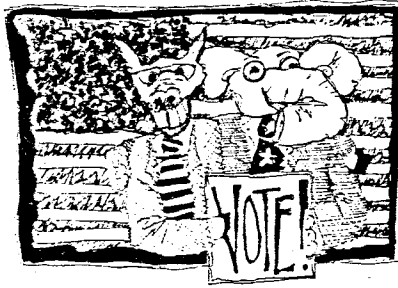
Cornwall could spend \$3.2 million in the next five years for roads, bridges, vehicles and a new town hall, according to a capital plan approved on Oct. 17 by the Board of Finance. The town's share would be \$2.4 million, the balance coming from the state.

The key word in the first paragraph is "could," because the actual expenditure would depend on a variety of factors, including approval by voters at the annual budget meetings. But board members said that they viewed the plan as a realistic projection, not just a wish list. It goes beyond state requirements in that it proposes where the revenues will come from.

The Board also approved the transfer of Blumenthal estate funds to the Cornwall Housing Corp. and discussed the auditor's financial statements, which show a general fund balance of \$846,000. — *Ed Ferman*

### ZBA Upholds P&Z — Almost

Reducing only the number of parking spaces around the proposed convenience store site, the ZBA on Oct. 7 voted 4 to 2 to allow this non-conforming usage of the Ingvertsen's Garage location. In doing so, they essentially denied the Cornwall Association's appeal of the Planning and Zoning Board's affirmative decision. Board alternate Lori Welles expressed the majority opinion in pointing out that there would be far more restrictions placed on any incoming convenience store than exist on the present garage and repair shop. She contended that comparing "Worst case scenarios", a convenience store would be less able to be objectionable than might a repair shop, with regard to noise, appearance and pollution.



The ZBA is authorized to overturn or amend a P&Z decision only when it finds such decision in error vis-a-vis the Cornwall Zoning Regulations. At issue in this case was whether a convenience store would be less non-conforming than the present garage is. (Zoning regulations stipulate that no change in a non-conforming land use can be made unless the new use is less non-conforming than the existing one.) The ZBA looked at the hours of operation, building alterations, and the intensity of use as well as the parking spaces — which they reduced from 24 to 14 — before making their determination. Board alternate Don Bardot likened the definition of a "less non-conforming use" to the definition of pornography: "no one can describe it to universal satisfaction, but everyone thinks he knows it when he sees it."

Alternate Nick Edler and Chairperson Norma Lake voted in the minority. Norma held that the hours of operation, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., were excessive and constituted a more non-conforming use. — *Scoville Soule*

### Town Meeting Buys 5-Year Plan

The Board of Finance and the selectmen faced the future at the annual town meeting on Oct. 25 and received unanimous support for their long-range recommendations. The necessary reconstruction of roads and bridges; Rumsey and Town Hall expenses; the Fire Dept.; town highway and ambulance vehicle replacement accounted for the bulk of anticipated expenditures. The five-year total cost to implement the plan — assuming the world stands still in every other way — would be \$3,213,000. State funding is figured in at \$743,000, and available town moneys on hand are \$1,090,000. Total taxes to make up the difference would be \$1,380,000 — an average yearly tax-rate increase of .5 mills.

The Five-Year Plan is the result of a full year's work primarily by Ralph Gold and Hendon Chubb of the Board of Finance and the three selectmen. It is to be reviewed and revised annually.

Other routine matters on the agenda were approved with little questioning and no dispute. The Rev. Peter Hammond moderated, which may account in part for this unusual equanimity. And a mathematical wizard in the rear of the room, Celia Senzer, brought the theoretical tax-rate increase down from 1.30 mills to .5 mills by pointing out a mistake in the Board of Finance's arithmetic — which also soothed the citizens.

— *Scoville Soule*

### Lions, Anyone?

As woods take over abandoned fields, wildlife has been returning to Cornwall. We have coyotes, turkeys, black bears — and now there is strong evidence that mountain lions are living in some of the town's wilder areas.

The first known sighting was three years ago when Mary Lee, who spends summer vacations here, was walking on a state-forest road behind Yelping Hill in the pouring rain. As she reports: "A mountain lion crossed the road about 100 feet away from me, just walking, not noticing me because of the rain. It was unmistakable; short, tawny hair, roundish ears, looking exactly like a small lion. I had no idea lions were in the area, so there was no question of my conjuring this up to fit my expectations."

The next summer, Gillian MacDonald saw a mountain lion in the same area, back of Yelping Hill. Hers was in the meadow behind her house, and she watched it from her terrace, transfixed, for a good five minutes. The animal at first was sitting, and then got up, revealing its long tail, and calmly walked across the meadow into the woods. Gillian's description is the same — a very large, tawny cat with a long, long tail.

Lisa Lansing, who lives on Dibble Hill, saw a mountain lion (or puma, or cougar — the names are interchangeable) this spring while looking out her kitchen window, and her description, too, is identical. Various Cornwall Bridge residents recall hearing an eerie night-time scream, typical of the lion, up in the woods behind town.

The Department of Environmental Protection reports that there has been no authenticated sighting of an eastern cougar, as the DEP calls it, in New England in 75 years. However, Douglas Radziewicz, the Environmental Education Specialist at the Sharon Audubon Center, says, "Personally, I believe mountain lions are surviving around here." He has had reports from Kent as well as Cornwall. The animal is extremely reclusive, he says, and not in the least aggressive toward people. What the DEP accepts as an authenticated sighting is a photograph, the plaster mold of a footprint, or a kill which has been carefully covered over by branches and twigs, which is the way a mountain lion hides food that it can't eat all at once.

Anyone else seen a mountain lion/cougar/puma? — *Barbara Klaw*



### Welcome

Nicholas Peter  
to Marie & Ralph Dzenutis

### Goodbye to a Friend

Lewis Cartwright

## The Hughes Memorial Library

The bronze tablet on the east wall of the main room is inscribed, "In memory of George and Mary Volmiller Hughes, and the happy days when they dwelt here. This building, for nearly a century the village school, was given by their son to the West Cornwall Library Association."

The main library room is small and homey. On the west wall are two large original paintings by Arlington Yutzler. On the opposite wall, the big old Housatonic railroad clock which hung for years in the station agent's office at the depot.

The pleasant room across the hall was used a great deal in earlier times. There were card parties, birthday and Halloween celebrations and club meetings. Many old books retired to this room. Zane Grey and Jack London and Horatio Alger books. Complete sets of Dickens and Ruskin. Now we have new bookcases installed for young people's books and for mysteries. And lots of books for sale. This is a sociable place. People feel free to come in and talk. Others join in. Problems of the town, state and nation are solved here!

More than a word of appreciation should go to Arlington and Myrtle Yutzler who for years carried on all the work that goes with running a library. They said it was their contribution to the community; likewise, Kenny Whitney, making bookcases and doing all the lawn work; and the Beckers, installing the lighting. Our present librarian, Peg Becker maintains it with fidelity, ever alert for what people want to read. If you didn't know us before, here we are!

— Doris Hart Cross  
Sat. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tues. 2 to 4:30 p.m.

## Sawmill Approved

After reviewing the comments from last month's hearing on Lawrence Stevens' application for a limited-use sawmill, P & Z members voted unanimously to approve the application as it complied with all requirements. Listed and limited by the detailed site plan are truck size, number of trips per week, equipment and accumulated amounts of slab and sawdust; also, buffered trees and the access driveway are described. The sound emitted by the saw mill will be measured again when it is located in its building to assure that the decibel level stays below the legal limit.

— Ginny Potter

## Wild Grapes - Great Jam

This was a remarkable year for wild grapes along our roads. By early October my neighbor, Anne Chamberlain, and I had put up an enormous amount of tartish grape jam with an un-Welch flavor not to be believed. I always keep an eye on local grape vines and most years we get from nothing to a few dried up, unhappy grapes. This year was different. Maybe it was the April rain or a very warm spring, but the fruit formed

early and you could see the bunches hanging out to ripen as Labor Day approached. Pritchard Road and Brick School House Road (Warren) provided us with more than enough fruit. We hardly touched the tiny (fox) grapes. The larger varieties were abundant and much easier to work with. We made jam using a food mill rather than the jelly route of slow dripping through cheese cloth. The abundant and delicious result of our efforts is nothing short of awesome so forgive us if we boast a bit over the winter.

— John Miller



## Cornwall Highlights

★ Sam Waterston stars in a new weekly television series about a small town family in the South in the 1950s as the civil rights movement gets into gear. Tuesdays at 8 p.m. on NBC. Rave reviews.

★ Joelle Sander has written *Before Their Time* about four generations of black women in one family all of whom became teenage mothers. A great-grandmother, grandmother, mother and daughter speak out. Published this month by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

★ Charles Van Doren is the author of *A History of Knowledge: Past, Present and Future*, published earlier this year by the Carol Publishing Group. The book is an account of the growth of human knowledge over 10,000 years and a forecast of future growth. A paperback edition of the book will be published next month by Ballantine.

★ Now available at Cornwall Library is the first edition of *Fiddlesticks*, an audio/literary magazine of poetry, fiction and commentary by Cornwall authors. Volume one contains a piece by Ken Keskinen about a plot to subvert baseball in Minnesota in 1934, and fiction of Earl Brecher that pokes fun at local government and the Torrington Area Health District. Contributions by Cornwall writers are solicited.

★ *Fighting Ships of the Revolution on Long Island Sound 1775-1783* by J. Lawrence Pool describes naval combat on the Sound and land battles when British and Tory ships crossed to Connecticut and patriot ships and whale boats engaged the British privateers. Plunder, and even hostages, were taken. An account of the burning of New London by Benedict Arnold.



## Letters to the Chronicle



### HOUSING IN PARADISE

The need for housing in Cornwall has led to fears in town of "turning our rural paradise into Fairfield County" (Oct. Chronicle). I do not seek a future modeled on the Gold Coast, but I realize the need for people to live and work here.

Cornwall does not remain a paradise by itself. Hard work is required to mow fields and lawns. A friendly form of government is maintained by the many volunteers who donate their time to attend board meetings and ambulance calls.

Yet during the 1980s home prices soared beyond the reach of many people this town relies on. Of my 1972 CCS class of 26, only three are living in town now despite the wishes of others to return. One answer to this problem is owner-built housing. There may be a few more homes to be built, but that may be part of insuring that paradise survives.

— Gordon Ridgway

### CHEERS FOR DICK DAKIN, ET AL.

Richard Dakin is deserving of re-election to the office of First Selectman in Cornwall. Dick has worked tirelessly for the past two terms to address Cornwall's problems, and will continue to do so. Dick's experience and desire to work for what is best for the town as a whole make him the best qualified candidate. Now more than ever, in these times of state economic trouble, Cornwall needs a full-time, dedicated First Selectman. Dick, Bill Hurlburt, Barbara Dakin, Klaus (Nick) Edler and the rest of the Republican slate of candidates in Cornwall are dedicated to providing solutions to Cornwall's ongoing needs in a cost-effective manner. They deserve your support.

— Charlie Yohe

### 100 ON 100?

Dick and Susan Frank asked the question in the October Chronicle "if someone donates 100 acres (to the Cornwall Housing Comm.) does that mean that theoretically there could be 100 houses built on 1-acre each?"

The answer, of course, is no, because there are zoning ordinances dealing with setbacks from property lines, from roads, plus wetlands and septic requirements.

The tone of the Franks' letter seems to suggest that the Cornwall Housing Comm. is going to ruin Cornwall. In fact it should allow younger people, teachers, artists, writers, and generally less well-off folks to live in the community. I like that.

— John Miller

### WEEKENDS FOR RELAXING

I am opposed to Mr. & Mrs. Frank's suggestion that we conduct important town business when it is convenient for weekenders to attend. After working all week, often with evening town board and committee meetings, I feel it only amiable that we leave weekends free so ALL may relax.

— Gary J. Heaney

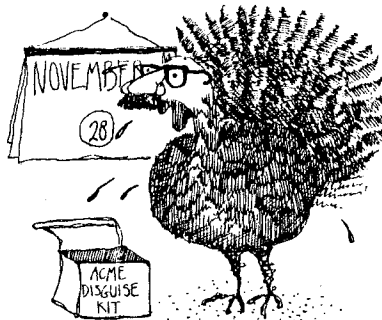
### Night Skiing? Yes! This Year? "Possibly"

On Oct. 10, the Department of Environmental protection finally gave its blessing to night skiing at Mohawk. The authorization specifically states that skiing is to remain Mohawk's overriding purpose and that any usage of the facility must be compatible with the rural, residential character of the community in which it is situated.

Referring to technical problems in installing lights, Carol Lugar, Mohawk president, said, "If we can pull it all together, we hope to have a grand opening ceremony of night skiing the weekend before Christmas." Regular skiing will begin at Thanksgiving as usual if weather permits, she added.

At the second information meeting on Oct. 4, which drew about 90 people to Town Hall, great sheafs of information about every issue disputed at the first night-skiing meeting were presented by Lugar and Peter Ebersol for Mohawk, and by various DEP officials. The salient facts that emerged are:

- 1) The ski area will be open until 10 p.m. six nights a week (not on Sundays).
- 2) No alcohol will be sold.
- 3) Eleven of the area's 23 trails will be lighted, covering about 75% of its skiable slopes. Lights will be low, sweeping across and down the trails, at about one twentieth the intensity of the lighting at an outdoor swimming pool.
- 4) Tickets will be sold for six different periods of the day, spreading out the times at which cars arrive and depart and ending the surge of traffic at 4 p.m., the present closing time.
- 5) Cafeteria hours will be extended for night skiers, but the type of food will remain the same — no fancy restaurant fare.
- 6) The septic system (described in numbing



detail) is more than adequate to take care of night skiers.

7) Mohawk now has room for 1,250 cars, and full capacity has seldom been needed. With staggered arrival and departures, parking is deemed no problem.

8) Noise will be reduced with the installation of new electrical snow-making equipment, which will also cut energy consumption by 80%.

9) Night skiing will provide 35 to 50 new jobs at Mohawk, which is already Cornwall's largest employer.

In a frank survey of Mohawk's financial position, Lugar explained that while Mohawk is the largest of Connecticut's five ski areas, it attracts the fewest skiers, and is the only one that doesn't have night skiing. Night skiing, she projects, will increase business by 35%, bringing in gross revenues of \$450,000 per ski season, which will yield about \$100,000 net after payments are deducted for long-term indebtedness.

Only two questioners still expressed reservations after the lengthy presentations and resident Gisela Lichtenberger ended the questions by saying, "Mohawk is a state park, a STATE park. We shouldn't be selfish."

Both selectmen said they now supported night skiing and felt that thrashing out the whole issue had generated better understanding between the DEP and the town.  
— Barbara Klaw

Mohawk Ski Lodge featuring a local band called Silverflame. (Oh for the days when bands had simple names like Spike Jones and His City Slickers). Well, anyway, we're told Silverflame provides a variety of music, which is more than you could say for Spike Jones. Ticket prices are \$20 per couple and additional tickets can be purchased at the door. This is a great event and the proceeds support the Fire Dept. and the Rescue Squad. ★

**Political Parties:** If you're watching your waistlines beware. The Cornwall Democrats are throwing a pre-election party for their candidates for first selectman and selectman, Gordon Ridgway and Dave Williamson, at Cadwell's Corner Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. Dessert, coffee and music provided. The Republican Town Committee is throwing a pre-election bash (coffee, cider & apple pie) for all voters also at Cadwell's on Sunday, Nov. 3, from 3 to 5 p.m. The local GOPers say "bring the kids. We'll have something special for them too." All this is fine but where can a hungry voter go for a free main course to balance all this pie and cake? ★

**Fiber Artists Hawk:** Diane Ingersoll (6442) and Carey McDonald (2777) are looking for people interested in forming a Cornwall Fiber Arts Guild.

That means all ye knitters, spinners, weavers and crocheters (at least)! There will be a meeting for those interested at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 14th at the Ingersoll house on Town Street. ★

**Domestic violence,** its forms and causes, will be the subject of a talk by Audrey Levine, program director of Women's Emergency Services of Sharon, at 11:15 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 3rd, at the United Church of Christ. ★

**Parents Take Note:** Pre-school testing for three- and four-year-olds will take place at Cornwall Consolidated on the first Thursdays of every month. The process is to assess the developmental level of each future student. Parents should call 672-6617 for an appointment. ★

### THANKSGIVING

And speaking of giving, if you've been planning to send a contribution, now would be a nice time. It's also a good time for us to thank all of you who



have supported the Chronicle.

### Events & Announcements

**Gather Together:** The annual ecumenical service of Cornwall's three churches will be held Thanksgiving Eve, Nov. 27th, at 7:30 p.m. at the United Church of Christ. The choir will be made up of the choirs from the three churches and all others who would like to sing. There will be one rehearsal at 6:30 p.m. on the evening of the service. For further information call 672-6133. ★

**Rejoice Ye Fox Trotters:** And now a secular note ... the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Dept. will hold its annual Firemen's Ball on Saturday, Nov. 16th, from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. at

THE CORNWALL CHRONICLE  
P.O. BOX 246, WEST CORNWALL, CT 06796

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