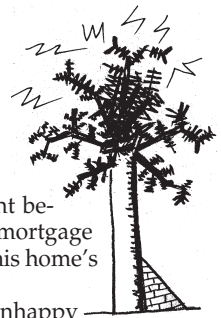


CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 17 : NUMBER 10 NOVEMBER 2007



Can You Hear Me Now?

Preliminary plans for an 80-foot cell tower on property owned by Matthew and Patricia Collins at 78 Popple Swamp Road were presented at a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen on October 10. Attorney Kenneth Baldwin, representing Verizon Wireless, explained that siting searches at this stage are based on need on main travel corridors in town—Routes 4, 7, 43, and 45—and that the Cornwall Bridge Firehouse is also under consideration.

Before a formal application is made to the Connecticut Siting Council (which makes the final decision), a visibility analysis will be done and engineering and construction experts will be consulted on accessibility. The Siting Council requires applicants to inform other providers of their plans so that towers may be shared. Sharing often requires a taller tower and a new application. First Selectman Gordon Ridgway asked about the possibility of using “repeaterized” antenna systems placed on existing telephone poles as an alternative to towers. Due to our area’s topography, Ridgway feels that the Popple Swamp siting is “just the beginning of the search by Verizon and other cell providers for locations for towers in town” and that public land should be an option.

The time between a formal application to

the Siting Council and, if granted, the completion of a tower is usually eight to 12 months.

Contacted after the meeting, Baldwin said, “We have no timetable for any Cornwall Siting Council applications. We are committed to working with the town to develop a network design that takes into consideration the town’s concerns and Verizon’s needs.”

According to Matt Collins, if built, the tower would use a parcel 75 feet square, plus a strip for an access road. He said: “In addition to the revenue from renting the parcel on this remote mountain top, I feel this is a desirable utility for Cornwall. It will provide a wide area of our town with the convenient and potentially lifesaving benefits of wireless telephones.”

Adjoining property owner Fred Thaler opposes the construction of the tower, which he says will be a “very visible structure that will alter the rural, scenic character of the Popple Swamp area.” And he questions whether advancing technology may make the tower obsolete in a few years, resulting in an abandoned eyesore on the ridgeline.

Verizon will be back with more information, and public hearings will be held for citizen input.

—Audrey Ferman

castle, now anxiously caught between the rock of a credit-mortgage crisis and the hard place of his home’s declining value.

Is Cornwall part of this unhappy national picture? So far the answer seems to be no.

A check with local lenders reveals that there are virtually no problems with foreclosures in Cornwall and the Northwest Corner, mainly because properties are holding their value and most lenders were conservative to begin with. But getting a new mortgage is somewhat more difficult. “Lenders have scaled back aggressive loan offers and require more of a down payment,” said Amy Raymond of the Salisbury Bank and Trust Co. “It’s crucial to maintain good credit quality.”

Construction in Cornwall continues at an active rate, and the number of new homes more than doubled from last year (from four to nine), despite a sharp increase in the costs of building. Building official Paul Prindle said, “Cornwall is a desirable town that follows its own drumbeat,” and he predicts continued but modest increases in new dwellings.

The real estate market in town is quiet, according to realtor Nicholas Bruehl, but the slump is much less severe here than nationally. “Volume is down and inventory up; there are over 30 houses on the market now

(continued on page 2)

NOVEMBER 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Vill. Mtng. Hse.; Men’s Adult Basketball, 7 P.M. CCS Gym Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 P.M. CCS Gym Wednesdays: Bend & Stretch Class, 9:30 A.M. UCC; Stretch Class, 5 P.M. Town Hall; Women’s Adult Basketball, 7:30 P.M. CCS; Tai Chi, 7 P.M. CCS Thursdays (Except Nov. 22): Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. St. Peter’s, call Debra Tyler 672-0229 to confirm Sundays: Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M. Debra Tyler 672-0229 for location				1 Enjoying Poetry TLC Class 10 A.M.–noon Library	2 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	3 Food Pantry Benefit Food Drive 9 A.M.–noon Baird’s Store †
4 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS Democratic Open House 4-6 P.M. W. C. Firehouse †	5 Park & Rec. 7 P.M. CCS Library Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 ELECTION DAY 6 A.M.–8 P.M. Town Hall Benefit Soup & Bread Lunch 11:30 A.M.–2 P.M. UCC Parish House † Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	7 Inland Wetlands 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	8 Enjoying Poetry TLC Class 10 A.M.–noon Library	9 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	10 Motherhouse Sausage Making Workshop 10:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M. UCC †
11 	12 VETERANS’ DAY OBSERVED CCS & Town Hall Closed Blood Pressure Screening Noon–1 P.M. UCC Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	13 Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library P&Z 7:30 P.M. Library	14	15 Deadline: December Chronicle Copy Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib. Bd. of Fin. 7:30 P.M. CCS Lib. VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	16 Iraq Moratorium † Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library	17 Deadline for Cornwall Views Photos to Library † Energy Fair 10 A.M.–4 P.M. CCS †
18 	19 CCS Early Dismissal 1 P.M. Parent Conferences	20 CCS Early Dismissal 1 P.M. Parent Conferences Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	21 CCS Early Dismissal 1 P.M. Thanksgiving	22 THANKSGIVING	23 Annual Talent Show 7:30 P.M. UCC †	24 Motherhouse Mother-Daughter Retreat 10 A.M.–3 P.M. † Book Signing for April Stevens 3-6 P.M. Wish House † Adam Van Doren Book Signing & Slides 4 P.M. Library †
25	26 ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall	27 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	28 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	29	30	Dec. 1 Christmas Fair 9:30 A.M.–2 P.M. UCC † Cornwall Captured 3-5 P.M. Library † Holiday Show 5-7 P.M. iO Gallery †

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

versus about a dozen a year or so ago. There's a disconnect between the buyer, who reads about declining prices, and the seller, who is stuck on past values."

Bruehl said that 80 percent of sales in town are to weekenders, leading to an expansion in Cornwall's already large second-home community. So far there is little of the overbuilding or flipping one sees in other second-home areas like the coasts of New Jersey and Florida. The closest thing to a spec subdivision is the building of three \$1 million-plus homes on Todd Hill Road.

Despite the fact that there has been little drop in prices, several expensive properties have sold recently, including two historic homes in the Village: the former MacLean house next to the Village Green for \$800,000, and the Calhoun house—beautifully renovated and returned to a private residence for the first time since the 1950s—for \$1,350,000.

In fact, the largest sale so far this year in all of Litchfield County was in Cornwall: Push-'Em-Up Farms on River Road sold for \$4.8 million; the property has 300 acres and a 5,700 square foot farmhouse.

One glum note is that the market has not provided any relief for the affordable housing problem, which is mitigated somewhat by the programs of the Cornwall Housing Corporation.

Will Cornwall remain insulated from the severe national recession? The near future of the housing market is unknowable, but it's been said that residential real estate is like an ocean liner, very slow to turn. If this is true, we could eventually be pulled into its wake.

—Ed Ferman



Election Update

Two new developments will affect the ballot at the November 6 town election. First, Richard Griggs has registered with the Secretary of the State as a write-in candidate for the office of selectman. Griggs was asked his motivation to try again, after being defeated by Richard Bramley 102 to 34 in a Democratic primary in September. He said he was "encouraged" by non-Democratic voters to continue, and was "curious" to see what happens.

Second, Lynn Cheney, the Democratic nominee for what was the only contested office, tax collector, has withdrawn from the race. Harriette Dorsen, chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, confirmed that Democrats have now endorsed Republican Jean Bouteiller, and said, "We're delighted to endorse Jean, who has excellent qualifications for the job." As for Jean, she says she "looks forward to serving the town, and wants to thank Helen Migliacci for her many years of service."

Both parties have also endorsed Gordon Ridgway, First Selectman, Vera Dinneen,

Town Clerk, and John Green, Treasurer. K. C. Baird is the Republican nominee for selectman, and Richard Bramley the Democratic nominee. Polls are open Tuesday, November 6, from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. at the Town Hall.

—Cheryl Evans



Cattails

At the corner of Rattlesnake Road and Cream Hill Road lies a sweep of open water, surrounded by reedy marshland. Historically, this kind of place had a bad reputation: bogs, swamps, and marshes are breeding grounds for mosquitoes, as everyone knows, and everyone hates mosquitoes. Bogs offer a kind of irritating passive resistance, too shallow to swim, too deep to walk. Difficult to navigate, they're murky and secretive, full of darting creatures, thick reedy foliage, fine clouds of mud. We've never liked them.

For a thousand years, marshes were routinely drained to eliminate mosquitoes and create arable land. Recently, though, we've learned their value in the natural hydrology system: bogs are loamy sinks that let water seep deep into the aquifers on which we depend. Now we're more tolerant. And now we know they're good, we can see that they're beautiful. Tall standing grasses edging quiet, dreaming water, a wide sheet of sky: still water has its own appeal.

Something that has always liked bogs is the cattail, which grows with cheerful abandon along the water's edge beside Rattlesnake Road. The common cattail, *Typha latifolia*, is a handsome plant, with tall, flexible, sword-shaped leaves that bend casually away from the root. At the end of a stiff round stalk is a thick brown cigar-like club, surmounted by a bare spike. Cattails are monoecious, so each plant contains both male and female parts, and is self-pollinating. The plushy brown cigar is the female part of the flower; the bare spike, the male part. The male flower ripens early to an insignificant pair of stamens that quickly disappear, but the female part is robust and long-lasting, and gives the plant its common name.

Now, in the fall, the stalk is dry, and holding one is oddly satisfying. It feels like a scepter, the brown club a modest, solid weight. It's pleasant to wave it, as though it were a sparkler, inscribing its journey through the air.

Actually, it is a bit like a sparkler, dispersing pollinated seeds like tiny points of light. The lightest touch on that dry plush will make it yield a finely shredded white substance, like a pillow leaking down. Fine white filaments radiate from the tiny seeds, like a miniature starburst. Floating airily on the breeze, these will drift for miles. They'll settle anywhere, but what they need is bog land—quiet, shallow water, and sun.

Unlike the non-natives—purple loosestrife and phragmites—that threaten them, cattails offer habitat for lots of native creatures. They're a favorite of an-

other local favorite, the red-winged blackbird. Red-wings, with their handsome graphics (neat red, yellow, and orange bars at the top of the glossy black wings, like the insignia for an Italian racing club) arrive early, nesting in cattails when they can. Red-wings' cheerful buzzing whistle, their bold pale eyes and vivid sheen remind us each year that spring is back, and the landscape is waking up.

And, like the answer to another of the ingenious natural puzzles that surround us, it turns out that red-wings don't hate mosquitoes like everyone else. In fact, they love them. Boglands, cattails, red-wings, mosquitoes—there's no end to it. Can it be that everything is good?

—Roxana Robinson

Welcome

Shauna Ann Rodger to Stephanie Ann Johnson

Stella and Ruby Scott to

Whitney Old and Alexander Scott

James Hayden Bell to

Mary-Lee L. Clark-Bell and Terrance R. Bell

Good-Bye to a Friend

Edna N. Hedden

Land Transfers

Clifford K. Jones and Maureen L. Morrill to Faye Kling, 5 acres with all buildings and improvements thereon at 79 Todd Hill Road for \$1,300,000.

Cornwall Limited Liability Company to Carroll Dunham and Laurie Simmons, land and buildings thereon at 48 Jewell Street for \$1,350,000.

Vivian H. Ditisheim to David Aaron Dwy, 25 percent interest in property at 20 Jewell Street for \$13,625.

Next Time, Maybe

There are several intersections in Cornwall with four corners, but there is only one that we refer to as The Four Corners, where routes 4, 43 and 128 converge. And that is where the Berkshire Country Store sits on the southeast corner, its gas pumps long silenced and in need of replacement and its deli counter in need of business.

Last month, the Planning and Zoning Commission denied an application by the store's owners, Rick and Beth Cochran, to change their property to a general business zone.

The property is in a residential zone. The store is grandfathered, going back to a time before Cornwall had zoning. The Cochrans' plan was to expand their grocery operation, update their gas pumps and to build a home

for themselves on the five-acre property.

P&Z voted against but "without prejudice," meaning, come back to us with some revisions and maybe this time we'll change our vote.

P&Z member Pat Hare told the *Chronicle*, "We had no problem with the idea of what they are trying to do but their specific proposals were unacceptable." When asked how the wording could be changed, he said this was something he could only properly discuss with other members of P&Z.

Beth Cochran said she thought their revised proposal to change the zoning would be back before P&Z this month.

—John Miller



Not for the Meek of Appetite

For many, Thanksgiving brings to mind fallen leaves and football games, turkey, pumpkin pie, and gathering together for a dinner at which we all tend to eat far too much. But today's meal will surely pale compared with this wondrous Thanksgiving feast described in Cornwall author Chard Powers Smith's 1939 novel, *Artillery of Time*. Set in 1850, it describes three hours of glutony during which "jaws and stomachs labored on to the end." Haven't yet planned your menu? Be inspired!

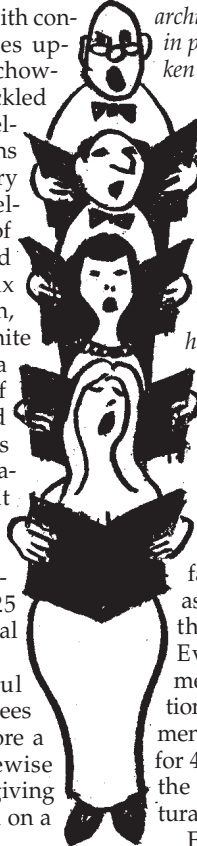
"By half-past two the cloth was spread over the table and laid for fourteen. Irish potatoes were mashed in cream and butter, turnips and Indian potatoes in butter alone; squash was scraped from the skin; onions were mixed with butter; and all stood steaming before the fire. Four meat pies were cooking in Dutch ovens. Gravies and four pots of coffee and tea were steaming on the stone shelves of the fireplace. On the table, two lofty pyramids of doughnuts and two of cookies; three loaves of rye bread and four pounds of butter; two castors with condiments; two large cranberry jellies up-turned and quivering; conserves, chowchow, piccalilli, mustard pickles, pickled cherries, brandied peaches, and relishes in colored glass dishes; gallons of milk, hard cider, sweet cider, cherry cider, blackberry, dandelion and elderberry wines, and heaped plates of hickory nuts, butter-nuts and dried berries. On the drain board sat six mince pies, and six apple, two lemon, a pound cake, marble cake and white fruit cake, a plain cheese, and half a sage cheese, and four decanters of cherry, peach, blackberry, and chokecherry cordials. The air was rich with turkey, goose, Indian potatoes, turnips, squash onions, meat pies, coffee and the intimation of pig and pumpkin pie escaping from the main oven. There were two venison pies, two rabbit pies, the 25 pound roast pig, and hot corn meal biscuits.

"Three hours later with awful grunts, all descended onto their knees in thanksgiving that 229 years before a band of starving Englishmen likewise had lifted up their hearts in thanksgiving that half their number had survived on a bleak and hostile shore."*

Do think about buying from Cornwall sources for your holiday: eggs, milk, ricotta cheese, plain yogurt and beef: Hautboy Hill Farm, 672-6869; produce: Ridgway Family Farm, 672-0279 and Stonewall Farm, 672-0261; organic turkeys: Baird's General Store, 672-6578 (order by November 16); homemade breads and pies: Berkshire Country Store, 672-3663; wines and liquors: Cornwall Package Store, 672-6645. Sorry, but they can't promise chokecherry cordials!

—Peggy Tagliarino

*This excerpt is a condensed version of the original.



Letters to the Chronicle

TO CORRECT CONFUSION

To correct any confusion caused by the error in the October 4 Lakeville Journal: The Cornwall Historical Society was offered for purchase the newly constructed building at the back of Railroad Square in West Cornwall—not Ian Ingersoll's historic showroom near the Covered Bridge as pictured.

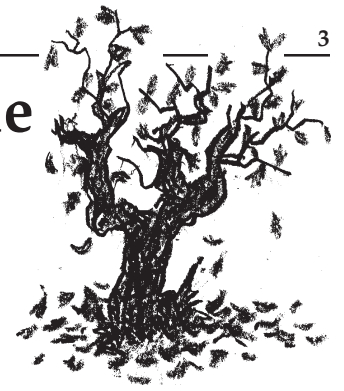
The CHS Board of Directors, acting as responsible stewards, inspected the new building, carefully weighed the options, and unanimously voted to confirm their commitment to CHS's historic Pine Street home. The reasons are many, including the proximity to Cornwall's Town Hall, Library, and Village Green, the size and visibility of the lot, potential for future expansion, easy parking, and the surety of the state grant which would not transfer to a different location. The Railroad Square building covers nearly its entire lot, has no potential to expand, and limited parking. The Society, engaged with its renovation project for almost two years, has architectural plans and two-thirds of funding in place, and has been encouraged by outspoken community support.

—Ginny Potter, President, CHS

SPECIAL ISSUE USEFUL

Having just read the "Volunteerism and Nonprofits" special issue of the Chronicle, I wanted to let you know how informative I found it and what a fine idea this special issue was.

In addition to learning about the history of volunteer activity in Cornwall and what is currently being done, I dis-



covered information about two organizations that I want to add to the list of those I support financially. I do hope that this issue convinces many readers to support all the worthwhile organizations that do so much for Cornwall.

—Sarah B. Jenny

HOW TO DOUBLE GIVING

Responding to your estimated charitable giving of \$450 per individual in Cornwall, here's another way to look at it. If the entire population of the town were at the official poverty level—\$9,350—and tithed, charitable giving would double!

—Christopher L. Webber

HIGHEST POINT IN CT

I thank Emilie Pryor and Dave Colbert for recommending a hike to Lookout Mountain in the September Chronicle. With my legs still sore, I can attest to the fact that the climb is, as reported, "very steep," and the views "spectacular." While the article states that the summit of Bear Mountain is "the highest point in Connecticut" (2,350 feet), that distinction in fact belongs to a spot on the south slope of Mt. Frissell (2,380 feet) whose summit is in Massachusetts.

—Andrew Roraback

Selectmen's News

Farm and Land Valuation: At its October 16 meeting, the Board of Selectmen discussed the issue of existing farm land and forest land values set by assessor Barbara Bigos. In September, the Agricultural Commission's 490 Evaluation Committee had recommended that the assessor reduce valuations and follow the Connecticut Department of Agriculture recommended values for 490 land, which would "help preserve the quality of our diminishing agricultural community."

For at least the last 25 years, forest land has been assessed at \$275/acre; the state recommends \$190. About 5,500 of our approximately 15,500 acres of forest land belong to the state, and assessor Barbara Bigos is reluctant to decrease the value because it would decrease our reimbursement from the state.

Cornwall's approximately 2,500 acres of farm land are all valued at \$600/acre, an approximate average of eight values recommended by the state.

Bigos reported that more and more assessors are using the flat rate, and she believes it is simpler and more equitable.

The selectmen can make recommendations to the assessor, but the assessor sets land values, "taking into account the tax structure for the entire town," and in Bigos' opinion, her 490 values are fair.

Steap IV: Businesses will be the beneficiaries of a \$200,000 STEAP grant the town is applying for, our fourth to date. If approved, the money will be used for improvements to building facades, signage, and traffic control in our commercial areas. The selectmen, in cooperation with business owners, will decide on the distribution of the funds. The grant was discussed at the special BOS meeting with the West Cornwall business community on October 1.

Energy: A \$5,000 grant for energy education has been received from the Clean Energy Fund as a result of town participation in the "20 Percent by 2010 Clean Energy Campaign." One program funded from this grant is the Energy Day Fair on November 17. All paperwork has been completed for the receipt of another grant for a solar panel installation at CCS. Minutes and activities of the Energy Task Force will soon be posted on the Cornwall website.

—Audrey Ferman

CORRECTION: The colorful bear outside the Wish House was painted by Bianca Griggs, not Manda Gropings as we mistakenly had it. It was sponsored by Bianca's mother, and dedicated to Bianca's father. It will remain an element of the Cornwall landscape since Bianca, exercising the prerogative of the artists in the Bear project, has purchased the statue herself.

Events & Announcements

Art in Cornwall: The Cornwall Library will continue to show Lynn Fowler's landscapes and Israel Fitch's exhibit of ironwork through November 24.

The Library will host *Cornwall Captured*, a show of photographs of special places in Cornwall sponsored by the Planning & Zoning Commission. The show is open to all photographers of Cornwall; deadline for entries is November 17. Contact Gail Jacobson at 672-6639 or gailjacobson@mindspring.com for more information. Opening reception is Saturday, December 1, from 3 to 5 P.M.

At the iO Gallery (formerly the Insiders/Outsiders Gallery), the group show including local artists Amy Buck, Jake Bell, and Peter Seltzer, continues through November. A holiday show featuring small works of art and crafts will open December 1, with a reception from 5 to 7 P.M.

A Food Drive for the Food Pantry will take place Saturday, November 3, 9 A.M. to noon at Baird's General Store to celebrate Quinn Hedden's second birthday. Donations of non-perishable items such as soups, canned fish, pasta, sauces, and cereals are needed. Call Erin at 672-2917 if you need pick-up. Drop offs may also be made at Reilly's Egg Stand on Rt. 125.

Like Clockwork

Every month the *Chronicle* comes like clockwork to your mailbox whether you live on Town Street in Cornwall or Timbuktu. Consider: Every *Chronicle* issue costs double what it did three years ago because of production and mailing costs. The source of revenue is you. Please send a check today with the coupon below. Thank you!

Democratic Town Committee Open House: Sunday, November 4, 4 to 6 P.M., West Cornwall Firehouse. Meet and talk with the Democratic candidates for town offices and special guest State Representative Roberta Willis.

Election Day Soup-and-Bread Lunch: 11:30 A.M. to 2 P.M., UCC Parish House. Proceeds go to the Cornwall Food Pantry.

Iraq Moratorium: On the third Friday of every month, peace activists nationwide are hosting local events in support of ending the war in Iraq. For information on Cornwall's November 16 event, call 672-0183 or 672-6089, or visit IraqMoratorium.org.

Energy Fair: Saturday, November 17, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. at CCS, sponsored by the Cornwall Energy Task Force and the Cornwall Association. Panel discussion, exhibits, films, activities for children, and a house tour of four energy efficient homes (see insert).

Temporary Trail

Closure: A section of Mohawk Trail, from the entrance at Dark Entry Road to the Cornwall Village trailhead is closed through sunrise Monday, November 5. For trail information call 860-346-2372 or info@ctwoodlands.org.

The 10th Annual Talent Show, sponsored by the Cornwall Library, will take place on Friday, November 23, at 7:30 P.M. at UCC. The show will feature new performers as well as a few old favorites. Robert Clohessy and Laura Kirk will M.C. See the insert or call the Library: 672-6874.

A Christmas Fair, Saturday, December 1, from 9:30 A.M. to 2 P.M. at UCC, will feature local artists, live music, an apple pie-baking contest, and a raffle for gift baskets, along with evergreen wreaths, children's crafts, a soup and sandwich lunch, and holiday foods. To enter pie-baking contest: Pat Blakey, 672-6516. To reserve wreaths: Nita Colgate at 672-6797.

A Book Signing Party for April Stevens' new children's book, *Waking Up Wendell*, will be held on Saturday, November 24, 3 to 6 P.M. at the Wish House. Refreshments.

Adam Van Doren Book Signing: Saturday, November 24, 4 P.M. at the Library. The author will give an informal talk about his book, *ADAM VAN DOREN*, a monograph of his architectural watercolors, and also show slides of images from the book. Some original drawings will be on display. Copies of the book will be available for purchase/signing, with a percentage of the sales benefiting the Library.

Motherhouse Activities: Sausage-making workshop, Saturday, November 10, 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., UCC Parish House. \$35 per family.

Mother-daughter retreat, Saturday, November 24, 10 A.M. to 3 P.M., \$35 per pair. Pre-registration required for both activities; call Debra Tyler, 672-0229.

Farmers Market will continue in West Cornwall on Saturdays 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. until a hard frost.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

NOVEMBER ISSUE

Marc Simont, Illustrations
Audrey and Ed Ferman, and Peggy Tagliarino, Editors

DECEMBER ISSUE

Lisa Simont and Lynn Cheney, Editors
lisalansing@optonline.net

MANAGING EDITOR Tom Bechtle

CALENDAR EDITOR Anne Baren

CIRCULATION Nan and John Bevans,
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