How We Voted

Eighty-three percent of Cornwall’s registered voters cast ballots on November 6. It was the second-highest percentage in the state (Norfolk edged us with 84 percent), and our turnout was not far off the 953 from the 2016 election. The 875 participants supported the Democratic candidates at an almost two-to-one margin over the Republicans.

Jahana Hayes, who became the first woman of color to represent Connecticut in Congress, received the most votes of any candidate, with 658 (75 percent of all ballots, second only to Salisbury where Hayes received 79 percent). Re-elected Sen. Chris Murphy received 73 percent of the votes in Cornwall (he received 47 percent in Litchfield County).

Gov. Ned Lamont had a narrow victory, but received strong support in Cornwall with 65 percent of the local vote (37.4 percent in Litchfield County). State Rep. Maria Horn was elected to the 64th District after a recount on Friday, November 16 (amended returns from Norfolk and North Canaan brought her vote margin to 51, prompting the recount). Horn gained nine votes in the recount (one in Cornwall).

The rest of the winning Democrats received similar tallies in town: Secretary of State Denise Merrill received 55.1 percent of the votes, Treasurer Shawn Wooden received 54 percent. Comptroller Kevin Lembo received 53.7 percent, and Attorney General William Tong received 51.7 percent.

Incumbent Republican Craig Miner was re-elected to the state Senate with 54 percent of the overall vote, but Democrat David Lawson received 64 percent of the vote here in Cornwall.

Our registrars of voters were also on the ballot, with 955 votes cast for Jayne Ridgway and 237 for Cara Weigold.

Both ballot questions, regarding disclosure of the sale or transfer of public lands and the ensuring of transportation funds be used only for transportation purposes, received overwhelming yeses, with 79.5 percent of the vote here in Cornwall and 88 percent statewide.

The following are the results, with Cornwall votes/percentages, compared with district/state percentages (in parentheses):

Governor: Ned Lamont/Susan Bysiewicz 565/64.6 (48.4); Bob Stefanowski/Joe Markley 265/30.3 (47.1); Oz Griebel/Monte E. Frank 33/3.8 (3.9)
U.S. Senator: Chris Murphy 642/73.4 (58.8); Matt Corey 217/24.8 (40.1)
U.S. Representative, 5th District: Jahana Hayes 658/75.2 (56); Manny Santos 204/23.3 (44)
State Senator, 30th District: David Lawson 559/63.9 (46); Craig Miner 288/32.9 (54)
State Representative, 64th District: Maria Horn 561/64 (50); Brian Ohler 304/34.7 (50)
Secretary of the State: Denise Merrill 593/67.8 (55.1); Susan Chapman 237/27.1 (43.2)
Treasurer: Shawn Wooden 573/65.5 (54); Thad Gray 271/31.4 (44.9)
Comptroller: Kevin Lembo 595/68 (53.7); Kurt Miller 234/26.7 (44.6)
Attorney General: William Tong 563/64.3 (51.7); Sue Hatfield 275/31.4 (47.2)

—Gregory Galloway

True Grit

Bill Dinneen, Cornwall’s agricultural commissioner, set the agenda for Cornwall Conservation Trust’s November 10th spirited discussion by six Cornwall farmers, “A Farmer’s Life, Challenges and Rewards.” Three of the panel were fortunate to have come from family farms, and three lucked...
out with supportive landlords. But all face the challenges and uncertainties of the profession: weather, animal health, and difficult economics.

Richie Dolan of Maple Hill Farm learned early that “If you have livestock, you have dead stock.” Roxann Roche, whose RD Farms is on Denny Frost’s land, confirmed this: “They get sick no matter what you do.” Bill Hurlbut told us, “It’s hard to peddle fresh meat.” And Debra Tyler faced early opposition to selling raw milk—not from farmers, but from the dairy industry, which burdened her with paperwork for literally pennies in fees.

But all were passionate about their pursuits. “The best time,” said Debra, “is when I wake up in the middle of the night and I have to go out through the sleet to help a cow calve.” “We do it for love of the land, for the joy of it. My cows,” said Mark Orth, “have the best view of Cornwall from Birdseye and Tanner Brooks Farm. They are always smiling.” Sara Casel, with her husband, Jeff, got hooked when they went to their farmers’ market in Brooklyn. “We wanted to figure out how to be on the other side of the table,” Sara said. They began a ten-year journey, interning at different farms every year, and are optimistic about starting their Calf and Clover Creamery on Chris Hopkins’ former farm.

All of the farmers talked about their compassion for animals (“I love how they care for each other,” said Roxann), their ability to make a difference, and, as Bart Jones of CCT put it, “Making sure we can feed people without destroying the environment.”

Selectman Gordon Ridgway’s message cited a few of the challenges all face: the stony fields, bugs, and disease, the fact that old people eat less, and that a farm worker usually earns only $12 an hour, while a mower of lawns earns $20.

The second panel, moderated by Sam Waterston, described public resources available for small farmers in Connecticut. The fact that there are many such organizations—that protect farms, link farmers with land, save land, create market strategies, help with business plans—attests to the difficulties that beset any endangered species. Questions abound: Can customers accustomed to the uniform supermarket products learn to make the slow ride for the sometimes imperfect peach? What is the relationship between conservation and agricultural use of land? How do we protect wildlife habitat? Will zoning allow for alternative uses such as breweries or cheese factories? (Karen Nelson of Planning and Zoning tells us, “They are trying to find a balance.”)

The average age of the American farmer is 67. But younger farmers at this forum, including two enthusiastic new families, gave us hope. We may not see the old agricultural school back, but it looks likely that we can keep the “corn” in Cornwall.

—Ella Clark

Telling Stories

The history of the Cornwall Library’s Boxing Day reading is a tale about how one afternoon of storytelling turned into a 20-year tradition.

In 1998 the library was fundraising for the new building. Someone came up with the idea of a family-friendly event for the afternoon after Christmas (also called Boxing Day). It seemed like a good time to schedule something: guests and out-of-town family are getting bored and boring, and children are itching for something new.

Tom Walker, who had grown up in town and gone on to a career in The Living Theater, seemed like a good bet for a reader. Tom chose Marc Simont’s Thirteen Clocks for the first reading on December 26, 1998.

“I felt Clocks was a family fable, to be told and retold,” Tom said. “The only alternative was Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, and I didn’t want to do that.”

Tom’s career with The Living Theater (aka The Living) began in 1971 when he traveled with the company to Brazil to perform one of its progressive plays. The subject matter irked the Brazilian government, which jailed them, as Tom says, “for being in the presence of marijuana.” A return trip to Brazil by The Living in 2017 brought out rapturous crowds (and no arrests).

Tom has spent long periods of time overseas—seven years in Italy, plus tours in Scandinavia and Germany. The Living’s brand of avant-garde theater has been well-received abroad, and over time, the group’s work in New York came to be regarded as an important part of American theater. Tom now is the archivist of The Living’s papers, artwork, and its history, which have found homes at Yale, Lincoln Center, and with a collector in Naples. Tom himself has become an eminence grise of avant-garde theater with gigs at La Mama and as a mentor to several groups of young actors establishing themselves in the downtown theater world.

Coming to Cornwall every Christmas to read at the North Cornwall Church has been a chance for something different for Tom. But there is a common thread to the tradition, he says. “All the readings I’ve chosen have this in common: they allow, for a period of reflection after the holiday.”

He tries for “upbeat and positive” selections. Over the years these have included Sholem Aleichem’s “Tevye the Dairyman” excerpts from The Wizard of Oz, The Willows, Winnie the Pooh, and The Little Prince—not all at the same time. The “Jabberwocky,” the “Hunting of the Snark,” and the Chronicles of Narnia have all made an appearance. So have Huck and Jim on their raft on the Mississippi and Ishmael and Queequeg and that whale in the Pacific.

This year Tom will read from W.G. Sebald’s The Rings of Saturn, about walking in the woods of northeast England. Come and listen on Wednesday, December 26, at 4 p.m. at the North Cornwall Meetinghouse.

—Lisa L. Simont

Carl Van Doren in Cornwall

(Editors’ note: Robin Foster is the author of the recently published Carl Van Doren: A Man of Ideas.)

Rumor has it that one day in 1914, 28-year-old Carl and his younger brother Mark headed north from New York City in search of a summer retreat, driving as far as they imagined anyone would possibly commute, and then drove 50 miles further. Arriving at Cornwall, Van Doren found a “cool green wilderness” where most of the farmland was owned by families who could trace their Cornwall lineages back 200 years. In 1915, Carl and his wife, Irita, settled into Threeways, the old parsonage located at the intersection of three roads and across from the North Cornwall Congregational Church. The house was a rustic dwelling with no heat save for the fireplace and no plumbing except for a pump in the kitchen.

Good-bye to A Friend

Peter Droz

Congratulations

Shelby R. Winn and Cody S. Aakjar
Rebecca J. Sawicki and Eric W. Wilczak

Land Transfers

Kevin Whitney, Administrator for the Estate of Lorraine P. Whitney to Katherine M. West and Phillip West, two parcels of land on River Road, for $78,000.

Sumner Ireland, Administrator for the Estate of Paulette L. Zabriskie, to Valerie Zabriskie, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 285 Cream Hill Road, for $285,000.

Sandra Lea Johnson Sandmeyer, Trustee and Ralph W. Sandmeyer, Jr. Trustee to Kathryn Sandmeyer Ward, land with improvements thereon at 36 Bolton Hill Road, for $85,000.

Sandra Lea Johnson Sandmeyer, Trustee and Ralph W. Sandmeyer, Jr. Trustee to Kathryn Sandmeyer Ward, land with improvements thereon at 366 Furnace Brook Road, for $300,000.

G.A.G.S., Inc to Bellum, LLC, land with buildings and improvements thereon at 103 Cemetery Hill Road, for $430,000.

Christopher Hopkins to Dirt Capital Partners 2018, LLC, two parcels of land with buildings and improvements thereon at 332 Kent Road, for $496,000.

Land Transfers

12/26/2018

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

DECEMBER 2018

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

DECEMBER 2018

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

DECEMBER 2018

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

DECEMBER 2018

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

DECEMBER 2018
Eight years later, the Van Dorens purchased a larger farmhouse on Cream Hill, called Wickwire after its former owners, which boasted several acres of fertile soil and a red cottage that Carl used as his study. The house was about a mile from Cream Hill Lake, where the couple enjoyed a daily swim and were delighted by the chirping frogs and abundant dragonflies. The agrarian landscape of Cornwall reminded Van Doren of his youth on the farm in Hope, Illinois (although the surplus of trees was new to the boy from the prairie), and the athletic build that had served Carl well on his high school football team was equally suited to the physical demands of country living. He built walls and fences, planted and harvested an annual vegetable garden, pruned trees or cut them down for firewood, dug ditches, cultivated hedges, and served as the home’s mason, carpenter, plasterer, and plumber. Maintaining Wickwire, which was built in 1800, provided a healthy balance to Van Doren’s more intellectual pursuits.

Van Doren wrote prolifically across the 1920s, ’30s, and ’40s for publications like The Nation, Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, the Saturday Review, and Good Housekeeping; was the author of many books of American and literary history (he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1939 for his biography of Ben Franklin); was a literary editor; gave lectures on issues of historical and cultural significance; and recorded radio broadcast promotional pieces for U.S. war bonds. He was, most simply, a man of ideas.

By 1920, a slew of literary critics and editors had followed the Van Dorens to Cornwall and turned the quiet New England hamlet into a literary retreat. In addition to Carl and Irita’s home on Cream Hill, Mark and Dorothy Van Doren had a farm at Cornwall Hollow, Lewis Gannett of the New York Herald Tribune was up the road on Cream Hill, Joseph Krutch of The Nation was in Cornwall center, and Henry S. Canby of the Saturday Review was nearby on Yelping Hill. Canby declared that during those years, Cornwall “taught the literary taste of all America.” These writers, critics, and poets flourished in an intellectual climate that was fueled by the nation’s literary capital of New York City, at the same time inspired and replenished by the hearty landscape of Cornwall.

—Robin Foster

**Letters to the Chronicle**

**MILITARY HOLIDAY GREETINGS**

If you know of someone in the military from the Goshen–Cornwall area who would like to receive a holiday greeting from the American Legion Auxiliary, please contact Suzette L. Barker (860-491-2422) or Jeanne Sage (860-309-7079).

—Lamson-O’Donnell Unit 46

**NEW EVENTS CALENDAR AND JOBS HUB**

The Town of Cornwall and Cornwall Economic Development Commission (CEDC) are participating in DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com, a regionally coordinated events, destinations, and jobs website. Launched in mid-November, it is a resource for residents and visitors to find out what’s happening and where to go in Cornwall and neighboring towns. We invite everyone to check out the site and discover something new!

Business owners and organizations are encouraged to submit their information and upcoming events; the site also links to the local Explore Cornwall page. Visit DiscoverLitchfieldHills.com/be-included to view a six-minute video on how to “submit your place.”

—Janet Carlson, Chair, CEDC

**Cornwall Wants You**

Chances are that when something is done around here, it’s done by volunteers. This is not to take anything away from our hardworking elected and employed officials; they too volunteer their time and talents above and beyond their required duties. But there’s a lot of heavy lifting by those who generously dedicate themselves to making our town better. From the more obvious things like the life-saving efforts of fire and emergency services (our volunteers responded to 278 calls this past year, including 163 medical emergencies and 23 calls to assist neighboring towns), to parades, picnics, planting flowers in public spaces, town-wide clean-ups, rummage sales, library activities, Christmas pageants, and other events, but also to the numerous associations, boards, committees, and other formal or informal meetings, blood drives, food drives, and countless anonymous acts of kindness and generosity that our neighbors contribute on a daily basis.

We are truly grateful for the efforts of all volunteers, but a better expression of our gratitude would be to lend a helping hand.

The Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department is looking to add members at all levels, including fire police (duties include directing traffic and training can be completed in a weekend), ambulance drivers (in-house training), and administrative help.

A number of town boards and commissions have vacancies, including the Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, Park and Recreation, and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Cornwall Association and Friends of the Library are also looking for new members.

The West Cornwall Water/Septic Study Group is looking to add as many as three new members.

The Food Pantry needs help with driving and shopping (and donations), and we’re sure we’re not even scratching the surface of the opportunities to pitch in and help your neighbors.

We are asking that in the days ahead you find time to help out, for an hour, an afternoon, or longer. Lend a hand at an event, join a committee, start a club. Whatever your interest or expertise—even old-fashioned elbow grease—there is a place for you. Please consult the town website (cornwallct.org) or the town report for what association, committee, group, etc. might interest you and who to contact.

—The Editors

**Cornwall Briefs**

- **Water/Septic Study Group:** The committee continues to meet and is now focused on finding alternate locations, financing options, detailing scope, and visiting sites in other towns in order to see how they’ve addressed similar wastewater issues using innovative systems. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, December 11, at 5 p.m. at town hall. The group is also looking for new members. Interested residents should contact Todd Piker (tpiker@gmail.com) before December 11 and provide a brief explanation for consideration. Members will be appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

- **Bridge Work:** While the covered bridge might have gotten all the attention, two town bridges—one at Smith Place and the one that connects town trucks to the gravel bank off Route 128 in West Cornwall—were also completed. Kudos to Roger Kane for supervising the work.

- **Election Day Lunch:** Pat and Jerry Blakey have been serving a selection of soups on Election Day since 2004, and this year nearly 100 voters sampled six different soups, including broccoli cheddar, chili (beef and vegetarian), Mulligatawny, and potato bacon. Donations produced $491 for the town’s Food & Fuel Bank.

- **Parking Notice:** Town Hall reminds all (continued on page 4)
not to park vehicles on the side of town roads now that the snow season has arrived. Your car or truck could get in the way of a plow, which could be very dangerous for your vehicle. And please don’t forget to have your street number visible at your driveway so the ambulance crew can locate you in the event of emergency.

— John Miller

Events & Announcements

Also: check our website and Facebook page for event reminders and Cornwall updates

Food and Fuel Needs: The Cornwall Food Pantry needs food and supplies. Drop off is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday to Wednesday at the basement of the UCC. If you need help with heat, contact Heather Dinneen at cornwallsocialservices@gmail.com or 672-2603. To support Cornwall families in need, please mail checks to Cornwall Food & Fuel Fund, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall CT 06753.

Annual Christmas Fair at UCC, Saturday, December 1, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Local holiday decorations, bake sale, luncheon, shopping, raffle, and holiday photos.

Cornwall Contra Dance: Saturday, December 1, at town hall. Dancing will begin at 7 p.m. All ages welcome; no partner necessary. Donations requested. For more information call Jane at 672-6101.

At the Cornwall Library

Duncan Hannah will read and discuss his memoir, Twentieth-Century Boy: Notebooks of the Seventies, on December 1 at 5 p.m.

Anne Hummel continues her course on diabetes self-care and management: Mondays through December 17, 10 a.m. to noon. Free. Register with the library (672-6874) or Anne (672-2325).

Civic Life Project Presentation: Hotchkiss students, working under the direction of Catherine Tatge, Dominique Lasseur, and other community members, will present their preliminary work on school enrollment issues on Thursday, December 6, at 7 p.m.

Don’t Stay A Scrooge!

Let the spirit of Chronicles Past inspire you to share generously with the Chronicle Present, ensuring a more perfect Chronicle Yet to Come. (For further directions, see insert.)

in the Gathering Room at CCS.

The Wish House: Holiday crafts workshop with elf Joe Brien of Lost Art Workshops; Sally Cook will be signing her series of How to Speak... books; and a photo opportunity with Santa Claus. Saturday, December 8, from noon to 3 p.m.

Senior Monthly Luncheon: Tuesday, December 11, noon at the UCC Parish House. Cost is $8/per person for a buffet lunch. RSVP to Jen Markow at 480-0600 or prcornwall@gmail.com.

Child Center Trivia Night: Team up with friends, test your IQ, and enjoy home-cooked BBQ at the Cornwall Inn on Wednesday, December 12, at 5:30 p.m. (snow date December 13). RSVP 672-6989.

Indoor Co-op Farmers’ Market: Saturday, December 15, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at town hall.

Souterrain Gallery: Book presentation and signing of The Connecticut 169 Club: An Epic Road Trip with Marty Podskoch. Saturday, December 15, at 3 p.m.

At Trinity Retreat: The Charlie Brown Christmas Jazz Quartet will perform on Saturday, December 15, in Community Hall. The event is free and light refreshments will be provided. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Pageant: Saturday, December 22, at 7:30 p.m. (snow date on Sunday, December 23, at 4 p.m.) at the UCC Village Meeting House. Traditional readings and carols, and the giving of “white gifts.” Please bring a toy wrapped in white paper to donate to children in need. Refreshments following the pageant in the Parish House. Those who want to be in the pageant MUST attend rehearsal at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, December 21. For more information call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services: 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. at North Cornwall Meeting House.

Boxing Day Reading: Wednesday, December 26, at 4 p.m. at the North Cornwall Meetinghouse. Tom Walker will read from The Rings of Saturn, W.G. Sebald’s innovative novel exploring memory, fate, and the beautiful effects of nature.

Art in Cornwall

“Visions of New England,” Mike Redmond’s landscapes and portraits show, continues through January 5.

The Toll House Gallery showcases paintings by Lennart Swede Ahstrom, landscape photographs by Ian Ingersoll, and newly added work by Dan Bracken.

“The Magic Corner Captured and Other Fantastic Imagery” at the Souterrain Gallery features photography by Lazlo Gyorsok, Joan Hinchman, and the Housatonic Camera Club through December.

New Year’s Day Pancake Breakfast will be held in the UCC Parish House, 9 a.m. to noon. Buttermilk pancakes, sausage, Cornwall maple syrup, orange juice, coffee, cocoa, and tea will be served. Donations will benefit the church outreach programs.