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2 SECTIONS

Sharks Prompt Swimming Advisory

by Alan Pollock

CHATHAM—The week-long series of shark programs on the Discovery Channel might have ended last Friday, but it's still Shark Week in Chatham.

On Tuesday, town officials issued an advisory banning swimming within 300 feet of seals on all east-facing beaches because of evidence that white sharks were hunting in the area. And last week, researchers tagged six great whites off Chatham.

The swimming restriction will remain in place until the predators move away from popular bathing beaches, or could be escalated to a full swimming ban if more sharks are seen in the area, Harbormaster Stuart Smith said Tuesday. The restriction does not apply to Nantucket Sound beaches.

The remains of seals attacked by sharks were recently found on Monomoy and on North Beach Island, Smith said.

"There's more shark activity, and they're closer in to the beach," he said. State researchers have also been keeping the town apprised of shark sightings in the same area last week.

"All that information added up to, it's best to take this action," Smith said. After consulting with Parks and Recreation Director Dan Tobin, Smith had the advisory issued late Tuesday afternoon.

"We've had no reports of sharks inside the harbor, or in the swimming area at Lighthouse Beach. "We've seen one

"There's more shark activity, and they're closer in to the beach."

STUART SMITH,
HARBORMASTER

or two in the no-swim area, however," the harbormaster said.

Though white sharks have been spotted farther away from the harbor entrance earlier this year, officials had not seen the need to restrict swimming until this week.

Last Tuesday and Thursday, crews from the state Division of Marine Fisheries tagged a total of six white sharks with satellite transmitters that record information about the predators' movements and diving habits. The tags do not transmit the sharks' positions in real-time, but collect data for weeks or months before detaching from the animal, floating to the surface and transmitting. The tags can be detected by acoustic receivers stationed in and around Chatham Harbor, however.

The largest of the white sharks tagged was about 16 feet

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WATERPALOOZA!



Mix a jumbo parachute with water balloons, 40 local children and a gorgeous summer day and you get one of the many crazy events at Waterpalooza, an annual favorite at Monomoy Community Services' Summer Camp. THERESA MALONE PHOTO

North, South, West Or 'Port: Villages Are A Source Of Pride And Mystery

by Alan Pollock

CHATHAM—It's a sure way to tell a resident from a summer visitor...residents know the names of the town's villages, and know their confusing quirks—like the fact that West Chatham is actually east of South Chatham.

But where does one draw the line between the town's villages? It's not a matter of precision.

"It's always been a question, where the boundaries are," said Thadd Eldredge of Eldredge Surveying and Engineering. He went to one of the first meetings of the West Chatham Village and Business Association, "and everyone said, 'Where is West Chatham?'" Eldredge said with a laugh.

Forget asking at town hall, which only divides the land by zoning districts and voting precincts; the town has around five recognized villages but only two voting precincts, and they're set to be merged shortly. Census tracts are not helpful, either; they merely divide the town in half, north and south. The U.S. Postal Service has post offices in South Chatham, West Chatham, downtown Chatham and North Chatham, but has long since stopped having an office in Chathamport. And that has led more than a few people in town to challenge the existence of that village, though most Chathamport residents maintain their sovereignty, as did the late former Selectman Reggie Nickerson, who championed that cause.

Partly as an exercise in learning a computer-aided mapping program, Eldredge recently drafted a map of Chatham, using a 1974 street listing published by the town

and the chamber of commerce. That booklet listed the village associated with each street, and by entering the information in the computer, Eldredge generated a map that hints at the village boundaries. But he's quick to point out that he's not establishing himself as an authority on the boundaries.

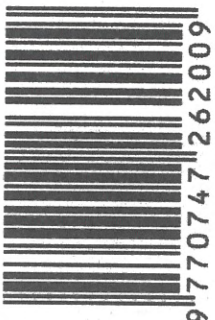
"I don't want to make a decision that affects somebody else," he said.

The street breakdown, which the booklet credited to a 1974 zoning map—no copy of which seems to still exist—seems to chiefly follow natural land features. The boundary between West Chatham and South Chatham, for instance, is Cockle Cove Creek; West Chatham becomes Chatham in the area of Lime Hill Road, a bit farther east than might be expected.

"But there are several inconsistencies there," Eldredge said. Perhaps because the data comes from a list of streets, some roads appear as outposts of one village, within the boundaries of another. How might this happen? It's possible that, when the 1974 street list was drafted, residents of some streets simply objected to the village they ended up in, and it was easier to modify the street listing than to resolve the dispute, Eldredge said.

The map has another interesting feature: the village of Northwest Chatham, a name which has fallen out of current use. The area is directly adjacent to East Harwich, and it's likely that most settlers there considered

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Villages

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themselves residents of East Harwich, which was centered around the Methodist Church. If Northwest Chatham is a vanishing village, it's not the only one. Whitewash Village, a thriving fishing community at the end of Monomoy Point, had around 200 residents in its heyday; the whole village was abandoned when its harbor silted in.

Then there's the Old Village, known then

as Scrabbletown, which has a clearly defined historic district, but which is seldom referred to as one of the town's principal villages.

"It depends on who you ask," Town Moderator William Litchfield said. But even the Old Village Association refers to the Old Village as an "area" of town.

There's no sign that villages are going out of fashion; they form a central part of the town's long range comprehensive plan, and one—West Chatham—has two dueling village associations. People seem to value their village identity, Litchfield said.

"I know of one case where someone bought a house on the south side of Orleans Road in the vicinity of the North Chatham Post Office, and that person was quite upset when they found that they lived in Chatham, 02633, and not North Chatham, 02650," he said.

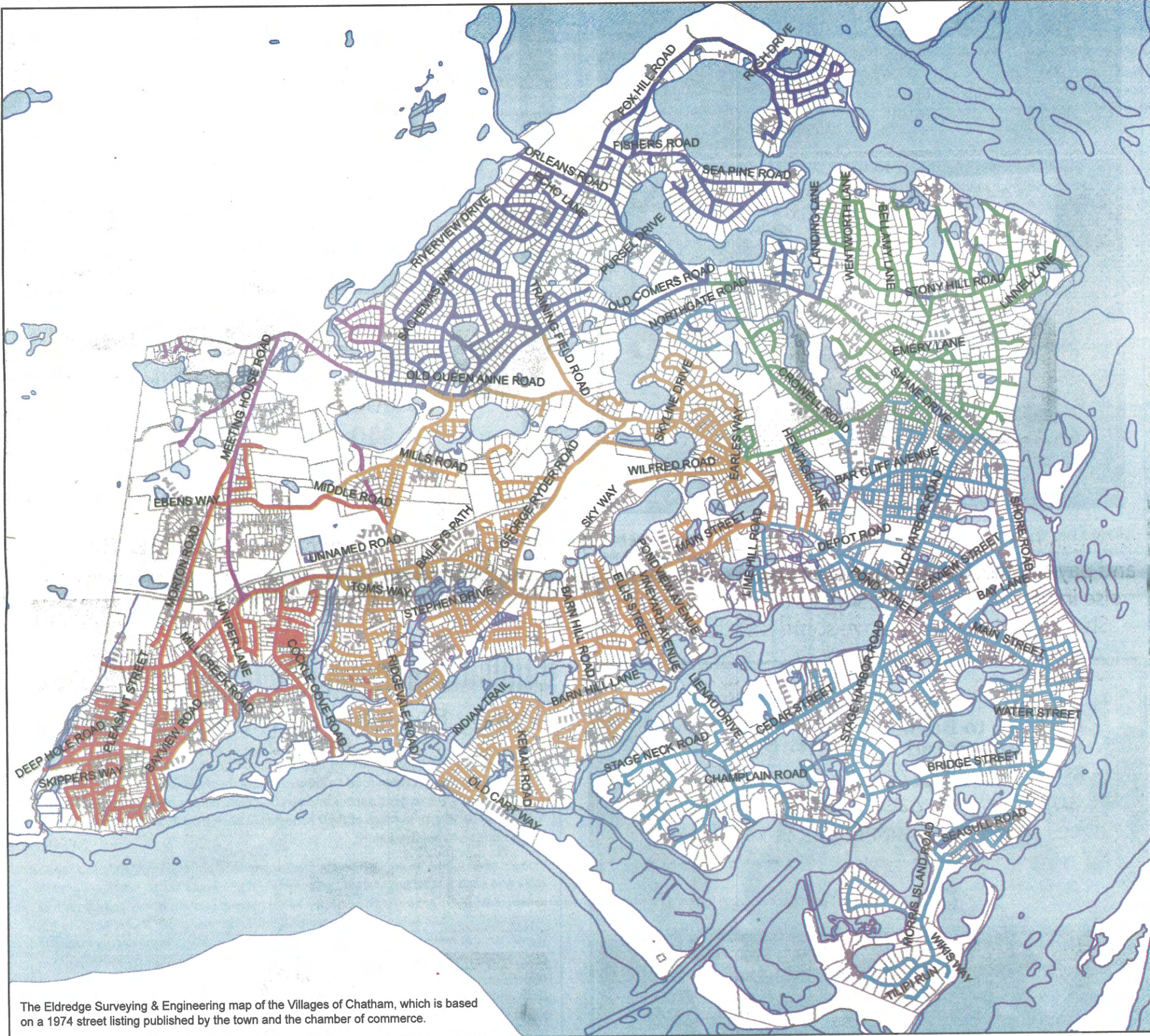
In any case, the boundaries of Chatham's villages are likely to remain in dispute forever. Surveyor Thadd Eldredge certainly isn't volunteering to draw the official lines.

"I don't want anybody burning a tripod in my front yard," he quipped.

Legend

Chatham Roads

- Chatham
- North Chatham
- West Chatham
- South Chatham
- Chathamport
- Northwest Chatham
- - - - - Not on the 1974 List



The Eldredge Surveying & Engineering map of the Villages of Chatham, which is based on a 1974 street listing published by the town and the chamber of commerce.



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