



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Enrollment Conundrum

Cornwall Consolidated School enrollment has always been an interesting topic for discussion. Current enrollment is 93 and the fall 2015 estimate is 87. We have cycled through these ups and downs in what appear to be roughly 20-year increments. In 1998, enrollment was at 202 before the downward trend we are now experiencing.

Principal Michael Croft and the CCS faculty are addressing the issue of declining enrollment. He is working with the Cornwall Economic Development Committee and others to promote the school and spread the word about student achievement in Cornwall. An example: for any out-of-town student wishing to attend CCS, the Board of Education recently reduced tuition to approximately \$6,000 per year. The faculty and staff are also looking at the way the school is organized. Croft said some multi-age classes are already in place with very successful results. The "social challenge," as Mike puts it, is to have a "robust peer group" even with small classes. He does not anticipate layoffs, but says that the BOE will use attrition as an opportunity to adjust the ratio of faculty to student by "looking closely at every vacancy."

Croft also says that CCS is ready to "embrace new ideas to attract students and families and help students develop 21st

century skills." In his words, "We need to be open to big-picture changes." Many schools have become magnet schools, specializing in science, technology, sustainability, or other specialized areas which are open to students from several districts.

At the Region One level, the All Board Chair Committee is planning to seek residents' views from all six towns on the issue of declining enrollment. Under the direction of Patricia Chamberlain, superintendent of schools, a demographic specialist from a group known as NESDEC did enrollment projections for ten years in the future using figures from ten years in the past. Enrollment figures from 1944 to the present used for this article show a larger picture of cyclical trends in enrollment. (See Figure 1.)

Enrollment at CCS has gone up and down since records were kept, beginning in 1944 when enrollment was 130. By 1964 it was up to 202. It stayed around 200 from 1967, where it reached an all time high of 210, before dipping to the lowest figure, 80, in 1984.

In the early 1970s, Dorothy Van Doren, then chair of the Board of Education, created a committee to study how three Vermont schools were dealing with declining enrollment. The committee visited schools with enrollments of 15, 55, and 75. In each

case, the structure of the school adjusted to the size while conforming to the educational standards of the state and federal governments. The Cornwall committee findings were well received by the Cornwall BOE as viable alternatives to closing the school and merging with Falls Village.

It is, of course, always important to note that in a school the size of Cornwall, a couple of families moving in or out will have a major impact on enrollment. In the last four years, only two students who have remained Cornwall residents transferred to other schools before graduating from CCS. Fifteen students are slated to graduate from CCS this June.

Some of this decline can be attributed to the high cost of buying property or renting in Cornwall and the difficulty young families still have in getting mortgages. Connecticut experienced an overall decline in birth rates and also had one of the highest unemployment rates, 9.2 percent, during the last recession.

Malcolm Gladwell in his book, *The Outliers*, argues that there is no such thing as a self-made man; that the origins of success "lie in the circumstances and influences of one's upbringing" combined with being "at the right place at the right time." Re-

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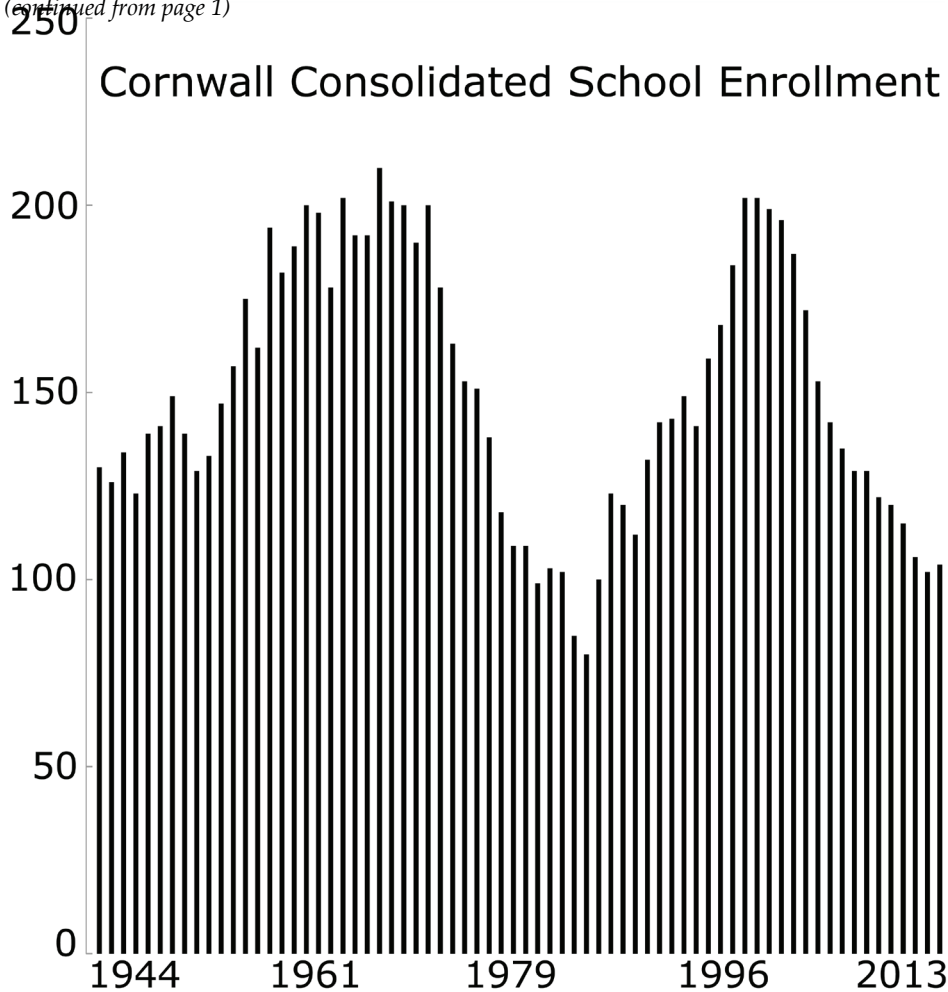
MAY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30-10 am Library; Karate, 6:30-7:30 pm Town Hall; Men's Basketball, 7-9pm CCS gym ♦ Wednesdays: Meditation, 4-5 pm call Debra 672-0229; Tai Chi, 5-7 pm Town Hall ♦ Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30-9:30 am Library; Toddler Play Group, 10:30-11:30 am Library; Meditation, 4-5 pm call Debra 672-0229; Mah Jongg, 7-9 pm Library; Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym ♦ Fridays: Yoga, 8:30-10 am Library ♦ Sundays: Yoga 9-10:30 am Library; Meditation 11:00 am call Debra 672-0229					1 ♦ Florence Tan Space Talks (see E&A)	2 ♦ Community Country Dance 7 pm Town Hall
3 ○ FULL	4 ♦ Historical Society Annual Meeting 8:30 am 7 Pine St ♦ Region 1 Board Meeting 6 pm Room 133 HVRHS	5 ♦ Region 1 Budget Referendum Noon-8 pm Town Hall ♦ 275th Anniversary Committee 5 pm ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	6	7	8	9 ♦ Spring Bird Walk 7-9:30 am ♦ HOPPINin's Rabbit Workshop 10:30 am Motherhouse ♦ Water Power At Home 10:30 am Library
10	11 4thQ ♦ Free Blood Pressure Clinic Noon-1 pm UCC ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	12 ♦ Economic Dev. Comm. 9 am Town Hall ♦ Seniors' Luncheon 11:30 am-1 pm Wandering Moose ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library	13	14	15 ♦ Deadline: June Chronicle Copy ♦ Town Budget Vote 7:30 pm CCS Gathering Room	16 ♦ Farm Market Season's Opening 9 am-12:30 pm Wish House
17 ♦ Civil Liberties Talk Norman Dorsen 2 pm Town Hall	18 NEW	19 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	20 ♦ Board of Ed 4 pm CCS Library ♦ Whiffenpoof Alumni Concert 6 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	21 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 6:30 pm Town Hall	22	23 ♦ Farm Market 9 am-12:30 pm Wish House ♦ Book Sale 10 am-3 pm Library
24	25 MEMORIAL DAY ♦ Comm. Service 9 am N. Cornwall Cemetery ♦ Book Sale 10 am-Noon Library ♦ Navy Memorial 10 am Covered Bridge Parade, Ceremony, and Carnival 11 am	26 ♦ Cornwall Committee for Seniors 7 pm Library ♦ ZBA* 7:30 pm Library	27	28	29	30 ♦ Dave Emond CCT Talk 7:30 am Hart Preserve ♦ Farm Market 9 am-12:30 pm Wish House
31						

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

For additions and updating, visit www.cornwallchronicle.org

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ardless of how we eventually decide to deal with increasing or declining enrollment at CCS, our small school, as the heart of our town, has launched many young people into the wider world, well prepared and able to meet new challenges. For many, Cornwall and its institutions have always offered us the right place at the right time.

—Pamela P. Wilson

Ideas for Renewable Energy

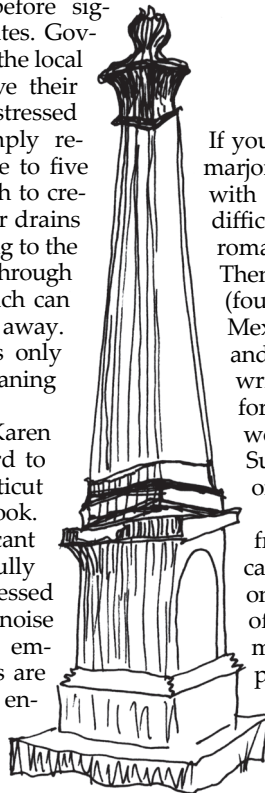
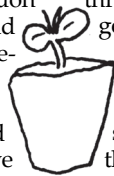
On Saturday, April 4, panelists Gordon Ridgway, Mark Lenz, Karen Nelson, and Melissa Everett shared their views on renewable energy with more than 20 participants at the Cornwall Library.

Ridgway runs his farm on solar and wood, and he stressed that alternative fuels have become more efficient and installation less expensive over time. His surveys suggest that six local towns have establishments that could become energy self-sufficient, citing successful solar installations at the Consolidated School and town hall.

Mark Lenz of Home Energy Professionals pointed out 26 suitable mill sites and streams in the area with significant potential for micro-hydro power. On average, the sun provides our area with four hours of energy per day, which means a five-kilo-

watt solar unit will provide about 20 kilowatts a day. The equivalent energy can be generated by a single one-kilowatt micro-hydro unit running for 20 hours. Installation would cost about \$15,000 before significant federal and state rebates. Government obstacles are only on the local level where many towns have their own restrictions, but Lenz stressed that micro-hydro power simply requires a stream-fed pool three to five feet deep situated high enough to create adequate force as the water drains through a long pipe descending to the generator. The electricity runs through wires to the end user, which can be no further than 500 feet away. Low maintenance requires only servicing the motor and cleaning the water filter.

Known as a wind pioneer, Karen Nelson has been working hard to help install the only Connecticut inland wind project in Colebrook. Legal disputes caused significant delays until resolved successfully in court. Opponents had expressed concerns about aesthetics and noise from the blades, but Nelson emphasized that today's turbines are quieter and generate enough energy to power a small town. However, she acknowledged



the environmental impact if they were installed in the beautiful hills of Cornwall.

Because the turbines feed directly into the grid and not to the local community, Melissa Everett has been attempting to get legislation passed that would allow a community to take advantage of the energy that they generate. Bill 928, introduced by the Energy and Technology Committee in Hartford would have helped, but was rendered ineffective by later amendment, and she asked those attending to encourage elected officials to restore the original bill. She urged the audience to visit SustainableCT.org, the site of the Connecticut Sustainable Communities Network, which supports clean energy and sustainability at the local level. —Stella Goulet

Welcome

Jesse Payette Cheney
to Anna Trentadue and Rusty Cheney
Aria Lynn Brown
to Jessica and John Brown, Jr.

Goodbye to Friends

Michael Norman Brown
Fred Sander
Natalie Louise Friedman
Russell "Rusty" Cheney

Editor's Note: Rusty Cheney, a son of Hugh and Lynn Cheney, died in an airplane accident in Idaho on April 10, along with two of his co-workers and the pilot.

Land Transfers

Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation to Lawrence Saed, land with improvements thereon at 12 Hickory Lane, for \$110,000
Stephen O'Neil to David J. Hubbard and John B. Hubbard, three parcels of land with buildings and improvements thereon at 239 Great Hollow Road, for \$150,000

The Herb of Love

If you stick your nose in a small pile of marjoram leaves you will be rewarded with a deep, heady fragrance that is difficult to describe. Sensual and romantic, this is the "herb of love." Then there are old favorites like basil (four kinds), and cilantro (if you love Mexican food, you've tasted cilantro), and chives, and dill. For most of written history herbs have been used for everything from poultices on wounds to a lovely addition to the Sunday roast chicken (think tarragon or basil or oregano, or all three.)

Pat Bramley, a neighbor and friend, is starting a new business called Buck Mountain Herbs. Located on top of a mountain, her home looks off in all directions, surrounded by mature woods and old stone walls: a perfect spot to grow her herbs, and that's exactly what she is doing! Hundreds of little pots of herbs adorn her dining room, under

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lights, peeking out at the world and waiting to be planted or potted up for sale. "I'm going to start with four rows, 42 feet long and about 5 feet wide, divided into perennials and annuals, and of course, this being Connecticut soil, some will have acidic soil and some more alkaline."

This has been a dream for many years, and now the time is right. "Why now? I guess there are several reasons; we're empty nested now, I love to garden, and I love the idea of growing a sustainable crop of herbs for culinary use. I also like the idea of growing herbs in general—they smell wonderful and have so many purposes." Her many years in the business field, doing financial records and books, is paying off, too. "I learned much over the years—how to start a business and grow it. How to keep good records and how to offer a service to my community."

The business will participate at the Farmers' Market in West Cornwall, and, as time goes on, will offer more herbs, and recipes that use each specific herb she grows. In the fall we may be able to purchase what some call "nose gays" or what Patty describes as "tussie mussions." Whatever they're called, these old-fashioned tiny bouquets of herbs and flowers are perfect for the breakfast table or to give as a gift. For more information go to her website buckmountainherbs.com or check her out on Facebook.

—Jane Bean

Boring But Important

It's only natural early in the year to pass over the articles and reports dealing with budget planning, meetings, projections, and such. However, on May 15 there is a town meeting to vote on our budget for the fiscal year starting July 1, so with the end of the months-long process close at hand, it's time to take our heads out of the sand and pay attention.

As of mid-April, it looks like the town budget will increase by \$170,812 to \$6,675,834, a 2.63 percent increase over the current year. In broad terms, and ignoring small increases and cuts throughout the various line items, the increase results from: (1) a net increase of \$32,184 (1.80 percent) in the Board of Selectmen's budget, reflecting certain contract services and employee salary/benefit increases; (2) a \$117,000 increase (30.55 percent) in capital expenditures; and (3) a \$25,532 increase (.61 percent) in the overall Board of Education budget—the CCS budget component was unchanged, but our Region One contribution is proposed to go up. Debt service on town bonds decreased by \$3,625.

In the last two years, capital spending was offset by the availability of excess funds from the Great Hill/Great Hollow road

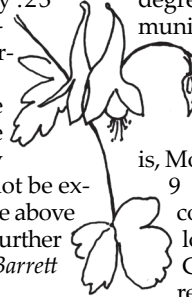
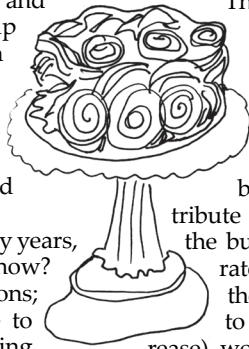
project, which softened the blow by \$230,000 and \$137,000 in those years, respectively.

This benefit is not available for the coming year, hence the \$117,000 increase.

On the income side, no extra help or cut is anticipated from the state. However, the grand list is scheduled to increase by \$5,527,490, which would contribute approximately \$82,000 towards the budget increase at the current mill rate of 14.9. In addition, increasing the mill rate for next year by .23 to 15.13 (a 1.5 percent increase) would make up the difference.

By the time you read this, the town budget hearing will have taken place on April 24. If history is a guide, major changes would not be expected, but if made would affect the above figures. Check the town website for further details and updates.

—Tom Barrett



New Park & Rec Honcho

By now many of you know that Becky Hurlburt has stepped down after five superlative years as the director of Cornwall's park and rec operation, to be replaced this month by Sydney Ormsby, who is leaving her job as an assistant with the Torrington recreation unit.

Sydney is 22 years old and previously had an internship with the Torrington Titans of the Futures Collegiate Baseball League. She is about to get an associate's degree from Northwest Connecticut Community College and said she plans to continue her studies at Post College in Waterbury via the Internet.

Sydney said her office hours in Cornwall would match Becky's, that is, Monday and Wednesday mornings from 9 to noon. "I am very excited about coming to Cornwall," she said, "and am looking forward to meeting all of you." Cornwall's director of park and recreation is a part-time job totaling 20 hours a week.

—John Miller

The Hills of Little Cornwall

Mark Van Doren wrote: "New England is almost too beautiful to live in long. The mind, accepting it too hungrily, and forgetting all things else, can in time grow queer. The silence it enjoins may not be the best thing for a man. For more than half a year, however, it is a blessed thing, and I have learned how to count the blessing even while I remember that."

The hills of little Cornwall
 Themselves are dreams.
 The mind lies down among them,
 Even by day, and snores,
 Snug in the perilous knowledge
 That nothing more inward pleasing
 More like itself,
 Sleeps anywhere beyond them
 Even by night
 In the great land it cares two pins about,
 Possibly; not more.
 The mind, eager for caresses,
 Lies down at its own risk in Cornwall;
 Whose hills,
 Whose cunning streams,
 Whose mazes where a thought,
 Doubling upon itself,
 Considers the way, lazily, well lost,
 Indulge it to the nick of death--
 Not quite, for where it curls it still can feel,
 Like feathers,
 Like affectionate mouse whiskers,
 The flattery, the trap.

—Mark Van Doren

(Editor's note: This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry awarded to Mark Van Doren, poet, writer, critic, and inspirational professor at Columbia University. Much of his writing was done here in Cornwall, where he lived part time, and where many relatives, including his son Charles, continue to live.)

—John Miller

Cornwall Briefs

• **A Sweet End to a Long Winter:** That would be local production of maple syrup. It was up big time this winter thanks to the cooperation (sap-wise) of our sugar maples and to the brave producers who had to climb over huge mounds of snow to plug the trees, sometimes sinking up to their hips to get there. By the way, we got the sweet quote at the top of this from the syrup-producing first selectman but didn't ask if it originated with him.

• **Mark This Date:** Friday, May 15, 7:30 P.M. at Cornwall Consolidated School. That's the annual meeting to vote on a proposed town budget for the fiscal year 2015/2016. And here is what you will be voting on: 1) The big item is the proposed budget as recommended by the Board of Finance. 2) Recommendation by the Board of Selectmen that the town purchase .91 acres of land behind the West Cornwall Firehouse for \$12,500. 3) Recommended by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance that the town appropriate \$10,000 from the Gates Bequest for celebrating Cornwall's 275th anniversary. 4) Recommendation by the BOS and BOF that the town appropriate \$37,000 to install a new generator and propane tank in the West Cornwall Firehouse. 5) Recommendation by the BOS and BOF that the town appropriate \$5,000 toward purchase by the Cornwall Conservation Trust of 317 acres from Trinity Church Wall Street.

• **Tax Relief:** This is for property taxpayers who may apply for a \$200 reduction if their tax bill exceeds 10 percent of their income. Applications are available at the selectmen's office and the deadline for turning them in is June 1.

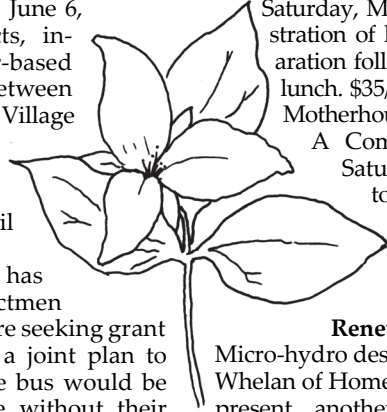
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•Hazardous Waste Collection: The next collection day is Saturday, June 6, and your waste products, including oil- and water-based paints, can be turned in between 9 A.M. and noon at the Falls Village Town Garage. Pick up applications at the selectmen's office. Keep in mind it doesn't happen again until late September.

•Bus Plan: The *Chronicle* has learned that the first selectmen of Cornwall and Goshen are seeking grant money that would fund a joint plan to purchase a small bus. The bus would be used to chauffeur people without their own transportation to such things as doctor and hospital appointments.

—John Miller



Motherhouse Events

A workshop on raising meat rabbits and visit to a local backyard rabbitry, will be held Saturday, May 9, at 10:30 A.M. Demonstration of housing, killing, and preparation followed by tasting at potluck lunch. \$35/family. Register at Debra@Motherhouse.us or 672-0229.

A Community Country Dance, Saturday, May 2, 7 P.M. at the town hall. Caller Eric Hollman and music by Still, The Homegrown Band. Donation.

Renewable Energy Redux: Micro-hydro designers Mark Lenz and Bob Whelan of Home Energy Professionals will present another roundtable discussion specifically on hydro-electric production systems for the home, Saturday, May 9, at 10:30 A.M. at the Cornwall Library.

The 16th Annual Spring Bird Walk led by Art Gingert and Jean Bouteiller, Saturday May 9, 7 to 9:30 A.M. Rain date is May 10. Call Art at 672-0077 to register. Limit is 15.

Cornwall Historical Society

Annual Membership Meeting will be held May 4, 8:30 A.M. at 7 Pine Street to elect directors and transact business.

Norman Dorsen, past president of the ACLU, will present "Seeking Civil Liberties: A Dilemma for Judges" at town hall, Sunday, May 17, 2 P.M. Free.

Senior Events

Free Blood Pressure Clinic on Monday, May 11, noon to 1 P.M. at the UCC Day Room. Questions? Contact VNA Northwest at 860-567-6000 or vnanw.org.

Monthly Senior Luncheon, feast and friendship, once again at the Wandering Moose Cafe at 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M. Tuesday, May 12. Call Bob Potter at 672-6191 for information.

Memorial Day Festivities: Monday, May 25, 9 A.M., a commemorative service at the North Cornwall Cemetery led for the first time by Virginia Gold. Flowers are requested to decorate the graves. At 10 A.M. a Navy Memorial will take place at the covered bridge. A parade followed by ceremony will begin at 11 A.M. at the town green. Carnival will be held after the ceremony.

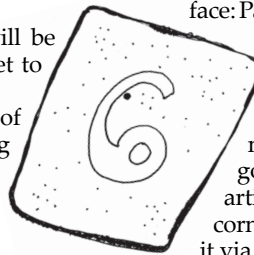
Seeking Art to Exhibit: National Iron Bank is looking for artists to display their work for three months. Contact Megan Arel, assistant branch manager, at 672-6623 or megan.arel@ironbank.com.

Art in Cornwall: Michael Quadland exhibit of abstracts at the library continues through May 30. Zejke Hermann paintings at UCC Parish House continues through mid-June. Constance Old works at the Souterrain Gallery continues through May 25. The National Iron Bank will be featuring artful hats and yarnadillos by Theresa Pattison.

New Conservation Trust Land Steward Dave Emond will share his land monitoring and birding skills in a two-hour combo course Saturday, May 30, 7:30 A.M. at the Hart Preserve. Bring paper, pen, water, and binoculars if you have them.

This Little Piggy... Welcome the Farmers' Market back on Saturday, May 16, starting at 9 A.M. and weekly thereafter, on the Wish House lawn in West Cornwall as usual. Familiar vendors will be back, including Suzie's Sweets and Carol Bonci, and a new face: Patty Bramley's Buck Mountain Herbs (see article this issue).

It may be a little early for the veggies, but there will be plenty of dairy, eggs, meat, sweets, and other baked goods, along with handcrafted articles. Bookmark the website cornwallfarmmarket.org or access it via the Cornwall website. Easiest and most convenient parking is at the Wish House parking area behind the building.



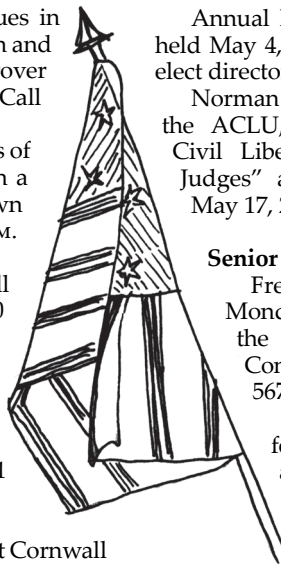
Events & Announcements

At the Cornwall Library

Florence Tan, lead electrical engineer for several NASA space projects, will be speaking at three different venues in Cornwall about space exploration and her experience with the Mars rover "Curiosity" on Friday, May 1. Call the library for details.

The library will host members of the Yale Whiffenpoofs of 1995 in a short a cappella concert at the town hall Wednesday, May 20, at 6 P.M. Free.

The annual book sale will begin Saturday, May 23, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M. (for \$10, early birds will be admitted at 9 A.M.) and continue Monday, May 25, from 10 A.M. to noon (closed for the parade) with everything at half price. Fill a bag with books from 1 to 2 P.M. for \$5.



Region One Referendum Vote at Cornwall Town Hall on Tuesday, May 5, from noon until 8 P.M. Absentee ballots available in the town clerk's office.

The Happy Dance

When my cousins and I were kids we did a Maypole, dancing with ribbons around a broomstick in our bare feet. It was like shaking off winter. Why not shake off those cold season blues and write the *Chronicle* a nice check. Warms you right up! Thanks!

CORNWALL CHRONICLE
cornwallchronicle.org

THIS MONTH

Elisabeth Cumnick, Illustrations
Tom Barrett and Bill Goulet, Editors

NEXT MONTH

Tom Bechtle, Maggie Cooley, and Cheryl Evans, Editors
tbechtle@optonline.net, magcooley@optonline.net
or cacevans@gmail.com

MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein

CALENDAR EDITOR Louise Riley
calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

CIRCULATION Nan and John Bevans
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