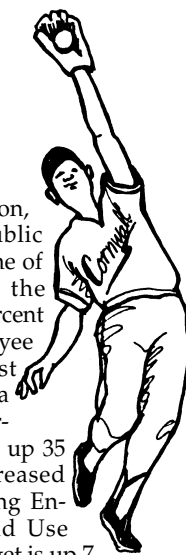


CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 14 : NUMBER 3 APRIL 2004



Ready For Anything

The Cornwall Office of Civil Preparedness? You

might think that this is a new-fangled attempt to protect against terrorists, but in fact state law has long required such an office. Now headed by Hunt Williams, it was of significant help in the 1989 tornado and played a role in the extended power outage five years ago. The office prepares our emergency plan and coordinates all services and agencies involved in an emergency.

Cornwall's emergency plan was updated last October and can be seen at the First Selectman's Office. It identifies resources that may be needed in emergencies, including snow storms and power outages, or release of hazardous materials, accidents and terrorist actions.

Our primary emergency resources are the Fire Department, ambulances and the Highway Department. Resources beyond the town include the Red Cross (which provided cots for sheltering people in the power outage) and the Connecticut National Guard. After the tornado the Guard sent an engineering unit to remove trees and clear roads. The new plan calls for making arrangements for sheltering people in the school.

In late April, Cornwall will conduct a "table top" exercise of everyone with a role in emergency preparedness. Hunt and the state coordinator are working on the design of a disaster scenario.

First Selectman Gordon Ridgway recently explained that Connecticut is working on two emphases in Homeland Security planning: (1) terrorism, which is being covered by the state Office of Emergency Preparedness and the National Guard, and (2) biological incidents. Cornwall is part of a seven-town region which has developed a plan for mass inoculations. Cornwall will inventory its resources and be eligible for federal distributions of new gear to the Fire Department. A shipment of plastic overalls, useful in oil spills and derailments as well as anthrax outbreaks, has already been received.

—Hanna Grossman

including administration, highway and sanitation, public health, welfare, and safety. One of the largest increases in the Selectmen's Budget is a 24 percent increase in the cost of employee health insurance, while most town employees will see a wage increase of about 3 percent. The Land Use budget is up 35 percent, mostly due to increased hours and pay for the Zoning Enforcement Officer and Land Use Clerk. The Park and Rec. budget is up 7 percent, despite the elimination of a requested After School Program.

The Board of Education's proposed budget, at \$3.2 million, is up 3.9 percent. The CCS part of the budget increased 6.1 percent while our share of Region One costs (which includes the high school) is up only 0.22 percent. Much of the rise at CCS is due to higher employee benefits. In a meeting between the Board of Finance and the Board of Education, Board of Ed. Chairman Barbara Gold pointed out that contractual costs in the budget— personnel, benefits, etc.—over which the board has little control, will increase 7.1 percent while discretionary spending drops by one percent. The added cost of operating the new addition is now estimated at \$47,000.

—Annie Kosciusko

APRIL 2004

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Meditation for Mothers Every Thursday 1:15–2:15 P.M. UCC Day Room Last Day of Kindergarten Registration (p.4)	2 Child Center Open House 9–11:30 A.M. (p.4)	3 Chess Club Every Sat. 9:30–11 A.M. Lib. Motherhouse Retreat 9:45 A.M.–3:15 P.M. Egg Hunt and Wizard's Show 10:30 A.M.–Noon, Town Hall Collage Workshop 11 A.M.– 12:30 P.M. Library (p.4) Poetry Slam 4 P.M. Library
4 PALM SUNDAY DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS	5 PASSOVER BEGINS AT SUNDOWN Park & Rec. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	6 Blue Mt. Satsang Every Tuesday 6:30–8 P.M. UCC Day Room Jam Session Every Tuesday 7:30 P.M. Town Hall or Library Inland Wetlands* 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	7 Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC Stretch Class Every Wed. 5:30–6:30 P.M. Town Hall	8 Bd. of Ed. 5 P.M. CCS Lib.	9 GOOD FRIDAY CCS and HVRHS Spring Recess Begins Library Closed	10 American Girls Club 11:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M. Library
11 EASTER	12 Blood Pressure Screening 3–4 P.M. UCC Parish House	13 P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	14 Cornwall Library Movie House 4 P.M. Library (p.4)	15 <i>Deadline: May Chronicle Copy</i> VFW Post 9856 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Bd. of Finance 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	16	17 Cornwall Assoc. 9 A.M. UCC Day Room Prose Reading 4 P.M. Library (p.4) Cornwall Village Improvement Society 4 P.M. Town Hall
18	19 CCS and HVRHS Reopen Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS	20	21 Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC Intergenerational Spelling Bee 7 P.M. HVRHS Auditorium (p.4)	22 Bd. of Selectmen 9 A.M. Town Hall	23 Preschool-K Story Hour 10–11 A.M. Library	24 Art at the Dump 10 A.M.–4 P.M. (p.4) Thomas the Tank Club 11:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M. Lib. Cemetery Tours 10–11 A.M. and 2–3 P.M. (p.4) TinCan Website Recording 4 P.M. Library (p.4)
25	26 ZBA 7:30 P.M. Town Hall*	27	28 Play Group 10–11:30 A.M. Playscape/UCC Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 7:30 P.M. W. C. Firehouse Green Party 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	29	30 Preschool-K Story Hour 10–11 A.M. Library	

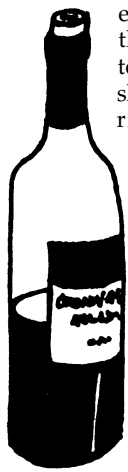
* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

Same-Sex Marriage Here?

As any newspaper reader or TV watcher knows, there's a lot of sound and fury across the nation on the topic of same-sex marriage. No same-sex couple has applied for a marriage license in Cornwall. Given the media frenzy, however, we thought it might be interesting to see what the situation would be if they did.

There are 22 Justices of the Peace in Cornwall, all of them qualified to conduct marriages. Several of them told me they are open to the idea of marrying gay or lesbian couples, provided that the couple has a valid marriage license. The Connecticut application for a marriage license is gender-neutral. It talks only about a "bride" and "groom."

To get married, however, a couple also needs a town clerk willing to issue a license,



either here or in the town where they want to wed. Cornwall's town clerk, Cheryl Evans, says she isn't prepared to issue a marriage license to a same-sex couple. She cites Chapter 814c of the State Statutes, Section 81r of which reads, in part:

"Nothing...shall be deemed to authorize the recognition of or the right of marriage between persons of the same sex."

Might the Connecticut Supreme Court follow Massachusetts precedent and find that our state constitution allows same-sex marriage? It's unlikely to happen in the near future. The State Office of Legislative Research, in a recent review, found no current court cases in Connecticut involving same-sex marriage.

Would there be a demand for gay or lesbian marriage in Cornwall if it were legal? That's hard to say, but at least one person familiar with the gay community here told me that there's little or no interest in marriage as such. There is deep-felt concern about obtaining key legal rights in areas like inheritance, tax benefits or pension benefits. Unmarried heterosexual couples share many of these concerns. Legalizing civil unions in Connecticut, as in Vermont, would seem to meet most of the concerns that have been expressed.

Marriage is a serious business. That's so whether you view it as governmental authorization of important legal rights, as a religious ceremony, as the commitment of two people to one another, or all three. At least for the present, some important legal rights are not available to same-sex couples in our town.

—David A. Grossman

Good, Clean Fun

For a small rural community, Cornwall has entertained itself in a remarkable variety of

ways. The recent Town Hall Players' production of *The Dining Room* by A. R. Gurney is only the latest. Some evidence of this entertainment tradition appeared in posters displayed during the performances of the play, part of a Cornwall Historical Society collection.

The posters hint at the richness of the entire collection, which advertised concerts, minstrel shows, plays, comic acts, films and lectures. These came steadily to Cornwall—especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—to divert the townfolk in the Library/Town Hall and elsewhere. Diversion could mean attendance at a temperance lecture, presented in the West Cornwall chapel, or lectures on such serious subjects as women's suffrage. On the other hand, many posters also advertised dancing after the show.

A century ago, the Wild West was a sure draw—especially on film. "Tom Taylor's Feature Moving Pictures" showed "Shooting, Riding Wild Horses, Indian Warfare" in a "Brilliant, Truthful, Historical Manner." The film featured Jesse James, "The Most Interesting Character That American History Has Furnished." Tom Taylor also offered "Funny Reels to Make You Laugh."

Another display guaranteed "180 Laughs in 180 Minutes." Comedy's therapeutic benefits were the selling point in a poster reminding people that "Laughter Overtakes the Tear and You Forget Your Surroundings for a Few Minutes...."

Nobody was expected to forget Enos Bacon, The Yorkshire Nightingale, "Drawing Room Entertainer, Dramatic Raconteur, Duplex Vocalist." One of Bacon's spellbinding talents was his ability to sing with "Two Voices."

A glimpse of the world outside came with a stereopticon lecture on India presented by "a native of Bombay." One of the few posters to provide exact date and location, the India lecture began at "7:45, First Congregational Church, Monday, September 11, 1905." Admission was 25 cents, children 10 cents.

A strong hi-tech note sounded when the gramophone came to town. Perhaps owing to technical difficulties with larger audiences, the entertainment provided by "Edison's Celebrated Sound Reservoir" was a parlor entertainment that could only be presented to "a dozen persons" at a time. They were treated to band and orchestral performances, augmented by renditions of "Annie Laurie," and "imitations of songbirds and farmyard fowls and animals."

The posters make it clear that their entertainments were all steeped in the elixir of good, clean fun. As one poster promised, "The Show Will Make You Laugh Because It Is Funny; You Will Admire It Because It Is Refined."

—Charles Osborne

Welcome

Lyndon Flavius to Debra and William Morehouse
Iris Utrata to Anna Utrata-Wynn and Jason Wynn

Congratulations

Adam Rosenbeck to Julia Redmond

Land Transfers

Cornwall Inn, Inc. to Stacey Marcin and Mark J. Hampson, 270 Kent Road for \$500,000.

James J. Vanasse, John P. Vanasse, Ophelia L. Vanasse to Paul Lincoln Cornell, Jr., 34.4 acres Ballyhack Road, for \$170,000.

Recollections Of a Selectman

When I was asked last spring if I'd serve again, after eight years on the Board of Selectmen, I said it was time for new blood. Not that the eight years weren't interesting, instructive and rewarding—and often even fun.

Given my background in social service, the job I'm proudest of came right at the beginning. Gordon Ridgway asked me to work with Bucky Whitney, who needed to move from his trailer home on Lake Road. The help of Bucky's extensive network of old friends and a cash grant from the town were the keys to a successful outcome.

Bucky died the following year, and his ashes were brought back to be scattered on the grave of his parents. Alicia Eaton said, "For all we knew about Bucky, I never met a man to whom friendship counted for so much."

The most surprising event of my time on the board was the ultimate outcome of the confusing and stressful town votes on the gym for CCS. The town voted "Yes." Then, the town was petitioned to reconsider. The town voted "No." Tempers flared. Words were spoken. I wrote a poem on the subject of government going off the tracks. In the end, when the project had been revamped, its cost reduced, put to the voters and approved, I woke up one morning saying: "Biffie Estabrook. You know what she did with all her bitching and hollering? She saved Cornwall's taxpayers over one million dollars! Right on, Biffie!"

When I joined the board I had a clear vision of my role. My job was to support and advise the first selectman. Only twice did I vote against a motion put forward by Gordon. In only a very few cases did I initiate an action. There was no need because Gordon usually had a clear idea of what needed doing and nearly always I agreed with him. What I often did was to attempt to clarify issues and sort through alternatives. I was the process guy and sometimes the "explainer." Gordon was the executive. From my perspective, the relationship worked well for all eight years.

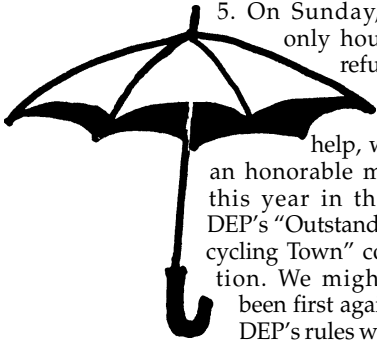
—Earl Brecher

Hints from the Transfer Station

1. Observe the posted speed limits.
2. Display your transfer sticker.
3. Sort your refuse at home before you come.
4. Deposit your refuse and move along.

5. On Sunday, bring only household refuse. With your help, we won an honorable mention this year in the state DEP's "Outstanding Recycling Town" competition. We might have been first again—but DEP's rules wouldn't allow it because we were first last year.

—Fred Bate and Steve O'Neil



Tending the Primrose

Before the snowdrops and daffodils come out, some truly dedicated gardeners grow primrose. I have three in full bloom on my desk, one yellow, one pink, and one white. To me, the most remarkable phenomenon about these little harbingers of cheer is the amount of buds and new growth that I can see underneath the foliage. So, too, is the story of the students at Cornwall Consolidated School and all they represent to the teachers, their parents, and myself.

We have had an adventurous year thus far. We have had visitors such as U.S. Representative Nancy Johnson and State Senator Andrew Roraback. We welcomed our own author and friend Marc Simont to help us celebrate Read Across America week. Two members of DeLancey's Brigade came for a reenactment of the Revolutionary War. The K-3 graders led the school in a Hundred Days Celebration. First and fifth graders came with their families to learn about the night sky in a portable planetarium. The event offered cocoa, pumpkin bread and the beautiful Cornwall sky. Our chorus and band have participated in regional music festivals. The Sharon Audubon Society has provided us several excellent nature programs. Spanish classes now include the entire school. The eighth grade participated in a Mock Trial. Many of these programs were paid for by grant awards, easing our local budget.

In the near future we will have a one-woman show on the life of Eleanor Roosevelt, a modern-day play depicting the importance of diversity through the life of Prudence Crandall, and visiting author Yoko Watkins. There will be rides around our Cornwall Green in a NH/Concord Stage Coach that will give life in early America new meaning, a Fourth Grade Arts Day at Hotchkiss School, and last but not least, kindergarten registration (see p. 4).

We are happy and healthy and growing strong. Sincere thanks to our understanding, supportive community for all they do to help us.

—Kathleen Fitzgibbons (Dr. Fitz)

Lonely at the Polls

Poll watchers and town election honchos were pretty much a lonely group on primary day last month. The only primary was

Letters to the Chronicle

SAVING OUR BILL OF RIGHTS

At the Library a few weeks ago, many Cornwallians heard Theresa Younger, Executive Director of the Connecticut Civil Liberties Union, talk about the Patriot Act and the dangers inherent in it. We decided to try and join some 250 towns and cities throughout the USA in making Cornwall a Civil Liberties Safe Zone. That means we would commit to safeguard the civil liberties that certain provisions of the Patriot Act as well as certain actions of the federal government have taken from us. Having collected over 100 names on a petition and then having presented them to the selectmen, we are waiting for the selectmen to announce a Town Meeting to discuss the issue and vote on a resolution indicating that the Town of Cornwall believes that there is no inherent conflict between national security and the preservation of liberty—we can be both safe and free.

—John Miller, Anne and John Zinsser

[Editor's Note: At a meeting on March 18, on advice of Town Counsel, the Board of Selectmen turned down the petition to hold a Town Meeting on the "Civil Liberties Safe Zone."

They also declined to hold a "meeting of the Town" as was done on the topic of the Iraq War last year.]

CHEERS FOR TOWN HALL PLAYERS

A. R. Gurney's play, *The Dining Room*, has long been a favorite of mine, so I looked forward to seeing it again when the newly formed Town Hall Players made its debut at The Town Hall. Any lingering doubts about the wisdom of amateurs tackling such a difficult piece were dispelled in minutes by the seemingly effortless interaction between the six principal actors who convincingly played all 58 characters.

Despite a somewhat overcrowded set (unavoidable on a tiny stage), the scenes overlapped smoothly. Exits and entrances were managed with a minimum of fuss. My hat is off to the cast and crew of this auspicious production, and above all to Director Jandi Hanna, who not only brought it all together with polish and panache but also turned in a sensitive performance as a teenager caught between innocence and experience.

Good show, Town Hall Players! And may there be many more of them!

—Jean Leich

of the Democratic persuasion and less than half of Cornwall's 300 registered Dems bothered to make it to The Town Hall. Only one voting machine was in use. Lynn Fowler handed out "I Just Voted" stickums to voters who trickled in at a rate of about 10 per hour.

By 8 P.M., when the polls closed, 147 Cornwall Democrats had voted, 98 of them going for Senator John Kerry, who had been endorsed in February by Cornwall's Democratic Town Committee. Senator John Edwards came in a distant second with 21. For the record, the remaining votes went to Howard Dean, M.D., 13; Representative Dennis Kucinich, 7; Reverend Al Sharpton and General Wesley Clark, 3 each; and Senator Joe Lieberman, 2.

—John Miller

Rent Assistance Available

Need help with your rent? It may be available, thanks to a program sponsored by the Winchester Housing Authority. Cornwall is one of 14 Northwest Corner towns that are taking part in the effort. Any Cornwall resident is potentially eligible for a federal rent grant amounting to as much as \$700 monthly, according to Fred Newman, executive director of the Authority.

To see if you're eligible, call (860) 379-4573, extension 12. They'll want to know your income and your current rent. You can qualify if you are renting in Cornwall, or even just trying to find an apartment in this tight housing market.

—Gordon Ridgway

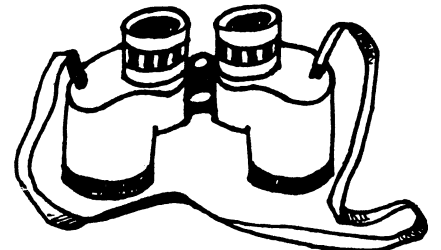
Surveying the Arts

If you'd like to express your view on the state of the arts in this area, the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council would like to hear from you. Their survey form, and information about the Council, can be found at www.artsnwct.org. The Council is a recently founded group that wants to identify individual artists—of all types—as well as arts groups in Litchfield County. If you respond, you can be listed in an internet-based "Cultural Resource Directory" planned by the Torrington-based Arts Council. The Council is funded by local foundations, including the Torrington Area Foundation and the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation as well as the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

Models for what the Northwest Connecticut Council is trying to do here are successful efforts in the Naugatuck Valley and by the Milford Fine Arts Council.

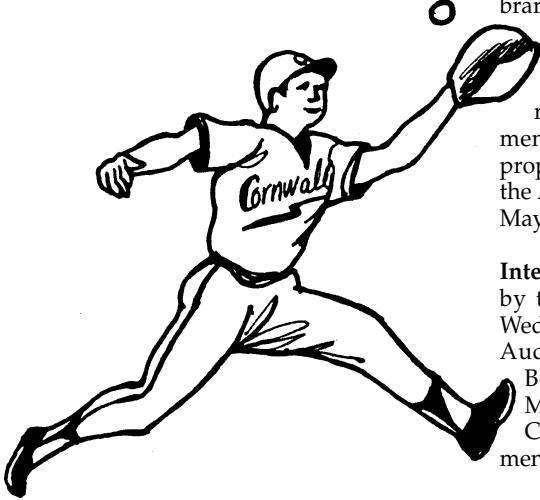
Amy Wynn, the Council's executive director, says, "We need to receive input directly from the community to be truly effective...." The survey form isn't very difficult, so I filled it in for the *Chronicle* (we come under "media").

—David A. Grossman



Events & Announcements

Art at the Dump: On April 24 from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. at the sand shed near the transfer station on Route 4. Artists are asked to bring their work between 8 and 10 A.M. that day. Artwork will be for sale with 30 percent of the proceeds going to the CCS art department. Address questions to Gail Jacobson at 672-6639 or gailjacobson@mindspring.com.



Prose: Second Annual Prose Reading on Saturday, April 17, 4 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. Local writers will read from their works. Sponsored by Friends of the Cornwall Library. Food available, donations accepted. Call Phyllis Nauts, 672-6608, to participate.

Egg Hunt: Park & Rec. will sponsor an egg hunt Saturday, April 3, 10:30 A.M. to noon at The Town Hall. First, we'll have a Wizard's Potions and More Show by Mad Science!—then the egg hunt. Free to Cornwall children ages pre-K through four. Bring a basket.

Cornwall Child Center: Open House Friday, April 2, 9 to 11:30 A.M.. Parents and children are invited. Learn about school year and summer programs available at the Child Center, West Cornwall (across from CCS).

The Ghana Fund is collecting medical supplies for children in Accra, Ghana, such as toiletries, Band-Aids, vitamins and children's cold/fever medications. Leave them at The Town Hall box by May 15. Questions? Heather Dinneen, 672-1187.

All Together Now

On April 4, we're all going to move an hour of daylight from morning to evening. Amazing what we can accomplish with a little co-operation. What if, on that same day, we all mailed a check for \$10 to the *Chronicle*

Cemetery Tour: Cornwall Historical Society guides will give tours of the Route 4 cemetery, Saturday, April 24: 10 to 11 A.M. and 2 to 3 P.M. (rain date April 25). Included are tombstone art, Civil War soldiers, early Cornwall residents and Opukahaia and the Mission School. Free.

Poetry: Come read your poem or listen to your talented neighbors read theirs at the Library, Saturday, April 3, at 4 P.M.

Tax Breaks: Cornwall homeowners 65 or older on December 31, 2003, or who receive Social Security disability payments, may be eligible for credit on their property tax. Applications may be filed in the Assessor's Office at The Town Hall until May 15. Credits will apply to the July billing.

Intergenerational Spelling Bee: Sponsored by teachers and PTAs from Region One, Wednesday, April 21, 7 P.M. at the HVRHS Auditorium. Adults (Ken Keskinen, Jane Bean, and John Leich) plus three CCS Middle School students will represent Cornwall. Cheer on your friends! Refreshments provided.

Cornwall Library Movie House: Join us for popcorn, jujubes and a fun flick, April 14 at 4 P.M. Free for children ages 5 to 8.

Collage Workshop: Kids and their parents can create their own collages on April 3 from 11 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. at the Cornwall Library. Many materials will be provided, but bring any flat items or papers you want to use. Ages 5 to 7 with adult, 8 and up may come without. Free. Sign up at the Library (672-6874).

Art in Cornwall: Sari Goodfriend's fine art photography addresses themes of time, movement, and stillness. Her show at the Cornwall Library, opening April 5, includes images from Africa, New York and Cornwall.

An exhibit of miniature paintings by Danielle Mailer opens at The Wish House April 10, 5 to 7 P.M.

At the National Iron Bank, Hilary Johnson will be showing portraits of animals during the month of April.

Bottle Drive: The UCC Church School's deposit can and bottle drive (soda or beer) runs now through Easter Sunday. Donations (rinsed) can be dropped off at the church. Also, the students are collecting a "Mile of Pennies." Penny donations can be left at the church anytime. The campaign benefits the Heifer Project International. Questions? 672-6840, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M.

Motherhouse presents a mother-daughter retreat of quiet activities. Spin wool, meet a cashmere kid, and color eggs with natural dyes. Saturday, April 3, 9:45 A.M. to 3:15 P.M. \$35 per mother-daughter pair. Call Debra, 672-0229.

Kindergarten Registration for the 2004–2005 school year, March 30 to April 1. Any child turning five on or before December 31 is eligible. Call 672-6617 to schedule a time for children to visit the kindergarten room. Please bring official immunization record and birth certificate.

UCC Dinner: All are invited to UCC's Progressive Dinner, Saturday evening, May 8. Guests, in groups of 12, will visit two houses: hors d'oeuvres at one, main course at another. Dessert at the Parish House plus show tunes and sing-along with Anne Chamberlain and John Miller. Full meal is \$35 per person; dessert and music only, \$10. Proceeds go to local food banks and international food aid. Call 672-6840 or 672-6637 by May 3 for reservations.

TinCan is a new website where you can record your voice reading a storybook, then send it electronically to a child. Meet TinCan creator David Cowan and writer Valerie Fisher at the Library on Saturday, April 24 at 4 P.M. Bring an e-mail address to send a story. Free.



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

APRIL ISSUE

Erica Prud'homme, Illustrations
Hanna and David Grossman, Editors
Phylla and Charles Osborne, Publishers

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