



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 17 : NUMBER 3 APRIL 2007



## Back in the News: Rumsey Hall

Just when we had pretty much put unhappy thoughts of a rotting Rumsey Hall on our collective backburner, that sad, crumbling landmark is back in the news. The *Chronicle* has learned that JP Morgan Chase, holder of the mortgage, now owns the building.

A certificate of foreclosure dated last February 6 spells it out, saying that Drew Hingson, who bought the property over a decade ago from the town, had forfeited his ownership by failing to make mortgage payments.

At the time of the purchase it was understood that Hingson would move into the gym building to the rear of the property while renovating Rumsey. He moved into the gym, but that was it, and Rumsey has continued to deteriorate.

When Hingson purchased the property he was a builder-developer with offices in Bridgeport, which, it was thought at the time, made him an ideal person to bring Rumsey back to its glory days. But nothing was done, and several years later Hingson went to work for a local real estate company.

When asked about the current situation, Hingson told the *Chronicle* that he had gone through a difficult financial period and that things had recently changed

for the better. He said his lawyer had a sizable escrow account and was hoping to negotiate buying back the property from the mortgage holder. If successful, Hingson said, he would begin renovating Rumsey this summer.

The *Chronicle* also contacted Cindi Latourneau, a Litchfield realtor representing the bank, who said Mr. Hingson must be gone by April 1, when she said the locks would be changed. Latourneau said determining a price and then listing the property would have to wait until April when she can inspect the building. She also said she was going to have a look inside Rumsey several weeks ago but thought better of it. "It didn't look safe," she said. The realtor also said she plans to "saturate the New York market" for prospective fixer-uppers.

Meanwhile, First Selectman Gordon Ridgway confirmed that he told Hingson some weeks ago that a party was interested in tearing down Rumsey to make way for an affordable house. Hingson, he said, rejected the idea. Ridgway also said there remain people interested in tearing down Rumsey and others in fixing it up.

Well, I hope you readers now have a somewhat better understanding of the current Rumsey situation. I think I do, but I'm not sure.  
—John Miller

## Feels Like Havens

There are about 100 or so people in town who take their car out every morning and drive to Baird's or the Berkshire Country Store to get an item that they need just as much as milk and bread. They buy *The New York Times* because they "expect the world" from its pages, where the Duchess of Cornwall (the former Camilla Parker-Bowles) is mentioned more often than the town of Cornwall.

Most of them don't care to be in the news. Or, for that matter, being the news. That's why it hit members of the Cornwall Community Network Internet discussion group so vividly in early February when they saw a long, 1,500-word story in the *Times* under the headline "On the Housatonic, a Destination for Anglers and Skiers." The article had been published in the "Escapes" section, where the paper trumpets its findings with headings such as "Havens." Cornwall had made the cut because it is "very rural and quaint," shows a "charitable spirit," and had scored high on another scale: "Cornwall is not so flashy. It's definitely a lower-key spot."

Praise like that has some people worried. The fear of being discovered and overrun by city folks, after millions of gazing eyes have detected the secret of their lives, can be daunting. So one member of the Internet chat group devised a strategy to produce the

(continued on page 2)

## APRIL 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 ☺ FM	2 Region One Bd. of Ed. 7 P.M. HVRHS Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Agricultural Comm. 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	3 PASSOVER Inland Wetlands 8 P.M. Town Hall	4 	5	6 GOOD FRIDAY CCS, Town Offices Closed	7 Constance Old Art Reception 3-5 P.M. Library † Sally Cook, James Charlton Book Signing 4-6 P.M. Wish House † Smart Power Information Meeting 7 P.M. CCS †
8 EASTER SUNDAY	9 Blood Pressure Screening Noon-1 P.M. UCC Parish House Democratic Town Comm. 7:30 P.M. Library	10 ☾ Kindergarten Registration at CCS † P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 P.M. CCS Library	11	12 Kindergarten Registration at CCS †	13 Kindergarten Registration at CCS † Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library †	14 Old Style Life Skills Workshop: Get Your Goat 10:30 A.M.-1:30 P.M. † Salt & Pepper Gospel Singers Benefit 7 P.M. UCC †
15 Deadline: April Chronicle Copy	16 CCS Spring Break April 16-20	17 ☺ Bd. of Selectmen 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	18	19 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	20 Public Hearing FY 2008 Budget 7:30 P.M. CCS	21 Corn. Assn. 9 A.M. UCC Day Room Art at the Dump 10 A.M.-4 P.M. † Laura Tyson Li Book Signing 3 P.M. Library † Town Hall Players Audition 4-6 P.M. † Family Contra Dance 7-10 P.M. Town Hall †
22 Town Hall Players Audition 1-3:30 P.M. † Danielle Mailer Art Reception 3 P.M. Library †	23 ZBA 8 P.M. Town Hall*	24 ☾ Town Hall Players Callbacks 5:30-7:30 P.M. † P&Z 7:30 P.M. Town Hall	25 Cornwall Vol. Fire Dept. 8 P.M. W. C. Firehouse	26	27 Story Hour 1:15 P.M. Library †	28 Cornwall Child Center Auction 5 P.M. Torrington Country Club †
29	30	<p>Every Week This Month:  <b>Mondays:</b> Jam Session, 7:30 P.M. Village Meeting House  <b>Wednesdays:</b> Play Group, 10 A.M. Playscape or UCC; <b>Stretch Class</b>, 4 P.M. Town Hall; <b>Tai Chi</b>, 7 P.M. CCS  <b>Thursdays:</b> Meditation for Mothers, 1:15 P.M. UCC Day Room  <b>Sundays:</b> Meditation Group, 1-2 P.M. Debra Tyler 672-0229 for location</p>				

\* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957  
† Details in Events and Announcements

(continued from page 1)

equivalent of a "Dangerous Dog on Duty" warning sign: a letter to the editor. Seven days later the paper published this note from a woman named Susan Rothchild of Miami Beach, a friend of Cornwall resident Victoria Montifiore, who only recently had discovered the attractiveness of Cornwall for herself: "I am perplexed by your positive portrayal of Cornwall, Conn. We visited friends there last summer; the bugs were ferocious, and shortly after we left our host came down with Lyme disease. They can't plant very much because the deer eat everything, and they are overrun by beavers. They faced terrible problems with local boards over building their house and putting in a driveway, and they must drive miles to the nearest drugstore. What's the upside?"

It was probably hard for a normal *New York Times* reader unfamiliar with the humorous undertones of Cornwall and its true aficionados to detect the irony. Which made Victoria Montifiore a bit remorseful when she confessed to her fellow Network members that she had been behind the prank: "I hope no one was offended, or considered it mean-spirited," she wrote. "It was really meant as a salvo against the press and the real estate market, not lovely Cornwall."

The press, i.e., "the gray lady," has moved on—to other escapes, which she discovers constantly by the bucketful. New Preston ("where well-to-do New Yorkers go to hide") had been given the same treatment in July. Roxbury ("best defined by an ethos of conservation") had been undressed on the same pages in October. A year ago, even New Milford had been given "Havens" status. Which should make concerned Cornwall residents sleep well again. Somebody who falls for New Milford will never even travel up this far. —*Juergen Kalwa*

## CVFD Juniors

This is a story to catch our readers up on a wonderful human asset to our town: the young boys and girls who make up the junior corps of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department. Initially, some of the kids heard about several junior fire squads in nearby towns and lobbied First Selectman Gordon Ridgway to start one in Cornwall. It has now been functioning for two years, and last year the then-16-year-old Zach Sawicki completed his EMS training at the high school and became the youngest member in CVFD history. Zach became a regular on the ambulance, even though he was still too young to legally drive it.

That was last year. More recently, ten youngsters ages 12 to 18 completed a special first aid course under the direction of Dave Cadwell who, with several others, volunteered his time. The course included training in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation), the use of an AED (auto-

mated external defibrillator), the life-saving techniques of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, chest compression, and shocking the heart back to its normal rhythm. They practiced bandaging, splinting, and treatment for shock and stroke, as well as environmental emergencies such as snake and tick bites. All this was accomplished in four two-hour sessions.

The youngsters who successfully completed the course are Arnon Fischer, Mark St. John, Katelynn and Mike Guerra, Oliver Fox, John Hurlburt, Phillip Geyselaers, Elizabeth Ridgway, and Mary Kate and Lauren Kosciusko. They have been equipped with protective gear and pagers, and those over 14 can now respond to limited calls for search-and-rescue and forest fire duties. The kids also do some of the so-called "grunt" work at the firehouses, such as cleanup and equipment maintenance. Eighteen-year-old Katelynn Guerra, the current junior captain, has applied for membership in the senior department, and Lauren Kosciusko, 17, is not far behind.

Forgive me for sounding off, but three cheers for these dedicated young volunteers! —*John Miller*

## Walkers Instead of Truckers

The *Chronicle* has learned that the Monuments Preservation Division of the Connecticut Department of Transportation is considering closing the last two covered bridges in Litchfield County because of repeated assaults by oversize trucks. In order to save the ancient structures that require expensive annual repair, DOT would close the West Cornwall bridge to vehicular traffic and limit the roadway to pedestrians. The other covered structure at Bulls Bridge may survive for vehicular traffic because engineers say it would be virtually impossible to build an adjacent crossing in that semi-wilderness area.

In West Cornwall, traffic coming east from Route 7 to join Route 128 would be rerouted along a new bridge that could be built about a thousand feet south of the present crossing. The new one-lane span would bring traffic from the high point on Lower River Road and lead it in a right-hand sweep to the main thoroughfare up the hill and across the railroad tracks. The one-way bridge traffic would be directed by a red light/green light system.

To accommodate trucks and create the necessary turn axis, the Wandering Moose restaurant would have to be moved back on its property and set on a new foundation. A substantial state grant would cover the cost. One welcome benefit: a much-improved parking area for the Moose.

As for Cornwall's covered bridge, the state tourism department has expressed interest

in creating an "olde worlde" flavor. Several local merchants have been asked about setting up stalls to sell their merchandise or food on weekends in the warm months.

Bianca Langner Griggs said she would consider a possible Wish House stall on the bridge. The roadside hot dog man who grills next to the gas station in Kent said he would gladly move north to West Cornwall.

No start date has been set, and a lengthy period for public comment is expected. —*Lisa Lansing Simont*

## Welcome

Pedro Adrian Aguilar, Jr., to Rebecca and Pedro Aguilar  
Bennett Snowden Bishop to Peter and Maria Bishop  
Manasseh Matsudaira to Rachel and Yoshihiro Matsudaira

## Land Transfers

Stephen J. Roberts and Anna M. Timell to Kirk Lowndes Van Tassel and Mary M. O'Sullivan-Van Tassel, land with all buildings and improvements thereon at 1 Rumsey Circle for \$478,000.

France B. Choa to Guy A. Story and Kerry Lynn Donahue, 10.074 acres, dwelling, and all improvements thereon at 400 Town Street for \$640,000.

## The Iceman Floweth

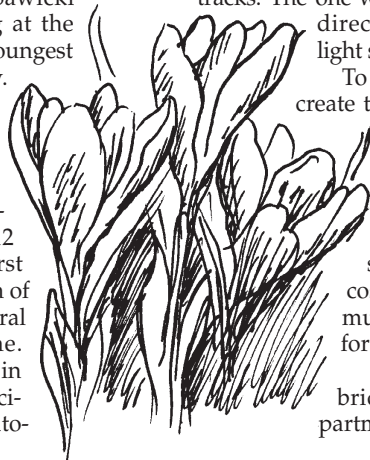
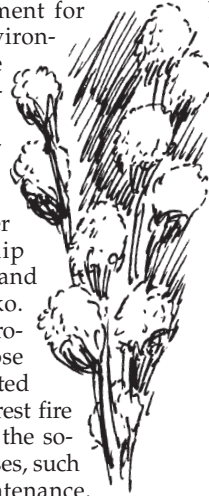
Bob Terrall once remarked that "things happen in Cornwall that do not occur in other places." It is also now true of ice. I have just read Al Gore's excellent book, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which chronicles global warming, complete with pictures of retreating glaciers around the world. Yet in Cornwall, a hillside stream has been working valiantly to create a mini menace of its own.

Susan Costello recently called the Town Office concerned that the brook behind her house was freezing out of its banks. Upon inspection, I learned that she and her neighbors had a hundred-foot-long, twelve-foot-wide, and five-foot-high glacier in their backyards. I checked the files and found that the glacier had no town permits. It was growing daily, with flooded basements within easy reach.

The Civil Defense High Command was assembled, and we decided to mount a preemptive strike on the ice. Nobly led by the Highway Department and their famous WMD (winter melting device) "Magic Salt," the force cut a trench down the middle to channel the water away from the banks.

Yet the glacier was neither to be tamed nor tricked by mere magic. Following some daytime meltdown, the mass re-froze, sending a new flow in the direction of those nearby endangered basements. Our local glacier was now threatening to undermine the former video store. Decisive action was needed to solve the crisis. Using chainsaws, picks, and a backhoe, we attacked the ice flow and seemingly got the upper hand. But with more rain in the forecast, we may have to send for Al Gore to help.

—*Gordon Ridgway*





## Cornwall Workers

What kind of work do Cornwall's residents do? How many jobs are there in town? How do people get to work? We each know what we do (or, for us retirees, what we did), and we may know what our friends do.

But to know what Cornwall as a whole works at, and where the jobs are, you need to look to the U.S. Census. It counts 800 people in Cornwall's labor force—anybody over 16 who is ready, able, and willing to work. Just about half of the labor force—387 people—consists of managers and professionals: doctors, lawyers, business owners, and the like. The next largest groups are 154 people with sales or office jobs, 117 service workers, and 98 construction workers. Only 13 Cornwall residents work in farming, forestry, or fishing.

The census also classifies residents in terms of the industry they work in. The largest category consists of 184 people who work in education, health, or social services. Next come 112 in the professions and management. Only 39 residents work in manufacturing, and only 19 in agriculture or forestry. Cornwall has a substantial representation of 88 workers in a category that combines the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services.

It's hard to know just how many of us actually work in Cornwall. Only 82 jobs were located here in 2005, according to the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. But their data applies only to jobs covered by unemployment insurance, and many local workers aren't covered. After all, one-fourth of our labor force—202 people—are self-employed. That's a far higher ratio than in Litchfield County as a whole, where fewer than one in ten is self-employed. Another 106 people work for government, but mostly not in Cornwall; according to DECD, there are only 9 full-time town employees. Our three federal workers presumably work in our three post offices.

Other categories of jobs located here include: 13 retail and 4 wholesale trade jobs, 12 construction jobs, 8 in administration or waste management, 5 in manufacturing, and 3 in agriculture or forestry. There are 21 Cornwall jobs described as "other services." Probably many of these jobs are at Cornwall Consolidated School or Mohawk Ski Area.

Other dimensions of our economic base reflect Cornwall's rural character. More than one in ten workers—that's 93 people, or 12 percent of the labor force—work at home. Most of us drive to work, 529 alone and 93 by carpool. Another 32 actually use public transportation, and 5 more use "other means" to get to work.

Some insights into how Cornwall works can also be found in other places. For example, there are 211 separate listings on the assessor's "personal property" file for people or firms that own equipment, machinery, or other such property. In most cases, the listings imply that either the owner or an employee is at work at the site of the equipment. Another source of information

# Letters to the Chronicle

## CHS SEEKS A LOAN

*The Cornwall Historical Society is now planning its spring exhibition entitled Cornwall Goes to War. We invite Cornwall residents, and those with Cornwall roots, to help us by lending us artifacts. We are looking for items such as uniforms, letters, ration booklets, photographs and prints, military orders and commissions, and other related items that would enrich the exhibit. We hope to show at least one artifact from every war or conflict, from the French and Indian War (1754-63) to the present. The "home front" will be included as well. If you would like to assist us, or have questions, please contact the Society at 672-0505.*

*The show will open on May 19, and we hope it will be an appropriate recognition of all those who have served.*

—Jodi Polsgrove, CHS Curator

## BRAZIL COMES TO CORNWALL

*Marcello, a Brazilian Rotary exchange student, will be attending HVRHS this coming year and will be hosted by a Cornwall family from his arrival in August until the end of December or early January. He is a seventeen-year-old boy who excels in swimming and soccer and speaks English. Two more area families are needed for the rest of the school year. This is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family to get to know someone from a foreign country and to show what life in rural New England is like. If you are interested and/or would like more information, please call me at 672-6637.*

—Paul Baren



might be the zoning regulation that requires permits for "home occupations." It's hardly a secret that many Cornwall dwellings have computers, faxes, or other equipment in home offices that are sometimes used for commercial purposes but are unlisted either in the assessor's files or with P&Z.

Also, let's not forget that in addition to the 800 residents who make up Cornwall's labor force, there are another 300 or more weekenders who work. Most live and work in Manhattan during the week, but some probably work from their homes here on the weekend or during the summer.

—David A. Grossman



## Events & Announcements

**Job Opportunities:** Lisa Lansing Simont is retiring after 16 years of dedicated work in the Town's Finance Office. A qualified successor is sought who should have experience in a complex and active office setting, knowledge of municipal finance, accounting, and benefits administration—or equivalent. The position is answerable to the Town Treasurer and works with the Boards of Finance and Selectmen. Resumes and references should be sent to P.O. Box 68, Cornwall, CT 06753 by April 30 (start July 1) so that the town will stay financially afloat.

The town is also seeking lifeguards to keep swimmers at the Town Beach afloat. Those interested should call the Selectmen's Office at 672-4959.

**The Salt & Pepper Gospel Singers** will perform at the United Church of Christ on Saturday, April 14, at 7 P.M. for the benefit of the Mekele School for the Blind in Ethiopia. The concert will be hosted by the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades from CCS as part of their outreach program to the school. Suggested donation is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children under 12, but all are welcome. For reservations or more information call (860) 248-3017.

**Art in Cornwall:** At the Cornwall Library, *Constance Old: Barcode Experiments* will continue through April 14. There will be an artist's reception on Saturday, April 7, from 3 to 5 P.M.

Beginning April 17, the Library will host Danielle Mailer's show of paintings *Dreaming in Color*. There will be a reception on Sunday, April 22, from 3 to 5 P.M.

At the Insiders/Outsiders Gallery, there is a rotating group show of New England artists going through the winter. Hours are noon to 5 P.M., Thursday through Monday.

At the National Iron Bank, Dennis A. Swett will be showing his paintings in acrylic during the month of April.

**Child Center Auction:** The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Cornwall Child Center Auction will be held on Saturday, April 28, at the Torrington Country Club. The silent auction begins at 5 P.M. and the live auction at 7 P.M. Your support enables the center to offer a sliding fee scale to families in Cornwall and surrounding towns. See insert in this issue for complete details.

**At the Library:** Saturday hours have been extended to 3 P.M. Marjorie Pettersen is the new Saturday librarian.

Friday story hour for preschoolers and kindergartners will resume and will be held on April 13 and 27 at 1:15 P.M. There will be no story hour during the school vacation.

**Smart Power:** On Saturday, April 7, at 7 P.M. in the Gathering Room at CCS, Keri Enright will return to Cornwall to teach interested residents about Smart Power's campaign to promote clean energy. The goal of her organization is to encourage communities to commit to obtaining 20 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by the year 2010. She will discuss how local homeowners can participate by purchasing a portion of their electricity from renewable sources. If 10 percent of residents sign up for the program, Cornwall will receive a photovoltaic system that could be installed at the Town Office or CCS to provide free power. If 20 percent sign up, Cornwall will receive two systems.

In addition, presentations will be made by local residents who have solar power installations.

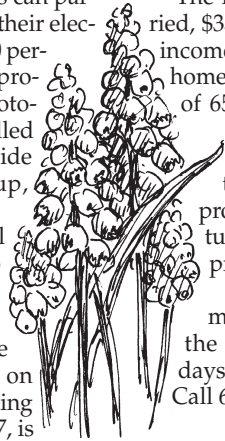
**Kindergarten Registration** for the 2007-8 school year will be held on April 10, 12, and 13. Any child turning five on or before December 31, 2007, is eligible. Parents should call the CCS office at 672-6617 to schedule a time for their child to visit the kindergarten room and meet the teacher, Mrs. Wadhams. Parents need to bring their child's official immunization record and birth certificate.

**Motherhouse Event:** Old Style Life Skills Workshop Series, "Get Your Goat," on Saturday, April 14, from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. in Cornwall Bridge. \$35 per family. Visit Rachel Gall and her backyard goats. Discuss goat care, feeding, fencing, and how to get started with your own goats. To register call 672-0229 or visit [Debra@motherhouse.us](mailto:Debra@motherhouse.us).

**Book Signing:** The Wish House will host a book signing for authors Sally Cook and James Charlton for their new children's book *Hey Batta Batta Swing! The Wild Old Days of Baseball* (illustrated by Russ MacDonald) on Saturday, April 7, from 4 to 6 P.M. There will be a baseball quiz for the audience and special prizes for the winners. Half the book sale profits will go to the Cornwall Free Library. For more information contact Sally Cook at (917) 913-2159.

### Satisfaction Guaranteed

Just think how satisfied you'll feel when next year's line 15, Schedule A, Form 1040 benefits from a generous tax-deductible contribution to the *Chronicle*. And think of all the organizations we cover that will benefit as well. If you haven't sent a check our way recently, please spread the satisfaction around by doing so now. Today.



**Tax Relief:** The Cornwall Assessor's Office will be accepting applications for the Homeowner's Tax Relief Program through May 15, 2007.

Applicants are required by law to submit proof of their 2006 income (income tax return if filed) and their Social Security form 1099 for the year 2006.

The income limits for this year are: married, \$35,300; single, \$28,800. This means all income including Social Security. Elderly homeowners must have reached the age of 65 by December 31, 2006, to qualify.

Those homeowners on Social Security disability do not need to meet the age requirement but must show proof of their permanent disability status and meet the income limits for this program.

Cornwall residents who qualify may apply at the Assessor's Office at the Town Hall on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 A.M. to noon. Call 672-2703 with any questions.

**The Eighth Annual Art at the Dump** will take place at the Cornwall Transfer Station on Saturday, April 21, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. The show features artwork fashioned from recycled items. Artists, aspiring artists, and non-artists are encouraged to participate. All artwork, unless indicated, will be for sale; 30 percent of the profits will be donated to the art department of the Cornwall Consolidated School. See insert in this issue for complete details.

**Town Hall Players Auditions:** Continuing with Summer Shakespeare Outdoors, the Town Hall Players will hold auditions for *As You Like It* on Saturday, April 21, from 4 to 6 P.M., and Sunday, April 22, from 1 to 3:30 P.M. Callbacks will be on Tuesday, April 24, from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. Performance dates are June 28 through July 1 in the pavilion at Foote Field on Route 4. Needed are wrestlers, jugglers, dancers, singers, and actors of all ages. Contact Fred Thaler at [fthaler@snet.net](mailto:fthaler@snet.net) or 672-0052.

**A Batting Cage** has been set up in the CCS gym, resulting in the cancellation of the adult evening sports activities (basketball for men and women and co-ed volleyball) until further notice. Instead there will be several evenings set up for people to use the batting cages during the next month or more. Check the Park and Rec. website for details both on the evenings for the batting cages and dates for the resumption of the adult sports: [cornwallparkandrecreation.org](http://cornwallparkandrecreation.org).

**Cornwall Captured:** The Planning and Zoning Commission would like photos of your favorite places in Cornwall. Professional and amateur photographers, young and old, are encouraged to participate. Photographs of scenic vistas, wildlife, buildings, people, events—if it's a treasure in need of notice and preservation, snap a picture of it! Photos will be shown at the Library in November and will be on display at community Town Plan events. For more information call Gail Jacobson at 672-6639.

**Family Contra Dance:** Saturday, April 21, from 7 to 10 P.M. at the Town Hall, with Paul Rosenberg calling traditional dances to the music of the Homegrown Band. Fun for the whole family. Refreshments served; donations welcome. For information call Rachel at 672-6328 or Jane at 672-6101.

**Library Reading:** Laura Tyson Li (daughter of Bobbie and sister of Josh) grew up in Cornwall, graduated from CCS and the Marvelwood School, and after college set off for China. After years in China and Taiwan, she has written a biography entitled *Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, China's Eternal First Lady*. She will talk about the book and read from it at the Cornwall Free Library on Saturday, April 21, from 3 to 5 P.M. Book signing and refreshments will follow the talk. Laura's website is [www.lauratysonli.com](http://www.lauratysonli.com).



### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

#### APRIL ISSUE

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