CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 31 : NUMBER 5 JUNE 2021

West Cornwall, Born Again?

As bear-like we emerge into the mostly vaccinated, mostly green-leafy-warmer world that is Cornwall in spring, we pause to consider the past year under Covid-19. Somehow while we social distanced, masked, quarantined, and Zoomed, we managed to keep many of our usual routines going and even made significant changes that will carry into the future. There is a hopeful quality to burgeoning developments in town, especially West Cornwall. "It's like Cornwall has a fresh coat of paint," says Janet Carlson, Economic Development Commission chair.

Some of the most significant developments in town: Cornwall Consolidated School's enrollment increased almost 30% from 88 to 113 students. The number of registered voters in Cornwall increased by 68. There were 45 new homes purchased, up from 27 the prior year. Since the pandemic began, we have gained one garden club, one winter co-op market (The Local), one ski and bike shop (3 Guys), one "Branch Out" weekly workshop for teens, one weekly protest gathering at Cornwall Bridge, one Paceline Junior Cycling Club, and one public workspace (The Union).

Further, our Cornwall Library achieved an international audience with its Zoom events. Margaret Haske reports that while live library events might typically attract 30 to 50 people, the Zoom events typically attract well over 100 people with the largest audience over 400.

Meanwhile, West Cornwall is hoping it will soon be a place where you can shop, bike, mail letters, get coffee, eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner, or meet friends for a drink. The long-awaited new restaurant and bar being developed by John Van Doren and other Cornwall residents is planning an opening later this summer. The last permits were issued in late April and work is moving forward 100% by Cornwall residents, from John, David Ellen, Jeff Morgan, Jim Terrall, and Frank Way as restaurant operator. The night in February 2020 when the restaurant proposal was presented at Planning & Zoning to a packed room of supporters—just on the cusp of the COVID-19 outbreak—is a fond memory for John.

The Local, featuring local food and products, now open on Friday and Saturday, provides an opportunity to support your neighbors and an opportunity to "know where your food is from." Later this summer, The Union will host a rock camp, a fee program offered to all students in Region One interested in playing in a band. When we spoke to Hughes Memorial Library Executive Director Libby Mitchell in early May, the first ever Cornwall high-speed internet hub was being connected at The Union. Three hubs are planned (West Cornwall, Cornwall Bridge, and the Cornwall Library). That The Local and The Union are projects of a library seems a very Cornwall approach to business development.

Could Libby and John's homegrown initiatives signify the "rebirth" for West Cornwall that many of us had recently despaired of? Possibly, if Cornwallians not only patronize local businesses, but join with others on the multiple town committees and in the clubs and associations that are constantly looking for new blood. To all newly settled residents: this means you!

—Kevin Fisher & Heidi Cunnick

West Cornwall Love Letter

I love West Cornwall, having lived there all too briefly from 1978 to 1980 when I "dropped out" and settled in a small rental house on a big property then owned by Carol Nelson, a mile from the covered bridge on Route 128. Carol came up from

(continued on page 2)

JUNE 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Every Week This Month: **Saturdays:** ◆ **Cornwall Co-Op Farm Market,** 9 am–12:30 pm ◆ **West Cornwall Farm Market,** 10 am–1 pm; **Sundays:** ◆ **Black Lives Matter Vigil,** 2:30 pm Cornwall Bridge		**1** 7:00 pm EDT Inland Wetlands/Water Courses Meeting - Zoom 7:30 pm EDT Board of Selectmen Meeting - Zoom	**2** ◆ Red Cross Blood Drive 1–6 pm Trinity Retreat Center	**3**	**4**	**5** Cornwall Association Meeting 9 am Zoom ◆ CT Trails Weekend Rattlesnake Preserve Hike 10 am–Noon ◆ Under the Tent Book Sale 10 am–2 pm Cornwall Library
6 ◆ Trinity Preserve Hike 10 am–Noon CT Trails Weekend ◆ Under the Tent Book Sale 11 am–2 pm Cornwall Library	**7** Region One Board of Education Meeting 6:30 pm Zoom	**8** Waste Water Committee 5 pm Zoom Planning & Zoning Commission 7 pm Zoom Housatonic River Commission 7:30 pm Zoom	**9**	**10** Cornwall Conservation Commission Meeting 10:30 am Zoom	**11**	**12** ◆ Robert Andrew Parker Works on Paper 10 am–7 pm Reception 5–7 pm Cornwall Library
13	**14** Park & Recreation 7:30 pm Zoom	**15** ◆ **Deadline: July *Chronicle* Copy** Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Zoom	**16**	**17** Board of Finance Meeting 7 pm Zoom	**18** George Schoellkopf Books and Blooms Hollister House Garden: 40 Years in the Making 5–7 pm Zoom	**19** ◆ XCollab The Cornwall Library - The Cornwall Garden Club 9:30–11 am Cornwall Library ◆ Cornwall Garden Tours Books and Blooms Benefit 10 am–4 pm Cornwall Library
20 ◆ Books and Blooms Hollister House Garden Visit Noon–4 pm	**21**	**22** Economic Development Commission 7:30 pm Zoom	**23** Board of Education Meeting 4:15 pm Zoom Region One ABC Committee 7 pm Zoom	**24** ◆ Gardener's Lab 5 pm Cornwall Garden Club	**25**	**26**
27	**28** ZBA* 7 pm Zoom	**29**	**30**			

Event Online
◆ Event In Person

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

New York City on weekends with her boyfriend, Steve, and we hiked the Cathedral Pines, Lion's Head in Salisbury, and Dark Entry Forest. During the week, my social activities were more limited, talking to Shirley Weaver at the post office or conversing with strangers at the bar of The Deck.

I would run to the covered bridge and back each morning, meaning a return run up the Sharon Turnpike hill. In summer, I would linger at the bridge with a vanilla ice cream cone from Yutzler's. Once on my return up the hill, exhausted and queasy, I saw a big bear staring at me as if I were his vanilla cone. I turned around and went back to town.

When I met Barbara Farnsworth, I thought she was an ordinary citizen book lover, but quickly learned she had been the Paris correspondent for *The Economist.* Unfortunately I told her I was trying to write a novel and she suggested I meet a writer friend of hers. At a party at her house, she introduced me to her friend, informing him I was trying to write a novel, which was a mistake, as it was Bill Styron. He was warm and charismatic and bigger than life, as they say.

I remember the Frost family, early settlers, having met Denny mowing Carol's back acres. When their son had leukemia at age 17, the town transformed itself into one big family. Everyone turned out with food, fundraisers at the church, and great community concern.

During my first autumn I had never seen a more brilliant array in colors, glorious enough to keep me hiking or driving to Cornwall Bridge or Salisbury, my eyes wide and my brain full of delight. One glorious day I stayed indoors when the Yankees and Red Sox played for a chance at the World Series, listening on my little transistor radio. With the good news (Bucky Dent), I ecstatically glanced out the window at the sun coming through yellow and red leaves and a group of wild turkeys, happy themselves as they strutted around.

I fell in love with West Cornwall the way men and women fall in love, the way something happens and affects you so deeply you never get over it. I've taken my family to the Northwest Corner and stayed in Falls Village, done cultural things like Music Mountain, and hiked, but my wife would not enjoy the place for more than a day or two. Since she won't move there, I've become a collector of books about the local towns.

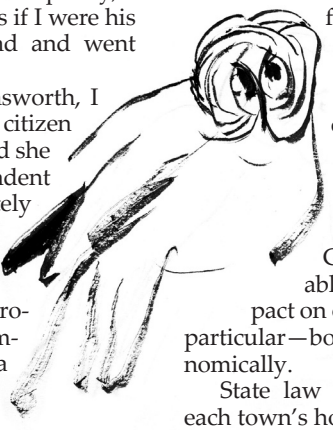
I still read the *Chronicle* every month and love the articles and illustrations. I keep *The Cornwall Companion* on my end table. I've read it several times and learned a lot about local mammals—bears and foxes, of course, but also Golds and Scovilles.

—Rich Olderman

Housing by the Numbers

The Cornwall Housing Plan Committee was formed in the fall of 2020 in order to comply with Connecticut law requiring every town "to prepare an affordable housing plan at least once every five years." The plan—due by July 2022—"must specify how the municipality intends to increase the number of affordable housing developments."

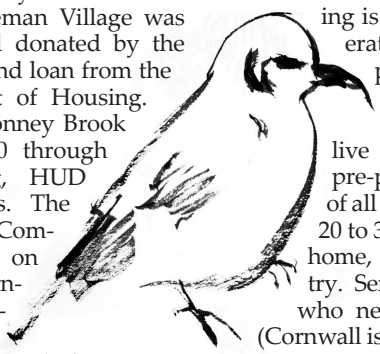
The nine-person committee has been holding monthly public (Zoom) meetings since January 2021 in order to present and review data and gain public input and to formulate the plan; a virtual forum was held on May 24 and information is available on the town website. The committee has gathered a tremendous amount of data on demographics, housing profiles, income, trends, etc. In a nutshell, the Northwest Corner's shortage of affordable housing has a negative impact on our region—and Cornwall in particular—both demographically and economically.



State law 8-30g requires that 10% of each town's housing stock be "affordable," defined by the state as costing less than 30% of the household incomes that are 80% or less than area median income. This translates to $1,436 in monthly mortgage/rent and utilities for an individual ($2,052 for a four-person household), or an annual income of $57,000 (or $82,080 for a four-person household). Currently only 3% of housing units in Cornwall meet this affordable definition (only North Canaan has achieved the 10% requirement in our region).

Over the past five years, as housing in Litchfield County has become more expensive, our wage disparity has grown, while the Cornwall poverty rate has seen a dramatic rise, up 180% from 2000 to 2017 (compared to a 25% increase statewide). Yet the mere mention of affordable housing can cause a flurry of misinformation and mischaracterization, including talk of "unwanted" outsiders and detrimental impacts on a town's physical and cultural qualities.

Affordable housing has been an important part of our community for almost 30 years. The 18-unit Kugeman Village was built in 1992, with land donated by the Kugemans and a grant and loan from the Connecticut Department of Housing. The 10-unit nonprofit Bonney Brook was established in 2010 through community fundraising, HUD grants, and tax credits. The Cornwall Housing Plan Committee hopes to build on those efforts by the Cornwall Housing Corporation, while soliciting public input. Some additional affordable housing can be created through changes in Planning and Zoning regulations. The committee has a stated goal of adding 25 affordable housing units over the next 10 years.



One of the goals of affordable housing is to maintain Cornwall's generational connection. Our young people leave town due to a lack of affordable housing, and those who stay, often live at home. According to a pre-pandemic study, nearly half of all residents between the ages of 20 to 30 in Litchfield County live at home, the highest rate in the country. Seniors on a fixed income, or who need to downsize, also leave (Cornwall is expected to have the highest percentage of seniors of any town in the state by 2025). Although the pandemic has slowed the decline, Cornwall has lost near-

Welcome

Emile Elliot Theodore Zeiser
to Jane Carlen and John Zeiser

Good-bye to Friends

Stuart Grant
John L. Miller

Congratulations

Marina Matsudaira and David R. Muench

Land Transfers

Jean B. Bryant, Trustee, to Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc., 18.867 acres of land on Valley Road, for $150,000.

Olive B. Goddard to Elizabeth Mitchell and James Herity, 5.30 acres of land at 120 Dibble Hill Road, for $93,000.

23 Kent Rd So, LLC to Jose Gonzales, 2.799 acres of land with improvements thereon at 23 Kent Road, for $347,500.

John W. and June L. Dinneen to Elizabeth Martins, two parcels of land with all buildings thereon at 91 Cemetery Hill Road, for $225,000.

Maureen E. Prentice to Kevin Greenberg and Melissa Gamwell, two parcels of land with all improvements thereon at 57 Todd Hill Road, for $685,000.

Estate of Paul H. Baren to Abigail E. Gelfand and Daniel S. Kammerman, 5.525 acres of land with buildings and improvements thereon at 68 Whitcomb Hill Road, for $995,000.

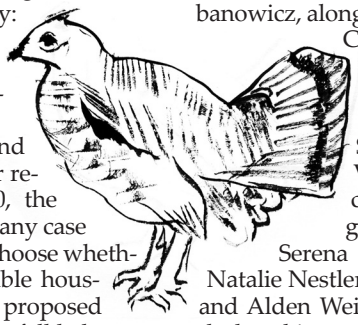
Estate of Pauline Sobotka to Fabian Astic, 10.644 acres of land with all buildings and improvements thereon at 31 Woodruff Lane for $930,000.

Mary C. Grusauski to Stephen O'Neil, land with all buildings and improvements thereon at 17 Brook Road, for $23,000.

Virginia B. Potter to Cornwall Housing Corporation, two parcels of land (1.17 acres and 1.20 acres) on Town Street.

Estate of Anna Foletar to Donald C. Ogonowski and Deborah A. Leak, one acre of land and buildings thereon at 51 Cream Hill Road, for $18,000.

ly 5% of its population in the last decade, while Connecticut overall has seen a 5% population increase. According to numerous studies, affordable housing has direct benefits to the local economy: with less money going to housing costs, more money is put back into local businesses.



There is a strong demand for affordable housing in our region; as of November 2020, the wait list was 1,520 people. In any case towns like Cornwall cannot choose whether or not to provide affordable housing: the state legislature has proposed to impose a tax on towns that fall below 2% affordable housing capacity. The only choices we have are in how we can best satisfy the state requirements while meeting the needs of our town. —*Gregory Galloway*

John Miller

With the death last month of John Miller, the *Chronicle* lost one of its iconic leaders. John was one of its most prolific contributors, a stalwart tongue-in-cheek commentator who was always handy with an anecdote or a nickname for one of Cornwall's leading lights. An unflagging booster, he incarnated the spirit of Cornwall.

John's sense of humor could win over anyone. He loved a good joke, and some of his most notable contributions to the *Chronicle* included a 1992 letter impersonating a mountain lion ("We are here. Not a whole lot of us. But enough."). He was the originator of the *Chronicle* April Fool's article with his announcement of a supposed April 2005 honeymoon visit by Prince Charles and Camilla to the home of John and Julia Scott. A later send-up was news of a Sturbridge-village style theme park to be developed in "Olde Dudleytown."

In recent years John provided short takes on Cornwall's civic life in the Cornwall Briefs. In an age of social media invective, John managed to have a smile for just about anyone he met, and usually provoked one in response. —*Paul De Angelis*

Not-Cancel Culture

Cancel Culture has come to Cornwall, as our school graduates know too well. They have endured canceled in-person classes, sports seasons and ski programs, a canceled prom, plays and musicals, dances, concerts and field trips, canceled state tournaments, canceled ACT/SAT exams, a canceled eighth-grade Washington, DC, trip, a canceled Next Top Housatonic Mountaineer competition, a canceled Walk-a-Thon, canceled awards ceremonies, a canceled Italy trip, and canceled high-fives in the hallways. Take heart students! WE WILL NOT CANCEL YOU! Cornwall congratulates eighth-grade graduates Pedro Aguilar, Omar Alganm, Joshua Benjamin, Niya Borst, Tryston Bronson, Sidney Crouch, Indigo Fitch, Rose Fitch, Manasseh Matsudaira, Marisin McLain, Alistair Taffe, Eliza Tyson, and Emil Urbanowicz, along with ninth-grade graduate Cole Mollica. We're excited for you as you move up to high school at Gould Academy, Hotchkiss, Kent School, and Housatonic Valley Regional High. We congratulate high school graduates Acadia Johnson, Serena Kim, Micah Matsudaira, Natalie Nestler, Keaton Terrall, Ian Tyson, and Alden Weigold. While your plans include taking a gap year, enrolling in the University of Vermont, Cornell University, Springfield College, and North Central College, we launch you proudly into the next chapter of your lives.

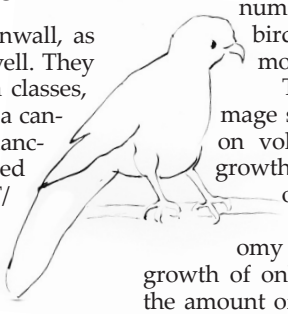
—*Rachel Matsudaira*

Editors' note: Apologies to anyone omitted; please contact the Chronicle *so we may celebrate you in the July edition.*

Trash Talking

If you reside in Cornwall, someone in your family likely makes a regular trip to the "dump," a phrase that once accurately applied to trash directly dumped into the landfill, which closed in the mid-1980s. That site is the large grass-covered mound with a wooden cow silhouette on top awaiting discovery by archeologists in 2,000 years. The renamed repository for the town's trash, the "transfer station" (TS) is not a euphemism similar to renaming garbagemen sanitary engineers. Cornwall's TS recycles and transfers a surprising amount and variety of waste to other uses.

Each week normally generates five or six tons of municipal solid waste, known as trash. It is sent once per week to the MIRA plant in Hartford, where it is burned to produce electricity. The resulting ash is placed in a lined landfill. During the height of the pandemic, when people worked from home and the town's population tripled, the trash deposited grew to ten tons per week. Much of the increase was caused by a new avian species that arrived in large numbers, the New York snowbird, who usually winters in more temperate climes.



The cancellation of two rummage sales also has had an impact on volume and may explain the growth in the permanent collection of large stuffed animals. Larger developments in the economy are reflected in our trash. The growth of online shopping has increased the amount of cardboard. The ubiquity of the internet has shrunk newsprint for recycling. Because of the increase in volume and numbers of users, Ted Larson, manager, and Will Berry, attendant, have been working 30 to 45 minutes before the TS opens, on their own time, preparing the bins and receptacles for the day's collection.

Cornwall recycles a greater variety of items than other area transfer stations. Among recycled objects are fluorescent light bulbs, rechargeable batteries, polystyrene peanuts (the packing kind), clean used clothing, waste oil and antifreeze, eyeglasses, books, printer cartridges, electronics, paper egg cartons, redeemable glass and plastic bottles, American flags, and smoke detectors. They go to many different places. For example, eyeglasses are given to the Kent Lions for charitable purposes. The egg cartons go to chicken-raising Cornwall residents. Tires are ground up and repurposed for playgrounds and mulch. The worn American flags received by the TS go to the Goshen VFW, which in tandem with the Goshen Cub Scouts, holds an annual flag-burning ceremony for proper disposal. Smoke detectors are sent to Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the microcurie, a radioactive isotope, is removed.

The TS also earns the town money. There are charges for bulky waste. Recyclable metal is paid a market rate. Electronics earn a whopping four cents per pound. With the costs of the transfer station about $6,600 over the 2020-21 budgeted amount, revenues from bulky waste charges were up over $1,000. The 2021-2022 budget has increased by 7.5% over its predecessor.

The swap shop may reopen approximately when the town offices do. Ted and Will ask patrons to be patient and not blow their horns, and those unloading to move quickly. While services will get back to normal, there are no plans to smooth over the way in, which should be called Hall's Garage Highway for the wheel alignment repairs generated by trafficking that road.

—*Jim Fishman*

Letter to the Chronicle

FELLOW CORNWALLIANS

Although the election for town boards is several months away, the caucuses that decide the slate of candidates are just weeks away (July 21-27). If you'd like a voice in who appears on the ballot, you must register for a political party. Voters registered as "Unaffiliated" cannot participate in any caucus. To register in a party, go to the Registrars of Voters page in the Government tab of the cornwallct.org website. Connecticut statutes require minority representation on all municipal boards. With so many new faces in town, let's all join in putting forth a robust slate of candidates for this fall's election. If you are interested in running for office on the Republican line, please contact KC Baird (bairdkc@yahoo.com or 860-921-8633) or Carl Hermann (windzeeker@yahoo.com). You do not need to be a registered Republican to be on our ballot line…you just need to want to help make Cornwall the best it can be! — *Rachel Matsudaira*

Cornwall Briefs

• **When it warms up,** pick up your passes for Hammond Beach at the selectman's office—$20 for a family, $10 for individuals.

• **Summer weather** also means bridge repairs**.** Work has been approved on four small bridges: two culverts on Popple Swamp Road, one small bridge over Bloody Brook on West Street, and another over Reed Brook on Music Mountain Road. Repairs to protect bridge superstructure are expected to be completed in August. Minimal disruption to traffic is anticipated.

• **A grant for 75% funding of** construction of the proposed West Cornwall wastewater treatment facility has made the "short list" of Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro's U.S. House Committee on Appropriations. Final decision on funding is expected by the end of June.

• **The east end of West Cornwall** is hopping with activity. William Betts has placed his bets on the resurgence of this part of town (and a water treatment plant) with his purchase of the former general store, now rented to 3 Guys Ski & Ride, and the old book store across the street.

• **The Ag Fair may be coming back** in September. Stay tuned for more details.

• **The Food Pantry needs restocking.** Demand remains high. Non-perishable items, tax-exempt donations, and fresh produce right from your garden are all appreciated! Drop off food inside the back doors of the UCC; make donations to Cornwall Food & Fuel Fund, Box 97, Cornwall CT 06753, or use Paypal: cwlfinance@optonline.net.

• **The Assessor's Office** is ready to begin the state mandated revaluation, effective for the October 1, 2021 Grand List. (The last revalution was completed 5 years ago.) Updated property valuations with be reflected in your July 1, 2022, tax bill.

• **Can you hear me now?** According to a scratchy call on my mobile phone with Cornwall Building Official Paul Prindle, Verizon recently activated the generator at the Popple Swamp transmission tower. Engineers still must sign off, but service on the Route 7 corridor towards Sharon should improve. —*Bob Meyers*

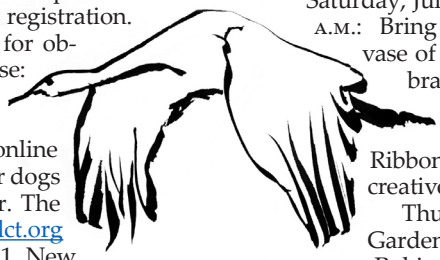
Summer Recovery

Don't succumb to hesitancy…give your local paper an appropriate shot in the arm by making a donation to the *Chronicle* today.

Events & Announcements

In addition to this print edition, the *Chronicle* posts important updates on our Facebook and Instagram feeds as well as web-only articles on our website: cornwallchronicle.org.

Dog Licensing in 2021: The state of Connecticut requires that all dogs six months of age or older be licensed annually on or before June 30 in the town clerk's office in the town where the dog is owned or kept. As of May 12, 2021, the town offices are still closed to the public. There will be no in-person issuing of dog licenses again this year. Licenses will be available on June 1. A current rabies vaccination certificate must be submitted or be on file. Neutered or spayed dogs cost $8 and male or female dogs cost $19. For a neutered or spayed dog being licensed for the first time, a certificate from a licensed veterinarian must be presented. Penalties apply for late registration. There will be two options for obtaining your dog's license: You may register by mail and enclose a SASE for return of tag and license, OR online license renewal, but only for dogs that were licensed last year. The Cornwall website cornwallct.org will show the link on June 1. New dogs and others that failed to renew their licenses last year will need to use the mail option.



Blood Drive: June 2 from 1 to 6 P.M. in Community Room, Trinity Retreat Center, UCC sponsored. Please call the Red Cross at 1-800-733-2767 for an appointment.

The original Farm Market/Market Place in West Cornwall will open on June 5 and continue into October on Saturdays from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.

At the Cornwall Library

Under the Tent Book Sale continues June 5 from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.; June 6, fill a bag for $5 from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.

Books and Blooms continues this year with a talk by George Schoellkopf from Hollister House Garden via Zoom on Friday, June 18, at 5 P.M. and a tour of four Cornwall gardens on Saturday, June 19, from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Private Hollister House garden opening on June 20 from 12 to 4 P.M. (*See insert.)*

Labor Day Benefit Art Sale: The library welcomes donations of artwork of all mediums and periods. Please email annecoffin2@gmail.com and save these dates: September 4, 5, and 6.

Guided Walks

On June 5, Deb and Bruce Bennett will lead attendees in becoming forest detectives on CCT's trails and preserves. Limited to 13, Covid rules.

On June 6, a guided tour of Trinity Preserve and the new Trinity Trail will be led by Johan Winsser. Limited to 13. Covid rules. Sign up for both tours at ctwoodlands.org.

Art in Cornwall

Robert Andrew Parker's "Works on Paper" opens Saturday, June 12, at the library, with a reception from 5 to 7 P.M.

The Souterrain Gallery will continue to showcase "Resting Place," the works of Hannah Jung, through July.

Cornwall Garden Club

Saturday, June 19, from 9:30 to 11 A.M.: Bring your bouquet/bud vase of cut flowers to the library by 8:45 A.M. to sell at Books and Blooms to benefit the library. Ribbons for most artistic, creative, and inspired.

Thursday, June 24, 5 P.M. Gardeners' Lab with Roxana Robinson as she tackles issues in her Cornwall meadow. 25 in-person limit, RSVP by June 17. To be recorded. cornwallgardenclub1@gmail.com.

Weekly Black Lives Matter Vigils: Sundays in June at 2:30 P.M. Cornwall Bridge.

CORNWALL CHRONICLE
cornwallchronicle.org

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BOOKS & BLOOMS

COUNTRY GARDENS ✣ 2021

FRIDAY, JUNE 18 | 5PM

George Schoellkopf – *Hollister House Garden: 40 Years in the Making* ~ Via Zoom

SATURDAY, JUNE 19 | 10AM TO 4PM

Tour of Four Cornwall Gardens

John and Juliet Hubbard | Bart and Debby Jones
Roxana Laughlin | Michael Trapp

ON SALE AT THE CORNWALL LIBRARY:

New and out-of-print gardening books
Delightful tea towels with the Books & Blooms signature design
Cut flowers arranged and donated by members of the Cornwall Garden Club

SUNDAY, JUNE 20 | 12PM TO 4PM

Visit Hollister House Garden, Washington, Connecticut

TICKETS & INFORMATION:

Talk only: $20 | Tour only: $25 | Talk & Tour: $40
The Cornwall Library | 30 Pine Street | 860.672.6874 | CornwallLibrary.org