



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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## Cornwall Went to War 100 Years Ago

The United States held back as long as it could from the "foreign entanglement" that President Washington spoke of in his farewell address. That was in 1796 and, aside from a few forays into Mexico or Canada, America heeded his advice.

It all started to come unraveled after August 1914, when the nations of Europe fell helplessly into a war their outdated, irrelevant alliances couldn't prevent. America waited tensely for the other shoe to drop.

President Woodrow Wilson "kept us out of war" as he so famously promised until repeated sinkings of ships carrying U.S. goods and citizens made it hard to avoid a response. The tipping point, oddly, came from Mexico. In late 1916 rumors surfaced that Germany was planning an invasion of the U.S. up through Texas, and the White House had to act. On April 6, 1917, Wilson and Congress declared war.

All these excitements were very far away from Cornwall in every respect. April was a time of repairing harnesses and sharpening plow blades. Documents at the Cornwall Historical Society indicate that everyone was looking ahead to a fine summer.

Cornwall's population in 1917 hovered between 800 and 1,000 people, but by May 6, 56 officers and men had enlisted in the Connecticut Home Guard. The muster included 10 men from the Hart family, two Bates, and a Yutzler. The men trained, using cast-off service rifles and uniforms. More than once drills had to be cancelled because of deep snow or, in 1918, the influenza epidemic.

The enlistees were called up in groups for active duty in France or to staff military bases all over the country. One Rumsey Hall graduate stationed in Plattsburg, NY, wrote a Cornwall friend about his buddies: "In my barracks [there are] an actor, an editorial writer, and an Arabian from Jerusalem who deserted from compulsory service in the Turkish army to come to this country."

The Rev. Edward Starr, rarely at a loss for words, said in his *History of Cornwall*: "The twentieth-century soldier may have had the heart of Miles Standish but three centuries had made the flintlock come and go, trench fighting had become prevalent, and his armor had forsaken the breast but returned to perch on the head." He meant the metal helmets the American doughboys wore at the front.

Here at home, a booming propaganda effort urged schools, churches, and libraries

to support the troops. A song sheet was circulated called "America's Message":

Wake all ye nations  
A new song is ringing!

The third verse was sung as a descant to "My Country 'Tis of Thee."

Schools were asked to examine their lesson plans to ensure they were "best fitted to prepare our children for their place in the new democracy which must arise out of the world war."

The U.S. Civil Service Commission circulated a call for "stenographers and typewriters" (the people not the machines) to replace men who had enlisted. The jobs paid between \$900 and \$1,200 a year.

Something called the National Emergency Food Garden Commission—bureaucracy was blooming in Washington—published a steady stream of booklets advising families about home economy, sometimes in catchy jingles: "So try to plan to dry or can whatever you are able and you will find your store room lined with treasures for your table."

Cornwall, and the rest of the United States, were isolated no more on the other side of a big ocean. It was the start of the American Century. —Lisa L. Simont

## MAY 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Mondays: Yoga</b> , 8:30–10 am Library; <b>Mat Squad</b> at 6:30 pm UCC; <b>Karate</b> , 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall; <b>Men's Senior Basketball</b> 6:30–8:30 pm CCS	<b>1</b> ♦ Deadline Cornwall Conservation Trust Scholarships ♦ Deadline Marie Baum Scholarship ♦ Deadline for Winter Heating Assistance ♦ Region 1 Bd. of Ed. 6:30 pm HVRHS ♦ Ag. Advisory Comm. 7:30 pm Town Office	<b>2</b> ♦ Kindergarten Registration CCS ♦ Region 1 Budget Vote <sup>1stQ</sup> Noon–8 pm Town Hall ♦ Inland Wetlands Agency 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> ♦ Historical Society Annual Meeting 8:30 am 7 Pine Street	<b>6</b> ♦ Community Contra Dance 7 pm Town Hall
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> ♦ Free Blood Pressure Clinic Noon–1 pm UCC ♦ Park & Rec. 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>9</b> ♦ Eco. Dev. Comm. 9 am Town Hall ♦ West Cornwall Septic Committee 5 pm Ingersoll's Shop ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library ♦ Housatonic River Commission 7:30 pm CCS	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> ○ FULL	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> ♦ West Cornwall Farm Market Opening Day 9 am–1 pm ♦ Make a Zine Workshop 2–5 pm Library
<b>14</b> ♦ Vespers 7 pm North Cornwall Meetinghouse	<b>15</b> ♦ <b>Deadline: June Chronicle Copy</b> ♦ Deadline Woman's Society Scholarship Application	<b>16</b> ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>17</b> ♦ Park & Rec. Trip to Carousel & Clock/Watch Museum 9 am–4 pm ♦ Board of Education 4:15 pm CCS ♦ Bd. of Finance 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>18</b> ♦ Cornwall Conservation 7 pm Library	<b>19</b> ♦ Budget Town Meeting 7:30 pm CCS	<b>20</b> ♦ Co-op Farm Market Opening Day 9 am–12:30 pm ♦ Cornwall Bridge Stroll 11 am–3 pm ♦ 2016 Flat Rocks Fire Discussion 1 pm Town Hall ♦ Mystery Dinner Theater 5:30 pm Torrington Country Club
<b>21</b> ♦ Show of Peace Art Reception 11:30 am UCC	<b>22</b> ♦ ZBA* 7 pm Library	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> ♦ Cornwall Business Assoc. 9 am W. Cornwall Library ♦ Reg 1 Elementary School Art Reception 5:30–7:30 pm Souterrain	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> ● NEW	<b>27</b> ♦ Memorial Day Weekend Book Sale 9 am–2 pm Library
<b>28</b> ♦ Memorial Day Weekend Book Sale 11 am–2 pm Library	<b>29</b> ♦ Comm. Service N. Cornwall Cemetery 9 am ♦ Memorial Day Weekend Book Sale 10 am–2 pm Library ♦ Seamen's Memorial 10 am Covered Bridge ♦ Memorial Day Parade/Ceremony 11 am ♦ Memorial Day Carnival Noon UCC	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Tuesdays: Zumba</b> , 5:30–6:30 pm Library ♦ <b>Wednesdays: Tai Chi</b> , 5–7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; <b>Stitch 'n Spin</b> , 7:15–8:30 pm UCC ♦ <b>Thursdays: Pilates</b> , 8:30–9:30 am Library; <b>Toddler Play Group</b> , 10:30–11:30 am Library; <b>Meditation</b> , 4–5 pm call Debra 672-0229 <b>Zumba</b> , 5:30–6:30 pm Library; <b>Mah Jongg</b> , 7–9 pm Library call 672-6874; <b>Adult Volleyball</b> , 7–9 pm CCS gym ♦ <b>Fridays: Yoga</b> 8:30–10 am Library ♦ <b>Sundays: Yoga</b> 9–10:30 am Library; <b>Meditation</b> , 1 pm call Debra 672-0229		

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

## Vibrant Markets

As a testament to our strong economy, we are now going to have two farmers' markets in Cornwall beginning on May 13 in West Cornwall and May 20 in Cornwall and continuing until October 28. The markets will be open, respectively, from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and from 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. The original market, Cornwall Farmers' Market, will continue on the grounds of the Wish House in West Cornwall, thanks to Bianca and Richard Griggs.

Our other market, the Cornwall Co-operative Farm Market, will be located on the Green in Cornwall Plains. Both groups have obtained the necessary zoning permit and liability insurance to operate. Vendors will pay a small fee that will go towards operating costs, advertising, and, in the case of the Co-op Market, some performances and events.

While parking has been seen as a problem in West Cornwall, two sites should now alleviate any congestion or safety concerns. Patrons in West Cornwall are encouraged to park in Railroad Square and in the lot behind the Wish House. Here we can look forward to the delicious bread, focaccia, and pizza of Carol Bonci and the baked goods of Heidi Rose. Patrick Beal will return with organic produce from Stonewall Vegetables and Margaret Tully will have her seedlings, flowers, and herbs. Maple sugar, honey, eggs, and cheese will also be available from local vendors. Negotiations are still underway for other options, from meat to crafts. Free coffee for patrons will be provided as we grab the mail and select our tomatoes.

The Co-op Market will host the renowned treats of Susan Saccardi and the herbs of Patricia Bramley. Hurlburts will be there with their beef and syrup, as will Gordon Ridgway with his many organic veggie options, maple syrup, plants, and flowers. Gordon will also add pork and eggs to his "menu" this season. You can also expect to see Mark Orth from Sam Waterston's Birdseye Brook Farm. And, for even more amusement besides chatting with your neighbors, Susan Saccardi and Patricia Bramley have lined up a host of varied performers to entertain us on selected market days. They call it "Scenes and Events" and the first will be on June 3—a pie tasting—sponsored by Susie's Sweets. Jordan Colon will have a pottery demonstration and Rachel Gall will be our musical interlude on July 1. See the insert in this issue of the *Chronicle* for more details about upcoming events. Shoppers are encouraged to park on Pine Street and Bolton Hill Road or at the town hall or library.

Of course, both the Cornwall Library and the transfer station—our most enticing dump—will be open to help Cornwallians complete their Saturday rounds.

Our farm markets stimulate business for our local farmers and entrepreneurs, and continue the convenience and pleasure of shopping locally. —*Pamela P. Wilson*

## Fox Attack

Don Bachman was out walking his dog Daisy at the Trinity Retreat Center when a screeching gray fox rushed out of the woods and attacked him. Terrified, Daisy stood by and watched as the fox snapped at Don's feet. Having recently had his hip replaced, Don was walking with a cane, which he used to flip the fox away from him. Undeterred, the fox came at him again even more viciously and Don was forced to strike it, sending the frenzied animal skidding to the side of the road. With Daisy at his side, he hobbled home as fast as he could and called Animal Control Officer Brad Hedden.

Brad arrived at the scene with his wife, Erin, who cares for the animals at Trinity and earlier found one of the chickens killed and Marge the donkey suffering from an apparent bite on the nose. She was concerned the fox may have been the culprit and was thankful Marge had received a rabies shot only a month previously.

Armed with a .22 rifle, Brad climbed up on a large rock to have a look around and out of the woods, close to where Don had described last seeing it, the fox emerged. Brad later described the animal as a healthy looking gray fox except for the top of its head which was completely bald. Hissing and snarling, the fox ferociously confronted him and Brad immediately told Erin to get back in the car. He fired several times as it kept darting back and forth, wounding it once in the body. Losing sight of the fox when it scurried under the base of the rock, he lost count of the number of shots he had taken as well.

Leaning out over the edge of the rock, he aimed the barrel of his .22 downward at the place he thought the fox was hiding. Suddenly, the animal made one last shrieking lunge at him and Brad shot it in the head with his last bullet.

While he had eliminated the menace, Brad regretted the location of the fatal wound, which was unavoidable under the circumstances. Because its brain was damaged, the fox could not be tested for rabies, which remains only a possible and not the conclusive cause for its affliction.

—*Bill Goulet*

## Fiber Optic Update

In case you have been wondering what ever happened to the fiber optic broadband proposals—one of last year's hot topics—there is some news to report.

The Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG), the coordinating body for the 21 northwest Connecticut town officials, has received a \$200,000 state grant to fund a number of studies and surveys to inform and guide its preparation of a request for proposals to which broadband and technology providers can respond. These responses would detail what services would be offered, possible rates, projected demand, and how each responder would partner with the municipalities and NWCONNect to bring the needed services to the area. The business model proposed by the vendor might take the form of a private venture, or public-private participation, or include publicly owned or managed infrastructure. NWCONNect is a private non-profit corporation looking to create a fiber optic network and an upgrade in the region's mobile telephone network, and it is working in partnership with NHCOG. The organizations are at this moment in the process of retaining a project coordinator consultant, and expect to have study results and proposals to share with interested parties at a conference to be held in the fall.

—*Tom Barrett*

## Goodbye to Friends

Marion Blake  
Daniel Cain

## Land Transfers

Michael James Geyselaers and Brigitte Erika Geyselaers to Melissa and Roy Bronson, residence, driveway and improvements at 19 Pierce Lane, for \$172,000.

Cheryl Ann Cass and Sandra Lynn Spiessl to Jane Herold and Robert Adzema, land with all buildings and improvements thereon, at 54 Sharon Goshen Turnpike, for \$168,000.

## Tough Year for Budgeteers

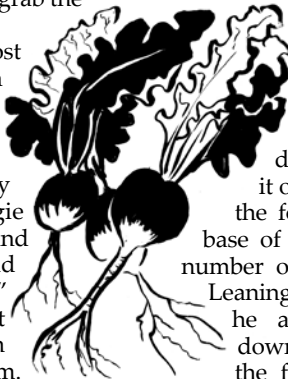
As of mid-April there are a number of ingredients that will contribute to concocting the next fiscal year's budget "stew." With apologies for these barely digestible lumps of numbers, here is the recipe:

(1) Board of Selectmen budget up 2.23 percent.

(2) Board of Education budget down 2.21 percent, from \$4,068,862 to \$3,978,968. Here, although Cornwall's Region One assessment is proposed to increase by \$106,333, the CCS education budget was pared down by \$198,487—over 7 percent.

(3) Capital budget down 11.13 percent.

(4) Debt service doubling from \$181,175 to \$362,250. The proposed increase reflects estimated payments of \$180,000 on the town's \$1.5 million bank loan approved in April, to finance town bridge replacements and repairs. The ten-year loan, which was anticipated to close late last month, will



take advantage of continuing low rates; the actual debt service payments may be tweaked downward by the time the loan closes. Bridge work is expected to start this summer. The town's existing bond obligation will be paid off in five years.

(5) The grand list is down by \$898,800 (3.8 percent) to \$389,384,320, in part a result of declining property values, but also some transfers off the tax rolls, according to JoAnne Dodge, associate assessor. Some of this tax loss may be recouped when Trinity Conference Center resumes payments in lieu of taxes, as in the past.

(6) Further reduction, and even elimination, is expected in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) by the state. For the 2015-16 fiscal year, this amounted to over \$85,000 in state assistance. Anticipating cuts for the current fiscal year, the town budgeted receiving only half of that; but now, estimates run to getting only about \$6,000. So, for the upcoming year even less is expected.

(7) Proposals by the state would pass down teachers' retirement obligations to the local level, which in Cornwall's case would amount to an additional \$193,000 burden.

Excluding the teachers' retirement issue, which is a separate line item, the proposed budget represents an increase of .98 percent—less than 1 percent; adding the retirement amount results in a total proposed increase of 3.85 percent.

The state had not resolved its pension proposal by the town public hearing in April. Nor will it in all likelihood by our town meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month, and yet the tax bills have to go out. This unknown presents several options to the Board of Finance: (a) include the pension amount in the budget and tax for it; (b) don't include it but face the need to contemplate amended tax bills and/or use of reserves; or (c) include part of the proposed amount, and when the results are known, absorb the balance by applying town reserves.

Greater details are set out in the budget worksheet on the town's website, and more may be known by the meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>, so plan to attend.

—Tom Barrett

## Post Office Roulette

I must have arrived at the "old coot" stage of senility, as I recently found myself contemplating driving safety issues more urgently. It's that or (and?) having just taken an AARP Smart Driver course with my spouse.

Today's example involved the perennial issue of safely exiting the West Cornwall Post Office lot, in this case to head uphill (somehow heading downhill doesn't seem as threatening—maybe because we figure all that metal behind our seats acts as extra

padding, and anyway we're going in the same direction as the downhill traffic). As I waited to pull out, I was passed by a car going downhill at well over 30 mph, I would guess, the driver totally oblivious to the possibility that as their car rounded the corner of the last house, there would be a car in the middle of their path: broadside.

One of our class lessons was to keep at least a three-second space cushion between us and the car we are following, which implies that we better be prepared to come to a complete stop in three seconds. That 30-mph car would have failed completely, even assuming there was a foot already on the brake and no additional reaction time needed. I decided to test it all out. Result: Anything over the 20-mph posted—and flashing—limit is very scary, to say the least.

As for those exiting the post office lot (there are about 165 box holders, not counting others having business there): Are you a "close your eyes, gun it, and hope for the best" person or have you learned to get into position to see uphill using Barbara Farnsworth's picture window? Do you prefer to back out or maneuver around to face out?

I think a 3-second test/experiment as we approach that blind corner would be an eye opener for each of us. Unfortunately, a segment of the traffic is through traffic, and those drivers will not be sufficiently aware of the danger in ignoring the posted limit.

—Tom Barrett

## Deck the Halls...

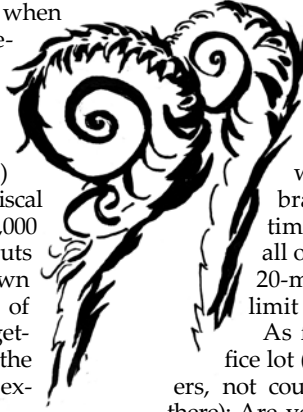
On a recent drive around Cornwall, I noticed (as I have every year) that many neighbors still have a holiday wreath or sprig up on their doors. Is this a resistance movement to a change of seasons?

Anne Zinsser avers that she purposely keeps her wreath up because it is beautiful, personal, and gives her pleasure. Her niece's partner makes a wreath just for her, using natural decorative items like pinecones and holly leaves from the Northwest.

Erica Prud'homme, on the other hand, admits that every two or three days she'll say to Hector, "Maybe we should take it down." It is "true laziness," she confesses, but they like looking at it.

Shoulder surgery might have delayed Lynn Scoville from removing the two wreaths on her porch this year. But in truth, she usually keeps them up. They add "cheer."

You won't see a wreath on Tom and Arleen Barrett's door; it is hanging on a tree across the road. In December the decorative ears of corn of fall give way to one of the



# Letter to the Chronicle

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*Last year the historical society welcomed visitors more than 877 times. Who greeted those friends, neighbors, and out-of-town visitors? Other friends and neighbors who volunteered as docents. Indeed, the doors would remain locked up tight without these generous souls who volunteer for at least four hours.*

*We are now seeking more volunteers who might want to act locally to make a difference by working one morning or afternoon this summer or fall. (You will need to bring a smile and a good book.) We hope you can join our ranks. Please contact our docent coordinator Ginny Potter at 672-6191 if you'd like to help.*

*We look forward to seeing you at our exhibits and programs this summer.*

—Karen Doebelin  
President of the Board

UCC Christmas Fair wreaths with a red ribbon. In March, Arleen swaps out the red ribbon for a green one to commemorate St. Patrick's Day, after which time Tom dispatches the ribbonless wreath across the road—forever, or for as long as the wreath lasts.

The ultimate ornament was spotted on Tim and Marie Prentice's door—a bright yellow circle. Tim created it out of yellow feathers last summer, looked for a place to put it, and ended up hanging it on the door for the holidays. He now plans to leave it there all year. "It has a long shelf life."

In the interest of full disclosure, Hunt Williams's and my Christmas Fair wreath is still up on the garage. Thanks to its ornery metal frame it retains its fullness and structure well into April, but the colors have morphed into sickly yellow-greens.

Maybe it's time... —Honora Horan



## Cornwall Briefs

• **Fundraiser** for the Cornwall Child Center takes place Saturday, May 20, at the Torrington Country Club under the title "Murder at the Juice Joint," a murder mystery dinner production. The fun begins at 5:30 p.m. It is \$75 per person or \$130 per couple, and the price includes admission, entertainment, dinner, and two drinks. Oh, almost forgot: you can dress up and win a prize. The theme is 1920's pinstriped gangster/flapper. For tickets call 672-6989 or go online to [cornwallchildcenter.org/tickets](http://cornwallchildcenter.org/tickets).

• **Word from Steve O'Neil** at the transfer station: "We are now accepting clean, dry plastic bags and film packaging." These include things like dry cleaning bags and stretch wrap. Among the unacceptable

(continued on page 4)

items: prewashed salad mix bags, degradable bags, candy bags.

•**Educational Un-Scholarships:** They are called "gifts" from the Woman's Society of up to \$2,000 to each graduating high school senior who lives in Cornwall. Applications, which must be in by May 15, are available from the town clerk, the HVRHS guidance office, or at the library. Any questions? Contact Nita Colgate at nitacolgate@optonline.net.

•**Memorial Day Events** on Monday, May 29, start at 9 A.M. with a memorial service honoring Cornwall veterans; it's led by Virginia Gold at the North Cornwall Cemetery on Rattlesnake Road. If you can, bring flowers to decorate graves. The Seamen's Memorial Service at 10 A.M. takes place at the Covered Bridge. At 11 A.M. the parade starts in the village, followed by the ceremony on the Green. And then there's the carnival sponsored by United Church of Christ on its grounds; lots of fun for all.

•**Civic Life Project** is holding a screening of films by students at HVRHS, including three from Cornwall. They will be shown at Noble Horizons on Tuesday, May 30, at 6:30 P.M. The Cornwall students and their projects are Blake Buckley (militarization of police), Elliot Gabrielson (college retention programs), and Kailyn Reilly (substance abuse treatment).  
—John Miller

## Events & Announcements

**Region One Budget Referendum** takes place at town hall on Tuesday, May 2, from noon until 8 P.M. Absentee ballots are available in the town clerk's office.

**Cornwall Historical Society** will elect directors and transact other appropriate business during its annual membership meeting on Friday, May 5, 8:30 A.M. at 7 Pine Street.

**The 19th Annual Spring Bird Walk**, led by Art Gingert and Jean Bouteiller, will take place on Saturday, May 6, from 7 to 9:30 A.M. Limited to 15 participants—first-time birders are welcome. Bring binoculars and waterproof boots; take precautions for ticks.

## The Maypole

Many years ago the many members of my family born in May set up a maypole and danced around it until we all fell down in the grass laughing, too weak to move. Don't let this happen to you before you write your check to the *Chronicle*. We're always grateful! Thanks.

Please do not wear white. Rain date: Sunday, May 7. Call Art at 672-0077 to register.



**The West Cornwall Farmers' Market** will open May 13, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. on the grounds of the Wish House, with additional parking in the rear and in Railroad Square.

**Vespers** will again be sung by the group Cantus Excelsis at North Cornwall Meetinghouse on Sunday, May 14, at 7 P.M.; presented by the Chapel of All Saints.

**The Park and Recreation Senior Bus Trip** to the Carousel and the Clock & Watch museums in Bristol will take place Wednesday, May 17, from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. \$10.50 plus lunch. Contact the director at 672-4071 or prcornwall@gmail.com.

**The Annual Budget Town Meeting** is Friday, May 19, 7:30 P.M. at CCS Gathering Room to vote on the 2017-2018 budget.

**The Cornwall Co-op Farm Market** begins Saturday, May 20, from 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. on the village Green in front of town hall. (See insert in this issue).

**Cornwall Bridge Spring Stroll:** The Cornwall Business Association will provide music, wine tasting, snacks, a raffle, and more on Saturday, May 20, 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. in Cornwall Bridge.

**The 2016 Flat Rocks Fire** will be discussed

Saturday, May 20, 1 P.M. at the town hall. (See insert in this issue)

## Art in Cornwall

The Region One elementary school art exhibit opening reception will be held at the Souterrain Gallery Wednesday, May 24, from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. and run through Memorial Day weekend.

The UCC Parish House will exhibit artwork of young people from the church school titled "A Show of Peace," running from May 21 to June 11 with the opening reception on Sunday, May 21, at 11:30 A.M. All are welcome.

The Cornwall Library continues to exhibit Frank Bramble's "In Fading Light: Landscape in the Land of the Housatonic" through May 21.

The Toll House Gallery showcases newly added works by Lennart Swede Ahrstrom and Donald Bracken, Monday to Friday, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Saturday 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

## At the Cornwall Library

The Memorial Weekend Book Sale is Saturday, May 27, 9 A.M. to 2 P.M.; Sunday, May 28, 11 A.M. to 2 P.M.; and Monday, May 29, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. (See insert for special times and pricing.)

Make a Zine! (a self-published mini-magazine) in a workshop with Olivia Montoya, designed with middle and high-schoolers in mind; Saturday, May 13, 2 to 5 P.M. Adults also welcome. No charge.

**Tax Relief:** Persons facing difficulty paying their tax bill may apply for a \$200 reduction if their taxes exceed 10 percent of their income. Requests must be filed at the first selectman's office by June 1. Call 672-4959 for details.

## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

[cornwallchronicle.org](http://cornwallchronicle.org)

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