CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 30 : NUMBER 4 MAY 2020

Editors' Note:

We are all impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and we can feel some comfort knowing the town continues to be prepared. As of April 20, there is only one confirmed case in Cornwall. This number reflects lab-confirmed tests of individuals who reported a Cornwall address. There may be other cases that were confirmed in other states, as well as some whom physicians did not test but suspected to be positive and instructed individuals to quarantine at home. Local changes include closing the town hall, library, and school to the public, but maintaining the continuity of operations has been essential. In-person meetings have been suspended. Check cornwallct.org for details of boards' activities. Mask making, Zoom meetings, and online chats are the new norm. Stay healthy and please wash your hands.

Cornwall Coronavirus Helping Hand

When it feels like there is absolutely nothing you can do about a situation, it helps to do something. This is how I find myself volunteering with Cornwall Social Services in the midst of the heartbreaking Covid-19 pandemic. I am just one of many who gathered at the firehouse in the middle of March, showing one another the same courteous distance usually reserved for a bear or snapping turtle. We were briefed on virus transmission, safety protocols, and the significant needs of the Cornwall community, specifically residents who are homebound or in compromised health or both.

Heather Dinneen spearheads the whole operation—with the utmost sense of calmness and grace. Before deliveries are made, volunteers spend hours shopping, sorting, packing, and labeling the food. I opted to deliver the groceries which, given the enormity of the crisis, feels like a very small task. It is something I feel confident in doing as I have schlepped many a grocery bag, usually to the various New York City photo studios where I'm hired to prepare and produce images of aspirational food. This new practical role allows me to feel connected to a belief that food nourishes the spirit and body in more or less equal proportion. The appreciative waves from those who have received groceries proves, to me anyway, this to be true.

I now have two children at home, each with the rug of young adulthood pulled out from underneath them. We are well. We are together. We are fortunate. Still, it is easy to fall into moments of despair. The usual framework of my day is rendered meaningless right now. I am absolutely guilty of lounging in my sweat pants long after lunch and maybe contemplating a Scotch an hour earlier than I should. My new social services responsibilities give me much needed structure, a sense of purpose and accomplishment, and a connection to a town that I currently call home—even if opening my own front door causes me to hesitate and recount where I have been—what I have touched. Sometimes, while out on my rounds, I call my mother. Her retirement home is in lockdown, and I am so grateful for the people who care for her. There was snow on the ground when we started sheltering in place. Now the Cornwall hills are covered in the colorful blossoms of Easter. A velvet moss blankets the stumps of felled trees. Soon I will veer from the road in search of ramps and nettles on the way home from making deliveries. All this beauty makes me wonder if nature is just as scared of this strange new world as we are, and simply doing its best to let us know we are not alone. —*Frances Boswell*

MAY 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
During this time of social distancing on account of the Coronavirus, the *Chronicle* will be posting important updates, information about online events, and reflections on the moment on our Facebook and Instagram feeds. Readers can also find our Web-exclusive reports posted directly on our website at cornwallchronicle.org **ALL GOVERNMENT MEETINGS WILL BE HELD REMOTELY** Zoom Meeting web-links and dial-in numbers can be found in the respective agendas.					**1** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon	**2** ◆ Bart Jones CCT Trail Clean-up and Blazing
3	**4** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Region One Bd. of Education 6:30 pm ◆ Agricultural Advisory Committee 7:30 pm	**5** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Inland Wetlands/ Water Courses 7 pm ◆ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm	**6** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Library Tea & Story with Roxana Robinson 4pm	**7** ○ FULL ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ What Are You Reading? with Margaret Haske 2:30 pm ◆ Cornwall Association Trivia Night 7–8:30 pm	**8** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon	**9** ◆ Bart Jones CCT Trail Clean-up and Blazing ◆ Cornwall Association Meeting 9 am
10 ◆ Rose Algrant Online Art Sale Deadline	**11** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Park & Recreation 7:30 pm	**12** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Planning & Zoning Commission 7 pm ◆ Housatonic River Commission 7:30 pm	**13** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Library Tea & Story with Roxana Robinson 4pm	**14** ◆ Cornwall Conserv. Comm. 10:30 am ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ What Are You Reading? with Margaret Haske 2:30 pm ◆ Cornwall Association Trivia Night 7–8:30 pm ☽ 4thQ	**15** ◆ **Deadline: June *Chronicle* Copy** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon	**16** ◆ Bart Jones CCT Trail Clean-up and Blazing
17	**18** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ ZBA* 7 pm ◆ Internet Expansion ZOOM Program 7:30 pm	**19** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm	**20** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Library Tea & Story with Roxana Robinson 4pm ◆ Board of Education 4:15 pm	**21** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ What Are You Reading? with Margaret Haske 2:30 pm ◆ Cornwall Association Trivia Night 7–8:30 pm ◆ Board of Finance 7 pm	**22** ● NEW ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon	**23** ◆ Opening Day Co-op Farm Market Town Green 9 am–12:30 pm ◆ Bart Jones CCT Trail Clean-up and Blazing
24 **31**	**25** MEMORIAL DAY	**26** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Economic Development Commission 7:30 pm	**27** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ Library Tea & Story with Roxana Robinson 4pm	**28** ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon ◆ What Are You Reading? with Margaret Haske 2:30 pm ◆ Cornwall Association Trivia Night 7–8:30 pm	**29** ☾ 1stQ ◆ Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time Noon	**30** ◆ Co-op Farm Market Town Green 9 am–12:30 pm ◆ Bart Jones CCT Trail Clean-up and Blazing

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

For additions and updates, visit www.cornwallchronicle.org

Carrying On, Calmly

With all that is happening around us this season, it's easy to overlook the mundane but essential government functions that cannot be put on hold, such as the need for a town budget for the fiscal year starting July 1. This activity has been ongoing for months, as participants examine hundreds of line items in the selectmen's and education budgets.

The *Chronicle* reported last month on Cornwall's education budget proposal. After some further tweaking, it is now at $2,536,958. This 2.12% increase is more than offset by a projected $112,271 decrease in Cornwall's Region One contribution. The result is a $59,583 reduction (1.50%) from the current year in the education portion of the town budget.

The Board of Selectmen's operating budget proposal shows a 1.92% increase to $2,080,603, reflecting small salary and benefit increases here and there, money to put more property assessment information online, a boost to the food & fuel fund, in addition to continued support for other organizations, increases for the fire department, and contract increases for recycling and hauling activities at the transfer station.

The selectmen's capital budget would increase by 2.50% from the current $680,000 to $697,000. These are funds set aside for highway department truck and fire department equipment and truck replacement, town building upgrades ($150,000), CCS capital projects, and roadway, bridge, culvert and guardrail improvements, and $10,000 for the upcoming property revaluation process. With the last budget component, debt service, flat at $352,352, the proposed town budget works out to $7,048,635, a little less than the current year's $7,053,978.

On the income side, receipts from a $4 million plus projected increase in the grand list, along with a transfer from the unassigned general fund of $106,000 would permit the budget to be balanced without an increase in the current mil rate of 16.70. At this point the numbers are essentially set. Fine tuning may continue, but substantial changes are not anticipated. The Region One budget will likely be approved early this month, and our Board of Finance and selectmen will be close to finishing their reviews.

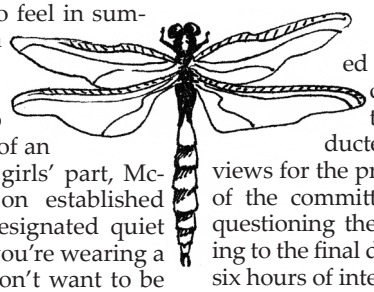
The state of Connecticut has authorized boards of selectmen and finance to give final approval to this year's budget, removing the need for town meeting approval. The budget and related information and dates noted are on the town website at the Board of Finance tab. You are encouraged to share your thoughts and concerns with the boards of selectmen and finance via email or telephone. Watch that website and the *Chronicle* Facebook page for updates. —*Tom Barrett*

April's Full Houses

The light of April's full moon had competition from the illuminated houses of Cornwall, full to the brim with unexpected residents. Driven by school and office closures, students and young adults flocked back to their childhood bedrooms. Working remotely (or not), they clogged the WiFi and their appetites emptied the sometimes hard-to-fill refrigerators.

Lucie Jadow, along with 550 other college students aboard a Semester-at-Sea vessel, jumped ship in Capetown, South Africa, on March 13 when the CDC shut down their four-month excursion. As Jadow reported, "It felt like the virus was chasing us. It kept appearing in places we had just left, Japan, Vietnam, then Mauritius." In "the race to get out," she was lucky to get a seat to Newark on March 21, but perhaps the greatest surprise came when closest to home. "I had been traveling all over the world, including in Asia where the outbreak started, when I got back to find out that my mother, who had not left the greater Cornwall area, had come down with it."

Jeanne McMullin remarked that having the whole family home "took me back to the time the three girls were little, which I really miss." Daughter Pia LaBalme told her, "It feels like it used to feel in summer in Cornwall without a driver's license, marooned at the house, nowhere to go, nothing to do, and no way to get there." In spite of an initial grumpiness on the girls' part, McMullin said they early on established ground rules including designated quiet time and the hat rule. "If you're wearing a hat, it signifies that you don't want to be spoken to."



When Cay and Josh Tyson learned in mid-March that their high-school-age sons' spring breaks were extended, they, according to Josh, "saw the writing on the wall." Their older son Dan, like so many student athletes across the country, would miss his final sports season as well as his graduation ceremony. "While it's wonderful to have the boys home, I just wish the circumstances were different," noted Tyson.

Lily Krug, who celebrated her 18th birthday with friends via Zoom at home in Cornwall Hollow, was appreciative of her sojourn there. "I've always wanted to see the spring in Cornwall up close and live here for awhile. This is a dream come true."

Mare Rubin, mother of Maddie, a musical theater major, commented that Maddie's fellow actors were discouraged by not being able to perform in their spring play, but they have since developed a video version. Rubin's drummer husband, John, relished new-found practice time with Maddie and her bass-playing brother Caleb. They hold live family jam sessions in their barn off Ballyhack Road.

Becky Hurlburt's household additions included not only daughter Roxy from Maine, but also for awhile, Roxy's shelter puppy Grape. As Hurlburt observed, "There's an amazing influx of grown young adults who I haven't seen for a long time." In March and April, the thresholds of Cornwall welcomed them back.

—*Sally Van Doren*

Welcome

Adelina Grace Aguilar
to Rebecca and Pedro Aguilar

Good-bye to a Friend

Celia Senzer

Land Transfers

David Gould Ellen and Ingrid Gould Ellen to William H. Schenk, 30 acres of land with all buildings and improvements thereon at 76 Popple Swamp Road, for $730,000.

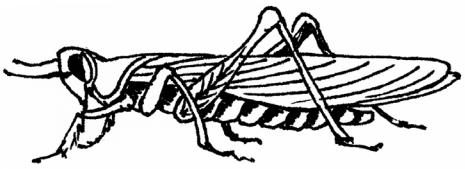
Thomas M. Brashares to Donald C. MacKinnon and Lisa Laarman, 4 acres of land with buildings and improvements thereon at 384 Cream Hill Road, for $1,180,000.

New CCS Leader

With tables scrubbed, sprayed, and spaced six feet apart in the Cornwall Consolidated School gym, the CCS Principal Search Committee and the Board of Education conducted their final round of interviews for the principalship. The remainder of the committee participated on Skype, questioning the candidates and contributing to the final discussions. A vote followed six hours of interviews and discussion. The decision to offer Mary Kay Ravenola the position was unanimous.

Ravenola, from Windsor Locks, is currently the principal of John F. Kennedy Intermediate School. Under her leadership, the school was awarded a Connecticut School of Distinction in 2016–2017. She was named Windsor Locks Teacher of the Year in 2008. She has 30 years of experience in public education, beginning as a classroom and reading teacher. She served as an instructional specialist and curriculum coordinator before going into administration. She holds her sixth-year certificate in educational leadership, a masters in reading, and a bachelor's in elementary education.

Student-led activities mark her leadership and inquiry-based learning is her method for creating a positive school environment. She herself expressed interest in leading a K-8 institution so she could have



"more engagement" with her students as they move through their nine years. Ravenola enjoys involving parents in many aspects of their children's education. As a current principal, she contacts parents frequently, sends out a regular newsletter, showcases student work, has an "open door" policy, and sponsors a parent book club, among other outreach activities.

Her interest in our community was evident when she said that she and her husband planned to relocate in Cornwall. They discovered our part of the world while hiking at Kent Falls and have been enamored by the region ever since. Ravenola is aware of the importance of community in a small school. She is comfortable addressing the challenges a small school faces and her experience is both multifaceted and in depth as a seasoned educator. We welcome her to Cornwall. —*Pamela Wilson*

Antibodies, Anyone?

There have been images in the news that were disturbing, to say the least. Healthcare practitioners in overrun hospitals in gowns and masks. Refrigerated trailers holding bodies of the deceased. Mass graves in New York. Not to mention an anonymous rat scurrying through the Rose Garden while the occupant of the White House stood at a podium and projected his toughest self.

A pandemic is never pretty. Even when it doesn't hit home as hard as elsewhere. Your inner self will still have to handle what French writer Albert Camus hinted at in *The Plague,* a brilliant novel. In a battle "between plague and life," he wrote, "all a man could win…was knowledge and memories."

Let's talk about the knowledge part, first. We know the adversary. A tiny fat and protein structure, officially named "virus," or, as some scientist labeled it, "the parasite of the living kingdoms." It needs us to survive, while we don't need it at all.

What we don't know is the outcome of its spread. The last time such a powerful pathogen did his deadly deed, in 1918, when the Spanish Flu killed 1,000 per week at peak time in Connecticut alone, towns with fewer than 3,000 were slightly better off. Their death rate was 3.6 per thousand while the average for the state was 6.0.

Our ancestors didn't have any drug to fight the virus. And no vaccine. Just like with Covid-19 today. Still, we know a bit more than they did: Stay away from anybody who might be contagious (which could be everybody). Wear masks and gloves. Wash your hands. Don't socialize.

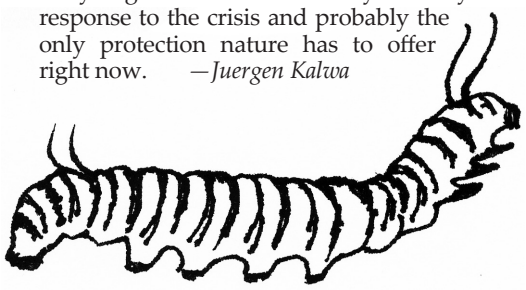
How to spend time? Read a book. Watch Netflix. Hook up electronically with the library system, where pre-school lunch time stories are served to keep the kids who cannot go to school busy. Participate in videoconferences with friends and neighbors across town. Play online trivia night. Do home cooking with a vengeance.

Until the power goes out.

Admittedly, these things might not make anybody's list of memorable items but mine. I, for one, will remember this: the moment when I noticed that the Housatonic Railroad trains had stopped running. And the day when during one of my walks I saw a man with a pretty golf swing hitting balls in his yard. He had energy. He persisted. Just like the rest of us.

I tip my hat to all of those who kept going. For example, to Dr. Ivan Miller who practices emergency medicine in Westchester County and has a strong connection to Cornwall. The parasite found him. He tested positive with symptoms such as a stuffy nose, but "no fever, no cough." He self-quarantined, recovered, and went back to work. "I continue to practice social distancing," he said. He is hoping his body has developed antibodies.

Which could be the best memory anybody might be able to store. It's your body's response to the crisis and probably the only protection nature has to offer right now. —*Juergen Kalwa*



Online Mountaineers

2020 has been a year of challenges for the country. With the coronavirus outbreak, schools at all levels have had to rethink how quarantined students can learn from home. As a junior at Housatonic Valley Regional High School, I can report that students' and teachers' responses are mostly positive. Some teachers are more experienced and have a better grasp of technology. Most assign work and arrange meeting sessions through Google Classroom, which is already used at HVRHS. So, the learning curve for students and teachers was relatively short.

During online schooling, Google Meet is used for full-class video conferences. Teachers discuss the work assigned in the days prior and any upcoming assignments. Most classes meet online once a week. This is a good time to ask questions, say hi to your friends, or mute yourself and pretend that you're paying attention. As work is done independently, there is more freedom than regular school to choose what is done and when it is done—IF it is turned in on time. Housatonic is moving towards pass/fail for the fourth quarter of the school year due to difficulties administering tests.

Chances of a spring sports season have become exponentially smaller with the governor's order to close schools until May 20. Currently the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference is exploring a shortened season, but it is likely there will be none in 2020. The pandemic has also led to the postponement of Housatonic trips to the Galapagos and to Italy, as well as changes for Advanced Placement exams.

In these exceedingly odd and turbulent times, students are reminded that they can never escape school, even in the safety of their own home during a global pandemic. —*Keaton Terrall*

The Art of Service

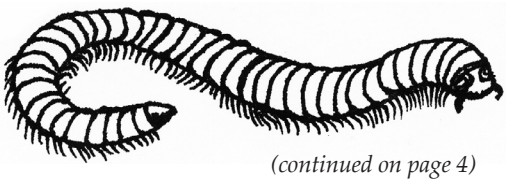
Ironically, due to the coronavirus, I abruptly returned from my study abroad program in the southernmost city in the world, Ushuaia, Argentina, on the same date our program was scheduled to travel to Antarctica. During the 26-hour travel, a single comforting thought came to me: at least I would not be the only Cornwallian whose opportunity to travel to the South Pole fell through. While I was not able to return with stories and pictures of the Antarctic for him, I instead sat down with Bob Parker of West Cornwall to share the similarities of our almost polar voyages and to discuss his experience as a World War II veteran.

With the usual Memorial Day festivities in town likely being cancelled, I wanted to write this article as a way to honor one of our veterans. Robert Parker was born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1927 to a father who served in the US Marine Corps Hospital Service, which brought the family all over the country. In New Mexico he spent over a year quarantined with tuberculosis.

He was drafted in 1945, at the end of World War II, and joined the Army Air Force. At this time his brother and father had been serving their country for years. He spent his time in Mississippi training until World War II ended.

According to Mr. Parker, the biggest impact of the war was the ability to attend the Art Institute in Chicago free through the GI Bill. After teaching three years at the New York School for the Deaf and multiple successful exhibitions, including at the Museum of Modern Art, he had the opportunity to play the hands of Kirk Douglas playing Vincent van Gogh in the movie *Lust for Life*. He commuted to the city to teach at Parsons and the School of Visual Arts and published 100 children's books. Through the years his talents brought him across the globe with *Fortune Magazine*, and eventually he received a grant to be the artist-in-residence in Antarctica for three months. His trip south was not thwarted by a global pandemic, but instead a mix up in x-ray records prevented his departure.

I asked Mr. Parker to compare the impact on daily life of Covid-19 and World



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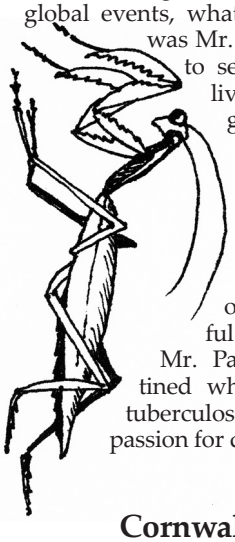
War II. The uncertainty of the situation right now seems "worse in some respects" as anyone can get the virus at any time. When thinking about these two historic global events, what jumped out at me was Mr. Parker's enthusiasm to serve. In each of our lives, we have an obligation to serve our community from social distancing to sewing masks. As we struggle with this unprecedented time of staying home, one hopeful and helpful thing to know: it was Mr. Parker's time quarantined while recovering from tuberculosis that inspired his passion for drawing and art.



—Rebecca Ridgway

Cornwall Briefs

• **No Crowds Memorial Day**. To limit the spread of Covid-19, there will be no parade or large gathering on Memorial Day. The carnival has also been cancelled. Plans are developing, but, available by live streaming, there will be three small ceremonies to help us to honor the veterans who have served our country. The public is encouraged to separately visit our cemeteries as Memorial Day approaches and decorate the graves of remembered veterans. A small gathering at the North Cornwall Cemetery lead by Virginia Gold will distribute flowers on May 25. A few members of the VFW will meet at the Covered Bridge for the Seamen's Memorial. And we may view from home a small but thankful ceremony at the town green.

• **West Cornwall Septic Study Project** meetings are paused for the time being. But USDA grants are being pursued to learn what financial support the town could get for this project. Hopefully meetings will begin again at the end of the summer.

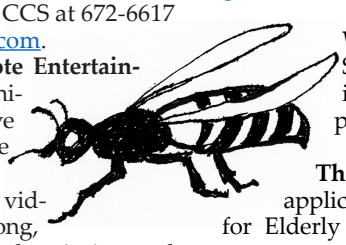
• **The Cornwall Child Center** closed its doors mid-March. Teachers have been busy from home providing virtual learning opportunities and story time. Payroll has been met by savings and a loan from the Paycheck Protection Plan (part of the Federal CARES Act). The center was unable to host its major annual fundraiser, so donations are welcome at 8 Cream Hill Road, West Cornwall.

• **Our Presidential Primary** remains fluid. It has already been postponed twice, now to August 11. Stay posted for updates.

• **Not Closed for Covid.** The Cornwall Bridge Citgo Station was temporarily closed when its boiler exploded causing damage throughout the building, but fortunately no person was hurt. Its cause is being investigated.

• **A Permanent Nest.** Some out-of-towners and second homeowners sheltering here have shown interest in living in Cornwall full-time since work at home via computer is viable. To learn more about our school, contact CCS at 672-6617 or cornwallconsolidated.com.

• **Cornwall Arts & Remote Entertainment Space** is an opportunity to share some creative distraction during this time apart. If you are making or moved by a piece of art, video, story, photograph, song, or museum stroll, send a description and link to davidcolbert7@gmail.com for us all to enjoy.



• **Check on the town website** for activities that have been cancelled, like the annual bird watch.

—Ann Gold

The Merry, Merry Month

Dancing around a maypole would constitute a breach of social distancing, so none of that, if you please! Just lift your face up to the sun and say thank you, as will the *Chronicle* when you send us a nice, sustaining check. We'll keep the real news coming.

Correction

The address for making donations to the Food & Fuel Fund via Paypal is cwlfinance@optonline.net. The incorrect address was listed in last month's letter from the first selectman.

Events & Announcements

For updates, changes, and additions, check the online calendar at cornwallchronicle.org or cornwallct.org (it is the same calendar). And for reminders, see the *Chronicle* Facebook page.

Pre-School Lunch Time Story Time sponsored by the Cornwall Library and the Cornwall Child Center takes place Monday to Friday at noon. Listen to a story and Q & A while having lunch at home. Connect to ZOOM from the library webpage.

Cornwall Conservation Trust trail clean-up with social distancing and blazing by Barton Jones will happen Saturdays in May. Details: cornwallconservationtrust.org. There also is an ongoing online discussion of wolves, coyotes, and foxes on the website.

The Rose Algrant Show is hosting an online sale of artists' works on paper benefiting the Cornwall Food & Fuel Bank. Visit rosealgrantartshow.org/shop-online for more information. Listing deadline May 10.

In the interest of Internet Expansion, a ZOOM program sponsored by the Cornwall Association along with the Cornwall Conservation Commission and the Economic Development Commission will be held on Monday, May 18, at 7:30 P.M. Participants send RSVPs with their emails to Susan Edholm at susanna7elizabetta@gmail.com.

Woman's Society High School Senior Scholarship application is due June 30 (not May 15). Apply to nitacolgate@outlook.com.

The assessor's office is accepting applications for the Renter's Rebate for Elderly and Totally Disabled. Applicants must be 65 or 100% disabled and a renter in town. The income limit for this program is $37,000 for single and $45,100 for married. The filing period is April 1 to October 1. Contact the assessor's office for an application: 672-2703 or cwlassessor@optonline.net.

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THIS MONTH
Erica Prud'homme, Illustrations
Ann Gold and *Jayne Ridgway,* Editors
Jacque Schiller and *Cara Weigold,* Facebook Posts

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