



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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## Me and My Meadow

Many things have changed in Cornwall since Europeans first settled here in 1740, but one thing has not: no matter what people do to the land—short of paving it over—the forest always comes back when they stop doing it. The contrast between pictures of Cornwall in the 19th century and those of today are striking: the abundant cleared land in the former is completely forested in the latter. Trees are the default vegetation of New England, meadows and pastures are human creations.

From an ecological point of view forests are a good thing—think carbon sequestration, habitat creation, and drinking water protection—but from the perspective of human habitation, forests can sometimes be a bit much. In the absence of regular cutting and mowing, the trees will take over your property. Don't get me wrong, the woods are great, but it's also great to look out over cleared land with a sweeping vista to the distant hills. Psychological research has shown that people prefer landscapes with signs of human activity in the foreground and wildlands in the background. This combination of nature and culture is more attractive than either by itself.

All of which brings me to the main topic of this article: How does one keep the forest

from taking over an old agricultural meadow? My experience on top of Cream Hill dates back to the early 1970s when I first arrived in Cornwall. The Klaw's property included a small "pony pasture" but, in the absence of ponies, the forest was moving back in. Working alongside my father-in-law, Spencer, we cut down trees along the back edge to try and preserve the view, but the forest grew faster than we could cut trees down, so our focus shifted to keeping the central portion of the pasture open. For years Spencer scythed the meadow in summer—it was too rocky to mow—but I never learned to use that tool and the woody plants came back when he got too old for the job. Periodically, I would cut down trees that got too big, but the brambles, shrubs, and vines that remained formed an impenetrable thicket.



For the past 30 years the pasture has been my responsibility and over time it has morphed into a long-term research project on meadow management. The goal I set for myself was to see if I could create a meadow by leaving plants I wanted—such as meadowsweet and asters—and removing those I didn't—like poison ivy. This process of selective removal is called "intaglio" after the engraving technique that creates a positive image by removing unwanted material.

The removal can be done by cutting, mowing, or herbicides, each of which has pros and cons. I chose to do the work organically, by using a weed whacker, pruning shears, and hand pulling. This approach was more work than mowing or using chemicals, but ultimately it was more satisfying because it gave me greater control over the vegetation. Weed whacker in hand, I visualized myself as a sculptor, leaving the bits I wanted and cutting away the ones I didn't.

The extent to which one can succeed in keeping a meadow open is commensurate with the persistence one brings to the task: a little bit of work over the course of the whole year is much better than one big burst of energy.

At the start of every growing season I make it a point to target one specific plant for removal. The first, and most difficult

(continued on page 2)

## APRIL 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 ♦ Region One Bd. of Ed 6:30 pm HVRHS Library ♦ Agricultural Advisory Committee 7:30 pm Town Office Bldg	3 ♦ Inland Wetlands Agency 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	4	5 ♦ Woman's Society Farm Life in Cornwall 10 am Library	6 ♦ CCT Foraging Workshop 4:30-6:30 pm CCS	7 ♦ Cornwall Vill. Improvement Annual Mtg. 10 am Library ♦ Emery Roth Author Presentation 4 pm Library ♦ Indian Dinner Fundraiser 5-7 pm UCC ♦ Community Contra Dance 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Watercolor Class Noon-2 pm Library
8 ♦ Annual Norman Dorsen Lecture ACLU President Susan Herman 2 pm UCC	9 4th Q	10 ♦ Eco. Dev. Comm. 9 am Town Hall ♦ Special Senior Luncheon and Programs 11 am CCS ♦ Monthly Senior Luncheon Noon UCC Parish House ♦ WC Septic Comm. 5 pm WC Library ♦ P&Z 7 pm Library ♦ Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 pm CCS	11 ♦ CCS Board of Education 4:15 pm CCS	12	13	14 ♦ Beekeeping Workshop 9 am UCC Parish House ♦ Opening Reception "For the Birds" 10-11 am Historical Society ♦ Watercolor Class Noon-2 pm Library
15 NEW ♦ Deadline: May Chronicle Copy	16	17 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	18	19 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Library ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm Town Hall	20 ♦ Public Hearing on Budget 7:30 pm CCS	21 ♦ Art@theDump 10 am-4 pm ♦ CCT Earth Day Hike 10 am Welles Preserve ♦ Watercolor Class Noon-2 pm Library
22 ♦ Art@theDump 10 am-Noon ♦ Iris Herman Artist's Reception 11:30 am UCC Parish House	23 ♦ Zoning Board of Appeals* 7 pm Library	24	25 ♦ Region One ABC Committee 7 pm HVRHS Central Office	26	27	28 ♦ Watercolor Class Noon-2 pm Library ♦ Andrea Barnet Author Presentation 5 pm Library
29 FULL	30	<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Mondays:</b> Yoga, 8:30-10 am Library; <b>Pickle Ball</b> 6-7 pm CCS; <b>Mat Squad</b> at 6:30 pm UCC; <b>Karate</b> , 6:30-7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ <b>Tuesdays:</b> Pilates, 8:30-9:30 am Library; <b>Zumba</b> , 5:30-6:30 pm Library <b>Wednesdays:</b> Tai Chi, 5-7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; <b>Stitch 'n Spin</b> , 7:15-8:30 pm UCC ♦ <b>Thursdays:</b> Pilates, 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>Fridays:</b> Yoga 8:30-10 am Library ♦ <b>Sundays:</b> Yoga 9-10:30 am Library; <b>Meditation</b> , 1 pm call Debra 672-0229				

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

one, was bittersweet vine, which took about three years of continuous cutting and pulling to eradicate. Poison ivy is a special problem because so many people are allergic to it and because cutting it only makes it spread and weed whacking it makes the plant more dangerous by putting toxins in the air. Unless you're one of the lucky people who doesn't react to poison ivy, targeted chemical applications are probably the best way to go. Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, and tree saplings are best disposed of with a shovel or a hand saw. By selectively removing some species while leaving others, one can create a diverse, beautiful, and more or less stable community of trees, shrubs, and wildflowers.

Whatever you do, don't make the mistake of letting your guard down—you need to go in every year and cut back the undesirable woody plants to the ground and weed whack the herbaceous wildflowers in the fall. A Sisyphean task for sure, but one that gets easier and more beautiful with each passing year.

—Peter Del Tredici

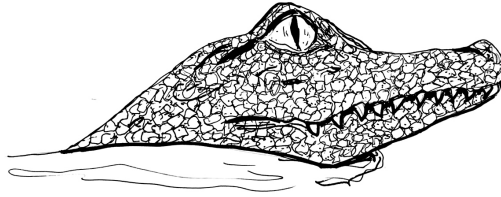
## The Beaver Menace Resolved

It has not gone unnoticed that beavers have taken up residence in Cream Hill Lake. Naturally, this has roused a good deal of outrage: beavers are well known to be international bad guys with ties to Russia. They're shockingly indifferent to federal law or public opinion, work mostly under cover of darkness, and are masters of technology. Scary stuff. Claims that they are not only harmless, but actually do a great deal of good, are only claims made by wildlife experts, always biased in favor of wildlife.

Their arrival threatens an otherwise pristine body of water. Since no domestic livestock live upstream from the lake, and it is not used by wildfowl, snakes, turtles, fish, or other living creatures, not even humans, it must be free of all contamination. Any bacteria now found in the lake must be the fault of beavers.

One way to rid the lake of these illegal arrivals is to introduce a natural predator. Alligators are North American natives, and, thanks to global warming, our lakes and streams will become increasingly welcoming to this ancient saurian. Alligators are swift and efficient hunters, nearly invisible as they go about their daily tasks. On the lake they'd be visually less intrusive than bright orange neon bobbers; on land they are surprisingly swift runners. They wear an endearing and permanent smile; they will certainly take care of the beaver problem.

It's true that beavers are known as a keystone species because they produce such a powerful and positive effect on so



many other species. It's true that they create habitat for fish, waterfowl, turtles, and other aquatic creatures; that their ponds and wetlands attract insects of all sorts—butterflies, moths, dragonflies, and a zillion more—which then attract birds, creating a nesting and resting habitat for many species. It's true that they are spectacularly good as engineers, and that their dams slow flash floods and storm surges. It's true that mountainous areas in the west are importing beavers so their dams will slow drastic flooding that's becoming increasingly frequent as our climate changes. It's true that the dams create quiet wetlands that absorb floodwaters when they arise.

So what are we waiting for? Get rid of those varmints. We can learn to love alligators. Unlike most wild animals, they will quietly move toward your kayak as you leave the shore, offering a smiling, companionable presence as you set off on your journey.

—Roxana Robinson

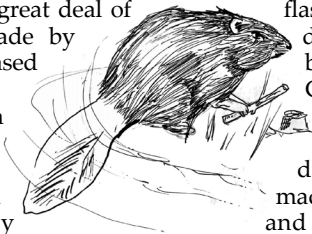
## Scraps Into Art

For those who don't know the "nativity" story, it all started in 2000 when Gail Jacobson's husband, Jeff, came home from taking garbage to the transfer station, then run by the late Art Brean. Jeff said, "Art at the dump told me..." and a lightbulb flashed in Gail's head. "Art...at the dump," she mused, and thus was born a wholly original annual Cornwall tradition.

It's an art show with a sense of humor in the sand shed at the dump—with art and objects made from items discarded there and elsewhere—that draws artists and customers from throughout the Northwest Corner. As Gail likes to say, the annual show marks "the beginning of Cornwall's social season."

Art@TheDump has showcased the imaginative work of 35 to 50 artists and amateurs each year. There's no entry fee and no sign up. Attendees vote on first, second, and third prizes. Occasionally the show will have a theme: Trashion Show and ShoeReDo come to mind. Most objects are priced under \$100, sometimes way under, and the annual gross is usually in the \$2,500 to \$3,000 range. Thirty percent of the proceeds go to the art department at Cornwall Consolidated School, where accumulated contributions have enabled art teachers to buy digital cameras and a printing press, among other supplies.

Show goers were greeted one year by the sight of Barbara Stone's elaborate wedding dress, complete with train, made



## Goodbye to Friends

Paulette L. Zabriskie

Peter M. Gorat, Sr.

### Land Transfers

Mohawk Ski House, LLP to William C. Pittel and Stephen Lavictoire, land with all improvements thereon at 34 Great Hollow Road for \$825,000.

Thomas K. Levine to David G. and Ingrid G. Ellen, land with all improvements thereon at 92 Town Street, for \$2,075,000.

entirely of Tyvek building wrap. Other memorable submissions have been Gail's salt-shaker chandelier, Debby Jones's bubble wrap alligator, and the magnificent horse, birds, and other sculptures (constructions?) made from odds and ends of metal by Lakeville welder James Hackett, one of which is staring at me as I sit and type this piece.

An innovation this year was the Kids' Recycled Art Workshop held on March 10, where each child made a piece of art for the show.

Gail's committee, all contributors to the show, consists of Richard Griggs, Lori Barker, Denise Bate, Chris Gyorsok, and Lori Blakey Welles. They handle the organization, publicity, setup, and finances for the show. Adds Gail, "We couldn't do it without the road crew who cleans out the sand shed and the Cornwall Association who donates \$400 to cover printing, signs, and other expenses."

Gail herself is an artist whose imagination knows no bounds. In addition to her more conventional paintings and constructions that have been shown in libraries and galleries in the area, she has made objects for shows over the years out of hardware, Formica chips, a beat-up stop sign, old maps, game board pieces, and erector set parts.

This year's highly anticipated show, now in its 18th year, is on April 21 and 22 (see insert for details.) Note to visitors: it's cold in the shed, dress warmly!

—Carol Schneider

## Doing Business in Cornwall

B2B was a trendy term back in the roaring tech days. "Business to business" was meant to be the next great wave in communications and services. The economy fizzled before much of this happened but here in Cornwall we have B2B the old way: neighbors helping neighbors.

Pat Bramley, whose young business Buck Mountain Herbs is gearing up for another growing season, is also investing in improvements. This winter she set up a new greenhouse with the help of her husband, Richard, plumber Roddy McNeil, and electrician Brad Hedden. Her greenhouse operation and the field nearby are now both certified USDA organic.

# Letters to the Chronicle

In the middle of March, with two feet of snow on the ground, the greenhouse shelves held flats of tiny seedlings. Pat is growing a selection of pollinating plants which will attract butterflies for buyers at the upcoming Trade Secrets expo. Farm market customers go for the more culinary herbs.

Buck Mountain Herbs will offer some of its plants in eight-inch-tall ceramic pots thrown by Jordan Colón, who works out of Todd Piker's Cornwall Bridge Pottery. A discreet pair of stag's antlers is pressed into the base of each pot, the logo of Buck Mountain Herbs.

Other ways of doing business in Cornwall include promises—"I'll write a business plan for you and you'll cut my hair for a discount." That's a paraphrase of what Janet Carlson Sanders, CEO of One Eleven Group, agreed to with CJ Burke, who owns Housatonic Hair Works in West Cornwall village.

"It's what I do," Janet said recently. She's been a business owner for 20 years and "it's in my interest to help other businesses." As the chair of the town's Economic Development Commission, she's been instrumental in opening lines of communication and mutual help in Cornwall.

She sees the climate changing from resistance to change to curiosity about how to find a place in the new economy. Janet commented that about 20 percent of the town's businesses are craft based. Websites and social media are the engines behind these small-scale efforts and, in fact, Doug Bloom, a colleague of Janet's at One Eleven, is designing a new website for Housatonic Hairworks.

Janet and others have seen changes in attitudes about what might work in Cornwall. Got an idea? Write a letter to the *Chronicle* and start a conversation.

—Lisa L. Simont

## Reprise: Is That the Doorbell?

Another school night all but accomplished. Nina, 9, and I were lying down and reading a story together, as Laura and Sasha, 8, and Queenie, the dog, did the same a room away. Just as Nina and I approached the end of an "A-Z Mystery"—a tale of no real fascination to me involving a "mystery" that wasn't, we both heard one ring on the doorbell downstairs, leading to a mystery that was.

Quietly, hoping not to rouse Queenie, who would have leapt up into defensive (or at the very least loud) action instantly, I went downstairs, insisting an eager Nina stay at the top, waiting. Something wasn't right. There was no car out front, nothing but quiet moonlight and the question: just who would barely ring a doorbell on a school night at 8:30 P.M.?

Expecting perhaps another in the erratic parade of variously impaired Dudleytown

## A WONDERFUL GIFT

Each year the Cornwall Woman's Society gives awards to graduating high school students who live in Cornwall. The only requirement is that the student complete the application for the award and agree to apply the award to their next year's educational plans. Each qualifying student then receives \$2,000, as a gift—not a scholarship. It doesn't matter where the student went to high school (local, distant, public, or private). They just need to be a resident of Cornwall.

There are so many misconceptions about these awards that several Cornwall students have failed to apply. Please apply! Applications are due May 15. The Cornwall Library has copies of the application and so do many schools. Email me for an application if your school

ghost hunters, I opened the door two inches and met... a bear.

Large, black, and very quick to take its leave once discovered, it moved with striking fluidity and speed across the lawn, over the fence, and back into the forest that surrounds us. Morning exploration revealed evidence of a compost dalliance, a stop for elimination (impressive), and a victorious wrestling match with the eye-level birdfeeder that hangs on the shed directly opposite our front door. It seems that the bear had used the relative comfort of our doormats to enjoy a feast of feeder-fresh sunflower seed and, once done, had simply planned to ask for more.

Returning to the foot of the stairs, I met the curious Nina with a finger over my lips, hushing her questions while signaling her to come with me to Sasha's room. Sitting down on the bed together, I watched small eyes widen as I described our giant visitor. Nina wished the bear could live inside with us. Sasha was not so sure but hoped he wasn't too hungry....

Bears were here first, of course, and while they don't always respect our seed supplies or our doorbells, we can hardly expect them to leave now that we've moved in. For peaceful co-existence we'll keep respectful distance, and if they ring the bell, we'll wish them well, but won't invite them in.

—Nicholas Givotovsky, April 2008

## Cornwall Briefs

• **The first** "vegetation management" plan submitted by the Housatonic Railroad as required by a new law has been received by the selectmen. The town's response: OK as a plan for the future, but what about removing the pine trees already killed by

doesn't have copies: nitacolgate@outlook.com. Or call me at 672-6797. Wait eight rings for the answering machine.  
—Nita Colgate

## GOT MEMORIES?

The Cornwall Historical Society is seeking photos, posters, and objects for an exhibit on "Cornwall's Old-Time Music." We are looking, for example, for pictures of the Cornwall Grange Hall Band, the Covered Bridge and Hart's Barn square dances, Oscar Degreenia, Pat and Biddy Bierce, Comfort Starr, Eddie Lisk, Fred Yutzler, Toot Tanguay, the Canaan Jamboree, and so on. If you have anything relevant in the attic or in that box on the top shelf, please let us know at director.cornwallhistory@gmail.com or leave a message at 672-0505.  
—Jeremy Brecher  
Cornwall Historical Society

overuse of herbicides along the tracks? The railroad is not obliged to respond.

• **Our new Transfer Station Operator** is former station attendant Ted Larson. Ted replaces Steve O'Neil, who retired at the end of February. A new station attendant was expected to be appointed at the March 28 selectmen's meeting.

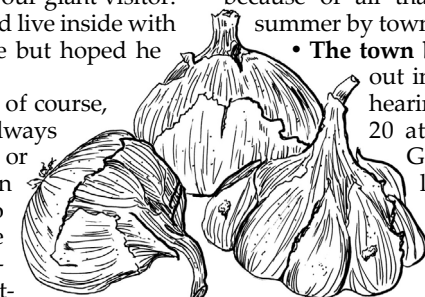
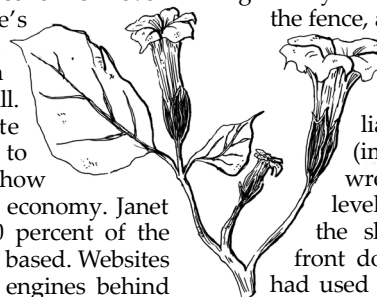
• **Other recent town appointments:** Phill West to the P&Z Commission (alternate), Bianca Griggs and Simon Hewett to the Economic Development Commission.

• **Triple whammy nor'easters** pounded Cornwall on March 2, 7, and 13, leaving major mounds of the white stuff and prompting the highway crew and local plow operators to come up with extraordinary displacement maneuvers to keep roadways and driveways open (kudos to all). The storm of March 7 delivered as much as four inches an hour and left two feet or more in many parts of town. Most of Cornwall avoided the major power outages suffered by nearby towns. Was that maybe because of all that branch pruning last summer by town and utility tree crews?

• **The town budget** is being hashed out in advance of the public hearing scheduled for April 20 at 7:30 P.M. in the CCS Gathering Room. The selectmen's budget is up about 3 percent and the CCS budget is down. Reason for the latter: retirement of a teacher not being replaced and

lower insurance costs from joining the Connecticut state school insurance pool. When the Region One budget is added, the total for education is up less than 1 percent. The capital budget will increase because of upgrades to town buildings and new highway equipment.

• **No Smoking signs** are being posted by the town at the village playground and Foote Field in response to a request from the Cornwall Against Tobacco Club at CCS.  
—Paul De Angelis



Events & Announcements

“Stories of Farming Life in Cornwall,” as told by Thalia Scoville, Anita Hurlburt, Jen Markow, and Debra Tyler, will be presented by the Cornwall Woman’s Society on April 5 at 10 A.M. at the Cornwall Library. Refreshments follow before the monthly meeting. Everyone is invited.

Naturalist/Author “Wildman” Steve Brill will present several foraging workshops on April 6, sponsored by the Cornwall Conservation Trust. All are open to the public. Focusing on common renewable wild edible and medicinal plants, Brill will teach participants to see, touch, smell, taste, and collect representative species of the plants in our local ecosystems. Program times: 12:30 to 2:30 P.M. for CCS middle school students; 3 to 4 P.M. for the CCS Afterschool Program; and 4:30 to 6:30 P.M. for the community. Participants should bring plastic bags and spades, if desired, for foraging. Meet at CCS.

A Gujarati Indian Dinner will be served on April 7, from 5 to 7 P.M., at the UCC Parish House, prepared by Cornwall’s Anju Patel. The proceeds will benefit the UCC work trip to Pine Ridge, SD, and the Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center in Brookfield. Suggested donation is \$20 and reservations are required. Call 672-6840 or email office@uccincornwall.org.

Cornwall Contra Dance: Put some “spring” in your step at town hall on Saturday, April 7. Dancing will begin at 7 P.M. with lively music by Still, the Homegrown Band and calling by Rich Sbardella. All dances taught, no partner necessary. Donations accepted to pay the caller. For more information call Jane, 672-6101, or go to motherhouse.us.

Cornwall Village Improvement Society will hold its annual meeting Saturday, April 7, at 10 A.M., at the Cornwall Library. Open to the public.

At the Cornwall Library

Brass Valley: The Fall of an American Industry, a reading and talk by Emery (Ted) Roth at Cornwall Library on April 7 at 4 P.M.

Fresh Promise

April always holds out the beautiful hope of spring, of snowdrops and croci, daffodils and warm winds. The Chronicle loves a refreshing breeze too, especially when it’s in the form of a check. Remember the Chronicle and thanks!

Watercolor landscape class offered by Collette Durst. All four Saturdays in April from noon to 2 P.M. Fee is \$100.

Author talk by Andrea Barnett, author of Visionary Women, How Rachel Carson, Jane Jacobs, Jane Goodall, and Alice Waters Changed Our World, April 28 at 5 P.M.

The Cornwall Library is participating in the CT Library Association’s Passport program to celebrate National Library Week during April. Come to the Cornwall Library to pick up your passport. Visit at least five participating libraries and enter a drawing to win prizes.

ACLU President Susan N. Herman will give the Cornwall Historical Society’s annual Norman Dorsen Lecture on Sunday, April 8, at 2 P.M. at the UCC in Cornwall Village. A reception follows. (See insert.)

Puppet Shows will enliven the April 10 senior luncheon. Tanglewood Marionettes will entertain seniors and students at CCS with shows at 11 A.M. and 12:45 P.M. Lunch is between shows with the students in the Gathering Room.

“For the Birds,” an exhibit of Joe Ellis’s bird carvings and images, will open at the Cornwall Historical Society, 7 Pine Street, with a morning coffee and doughnuts reception on Saturday, April 14, from 10 to 11 A.M. Free, but donations are welcome.

A beekeeping workshop sponsored by the Cornwall Agricultural Commission will be held on Saturday, April 14, at 9 A.M. at the UCC Parish House. Speaker Mike Carey, instructor with the Connecticut Beekeepers Association, will bring beekeeping equipment and an observation hive. Light refreshments will be served. No charge to attend. Questions? Call Bill Dinneen at 860-248-1543.

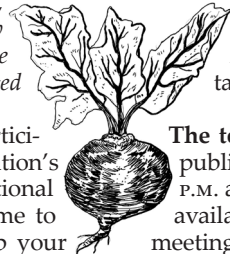
Art in Cornwall

In the UCC Parish House, an exhibit by Iris Hermann, “Sew, Clay and Crochet,” a production of Crazy Cave Creations (frequently silly, yet practical things for people of all shapes and sizes) will take place from April 15 to June 10, with an opening on Sunday, April 22, at 11:30 A.M. Hours are Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., Sundays from 10 A.M. to noon, and by appointment: iris.bedelia@gmail.com.

The following exhibits will continue through April: Souterrain Gallery—Gail Jacobson’s “All Over the Map”; Toll House Gallery—works by Donald Bracken, Len-

nart Swede Ahrstrom, Scott Zuckerman, and Susan Rand; and at the Cornwall Library, photographs by Lazlo Gyorsok and Emery Roth.

And don’t forget Art@TheDump, April 21 to 22. (See insert for details.)



The town budget will be discussed at a public hearing Friday, April 20, at 7:30 P.M. at CCS. Copies of the budget will be available at town hall the week before the meeting.

Earth Day Hike with naturalists: Saturday, April 21, at 10 A.M. at Welles Preserve. See CCT website: cornwallconservationtrust.org.

Applications for the \$500 Marie Baum Scholarship, for a Cornwall student “who displays enthusiasm for achievement in music,” must be received by May 1 in the selectmen’s office. Applicants must have graduated from Housatonic and attended CCS for four years. Applications available at HVRHS guidance office or the selectmen’s office.

The Mat Squad (which makes plastic mats for the homeless) has plenty of plastic bags, but needs help in flattening them. The squad meets on Mondays, 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. at UCC, or you can flatten them at home. Supplies can be delivered and the flattened bags picked up. Questions? Ask Maya Gray at mgray09@snet.net.

Cinco de Mayo will be celebrated with a murder mystery dinner sponsored by the Cornwall Child Center on May 5 at Trinity Retreat Center. (See insert.)

CORNWALL CHRONICLE

cornwallchronicle.org

THIS MONTH

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Lisa Simoni and Carol Schneider, Editors  
Paul De Angelis and Caroline Kosciusko, Facebook Posts

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