



CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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Mountain Lions: The Debate May Be Over

There has been a longtime tug of war between Cornwall residents who have spotted mountain lions in this area and wildlife experts who believed them to be long gone, or even extinct. But recently, many naturalists have agreed that the mountain lion is coming back. In a talk at the Housatonic Valley Regional High School on February 22, naturalist Sue Morse asked an audience of about 400 if they had seen a mountain lion, and about half the audience raised their hands.

According to the *Chronicle*, Cornwall sightings were noted when the newspaper first appeared in the early 1990s. Reports from Mary Lee, Gillian MacDonald, Lisa Lansing, Joe Ellis, and Jayne Ridgway, among others, recalled seeing a mountain lion (also called cougar, puma, catamount) in meadows, forest paths, or back yards. Their descriptions were the same: a very large cat with a long tail, tawny skin, and rounded ears. Some Cornwall residents also reported hearing their "eerie nighttime screams."

The last authenticated eastern mountain lion was trapped and killed in Maine in the early 20th century, according to a recent *Lakeville Journal* article. Yet in 2011 one was killed on the Wilbur Cross Parkway in

Milford. That's the same year that Lynn Cheney reported seeing one along the bottom of their pasture. It's also the same year that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared the species extinct. Who to believe?

Sue Morse is among the growing number of naturalists and wildlife biologists who foresee the return of the big cats. "It will be a positive change," she said, because it will help to limit the number of white-tailed deer—the mountain lion's primary food source—whose numbers are close to their estimated pre-colonial levels. She said that if a big cat strays into a populated area, it's to follow its prey, not to attack people. The worst thing to do is to run away, she cautioned, as they are hardwired to chase, and she advised the audience to stand their ground or, in the worst case, arm themselves with a rock or stick. "They're scaredy cats," she said, who are quick to run away from perceived danger.

For more information on her talk, check out articles by Tim Abbott and Patrick Sullivan in the February 14 and 21 issues of

the *Lakeville Journal*.

Perhaps the final word comes from the mountain lion himself, a.k.a. John Miller, in a 1992 *Chronicle* letter. Regarding the published sightings in the *Chronicle*, he declared, "We ARE here... That was me, Joe. It was getting close to Thanksgiving and we frequently get our turkeys in those cornfields on either side of Route 7." In response to Lisa Lansing's sighting, he wrote "Well, I saw Lisa too, framed in her kitchen window, tawny looking in a kind of ratty bathrobe. Come on, Lisa, new house—new bathrobe!"

—Carol Schneider



The Wind from the West

Cornwall has joined neighboring towns and environmental organizations in an air quality monitoring effort to ensure that the upcoming launch of the Cricket Valley Energy Center in Dover, NY, does not send a cloud of toxins into our hills and valleys. Thanks to Kate Freygang and the Western Connecticut Clean Air Action network, this April Cornwall will get its own satellite monitor to measure ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter in the air we breathe.

Cornwall's monitor will work in conjunction with other satellite monitors in

(continued on page 2)

APRIL 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 ♦ What's the Word?! Group 11 am Library ♦ Region One Board of Education 6:30 pm HVRHS Library ♦ Cornwall Agricultural Advisory Comm. 7:30 pm Town Office	2 ♦ Inlands Wetlands 7 pm Town Office Bldg. ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	3 ♦ Deb Devins Writing Workshop 6:30 pm Library	4	5 NEW	6 ♦ Meet, Play, Flow 8:30 am–3 pm RT Facts ♦ South of the Border Dinner 5–7 pm UCC Parish House ♦ William Kinsolving One- Man Play 5 pm Library ♦ Community Country Dance 7 pm Town Hall
7 ♦ CCT Cornwall Neighborhood Meeting East Cornwall & Cornwall Village 4 pm Library	8 ♦ Free Blood Pressure Clinic Noon–1 pm UCC Day Room ♦ Park and Recreation Commission 7:30 pm Town Hall	9 ♦ Econ. Dev. Comm. 9 am Town Hall ♦ Senior Lunch Noon UCC Parish House ♦ WC Septic Comm. 5 pm Town Hall ♦ P&Z Commission 7 pm Cornwall Lib. ♦ Housatonic River Comm. 7:30 pm CCS	10 ♦ Deb Devins Writing Workshop 6:30 pm Library	11	12 1st Q ♦ CCT Cornwall Neighborhood Meeting Cornwall Bridge 4 pm Library	13 ♦ Three Green Aliens Plants Program 4 pm Cornwall Library
14	15 ♦ Deadline: May Chronicle Copy	16 ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall	17 ♦ Board of Education 4:15 pm CCS Library ♦ Deb Devins Writing Workshop 6:30 pm Library	18 ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 6 pm Cornwall Library ♦ Board of Finance 7 pm Town Hall	19 FULL ♦ CCT Cornwall Neighborhood Meeting North Cornwall & Cornwall Hollow 4 pm Library	20 ♦ Park & Recreation Egg Hunt 10:30 am UCC Parish House ♦ Ellen Moon Art Reception 3–6 pm Southerrain Gallery ♦ Joan Edler Art Reception Show & Sale 5 pm Library
21 EASTER SUNDAY	22 ♦ Earth Day Hike (See CCT webpage) 10 am ♦ ZBA* 7 pm Cornwall Library	23 ♦ Morning Coffee & Conversations 9 am UCC Parish House	24 ♦ Deb Devins Writing Workshop 6:30 pm Library ♦ Region One ABC Committee 7 pm HVRHS Central Office	25	26 ♦ Trivia Night BYO Dinner/Drinks Before Game 5:30 pm ♦ Trivia Night Library Benefit 6:30 pm Library ♦ Budget Hearing 7:30 pm CCS	27
28 ♦ Norman Dorsen Lecture 3 pm Town Hall ♦ CCT Cornwall Neighborhood Meeting West Cornwall 4 pm Library	29	30	Every Week This Month: Mondays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Pickleball, 6–8 pm CCS; Mat Squad, 6:30 pm UCC ♦ Tuesdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library ♦ Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 5–7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; Tai-Chi, 5:30 pm and Qui-Gong, 6 pm UCC; Stitch 'n Spin, 7:15–8:30 pm UCC ♦ Thursdays: Pilates, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Meditation, 4–5 pm call Debra 672-0229; Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library; Mah Jongg, 7–9 pm Library call 672-6874 ♦ Fridays: Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; Toddler Play Group, 10:30–11:30 am Library ♦ Sundays: Yoga, 9–10:30 am Library; Meditation, 1 pm call Debra 672-0229; ASW Method Mat Class, 1–3 pm Library			

*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

(continued from page 1)

nearby towns and a central meteorologically sensitive monitor being established at the Kent School as part of an ongoing scientific environmental project.

Until recently, New York's 2012 approval of the construction of Cricket Valley went largely under the radar of Connecticut environmentalists, as the review process took place entirely across the border. Critics of the power plant fear that a noxious wave of pollution might be aggravated by our area's hilly topography, although New York's DEC has concluded that all harmful emissions will remain below federal and state limits.

The goal of the monitoring project is to establish a "baseline" of air quality before Cricket Valley goes online, so that any change in quality becomes objectively quantifiable. Should federal limits on pollutants be exceeded and the deterioration traceable to Cricket Valley, Connecticut would have the power to intercede.

The \$4,500 cost of establishing the Cornwall satellite station is being shared equally by the Cornwall Conservation Trust, the Cornwall Foundation, and the town endowment; annual cost after installation is expected to be \$600. Town hall and a spot midway up Mohawk Mountain are being considered as possible locations for the unit.

—Paul De Angelis

A Chat with Pastor Micki

The pastor of the United Church of Christ in Cornwall is the Rev. Madelon E. Nunn-Miller. But everyone in Cornwall who knows her calls her Micki, evidence of her accessibility to both parishioners and townspeople alike.

Born in Rochester, NY, to a Methodist church-going family (with a grandfather who was a "hellfire and brimstone" preacher), Micki developed a keen interest in social justice as a teenager that has persisted through her life. In 1968 her family moved to Richmond, VA, the beginning of 18 years in the then-segregated South. Her first calling was as a therapist and she enrolled at the University of Virginia. But a random class by a professor of religion changed her life, and she decided to major in both.

She went on to divinity school at Duke University, along with 300 men and only 25 women, and from there to Vanderbilt for a Ph.D. in religion and personality theory. She was working toward her doctorate, but by then she had married Stephen Miller and "when it became time to do my dissertation, I had a baby instead." She ultimately had two sons, but the marriage ended in divorce.

Her first church, in Chattanooga, had 3,000 members, with six ministers, and she

came in as minister of counseling. But she ultimately realized that she wanted to do more. "I wanted to preach. I wanted to administer the sacraments. I wanted to look at the big picture." She has since sought her own congregation in smaller churches, and went on to northern New Jersey where she stayed for another 18 years.

By the time the Cornwall UCC was looking for a new pastor, Micki was ready to start a new chapter in her life. She was only looking in New England, at "beautiful places," she admits. Her church in New Jersey was disappointed to lose her, but after she was interviewed here, the search committee received a letter from the New Jersey UCC regional conference saying, in large letters, LOOK NO FURTHER. YOU HAVE FOUND YOUR CANDIDATE. She began her ministry here in 2004.

In a *Republican-American* interview around the time of her UCC community reception, Micki said "I'm a lesbian, and the congregation knew that when they voted for me, and I'm very proud of them for choosing a pastor who might be a little controversial. I found people here extremely hospitable, welcoming and warm."

The Cornwall church is one of more than 107 now in Connecticut with an Open and Affirming Ministry, dedicated to "understand and appreciate the gift of sexuality and the concerns and issues of homosexuality." Micki met her wife, Diane Beebe, online, and they were married in the church in 2009.

"Half the town came," she recalls with pleasure, "and the kids were so excited to come to the first wedding for two women; that was very touching to me."

Relationships, she says, are the highlight for her in her ministry, as well as God's love and justice work. She has championed an active outreach, first with the La Casa project which was already in place, building houses in Mexico. Next was a mission to the Pine Ridge Reservation in Wounded Knee, the poorest city in the U.S., building relationships with the Lakota Sioux tribe, repairing homes, and making bunk beds. Most recently, the church has joined with other local churches to bring two Muslim families to the Northwest Corner; one who lives in Cornwall and the other in Salisbury.

Both Micki and Diane, who works for Prudential Financial in Hartford, have busy schedules in the wider world. In addition to her many roles at the church—including preparing sermons, officiating at weddings and funerals, hospital visits, being available to congregants and more—Micki is the chaplain for the fire department and has served on the boards of the Cornwall Association and Women's Support Services, where she was president for more than two years.



Welcome

Raelyn Valerie Eleanore Poley to Ashton and William Poley

Good-bye to Friends

Margot Feely
Carmela M. Marchetti
Robert C. Judge

Land Transfers

Thomas D. Dzenutis to Roy J. Masterson, land with all buildings thereon at 9 Smith Place, for \$500,000.

Despite all this activity, Micki has the air of a woman who has found both meaning and pleasure in life, however hectic it can be. She and Diane wind down at their lake house 45 minutes from Cornwall, where they live for five months of the year with three dogs and three cats and where Micki loves to swim. "Water is my relaxation and renewal," she says. Her two sons are both married and she is eagerly awaiting the birth of her first grandchild. And she's in a book club, "though I don't always get to finish the book!" —Carol Schneider

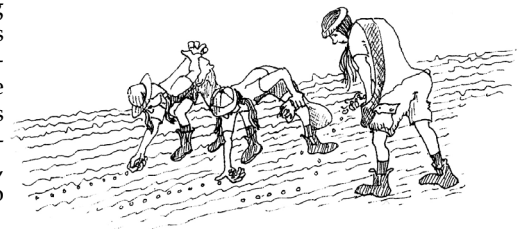
Big Bend to be Power Site

The *Chronicle* has learned that a Vermont-based energy start-up, Belisama Partners, is studying the feasibility of installing a micro hydro power facility in the Housatonic River at the Big Bend.

The small cylindrical plant would contain turbines capable of making electricity even in low-flow summer months, according to Belisama engineer, Peter Roebing. Power is transmitted from the little plant using a system of magnets and copper wiring. Systems like these can transmit about a mile, Roebing said, far enough to bring electricity to West Cornwall village and to the proposed septic waste water plant.

Roebing said he was inspired by the appearance a few months ago of a 300-foot diameter ice floe in the Presumpscot River in Maine. The floe had nestled into a bend in the river and was turning slowly, powerfully in the river current. The River Ice Hydraulics Office of the Army Corps of Engineers confirmed the existence of such ice floes and their potential as a power source.

Ice, of course, melts, so Roebing and his colleagues set out to design a more permanent installation. A key element was going to be the right topography, a river bend which captured the downstream flow and released it in a counter-clockwise fash-



CORNWALL MINOR POETS AWARD

From the *Cornwall Chronicle*, April 1999

The Cornwall Hollow Union of Minor Poets is pleased to announce the results of the competition for the best sonnet celebrating real-estate developers. The winning sonnet was submitted by the Real Estate Developers' Glorification Association, which strictly observed the Shakespearean rhyme scheme:

When in disgrace with conservationists,
 We're solaced by our lucrative endeavors;
 We love to serve those privileged vacationists
 Who'd rather ruin land than save the beavers.
 Oh why are we so oft reviled as villains
 When we're the ones who really have the Vision?
 We should be praised by you and all your chilluns,
 Not targeted with insults and derision.
 Just think! A nice casino in the Village,
 Some neon billboards rising in the Hollow,
 And after just a little forest-pillage,
 Hotels and spas; rock festivals to follow.
 Let's first propose the plan to Donald Trump:
 To honor him, we could re-name the Dump.

—*Franmy Taliaferro*

ion. The micro hydro power plant Belisama has developed channels that flow into its turbines like a paddlewheel lying on its side. The power produced will be patched into the existing lines on poles throughout the village.

The cost of the little plant is expected to be \$20,000 or less. Roebing said his firm is interested in building the system in the Housatonic as a pilot project and is looking for local fiscal partners, public or private. The financial return is expected to be modest, Roebing said. The real benefit will be in establishing that micro hydro power is a possibility in western New England. Similar installations have worked along the Upper Nile to pump irrigating water into agricultural fields.

Roebing said his interest in engineering stems from his family's history. Great-great grandfather John Roebing designed the Brooklyn Bridge.

—*Lisa L. Simont*

Little Guild to Grow

The Little Guild purchased a single-family home in West Cornwall in 1988 and, like any small family, it has grown. Over the past 31 years, the home was converted and expanded to accommodate shelter operations, and during that time, thousands of animals have passed through the doors.

The Little Guild is looking to grow and improve operations. More space is needed to make it easier and more comfortable for adopters. The guild also needs a dog quarantine area so the staff can rescue dogs from other shelters and pounds that euthanize for space. An increase in space would support classes in obedience and agility and expand to house 28 dogs and 32 cats plus kittens. The outdoor exercise area could grow too.

The Little Guild currently employs 12 staff, and works with 100 active volunteers, making them not only a significant em-

ployer in town, but a cramped one as well.

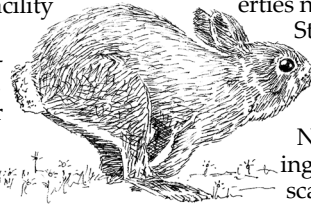
The plans are constrained by the current property size. Bordered by state land, and with limited septic options, expansion on the current site is not possible. Like any small family which has outgrown its starter home, the time has come to plan for the next move.

Abigail Cusick, the executive director, has said: "We want to do better for these animals, and we want to do more." She estimates the costs for a new site would be \$3 to \$5 million over about three years. The goal is to find 3 to 5 acres of flat land, zoned appropriately, on a main road without existing structures. The Little Guild would construct a new facility, custom designed for the ideal shelter operation. Construction would provide opportunities for local contractors, and the new facility would add jobs for local staff.

In addition to providing employment, the guild also attracts people to Cornwall. Each year the Run & Wag 5K race brings runners from all over Connecticut and neighboring states to town.

The Little Guild wants very much to stay in Cornwall and is working to find the right location here in order to remain the important part of our community that it has been for decades.

—*Diane Beebe*

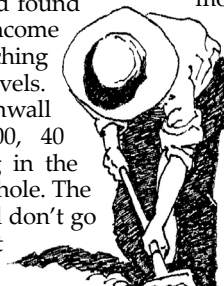


Cornwall Briefs

• **A stream of new statistics and surveys** is lighting up the discussion of Cornwall's future. There's a lot to pick through and it's easy to find yourself comparing pears to kiwis, but here goes with some highlights: The CT Economic Resource Council (CERC) profiled Cornwall in 2018 and found that our median household income was \$74,107, just about matching Litchfield County and state levels. The median price of a Cornwall house, however, is \$420,100, 40 percent higher than housing in the county and in the state as a whole. The dollars of income in Cornwall don't go as far as dollars do in the rest of the state.

And Cornwall's residents are older; the over 65s make up 26 percent of the population compared to 15 percent statewide. And this group has a lot to say about where the town should be going in the next ten years.

This was clear in the town-wide survey circulated by the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z) which tested opinions about housing, the natural landscape, the local economy, and quality of life. The data



Letter to the Chronicle

DUMP ART DATE CHANGE

After 18 years, the hardworking Art@TheDump Committee has voted to move the dates of the show from April to May in the hope that we might catch some warmer weather. Our creaky bones can no longer tolerate frigid cold, blustery winds, or pelting rain. Please join us at the sand shed on May 4 and 5; 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. on Saturday, and 10 A.M. to noon on Sunday. As always, we welcome artists to bring their works between 8 and 10 A.M. on Saturday. This year 30 percent of the sales will go to the Art Garage at Housy. As this is the weekend before Mother's Day, you might find some interesting piece of art to give your mommy. See you then and there.

—*Art@TheDump Committee*

revealed real concern about housing which meets the needs of the aging and the young alike. The range of options for multi-family, co-housing, smaller houses, and rental properties needs to expand.

Stay tuned for more analysis by P&Z and its planning committees on this survey.

• **Speaking of the state, Gov.**

Ned Lamont's new staff is turning over every rock in the landscape looking for more revenue.

Local governments will surely feel the pinch, one way or another. As Cornwall begins work on its own FY 2019—2020 budget, the state is considering requiring towns like ours to pay about 25 percent of our teacher retirement costs. The program is currently the responsibility of the state and successive administrations have failed to fund it for many years. It's too early to know how this will play out. At least we know we won't have tolls on Route 7.

• **Heather Dinneen** has been appointed by the selectmen to be the new social services director. She has been doing the work on a temporary basis for the past several months.

• **Road news!** Cornwall Hollow and Town Street may expect the chip and seal trucks in their neighborhood toward the end of April. The state has no plans to repave any roads in the Northwest Corner. "These roads are unravelling," First Selectman Gordon Ridgway grumbled in a recent interview. Competing interests across the state will keep the paving trucks elsewhere.

• **STEAP**, the small-town economic development program, will stop its grant activity at the end of 2019. Ridgway said that, although the facade program is over, funding remains for commercial building renovation and reconstruction of old barns still in use by farmers. The grants max out at \$10,000 and applications are available in the selectmen's office.

—*Lisa L. Simont*

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.

At the Cornwall Library

Creative Writing Class, taught by Deb Devins, will be held on eight consecutive Wednesday nights beginning April 3, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This class is for anyone interested in writing novels, short stories, children's stories, personal essays, poetry, memoir, and family stories. \$50 fee.

On Saturday, April 6, at 5 p.m. William Kinsolving will present his one-man play, *America and Me*, the musings and torments of Walt Whitman on his 67th birthday. Admission is \$10.

Trivia Night will be held on Friday April 26. BYO dinner/drinks at 5:30 p.m. Trivia game starts at 6:30 p.m. (See insert.)

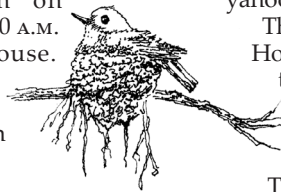
"Dining, South of the Border," a benefit for five mission projects selected by the UCC Church School students will be held Saturday, April 6, between 5 and 7 p.m. at the Parish House. Free will donations will all go to the mission projects. For more information call the church office at 672-6840.

Family Country Dance will be held at town hall on Saturday, April 6. Waltzes will be played from 6:45 p.m. with called dances starting at 7 p.m. The caller will be Patricia Campbell. Music generously donated by Betsy's Band. Suggested donation, \$5-8/child and \$10-15/adult. Contact Debra@Motherhouse.us or 860-671-7945 for more info.

Park and Recreation Events

Senior Luncheon. Tuesday, April 9, at noon at the UCC Parish House. Cost \$8. RSVP required to prcornwall@gmail.com.

Spring Celebration on Saturday, April 20, at 10:30 a.m. at the UCC Parish House. Featuring an egg hunt, a visit from our Park and Rec rabbit, and other fun spring activities.



Green Mulch

Spring has arrived! As you plan your garden, don't forget that your local paper needs its own kind of fertilizer. Make a contribution to the *Chronicle* today.

Morning Coffee and Conversations. Tuesday, April 23, at 9 a.m. at the UCC Parish House.

Opinions Needed for the Cornwall Conservation Commission's upcoming "Insider's Guide to the Cornwalls." Meetings for various sections of town will be held this month: East Cornwall and Cornwall Village, Sunday, April 7; Cornwall Bridge, Friday, April 12; North Cornwall and Cornwall Hollow, Friday, April 19; and West Cornwall, Sunday, April 28. All meetings will be at 4 p.m. at the Cornwall Library. Refreshments will be on hand. (See insert.)

Three Green Aliens: Plants and invasive species will be the subject of a slide show and talk by Tom Zetterstrom, Elm Watch founder and ecological activist, presented Saturday, April 13, at 4 p.m. at the Cornwall Library. Sponsored by the Conservation Commission and the Cornwall Conservation Trust, the presentation will include plant identification and control methods of all kinds aimed at suppressing these vigorous invaders. Refreshments will be served. (See insert.)

Art in Cornwall

The Souterrain Gallery will be opening its season Saturday, April 20, with an artist's reception from 3 to 6 p.m. for Ellen Moon, whose watercolor exhibit "Home and Away" will be on display through June 2. The gallery is open Thursday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and by appointment.

An art reception for Joan Edler's show and sale "Verdant Moments" will be held on Saturday, April 20, at 5 p.m.

In the Parish House, the exhibit of Scott Zuckerman's paintings and drawings, "Out in the Fields," continues through April 30. The show may be viewed Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sundays, 10 a.m. to noon, and by appointment with Scott who may be contacted at oldfox143@yahoo.com.

Through the month of April, the Toll House Gallery in West Cornwall will continue to showcase the paintings of Lenart Swede Ahlstrom, landscape photographs by Ian Ingersoll, and newly added work by Don Bracken.

The Toll House is open Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Signs of Spring," an Earth Day hike led by the Cornwall Conservation Trust will step off on Monday, April 22, at 10 a.m.

Trail location will be announced on CCT webpage, cornwallconservationtrust.org.

Town Budget: Townspeople will get a chance to study and ask questions about the town's budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 at a public hearing on Friday, April 26, starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Gathering Room at CCS. The budget includes expenditures by the selectmen's office and the Board of Education. Copies of the budget will be available at the town office one week before the meeting.

Changing Times: Hamish Lutris, associate professor of history, will give the fourth annual Norman Dorsen Lecture presented by the Cornwall Historical Society on April 28 at 3 p.m. at town hall. (See insert.)

Renter's Rebates: The Assessor's Office for the town of Cornwall is accepting applications for the Renter's Rebate for Elderly and Totally Disabled. Applicants must be 65 or 100 percent disabled and a renter in the town of Cornwall. The income limit for this program is \$36,000 for single and \$43,900 for married. The filing period is April 1 to October 1, 2019. Please contact the assessor's office for an application.

Jobs and More Jobs: Trinity Retreat Center has openings for housekeeping (\$16/hour), dishwashing (\$13/hour) and for a summer farm fellow (\$18/hour). Anyone interested, contact Susan Smith at susmith@trinitywallstreet.org.

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THIS MONTH

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Lisa Simont and Carol Schneider, Editors
Paul De Angelis and Cara Weigold, Facebook Posts

NEXT MONTH

Ann Gold and Jayne Ridgway, Editors
rg16@yahoo.com or gridgway@snet.net

MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein

CALENDAR EDITOR Chris Gyorsok
calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

ILLUSTRATIONS EDITOR Valorie Fisher
valorie@valoriefisher.com

CIRCULATION Hunt Williams, Nan and John Bevans

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