In this issue, the editors explore a younger generation’s perspective on life in Cornwall. These are new residents in their 20s and 30s who choose to live in Cornwall. Their reasons for landing here are varied, interesting, and reflect the hopes and needs of both the traditional and modern Cornwall resident. —The Editors

Finding Cornwall and Settling In

The following is a conversation between Chronicle editor Marina Kotchoubey and Cornwall resident, 26-year-old Jessica Garrofano on life in Cornwall. Jessica resides in Cornwall with her husband, Thomas James (TJ) Garrofano, and their 18-month-old son Thomas.

MK: There is concern in the region that young families are living elsewhere. You are the White Whale! How did you and your husband discover Cornwall?

JG: It’s funny that you say that because I am originally from one side of Connecticut wasn’t the best fit for us. When we were ready to start a family, we realized that side of Connecticut wasn’t the best fit for us. We came back to the Sherman area and began to look for a property that would fit our needs.

MK: Why did you settle on Cornwall?

JG: When we came to Cornwall, we absolutely loved it. Our Realtor stumbled upon a little fixer-upper with land. It was our dream property. I’ve always grown up working with my hands. My father was a carpenter and my husband loves all that as well. We knew the school system had a great reputation. We heard from many community members about the special qualities of a Cornwall education, which is something that is really hard to find. We were excited about other attractions, such as our children being able to ski during the winter. The way of life in Cornwall has a different dynamic than what you hear about nowadays. It’s how we want to raise our kids. We’re always outdoors. We understand the concept of “work hard, play hard.” We knew that in other parts of the state, we would never be able to raise our children this way. Cornwall was the jackpot for us.

MK: Do you have contemporary-rates that would like to make a similar life change to the one you and your husband made?

JG: Yes. I can tell you right now, in my generation, a lot of our friends are beginning to look for houses. I think times are changing, especially when it comes to families and family values. A lot of young parents are starting to realize that maybe a simpler way of life is better. Small towns like Cornwall are great places to raise well-rounded children. Just a small example...when my husband splits wood and carries it in, my 18-month-old son is behind him with a smaller log. It’s amazing that in such a short amount of time we already see the positive effects of our choice to live here. There are others that would like the same experience.

MK: Do you have a community of people your age in Cornwall?

JG: I would be lying if I said I had met a huge young person/mom community in Cornwall. That definitely has not been the case.

MK: In your opinion, how can we attract more young people to the area?

JG: I think if more people your age in Cornwall...

Every Week This Month:
* Mondays: Mat Squad, 6:30 pm UCC
* Tuesdays: ASW Method Mat, 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, 5–6:30 pm and QiGong, 6–6:30 pm UCC; Stitch ‘n Spin, 7–15–8:30 pm UCC
* Thursdays: ASW Method Mat, 8:30–9:30 am Library; Bad Day at Black Rock 10–Noon Library; Winter Film Series: The Mouse that Roared 4 pm Library

* Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

For additions and updates, visit www.cornwallchronicle.org
much of my childhood living overseas in a number of different countries. It took years for me to adjust to my native land that was more foreign to me than anywhere I had been before. While living in the Hudson Valley, a community slowly began to reveal itself to me through clay. I credit my being in Cornwall to my dear friend and mentor, Christine Owen of Warren. Christine, a phenomenal potter and artist, introduced me to the rich pottery community in northwest Connecticut. It didn’t take long for me to realize that this is where I belonged.

Now in my 20s, I met Jordan Colon a little over two years ago at the Cornwall Bridge Pottery. Jordan, a potter himself, hearing that I was looking for work, employed me to help with his production. Initially, work at the pottery was part time and I, having worked on a farm in New York state, wanted to find a farm family here in Connecticut. Jordan introduced me to Gordon Ridgway.

It is difficult to imagine a better welcoming committee than the Ridgways. Gordon, our first selectman, and his family embody so many of the qualities that make me love this town. They were quick to embrace me as a member of their team, deepening my appreciation for the kindness of others. Their eagerness for change and commitment to each other, their community, and the local fire department is truly commendable. A day working in the field side by side with Gordon features countless fascinating and often entertaining stories about Cornwall and its history.

Today, under the umbrella of Cornwall Bridge IDEAS (the Institute for the Discovery and Examination of Artistic Sensibilities), a non-profit founded by Todd Piker, I am able to explore my own creative processes with clay as my medium. The foundation has provided a physical center for me, along with other young artists and craftspeople to interact and exchange ideas in the setting of a functional studio while expanding the arts/crafts community in Cornwall and around the world. Being at the pottery gives me access to Todd Piker and the wealth of knowledge he has about the many complexities that encompass the ceramic world. Being in Cornwall gives me a community of friends, mentors, and neighbors.

—Sanah Petersen

**Feels Right to Come Home Here**

Since moving to Cornwall as a somewhat-young person, I’ve heard a lot of negative comments from the older generation about how Cornwall is dying: “Why would you ever move here at your age?” people ask. I tend to look at the future of this town in a more optimistic light. Perhaps Cornwall is in a bit of a slump currently, with low enrollment at CCS and West Cornwall a shadow of its former self, but I see a coming renaissance, and I’m excited for what the next decade will bring to this town.

Many of my friends who grew up as weekenders are bitten by the Cornwall bug and are either starting to move back to town, or have expressed intentions to eventually return and settle down here. I think a huge factor in the likelihood of a Cornwall revival is the opportunity to work remotely in today’s economy. While Cornwall is not really within commuting distance of an urban hub (which, of course, is a large part of the charm), the ability to work from home and telecommute has created the possibility of living in Cornwall for myriad careers that were not previously viable in the Northwest Corner. An offer to work remotely for my New York-based job was what initially brought me to Cornwall full time, and many of my friends who are beginning to move here are in the same boat.

Life in Cornwall is not for every urban millennial, but if you appreciate the great outdoors, you’re never really bored in this town. That being said, there are aspects of Cornwall life that could be improved to the benefit of all living or considering living here.

I think the development of our attainable housing stock would be a great boon to the growth of the town. While Cornwall is idyllic in so many ways, one of its main shortcomings in my eyes is the lack of diversity—racial, generational, and socioeconomic diversity all included. There’s no shortage of accommodation at the high end of the market; however, affordable options would do a lot to encourage a younger, more diverse population to invest in the town.

For Cornwall to grow and prosper in the coming years I think it’s important to attract new residents who don’t already have some sort of connection here. One aspect that my group of Cornwall friends all
share in common is that we either grew up in town or spent our childhood summers here. I hope to see new residents who have discovered the town for themselves, and I think a larger pool of places to live will do a lot to encourage this change.

Perhaps the development of attainable housing will further encourage the much-needed revival of West Cornwall village. With new residents will come a greater need for the shops and eateries that so many of us yearn for. I dream of a rebirth of the bridge dances of my youth and other community festivals in the shadow of the Covered Bridge, the beloved symbol of our small town.

We’ll see what the next few years hold for Cornwall. Brittany McAllister, another 30-something who recently moved here with her husband, Tyler Cheney, shares my positive outlook for the town: “We hesitate ed to leave the city with all of its conveniences and culture, but we realized that Cornwall is ready to grow and support the next generation if we are willing to invest our love and energy.”

It’s difficult to improve and modernize the town when much of Cornwall’s magic is in the fact that so little has changed over the years. But with our love and energy it can be done. We have something special here and I see only good things ahead as more and more people are seduced by Cornwall’s magic.

—James Gold

Communicating in Cornwall

The Cornwall Community Network is an online platform for our community to share ideas, seek information, submit asks, discuss issues, and otherwise communicate about Cornwall. It is free and open to all. The only requirements are to use your full name when posting, and to keep it civil.

For those who may be having challenges signing up or logging in, here are simple steps to help you join or login to CCN:
(1) go to www.Groups.io
(2) click on Find or Create a Group (at top of screen)
(3) enter Cornwall Community Network in the search box; hit Search
(4) click on Cornwall Community Network
(5) click either Log In or Sign Up button (you can also find CCN on CornwallCT.org; click Links at the top, then select Great Links, and scroll to almost the bottom)

After logging in or joining, the most recent topics will be displayed. If you click VIEW ALL you will see all topics and messages.

To respond to an existing topic just click the topic title and then choose what you want to reply to.

To start a new topic, click New Topic in the left column.

Need assistance? Just email cornwall@cornwallct.org and we’ll help.

—Casey Cook, Administrator Cornwall Community Network
in between. This is an interesting job for someone who wants to learn how regional work in our part of the world.

— Lisa L. Simont

Events & Announcements

For updates, changes, and additions, check the online calendar at cornwallchronicle.org. For reminders, see the Chronicle Facebook page.

Applications for the Elderly and Totally Disabled Homeowners Program are being accepted at the assessor’s office. Applicants must be 65 or 100% disabled and a homeowner in the town of Cornwall. The income limit for this program is $37,000 for single people and $45,100 for those who are married. The filing period is February 1 to May 15, 2020. Please contact the assessor’s office for an application.

What’s the Word? Next meeting is Monday, March 2, at 11 a.m. at the library. The word for this month is ZENOGAMY. Contact Connie Steuerwalt at 672-2816 or csteuerwalt@gmail.com.

Traditional New England Country Square Dancing on Saturday, March 7, at town hall. At 6:45 p.m. there will be wallazes; at 7 p.m., square, circle, contra dances taught and called by Dudley Laufman. Music by Betsy’s Band. Suggested donation $5–8/child, $10–15/adult, $25/family. Contact Debra@motherhouse.us or call 672-0229.

Art in Cornwall: March exhibits include: Cornwall Library—Erica Child Prud’homme “Retrospective: Paintings and Drawings” opening on Saturday, March 7, from 5 to 7 p.m.; Toll House Gallery—works by Donald Bracker, Lennart Swede Ahstrom, and photographs by Ian Ingersoll, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the National Iron Bank—work of Charles Besozzi with a change in theme to his winter scenes continues through April; the UCC Parish House—exhibit of Magaly Ohika’s “The Silence of Peace and Beauty” viewed Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. or Sunday, from 11 a.m. to noon until March 15 or by arrangement with Magaly (860-248-1806 or ohika_mp@yahoo.com).

A Red Cross Blood Drive will be held on Thursday, March 12, from 1 to 6 p.m. in the United Church of Christ Parish House. Call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter 3663 to schedule an appointment. Sandwiches, fruit, candy and cookies are offered to donors, volunteers, and staff.

Shredd It Day will be on Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to noon at the United Church of Christ. $5/carton or bag to be shredded by the Shredd It Company. Sponsored by the UCC Church School children. Call 672-6840 for more information.

At the Cornwall Library

Paint Flowers in Pastels with Collette Hurst in three sessions, Saturday March 14, 21, and 28 from 10 a.m. to noon. $75 for three sessions. Supplies available in class. Call 672-6674 to register.

The Winter Film Series continues with Bad Day at Black Rock on Saturday, March 14, at 4 p.m. This 1955 thriller stars Spencer Tracy, Robert Ryan, Lee Marvin, and Ernest Borgnine. The plot includes murder and involves prejudice against a Japanese American. $5/person suggested donation.

The Voting Rights Series by teacher and historian Peter Vermiliea concludes on Monday, March 23, at 5:30 p.m. The topic is “Voting in the 21st Century: voter suppression, gerrymandering, the electoral college, the Supreme Court, and the Voting Rights Act.” Made possible through a Cornwall Foundation grant.

The movie series concludes with The House That Roared on Saturday, March 28, at 4 p.m. Peter Sellers and the Grand Duchess of Fenwick declare war on the United States. $5/person suggested donation.

Storytelling and Photo Display Reception about coyotes, wolves, and foxes sponsored by the Cornwall Conservation Trust will take place Sunday, March 15, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at its office, 7 Railroad Place, West Cornwall. All are welcome to submit entries before March 10 via its Facebook page or email at event@cornwallconservationtrust.org.

The Republican Town Committee will caucus to fill vacancies, elect committee officers, and choose delegates for the conventions on Tuesday, March 24, at 7 p.m. at the Cornwall Library.

The Democratic Town Committee will hold a caucus on Sunday, March 29, at 3 p.m. at the Cornwall Library to choose delegates to the state convention and new officers.

Dining, South of the Border, a benefit buffet-style dinner on Saturday, March 28, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the UCC Parish House. The Church School children, with the help of the Faith Formation Committee, will put on the dinner with free-will donations going toward four mission projects. The menu includes dishes from Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Costa Rica, Colombia, and Argentina. Call 672-6840 for more information.

Trivia Night, sponsored by The Cornwall Association, will be held Saturday, April 11, starting with BYO eats at 6 p.m. Trivia at 7 p.m. (See insert.)

Scholarships are available from the Cornwall Conservation Trust for a maximum of $1,000 for residents of Region 1 who are graduating high school seniors or students in college. Information is available on the Student Grants page of its website, cornwallconservationtrust.org. Deadline is May 1.

US Census Bureau wants to hire census workers for Cornwall at $25 per hour. Contact Jonathan Berry at the town hall for more information. 672-4959.  

Let Lions Roar and Lambs Gambol

The lovely days of March can be pretty tough in Cornwall—often it’s the snowiest month of the winter. Whatever the weather, the Chronicle soldiers on. Consider a gift to keep the news coming! Thanks.

The Chronicle Needs Your Support

We hope you enjoy this on-line edition of the Cornwall Chronicle. Remember that all our revenues come from readers like you, and we need your help to continue producing this electronic edition along with the print edition. If your contribution is $15 or more, we’d be glad to mail the print edition to any out-of-town address. Please mail your tax deductible gifts to: Cornwall Chronicle Inc. PO Box 6, West Cornwall, CT 06796. Comments, letters and news may be E-mailed to the publishers at: info@cornwallchronicle.org.