



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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## End Of Trouble At The Library?

Steps toward calming a divisive community discussion about the Cornwall Library were about to be taken in late July as the *Chronicle* went to press. According to reliable reports, the parties were very close to reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution of the issues surrounding the abrupt dismissal in late June of Amy de Neergaard as children's librarian.

Correspondence on the firing and how it was done had been flowing for weeks on the Cornwall Community Network. De Neergaard had been in the position for 14 years. On June 20, she said, she was told by Library Director Amy Cady she would no longer be employed, as of then. "There was no warning," she said during a phone interview. "It came completely out of the blue. I didn't realize there was unhappiness with my performance or that there were issues so dire." De Neergaard, who is also an artist, said she hadn't had a written performance review in two years, but did a self evaluation last year.

During the following few weeks, many conversations about the firing focused on the lack of explanation from the Library. Amy Cady said she and the board could only give out basic information about de Neergaard, such as the length of her employment and her title. When the matter became public, Library Board of Trustees

President Barton Jones was out of town and member Marnell Stover said that they could not say anything about an employee.

In a letter to the board, Phyllis Nauts, a former Library board member and co-founder of Friends of the Library, railed at de Neergard's being fired "with no notice and made to gather up her things and leave immediately." Nauts said, "Although there had been some issues of time management, her evaluations have been consistently very laudatory." Nauts spoke of the wonderful children's programs de Neergaard has created as well as the excellent book collection she has built up.

Tom Bechtle noted in his entry on the network that the Library is supported exclusively by public, or quasi-public money and the town gives an annual grant. This year the total is \$36,300. Gifts are also derived from an annual appeal and revenue comes from various fundraising events and earnings from an endowment fund built up over the years, in part, from donations from town residents. "My point is that the organization derives its financial support exclusively as a direct (or indirect) result of the generosity of the Cornwall community and so a case can be made for more transparency when something significant (can I say 'controversial?') happens inside its doors."

Many supporters of de Neergaard also had good things to say about the trustees as individuals. Hendon Chubb wrote "Supporters of Amy de Neergaard, myself included, have written many letters supporting her. The board of the Library is run by honest and good people who are working hard to make the Library flourish. Because their lawyer has apparently told members not to discuss the matter, we only have one side of the story. Some people have made harsh statements about the board of trustees and its members. I think this is not fair."

While the controversy was running its course, De Neergaard said she was amazed and touched by the outpouring of support she received. "I'm thankful for all my friends coming forth."  
—Ruth Epstein

## Used Dogs

When our first son was 7 he announced one evening that a friend had just been given a dog. "It's not a new one, though," he clarified. "It's a used dog."

Used, adopted, or rescued...the numbers are staggering. On the supply side, over three million dogs enter animal shelters in the United States annually with an estimated 60 percent of those being euthanized. At the Memphis (Tenn.) Animal

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## AUGUST 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball,</b> 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Wednesdays: Tai Chi,</b> 6-9 pm Town Hall; <b>Karate</b> 6:30-7:30 pm CCS; <b>Women's Basketball,</b> 7:30 pm CCS gym <b>Saturdays:</b> Cornwall Farm Market 9 am-12:30 pm Wish House Lawn <b>Sundays: Meditation,</b> 1-2 pm, call Debra for location, 672-0229			<b>1</b> ○ FULL ♦ "Wishes & Dreams" Program 6:30-7:30 pm Library	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> ♦ Grumbling Gryphons Play 3:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 5-9 pm CCS ♦ Grumbling Gryphons Play 6:30 pm Town Hall	<b>4</b> ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 10 am-5 pm CCS ♦ Lets Get Growing 10 am Library ♦ Country Dance 7 pm Library ♦ Sweet Summer Dance 7 pm Town Hall
<b>5</b> ♦ Rose Algrant Art Show 10 am-noon CCS ♦ CCT Walk 11 am Welles Preserve	<b>6</b> ♦ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ♦ Park & Rec 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>7</b> ♦ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall	<b>8</b> ♦ Republican Town Committee 7 pm Library	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> ☾ 1st Q ♦ Kids Movie Night "E.T.-The Extra-Terrestrial" 7 pm Library	<b>11</b> ♦ Canning Workshop 10:30 am-1:30 pm Local Farm ♦ Hillary Clinton Video Talk 4-6 pm Library
<b>12</b> ♦ Talk&Tea With Peter del Tredici 2-3 pm Historical Society	<b>13</b> ♦ Family Farm Camp 9 am-1 pm Local Farm ♦ Primary Election 6 am-8 pm Town Hall ♦ P & R Cornwall Day 11 am-8 pm Lake Compo ♦ Economic Development Committee 8 pm Town Hall	<b>14</b> ♦ Family Farm Camp 9 am-1 pm Local Farm ♦ Primary Election 6 am-8 pm Town Hall ♦ P & R Cornwall Day 11 am-8 pm Lake Compo ♦ Economic Development Committee 8 pm Town Hall	<b>15</b> ♦ Family Farm Camp 9 am-1 pm Local Farm ♦ Deadline: September Chronicle Copy	<b>16</b> ♦ Family Farm Camp 9 am-1 pm Local Farm ♦ Cornwall Conservation Commission 7 pm Town Hall ♦ Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> ● NEW ♦ Family Farm Camp 9 am-1 pm Local Farm
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> ☽ 4th Q ♦ Kids Movie Night "The Princess Bride" 7 pm Library	<b>25</b> ♦ Fred Sander Book Signing 3-5 pm Library ♦ Hendon Chubb Reception 5-7 pm Library
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> ♦ Committee For Seniors 7 pm Town Hall	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> ○ FULL	

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Shelter the day before this past Fourth of July weekend, 70 people were in line, waiting for the shelter to open. Each had a dog on a lead or a line, ready to be relinquished.

However, figures for the demand side are also impressive as, increasingly, folks appear to turn to adoption when looking for a pooch. The mesmerizing site, Petfinders.com, is currently showing bios of more than 145,000 available dogs listed by nearly 12,000 shelters and rescue groups. Monthly, more than one million viewers log on to Petfinders, spending an average of 30 minutes per visit, and each reviewing an average 90 pages of listings.

Denise Cohn, the executive director of Cornwall's Little Guild of St. Francis, reports that the guild's dog placements have doubled in the last year. As Cohn notes, rescue dogs are not damaged goods. They didn't ask to be put in this position.

Having had three spectacular English-bred Labs over 25 years, we finally found ourselves dogless. Not wanting to go the puppy route again, our thoughts turned to adoption. For advice I turned to "Dr. Dave" Sandefer of Falls Village's Sand Road Animal Hospital. He was encouraging, saying that adopted dogs represented approximately 35 percent of the practice's canine clients.

Curious as to why so many listings were from the Southeast, Sandefer replied that the area has no strong tradition of spaying or neutering and is also the base for many of the "puppy mills." He also added that 95 percent of his Southeast-adopted canine patients are excellent animals. We took the plunge and have been thrilled with the result.

All of those we have met in the adoption process are dedicated to a fault, and focused on placing the proper pup with the proper family. Dogs are carefully evaluated as are potential adopters, greatly minimizing the possibility of disappointment.

A slight smile of satisfaction was on Cohn's face when observing that there was a growing sense of status and pride coming from having an adopted pup in the family. It appears that used dogs are in.

—Jeffrey Jacobson

## End of Life

One evening in April a group of brave Cornwallians met at the Library with members of the Sharon Hospital Ethics Committee to talk about...shhh...dare I say it?...preparing for death. The committee is promoting advanced planning for death in ways that go beyond writing a will for disposing of wealth or purchasing a gravesite. Members advise writing a living will for health care at the end of life.

Most people today are aware of the technological advances in medical science that have made lives longer than at any other time in our history. Unfortunately, those same advances can make our dying last longer than ever. Between antibiotics, transfusions, dialysis, feeding tubes, mechanical ventilation and chemotherapy, we can now keep people going much longer, but often with a lower quality of life than they or their families would want.

When a sick or suffering person is admitted to a hospital, doctors must offer any legitimate treatments that are available. The problem is that patients are often not aware that they can just say no. They are not aware that they can ask the question: "Is this treatment going to cure me?" And if the answer to that question is no, then the next one could be: "Is this treatment likely to ease my suffering or just prolong it?" Of course, terminally ill or dying people are often not in any condition to ask such questions or even make decisions about treatment options. They often have to rely on a document like a living will or a person they trust (aka health care representative) to communicate their wishes for them. There is an excellent document explaining our living will law at <http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/health/yourrightstomakehealthcaredecisions2011version.pdf> with all the necessary forms.

In my 32 years of practicing medicine I have encountered people with many varying philosophies or ideas about death. I have met people who believe that only God can decide when they should die and that their obligation is to try to stay alive at any cost until called by God. I have also met people who are terrified of death and therefore want "everything done." There are people who believe (falsely) that depriving a loved one of artificial nutrition through a feeding tube is equivalent to starving that person.

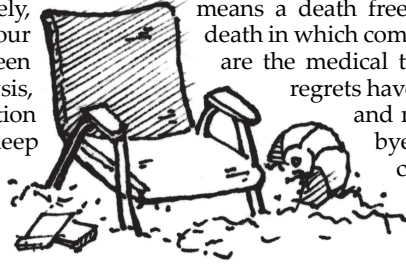
There are people who would want to be temporarily put on a mechanical ventilator to allow their children to gather at their bedside. And finally, there are people who want to end their lives at home in their own beds, surrounded by family and with a minimum of medical intervention.

To make sure that you yourself decide what kind of death you will have, you have to start by bravely acknowledging that you will indeed die some day. How do you picture it? What would mean the most to you? What would you definitely not want to have to endure? Tell your family your wishes. Do it in writing or in person, or better yet, both.

Several decades ago some patients started complaining about the "medicalization" of childbirth. Soon the "natural childbirth" movement was started. Now people are starting to object to the "medi-

calization" of dying and are demanding a "natural death." What each person means by this is not exactly uniform, but it usually means a death free of gadgetry, a death in which comfort and dignity are the medical treatment focus, regrets have been set aside, and necessary good-byes have been completed.

—Anna Timell



## Welcome

Sophie Naomi Smith Mager  
to Alix and Camilla Mager

## Land Transfers

Lorraine P. Whitney to Daniel Lazar and Margaret Tully, 3.93 acres of land with improvements thereon, at 5 Tarradiddle Lane, for \$215,000.

Pamela A. Jones to Jeremy and Andrea Kortes, approximately 1 acre of land with all improvements thereon, at 2 Dibble Hill Road, for \$400,000.

Michael J. and Elizabeth R. Santini to Paul Rollin and Sheila Zachman, 1.488 acres of land with improvements thereon, at 368 Kent Road, for \$345,000.

Debra L. Morehouse to Steven C. Madeux, land with improvements thereon, at 17 Hollenbeck Road, for \$310,000.

Judith R. Scranton and Olivia Jane Connors to Edward & Rosalie Pinnette, land with improvements thereon, at 150 College Street, for \$315,000.

## Migration: Where Do They Go?

Many weeks have passed since the summer solstice, and the days have gotten shorter, once again triggering the migration impulse throughout the world of birds. You may have seen increasing numbers of foraging birds with indistinct colors. These are the newly fledged offspring of our resident birds. Our local breeding birds are with us for only three to four months, from April/May to July/August, spending six to seven months in their winter habitats and as much as a month in their journeys in each direction.

The phoebe is one of our most vocal backyard birds and thus for many of us signifies the true arrival of spring and, with its departure in late August, the onset of fall. It and other common summer residents, such as our bluebirds, song sparrows, and chipping sparrows travel to the southern United States, while our wood thrushes, orioles, and tree swallows fly further, to Central America. Catbirds, barn swallows, rose-breasted grosbeaks, yellow warblers, redstarts and many others are true long-distance travelers, wintering in southern

Central America or northern South America. En route, migrants brave violent weather, disorientation from bright lights and collisions with tall buildings, and losses to hawks and other predators who are all too familiar with their travel schedules.

The true champion among our songbird migrants is the bobolink, which flies 8,000 miles to us, all the way from northern Argentina and southern Brazil. Bobolinks breed only in grasslands, which puts their nests and chicks at risk when mowing time arrives. Our farmers need that hay, but we can help declining grassland species by reserving a small portion of our fields for cutting until mid-July, when the young birds have fledged.

The survival of our songbird species depends every bit as much on preserving their winter habitats and stopover points during migration as it does on the stability of our local breeding grounds here in northwest Connecticut. There is still much to learn about the exact wintering grounds of our backyard birds. Remarkably, scientists at UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, and several other institutions have found a method to extract from a single feather genetic and isotopic information on where birds were born, wintered, and migrated. This information can be used to help protect venues vital to their survival.

Ornithologists are still working to understand how the remarkable little creatures find their ways back, often to the exact same acre in which they were hatched.

As we face fall and winter, we can be grateful that so many beautiful full-time residents, such as cardinals, blue jays, goldfinches, chickadees, nuthatches, tufted titmice, and red-bellied, downy, and hairy woodpeckers, will be with us until our remarkable summer avian residents fly back next spring.

—Joe Ellis

## An Artist in Mud and Vines

In his studio in West Cornwall, Don Bracken shows you tall panels coated with acrylic-tinted mud in curious designs and great hanging sculptures made each of a single vine. Nobody could possibly describe them, but you can see examples of his work at donbracken.blogspot.com.

Bracken has made art since he was a child. After graduating from the MFA program at UC Berkeley, he painted while supporting himself as a carpenter and house painter. In 1979 on a visit to a friend in Lakeville he so much enjoyed the fireflies and the skinny dipping that he decided to move east. With the help of Earl Brecher he found a place in Cornwall and has lived here ever since.

In 1997 Bracken was awarded a fellowship to use an unrented floor high up in the new World Trade Center. For a month he painted what he saw from the windows. The disaster of 9/11 was a hideous shock to him. He still had some Mylar cityscape

## LIBRARY INQUIRY

This summer I have been reading James Thomas Flexner's masterful, multi-volume, 1970s biography of George Washington. At the end of the volume describing Washington's second term as president, Flexner acknowledges the assistance he received in his research from a number of institutions. Those listed are: the NY Public Library; the NY Historical Society; the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association archive; the Century Association; the Free Library of Cornwall, CT; the Library of Congress; the Frick Art Reference Library; and the NY Society Library.

panels he'd painted while he was there. He splattered them with gobs of red paint as a memorial. Later he incorporated debris from the buildings in his work.

Bracken started out as a figurative artist. Fifteen years ago Phyllis and I traded with him for a large painting of a French family. It was made from a photograph but it was starting to morph into his American family: he replaced one of the figures with a portrait of his dog.

Bracken's mud paintings started out as pictures of farms in the area, using dirt from the farms as a pigment. But he found it was much more "self-realizing" to forget about landscapes and paint what his creativity told him to as he worked.

In November Bracken will have a show at the New Arts Gallery in Milton. He still enjoys skinny dipping in Cream Hill Lake.

—Hendon Chubb

## Stripped

Write me poems,  
spin out syllables,  
strings of words.  
I'm hungry for  
your metaphors.

But no hyperbole,  
please.  
I want pared down,  
burnished  
Cycladic art.

So carve and hone.  
Let me see  
you stripped,  
bare.

—Phyllis Nauts

## The Senior Survey

The senior survey results are in. Sixty people responded. The majority of responders were 70 to 80 years of age with the 80-and-above coming in second. About a third felt they would like more programs for seniors.

The top three issues picked were, in

# Letters to the Chronicle

Obviously, one institution in the list stands out: how did Flexner come to benefit from the research he did at our local library? I would appreciate hearing from anyone whose memory and knowledge might offer an answer.

—David A. Grossman

## SETTING IT STRAIGHT

My article in the July Chronicle, "Slavery in Cornwall?" contained an error. In the sentence, "It worked: 2,759 blacks were held in bondage in the state in 1790; by 1800, only about 200 remained," the latter date should have been 1820.

—Ann Schillinger

order, Chore Service, transportation, and low-cost housing. Chore Service is alive and well, and utilized by many of our residents, and the affordable housing project in Cornwall Bridge is very close to getting its funding. As one insider commented, "We can almost smell the money." Transportation is offered by both the Northwest Transit Dial-a-Ride and Geer Dial-a-Ride; however, using these services requires more planning than an individual with a car.

The most popular programs were trips to cultural events and museums, lectures, readings and classes, and exercise.

Both in the selections and the comments two things stand out. One is that many respondents didn't know that these programs are already being offered. The other is that many of the respondents felt that they did not need the services. As one commenter wrote, "Doing just fine, thank you!"

With this feedback, the Cornwall Committee for Seniors plans to promote communication through programs, the Library, informal gatherings, and a new senior web page (you'd be surprised at how many seniors are tech savvy). Additionally the committee plans to support the programs and services already in place.

Thank you to all who responded, thank you to those who pointed out that an informal gathering is NOT called a coffee clutch (that is a brown handbag) but a coffee klatch. And please send in any late surveys. You can get a survey form from the Library.

—Jane Prentice

## Hip in the Sticks

Don't just sit there: hike, eat, drink, shop, etc. etc. etc. Even if your hip days are over you can still be in the know by logging on to a new resource guide online, www.Hipinthesticks.com, created by two Cornwall residents, Mary Kay Elwell and April Stevens, and their Washington, Conn. neighbor Teresa Fernandes. "No more driving to Great Barrington for your cap-

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puccino. Sweet William's Bakery has done it and the lines are starting to form," advises the site and then about a local artisan, Hip in the Sticks says, "We have asked ourselves how is it possible that a weathered red clay pot could give us so much pleasure? Well, it's obvious: it was made by Guy Wolff, the master potter."

Co-creator Elwell says, "Bookmarking the site is a great way to access the addresses and phone numbers of local eateries, stores, and services." No need to Google when you've got Hip. "We wanted to create something that looked good and gave information fast without spending more time on the Internet, researching what to do, where to go, how to spend your days and nights," says Stevens.

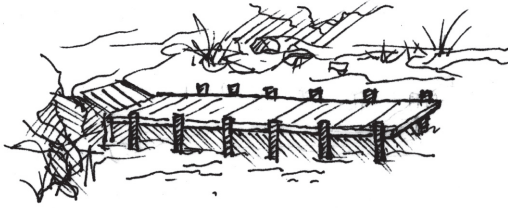
Rural Intelligence and Berkshire Style are two other area guides for towns farther west and north. —Elizabeth English

## About This Issue

Our readers will notice that there is no "Cornwall Briefs" section. The Selectmen's Office reports that nothing much happened in Cornwall during the past month.

They will also notice that Ruth Epstein, who is not a Cornwall resident (but she's our managing editor) is the author of "Trouble at the Library." Feelings in town have been so high that to avoid the appearance of bias we broke with custom and asked an outsider to write the piece.

Every August we like to include the story of a Cornwall artist and a poem. This month's artist is Don Bracken and the poet is Phyllis Nauts. Full disclosure: Phyllis Nauts is the wife of one of the editors and mother-in-law of the other. —The Editors



## We've Got Legs

Our readers have kept the *Chronicle* alive and well into its third decade. The visual proof is in the Library where back issues are stored in decade-sized document boxes; we're now in Box 3. You're the reason we bring the paper out every month. Your support keeps us going. Thank you!

## Events & Announcements

**Art in Cornwall:** The Rose Algrant Show at CCS will be held Friday, August 3, 5 to 9 P.M., Saturday, August 4, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. and Sunday, August 5, 10 A.M. to noon.

At the Library, Hendon Chubb's show of 2 and 3-D painted works will continue through August. An artist's reception will be held Saturday, August 25, from 5 to 7 P.M.

**Grumbling Gryphons:** Friday, August 3, 3:30 and 6:30 P.M. Play and festivities of the Theater Arts Camp followed by dancing on the Green.

**Let's Get Growing:** Saturday, August 4, (rain date Sunday), 10 A.M. Meet behind the Library. The Midseason Garden is the subject.

### At the Cornwall Library

"Wishes and Dreams" with Tim Van Egmond, followed by a raffle for faithful readers 4 and up, will be held Wednesday, August 1, from 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.

Toddler Storytime, for 18 months to 3 years, will be held Thursday, August 2, at 11 A.M. Call 672-6874 to sign up.

Kids Movie Night, "E.T.-The Extra-Terrestrial" will be shown Friday, August 10, at 7 P.M.

Video talk by Hillary Clinton on the global women's movement, followed by a discussion, will be held Saturday, August 11, from 4 to 6 P.M.

Kids Movie Night, "The Princess Bride" is scheduled for Friday, August 24, at 7 P.M. Fred Sander, editor of *Created In Our Own Images.com: W.S. Gilbert's Pygmalion & Galatea* will speak Saturday, August 25, from 3 to 5 P.M. Books will be available for sale and signing.

A reception for Hendon Chubb's exhibit of 2-D and 3-D painted works will be held Saturday, August 25, from 5 to 7 P.M.

**Cornwall Conservation Trust:** Sunday, August 5, at 11 A.M., Welles Preserve trail walk. Park on Town Street, four-tenths of a mile from the intersection of Route 128.

**Republican Town Committee:** Wednesday, August 8, 7 P.M., at the Library. Monthly meeting and forum. Charles Gold will talk on the Torrington Area Health District. Everyone welcome.

**Democratic Town Committee:** Monday, August 13, at 7:30 P.M., at the library.

### Motherhouse Activities:

Saturday, August 11, 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., Canning Workshop. \$35 per family. Preregistration required.

August 13 to 17, 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. Family Farm Camp for 8-to 11-year-olds and their families. Cost is \$275/child or \$250/child with participating parent or guardian and up to one sibling.

Visiting local farms. Every Sunday, 1 P.M. Meditation; Every Monday, 10:30 A.M. Yoga: call Debra for location.

For more information, ticket prices, and to reserve places, contact Debra Tyler at 672-0229.

**Park & Rec:** Cornwall Day at Lake Com-pounce. Tuesday, August 14, 11 A.M. to 8 P.M. (rain date Wednesday, August 15). Cost is \$23 per person; no charge for children under 3. Call Becky, 672-4071 or email [prcornwall@gmail.com](mailto:prcornwall@gmail.com) with your name, phone, and number of reservations.

**Primaries** of both parties for nominations of U. S. senator and representative, Tuesday, August 14, 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. at Town Hall. Absentee ballots available from the Town Clerk's office, Monday through Thursday, 9 A.M. to noon and 1 to 4 P.M.

**Sweet Summer Dance:** Saturday, August 4, at 7 P.M., Town Hall. Contrabands, circles, and squares. All dances taught, all ages welcome. Please wear soft-soled shoes. Suggested donation: \$5 adults, \$3 children to pay the caller. For more information call Jane or Jim, 672-6101.

## CORNWALL CHRONICLE

### AUGUST ISSUE

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