



# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

VOLUME 26 : NUMBER 11 DECEMBER 2016



## Little Guild

A rapid sequence of events at the Little Guild in October shook the organization and its supporters and resulted in the departure of staff and an "exhaustive internal review" of practices, according to John Guenther, chairman of the board of directors.

Criminal charges were filed on October 5 by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOA) against Heather Dinneen, director of the Little Guild, and Liz Sullivan, shelter manager. The two women were arrested on October 27. Each posted a \$2,500 bond and was released to return to work.

The arrests stem from a series of DOA inspections of the Little Guild between December 2015 and July 2016. According to reporting by the *Lakeville Journal*, the visits turned up multiple cases of cats and dogs being brought from out of state to the shelter by Dinneen and Sullivan without state-required health certificates. Several animals allegedly had not been seen by a veterinarian, as required by law. The charges also stated that kittens and puppies younger than eight weeks had been admitted to the shelter without their mothers, also a violation of state law.

In an unrelated development, the Little Guild was closed 14 days in early November due to several cases of infectious disease

among the animals. The shelter undertook a thorough scrub-down and reopened on November 16. All animals were then in good health.

In spite of the inspection visits, which resulted in the charges, the DOA renewed the Little Guild's license to import animals from out of state in September.

Guenther and the board of Little Guild met on October 30 to discuss the charges against Dinneen and Sullivan. By November 4 it was reported that the two women were no longer employed by the guild. Dinneen resigned to pursue other opportunities and Sullivan had also left. Guenther said a search for a new executive director would begin immediately. Dinneen will remain at the guild to ease the transition.

The Little Guild is the only shelter in northwest Connecticut with a no-kill policy except in the case of severe behavioral issues or medical need. The shelter has room for 20 dogs and 40 cats in 3,000 square feet of recently remodeled space. Little Guild has energetically promoted adoption by families from all over the area.

Pet adoption in northeastern states increased sharply after Hurricane Katrina

in 2005 displaced over 250,000 family pets. Animal lovers became aware of the number of these animals being euthanized and a rescue movement began. Thousands of animals were brought north from the southern states, some by ad hoc vigilante rescuers. Because the disease status of these animals could not be verified, states like Connecticut tightened restrictions on importing animals from out of state. Veterinary exams, vaccinations, and health certificates are now required, barriers to the adoption of undocumented dogs and cats, sometimes found in heart-wrenching circumstances.

Dinneen and Sullivan, each represented by a different attorney, appeared at court in Bantam on November 7. Their cases were continued until December 1.

—Lisa L. Simont

## When the Wells Run Dry

On a Sunday afternoon at the end of October, a friend turned on our tap and...nothing. No water. Had we lost power? No. A call to the plumber and soon, the verdict: Our well had run dry.

Turns out we are just part of a growing club, as the state continues to grapple with the worst drought in years.

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# DECEMBER 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Every Week This Month:</b> <b>Mondays:</b> Yoga, 8:30–10 am Library; <b>Mat Squad</b> at 6:30 pm UCC; <b>Karate</b> , 6:30–7:30 pm Town Hall <b>Tuesdays:</b> Zumba, 5:30–6:30 pm Library <b>Wednesdays:</b> Tai Chi, 5–7 pm Town Hall call 672-0064; <b>Introduction to Fiction</b> , 6:30–8:30 pm Library; <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>Adult Volleyball</b> , 7–9 pm CCS gym <b>Fridays:</b> Yoga 8:30–10 am Library <b>Sundays (except Christmas):</b> Yoga 9–10:30 am Library; <b>Meditation</b> , 1 pm call Debra 672-0229				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26	27	28	29	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE

\*Check with Zoning Office—672-4957

For additions and updating, visit [www.cornwallchronicle.org](http://www.cornwallchronicle.org)

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In late October, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy issued the state's first-ever drought watch for western and central Connecticut. After three years of lower than normal precipitation, most of the state is in moderate to severe drought.

Talk to local plumbers and they'll say they are getting many more calls about dry wells than they can remember. Joey Rogers of Cornwall Plumbing and Heating said shallow wells can run dry every year. This year he's seeing deeper wells—up to 200 to 300 feet deep—also running dry. And, except for a small number of houses near Cornwall Bridge which are on town water, Cornwall residents rely on wells. Rogers said there is no easy way to predict if your well is at risk. He has seen cases where one house is dry and a close neighbor is fine.

So, perhaps a little late, the governor and local experts are urging a little more California in our small New England town, at least in terms of water conservation. Most households use a whopping 75 to 85 gallons of water per person per day, for everything from showers to laundry. The biggest water hogs are outdoor uses such as irrigating lawns or gardens. We can breathe a sigh of relief that gardening season is over, though it will take more than a smattering of rainy days or even heavy snowfall this winter to get us back to better conditions.

If you're not getting any water out of your faucet and you don't find any obvious leaks, call a professional who can check the pump and see if there's water in the well. From there, solutions can range from hydro-fracking to unclogging any minerals that might be blocking the water's path to—at the far end—drilling an entirely new well, with price tags ranging from \$5,000 to \$12,000.

Rogers said some of his customers are installing home storage tanks in basements. In more desperate cases, he has even brought in water trucks with several thousands of gallons of water to be pumped directly into the well. The problem lately has been that sometimes it just disappears since the whole water table is so dry.

Perhaps a silver lining in these drying times: neighbors helping neighbors. The local plumbers told stories of neighbors running hoses with water to help neighbors without. Still, there's a race against time with winter and the holidays coming up. In the meantime, we can all pray for rain and it might not be a bad time to get that gym membership you have been debating. At least you can take a shower there.

—Kerry Donahue



## The Cornwall Christmas Miracle

"For unto us a child is born." Those lofty words from Isaiah open the nativity pageant that's been performed here in Cornwall for some 75 years.

From Isaiah we settle into Luke's homey description of a birth in a stable. As the story unfolds, our neighbors, dressed as angels, shepherds, and finally the Three Wise Men, proceed down the church aisles and up to the stage where they form a living crèche. They come singing familiar carols and wearing the costumes brought to Cornwall all those years ago by Dodi Prentice, who started the pageant.

Each year some folks join the pageant for the first time. Last year's newcomers included Nita Colgate's dog Minnow. Like the animals in Bethlehem, Minnow seemed awed into uncharacteristic stillness as she sat before the manger. Another of last year's newcomers, Mark Orth, tends sheep at Birdseye and Tanner Brooks Farm. How many other church pageants have an actual shepherd in their cast?

But most of the participants have been doing it for years. Over the decades audiences have watched some regulars grow from wee angels into mature shepherds and even kings. Tracy Gray remembers herself as a squirmy five-year-old in her debut as "the littlest angel." By her teens she'd matured into a serene Mary. Today she's the church's education director.

I'm not a Christian, yet nativity plays and paintings stir my sense of the miraculous. I guess what I feel is love, fear, and pity for that infant human light in the darkness. In my case, the miracle is that a child—any child—is born. The Cornwall pageant augmented those feelings.

When Mary and her new baby were joined by two wee angels, my love for humans expanded from infants to children. Perhaps that's just sentimental. Five-year-olds in tiaras are bound to be adorable, but adolescents aren't inherently cute. Yet last year's procession of older angels also seemed wondrous. And when the full-grown shepherds proceeded past me singing slightly flat, I was overwhelmed by the beauty and sadness of human striving. I wonder if that perfect imperfection can be repeated this year.

The Cornwall miracle continued after the show. Amid the agitations of packing away costumes and setting out hot chocolate and baked goods (the gingerbread was excellent), all the volunteers and viewers seemed miraculous too. All these men and women of good will had come together to comfort each other with beauty. What extraordinary animals we humans are!

This year's pageant will be held on December 10 at 7:30 P.M. at the United Church of Christ on Bolton Hill Road. The normal rate of births, deaths, and changes of venue means that some cast members will be walking down the aisles for the first

time while others will be missing. But the pageant will feature the same costumes, the same carols, and the same narration that it has for three-quarters of a century. I look forward to renewing my sense of the miraculous.

—Barbara Garson



## Goodbye to Friends

Philip M. Gargan  
Evelyn N. Peschko  
Krista Lee Ruut

## Congratulations

Casey A. Cook and Gary Steinkohl

## Land Transfers

Rosalie R. Furniss to Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc., ten acres of land on Cornwall Hollow Road.

James Detterick to Shimon Shkury and Ruby Gelman, 11.158 acres of land with buildings and improvements thereon at 109 Dibble Hill Road, for \$875,000.

Richard K. and Gail Dolan to William G. Russ, two parcels of land with buildings thereon at 90 Cornwall Hollow Road, for \$210,000.

## Holiday Gift and Food Drive

Some suggestions if you are in a position to offer to help others this holiday season:

Donations are gratefully accepted to the Cornwall Food and Fuel Bank to help low-income Cornwall residents in times of need. One hundred percent of the donated funds are used for direct aid to Cornwall families. Your neighbors are relying more and more on local fuel banks and food pantries to stay warm and keep food on the table.

Cornwall Social Services coordinates a holiday gift and food drive for families and households. In addition to specific gift requests for children, there is also a need for other items such as household goods (new or good used condition) and prepaid gasoline cards for residents who cannot afford to buy gas. Please contact the social services office for more information, 672-2603.

The social services office works in concert with the Cornwall Food Pantry, a volunteer-led effort to provide emergency food for residents who need help. The pantry is located at the United Church of Christ at 8 Bolton Hill Road. The pantry

shelves are accessible Mondays from 5:15 to 6:15 P.M. and Thursdays 9 to 10 A.M., and by appointment. Donations are accepted Monday to Friday from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M., and by appointment. Please remember, the pantry can only accept items which are unopened and within the sale date. The pantry has recently added a new freezer and refrigerator. Nonperishable items such as detergent, shampoo, toothpaste, and soap are always useful. There is also a shelf for pet foods if you'd like to honor our furry friends. For more information, please contact Louise Riley, volunteer coordinator, at [cornwallfoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:cornwallfoodpantry@gmail.com).

Your generosity makes all the difference.  
 —Jane Muir Sellery,  
 Director of Social Services

### The Fire

This is a report on where the Peck Mountain fire—"the longest burning and largest forest fire in Connecticut in recent memory" according to state officials—stood as of mid-November. The fire that began in September is a troublesome SOB who just won't go away. He smolders and puffs out smoke and wafts this way and that depending on the direction of the wind.

By early November, the fire's area had increased to around 250 acres. After heavy winds on the weekend of November 12-13, flames suddenly became visible. The state DEEP, with the support of volunteer firefighters from Cornwall and most of our neighboring towns, did a maneuver called "backburning" that burned off approximately 150 acres in advance of the flames to try and eliminate much of the dry leaves, grass, and brush ahead of the fire.

This was followed by a rainy day that produced the first downpour Cornwall has had in many months. The rain helped, but did not completely extinguish the fire. Smoke persisted in an area totaling 400 acres (the original 250 plus the 150 from backburning). Keep in touch and stay tuned. —John Miller

### Crime Hits the Gas Station

A false rumor two days after the election had it that an anti-Trump demonstration was responsible for some mayhem at the local Citgo gas station and store in Cornwall Bridge.

In truth, what appears to have been a "professional" hit by burglars took place on the night of November 9. The perpetrators gained access to the store, managed to cut the electric wires throughout, and vandalized the ATM machine for an undisclosed amount of cash inside. They also stole all the Newport cigarettes. At least we know one of their vices. The burglary seems to fit a pattern of other such incidents at area gas stations/convenience stores and is under investigation, according to the store manager.  
 —Jane Bean



### The Gift of Safety

As holidays near and thoughts turn to gifts for family and friends, it is a good time to consider the gifts of home safety.

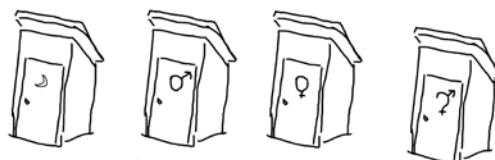
Before the stockings are hung, having the chimney cleaned can help ensure pleasant evenings in front of the fireplace or wood stove without fire personnel rushing in. Using clean and very dry wood helps maintain the condition of the chimney. Professionals recommend that you clean your chimney after every two cords of dry, clean wood are burned (using damp or moldy wood requires more frequent cleaning).

In the past two years the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department responded to over 60 alarm activations, four chimney fires, and six requests to assist in smoke issues.

Checking the batteries and function of an alarm system, especially carbon monoxide detectors, is essential. There are a number of sources for carbon monoxide, including a somewhat clogged chimney. This hazardous gas is lighter than air, depending on a home's overall temperature and humidity, and disperses throughout the home easily. Colorless and odorless, it is deadly. The National Fire Protection Association states that all carbon monoxide alarms "shall be centrally located outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms." It also states that they can be on a wall or ceiling depending on the recommendation of the unit's manufacturer. Most important, check for an alarm that can wake even Sleeping Beauty.

Winter brings the potential for heavy ice and snow. A stroll around the yard now is a good time to note trees and branches that may place overhead wires at risk. In widespread outages, electric companies focus first on main power lines. Residential issues will then be prioritized accordingly. Consult with a professional to have these hazards removed.

Last, as the weather turns colder, consider the family car. Checking the condition of tires, antifreeze, and wiper fluid can make that trip over the mountain and through the woods enjoyable for all. A shovel, some sand or kitty litter, a warm blanket, and a flashlight are also good to have on hand. Above all be safe. It means a great deal to many when someone can read these reminders again next year.  
 —Diane Beebe



### Jane's Sticky Cranberry Gingerbread

Here's a lovely Christmas recipe for you to try. Have a merry!

- 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 stick good unsalted butter (no margarine, please)
- 2/3 cup dark brown sugar
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 1/3 cup real maple syrup
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 1/2 cups white flour
- 1 Tbsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon (can be generous)
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs lightly beaten
- 1 Tbsp grated fresh ginger

Heat oven to 350 degrees.

In a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan, stir together the cranberries and sugar. Cook on medium heat until sugar is dissolved and cranberries form a syrupy sauce with thick bubbling.

In a separate pan, stir together maple syrup, butter, molasses, milk, and brown sugar over medium heat until barely simmering.

Remove from heat. Do not boil.

In a large bowl, mix together flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda and powder, pepper. Beat in the butter/maple syrup mixture, then beat in eggs. Add grated ginger.

Scrape the batter into the pan (9-inch square or round dish, lined with parchment paper).

Drop fat dollops of the cranberry mixture into the batter, swirling with a knife as if you're making a marble cake.

Bake about 50 minutes until top is firm and toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Transfer cooled cake onto a baking rack. Cool completely. —Jane Bean  
 (adapted from the New York Times)

### Stop and Swap

You have probably noticed the new building at the Cornwall transfer station—it is the future home of the Cornwall Swap Shop, where residents can donate and take good, usable items, including construction materials, not yet designated as trash.

"It's something we've wanted for a while," said station operator Steve O'Neil. "Most other transfer stations in the Northwest Corner have one." After receiving the necessary approvals from the town, the facility has been constructed by volunteers. "John LaPorta has been the project manager and driving force behind this," O'Neil said. With additional construction contributions from George Charlton, Jim Prentice, Jim Terrall, and Wayne Wolfe, and their crews,

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the swap shop hopes to be operational by the new year.

They are currently looking for volunteers for painting the building (weather permitting). Please contact John LaPorta if you are able to help.

Volunteers are also needed to help manage and vet items once the swap shop opens. All items in good, usable condition will be accepted. Mattresses, car seats, cribs, upholstered furniture, and "grungy" goods will be disallowed. All items must be inspected and approved before they can be left to be discovered by a new owner.

Swap shops have become popular at area transfer stations as they reduce the station's disposal fees, increase recycling, and promote conservation (as well as conversation).

The swap shop is a free service for town residents and will be open during regular transfer station hours—9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday—except closed on Sundays. —Gregory Galloway

### How We Voted 2016

Nine hundred and fifty-three people voted in Cornwall on November 8 (65 more than the 2012 election), or 89 percent of the 1,068 registered voters (which included 14 people who registered on Election Day).

Nine hundred and twenty-three votes were cast for President. Democrat Hillary Clinton received 622 votes in town, while Republican Donald Trump received 248 votes; Libertarian Gary Johnson received 27 and Green Party Jill Stein received 26.

While Clinton carried Cornwall and the state of Connecticut, she lost Litchfield County to Trump, who received 53,444 votes (54.9 percent) to Clinton's 39,731 votes (40.8 percent), while Johnson received 2,860 votes (2.9 percent) and Stein received 21,230 (1.4 percent).

Democrat Richard Blumenthal was re-elected to the U.S. Senate with 911,007 (63 percent) in the state. Cornwall cast 639 votes (70 percent) for Blumenthal and 237 for Republican Dan Carter. Green Party Jeffrey Russell received 20 votes and Libertarian Richard Lion received 14. Blumenthal won Litchfield County with 49,464 votes (51.9 percent).

Democrat Elizabeth Esty was reelected

### Forget Something?

Don't let your hometown paper down this holiday season. See inside for details.

to Connecticut's 5<sup>th</sup> District with 174,350 votes (57.4 percent) in Litchfield County. Cornwall cast 675 votes (74 percent) for Esty and 241 votes for Republican Clay Cope.

Cornwall provided Democrat David Lawson with 575 votes and Republican Craig Miner with 327 votes for the state Senate. Democrat William Riiska received 532 votes and Republican Brian Ohler received 383 for the state House. Miner was elected with 23,439 votes to Lawson's 18,448, and Ohler won with 6,842 votes to Riiska's 5,380.

In our local government, Democrat Jayne Ridgway (627 votes) and Republican Cara Weigold (272 votes) were elected as registrars. —Gregory Galloway



### Events & Announcements

#### Art in Cornwall

At the Souterrain Gallery: "Cornwall-Little Compton," recent paintings by Kathleen Love Mooney through December 31.

A Christmas exhibit of wood-fired pots at the Cornwall Bridge Gallery through the end of the year.

At the National Iron Bank: Laminate pictures by Melissa Robinson through December 31.

**United Church of Christ Christmas Fair:** December 3, 9:30 A.M. to 3 P.M. at the Parish House. During the same hours at the town hall there will be an "open house" for Cornwall's new ambulance.

**Christmas Pageant:** Saturday, December 10, at 7:30 P.M. (snow date Sunday, December 11, at 4 P.M.) at the UCC Village Meeting House on Bolton Hill Road. Traditional readings and carols will culminate with the giving of "white gifts." Please bring a toy wrapped in white paper to donate to children in need. Refreshments will be served following the pageant in the Parish House. If you want to play a part you MUST be at rehearsal on Friday, December 9, at 5:30 P.M. For more information call Jane at 672-6101.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Services:** 5 and 8 P.M. at North Cornwall Meeting House

**Cornwall Contra Dance:** Traditional music by Still, the Homegrown Band with calling by Rachel Gall. 7 P.M. on Saturday, December 3, at town hall. All dances taught, all ages welcome, and no partner necessary. Donation

requested. For more information go to motherhouse.us or call Jane at 672-6101.

#### At the Library

All Cornwall Library volunteers are invited to a "thank you" party on Friday, December 2, at 4 P.M. at the library.

Betty Krasne will read from her new book *Playing the Part—Collected Poems* on December 7 at 3 P.M. Books available for sale and signing.

Boxing Day Reading: Tom Walker will read from *Great Expectations* at the North Cornwall Church, December 26 at 4 P.M.

The library will close at noon on Christmas Eve and on New Year's Eve.

**Cornwall Business Association Holiday Party:** December 8, 5 to 7 P.M. Wandering Moose (side room). All business owners welcome. Appetizers provided, cash bar.

#### Senior Events

Blood Pressure Clinic: Monday, December 12, noon to 1 P.M. in the UCC Day Room. Contact VNA Northwest at 860-567-6000 or vnanw.org.

Luncheon: from 11:30 A.M. to 1 P.M., on Tuesday, December 13, at the Wandering Moose.

**New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast** will be held in the UCC Parish House, 9 A.M. to noon. Buttermilk pancakes, sausage, Cornwall maple syrup, orange juice, coffee, cocoa, and tea will be served. Donations will benefit the church outreach programs. Everyone is welcome.

**Need Help with Healthcare?** We can help you get health insurance during open enrollment, through January 31, 2017. Contact janet.carlson@pharmacares.org or call 672-0043 x114 and leave your name and number. We will follow up!

### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

[cornwallchronicle.org](http://cornwallchronicle.org)

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