# CORNWALL CHRONICLE

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## **Storm Sandy**

Sandy was the storm that wasn't for the lowlanders in Cornwall's three villages, but for the hill people who lost power for 48 hours or more, she was a replay of Alfred who had visited darkness, cold, and flooding on Cornwall exactly a year earlier.

Because of Alfred and because of the doomful warnings that Sandy would be an 800-mile-wide "perfect storm," the selectmen and Emergency Management Director Nev Dunn declared a state of emergency in Cornwall at 8 A.M. Monday, October 28, and set up headquarters at the West Cornwall Firehouse. All emergency services were under unified command. Sunday afternoon the Junior Fire Department and members of the CERT team had moved supplies for a shelter to the CCS gym.

When Sandy finally hit late Monday afternoon, she only cuffed Cornwall. Reports filtering into the firehouse Tuesday morning revealed about a dozen trees down across roads and another half dozen leaning on wires. The roads were cleared first and then we all waited for CL&P to fix the wires and restore power. The five repair trucks parked in Cornwall Bridge Sunday afternoon disappeared overnight, redirected to Fairfield

County where Sandy, a full moon, and the storm surge ripped houses into Long Island Sound and caused heavy flooding.

Four members of the Cornwall Volunteer Fire Department trailered the rescue boat to Greenwich late Monday evening. They spent the night wading through shoreline streets knocking on doors and offering evacuation help. They were back in Cornwall at 5 A.M. Tuesday. Tree crews from Tennessee appeared during the morning and worked with the town highway department to clear roads by the end of the day.

Forty percent of the town had no power for about four long, dank days. The shelter wasn't needed but as the temperature dropped into the 40s during the week, a warming center was opened on Thursday at the Parish House in Cornwall Village. The Cornwall Library later that evening was open for more warming and a movie.

"What we learned," First Selectman Gordon Ridgway said, "is that Cornwall needs to prepare for at least four days without power after storms like Sandy. We also have to accept that Cornwall will be low in priority" for power restoration. The town has 30 to 40

trained people, he added, who are on call and active during emergencies. The best policy is to prepare to be safe at home when a storm like Sandy comes calling.

— Lisa L. Simont

### Storm Sandy Reports From All Over

### Great Hill Road:

Sunday evening, October 28, dusk: gutters cleaned, firewood inside, tubs filled with water for flushing toilets. Park car outside of garage (door is electronic).

Monday, Oct. 29, 9:22 A.M. Weathervane swivels wildly, shrubs and trees thrash, grandkids' swings lunge in midair. Sandbox cover unmoored, flaps around.

3:15 P.M. Hard rain. Power fails. Using cell report outage to CL&P's computer, becoming complainant #706131506.

3:25 P.M. Deborah Schaaf, postal carrier, delivers package. Rain running off her hood, says while she halted at a mailbox on road from Milton a huge tree dropped right in front of her car.

Monday evening: Rain and wind stop. Enormous limb torn from ash tree has become widow maker over front yard. Survive night with roaring wood stove, eight-battery lantern, bottled water, boiling water for pots, self.

Tuesday, October 30, 5:15 P.M.: Rescued!

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#### **SUNDAY FRIDAY** MONDAY **TUESDAY THURSDAY** <u>SATURDAY</u> 1 ◆ Calvin Trillin 5 pm Every Week This Month: Village Meeting House Christmas Fair 9:30 am-3 pm UCC "Honk" Musical 3 pm CCS Mondays: Yoga, 5:45-7 pm CCS Tuesdays: Adult Volleyball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Wednesdays: Tai Chi, 6–9 pm Town Hall; Karate, 6:30–7:30 pm CCS; Women's Basketball, 7:30 pm CCS gym Thursdays: Toddler Play Group 10:30–11:30 am Library Sundays: Meditation, 1–2 pm, call Debra for location, 672–0229 ◆ Cornwall Community Dance 7–10 pm Town Hall 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ◆ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall ◆ Park & Rec Senior Luncheon 11:30 am−1 pm Wandering Moose ◆ Inland Wetlands 7:30 pm Town Hall 7:30 pm Town Hall 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 ♦ P+7 ◆ Christmas Pageant Performance 7:30 pm 7 pm Library CCS Holiday Concert Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 5:30 pm Republican Town "Half the Sky" Movie 2–4 pm Library ◆ Blood Pressure Clinic Committee UCC Meeting House Noon–1 pm Parish House 7 pm ◆ Economic Development 7 pm Library UCC Meeting House Deadline January Chronicle Copy Committee 8:30 pm Town Hall **17** <del>19</del> 21 22 16 18 20 ( ◆ Board of Education 3:30 pm CCS Library Committee for Seniors ◆ Cornwall Conservation Commission Christmas Pageant ◆ Blood Drive Snowdate 4 pm UCC Meeting House 7 pm Library ◆ Board of Selectmen 7:30 pm Town Hall 7 pm Town Hall 9 am-1:45 pm UCC Board of Finance 7:30 pm CCS Library 23 24 25 26 27 28 O 29 Candelight Services 5 pm and 8 pm North Cornwall ◆ Tom Walker's Boxing Day Reading 4 pm North Cornwall Meeting House Meeting House 30 31

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Gary Evon from Bristol (hunter on property) turns up with 2,000-watt portable generator, gasoline, 50-foot extension cords.

Friday, November 2: Learn that temperatures in 20s predicted. Drain house pipes, turn off generator, lock up, refugee to friends. That evening power comes back to Great Hill Road.

—Ann Schillinger

### River Road, West Cornwall Village:

"Was that it?" most residents of West Cornwall village wondered after Sandy blew through. The village proper saw little or no interruption in power, cable, or telephone service.

Dave Carey, who drives the West Cornwall Post Office delivery route, reported only a few detours in the aftermath of the storm. More consequential, he said, was the fact that there was very little mail in the days following the storm, since a key distribution point in Stamford had been shut down. But the floodgates opened on Friday, November 2, when all of the backed-up first class mail, the *Lakeville Journal*, the *Litchfield County Times*, various supermarket circulars, and the *Chronicle* arrived simultaneously.

As for the Housatonic, levels rose only modestly. Unlike the spectacle brought on by the torrent caused by Irene last year—a parade of patio furniture, fences, and tree carcasses—there was little this time to attract much notice.

—Tom Bechtle

### **Northern Town Street:**

After the old maple fell over the lines in the field and toppled the power pole, I had settled, by Day Five, into a comfortable drill of very early to bed and early to rise, with water delivered by neighbors Bob and Ginny Potter, cell phone reception rock identified, firewood stacked kindness of Bill Beeman, suppers of the interminable blackout stew from freezer and fridge remnants, and letters written by lantern light. The quiet life.

All of this changed on the afternoon of November 3. Up the driveway, lights flashing, roared two line trucks, two diggers (with huge augers), and two utility pickups from Service Electric Co. of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers out of Chattanooga, Tenn. Three more line trucks parked on the road and the entire 12-man fluorescent-vested crew swarmed over the disaster scene.

The tree man floated up with his elegant extended chain saw to lop maple branches; the digger's auger drilled a post hole for the new 30-foot power pole; a man ran across the field toward the street, unspooling cable as he went. After a line truck had hoisted the pole up and over the stone wall, six men guided it down with peevee hooks, and restrung the lines with pounding devices. Then they slanted it into the hole and planted it like the flag on Iwo Jima.

All the while the genial crew (from Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee) asked questions about this strange land: Where did all these rocks come from? These trees—they aren't swamp maples? Sugar maples? We thought all the maple syrup came from Vermont. Snakes around here? In the walls? Woodchucks? Wide-open fields, all these hills?

As the last member of the brotherhood drove away he leaned out his truck window grinning: "Now you got la-aht!" And indeed, inside the house I did have light—lamps were ablaze—and heat and water and the hum of the refrigerator. The phone rang. A political campaigner. I was back on the grid.

—Ella Clark with Ginny Potter

### **Election 2012: How We Voted**

Eighty-five percent of Cornwall's registered voters turned out on Election Day—that would be 888 out of 1,045. In addition, five other residents showed up to vote only for president which is permitted under federal regulations.

Democrats won four of the five contested races in Cornwall handily, the one exception being local favorite Andy Roraback who lost a close contest to Democrat Elizabeth Esty in Connecticut's Fifth Congressional District. Esty prevailed in Cornwall 458 to 407. Although he lost the race, Republican Roraback did carry several towns in the Northwest Corner, including Sharon, which he took by two votes out of 1,404 cast.

In other races, Cornwall results tallied with statewide results with one exception: In the race to replace Andy Roraback Democrat Bill Riiska easily carried Cornwall (524 to 282), but he lost his bid in the 30th state Senatorial District to Republican Clark Chapin.

Otherwise here's how it went: Obama/Biden over Romney/Ryan (629 to 250); Democrat Chris Murphy for U.S. Senate over Linda McMahon (588 to 271); and incumbent Democrat Roberta Willis in the newly drawn 64th state Assembly District over Republican Vivian Nasiatka (639 to 211).

For the record and closer to home, our Cornwall registrars of voters, Republican Ginny Potter and Democrat Jayne Ridgway, were re-elected without opposition.

-John Miller

# Soupmaker, Soupmaker, Make Me a Soup!

There we were slurping our way through a variety of homemade zuppas. It was Election Day 2012 and the UCC Parish Hall was chock full of chatty folk who had just voted around the corner and were mostly

talking up their favorites: Was it Jill Bryant's divine mulligatawny? "You betcha," said Charlie Van D., already spooning down his follow-up bowl. Or could it be Pat Blakey's slightly hotsy bean stew? Paul Baren said he was in "yummyville" as he put spoon to mouth.

Then we noticed Graham Underwood, raving about the chili cooked up by the Rev. Micki. "It was," he said, "the best I've tasted since I left Australia nearly 75 years ago."

Another Pat Blakey entry, corn chowder, had such diverse cheerleaders as Pauline Sobotka, Alec Frost, and my Warren Hill neighbor "Sweet Sue" Saccardi. Alec's long-time roommate, Nan, contributed a tomato soup worthy of the best Cornwall tomatoes. And Blakey offspring Lori Welles came through with a tasty ginger squash which found fans in Mr. Nice Guy, Joe (spell me right) Gwazdauskas and another Miller, West Cornwall's Priscilla.

I sampled three of the soups and found all delicious, but clearly the election year-in, year-out favorite remains the mulligatawny. Kudos to Jill and the others.

Dessert came in the form of spice cake from Audrey Ferman, brownies by Norma (once a Republican, now a Democrat) Lake, and lemon squares from a mystery source I will divulge privately to anyone interested.

-John Miller

# Congratulations

Winfield J. Wilson to Veena K. Srinivasa

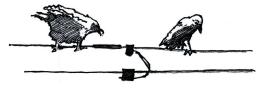
# Goodbye to Friends

Alice Scoville Barry Sam Wee

### **Land Transfers**

Amy Truax and Matthew Hans Truax to Kelly A. Griswold, land with buildings and improvements thereon, at 379 Kent Road.

Carl Hermann and Carol Ann Knapp, to Deutsche Bank National Trust Co, Trustee, property at 252 Furnace Brook Road.



# Mission Impawsible

On the Friday after storm Sandy, Denise Cohn, executive director of Cornwall's Little Guild, received an urgent email from Best Friends, a national animal society and network of no-kill shelters. The hurricane had moved inland and dumped two feet of wet snow in West Virginia. A shelter there was in serious trouble: without

power, heat or water and with a collapsed kennel roof. They needed help.

Within a day a rescue trip was organized, and Denise, director Denis Curtiss, one staff member and two volunteers headed off at 4 A.M Sunday in a van and a 24-foot rented truck loaded with donated crates, blankets, and supplies. Their destination was a place more than 500 miles away that none of them had ever heard of: Philippi, a town of about 2,800 in north central West Virginia, a town which is known mainly for its historic covered bridge!

The guild gang arrived Sunday afternoon. "It was a sad situation, with many animals out in the cold," Denise told us, "but they did a good job with what they had." The rescue team loaded the truck with 65 dogs and 23 cats and headed home. Meanwhile, the guild's Facebook page alerted Cornwallians and other friends that help was needed.

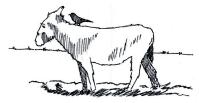
Denise spent the 16-hour return trip riding in the back of the truck with the dogs and cats, keeping them reassured and watered. She had only a lantern for light and one loose, deeply furred dog named Hannah to keep her warm. "The animals were quiet and docile, they knew they were being saved."

After a long drive complicated by a missed exit and detour, they arrived in Cornwall about 11 A.M. on Monday. "The truck door opened to show them our beautiful shelter. The parking lot was full," Denise said, "There were about 75 people waiting to help out. It was an overwhelming sight."

There are 28 puppies among the dogs, ranging from 10 to 16 weeks old, and also a mom with three 10-day old pups. Some of the dogs are now in foster homes and other kennels, but the Little Guild is taking applications for adoptions.

"We're grateful for all the help; what we need most now are canned dog and cat food and monetary donations,"\* Denise said, as she sat at her desk stroking Gus-Gus, an appealing puppy with brown and white fur, a funny face, and a pleased expression, as if to say, "I'm the star of this show." And maybe he was. —Ed Ferman

\*Checks can be sent to the Little Guild, 285 Sharon-Goshen Turnpike, West Cornwall, CT 06796, or visit its website and click on the donate button.



# A Stomping Good Time

Once a month, the door of Cornwall's Town Hall opens into a room filled with footstomping dancers circling to the sound of fiddle and concertina. The first weekend of

# Letter to the Chronicle

THE OLD POUGHKEEPSIE ROAD.

The October issue quoted the town attorney as saying the Old Poughkeepsie Road (the proposed access for the new cell tower on the Gulliver property) was "closed" many years ago, a strange term which sounds like the town whipped up a brass band, found the blue ribbon snipped when the road was laid out in the 1700s and ceremoniously taped it back together again. Gordon's administration has been all over the ballpark on this issue. When the goal was to

prevent Cornwall from having a cell tower, he claimed the road's status was "in dispute." In the September Chronicle, the town attorney called the road's status "a complicated bag of worms." In the October issue it suddenly became "closed" many years ago.

In reality, it is an unimproved town road, shown on the US topographical survey map and never discontinued, which has had "notorious" (i.e. widely known) public use throughout its 250-year history.

—Matt Collins

November Dudley Laufman, dance caller and National Heritage fellow, led the dancers through their paces, accompanied by Cornwall's own Still, the Homegrown Band. Participants ranged in age from these weeks to

in age from three weeks to 80 (the baby wasn't dancing, but he did wave to the music).

Cornwall folks have enjoyed contra dancing since it came over to New England centuries ago, but our homegrown band is fairly new. Rachel Gall, a fiddler, remembers a particular jam session in the summer of 2003 as formative.

Lorraine Hammond, known in folk circles as the Jimi Hendrix of the mountain dulcimer, came to Cornwall to give a concert with her husband, Bennett. Lorraine is a native whose first exposure to what she calls the music of northern Appalachia took place at the homes of the Degreenias and other Cornwallians. When her father, Joe Choiniere, passed in 2002 she was grateful to townspeople who cared for him; the concert was her gift to the town. She stipulated that there be a jam session afterwards, so musicians brought their instruments and played after the concert.

Many of the musicians who would go on to form Still, the Homegrown Band were there, including Debra Tyler and Jane Prentice. They began to get together on Monday nights, and eventually the contra dance enthusiasts began practicing together separately in order to learn dance tunes. Bill Fischer, a well-known Connecticut caller who comes up for dances, encouraged the band and got it its first real gig, a wedding in New York state. Still, the Homegrown Band went on from there, and eventually established a Cornwall dance on the first Saturday of every month.

The band now includes fiddlers, a guitar and keyboardist, a concertina player, a bassist, and a bodhran player (an Irish hand drum). Jane Prentice informed me that these days, "half the band is Prentices."

Residents definitely shouldn't pass it up as a Saturday's entertainment. It's an intergenerational experience, which is increasingly harder to find these days, and it feels good. As Jane says, "People are looking into each other's eyes and holding each other's hands." Can't beat that....

—Jill Cutler

### **Cornwall Briefs**

• The Great Great Hill Repaving Project began life early in the first administration of Barack Obama and was closed out just before Obama was voted in for his second term. Fueled by the first round of stimulus money back in

2005 and finished just after Storm Sandy, this baby has to be in line for some kind of longevity prize. Certainly for Cornwall, that is.

- The State Siting Council has given a green light to the long-contested cell tower on the Gulliver property just off Popple Swamp Road. Expect to see evidence of construction soon, that is, if the winter permits it. The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency still has issues with the 20 percent slope of the gravel road leading to the proposed tower, so stay tuned about that.
- Male Moose: That's right and a big one too. He was sighted in Roxana and Ledlie Laughlin's driveway early in November. Although few of us in Cornwall can be experienced moose measurers, given the lack of opportunity, this one was huge, according to Ledlie. The moose wandered away up Ford Hill Road into the tall timber.
- New Signage is now in place to guide tourists and otherwise confused people to the various points of interest in Cornwall. The attractive oval design, the signs themselves and their planting at four entry points in town were paid for by a \$2,000 grant organized by the NW Regional Planning Collaborative. —Lisa L. Simont

# Well Managed Trash

The Cornwall Transfer Station had a terrific year, thanks to the direction of Steve O'Neil and Ted Larson and to the recycling diligence of our villagers. An increase in the amount of recyclable and redeemable material combined with a decrease in the amount of municipal solid waste made for an efficient bottom line. Proceeds from redeemable bottles and recyclable metal have enabled the transfer station to forward nearly \$10,000 to the town's

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general fund during the recent fiscal year.

The transfer station has also finished third in the statewide WeRecycle! electronics recycling contest. The \$1,000 cash award was forwarded to CCS for the school's recycling education effort. Fourthand fifth-grade classes have already benefited with a field trip to the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority's "Trash Museum" in Hartford.

The station has continued with its improvement and beautification program, including the installation of window boxes and the planting of many annuals. The lead battery storage shed has been rebuilt, new signage has been installed, and with able help from the town crew, the roadway maintained.

From Steve and Ted: Please start a compost pile for kitchen scraps, observe the 5 MPH speed limit, and remember-reduce, reuse, and recycle. - Jeff Jacobson

### **Events & Annoucements**

At the Cornwall Library

Calvin Trillin will speak Saturday, December 1, at 5 P.M. at the Cornwall Village Meeting House. An open reception follows at the Cornwall Library, 30 Pine Street. For tickets, please call the library at 672-6874. Regular admission is \$30; reserved seating, \$100.

Half the Sky, an 80-minute version of Nicholas Kristof's film, will be shown on Sunday, December 9, from 2 to 4 P.M. This shortened version (reduced from four hours) had a huge impact on the audience when shown last month at The Movie House in Millerton. For more information, please contact Anne Zinsser at 672-6400.

Beginning December 18 and running through January 25, Jane Worthington-Roth's photographic exhibit, "Faces of India," will be on display. It offers a glimpse into the lives of people from New Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, and Goa. A reception is planned for Saturday, January 5, at 3 P.M.

The library will be closed for Christmas

### The Shortest Day

At the winter solstice daytime is so short that the sun seems to wing by low on the horizon. The next day will be longer and brighter; that's not optimism, that's physics. Ward off the chill by writing a check to the Chronicle today. Thank you!

on Tuesday, December 25, and on Tuesday, January 1, for New Year's

Tom Walker's Boxing Day reading will be held on Wednesday, December 26, at 4 р.м. at the North Cornwall Meeting House. This year's selections are The Secret Life of Walter Mitty, by James Thurber, and other stories, perhaps by Thurber or someone else, says Tom.

Put some twinkle in your toes at the Cornwall Community Dance Saturday, December 1, at 7 р.м. at the Town Hall. Contras, circles, and squares will be taught by a surprise caller(s) with music by Still, the Homegrown Band. Single dancers, left feet, and all ages welcome. Please wear soft shoes. Suggested donation: 5\$ adults, 3\$ children. For more information call Jane or Jim at 672-6101.

Senior Luncheon: Tuesday, December 4, from 11:30 to 1 P.M. at the Wandering Moose Cafe. A little fiddle music by Jane Prentice and a specially priced lunch for seniors served by Russ, Sharon, and the crew. No reservations, just come and



Holiday Concert: CCS grades five through eight will present a concert of seasonal music on Tuesday, December 11, at 7 P.M. at the school. All are welcome.

Calling all angels, shepherds, and neighbors for the annual UCC Christmas Pageant on Saturday, December 15, at 7:30 P.M. (snow date Sunday, December 16, at 4 Р.м.) at the UCC Meeting House on Bolton Hill Road. Traditional readings and carols will culminate in a beautiful tableau and the giving of "white gifts" for children in need. Please bring a toy wrapped in white paper to donate. Cocoa and donuts will follow in the Parish House. Those interested

in being in the pageant must arrive at rehearsal at 5:30 р.м. on Friday, Dec. 14, at the church. Questions? Call Jane Prentice at 672-6101.

A Blood Drive will be conducted on Saturday, December 22, from 9 A.M. to 1:45 Р.м. at the UCC Parish House on Bolton Hill Road. Giving blood at this time of year is especially meaningful. One pint of blood can help save three lives. Please call 1-800-Red Cross, or visit online at redcrossblood. org to schedule an appointment.

The New Year's Day Pancake Breakfast will be held, as it is every year, in the UCC Parish House from 9 A.M. to noon. Buttermilk pancakes, sausage, Cornwall maple syrup, orange juice, coffee, cocoa, and tea will be on tap. Donations will benefit the church's mission outreach programs. Everyone welcome.

The Cornwall Cupboard Food Pantry, located in the lower level of the UCC at 8 Bolton Hill Road is always grateful to receive donations of non-perishable food, household and personal care supplies. Drop off times are Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and by appointment. Pick up: 11 A.M. to noon, Tuesday and Thursday, and by appointment. No application is necessary. Call Anne Scott, at 672-0595 or cornwallfood@optonline.net.

Town of Cornwall Food and Fuel Fund welcomes donations. Please contact Barbara Herbst, Finance Officer, Town of Cornwall, P.O. Box 97, Cornwall, CT

### CORNWALL CHRONICLE

### THIS MONTH

Will Calhoun, Illustrations Lisa Simont and Jill Cutler, Editors

### NEXT MONTH

Lisa Simont and Celia Senzer, Editors lisal an sing @opt on line.net

#### MANAGING EDITOR Ruth Epstein CALENDAR EDITOR

Richard Griggs (December) Louise Riley (Ongoing) calendar@cornwallchronicle.org

CIRCULATION Nan and John Bevans Lucy and Jack Kling

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