



# NEWSLETTER

VNA Northwest, Inc. [www.vnanw.org](http://www.vnanw.org)

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## Nearly 100-Year-old Patient Lives Happily at Home in Cornwall

Cornwall resident Helen Tennant is an independent-minded New Englander. Born in 1907 in Beverly, MA, this cheerful Health Guidance patient says she is a Mayflower descendant.

"The house I grew up in was right on the sea," she said. "I had a very active childhood. I loved to swim and dive in the ocean. I climbed Mount Washington several times."

Helen and her late husband, George, lived in New Jersey when they were first married. "On a Maine coast vacation, we met a friend who had a home in Cornwall. After that, we started to visit Cornwall on weekends," she said.

In 1969, they moved to the large house across the road from Colt's Foot Mountain where she still lives. "This is the longest I've ever lived anywhere," she remarked.

Helen loves living in Cornwall, and she has many friends who help her to get around now that she is no longer able to drive.

"Thursday is dump day," she said. Friends drive her to the town dump with not only her trash, but bags of newspapers and other reading material she recycles. "There is a book swap at the Cornwall Dump, and I've donated quite a few books," she said. "I've got so many -- I'll never live to read them all."

Helen said worked at a bookstore in Boston after she graduated from Smith College with a degree in History. She continues to be a voracious reader. "I read all the time. Not so much novels, but non-fiction and essays -- I love them."

The Tennants' daughter, Susanna Gretz, is a children's book author and illustrator. "She has been drawing ever since she could hold a pencil," said Helen. "Susie," also a Smith College graduate, lives in London. She recently visited Helen for several weeks.

"She's planning to come back in the fall, for my birthday," said Helen, referring to her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on October 15.



*Helen Tennant*

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**Cover Photo: Maryanne Spring, LPN**

## Join Us for Our 8th Annual Golf Tournament Mon., Sept. 24

*At right, some golfers who enjoyed last year's tournament: Brian DiVito, Peter Galla, Jill Toma and Pat Cascio.*



Please plan to support our 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament. This year's event will be **Monday, September 24**, at Fairview Farm Golf Course in Harwinton.

All proceeds support VNA Northwest's Hospice and Home Care programs in the Northwest Corner.

Tournament Chairperson Peter Belval is pleased to welcome some new corporate sponsors this year. **RJB Contracting, Inc.** of Torrington will sponsor our Luncheon, and **Prospect Printing, LLC**, will sponsor our Social Hour. The Hole in One Contest will be sponsored again by **Litchfield Ford**.

We continue to seek sponsors at several levels, along with raffle prizes and donations. Your contributions are tax-deductible, and sponsors' names will be posted on our website and included in promotional materials.

Golfers – you are encouraged to sign up now, as the field is limited. Registration forms and complete details are available at [www.vnanw.org](http://www.vnanw.org), or by calling 1-860-567-6000 or 1-800-752-0215. Not a golfer? For just \$35, you can enjoy the evening banquet and raffle with other supporters of VNA Northwest. See you in September!

### ***Find Out More About the Legacy Tree at VNA Northwest***

*Your investment will help fund Hospice, Home Care for Neighbors*



This stunning three-dimensional sculpture symbolizes the spirit of compassion and caring. It was completed early this year by renowned Connecticut artist Ann P. Lehman, and now spans one of the large walls in our lobby.

When you purchase a leaf on our tree, your contribution will go directly toward funding care for patients in both our Home Care and Hospice programs.

You choose the inscription for the brass overlay that fits over the copper leaf. It could be your family name, the name of a friend, colleague or relative, or the date of a significant milestone in your life, like a birthday, anniversary or graduation.

As the brass inscriptions begin to spread from branch to branch, this unique wall hanging will illuminate the names and sentiments of people who make our mission possible – people like you!

A Legacy Tree leaf will leave a lasting impression on the patients who will continue to benefit from our care. Please stop in to see the tree, or call us at 860-567-6000 for more information.

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## Couple Lives Comfortably at Home with Help from Our Staff



*Jane and Bill Richardson enjoy the comforts of their Torrington home with help from family members and VNA Northwest. They are shown here with Sharon Kloczko, RN, and one of their pets.*

Jane and Bill Richardson will celebrate their 57<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this May. And unlike their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, they hope to spend it surrounded by family, and *not* in the hospital. The couple have four children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

For the past 10 years, the two have experienced a wide range of health problems. Either Jane, Bill or both have been “steady” VNA Northwest patients for at least the past five years, and Sharon Kloczko, RN, and Janet Gagnon, LPN, have been their main caregivers.

“Sharon and Janet know everything about them,” said the Richardsons’ daughter, Patty.

She moved back to Torrington from Florida five years ago, when her mother had surgery to remove a tumor in her colon. Jane now uses a nebulizer and oxygen.

“Everyone in ICU calls her a walking miracle,” said Patty. She now lives in the upper portion of her parents’ home and works full-time from her home office for a company in Florida.

Bill and Jane live in the basement apartment built by their son, “Chumley.” He lives next door to his parents, and “comes up to cook dinner every night,” said Patty.

Bill, who is 80, retired from IBM in 1982. He suffers from spino-cerebellar degeneration. “We can’t keep him tied down, though. That’s why we got him a scooter,” said Patty with a laugh.

Bill received regular visits last year from his VNA Physical Therapist Erika Roberg, and this therapy helped to maximize his safety and mobility.

The Richardsons’ basement apartment is cheerful and bright, with a picture window overlooking a wooded backyard, family photographs on the mantle of the brick fireplace and lots of stuffed animals. There is a large wipe-off board in the kitchen that Patty uses to monitor her parents’ medications and vital statistics.

In addition to regular visits by Nurses Sharon and Janet, VNA Northwest Home Health Aides come to the house to assist Bill with personal care, including bathing. Patty and Jane say that they have been happy with all of the aides.

“We embrace the VNA nurses and Home Health Aides as part of our family,” said Patty. “We need them.”

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*Cornwall Resident, continued from Page 1*

Helen said she has been strong and healthy most of her life. However, about five years ago she broke her left arm “after shoveling my driveway – I slipped on black ice.” She said she had surgery, but her arm is now “permanently stiff. Being left-handed, it’s hard for me to comb my hair on the right side,” she said.

“Up until last spring, (about one year ago) I could still go up and down stairs, though.” But one day while she was climbing up, “my weak left arm betrayed me and I lost my grip.” She explained how she fell and seriously injured her leg. VNA Northwest nurses and therapists cared for Helen after both of these accidents, providing over eight months of skilled nursing care in the home.

When she reached her goals, she was transferred to the agency’s Health Guidance program. Now a nurse visits Helen about once a month to check her vital signs and general health status. VNA Northwest aims to provide quality home health care that allows patients to live safely in their homes when possible, and to avoid the need for institutional care. Helen said she loves to have the nurses “stop by.”

## Canaan Woman Appreciates Assistance From VNA Northwest, Inc.

VNA Nurse Darlene Grant, RN, visits Stella Togninalli once a week to check her vital signs and manage medications she needs for her chronic health problems. The two (shown right) met over eight years ago when Darlene cared for Stella's husband.

After Mr. Togninalli died, Darlene worked with the couple's son, Dennis, to find alternative insurance and social service programs for Stella. She is now receiving the care and assistance she needs to live alone in her longtime home in Canaan.

Darlene, who has been a home care nurse for over 15 years, said she has gathered extensive knowledge about service programs and insurance plans for senior citizens. So she was glad she could help the Togninallis.

Stella said she is "very pleased with the good services" she receives. In addition to Darlene's early morning visits once a week, VNA Northwest's Home Health Aides assist her with personal care twice each week. On Saturdays, a chore worker assists her with housekeeping.

Monday through Friday, Stella attends Geer Adult Day Center. She said she likes the varied activities and the exercise she does there.

Dennis works close by and stops over every evening to check on his mother before heading home to his wife and three daughters. "He makes sure I take all of my pills," she said. Stella's other son, David, visits often, too. David and his wife have a son, and Stella said she enjoys having the whole family come to visit.

Regarding the care that both of his parents have received from VNA Northwest, Dennis said, "We have had good experience with the VNA. They have always been there in our time of need."

About his mother's current care, he said, "Right now, everything's working fine with your organization and the day care. I know if anything needs attention, Darlene will call me right away."



**Barbara Verrastro with Peggy Lynn**

After a recent check of his blood pressure, Eugene reported that the reading was the best it had been since he started coming. "Peggy told me to buy a different brand of sliced turkey, because it would have less salt. And that's really made a difference," he said. Barbara Verrastro has been a regular participant for five years. She said having her blood pressure checked on a weekly basis "really helps." She added, "I like Peggy. She gives me a little boost, too!"

Helen and Frank Matulewicz, both 89, have been married for 67 years. They said they have an active lifestyle, and that attending this clinic is one of the ways they take care of themselves.

Peggy gives individual time to each participant, answering questions and offering advice on health concerns. Since she is on a first-name basis with most of the regular attendees, there is often a lot of good-natured teasing that takes place. "One of the highlights of my busy week is spending time with the people in Bethlehem.," said Peggy. **Note: VNA Northwest offers Blood Pressure Clinics in many towns. Please call 860-567-6000 for our schedule or visit us at [www.vnanw.org](http://www.vnanw.org).**

### Wednesday Morning Blood Pressure Clinic is Popular

The "regulars" often arrive before 10:45, and chat amiably as they wait for VNA Nurse Peggy Lynn to come through the door with a smile.

She has been running the Wednesday morning Blood Pressure Clinic at North Purchase Senior Housing for several years.

"Peggy is very well liked, it's the truth," said Josephine Pagliaruelo, who has been attending the clinic for four years.

"There is no better person. She took care of my mother, and she really cares," said Eugene Thompson.

## VNA Northwest, Inc. Volunteers Honored at April 25 Reception

Our volunteers enjoyed refreshments and some well-deserved recognition at a reception in their honor on April 25. Board of Directors President Art Mulligan told them they are very important to the agency, and that VNA Northwest is extremely appreciative of their service. Hospice, F.I.S.H. and Thrift Shop volunteers were present at the event.

### *Dedicated Volunteers Make the Difference*

As you may know, the VNA Northwest Thrift Shop has been a wonderful asset to the agency for many years. Back in 1946, when its original home was the Joseph West barn in Washington, Jean Dell was the first volunteer to take on the challenge of running the shop. Throughout the years and several changes in location, many more dedicated volunteers have joined together to make this worthy cause a success.



*Retired Thrift Shop Managers Sally Wright, left, and Nellie Condon enjoyed the reception.*



*L-R: Leonard Hutton, a F.I.S.H. driver; Sandy Ray, Thrift Shop manager; and Jo Vaill, a Thrift Shop volunteer, shared a table.*

### *Here's How You Can Help Our Thrift Shop:*

This is an appeal to both shoppers and spring cleaners. Did you know that proceeds from the VNA Northwest Thrift Shop provide an important source of income to our agency?

The shop has been operated by dedicated volunteers for more than 60 years. It's now located in the Armoury Building (Route 202) in New Preston. Stop in to see the selection of clothing, household items, toys, books and music. And if you have gently-used clothing or saleable items to donate, please bring them along. You may also leave donations at the VNA Northwest office, or call us to arrange for pick up.

The Thrift Shop is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 10-4, and Saturdays from 10-3. For more information, please call 860-868-0884.

## VNA Northwest's Holiday Giving Program Was A Great Success

Thanks to a communitywide effort coordinated by VNA Northwest, 300 Northwest Corner residents received baskets of food and gifts last Thanksgiving and Christmas. Both adults and children were the recipients of the "holiday cheer" delivered by local volunteers and some members of VNA Northwest's staff. Many of these friends and neighbors called or wrote us to express their appreciation.

Donors that helped make this effort a success were: The Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation; the Eva M. Coty Fund of the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut; Devereaux-Glenholme School; Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church of Washington Depot; St. Patrick Church, Roxbury; Stop and Shop of Litchfield; Trinity Episcopal Church of Milton and the staff of VNA Northwest.



*Among the volunteers who helped with preparation and delivery of holiday gifts were, L-R., Frank and Sherrin Nolfi, Shirley Dunkin and William Dunkin and Anne Tyrrel. Back row: Daniel Tyrrell.*

## VNA Northwest, Inc. -- 8th Annual Golf Tournament: Mon., Sept. 24, 2007



Enjoy a day of golf with us, or join our growing list of sponsors and donors! You'll be helping to insure the future of VNA Northwest's Hospice and Home Care programs. Please see page 4 to learn how you can get involved. **Shown above is 2006 golfer Ian Sutherland.**

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