

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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Eight-year-old John Mendelsohn practices hammering a tap into a maple tree stump under the watchful eye of Wayne Palmer, owner of Winding Brook Sugar House. John and his family came from Newington to Hebron last weekend for the annual Maple Fest.

## Hebron Celebrates Best Maple Fest Ever

by Sarah McCoy

It may not be the best year for maple syrup in Connecticut, but the Maple Fest is another story entirely. Last weekend crowds mobbed Hebron, eager to take part in the annual event.

“The weather and schedules must have aligned because more people have come through our doors this year than any other, it seems,” said Russ Schaller. Schaller runs the Woody Acres Sugar House.

Ironically, it’s that same weather that has slowed down syrup production this year. Optimum conditions for sap to flow are 40-45 degrees during the day and 20 degrees at night. Even in good years the season only lasts four-six weeks.

This year sugar makers either haven’t seen the 40+ degree days they need or they’ve seen high temperatures during the day temperatures have not been cold enough at night. It’s that high/low variance that helps the sap to flow.

“There is a short window of opportunity,” Schaller said of the season. “Usually we’ll produce somewhere around 50 gallons of syrup. This year we’ll be

closer to 30.”

Whatever Schaller was able to produce is long gone now. This weekend visitors bought up everything he had—a first for Schaller at the Maple Fest.

Craig and Jean Cyr, owners of the Hope Valley Sugar House, also sold out of all their syrup and maple products. The husband and wife team have helped organize the annual event since its inception in 1990. Since then, Jean said the festival, “has just gotten bigger and bigger each year.”

Maple Festers not only had the chance to tour the sugar houses, all kinds of activities lined Main Street. From pony rides to an antique quilt show, it could all be found in Hebron last weekend.

Those interested in the basics of sugaring could learn from the pros last weekend. Wayne Palmer, owner of Winding Brook Sugar House, set up a tree stump and let children practice tapping for sap. “Have you ever used an electric drill before?” he questioned as eight-year old Jordan Mendelsohn shook his head. “Well, today you’ll learn

two things then.”

For the second year in a row the AHM building was packed to the brim for the Birds of Prey exhibit. Julie Collier and Jim Parks brought six different birds of prey to show to visitors. The menagerie included a red-tailed hawk, a golden eagle, and a saw-whet owl weighing only 2.5 oz.

“I watched the audience this year and you hear the same sounds from everyone— just different pitches,” Hebron resident and AHM volunteer Dave Morency said. “When they bring the hawk out it’s wow. When they bring out the little owl everyone *awwws*.”

No official attendance records are kept from the Maple Fest but Jean Cyr estimated this year to be one of the biggest. “The Maple Fest is a sign of spring,” she explained. “People have been cooped up all winter long and this is a nice family activity to get out to.”

Now that it’s over, the local sugar makers will continue to tap for sap as long as Mother Nature allows. “Cross your fingers for another couple weeks,” said Cyr.

# Marlborough Selectmen Make Final Budget Recommendations

by Sarah McCoy

For the past three weeks the Marlborough Board of Selectmen have agonized over the 2007-08 budget. Last week they made their final recommendations.

By a vote of 2-1 the selectmen voted to recommend a 2.87% increase for next fiscal year. The budget will now go to the Board of Finance for further discussion before it comes before the voters in May.

Democrats Bill Black and Joseph LaBella voted for the budget while lone Republican Sharon Reiner dissented.

At their final budget workshop Reiner made motions to reduce the \$20.28 million budget by an additional \$155,000. All four of these motions failed to pass. They included a \$6,700 cut to remove the relocation of the Parks and Recreation office to Town Hall; a \$10,000 decrease in funding for the 2010 revaluation; an \$8,000 reduction by removing the receptionist position at the Senior Center; and a \$131,000 cut to the Public Works Department Budget for a new dump/sander/plow truck.

Currently the Parks and Recreation Department office is located at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School. With the new safety procedure in place at the school, visitors must be buzzed in to visit Parks & Rec. This slight hassle, combined with the printing and copying resources at Town Hall make the relocation sensible. All three BOS members agreed with that. But, Reiner argued that this isn't a good year for the transition. LaBella and Black disagreed and the \$6,700 remained in the budget.

In 2010 Marlborough will undergo a state-mandated revaluation. This process is expected to cost \$218,000 in 2007 dollars. Last year the town put away \$60,000 in preparation for 2010 and Black asked the town to do the same this year. He called the allocation, "sensible budgeting for a known expense."

LaBella again sided with Black and \$60,000 remained earmarked instead of the \$50,000 Reiner had suggested.

Reiner's motion to cut the Senior Center receptionist position failed to garner a second. There was no further discussion on the matter.

The largest proposed cut was a \$131,000 decrease from Public Works. Currently there is \$262,000 allotted to replace two of the town's plow trucks. Reiner asked for this number to be cut in half, with the town purchasing just one of the vehicles.

"If we don't make the budget as reasonably

palatable as possible, the Board of Finance will," she said at last week's meeting.

Black supported the expense noting that the vehicles being replaced are 17 and 18 years old. "If they aren't replaced these two vehicles will continue to break down and require expensive repairs," he said.

He added that including the purchase in this year's budget is preferential because the fire department is looking to purchase a new fire truck next year.

The 2.87% budget includes placeholders for the both the RHAM and local boards of education budgets.

Currently the RHAM budget stands at a 5.89% overall increase and the local education budget at 4.38%. Because of an enrollment decrease, the Marlborough increase for RHAM is currently .76%. The RHAM BOE is currently going through their budget process. A final recommendation is expected by the beginning of April.

The budget also includes a \$710,000 reimbursement to the town from a tax surplus in 2005-06. Had this figure not been included, the increase would have been 6.16%.

The largest area of percentage increase came from capital expenditures. There was a combined 79%—or \$63,000—increase in Reserve for Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures and Capital Expenditures. Most of this comes from renovations to Town Hall.

Almost \$50,000 is earmarked for Town Hall upgrades. This includes \$15,000 to replace the current ductwork and heating and cooling controls in the Town Hall, \$11,200 for new carpeting, and \$10,000 to fix the fixtures and privacy screens in the men's bathroom.

Black fervently supported all of these expenditures. "The painting, the carpeting, the [bathroom] fixtures were all from the original 1985 construction. We need to maintain the building better than we are doing now," he said.

Other increases include a 23.96% jump in debt repayments. This includes the two school projects and the business park.

Town Operations saw an increase of 8.93%.

The budget was presented to the Board of Finance last night. They will make their final recommendations over the course of the next month.

Copies of the budget are available at Town Hall.



## Colchester Girls Invited to All Star Cheerleading Event

Three Colchester girls have the opportunity to travel to Florida next month to participate in the All Star Cheerleading Competition, a prestigious competition regarded as the Olympics of competitive cheerleading.

And, like the Olympics, the members of the Celebrity Cheer Team are pretty much on their own when it comes to financing their travel and accommodations at the event's location.

All three Colchester members of the team—Jenna Wood, Cassie Parker and Kandice Goguen—have kicked off their fundraising efforts, though they have yet to reach their goal. So the three, along with their fellow team members, are appealing to the those who are willing to help them get to the competition.

All three residents are members of the Celebrity All Star Cheer and Dance Gym in Oakdale.

A dance team at the gym has also been invited to the competition, though the three Colchester girls are members of the cheerleading team.

While the competition itself is considered the crown-jewel of the cheerleading world, all three expressed excitement about the mere invite, called a "bid," to the world event.

"It's really exciting. Bids are hard to get, given all the teams out there, but it's truly exciting to get the bid. It's a pretty prestigious event, and ESPN broadcasts it," Cassie Parker, a senior at Bacon Academy, said.

Cassie has been cheering for six years total; she cheers at Bacon Academy for its sports teams and has been a member of the Celebrity Gym team for the past three years.

Kandice Goguen is a junior at Bacon and has been cheering for sports teams there for three years and has been cheering competitively for two years.

Jenna Wood, a 7th-grader at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, the youngest of the three, has been cheering competitively for six of her

12 years. Jenna said she too was thrilled about hearing the news about the team bid.

"I'm so excited. We really worked hard and we got it," she said.

Competitive cheerleading is different than cheerleading for sports teams, as more skill and physical dexterity, such as gymnastics and acrobatics, is required to cheer on a stand-alone team.

"There are acrobatics involved, it's much more demanding than cheerleading at school," Cassie explained.

Competitive and even sports cheerleading organizations have been on a campaign recently to raise awareness of the sport and try and dispel preconceptions that competitive cheerleading and cheerleading for sports teams are one in the same.

The Celebrity Cheer Team is the only team representing Connecticut. In order for a team to secure a bid for the prestigious event, a national qualification is necessary. The team secured its bid at its last competition in Atlanta. The Celebrity Team finished 4th out of 26 teams in its division at the Atlanta meet.

Cassie said the team participates in about ten meets a year, but this is the first time the team has received a bid for the world competition.

The girls said they would be grateful for anyone willing to make the competition a reality.

Each participant is responsible for their own expenses to attend the event. They are looking for sponsors to help defray the costs.

Anyone interested in sponsoring any or all the girls for their trip, can contact Jen Sobiech at the Celebrity All Star Cheer and Dance Gym in Oakdale at 860-443-4324.

The gym's website can be visited at [www.celebrity-ct.com](http://www.celebrity-ct.com) for more information. For more information regarding The World Cheerleading Competition, visit their web site [www.usasf.net](http://www.usasf.net).

# Marlborough Library Expansion Referendum is Tuesday

by Sarah McCoy

Tuesday is the day that Nancy Wood has been looking forward to for the past decade.

Wood, the Director of Marlborough's Richmond Memorial Library, has been working towards expanding the current building since 1995. Next week the issue will finally come before the voters.

Eligible Marlborough voters will have one question in front of them at Tuesday's referendum. Should the town approve a \$5.1 million library expansion project, with the town contributing \$4.1 million of the funding?

"It's in the hands of the voters," Wood stated. "There isn't much more I could ask for."

Because of town charter stipulations, Tuesday's referendum will need a little more than simply the majority of votes. At least 15% of the town's eligible voters will need to vote in the affirmative and that number must be in the majority.

Those numbers could pose a problem. "The fact that this issue isn't coupled with a federal or local election hurts," Assistant Town Clerk Susan Whalen said. "It certainly isn't unreasonable to think that many people could turn

up for a referendum like this, but it would have to be a strong showing."

To encourage voters, the Friends Committee of Richmond Memorial Library is offering rides to the polls for any eligible voter. Those who need a ride should call Elaine Castro at (860) 295-0152.

The Board of Finance recommended the expansion project be brought forth to residents at last month's Public Hearing on the issue. At that meeting, the project and its associated costs were presented.

Currently the library is approximately 5,000 square feet. The new proposal calls for a tripling of the space, making it 16,000 square feet. This space would include more room for materials, meeting space—even chairs.

"We have one chair left in the building for visitors to sit and read," said Wood. "And there is no more quiet study space."

The plan calls for a meeting room upstairs in the library that could hold 129 people or be split into two smaller rooms using a retractable wall. Each room would then hold 89 and 44, respectively. Currently the meeting room holds

20 and is not handicapped accessible.

There would also be more room for computers, periodicals, and other materials.

At last month's meeting virtually everyone agreed the project was a good one. The hard sell will be the price tag, especially with Marlborough residents already in debt.

The average resident pays around \$6,000 in local taxes each year. If Tuesday's referendum were to pass, construction costs would add \$141 to that annual bill. Another \$100 would also be needed yearly to accommodate the costs associated with running a larger building.

"It would be a 4% increase," First Selectman Bill Black stated. "The construction is one part of it, but you can't build a building and then not staff it, heat it, or cool it."

Marlborough residents each carry a debt load of just over \$8,000 per person. The state average is just under \$1,500. This debt is due to recent town projects that include the two school renovations, the business park and the sewer system.

Letters to the editor over the past three weeks

have explored both sides of the issue—the added debt load, vs. the value of an expanded library to the community. Most of those weighing in on the subject seem to agree on the value of the library—it's the cost of the project that worries some writers.

Marlborough has already been awarded a \$500,000 library construction grant and the Friends Committee of the library has pledged to raise another \$600,000. They are asking the town to bond \$4 million, but Wood doesn't believe it would cost even that much.

"The town wanted to err on the side of caution. They allotted a generous contingency fund, but honestly, the town shouldn't need to contribute more than \$3.7 million."

If Tuesday's referendum does not pass, there will be additional expenses included in this year's budget for the library. These include heating and cooling repairs and new carpeting. All told, expenses would cost just under \$40,000.

The polls will be open on Tuesday from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School Community Room.

# Author of ‘Drumming Book’ to Hold Signing at Portland Library

by Michael McCoy

The Portland Public Library will host a book signing and reception for local teacher Jonathan Peckman this Saturday, March 17, for his brand new book, *Picture Yourself Drumming*.

Peckman, 39, who grew up in Wallingford, comes from a musical family. His uncle worked for a record company, and Peckman remembers, “I used to get promo records in the mail.” This instilled the music bug in him early on.

While attending the Wallingford public school system, he learned to play the drums. “I played in every band they had,” said Peckman. “I can’t say enough about the Wallingford school system.”

Peckman had been taking lessons from Vic Steffans, who runs Horizon Studios in West Haven. Then, shortly after Peckman finished high school, Steffans decided to retire from performing live. “He basically gave me all of his gigs,” remembers the drummer.

So it was that at the age of 19 Peckman began his professional music career, playing with local staples such as Jeff Pitchell and Texas Flood, Eight to the Bar, and The Feather-merchants.

About five years ago, Peckman began teaching drums at Connecticut Valley School of Music & Dance in Portland. He has taught there ever since.

Peckman decided to take on the challenge of writing his first book on his craft in May, and Thomson Course Technology published it in January.

The book, subtitled *Step-by-Step Instruction for Drum Kit Setup, Reading Music, Learning From the Pros, and More*, aims to help begin-

ners get started with the instrument. In fact, the publisher has said, “If you have some natural rhythm, a set of sticks, and a desire to become a drummer, then this book was written for you.”

The book expounds on the very first steps, including necessary hardware, reading drum music, and qualities a band seeks in a rock drummer.

Incidentally, rock and roll is Peckman’s style of choice, and when put on the spot, he cited Ringo Starr and Dave Grohl, who drummed for Nirvana before fronting the Foo Fighters, as two of his favorites in the business.

*Picture Yourself Drumming*, which is 240 pages long, also comes with a step-by-step instructional DVD. The whole package costs \$34.99.

The book, the drummer admits, “was the biggest challenge of my life.” Unfortunately, the undertaking was compounded by the passing of his father a couple months prior to its completion. “It was really difficult to finish it,” he said.

Despite the frustrations involved with such a project, Peckman said, “I would definitely do it again,” noting that, while this book is designed for fledgling drummers, there is much more to write on the subject.

So far, Peckman estimates that the book has sold around 4,000 copies. Plenty more will be on sale during Saturday’s signing, which will be held from 1-3 p.m. in the library. Peckman will be offering brief introductory lessons to anyone who is interested in attempting the drums. Refreshments will also be included at the event, which is being sponsored by Conn. Valley School of Music & Dance.

# Colchester Land Trust Receives \$10,000 Challenge Grant

The Colchester Land Trust has received a \$10,000 challenge grant from an anonymous donor.

The benefactor, who does not reside in the town, contacted the Trust after reading a newspaper article describing the Trust’s acquisition of their 18-acre property at the Airline Trail Gateway on Bull Hill Road.

Lisa Hageman, president of the trust, received a call that an anonymous donor wanted to challenge the town by matching \$10,000 in new donations. If someone who has never given to the Trust before sends a contribution for land acquisition between March 1 and June 30 they will help qualify for the additional \$10,000.

“If we hit the \$10,000 level in new donations, this donor will match that amount! It is an amazing gift, essentially doubling a new contribution,” said Hageman.

The Land Trust has been active, working with landowners, informing the community of conservation options and trying to provide a balance to the development pressures on

Colchester.

“We recognize the need for quality housing and industry,” says Hageman, “but to lose 18 acres on the Airline Trail to housing would diminish this treasure for all of us. There is a momentum behind our efforts that is very rewarding and we thank everyone who has contributed and supported us so far.”

Colchester Land Trust has until July 15 to raise the needed funding for this land. They will seek state grants, donations from foundations and contributions from private individuals. Board members of the trust have pledged more than \$30,000 over the next few years. “We committed ourselves first,” says Hageman, “Failure is not an option!”

Should anyone wish to contribute to Gateway Project, go to [www.colchesterlandtrust.org](http://www.colchesterlandtrust.org) or mail a contribution to Colchester Land Trust, PO Box 93, Colchester, CT 06415. If landowners wish to learn more about their options, they may contact the trust on line or call 860-267-6145.

# Portland Board of Ed Examines Alcohol/Drug Zero Tolerance

by Michael McCoy

The Portland Board of Education has agreed to review its “zero tolerance” disciplinary policy regarding school athletes.

The board agreed to review its policy after complaints from the uncle of a Portland teenager thrown off the high school basketball team after being arrested for possession of alcohol off school grounds. The uncle, Michael Foley, argues that the board’s policy unfairly discriminates against athletes.

All Portland school athletes sign a document, agreeing to abstain from alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, with the understanding that if they do not, their season will be terminated.

Foley says the policy lacks flexibility and discriminates against students who play sports. He has made his feelings known to the school board and written letters to the editor—one of which appears in this issue of the *Rivereast*.

In one of his letters he said, “The word ‘team’ implies that the rule implies to athletes only. It seems counterproductive to single out athletes, who almost by definition are committed to health and fitness more than most other students.”

He also took issue with the severity of the district’s punishment for first-time offenders, asserting, “One strike and you’re out isn’t fair to anyone.” He cited other area school district policies, which are more lenient, allowing two offenses before an athlete is terminated from the team.

A temporary suspension makes more sense than the current approach, he said. Such a policy, he maintains, allows a student who makes a mistake to redeem him or herself.

The incident that sparked the debate occurred at 11:09 p.m. on Jan. 5 when a Portland police officer on routine patrol observed four vehicles parked at Zion Lutheran Church. The officer found a number of teenagers congregated on the outside lawn. Perusal of the area and a vehicle search also uncovered a 30-pack of Miller Lite, as well as empty alcohol containers.

Two of the minors on the scene—one of whom was the high school basketball player—took full responsibility for the alcohol. They were charged with possession of alcohol by an underage person. In accordance with school policy, the youth was dismissed from the team.

The Board of Education has agreed to review the policy, but the end result may be a simple extension of the policy to other activities. According to board chairman Chris Hettrick, the board’s policy committee met last week and decided it might be appropriate to extend the disciplinary policy parameters to include all extracurricular activities, not just sports.

As for what happened to Foley’s nephew, the board seems sympathetic but unapologetic. Athletes know the penalty; there is no confusion, they say. “They sign a statement,” said Hettrick in defense of the policy.

# Colchester Student Remark Results in Arrest for Beach of Peace

by Jim Salemi

A 15-year-old Bacon Academy student arrested last week at the school on unspecified charges has been formally charged with breach of peace, according to police.

According to Schools Superintendent Karen Loiselle, the child was arrested for directing an “obscene” and vulgar verbal remark toward a female administrator, a remark she said she was uncomfortable repeating.

Loiselle said the decision to arrest the child was entirely that of School Resource Officer Fred Briger, who was present when the remark was made.

Briger too refused to repeat the remark. Briger, who seemed uncomfortable talking about the incident, said “he wouldn’t do that” when asked what word was used. Briger said he witnessed the remark firsthand, along with 22 students and the administrator.

While reporters have a good idea of what was said, it has yet to be confirmed, and the word, if reporters are correct, would not be appropriate for print with a general-audience readership of children and mixed company.

Just what punishment the school might mete

“We want to set an example,” said Hettrick. “I’m a father of four, with children aged 25 to 16. I know what they’re like. I know the temptation is there. It’s an issue that we take very seriously.”

Hettrick said the committee is still composing the language of the proposal. He said he expects the entire board would see a draft within the next month. He observed that these matters are usually discussed at some length upon the first viewing, and then tabled for one meeting so all board members can reflect on the matter.

This particular policy issue only concerns incidents that occur away from school property and have no connection with any school event. A student found in violation of the school’s code concerning drugs, alcohol, or tobacco on school grounds or in connection with a school event faces potential expulsion. During this debate, no one has taken issue with that policy.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sally Doyen welcomed the policy committee’s review and the possibility that the policy might be extended to cover areas beyond athletics.

“I think it’s a good idea,” said Doyen, who noted that students participating in these clubs and organizations represent the school. “They need to adhere to very high standards.”

As for the propriety of the reprimand that brought on the debate, Doyen said, “I don’t think it’s too harsh. It’s very clearly spelled out in the handbook.”

She also reminded parents, “It’s illegal. There’s not one student at the high school who is 21.” As for schools that have opted for a less severe policy, Doyen said, “Districts do vary, and that’s their prerogative.”

Foley points out that the basketball season is over and his efforts are not aimed at reinstating the youth to the team, merely correcting what he views as an inequity. He expressed appreciation at being able to at least have his say on the matter. And, though it appears at the moment that the status quo will remain, he expressed optimism that the Board of Education would come up with a “good policy.”

Should the Board of Education adopt the committee’s recommendation to extend the current policy to other student activities, the policy would apply to every extracurricular activity. In addition to athletics that list includes Student Council, Garden Club, Future Business Leaders of America, Drama Club, Pep Band, Jazz Band, school musical, Marching Band, County Substance Abuse Prevention Club, Art Club, and ski club.

The rules would not apply to band and chorus, which are credited courses that are attended during the school day.

So far, there has been no indication that the Board of Education is considering a less severe punishment, such as temporary suspension, for a first offense.

out for the remark, has not been made known. The violation would likely be insubordination, typically punishable by suspension.

Neither the school board nor the school administration mentioned the incident during the Board of Education meeting last Tuesday.

While police do make arrests for use of profanity and charge breach of peace in Connecticut and some other states, it is only recently that the use of words alone was criminalized by the state. Before the legislation, profanity would have to be intended to incite another person into a confrontation in order to charge breach of peace, according to attorney John Stawicki, who has a practice in town.

Despite the legislation, juvenile courts more often than not nolle the charges, or dismiss them all together, he said, speaking to his personal experience defending juveniles in Connecticut courts.

U.S. Courts, if a case makes it that far, usually toss out charges on First Amendment grounds, he said.

# Scam Artist Suspect Arrested on Larceny Charges in East Hampton

East Hampton police recently arrested a Lebanon man who is charged with conning a resident out of \$65,000

According to police Steven Earl Davis, 44, of Lebanon was referred to an East Hampton woman to do some contract work last year. Over a period of about three weeks last December, he befriended the woman and led her to believe that their relationship would continue, said police.

He borrowed money from the woman, then skipped town, according to police. Seemingly, he had no intention to pay back the money he had borrowed.

Sergeant Michael Green headed up the investigation. He said Davis had a history of similar scams. “He’s been in and out of jail throughout the country,” said Sergeant Garritt Kelly.

East Hampton police found Davis on February 27. The suspect was being held at Osborn Correctional Facility in Somers, where he was serving another sentence. He was further charged with larceny 1st degree and held on a \$300,000 bond.

Anyone who suspects they may have been victimized by Davis should file a complaint with their local police department, noted East Hampton police.

## Celebrity Auction Raises Over \$9,000 for East HamptonLake Group

The stars were out the evening of March 9 at Angelico's Lake House Restaurant for the East Hampton Idol Talent Contest & Celebrity Wait Staff Auction.

There were performances by "Elvis," "Jefferson Airplane," "James Brown," "The Three Tenors" and other famous—and not so famous—contestants. It was a difficult assignment for the Idol judges to pick the top acts. But in the end the judges, "Simon" Shulman, Pete "Bling Bling Big Dawg" Brown, and Gail "Abdul" Cavanaugh, selected the "Best of the Best."

But the real stars of the evening were five young women that were auctioned off as "Celebrity Waiters." They were Elisha Kissinger, Jen Engel-Day, Jamie Nowakowski, Mitzie Tuttle and Nicole Murphy. These young women were auctioned off by Master of Ceremonies Red McKinney and together they raised over \$9,000.

On April 21st the winning bidders will be honored at a special Celebrity Dinner and will receive complimentary dinner for four served to them by the Celebrity Waitress they successfully bid on. The lucky winning bidders included Mark Johnson, who was engaged in a spirited bidding war against Steve Nowakowski, Bob Hart, Gerry McCabe, Brian Spack, and the East Hampton Republicans.

The \$9,050 raised at this Celebrity Auction will be used by Friends of Lake Pocotopaug to fund projects specifically designed to improve the water quality of the lake. Friends of Lake Pocotopaug is a non-profit volunteer organization and over the past three years has raised over \$60,000, all of which has been earmarked for lake improvements.

The April 21st Celebrity Dinner will kick off the "Friends" major summer fundraiser. The



**Celebrity waitress Nicole Murphy and spirited bidder Brian Spack enjoy themselves at the Celebrity Auction at Angelico's.**

group will start the raffle for a 2007 18' Tuscan Pontoon Boat and trailer. The drawing for the Pontoon boat will be July 14 at the East Hampton Old Home Day Celebration. The boat will be displayed at Angelico's for the April 21 Celebrity Dinner.

The April 21 Celebrity Dinner is open to the public but seating is limited. Call 860-267-1276 to make reservations.

## The Grass is Always Greener...in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Rich Calarco has a thing for grass.

The Hebron Parks and Recreation Director recently received national recognition for his knowledge in field turf management. He is now the only Certified Sports Field Manager in Connecticut and one of only about 100 in the nation.

"It was a process that spanned my entire career," Calarco said recently.

To become a Certified Sports Field Manager, he had to pass a rigorous four-part test. Each section focused on one specific area; administration, pest management, sport specifics, or agronomy. Calarco needed a score of 80 in each section to earn the national distinction.

He did just that.

"It was a solid year of studying," said Calarco, "but the culmination of a career's work."

Taking the test was only the last step in the multi-year process. In order to qualify to take the test, Calarco had to earn a certain number of education and experience credits. For the past 27 years he has worked in a Park & Recreation Department, most of those years in Killingly. During that time Calarco has attended numerous seminars and classes to learn everything about grubs, bugs and pesticides.

"Don't get me started about grass," he warned. "Once I get going, it's hard to stop me."

For Calarco, sports fields are more than a job. They are his passion. Not because he's driven by green grass or perfectly manicured lawns. Calarco loves field maintenance because he believes in its importance.

"I believe if you are managing athletic fields you need to be on top of the industry for safety's

sake," he explained. "You can't have children playing on fields infested with bugs or with holes everywhere. I am responsible for providing them with the safest environment possible."

With that in mind, Calarco sets out every day to do the best job he can.

Since he came to Hebron two years ago, field conditions have drastically improved. Calarco walks each field at least once a week. He pulls grass out to examine it. He tests the soil. He searches for bugs. All this in an effort to be better prepared.

Taking such a scientific approach has helped Calarco understand what each field needs. One thing he is confident of: no field needs is chemicals. "There is no need for them with proper field management," he explained. "There are numerous safe products out there that are great for the environment and can help the fields to flourish."

Calarco isn't only interested in helping Hebron. Part of his reasons for pursuing the certification were to pass on his knowledge to others. "There aren't any egos when it comes to turf management," he said. "We are here to learn and to provide the best fields we can."

Calarco's expertise is something Hebron will rely on as it moves forward with plans to build a multi-use sports recreation facility on East Street. The town is currently looking at building the park in phases to spread the future debt out over a number of years.

"I know what those fields need to be able to do," he explained. "And I am talking with the engineers to make the fields as functional as they can be."

## New Appliance Store Opens in East Hampton

by Michael McCoy

Thirty years of mechanical know-how has arrived in East Hampton, as Belltown Appliance recently joined the local business community.

Edgar Goss started H & E Appliance in Hartford 30 years ago. He was always aided by his son, Harvey Gross. When Edgar passed away in 1992, Harvey took over the business that his father had built.

In 2005, Gross moved the business to his Moodus home.

That's when local resident Alan Veazie comes into the story. Gross and Veazie have been friends for the past 20 years, enjoying hunting and the outdoors together. Many times, as Veazie would pull into the driveway to pick Gross up for a hunting excursion, he would find him working on one machine or another. Of course, Veazie would always help his friend out, and they'd eventually be on their way.

One such day, Harvey suggested that they go into business together. So they did.

They originally retained the name H&E, which stands for Harvey & Edgar, but subsequently decided to go with something a little more colloquial and with more local meaning shortly after their grand opening.

The store is now in the middle of switching over all of their signage, as well as their logo and other promotional material from H&E to Belltown, but they are one and the same.

Why locate in East Hampton? "We decided on East Hampton, because we thought the community could use it [a service like theirs]," figured Alan.

It would seem that another Alan shares his sentiment. "This is a great addition to the town," agreed Town Manager Alan Bergren.

Speaking of the warm welcome by the town, specifically the Economic Development Com-

mission, Veazie says, "They've all been a really big help."

Harvey added, "They're all kind of psyched that we're here."

Belltown Appliance offers washers, dryers, stoves, electric ranges, ovens, refrigerators, air conditioners, and even commercial stoves.

They specialize in refurbished and "scratch and dent" products—that is, brand-new machines with minor blemishes. Belltown also stocks virtually any major brand you can conjure up: Maytag, Bosch, LG, Asco, Kenmore etc...

In addition to the products, they also sell specific parts and offer servicing on all machines. Incidentally, there is no other appliance store in the town of East Hampton.

The shop is located at 12 Summit Street, a building owned by Ralph Nesci.

"It's kind of a neat appliance store," said Nesci. "I'm tickled pink with his whole thing." As it happens, it was Alan's brother Kenny who found the space for Belltown. To add another relative dimension to the endeavor, Gross's mother Jane does all of the bookkeeping.

Harvey and Alan had plenty to attend to before their February 1st opening, including painting the entire interior of the shop, as well as erecting a wall to separate the sales floor from the back. The duo did it all themselves.

Belltown Appliance is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., though they plan to eventually extend the hours one more day during the week. They can be reached by phone at 365-0242.

## RHAM Student's Essay Catches State Legislature's Attention

by Sarah McCoy

What would you do to change the world?

That was the question recently posed to students in Civics classes across the state by their state senators. Students were encouraged to write their answer in an essay contest sponsored by the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association.

RHAM High School senior Jessica Adelson had an answer that took her all the way to Hartford after she won the essay contest for the 19th District.

As a result of her effort, the Hebron native won a \$500 scholarship and a chance to present her ideas to the State's Public Health Committee last month.

"A little intimidating, to say the least," Adelson said of the experience.

But the 17-year-old didn't show any signs of intimidation as she asked a room full of politicians to raise the age requirement to purchase cigarettes from 18 to 21. "How can smoking be justified for younger children when drinking isn't?" Adelson questioned in her essay. "Logically, they are both harmful to a person's body... However, it is socially accepted that when one turns the golden age of eighteen, he is now old enough to begin the process of getting lung cancer."

That is something Adelson wants to change.

Her grandparents both died from smoking. And, although they know the risks, many of

her friends smoke. This, Adelson believes, is completely preventable.

"As a teenager there is peer pressure to smoke," she explained. "But, if the smoking age were to be increased to 21, teenagers would have a lot less accessibility."

Adelson argued that most 15-17 year olds know an 18-year-old. This is there "in" to the tobacco world. But that same age bracket probably wouldn't have 21-year-old friends.

State Senator Edith Prague, who first came to Adelson's class to introduce the essay contest, agrees. "It is a great idea," she said. "Maybe by the time the individual is 21 they would realize how detrimental [smoking] is to your health."

Adelson's idea has since been turned into a bill. Number 661 is currently on the table of the Public Health Committee. While the future of the bill has yet to be determined, Adelson has a lot to be proud of.

"The whole point of the contest is to encourage young people to think about state government, to expose them to the process, and to get them involved," Prague said.

Jessica Adelson has done that. "Just the other day I was listening to the radio and the DJs were discussing my idea," she said. "I heard it and thought to myself, 'Wow, look at the power that a 17 year old can have.'"

## Portland Police News

3/7 - Devin Holley, 25, of 118 Newfield St., Apt. 11, Middletown, was charged with possession of less than 4 oz. of marijuana, said Portland police.

3/9 - Kahreem Grumbs, 22, 14 Brook Hill Dr., East Hampton, was charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and traveling fast, said police.

3/10 - Peter Graham, 19, of 12 Oak Hill Rd., Rocky Hill, was charged with possession of alcohol by an underage person and simple trespass, said police.

# Obituaries

## Andover

### Robert W. Brown

Robert W. Brown, 60, the husband of Mary Jane (McCue) Brown died on Saturday, March 10, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Hartford the son of the late Leo F. and Julia (Hentz) Brown he grew up in Andover and for many years had lived in Manchester.

Bob was formerly employed in the aerospace industry and greatly enjoyed music, family and antiques.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children, Matthew Brown and his wife, Sandra of Worcester, MA, Heidi Huber and her husband, Bobby of Norfolk, VA, Brian Reid and his wife, Sofia of Windsor, Jeff Reid of Manchester and Jennifer Reid of Manchester and his grandchildren, Zachary, Aidan, Miah and Shane. He is also survived by his sisters, Joan Byron and her husband, Ray of Port Charlotte, FL and Sandra Watson of Lincoln, CA and his in-laws, Lorraine and Richard Manas, Christine and Corey Morelli and Robert and Jennifer Burckardt and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his brother, Dale.

Bob's family would like to offer a special note of thanks to Drs. James Cardon and Jeffrey Kluger and the staff of the 10th and 11th floors at Hartford Hospital.

Funeral services were held on Wednesday morning, from the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester followed by a funeral service, at the Wapping Community Church, 1790 Ellington Rd., South Windsor. Calling hours were Tuesday evening at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Assoc., 1 Union St., Suite 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691.

## Andover

### Michael Misovich, Jr.

Michael Misovich Jr. 84, of Manchester beloved and devoted husband of 56 years to the late Ella (Tomasaitis) Misovich, died peacefully at home on March 5, surrounded by his family and joined his beloved Ella in heaven.

Born in Andover, he resided in Manchester most of his life. He was the son of the late Michael and Sadonia (Simovic) Misovich. Michael graduated from Willimantic State Trade School in 1941 as an Architectural Draftsman. He served in the US Navy, receiving numerous medals upon being honorably discharged in June 1946. He completed the Home Builders Program at the University of Connecticut in March 1960. He was employed by Ernie Richie Home Builders, Conyers Construction Company and for Orlando Annulli and Sons, Inc. At Annulli, he was involved in overseeing many major projects throughout the state, then becoming a Certified Estimator and retiring in 1991.

Mike was a master craftsman designing and building his dream home along with Ella, his daughters, many friends and other family members, taking fifteen months to complete during nights and weekends.

Mike was an avid hunter, fisherman and enjoyed boating. He loved nature and enjoyed hiking on his property and watching for wildlife. He also loved traveling to his cabin in New Hampshire with his hunting buddies. Mike was known to his polka friends as "Polka Mike" or "Slovak Mike" and was a polka dance instructor with the Johnny Prytko Orchestra as well as being Fan Club Co-President. He was a great lover of buttonbox music which he played frequently.

Mike was a devoted, loving father to four daughters and their families, Sheila, Marlene, Allison and Christine, four sons-in-law Brian Wheeler, Russell Couch, William Munroe and Stephen McKenzie. He was a loving grandfather to Scott, Michael and Eric Wheeler, Salena and Pamela Couch, and Keith and Kimberly McKenzie. He is also survived by three sisters, Ann Hanko, Ernestine Yaworski and her husband Stephen, and Mary Johnson and several nephews. Besides his wife and parents Mike was predeceased by a nephew Ronald Hanko, and sisters Amelia Misovich and Irene Boscher.

Funeral services were Saturday, March 10, at Holmes Funeral Home 400 Main St. Manchester, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at Church of the Assumption 29 South Adams St. Manchester. Burial with military honors was in St. James Cemetery, Manchester. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to M.A.R.C. Inc. 376 R. West Middle Turnpike Manchester, CT 06040 or the Visiting Nurse and Health Services Inc. 8 Keynote Dr. Vernon, CT 06066.

## Andover

### Eleanor Cataldi

Eleanor (Anderson) Cataldi, 83, of Andover, formerly of East Hartford, the wife of Frank Cataldi, died Sunday, March 11, at her home. Born in East Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Oscar and Elna Anderson.

Eleanor's family was the joy of her life, especially attending her grandchildren's sporting, musical and school functions. She was also an avid UConn Huskies Men's and Women's Basketball fan.

Besides her husband she is survived by her children Sandra Cataldi of South Windsor, David Cataldi and his wife Valarie of Merrimack, NH and Georgette St. Jean and her husband Roger of Andover; and her grandchildren Michael Borillo of Orlando, FL, Jennifer Lombardo and her husband Steven of Colchester, Thomas, Peter and Daniel Cataldi of Merrimack, NH and Cecile and Jacob St. Jean of Andover.

Funeral service will be held today (Friday (March 16) at 10:45 a.m. from the John F. Tierney Funeral Home 219 West Center St. Manchester with a Mass of Christian Burial at 12 noon at St. Mary's Church 1600 Main St. Coventry, CT. Burial will follow in Silver Lane Cemetery, East Hartford. Calling hours were Thursday evening at the funeral home.

Memorial donations may be made to either VNA East, Inc. 34 Ledgebrook Drive Mansfield Center, CT 06250 or the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center c/o Fund Development Office Hartford Hospital 80 Seymour St. PO Box 5037 Hartford, CT 06101-9960.

## Andover

### Muriel Skoog

Muriel (Anderton) Skoog, 92, resident of Andover since 1946, wife of the late Henry T. Skoog, passed away, Friday, March 9. She was born on Oct. 13, 1914, daughter of the late Harry and Agnus Anderton.

Born in Darwin, Lancaster, England, she came to America at age 6 residing in Manchester during her youth, and Andover Lake since 1946. Muriel was a longtime member of the Andover P.T.A., and the Grange. She was well known for the many variety shows she presented at the Town Hall in Andover. She was employed at Veeder-Root, and the Mansfield Training School for 13 years, receiving the award "Aide of the Year." She also worked at several convalescent and group homes in the area. She was a dedicated caregiver and a wonderful person because of her kindness.

Muriel loved writing poetry. A book of her poems was published and she donated all proceeds to the Andover Congregational Church of which she was a lifelong member. Her poetry portrayed the love she had for her family and friends.

She leaves her sister-in-law, Astrid Wierzbicki, of Manchester; four children; Chuck Skoog of Andover, Bill Skoog and his wife, Pam of Columbia; Peter and his wife, Elinor of Andover; and a daughter, Astrid Belanger and her husband Bob of Columbia; five grandchildren, Jessica, Travis, and Sara Skoog, and Jim and Jaime Belanger. Muriel and her husband took care for their quadriplegic son, Charles, from 1955 to 1992. Upon her husband's passing in 1977, she continued caring for her son until her first stroke. Charles kept her home for four years but after several more strokes she became a resident of Marlborough Health Care in 2001 where she was given excellent care. She was loved by all the employees for her sense of humor.

Memorial donations may be made to the Andover Congregational Church, PO Box 55, Andover, CT 06232 or the Andover Fire Department, 11 School Road, Andover, CT 06232. There will be no calling hours and burial will be at the convenience of the family.

Muriel will be missed by all who knew her for her humor and compassion. Until we meet again.

The Holmes Funeral Home in Manchester has care of arrangements.

## East Hampton

### Bonnie J. True

Bonnie Joyce (Luckingham) True, 85, died Saturday, March 10, at Cobalt Lodge Health and Rehabilitation Center. She was born April 4, 1921 in Hartford, the daughter of the late Ruel M. and Violet (Winter) Luckingham, and lived in East Hampton for most of her life.

Bonnie was employed by United Technologies Research, retiring after more than 20 years of service.

She is survived by her three sons Bruce True and his wife Jackie of East Hampton, Dean True and his wife Kathryn of Sterling, and David True and his wife Cheryl of California, a brother Ruel Luckingham of South Windsor, three sisters Shirley Sezluga of Florida, Doris Pierce of Florida, and Jean Austin of California, and 11 grand and great grandchildren. She was predeceased by a brother Robert Luckingham and a granddaughter Tracey True.

A memorial service celebrating her life will be held Saturday, March 24 at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to the American Heart Association 2550 U. S. Highway 1 North Brunswick, NJ 08902-4301.

## Hebron

### David R. Hills

David Roy Hills, 41, of Vernon, formerly of Hebron, died unexpectedly on Monday, March 12. Born July 29, 1965 in Middletown, he was the son of Oscar D. and Susanna (Fuller) Hills of Hebron.

David had lived in Hebron for most of his life before moving to Vernon. He was employed as a Project Manager for the Aldrich Construction Company where he had worked for the past 15 years.

David was an avid cyclist and outdoorsman, he was a co-founder and assistant director of the Colchester Continental Fife and Drum Corps., an assistant Cubmaster and Den Leader of Pack 221, Den 3 in Vernon.

David was a gentle spirited son, brother, father, fiancée, and friend. David touched the lives of all who knew him. He will be deeply missed and continue to touch our lives every day.

Besides his parents he is survived by his children Heather and Austin Hills; his fiancée Loreen Williams and her children MacKenzie, Randall, Brianna Williams, and their son Joshua Hills. He also leaves his brother and sister-in-law Daniel and Sonja Hills of Vernon and nieces Ashley and Taylor Hills, many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, March 17, at 10 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St. East Hampton with the Rev. Thomas Sievel, Pastor of St. Bartholomew Church in Manchester officiating. Burial will follow in the family plot in Gilead Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home on Friday March 16, from 7-9 p.m. and again on Saturday from 9 p.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions can be made to the Hills Children Education Fund c/o Liberty Bank PO. Box 188 Marlborough, CT. 06447.

## Colchester

### Eugene J. Riel Jr.

Eugene "Gene" J. Riel, Jr. passed into the hands of God on Monday, March 12, 2007 at New Britain General Hospital after a short illness. Gene Riel graduated from College of Holy Cross, Class of 1957. He taught at Bacon Academy in Colchester and at Central Connecticut State University, which he retired from in 1991.

He is survived by his wife Linda Riel, his children Eugene, Donna and Cynthia, step children Laurie and John, and six grandchildren, April, Josh, Dean, Karen, Sean and Samantha.

Memorial services will be at Berlin Memorial Funeral Home on Saturday, March 17, 4-6 p.m. Burial will be at the family's convenience. The family would like to thank the doctors and staff of New Britain General Hospital for their kindness and knowledge

## East Hampton

### William F. Sladyk

William F. Sladyk, 94, of Wells Ave., East Hampton, beloved husband of Helen (Kalman) Sladyk for 69 years, died Sunday, March 11, at Middlesex Hospital. Born May 31, 1912 in Glastonbury, the son of the late Albert and Kathryn (Juba) Sladyk he had lived in East Hampton for most of his life.

He joined Pratt & Whitney during World War II, becoming a journeyman machinist and master tool & die maker. After decades of faithful service, he enjoyed his retirement traveling the world with his wife Helen. He was an avid gardener, golfer and bowler. He could fix anything, loved the Red Sox, and made the best green tomato pickles ever.

Besides his wife he is survived by a daughter Diane of CA., a daughter-in-law Mary of VT., sister-in-law Albina, nephew Tom and his family, seven grandchildren and five great grandchildren. He was predeceased by a son William F. Sladyk Jr. The family also wishes to thank Peter for his devoted support and kindness. We love you, Pop!

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday, March 17 at 10 a.m. in St Patrick Church with the Rev. Charles LeBlanc officiating. Burial will follow in the family plot in Calvary Cemetery on Bow La. Middletown. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St. East Hampton today (Friday, March 16) from 3-5 p.m.