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Linda Crossman is retiring in June after eight years as principal of RHAM Middle School. She has seen many changes during her time at RHAM, including construction of a new school.

RHAM Middle School Principal Retiring After Eight Years

by Sarah McCoy

Linda Crossman has always preferred her life to be full of challenges.

For the last eight years she has had plenty of that as Principal of RHAM Middle School. And now, after seeing the regional school district transform inside and out, Crossman is retiring from her post at the end of the school year.

"To say it's been fun is an understatement," Crossman said this week of her tenure at RHAM, which serves students in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough. "My time here has run the gamut of emotions as I've seen the school thrive."

Crossman's journey through the education field began at a young age.

"Ever since I was a child, teaching came natural to me," she said. Crossman went on to City University of New York where she majored in Consumer Science Education. She would go on to teach foods and nutrition at schools in the Bronx and Huntington, LI, before relocating to Connecticut.

In 1977, Crossman took a teaching position at East Windsor Middle School and then, two years later, at Lyman Memorial in Lebanon. In 1986, Crossman decided to try her hand in another field. She opened

Casper's Restaurant in Old Lyme. The venture proved to be short-lived, as Crossman decided to sell the restaurant within a year and go back to teaching.

It was around this time that Crossman began to consider pursuing a career in school administration. "I wanted to help more than the 20 or so students I had for 5 periods," she explained. "I also felt that I had a talent for teaching teachers, organization and solving problems."

So, Crossman enrolled in the University of Connecticut's Educational Administration doctoral program and accepted her first position as Assistant Principal of Plainville Middle School in 1992. She stayed at Plainville until 2000, when she began her tenure as principal of RHAM Middle School.

Since then, it has been non-stop excitement for the RHAM principal. Upon her arrival, discussions began for the building construction. Crossman was involved from the time the plan for a new school was merely a thought to the point of its actual opening in the winter of 2003. "This is a building that was built around our philosophy," she explained. "This is more than a building; it promotes what we try to ac-

complish here."

The middle school building is divided into six pods, coinciding with the six teams of students in the school. The idea behind this, Crossman explained, is to create small communities to promote a level of closeness between students and staff. There is also a series of pillars at the entryway to the school, each representing an aspect of character: citizenship, responsibility, respect, fairness, caring and trustworthiness.

"Developing good character is part of how we do business here," Crossman said. "We're more than just reading and writing."

Middle school can be a difficult place for all those involved. Students are rapidly developing cognitively and physically and, as a result, adults are left to scratch their heads on how to reach these adolescents. That challenge is what drew Crossman to middle school in the first place.

"It's more than the school in the middle of elementary and high school," she explained. "We, as educators and as a parent, have to tap into all the enthusiasm and energy these students have. They really are eager learners."

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Even after more than 30 years in education, Crossman still gets pumped up by her students, often racing them up the stairs two at a time.

"I'll miss a lot of things about this place," she said. "The people here are colleagues and friends not just teachers in a building." She'll miss watching students succeed and seeing teachers come in scared to death on their first day, only to turn into exemplary educators down the road.

However, Crossman won't miss getting up at 5:30 every morning or the tedious budget process that happens every year around this time. "They're part of the job, but they're certainly not my favorite parts," she said.

Don't expect Crossman to be a stranger in these parts, as she plans to stay in Marlborough and find a new adventure. She's not entirely sure what she'll do next, but Crossman says she's ready for a change.

"I want to do other things while I'll still have the energy," she said with a laugh.

It only takes a minute of looking around Crossman's office to guess what those other things may be as photos of a whitewater trip

and ski vacations adorn her walls. Crossman says she does intend to do some traveling, she's going to Beijing this summer for the Olympics, but other than that, who knows. "For years I have worked around 65 hours a week so I haven't had much free time," she said.

Whether it's volunteer endeavors or a new occupation, Crossman says she's ready and so is RHAM. With construction and the school's accreditation complete, and Connecticut Mastery Test scores on the rise, Crossman is leaving RHAM in a good place for the next principal.

The district will continue to receive applications for the new principal position until April 7 at which point a search committee will begin the evaluation and interview process. The search committee is typically about 12 members and includes teachers, current administration, and parents. The final hiring decision rests in the hands of the Board of Education, who are expected to take action on this around the end of the school year.

Crossman's retirement will be effective on the last day of school, June 19.

Marlborough Man Charged with Strangling His Wife

by Kristina Histen

A Marlborough resident is facing criminal charges after a domestic incident involving his wife turned physical last Thursday, State Police said.

Matthew Lee, 40, of 4 Summer Ln., was charged March 20 with two counts of risk of injury to a minor, third-degree strangulation, disorderly conduct, third-degree assault, interfering with an officer and interfering with emergency calls, State Police said.

According to an investigation report on file at Manchester Superior Court, State Police Troop K Officer Patrick Dwyer responded to a report of an ongoing domestic disturbance at 4 Summer Ln. at around 7 p.m. last Thursday. While en route to the residence, the report said, the Troop K dispatcher informed Dwyer that a 911 call was received from a child at the residence, who told State Police that the father was drunk and he was beating up the mother.

Shortly thereafter, court documents said, a second 911 call was made from the residence, this one from Lee's wife; she remained on the line with Troop K, the report said. The woman told Troop K she had locked herself and her children in a bedroom and her husband was trying to kick in the door and that her children were screaming, the report said.

The Troop K dispatcher then told Dwyer that Lee had forcefully broken through the bedroom door and the female was now being pinned down before the line went dead, the investigation report said. The alleged victim said in her statement to police that Lee had jumped on top of her and she had dropped the phone.

When Dwyer arrived at 4 Summer Ln., two of the children ran outside and told him that "their dad was beating up their mom in the upstairs bedroom," the report said. He ran upstairs and could hear the sound of an ongoing

struggle, the report said.

When Dwyer entered the master bedroom, he saw Lee on the bed, on top of the woman, the report said. Lee was yelling at his wife and she was screaming. Dwyer observed that Lee had his left arm around her neck and she was struggling to try to breathe and attempting to get away. The alleged victim later told police she had trouble breathing while he was choking her and "thought she was going to die," according to the investigation report.

Dwyer immediately intervened and physically removed Lee from the alleged victim and brought him to the ground on the bedroom floor, the report said. Lee was noticeably intoxicated, the report said, and continued to yell at his wife, telling her that "this was the last time and she had her chance."

At this time, State Trooper Kelly Kraynak also arrived at the residence, and helped Dwyer in escorting Lee out. Lee was not interviewed in the cruiser; according to the report, he appeared to have passed out while seated in the passenger area of Dwyer's assigned vehicle. He had been given his Miranda warning at the time of the custodial arrest, the report said.

State Trooper Carson Konow also arrived at the scene and assisted in the investigation, the report said. Kraynak, meanwhile, obtained a written statement from the alleged victim, in which she said she and Lee had been married for 17 years, and have three children together.

Lee, meanwhile, was processed at Troop K, where he was extremely intoxicated and uncooperative at all times, the report said. He was held on a \$15,000 cash bond. Lee was issued a court date of March 25 at the Superior Court in Manchester. The case has been continued to April 17.

RHAM School Board Members Express Budget Frustrations

by Sarah McCoy

Budget season is upon us and members of the RHAM Board of Education are preparing their recommendations for next month's public hearing. But at a meeting Monday, there were obvious frustrations on the part of some board members, as the group struggled to agree on a level of spending.

Last month, Superintendent of School Robert Siminski proposed a \$23.86 million budget, which represents a 5.99 percent increase in spending. Since then, that number has been adjusted to a 4.99 percent increase in spending thanks to a savings in employee health benefits and a reduction in the number of gallons of oil the district expects to purchase.

For some board members, 4.99 percent is where they want to be. Debra Dee and Michael Turner both expressed appreciation for what they said they felt was a reasonable budget. But, on the other side of the table, Danny Holtsclaw, Thomas Tremont and Joe Farrell sat ready to make adjustments.

It seems apropos that Farrell, who was elected last November, sits in the very same seat that former board member Ken Mosher occupied for four years. Mosher was known for his repeated attempts to reduce the budget, much the same as Farrell has done this year.

The Board of Education (BOE) only voted on one motion Monday night, a \$23,000 reduction, brought forth by Farrell, to the line items associated with hiring new part-time staff that Siminski and RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie are recommending to accommodate for the projected increase in enrollment. The motion was defeated, 6-3, with Farrell, Holtsclaw and Tremont supporting the motion.

Farrell said later that his intent was not to reduce any of the part-time positions requested but, rather, force the administration to find other areas of savings if the position is so vital.

"Our job is to give [the RHAM administration] a number not to decide where they should spend it," he said. "Right now, I feel, our number is too high."

The board heard one more motion on Monday night, a reduction in the salary increases for non-certified staff from 4 percent down to 3

percent. This would affect about 10 district employees comprised mostly of secretaries and a couple of paraprofessionals. The motion was tabled until next meeting when Siminski will be able to provide the dollar amount that this reduction would result in.

During the public comment portion of the meeting Mal Leichter, a Hebron resident and member of the Board of Finance, urged members of the school board not to cut the salary increase for non-certified staff.

"These are individuals who are not represented by a larger body," he said. "They work just as hard, if not harder, than our certified staff but there is nobody to defend them."

The issue will be revisited next Monday, when the BOE will meet with the intention of finalizing its budget recommendations, giving residents time to review the numbers before the April 7 public hearing.

At Monday's meeting, Farrell expressed his displeasure in the way the budget process has operated this year, criticizing the BOE for putting possible actions off until the last minute. "I came here to have a substantive discussion about each line item," he said. "If we have hard decisions, let's make them now to give the public a chance to come in next Monday."

Board chair Sue Griffiths solicited input from other members in response to Farrell's comment. The response was mostly in favor of the current budget presented with some members indicating they'd like to see the number get down in the 4.5-4.6 percent range.

Maryanne Leichter expressed a desire to see the district eliminate the .2 administration position that is included in next year's budget to assist in the transition of the new Director of Special Education. Current Director of Special Education Brian Morin will retire at the end of the school year.

The position is slated to be only for one year and it will cost the district \$12,000. No motion was heard on the issue.

The Board of Education will reconvene Monday, March 31, at 6:30 p.m. in the Music Room at RHAM High School for its last budget workshop before the public hearing on April 7.

Andover Saving Money by Cutting Streetlights

by Sarah McCoy

Andover might seem a little darker than usual these days.

That's because, in an effort to keep expenses down, the Board of Selectmen voted to discontinue the use of about 40 percent of the town's street lights. The selectmen made the decision last fall; the lights have been out now for about four months.

"When I was gathering information to create the budget for the upcoming year I noticed that we, as a town, are spending almost \$10,000 on streetlights," First Selectman Bob Burbank explained. "This seemed like an awful lot to me."

[This \$10,000 figure is not what the town had budgeted for street lights in 2007-08 but, rather, what Burbank projected the cost would be in 2008-09, if the town continued to operate all of its streetlights.]

Some streetlights cost the town in excess of \$100 a month in electricity expenses.

When compiling the budget proposal for the 2008-09 year, Burbank began to consider areas for possible elimination of the costly lights. His goal was to curb spending without sacrificing safety. Ultimately, there were over 20 lights

where the town could discontinue use without, in Burbank's opinion, putting residents at risk.

Last year, the town operated 57 streetlights. That number currently hovers around 35.

Burbank said lights at intersections and along winding roads will remain in regular use.

At this point the town is evaluating whether or not this is a plan that will continue into the future. The Board of Selectmen, in fact, recently voted to reinstall one light on Center Street and another on Pine Ridge Drive in response to resident concerns.

Cutting down on streetlights "is just one of the many ways we try to save tax dollars, but if it comes at the result of residents' safety than it is clearly not worth it," Burbank said.

So far there has not been an increase in traffic accidents in areas where street light use has been discontinued.

Burbank has proposed \$7,000 for street light operation for the upcoming 2008-09 fiscal year. This number is down slightly from the current year's budget, but not as much as Burbank had initially hoped, thanks to rising electricity costs.

Inland Wetlands Closes Belltown Hearing

by Michael McCoy

After the developers nixed a request for an extension, The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA) Wednesday closed the public hearing on the proposed Belltown Place project.

The hearing was opened at last month's meeting, and was the first public forum residents had to air questions and concerns involving the project. The following week the proposed development went to a Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) meeting. More than 100 people attended that PZC meeting, and about half that number attended Wednesday night's IWWA meeting.

Belltown Place, being put forward by Pelletier Developers of Glastonbury, is billed as "a townhouse community." The proposal calls for 127 units on a 24.4-acre parcel of land. One third of these units would qualify as Housing Opportunity Development (HOD). To qualify to purchase these particular homes, one must make no more than 80 percent of a municipality's median income. In East Hampton, that number is \$64,000.

Pelletier attorney Mark Branse opened the hearing by saying it was his understanding that residents felt the applicant's part of the pre-

sentation ran too long last time, so he promised to be brief. So, he provided responses to some of the concerns from the last hearing in writing, rather than proceeding through all of them verbally.

Chris Till of Precision Engineering then spoke, and said the average household uses about 50 percent less water than is required for design standards. He added that of the 47 inches of rain Connecticut sees in a given year, 20 inches are used by plants or is evaporated, while the other 27 inches "percolates into the ground."

IWWA Chairman Jeff Foran seemed quite frustrated over the amount of material submitted to the agency within the previous few days. "It just upsets me how we get burnt like this," Foran said. "There's something wrong with the system." This prompted audience members to add, "Here, here," and "You got that right."

Foran said the last thing he wanted to do was suppress public comment for the night, but due to the most recently submitted documents, he considered postponing the hearing until another date, and asked Branse if that would be acceptable.

Branse responded, "Every single thing we've submitted to this commission is a direct re-

sponse from your requests." He then delivered his answer to Foran: "If you need more time to reach a decision, absolutely 'yes.' If you want to continue the public hearing, absolutely 'no.'"

So, Foran opened it up to the public, saying, "Let's rip."

Toward the end of the public portion, Bill Reardon, whose property sits right next to the proposed development, extended an invitation to the entire IWWA, asking them to visit his property.

Alluding to the difference between seeing a site first-hand and looking at drafted plans, he said, "When we look at a piece of paper, it doesn't mean anything. They can tell us whatever they want to." He also said the pipe leading out from the applicant's southern catch basin was pointed directly at his property. He then told the applicant to point it the other way.

Resident Gordon Binkhorst, who is also a senior hydrogeologist for ALTA Environmental Corporation in Colchester, submitted a written statement that concluded, "...There is a reasonable likelihood that the long-term pumping of the proposed bedrock wells in close proximity to the wetlands in this hydrogeologic setting could cause adverse impacts to the wet-

lands."

He also said that while Till estimated Belltown Place going through 34,875 gallons of water a day, he thought that number could be from 52,000 to 87,000 gallons a day, "based on the Average Daily Demand calculated for this project and typical ratios of average peak demand."

Foran eventually asked the applicant for an extension on the public hearing.

But Branse responded, "This applicant has heard all the same questions we heard a month ago. Some of them were answered four or five times." Alluding to written comments that have been submitted by concerned residents, Branse said, "It's just going to be another stack of green papers on your secretary's desk."

Branse concluded, "The answer, Mr. Chairman, is 'no.'" So, after consulting with legal counsel, Foran closed the public hearing.

The IWWA have until May 30 to rule on the applicant's proposal. The agency's next meeting is April 30. Meanwhile, the PZC's own public hearing concerning Belltown Place will continue next Wednesday, April 2, at 7 p.m., at the middle school commons, 19 Child Rd.

Colchester Student Expelled After Allegedly Threatening to Shoot Girl

by Kristina Histen

An eighth-grader at William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS) has been expelled for one month after allegedly threatening to bring a gun to school and shoot another student over the Internet.

On Thursday, March 6, a female student was chatting on AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) with another girl and a male classmate. According to the mother of one of the girls, her daughter and the boy were friends and had classes together. While they were talking, the boy threatened to bring a gun to school and shoot the girl, her mother (who wished to be unidentified) said.

As the conversation went on, the girl gave the boy ample time to say he was joking, her mother said. The girl soon became concerned and showed the messages to her mother. Because of the nature of the threat, she printed up the conversation and contacted the police.

"I didn't know what to do, so I put it in their hands," the girl's mother said.

At approximately 6 p.m. that night, the boy was charged with second-degree threatening, State Police said. He was also suspended from WJMS for 10 days.

"It's a credible threat if the police filed charges," the girl's mother said Tuesday. "He did have access to a weapon. Nowadays you have to take any threat like this seriously; they are not two-year-olds. They have to be aware of what they say, and you have to be held ac-

countable. We didn't think this was very funny if he was joking. We live in different times now; you open up the paper and see these things happening. You don't know what's going on in people's minds and what they are capable of doing."

The girl was so shook up by the conversation, she was too scared to attend school, her mother said, and she was also very tense during the boy's initial 10-day suspension.

"My daughter doesn't question whether or not she did the right thing. She knows she did," her mother said, "but it has been very stressful and hard having it hang over her head, wondering what am I going to do when he's back? There's just been no closure from that."

The boy was supposed to return to school on Tuesday, but after deliberating for over four hours at an expulsion hearing on Monday, the Colchester Board of Education (BOE) expelled the student from school. As stated in a news release Tuesday morning, "under the Board's decision, the student may be readmitted to school on a probationary basis on April 21, subject to his compliance with all Board policies and school rules."

The statement said the student will remain on probation through March 24, 2009, and "If he continues to conduct himself in accordance with Board policy, the record of his expulsion shall be expunged from his record."

The statement said the BOE "recognized its

obligation to address threatening behavior in order to promote a positive, safe climate in the schools. ... In the Board's view, the expulsion decision appropriately balanced the seriousness of the threatening behavior and its impact on the student environment with the welfare of the individual students involved."

At the hearing, the BOE reviewed information provided by the administration and the parents of the student facing expulsion, as well as a report prepared by the police, information from a medical professional that the student who made the threat does not present a danger to himself or others and the student's statements during the hearing where he took responsibility for his actions and expressed remorse.

"I am not satisfied yet with" the decision made by the BOE, the girl's mother said. "Right now there needs to be a cooling-down period to look at the issue as to why this person said this and hope that if there is some issue there, they have time to work it out with this other student."

The girl's mother said she hopes the school system will have enough security within the next few weeks. They need to show that they have adequate precautions in place, she said, because it is the only way for students and parents to feel safe. She said she is also "overwhelmed" by the thought that when the boy is back in school, he will be able to attend the

eighth-grade field trip in New York City.

"Apparently, the policy is a little iffy," the girl's mother said. "What I was told was that while he is expelled, he is not allowed to participate in any school functions. But, once he is back and on probation, he is allowed to participate in school events and field trips. As of right now, he is allowed to go on the trip. Should my daughter have to miss that because they can't provide security? They need to address that. Enough parents have issues on that and the school really has to look at all of the kids involved, not only three on an AIM conversation but the 600 kids in the building."

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said that while she can't legally comment on the specifics of the expulsion case, she said "the board consistently makes decisions based on the best interest of the students and believes safety is a priority."

The school board said in its news release that it "asks parents to use this incident as a learning opportunity to review with their children appropriate standards in communicating with their fellow students, regardless of the communication media. The expulsion decision places closure on this issue from the board's perspective. The board asks the community to move forward by renewing its focus on student achievement and the goals of the district for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year."

Marlborough Police News

3/18-Joshua Willard, 22, of 29 Bayberry Rd., Glastonbury, was charged with DWI, State Police said.

Andover Police News

3/25-Tina Caroll, 45, of 135 Shoddy Mill Rd., was charged with risk of injury to a minor, State Police said.

Portland Police News

3/18 — A 14-year-old male was arrested on charges of possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Colchester Police News

3/17-Julie Heger, 45, of 27 Killingworth Rd., Higganum, was charged with violation of restraining order, State Police said.

3/18-Matthew Dowling, 26, of 26 Cheyenne Rd., East Hartford, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

3/19-Christine Sapula, 53, of 319 Amston Rd., was charged with DWI and unsafe backing, State Police said.

3/22-A 16-year-old was charged with possession of marijuana, State Police said; a 17-year-old was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said; and another 17-year-old was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, possession of marijuana and violation of passenger restrictions, State Police said.

3/23-Michael Alan Perry, 37, of 721 Tabacco Rd., Lebanon, turned himself in to state police on the charge of second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

3/23-Carlos Aponte, 36, of 125 Cameo Dr., Willimantic, was charged with second-degree breach of peace, third-degree criminal mischief, second-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree unlawful restraint and interfering with an emergency call, State Police said.

3/23-William Wiltsie, 29, of 95 Hi Lea Farm Rd., was charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive right, State Police said.

3/24-Coty Rugar, 20, of 9 Brooke Hill Rd., East Haddam, turned himself in to state police on the charges of third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny theft from building and second-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

3/24-Eric Schmidt, 20, of Lebanon, turned himself in to state police on the charge of first-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

3/24-Eddie Santiago, 18, of 114 Walnut St., Willimantic, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

East Hampton Council Tables Fertilizer Ordinance Again

by Michael McCoy

The East Hampton Town Council Tuesday seemed to be mere minutes away from sending a fertilizer ordinance to a town vote, but it got delayed once again.

According to Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency (IWWA) chairman Jeff Foran, IWWA members Josh Wilson and Scott Hill began working on the ordinance, which would include the banning of fertilizers containing phosphorous, about two years ago. Foran said Hill found a similar ordinance in Dane County, WI, which he and Wilson used as a starting point for this.

Since then, the ordinance has been volleyed back and forth between the IWWA and town council several times. Most recently, during their Feb. 26 meeting, members of the Town Council seemed to hope they would pass the ordinance, but there was a lack of consensus concerning some of the details, so it was tabled to the March 25 meeting.

The latest draft of the ordinance was approved by IWWA a day after the Town Council's meeting in February.

This latest version called for the prohibition of fertilizers containing phosphorous in the entire town of East Hampton. It would also restrict the sale of such fertilizers in town from being sold to East Hampton residents and would regulate the display of fertilizers.

Council member John Tuttle said Tuesday this new ordinance "is taking it too far." He continued, "We're expecting [the retailers] to ask the customer, 'Do you have a new lawn? Prove it. Do you have a farm with vegetables? Prove it.' It's too much of a burden on them. It's restraining trade."

Tuttle said some of the biggest fertilizer manufacturers were already moving in the di-

rection of focusing on non-phosphorous products.

Council member Thomas Cordeiro seemed like the most adamant about leaving the language concerning retail in the ordinance. "My issue is we want this to have some teeth," he said. "I don't want to wait for the companies to do it."

He also mentioned, as was stated during the February meeting, that should the town adopt this, East Hampton would be the first town in the state to take such action.

Invoking the words of Kermit the Frog, councilman Scott Minnick said, "It's not easy being green."

He said he agreed "that the sale of fertilizer is perhaps not the best angle to take," and also said he felt the ordinance should be town-wide, as opposed to just applying to those living in the Lake Pocotopaug watershed.

Council chair Melissa Engel was also in favor of the town-wide facet of the ordinance but said, "We do not have the staff to enforce an ordinance like this." Instead, she figured, as did others, that the ordinance would be informally enforced through social pressure. Still, formal would exist. Residents who violate the ordinance would be fined \$100. Commercial or industrial entities in violation would be fined \$200 for the first offense, \$300 for the second and \$500 for the third offense or any thereafter.

However, she also seemed the council member most vehemently opposed to addressing the sale of fertilizer. "It's none of our business, quite frankly, what our stores sell," she said. "You can never tell someone to display Campbell's Soup in front of Progresso."

"Get this in court and you will lose," Engel

added.

It appeared that the council would strike the language concerning sale of fertilizer and proceed with a vote.

Engel then yielded the floor to Paul Peszynski, owner of Paul's and Sandy's Too, a nursery he started in town in 1970. He said he has sold fertilizer for 36 years, and theorized, "I know more about fertilizer than anyone else in this room."

"I have lived in East Hampton for over 60 years," Peszynski said, adding, "I love that lake almost as much as I love East Hampton."

Peszynski said at his nursery "we throw [non-phosphorous fertilizer] away in the fall, because [customers] don't buy it." He said the non-phosphorous fertilizer sells for three times as much as standard fertilizer.

Peszynski said he just heard about the ordinance, and blurted, "I am amazed that I was never consulted on the writing of this." He said "the whole thing is an exercise in foolishness." On a Saturday in May, Peszynski said, Paul's and Sandy's gets around 600 customers. He suggested that checking identification for town of residence would be unfeasible, adding that around two-thirds of their customers are from out of town.

"This could cause more people to go to the Home Depots and the big-box stores," Peszynski said. He said there's already an uphill battle against the huge chains, and "we keep fighting it all the time. Sooner or later, we'll be gone too."

Minnick said many of Peszynski's statements had merit, but said, "I don't think we should scrap this," adding, "No offense, but we've heard from one person here; that's going to

change all of our minds in five minutes?"

Chairman of the Lake Commission Bob Hart said, "It comes down to dollars and cents," and agreed that regulating the sale of fertilizer may not be the best route. However, he did suggest working with the state and federal governments to subsidize non-phosphorous fertilizers. As for the rest of the ordinance, he figured, "This seems like a good place to start."

The council ended up voting to organize a meeting between acting town manager Bob Drewry, Parks and Recreation director Ruth Plummer, Peszynski and representatives from Shaw's or any other retailer of fertilizer. They are to report back to the Town Council by its April 22 meeting, where Engel hoped the matter would be resolved.

During Wednesday evening's IWWA meeting, Jeff Foran reported to the rest of the agency, "I was hoping to come here and..." He finished the sentence with a groan.

He continued, "I was disappointed...I'm kind of washing my hands of this."

Speaking on the issue of regulating sale, IWWA member Alannah Coshow said, "I think this went beyond what we ever imagined." Agency members seemed to agree that they were never looking for anything as formal as checking identification, but were rather looking for the posting of notices on the premises.

IWWA member Josh Wilson said, "I feel like this is a stalling tactic."

However, during Wednesday's meeting, council member Susan Weintraub suggested the IWWA continue in its efforts. She noted, "At least half of us are encouraged by your ordinance and would like to see it implemented as is."

Marlborough Educators Talk About Experiences in China

by Kristina Histen

Marlborough Elementary School continues to strengthen the relationship with its sister school in China, as Principal Loraine Giannini is getting ready to board the 16-hour flight to Beijing next month.

At a Board of Education meeting in January, school board chair Maria Grove signed a school partnership agreement between Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School and Hui Quan Primary School in Zhannqui, Shandong Province in China.

The partnership agreement stated, "in the interest in expanding the knowledge of our students, teachers and school communities, we hereby agree to establish an educational partnership. Our partnership will involve pen pal connections between students from both countries. In addition, art exchange will be conducted between schools. Through these initiatives, our goal is to enhance knowledge, extend friendship and refine our understanding of one another's country."

The School Partnership is intended to achieve an exchange of the works of teachers and students from both sides through mail or e-mail, offer students from both sides an opportunity to exchange information to get a better cultural understanding and carry out a long term teacher-and-student learning program.

Students in designated grades from China and America will be matched as pen pals. Depending on school resources, the communication will occur using the Internet or airmail. Art teachers from China and America will send student artwork to be displayed in each partner school. Eventually, the partnership hopes to send teachers over from the sister schools to teach. It would be not just for the language but also to expose the cultural differences.

After being postponed because of weather, a presentation on school officials' recent trip to China was finally held on Wednesday. Marlborough Superintendent of Schools Sal

Menzo, RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski, Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz, and Board of Education members Jane Dube (from the Hebron board), Joe Farrell (the RHAM board) and Grove spoke about their experiences during their visit last November at their sister schools in China and how they grew together as a group. The State Department of Education sponsored the trip for the superintendents, but school board members paid for their own.

When Menzo, Grove, Farrell and fellow Marlborough Board of Education member Betty O'Brien first arrived at the Hui Quan Primary School, they saw an impressive-looking building with a lot of character. It was quickly realized however, that the structure was old and run down because of the thousands of children that come and go. But, Menzo said, it wasn't the walls that mattered, but the people within them.

They spent four or five days in the school, being treated like "rock stars," as they observed classes and understood how the Chinese school system functioned. Because the principal of their sister school was not there, they were able to have a lot more face-time with the teachers and students. Each 45-minute class consisted of about 75 students with just one teacher, because there aren't as many discipline issues as there are in America, as it is just not in their culture, Grove said. Still, Menzo found, "kids are kids wherever you go."

A lot of focus of the student exchange is on art because it is a universal way of expressing "our culture and ourselves," he said. The Board of Education presented the Chinese department during their visit with a piece of art created by Marlborough students. It was a picture of the local school and in the middle of it was the Chinese symbol for "friendship." Menzo said it was "very touching" to see how the crowd responded to the understanding of the artwork.

It was a "very valuable trip," Grove said, and because they were lucky enough to send three



Several Marlborough school officials talked Wednesday about their experiences last November visiting a Chinese school. Pictured in a classroom of Chinese students are Joe Farrell, Maria Grove, Sal Menzo and Betty O'Brien.

board members over, there is a real passion for this. "As opportunities present themselves, we are going to be the ones involved," she said, "not only championing it, but also being a part of it."

The elementary school has already sent over their first batch of letters earlier this week, Menzo said, and Giannini will bring over more in April.

More steps in strengthening the "friendship" with Marlborough's sister school will be taken when Giannini visits China. It will then be her

lead role as principal to integrate the experience with the Marlborough students. Some teachers have already put focus on Chinese culture in their lesson plans.

"We don't just go for the cultural charm and the trip," Grove said. "It is to go and accomplish something and establish a true relationship. You never know what type of opportunities this could provide for a child in the future. It will be a learning process for both our communities to build this relationship."

Obituaries

Portland

Mildred L. Gatzke

Mildred L. (Marth) Gatzke passed away in her home Saturday, March 22, one month after celebrating her 93rd birthday with her family and friends. She was the matriarch to her three daughters and extended family after the untimely passing of her husband and soulmate, Ernest F. Gatzke in 1968. Her life was centered around her family both in Portland and in 80 joyous years she spent summering at Rogers Lake in Old Lyme. She loved playing cards and was an avid fan of the UConn Huskies.

Milly is survived by her sister Doris White of Old Lyme and her three devoted daughters, Sharon Gatzke and husband Scott Potter of Lebanon, Patricia Gatzke and Michael Dzagan of East Hampton and Barbara Longo and husband Roy Longo of Madison, and her "fourth" daughter Sheryl Milardo of Old Lyme. She is also survived by her two adoring grandsons Adam Carta and his wife Jenn Dalton of Brookfield, and Nate Carta and his wife Missy of Southbury. The arrival of her great-grandson Jack Dalton Carta in January was the crowning joy to her life. She was predeceased by her parents Charles H. Marth and Angelina Picard Marth and her brothers Robert and Raymond Marth and sisters Florence Mirament and Ethel Summers.

Relatives and friends attended her memorial Mass of Christian Burial which was to be held today, Friday, March 28, at 10 a.m. in the Church of Saint Mary in Portland. Interment will be private. There are no calling hours. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St. Portland. In lieu of flowers, gifts in her memory may be sent to the St. Jude Children's Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105-1942 or to the Portland Visiting Nurse Association, 309 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

Andover

Evelyn J. Monk

Evelyn J. (Scott) Monk, 72, of Andover, wife of Raymond Monk died Monday, March 24, at Haven Health Center in Willimantic. She was born Dec. 12, 1935, in Scotland (UK), the daughter of Alexander and Jessie Scott. Raymond and Evelyn would have been married for 29 years on April 6, 2008. She enjoyed spending time with her family and knitting.

In addition to her husband she is survived by a son, Charles Scott Brown and his wife Kimberly; a daughter, Sally Ann Barclay and her husband Clay; four brothers, Edward Scott, Thomas Scott, Gordon Scott and William Scott; two sisters, Sheila Williams and Irene Brogan; and a granddaughter.

Her family was to receive friends today, Friday, March 28, from 1-2 p.m. at the Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Route 195), Willimantic, with a Memorial Service beginning at 2 p.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Lung Association, 45 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108. For online memorial guestbook visit www.potterfuneralhome.com

Hebron

Bessie Griffin

Bessie "Betty" Griffin, 83, of Waterford, formerly of Hebron and Barefoot Bay, FL, wife of Donald E. Griffin Sr., died Friday, March 21, at home. She was born July 11, 1924, in Middletown, the daughter of George and Eva (Squires) Hardy and had lived in Hebron most of her life.

She was a member of the Eastern Star Lodge in Merrow. Betty was a member of the Hebron Congregational Church, serving as secretary to the Church Council, also a member of the Gilead Church, the Roseland United Methodist Church in Florida and lastly the Flanders Baptist Church. In earlier years she was active in the Cub Scouts of Hebron, serving as a Den Mother. She had been employed at the American Screw Company in Willimantic, as a secretary at RHAM High School in Hebron and later at UConn, from which she retired.

In addition to her husband of 64 years, she is survived by a son, Donald E. Griffin Jr. of Barefoot Bay, FL, two granddaughters, Christine Kisling and her husband James of Waterford, Elizabeth Griffin of Asheboro, NC, three great grandsons, Donald E. Griffin III, James Kisling Jr. and Joseph Kisling. She was predeceased by a son, Bruce Griffin.

Her family received friends at the Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St., Rte. 195, Willimantic, on Monday, March 24. Funeral services were Tuesday, March 25, at 2 p.m. at the Hebron Congregational Church, jct. Rte. 66 and Rte. 85, Hebron. Burial followed in St. Peter Cemetery, Hebron. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions are suggested to the Alzheimers' Association, CT Chapter, 279 New Britain Rd., Kensington, CT 06037. Visit www.potterfuneralhome.com for directions and online memorial guest book.

Hebron

Christopher F. Reidy

Christopher F. Reidy, 43, of Hebron, beloved husband and father and former sports editor at the *Hartford Courant*, died Wednesday, March 19, at home after a courageous fight with colon cancer. Born Sept. 5, 1964, in Largo, FL, to Frank and Joyce (Moore) Reidy, Chris was a 1982 graduate of Largo High School. He later attended the University of Florida in Gainesville and left with a degree in journalism and an unwavering loyalty to Gator football.

Over the 15 years he worked at the *Courant*, Chris was a copy editor, slot editor and layout editor. He also served as college football editor, responsible for the paper's former "Sidelines" section of Division I college football. Known for producing clean copy as an editor and entertaining stories as a writer, Chris was especially valued for his good humor with co-workers and his one-on-one work with writers. Prior to the *Courant*, Chris was assistant sports editor and high school sports editor at the *Anchorage Times* in Alaska and sports writer and copy editor at the *Gainesville Sun*.

Chris' passion for sports included soccer- an interest that led him to become a volunteer coach for the Hebron Soccer Association as soon as his daughter, Carolyn, could connect with the ball. Over the years, he coached girls from first through eighth grade, enjoying every minute of his time spent on the field with his kids.

Along with his daughter and mother, Chris is survived by his loving wife, Mary Wilson; a sister, Cathy Gill, and her husband, Art Gill, of St. Petersburg, FL; his "band of brothers" Andrew Hauser, Steve Carney, Robert Doyle, Tony Staszewski, Bill Tonnies and Mark Matulenko; extended family Jan and Sherman Tarr of South Windsor; a niece and two nephews; and his TFL clan.

Calling hours were held Monday, March 24, at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St. Colchester. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Tuesday, March 25, at Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. Hebron. Interment followed in the New Hebron Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Hebron Soccer Association, P.O. Box 252, Hebron, CT 06248.

Portland

Raymond W. Johnson

Raymond W. Johnson, 85, lifetime resident of Cromwell, husband of Eleanor (Swanson) Johnson of 58 years, passed away Thursday, March 20, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center after a long illness. Born in Middletown, he was the son of the late John and Jennie (Bloomquist) Johnson. Ray served in the Army during WWII in Europe, was co-owner of Johnson's Grocery Store in Cromwell for many years and later worked part-time for Portland Country Market.

He was a lifetime member of Bethany Lutheran Church, where he sang in the choir, served on the Church Council, and many other committees over the years. He belonged to the American Legion Post 105 in Cromwell for 60 years. During his semi-retirement years, he enjoyed restoring antique furniture. Ray will be remembered as a family man who took his family on many wonderful camping trips.

Besides his loving wife, he is survived by a daughter, Kristen Warzecha and her husband, Kenneth, of Colchester; a son, Kevin Johnson and his wife, Elizabeth, of Portland and two grandchildren, Ashley Johnson and Jeffrey Warzecha. He also leaves one aunt, Mary Bloomquist, of Cobalt and many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends. Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his sister, Edythe (Johnson) Pudeler.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 25, at Bethany Lutheran Church, 50 Court Street, Cromwell and interment is in West Cemetery in Cromwell. Friends called at the church prior to the service and in lieu of flowers, donations may be made in his memory to the Mortgage Reduction Fund c/o Bethany Lutheran Church, 50 Court St., Cromwell, CT 06416 or the Alzheimer's Association, Connecticut Chapter, 279 New Britain Rd., Kensington, CT 06037. Messages of condolences may be sent to the family at www.doolittlefuneralservice.com. The Cromwell Funeral Home, 506 Main Street, Cromwell is in charge of the arrangements.

Portland

Jacqueline Barrett

Jacqueline Bell Rau Barrett, 85, of William Street, Portland, died Tuesday, March 25, in her home. Her funeral arrangements are incomplete and will run in a future edition. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

Portland

Ernst Karl Vogt Sr.

Ernst Karl Vogt, Sr., 72, a lifelong resident of Portland, husband of Mariellen Agnes (Noble) Vogt passed away at home surrounded by his family on Friday, March 21, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born in Middletown, he was the son of the late Karl and Helene (Frick) Vogt. Ernst served proudly in the Army Reserves 819th Station Army Hospital and 405th Combat Support out of West Hartford, both as active and civilian duty for a combined total of 38 years.

He graduated Portland High School, Class of 1953, Hillyer College, Class of 1957, and Cornell College, Class of 1960 before making his career in the grocery store business, first at First National Stores, then Edward Foods and finally Stop and Shop. He was an avid sports fan, loving (and hating) the Red Sox. He enjoyed trips to Baltimore and Camden Yards to watch his Red Sox beat the Orioles. He enjoyed fishing and his beautiful vegetable garden which he shared with his neighbors. Ernst will be remembered most for being a wonderful husband, father, Opa, brother and friend.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his daughter, Ann and her husband Tom, and their children, Robby and Becky; his son, Kurt and his wife, Lori, and their children, Kurt, Jr., Brittany and Jordan; a stepdaughter, Nancy and her husband, George, and their children, Kristin and Lyndsay; and his sister, Marie DeGraff and her husband, Leo. He is also survived by his cousins, brother-in-laws and sister-in-laws, nieces, nephews, great-nieces and nephews with whom he enjoyed spending holidays and also leaves his beloved dog, Dante. Besides his parents, he is predeceased by a son, Ernst K. Vogt, Jr.

The family would like to thank Portland Care and Rehab and Middlesex Hospice for the wonderful care they gave Ernst. Funeral services were held at Zion Lutheran Church, 55 Williams St., Portland, on Tuesday, March 25, and interment is in the Swedish Cemetery in Portland. Friends called at the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church Street, Middletown, on Monday evening, March 24.

In lieu of flowers, friends may make donations in his memory to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude's Place, Memphis, TN 38105 or Middlesex Hospice Palliative Care c/o Development Office, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457. Messages of condolences may be sent to the family at www.doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Andover

William Goss Sr.

William R. "Bill," "Poppie," or "Smiley" Goss Sr., 68, of South Wheelock, VT, and formerly of Andover, died peacefully with his family by his side Tuesday evening, Feb. 26, at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, NH. He was born March 28, 1939 in East Hartford, the only son of Earl H. and Jennie M. (Grant) Goss. On Jan. 13, 1962 he married Roberta "Bobbie" (Brundage).

Bill resided in Andover for 50 years. He worked for the Metropolitan District Commission of Hartford for many years. He then worked as a heavy equipment operator for Reed Construction Co. in Manchester for more than 30 years. He had been a member of the Andover Volunteer Fire Department for over 30 years. He enjoyed woodworking, hunting, fishing, and playing his Gameboy. In 2002 he and his wife Bobbie fulfilled a dream by moving to a peaceful area in Vermont.

Survivors include his wife of 46 years, Roberta "Bobbie" Goss of South Wheelock; three children, William R. Goss Jr. of South Wheelock, VT, Laura Lynn Goss of Manchester, CT, and Mark Goss of South Wheelock, VT; four grandchildren, Kelly Rae Goss and Benjamin Goss of Manchester, Devon Grace of Hampton, CT and David Goss of Philadelphia, PA; and close friends Donald Mills of Enfield, Pat Reed of East Albany, VT, Rayanne Mello and family of West Burke, and his adopted rottweiler "Empty Head."

He was predeceased by his parents, and his infant sister, Lena Goss.

Funeral services were private and held at the convenience of the family. Memorial donations made in his memory may be directed to Andover Volunteer Fire Dept., School Road, Andover, CT 06232. Private on-line condolences and remembrances may be shared with his family at www.guibordfh.com

East Hampton

Donald A. Westcott Sr.

Donald A. Westcott Sr., 81, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Phyllis (Lawrence) Westcott, died Wednesday, March 26, at River's Edge in Middletown. Born Feb. 5, 1927 in Middletown, he was the son of the late James H. and Bertha (Gustafson) Westcott.

He had lived in Portland before moving to East Hampton more than 45 years ago. Donald was retired from J.J. Vinci of Middletown where he had been a truck driver. Donald had served his country in the U.S. Navy during WWII.

Besides his wife he is survived by his four sons, Walter Westcott of East Hampton, Donald Westcott Jr. of Vernon, David Westcott of East Hampton and Daniel Westcott of East Hampton; four daughters, Nancy Lopez of North Carolina, Darlene Blunt of Massachusetts, Diane Almodvar of Florida and Donna Gilmore of East Hampton; 20 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 29 at 10 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will follow in the family plot in Center Cemetery in Portland. Friends may call at the funeral home on Friday, March 28 from 5-8 p.m. To leave online condolences or for directions, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Shirley M. Semple

Shirley M. Semple, 86, of Marlborough and formerly of Phoenix, AZ and Pittsburgh, PA, died Sunday, March 23 at Liberty Specialty Care in Colchester. Born Sept. 29, 1921 in Wildwood, PA, she was the daughter of the late George and Daisey (Hyde) McQuaid. She was the widow of the late Eugene L. Rapino and the late Donald Semple.

Shirley had been employed by the Sinclair & Valentine Printing Co. of Pittsburgh and the Valley National Bank of Phoenix before her retirement. She was a member of the Marlborough Congregational Church, Marlborough Senior Citizens and the Dorcas Society of the Marlborough Congregational Church.

Shirley is survived by her daughter, Lisa Francis of Marlborough; a step-son, Ted Semple and his wife Kelly of New Hampshire; and two grandsons, Geno Francis and his girlfriend Jessica Hicks, and Tim Francis, all of Marlborough. She was predeceased by her brothers Edwin McQuaid, Wallace McQuaid, Charles McQuaid, Frank Howard McQuaid and Robert McQuaid.

Funeral services were to be held Friday, March 28, at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. James Ameling officiating. Burial will be in the family plot in Pittsburgh, PA. Friends called at the funeral home on Thursday evening from 4-7 p.m. To leave online condolences or for directions visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com

Portland

Lula St. Paul

Lula (Schmidl) St. Paul, 87, formerly of Foley Road, Portland, died Tuesday, March 25, at Middlesex Hospital. She was the wife of the late Angelo St. Paul. Born in Westchester, July 1, 1920, a daughter of the late William O. Schmidl, Jr. and the late Nellie Belle Martin Schmidl, she was a lifelong area resident. She was a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary.

She is survived by her son, Danny St. Paul and his wife Sharon of Kensington; her granddaughter, Alicia St. Paul; her step-grandsons Brian, Jerid and Kyle Guarino; her sister Della Zahacefski of Waterford, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her seven sisters and two brothers.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, March 29, at 10:30 a.m. in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Her family will receive relatives and friends in the funeral home Saturday morning from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the service. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery.