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AJ Pollock of Hebron warms up prior to his first at-bat on Friday against UConn. Pollock now plays for the University of Notre Dame and leads the team in hitting.

RHAM Baseball Star Comes Home

by Sarah McCoy

Last weekend was rainy, drizzly and cold, yet dozens of community members flocked to the University of Connecticut for a baseball game. For this wasn't just any old baseball game; the three-game series was the homecoming of RHAM's own, AJ Pollock.

After four years playing for the Satchems, highlighted by a State Championship in 2004 and being named Gatorade Player of the Year in 2006, Pollock went on to a different blue and gold: the University of Notre Dame.

Now a sophomore, Pollock is leading the Fighting Irish in a slew of offensive categories, including average (.385), hits, doubles and stolen bases. He's second on the team in runs, runs batted in, triples and slugging percentage.

To say he's having a good year is an understatement, but that's all that Pollock is willing to give you.

"I'm playing pretty well," he said. "The important thing is that we are playing much better as a team."

Last year Notre Dame finished 28-28 and took a quick exit from the Big East Tournament. This year they're one of the

teams to beat, currently sitting in second place in the league, a game behind St. John's University.

"This year nobody panics," Pollock said of his team. "If we get down, we're still relaxed. We know we can come back."

That's not the only difference for Pollock this year. He's now in the outfield, using his speed to cover a lot more ground for the Irish.

While at RHAM, Pollock was a whiz at shortstop. With excellent range and a strong arm, he excelled in the middle of the infield. When Pollock arrived at Notre Dame shortstop was occupied by then-junior, Brett Lilley. Pollock moved over to third base and, unfortunately, led the team in another category, errors.

"Third base is intense. It feels like every batter is going to slam the ball down your throat," he said. At the beginning of this season, he moved to center field. "I like center field more than I expected. There's not as many opportunities to screw up."

He hasn't screwed up much this season. In fact, during an April game, league-leading St. John's had the bases loaded and

two out, threatening to make a serious dent in Notre Dame's 5-0 lead. But Pollock raced a long fly ball just shy of the warning track in center field to make a basket catch, ending the inning and preventing what looked to be three runs from scoring.

Despite his success in center field, Pollock said he'd love the opportunity to play shortstop again. With Lilley graduating at the end of the year, Pollock could be the one to fill that vacancy. "Honestly, wherever the coaches want me is great," he said. "I'm just happy to be playing."

Pollock's play has caught the eyes of everyone around him. "He is such a talented player," Notre Dame head coach Dave Schrage said. "We could put him anywhere and he would excel. He's our energy."

That's high praise coming from a man who's coached for 20 years at the collegiate level. Still, those who know Pollock best aren't surprised at the success he's finding in South Bend.

"He works harder than anyone I know," Matt Grosso said. Grosso, who now rooms

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with Pollock in a loft overlooking Notre Dame's golden dome, is red-shirting this season for the Irish due to shoulder and elbow injuries. The two have been teammates and best friends since their days at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School.

This year Pollock's had to work even harder, as more is being asked of him. Last year he was looked at to get on base, for his teammates to bring him home. But this year, Pollock is the one looking to drive in runners. To have success, Pollock said he's had to learn how to be a more patient hitter. "I think I've improved a lot in my mental game," he said. "I'm at the plate now understanding what kind of pitches I'm going to get."

This summer Pollock will return east to play

for the Falmouth Commodores of the Cape Cod Baseball League. After that, a return trip to South Bend for his crucial junior year.

College baseball players are eligible for the Major League Baseball draft after their junior year or once they turn 21, making Pollock eligible next spring. So far he's gotten a few letters from clubs requesting additional information, but Pollock is trying hard not to think about it. "It's better in the outfield. You can't see them," he said of the scouts that now attend most of the Irish's games.

Right now Pollock is enjoying college life and looking forward to this weekend when Notre Dame takes on the University of Pittsburgh.

All Three Towns Pass Budget

by Sarah McCoy

The RHAM Board of Education's proposed 2008-09 budget was passed at referendum Tuesday – and this time even Andover voted 'yes.'

"I'm feeling elated," Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said after the ballots were tallied. "We all realize that this has been a tough year both for us and for families at home. We're just humbled to see voters place trust in us."

The \$23.55 million schools budget was approved in all three RHAM towns. Marlborough voters passed the spending plan by the biggest margin, 233-139. Hebron voters passed the budget by a 496-442 tally, while Andover okayed the figure by a 118-116 vote.

Neither Siminski nor BOE Chair Sue Griffiths could recall the last time all three towns approved the budget.

"It's rewarding to see," Griffiths said. "We have an 11-member board with each member pulling their weight, bringing ideas, and showing genuine concern."

The approved budget represents a 4.66 percent increase in spending over the current year's budget.

Initially, Siminski had requested an increase of 5.99 percent. This number slowly came down, due in large part to a reduction in the increase of health insurance costs and in the amount of oil the district intends to purchase in the coming year.

However, on Tuesday some residents still opposed the increase. Vivian Meyers of Marlborough said this year's budget isn't one she could support because of the financial burden it places on her.

Hebron resident Wayne Simmons disagreed, saying that he felt the budget presented is, "very fair. Our kids need everything they can get."

Since coming to Region 8 in 2005, Siminski has endured three budget cycles, each passing on the first try. That's a far cry from the 2003-04 budget that took 12 attempts before voters finally approved the spending plan.

"I believe communication is one of the important parts of this year's budget," Siminski said. "Residents knew what was included in the numbers and they were, obviously, comfortable with it."

Griffiths, who joined the RHAM BOE in 2005 partly in response to the contention on the board in years prior, called this year's budget results "a reaffirmation" of the work done by the Board of Education in the last few years. As she visits the various boards and organizations in the three towns, Griffiths said, she sees a real empathy from residents as to the budgetary challenges that affect all taxpayers. This visibility and understanding, she feels, has provided a foundation for moving the RHAM budget forward.

In addition to communication, Griffiths said collaboration between boards is at an all-time high. The various boards have pulled their resources to stay abreast of goings on at the state level that affect Hebron. They've also worked together to provide services. For example, next year RHAM will provide technology services two days a month to the Town of Hebron. RHAM staff is providing this service, which would cost the town much more elsewhere, for \$14,000 a year.

With Tuesday's budget approval, Siminski will now take a break from the process, at least until August, when he and the schools' department chairs will begin work on the budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Man Accused of Sexually Assaulting Portland Girl

by Michael McCoy

An Uncasville inmate who was charged in January with sexual assault has been arrested again, this time for allegedly sexually assaulting a 7-year-old child.

Robert D. Schleich, 37, was arrested in April 20 in Middletown Superior Court and charged with first-degree sexual assault, fourth-degree sexual assault and risk of injury. He was held on a \$100,000 bond, and is next due in court May 12.

According to Portland Police Sgt. Scott Cunningham, Schleich met the mother of the child in an online chat room around a year and a half ago. Claiming to be a handyman, Schleich struck a deal with the woman. "In exchange for working, they provided him with a roof and food," Cunningham said.

The family Schleich moved in with included a man and wife, as well as one girl and one boy.

In January, state police charged Schleich with two counts of first-degree sexual assault, two counts of fourth-degree sexual assault and two counts of risk of injury to a

child. Those charges stemmed from a sexual assault investigation involving three boys in Danielson.

"That's what alerted [the parents] that something was going wrong," Cunningham said. He said that after Schleich's arrest, the parents began questioning their children regarding any inappropriate behavior on Schleich's part. Cunningham said the family alerted Portland police on Jan. 19, alleging that the assault happened last summer.

Cunningham said a four-month investigation ensued, leading to Schleich's arrest.

In a press release issued Monday, Portland Police said "Interviews with the victim revealed that the accused had inappropriately kissed and touched the child while at her home." Police declined to elaborate on the incident itself, and the court affidavit is currently sealed.

Since January, Schleich has been incarcerated at Corrigan Correctional Institution in Uncasville, in connection with the Danielson incident.

East Hampton Man Charged With Bringing Knife to Court

by Michael McCoy

An East Hampton man was arrested Monday for bringing a knife to Middletown Superior Court, just before facing charges stemming from a March 30 incident.

On April 3, Joseph Simonelli, 60, of 23 Wopowog Trail was arrested and charged with criminally negligent storage of firearms, risk of injury/impairing morals of a minor, first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree falsely reporting an incident, and second-degree giving a false statement. The charges stemmed from a March 30 incident, in which Simonelli's nine-year-old son allegedly shot his father in the neck.

Simonelli was due in Middletown Superior Court on those charges on Monday. But, according to a press release issued by the Connecticut Department of Public Safety, Simonelli was detained while passing through security.

According to the press release, court marshals reported that Simonelli was going through the normal screening process before entering the courthouse. While scanning Simonelli's briefcase with an X-ray machine, the press release said, the marshals observed

a knife inside. According to the press release, the knife was 13 inches long and had a seven-inch blade.

Police arrested Simonelli and transported him to Troop F in Westbrook. He was charged with carrying a dangerous weapon, breach of peace and possession of narcotics not in original container. He was released on a \$1,000 bond, police said.

State Trooper William Tate declined to elaborate on the narcotic. As for bringing the knife, Tate said such a thing seldom happens. But, he said, "more than likely it was unintentional." He said that typically, in these situations, the perpetrator simply forgets they have the object on their person, being it is something commonplace for them to have on them.

But, he said, "That's an illegal weapon for anyone to carry," explaining that the blade exceeded legal limits

According to Tate, Simonelli will appear in court for this most recent incident on May 15. The initial trial will be continued to a date yet to be determined.

Nine Teens Arrested After Fight at RHAM High School

by Sarah McCoy

Nine students were arrested Wednesday, May 7, after a fight broke out during lunch at RHAM High School.

State police reports indicated that a verbal dispute began between two groups of students at about 12:30 p.m. School Resource Officer State Trooper Jon Holston was present when the altercation began, state police said, and he and Assistant Principal Don Wilson intervened when the dispute became physical.

During the fight Holston sustained a minor injury, state police said, and Wilson a minor laceration. Neither required medical attention. Additional state troopers from the surrounding area responded, and, according to police, order was restored upon their arrival.

The incident led to the arrests of nine students, police said. Ryan McNary, 18, Tyler Hopson, 18, and Axel Ost, 18, were all charged with breach of peace, third-degree assault and assault of a police officer, police said, and Michael Kelly, 18, was charged with breach of peace and third-degree assault. Two juveniles were charged with breach of peace

and third-degree assault with one of the juveniles also charged with assaulting a police officer, police said, and three "youthful offenders" were charged with breach of peace and third-degree assault. (According to the state, children under 16 are considered juveniles, while 17- and 18-year-olds are "youthful offenders.")

The adults and "youthful offenders" will appear at Rockville Superior Court on May 20. The juveniles will appear at Juvenile Court in Windham at a date that had not been determined as of press time.

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said the regional school district would review "the individual involvement of [the people involved in] the fracas" on Thursday, after press time.

All nine students involved were immediately given a 10-day suspension, Siminski said, and added that "subsequent punishment could be forthcoming including expulsion." Siminski praised Wilson for his role in the incident, noting that the assistant principal remained at school for the balance of the day to ensure safety at the school.

Colchester Budget Sent to Referendum

by Kristina Histen

A standing-room-only crowd gathered in Town Hall Tuesday to send the proposed 2008-09 town budget to referendum next Tuesday.

The vote will be held Tuesday, May 13, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

This year's referendum will be slightly different than previous ones, in that people will be able to vote on the Board of Selectmen's proposed \$13.33 million budget and the Board of Education's proposed \$34.29 million budget separately.

Every seat was taken in the Town Hall meeting room Tuesday, and many residents had to stand up in the back. But, despite issues brought up by only a few residents at the meeting, no one opposed either budget.

"With a zero mill increase it's all people care about," resident Jim Kelly said after the meeting. "But it is not a fiscally approved budget. I just don't understand the lack of planning for the town."

Kelly also spoke during the meeting, and brought up concerns about the First Selectmen's budget being so low and the Board of Education's budget being so high. He said that to him, it seemed like the Board of Education was adding things like an enrichment teacher instead of taking into consideration that gas may reach

\$5 a gallon. He said the extra money taken from special education should be used for the rising costs of oil and other needs.

But Kelly also brought up a "what if" situation, wondering what would happen if a special education student were to come back into the school system at any time. Kelly also said he felt that not enough money was being put into capital improvement and the town was becoming too "bond heavy."

"This is the first time in a long time I am not supporting the budget," Kelly said. "How much money being cut out of the town budget is sick. I would hate to think that something political is going on and [that the town] is playing games with our tax money."

Nevertheless, First Selectman Linda Hodge said she has been hearing positive responses from residents. However, she said she feels that the Board of Selectmen, the Board of Finance and the Board of Education will need to work together on the long-term vision for Colchester's finances.

"I think the budget this year is very conservative," Hodge said. "It is a very lean budget, but it addresses the immediate needs and recognizes the economic times our families and residents are going through."

East Hampton Budget Passes by Narrow Margin

by Michael McCoy

For the second year in a row, East Hampton has approved a budget on the first referendum – but this time, the vote was a squeaker.

About 20 people assembled in the high school gymnasium just after 8 p.m. Tuesday to hear the results of the budget referendum. The proposal passed by a vote of 631-609.

The newly adopted budget comes in at \$36.94, which makes for a 5.02 percent increase. It contains a calculated mill rate of 23.81, an increase of 0.51 mills, which translates to a 2.19 percent tax hike. Tuesday's approval came after the Board of Finance's approval of the budget in mid-April, town council's approval on April 22, and the annual town meeting on April 28.

The 1,240 ballots cast accounted for a 15.63 percent voter turnout, a number many town officials seemed distressed over. Finance director Jeff Jylkka reported that this is the lowest percentage turnout since 1997, when an abysmal six percent of eligible voters showed up.

Since 1993, an average of 1,560 people have come out to vote, resulting in an average turnout of 22 percent. (There have been 33 budget referenda since 1993.)

Jylkka said, "When the budget gets defeated, usually there's a higher voter turnout, for whatever reason." He later supposed the reason may be linked to taxes. "When the tax increase is higher," he observed, "more people come out to vote 'no.'"

Jylkka also said that, since 1993, budgets have been rejected by an average of 392 votes and approved by an average of 196 votes. This year's 22-vote spread is far lower than the 196-vote average; last year's numbers were more in line. That year, the budget passed by an im-

pressive 266 votes and solicited a 22 percent voter turnout.

"I think the people who liked [the proposed budget] may have been complacent," Jylkka said. "You're always going to get the 'no' vote."

Upon exiting the polls, voters voiced various takes on the process. "I voted 'no,'" said Flanders Road horse farm owner Chester Hinton, who seemed to suggest that his dollars have not been spent as wisely as they could be. "My road is full of potholes! I pay \$600 a month. I don't get nothing for that money, nothing whatsoever."

"You know what we need in this town? A public water system," said Mark Cibula, who also voted against the budget.

Len Iorio, however, voted in favor of the budget, and noted his concern for education. "I don't want to see any more cutbacks," Iorio said.

Resident Dan Brewer also voted yes, "cause it seemed fair," he said.

Fran Connelly, who works at the East Hampton Public Library, voted in favor of the budget, and joked, "Well, part of it is my salary." On a more serious note, she added, "I trust the people who put it together in the first place. They know better."

Resident Richard Wells voted against the budget. When asked if there were any particular reasons why, he said, "Not that I'd rather mention out loud."

Newly appointed Economic Development Commissioner Kimberley Fontaine voted to pass the budget, saying, "I think the Board of Finance put a great deal of thought into what the priorities are for the town."

When the ballot results were read Tuesday

night, the tightness of the vote was enough to force a "Holy smokes" out of Board of Education member Glenn Gemma.

Just after the results were read, Town Council member John Tuttle commented, "I'm disappointed by the turnout, but I'm pleased by the result." He added optimistically, "Now we can move on and focus on bigger and better things."

Fellow councilman Tom Cordeiro said he thought the budget would pass, although he said the 22-vote margin the budget passed by is "as close as it gets." Cordeiro said he was "concerned with the turnout," and added, "we could have done a little better in announcing it." Musing on the lack of controversy involved with this budget cycle, Cordeiro figured, "There wasn't great discussion."

Jylkka, however, said, "I don't necessarily agree with some people that have said we didn't advertise this. ... This was more publicized than any budget I've ever done." He noted the inclusion of a flashing notice on the town's web site, at least four signs throughout town, a bright green flier inserted in the *Rivereast*, a separate advertisement in the paper's East Hampton section, and a couple of legal advertisements covering some of the budget highlights.

Council member Scott Minnick said the low turnout could be due to "any number of things."

Board of Finance Chairman Ted Hintz said, "Typically, unless there's a great concern people don't come out and vote." He waited a beat before adding, "I'm hoping that's the reason." Speaking to the budget's initial passing in 2007 and 2008, Hintz said, "Two years now, I think that's quite an accomplishment."

George Pfaffenbach, also on the Board of

Finance, said, "I'm pleased with the results. I would have hoped more people would have voted. ... I think it's sad that 1,300 people make the decision to spend the people's money."

Board of Finance Vice Chairman Sharon Kjellquist said she thought the budget passing was "wonderful," and added, "It allows the town to move forward."

Alluding to allegations stemming from last's November election, which questioned the openness of the tallying procedure, election moderator Dave Simko proclaimed "I want everyone to know what's going on" as he opened up the voting machine at 8 p.m.

When asked if things went more smoothly than they did in November, Simko said, "Yes." But, he added, "This is nothing like the Presidential [election] is going to be," noting how big an undertaking that contentious election is expected to result in. Simko said 10 booths were set up for the referendum, whereas the town will have to include 32 booths for Election Day in November.

More than 50 high school students registered to vote during the day on Tuesday, which Republican Registrar of Voters Margaret Jacobson viewed as more effective than the town simply going into the schools to try to get teens to sign up. "It's very hard when [the students] can't see the process," figured Jacobson.

Though the Board of Finance does not have to set a mill rate until next month, Jylkka anticipated that it would do so at its next meeting, which is May 19. Jylkka hoped the Board of Finance would have a better idea by that time of just how much state money the town will receive. But, he added, "We don't expect any significant changes from what we expected."

Local Family Organizes Fundraising Event

by Sarah McCoy

Two years ago, Laura and Gregory Czapiga received news that all parents dread.

Their daughter, then just three years old, was diagnosed with two incurable diseases. Now Laura is on a mission to spread awareness and raise money for Celiac Disease and Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IDB), the two conditions that five-year old Kara Czapiga deals with everyday.

The Czapigas will hold the first annual "Babci's Run" Sunday, May 18, at Manchester Community College, with proceeds to benefit the Connecticut Children's Medical Center's Celiac and IBD research and public awareness.

The event is being held in celebration of Ann Sikorski, Laura's "Babci" (Polish for grandmother) who also suffered from Celiac. Despite being in her late 80s, Sikorski continued to bowl, drive and crochet until her passing last summer.

Celiac Disease is an autoimmune disorder that prevents the body from absorbing nutrients caused by a reaction to proteins found in wheat, barley, rye and oats. The disease causes severe diarrhea and other gastrointestinal damage. Currently the only way to treat Celiac is through a gluten-free diet. Failure to adhere to this diet puts sufferers at a heightened risk for pancreatic and intestinal cancers.

IBD is an inflammation of the intestines. Symptoms of the disease include cramping, fever, anemia, and bloody diarrhea. It can lead to a high risk of colon cancer and arthritis, among other complications. Currently, sufferers are able to treat IBD with medication. But the Czapigas are hoping for a day when this isn't necessary.

Every day, Kara takes her pill crushed in applesauce.

Every day, she is forced to check and double-check every ingredient of the food she wants to eat.

Babci's Run, Laura hopes, will be a time

where awareness can be raised about these two, often misunderstood, diseases. "As a society, I feel, we aren't sensitive enough to allergies and differences," she said. "Although [Kara] has to eat different, don't treat her different."

In many ways, living gluten-free has its advantages. With the absence of flour, the Kara and her younger brother Roman are apt to pick up an orange as a snack instead of a processed treat. In fact, since Kara was diagnosed all the Czapigas have changed their eat habits. Laura said that 90 percent of what the family eats is gluten-free.

Last year Laura decided to take it upon herself to get the word out about Celiac Disease and IBD. While in Vermont she saw a commercial advertising a run to benefit Crohn's Disease. A light bulb went off in Laura's head and she immediately called Connecticut Children's Medical Center to ask about hosting her own event. For the last year she has worked to gain sponsors and participants in the first annual Babci's Run.

Her hard work is paying off as the 5K walk or run (with a one-mile option) will be held on May 18 at Manchester Community College. The event will take place rain or shine.

Whole Foods Market will be on hand with a tent set up dedicated to gluten-free eating. Additionally the first finishers of the race will receive coupons for Newman's Own products. Diane Kittle, who is starting up a gluten-free bakery in South Glastonbury, will provide snacks as will Utz chips, and Ted's Foods and Pamela's Products who produce gluten-free cookies and mixes.

So, for the first time in a long time, Kara will be able to go out and eat everything in sight.

For more information about Babci's Run or to sign up, visit www.babcisrun.org. Registration forms are available on the web site or by showing up at Manchester Community College at 9 a.m. The race will begin at 10 a.m.

Town, CIP Budgets Pass in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron voters Tuesday approved both the town and Capital Improvement Plan budgets for the upcoming fiscal year.

The \$32.76 million town budget received 486 votes of support to 454 'no' votes.

"I think the key to success this year was that it was a reasonable budget," Board of Finance Chair Mike Hazel said.

The approved 2008-09 budget represents a 5.53 percent increase in spending and includes the first costs associated with the park project that voters approved last fall. The spending plan includes \$304,000 for the town to begin repaying the bond for the park, and additional staff in the Parks and Recreation Department to handle the upcoming construction.

Other components of the budget are: the Hebron Board of Education budget, the town operations budget and the town's portion of the RHAM Board of Education budget. (In a separate vote Hebron, Marlborough and Andover all passed the RHAM budget Tuesday. See related story on page 33.)

Hazel commended the Board of Education (BOE) with their work on the now approved budget. "They did a great job," he said. "They came forth with the lowest proposed increase in the last 10 years. That certainly made our job a lot easier."

Despite a lower than normal increase in spending, the BOE was able to include a few new initiatives for the 2008-09 school year. The most notable is the full-day kindergarten option for parents and students. Beginning in the fall Gilead Hill Elementary School will have two classes of full-day kindergarten, and seven sections of half-day kindergarten.

A random lottery was held yesterday to de-

termine which of the incoming students would be placed in the full-day program. There were 36 available seats and approximately 100 of the 149 registered kindergarteners indicated an interest in this option.

After the results were announced, Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said this year "was a collaborative effort between the Board of Finance, the Board of Education, and the Board of Selectmen."

"Our hard work paid off," she said, "And now we'll be able to continue our good work for our students."

Voters approved the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget by a count of 504-428. Town departments had requested \$1.4 million in capital improvement projects for the coming year, with the CIP committee satisfying only \$875,936 worth of requests. (In a survey last year, Hebron residents overwhelmingly voted against an increase in funding for the CIP budget.)

This year, 940 of the town's 5,949 registered voters cast ballots at Tuesday's referendum, for a 15.8 percent voter turnout, slightly less than last year's turnout of 16 percent. "Hopefully that's a sign that what we proposed isn't controversial," Hazel said. "This wasn't a budget that elicited a lot of comments, so I have to read into it that people supported what we were doing."

The next Board of Finance meeting will be held Thursday, May 22, at 7:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room at the Town Office Building. Hazel said the BOF is looking to schedule a Special Meeting before then to set the town's mill rate for 2008-09, giving the town staff additional time to calculate and prepare tax bills.



Over 500 people turned out from April 30-May 4 to help with the Blish Park Playscape Renovation project. Children who were at least 10 years old could work alongside an adult to help build the playscape. At left are Dean Calderoni, Michael Calderoni and Ryan Masotti volunteering their time. At right is the new-look playscape, after work wrapped up on Sunday.



Hundreds Gather to Renovate Marlborough Playscape

by Kristina Histen

Over 500 Marlborough residents came out from April 30-May 4 to support the Blish Park Playscape Renovation project.

Whether rain or shine, volunteers of all ages were out on Lake Terramuggus from dawn to dusk, rebuilding the playscape that has over the years become a valuable asset to the town.

In the fall of 1988, the Marlborough Junior Women's Club created a committee to construct a playscape in town, Barbara Lazzari said. Under the direction of New York-based development firm Leathers and Associates, the design and ultimate construction of the playscape was accomplished and construction began May 3, 1989, with the project completed four years later. But that was 19 years ago, and in recent years it's become apparent the playscape was in need for major renovation and a maintenance program.

Over the past few years, the Blish Playscape Renovation Committee organized the renovation of the playscape. The committee consisted of Lazzari as the General Coordinator; Louise Concodello as the Assistant General Coordinator; Brenda Hill gathered volunteers; Dawn Tavolieri did fundraising, Kendra Monstream organized the T-shirts and sweatshirts; Robin Anderson was the publicity; Corinne Machowski and Jackie Lovett organized the materials; Maggie Hannon organized and handed out tools; and Becky Tarbell in charge of childcare.

"There has just been such a dedicated bunch of people," Lazzari said Saturday, May 3. "I've been speechless about the whole thing. It's been overwhelming on how it's coming together."

It has been "so cool to see everyone coming together as a community," Anderson said. Hannon said that the project has been "exhilarating," and brought "a great crowd."

"I wish I was 10," Tyler Anderson, 9, said, who will be in two months. "Then I could help build with my friends."

Instead, he and his sister Lindsey, 8, were under the supervision of Tarbell with all the other kids under age on the other side of the lake. They played kickball and other games throughout each day, including entertainment by a magician. This way, they were kept busy and out of the way so their parents could help rebuild the playscape.

"A lot of people didn't realize the scope of the project until they got here," Lazzari said. Throughout the site were "captains" that wore bright orange vests, she said. All the captains were Marlborough residents and volunteers that had skills either in building or construction, Lazzari said.

Representatives from Leathers and Associates – which once again aided in designing the playscape – were at the site every day, Lazzari said. And on Wednesday, April 30, State Representative Pam Sawyer was there, bright and early. Then, on Thursday, afternoon students

from Cheney Tech High School in Manchester used their tech skills to help with the build. They had so much fun, Hannon said, they came back on Friday. Also on Thursday, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. a group of about 40 State Police recruits from the Police Academy came to help with the playscape.

"The recruits drove in with all the sirens on and marched in formation," Hannon said. "It was just an amazing experience."

State trooper and resident Trent Kalkus was there on Thursday, as he is a mentor to one of the recruits, and was there again on Saturday.

"This has just been great," he said. "A good community project." The recruits really helped getting a lot of work done while other volunteers were able to concentrate on other aspects of the project, he said. If Kalkus was able to volunteer on Sunday, he wanted to bring his seven-year-old so "he can see how the community comes together." His wife also helped out by serving food to the volunteers. All the food was donated by local businesses.

Saturday had the most volunteers, with over 300 people signing in and out, Anderson said. RHAM Middle School students Megan Starkowski, Taylor Tarka, Mykaela Scarpace and Manchester resident Lindsey Perriolat were shoveling mulch throughout the playscape on Saturday. They were there for community service and because their parents were there too, but mostly because they wanted to help out.

They admitted it was also more fun with their friends around. "The playscape looks great, a lot different," Tarka said. "We all played here a lot when we were little."

"Everyone had a large part of this," Lazzari said. "Everybody takes a piece." Finally, around 6 p.m. on Sunday, the project was completed. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held, where children Ava Machowski, Wyatt Hill and Ben Tavolieri participated, with the help of Kris Gould and Jeff Lazzari. The kids' mothers were on the committee and Gould and Lazzari were the original children from the ribbon cutting ceremony 19 years ago, Anderson said.

The 10 members of the Blish Playscape Renovation Committee were all given golden screws and each person drilled in the final screws, Anderson said. The playscape was then blessed by Reverend Bob Faulhaber from the Congregational Church of Marlborough. After the ceremony, all the kids were allowed to play on their new renovated playscape and a pot luck dinner was held in the pavilion for all the volunteers. There were about 100 attendees.

"This whole project has been beyond amazing," Hannon said. "Everyone seems to think the playscape is a cool place to be," Anderson said.

Now that the project is finally completed, Lazzari joked about all the time she'll have on her hands. But who knows what will happen in another 19 years...

Silent Auction This Saturday in Marlborough

Since last week, the contributed items to this Saturday's Silent Auction to benefit the National Multiple Sclerosis Society in honor of Walk Team 100 Strong has yet again doubled.

The team is the brainchild of Marlborough resident Cassandra Hamilton, who is also its captain.

The auction will be held tomorrow, Saturday, May 10. There are now over 100 items from nearly 60 contributors. It promises to make for a fun afternoon of entertainment at Thatcher's Art Alcove and Lily's Frame & Art. From 1-4 p.m., attendees may doodle on cut-out candles to add to the team's Hope Wall, view sidewalk art, watch team videos, nibble on delicious hors d'ourves from Sadler's Ordinary, and bid on items ranging in value from a small cheese pizza to a Rest and Rejuvenation weekend for two at the world-renowned Omega Institute.

Items at the event include: jewelry, pottery, massage, a make-up gift basket, a hair cut and blow dry, health club memberships, watercolor paintings, a table runner, journals, a cooking class, certificates to excellent restaurants, and inspirational books. There will also be mini-makeover and mini-stress reduction sessions offered. Those who opt for a stress reduction session may select to have an aromatherapy, vibrational healing and body/energy work treat.

"It's important we have a day of fun," Hamilton said. "Yes, I know, we are doing something serious: fighting a debilitating disease and trying to raise \$10,000 for MS re-

search. But there are some fundamentally important things we can all do, which I've seen effectively put in action in the making of this event, and they are: inspire each other, spread some love and celebrate our lives together. It's only fitting that the event seek to do the same."

Nearly 70 contributors will fill the two Marlborough businesses with their products and certificates for services. Books provided by Joel and Dodie Osteen head the list of new contributions. They are followed by a day pass to renowned Kripalu, a gear pack from NBC Channel 30 news, aqua therapy sessions from Pieper Olson Veterinary Hospital, pottery from Mary Sampson, a one-month membership plus a personal training session from Bodyworks, brunch for two at the Marlborough Tavern, a gift basket from Textures, a pair of tickets to Theatre Works, pottery by Diana Tuppeny and many items from Orange Arts. Gift certificates to buy items of the winners choice were given by New China Sea, Loco Perro, Jalisco Mexican Restaurant, Stop & Shop in Glastonbury and Shaw's in East Hampton.

The winning bids will be announced at the last hour of the event. All attendees will leave with a coupon booklet from Mambo Sprouts, a marketing company for organic and natural products, which they can use at any grocery store to buy items like milk, eggs and cereal. Pet lovers (and friends of pet lovers) will take home organic dog and cat food samples and coupons from Castor & Pollux.



Kathy Berlin of Thatcher's Art Alcove assembles one of the many flamingos that will mark the pathway to her business and Lily's Frame & Art at Saturday's Silent Auction between 1 and 4 p.m.

Every half hour, from 1-3 p.m., prizes will be awarded to attendees who donate any amount to the team, regardless of bidding. Seven lucky people will walk home with the colorful spin-

ner flamingos donated by Family Dollar in Portland. The Flamingos will mark the path between Lily's Frame & Art and Thatcher's Art Alcove.

Andover Teen Gets Six Years for Robberies

by Sarah McCoy

An Andover teen was sentenced to six years in jail for her role in a string of robberies that she and an accomplice committed early in 2007.

Brittany Delaware, 17, pled guilty April 25 to first-degree robbery, second-degree robbery, first-degree larceny and reckless burning, a spokesman at Rockville Superior Court said. Judge Terrence A. Sullivan sentenced her to six years in prison and three years of probation, the court spokesman said.

Court affidavits indicate that Delaware and Kelly Robbins, 18, of Marlborough, stole \$240 at gunpoint from a Blimpie in Colchester in January 2007. According to police, the pair then

attempted to rob a Dunkin' Donuts in Columbia before fleeing when an employee ran into the back room seeking help.

Later that day, the girls robbed a Glastonbury Subway for \$250 at knifepoint before stealing a pick-up truck left idling outside a Hebron package store, police said. Robbins and Delaware both pled guilty to burning the \$40,000 truck after getting it stuck in the woods in Coventry.

As part of her sentence, Delaware is prohibited from having contact with Robbins, who was sentenced in January to seven years in prison.

Man Charged with Attacking Former Boss in Portland

A Cromwell man was arrested last week after police say he attacked his former boss at a local tire store.

Joshua Hawk, 19, of 10 Wall St., Cromwell, was charged with first-degree reckless endangerment and third-degree assault, police report.

Police say they responded to the Axelrod Tire store on Portland-Cobalt Road at around 8:30 a.m. last Thursday, May 1, to a report of a dispute. Police say Hawk, an ex-employee, had arrived at the shop, looking for his paycheck. When he was told the paycheck would not be ready until the following day, police say he left the store and spit on the store manager's truck parked alongside the office.

An argument then ensued between Hawk and the manager, police say, during which Hawk sprayed the manager with a small bottle of pepper spray. The two parties began to

struggle over the pepper spray, police say, and the manager was able to pull it away from Hawk and throw it across the parking lot.

Hawk then got into his vehicle, police report, and drove towards the manager, pushing the manager backwards between the vehicle and the parked truck. The manager began yelling at Hawk to back up, and Hawk did, police say, only to pull forward a second time, pinning the manager. Police say Hawk left the manager pinned for approximately one minute before fleeing the business.

Police say the manager sustained minor eye/nasal irritation as a result of the pepper spray, but no injuries from being struck by the vehicle.

Hawk was released on a \$5,000 non-surety bond, police report, and is due in Middletown Superior Court May 13.

Andover Elementary School Principal Charged with DUI

by Sarah McCoy

State police arrested Andover Elementary School Principal David Griffin last Saturday for allegedly driving under the influence.

According to police, shortly before 11 p.m. Saturday, Griffin, 62, of 58 Whitney Rd., Columbia, was driving eastbound on Interstate 384 in Manchester by exit 2, when a state trooper pulled him over for driving erratically. After detecting the odor of alcohol, the trooper asked Griffin to perform a series of sobriety tests, police said.

Griffin failed these, police said, and was arrested and transported to the Troop H barracks in Hartford for processing. He was later released on \$500 bond. Griffin is due in court on May 19.

Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia said he is reviewing the incident and is cur-

rently in consultation with the Board of Education's attorney. He said all Board of Education members had been notified of the incident but, considering the situation is under review, he had no further comment.

"For me to suggest anything, at this time, would be precipitous," he said.

Mannegia did say, though, that the Board of Education does not have a standard policy in regards to employees arrested for DUI and that no precedent had been set, to his knowledge. The next Board of Education meeting will be Wednesday, May 14, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School Library.

Griffin did not respond to calls for comment by press time, and neither did Board of Education Chairman Jay Linddy.

East Hampton Police News

4/21 — Aaron Cambreleng, 18, of 19 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, was issued a ticket for a defective muffler, East Hampton Police said.

4/24 — Stacey Silvia, 23, of 124 Smith St., Middletown, was arrested for disorderly conduct and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

4/27 — John Burger, 43, of 128 East High St., was arrested for failure to display plate, operating with a suspended license, operating a motor vehicle with no insurance and possession of marijuana under 4 oz., police said.

4/29 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was arrested pursuant to a warrant for unreasonable speed, unsafe tires, operating a motor vehicle after hours, no seatbelt and possession of marijuana, police said.

5/1 — Robin Baldelli, 45, of 205 West High St., was arrested for disorderly conduct and

criminal mischief, police said.

5/3 — Stephen Majeski, 61, of 33 Old Middletown Rd., was arrested for driving under the influence and failure to drive right, police said.

5/4 — Stacy Jedziniak, 24, of 22 Cooley Ave., Middletown, was issued a ticket for traveling fast, police said.

5/5 — Bryan Polsonetti, 31, of 88 Viola Dr., and Jennie Porter, 31, of 45 Collie Brook Rd., were both arrested for speeding, police said.

5/5 — Peter A. Ezold Jr., 25, of 36 Summit St., was arrested for operating under suspension, operating without insurance, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, misuse of plates, failure to display front plate and failure to bring motor vehicle to a stop when signaled, police said.

Colchester Police News

4/30-Michael Naud, 19, of 124 Murray St., Middletown, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

5/3-Philip Selavka, 50, of 116 Broadway St., was charged with public indecency and breach of peace, State Police said.

5/3-Terri Erdos, 35, of 91 David Dr., was charged with injury or risk of injury/impair the morals of a child, third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

5/4-Two juveniles were both charged with second-degree harassment, State Police said.

5/5-Amanda Sawchuk, 20, of 29 McDonald Rd., turned herself in to State Police on the charges of conspiracy, first-degree larceny and larceny of a fire arm, State Police said.

5/5-Peter Christie, 19, of 124 Edstrom Rd., Marlborough, turned himself in to State Police on the charges of evading, traveling unreasonably fast and stop sign violation, State Police said.

Portland Police News

4/30 — Justin Carl, 23, of 32 Marlborough St., was charged with breach of peace and carrying a dangerous weapon, Portland Police said.

Andover Police News

5/1-Ahmed Atanu, 42, of 33 Cider Mill Rd., was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, State Police said.

Salem Police News

5/3-Jessica Dawky, 31, of 85C Horse Pond Rd., was charged with first-degree larceny and false statement, State Police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Shirley M. DeBarge

Shirley M. DeBarge, 79, of 175 West High St., East Hampton, passed away on Saturday, April 26, at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Born in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Esther (Behrens) DeBarge and adopted daughter of the late Theophile A. DeBarge and had lived in East Hampton since 1949.

Shirley was a graduate of Middletown High School Class of 1947. She was employed at the Russell Mfg. Co. as a secretary and advanced to sales manager of Narrow Fabrics and Fiberglass Sales Division. She later worked in New York City until her retirement. She was a member of the South Congregational Church in Middletown.

She is survived by cousins and many special and devoted friends including Beverly and John Starr, Pat DiMauro, Dick and Lee Burnham, Roseann Bullett, and many others. She truly appreciated the love and help of her friends.

A special thanks to Dr. Cathy Zack and staff, Dr. Kimmel, Sharon Hines and staff at the Middlesex Hospital Cancer Center, Middletown Hospital Home Care aide's and staff, nurses, physical therapists, Jan Clark, and my volunteers for Hospice, Pat Sienna and Dick LeBrasseur. She was so grateful for their compassion and loving care.

At her request, funeral services will be private and interment will be in Pine Grove Cemetery in Middletown. There will be no calling hours and friends are invited to send a message of condolence at the website of www.doolittlefuneral.com. Those who prefer, may make a contribution in her memory to East Hampton Ambulance Association, P.O. Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424 or Middlesex Hospital Palliative Care and Hospice Unit, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457.

The Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, is in charge of arrangements.

Portland

Frank J. DeLuca Sr.

Frank J. DeLuca Sr., 89, husband of Ann Lucille Fazzino DeLuca, of Rogers Road, Portland, passed away peacefully Friday, May 2, in his home surrounded by his family. Born in Middletown, July 14, 1918, a son of the late Francesco DeLuca and Nellie DeLuca Nocera, he was a longtime Portland resident. He had been employed by the Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Co., in Middletown, for over 30 years until his retirement in 1982.

He was a member of the Middletown Lodge of Elks and a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary. Besides his wife, Mr. DeLuca is survived by his sons, Frank J. DeLuca, Jr., and his wife Barbara of East Hampton, Ronald DeLuca and his wife Carol of Haddam, and Richard DeLuca and his wife Sheila of Colchester; his grandchildren, Kevin DeLuca, Scott DeLuca, Kimberly Fritsch and her husband Steven, William Zadroga, Jr., and his wife Susan, April DeLuca, Emily DeLuca, Rachel DeLuca, and Ian DeLuca; his great-granddaughters, Lauren and Chelsey Fritsch.

He was predeceased by his stepfather, Riccardo Nocera, and his brother, Edward Nocera. Relatives and friends attended a Mass of Christian Burial Tuesday, May 6, in the Church of Saint Mary, Portland. Interment followed in St. Mary Cemetery. There were no calling hours. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. In lieu of flowers, gifts in his memory may be sent to the Middlesex Hospice c/o Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or to the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Andover

June L. Birdsall

June L. Birdsall, currently of Tucson, AZ, and formerly of Andover passed away peacefully on Wednesday, April 30, after a long illness. She was preceded in death by her sister, Joy Sears. She is survived by her loving husband Thomas, her son Thomas, her daughter-in-law Linda, a brother, Arthur Weingart, and his wife, Claudette; her niece, Deborah Hamilton, and her nephews, Gregory Sears and Jeff Weingart. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to a charity of your choice. Private services were held Saturday, May 3, in Tucson, AZ.

Portland

JoAnn Williams Goddard

JoAnn Williams Goddard, 44, of Olde Homestead Village, Portland, beloved wife of David Goddard, died unexpectedly in Washington, DC, on Monday, April 28, while on assignment as a journalist. She was born in Newark, OH, on July 25, 1963, to the proud parents of James and Peggy Williams. JoAnn attended school in Ohio and Indiana before graduating with honors from Canton High School in Canton, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

She was currently associated editor for Soundings Publications, Essex. JoAnn worked at Soundings for 10 years. Prior to being promoted to associated editor at *Soundings Trade Only*, she was a staff writer for Soundings for nearly seven years. Prior to Soundings, JoAnn was a reporter for the *Hartford Courant*, assigned to the Middletown office. JoAnn received several awards through the years for her writing from Boat Writers International and recently National Apex award in 2007. But her most rewarding experience was as a wife, mother, daughter and grandmother.

In addition to her loving husband she is survived by her son Lincoln, who attends Bard College in New York State, her daughter Krista, who attends Suffolk University in Boston, her son David of Norwich, her grandson Jeremy of Hebron, her parents of Canton, her brother Jim Williams of Windsor, her sister Sandra Delehoy and nephews Tyler and Ryan Delehoy, all of Canton, and several aunts, uncles and cousins. She also leaves to mourn several friends, coworkers at Soundings and avid readers of the boating community.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Windsor Independent Livings (WILA), P.O. Box 902, Windsor, CT, 06095. Calling hours were Saturday, May 3, prior to a service at 11 a.m. at the Portland Memorial funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, CT. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

East Hampton

Parmelia M. Petrow

Former resident of East Hampton, Parmelia M. Petrow, widow of Michael J. Petrow, died Wednesday, April 30, in her Vermont home. Born Sept. 28, 1920, in Los Angeles, she was a daughter to the late Albert Desmarchais and Marian Lambert. Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Petrow established their home in East Hampton, where they raised their family before retiring to Vermont in 1986.

Parmelia is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Michael Petrow of Lakeland, FL, Mr. and Mrs. Albert A. Petrow of Colchester, Mr. and Mrs. Robbie Petrow of Colchester; her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Willey (Laurie Petrow) of Lyndonville, VT; eight grandchildren, Stacey Strong of East Hampton, Tricia Nolan of Colchester, Chad Petrow of Plainville, Desiree Brown of Colchester and Brett Petrow of Colchester, Christina Willey of Lyndonville, VT, Jamie Willey of Lyndonville, VT and Zachary Willey of Lyndonville, VT. Parmelia was also the proud great-grandmother of Andrea, Anthony and Kyle Strong of East Hampton, Ryan Gannon, Tiffany Kennedy, Mikhail Nolan, Jordan, Sarah, Logan and Hailey Brown of Colchester.

Parmelia was a loving homemaker for her husband and children. In her spare time she loved knitting, crocheting, cross-stitch, her flower gardens, Chinese food, seafood and the love of her life that also joined her in heaven, her poodle MeToo. "When we look back on Nana's remarkable life, she will be remembered by everyone who knew her. She will be greatly missed."

Colchester

Robert Schreck

Robert Schreck, 77, of Colchester, passed away on Monday, May 5. He was born July 27, 1930 in Manchester, son of the late George and Elizabeth Schreck.

He leaves a sister, Shirley Skarzinski of Ohio; a niece, Suzie McVey of Windsor and numerous other nieces and nephews.

Funeral services are private; there are no calling hours. Belmont Funeral Home of Colchester is in care of arrangements.

Hebron

Joseph G. Bienko Jr.

Joseph G. Bienko, Jr., 72, of Inverness, FL, and formerly of Hebron, died on Thursday, May 1, in Inverness. Joseph was born on Sept. 27, 1935, in Manhattan, NY, the son of Joseph and Marie Bienko. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1952 to 1956. He was a technician for Praxair in Suffield. He moved to Inverness in 1994 from Hebron. Joseph was a member of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Inverness and the American Legion Post 155.

Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Jeannine Bienko of Inverness, daughter Denise Hornbecker (Robert) of Colchester, son Joseph J. Bienko (Debra) of Glastonbury, brother Dr. Raymond Bienko (Patricia) of Ocala, FL, sister Andrea Brown of Swepsonville, NC, and two grandsons, Jason and Justin Hornbecker both of Colchester.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated by Father Michael S. Smith at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St., Hebron on Saturday, May 10, at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made in his memory to The Channel 3 Kids Camp, 73 Times Farm Road, Andover, CT 06232.

Salem

Gregory S. Weeks

Gregory S. Weeks, 58, of Salem, formerly of Greenfield, MA and Cincinnati, OH, died Thursday, May 1, of pancreatic cancer. Born July 17, 1949 and raised in Cincinnati, OH, he attended Taylor High School and the University of Cincinnati. An athlete, intellectual, wandering soul and adventurer, Greg was well known for his stories of travel, trouble and humor, from Greenwich Village to Haight-Ashbury and all points between.

Over the years he was a taxi driver, urban planner, community loan officer, hospice assistant, database administrator, national & regional trucker and truck driving instructor. Each kind of work was in part a result and reflection of his life expression. He was also a survivor. In his mid-30s, while living in Greenfield, MA, it seemed his life would be cut short by a diagnosis of metastatic melanoma. Over the next few years, however, he not only survived the cancer, but also became a father, got sober and began a new life in recovery. In that emergent space he found in himself a gift for helping others who are facing the challenges of terminal illness and addiction.

By his mid-50s, Greg had created a balance in his life, with a rich personal spirituality that readied him for the partnership, calm and happiness of the new love he would find with his second wife, Holly. In late 2006, after nearly 20 years of working to become a presence without his addiction, and after a new marriage and a move to Salem, Greg was diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer. Even in that, he defied expectations and lived for a year and a half, demonstrating a grace and depth of character born of his life experiences.

Greg is survived by his wife, Holly; son, Nathaniel, former wife, Laurie, parents, Ray and Joan; siblings Debbie, Kevin, Randy and Lori; his step daughter Tina and her daughters; and a combined, extended family of nieces, nephews and others, from Cincinnati to New England. The memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 10, at his home in Salem. Memorials may be made to Hospice of South Eastern Connecticut, www.hospicesect.org. For online condolences, visit www.weeks.org/greg.