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Darcie Graziano-Mackay, top left, sits with her children (clockwise from top) Samantha, 10, John, 2, and Christopher, 4, in their backyard in Andover. Graziano-Mackay recently graduated from Goodwin College in East Hartford after overcoming a critical cardiac condition.

Andover Mom Overcomes Heart Problems, Graduates from College

by Sarah McCoy

Darcie Graziano-Mackay looks like your average busy mom of three. Last Wednesday, for example, she spent time outside with her two youngest and found time to do some chores. But a closer look reveals that Graziano-Mackay is anything but average.

The first clue is the stacks of nursing books and her laptop on her kitchen counter.

The second clue is the silver bracelet worn around Graziano-Mackay's wrist that reads: Congenital Heart Defect.

This Andover resident and mother of three is more than just a busy mom. She's a super busy mom, graduating from Goodwin College's nursing program last week after four years. Oh yeah, and in that time she found out she had a hole in a wall of her heart requiring immediate medical attention.

Graduating from Goodwin College, Graziano-Mackay said, "was the hardest thing I've ever worked for."

But she doesn't want any special treatment because of what she went through to earn her diploma. "I don't think I'm anything special," she said. "Things happen and you push through them to accomplish your dream."

As a child Graziano-Mackay had always been interested in medicine. In fact, in eighth grade she wrote in a homework assignment that she wanted to be a doctor. However, these dreams came to a screeching halt when, as a student at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, a career inventory test revealed that Graziano-Mackay's most "suitable" profession would be as a domestic engineer—a fancy title for a stay-at-home mom.

"I was devastated," she recalled. "All of a sudden I didn't think I was smart enough to pursue a career in medicine."

Instead, Graziano-Mackay headed to Teikyo Post University in Waterbury, where she graduated in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science degree in legal assisting. However, she changed her mind about the legal profession soon after graduation. "It just wasn't the type of human service work I was looking for," she recalled.

Over the course of the next 10 years, Graziano-Mackay took a series of jobs, always searching for the right fit. She worked for a temp agency, she worked in customer service for the Swiss Army Company and she later took a job at ESPN in the accounting department. It was while at ESPN that Graziano-Mackay again felt

the tug to pursue a career in medicine.

At the time, she was in and out of the hospital, pregnant with her second child. She was going through preterm labor and Graziano-Mackay spent most of her time in bed or at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport. While she was there, Graziano-Mackay bonded with Roxie, a nurse assigned to the birthing unit.

When Graziano-Mackay's co-worker at ESPN decided to enroll in Goodwin College's nursing program, she decided to do the same. "They were so nice," she remembers of her first interactions with the admissions department at Goodwin College. "At the time I had to schedule meetings and placement tests between feedings for my son; they met my needs and did it with a smile."

She began classes two weeks later in the fall of 2004.

Balancing a newborn, a five-year old daughter and classes proved difficult for Graziano-Mackay, who had been out of school for 10 years. "I remember driving home crying after my first exam," she said. "It was the lowest grade I had ever received." But one of Graziano-Mackay's professors encouraged all students to visual-

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ize their goals as if they had already happened. So Graziano-Mackay started writing.

I am smart.
I passed my exam.
I am a nurse.

"It's like brainwashing yourself into believing that stuff is true," she said. "Now I believe it."

As well she should. Graziano-Mackay cruised through the first year of the nursing program and was in the middle of her second year, when she hit a speed bump. Pregnant with her third child, Graziano-Mackay again went into preterm labor, forcing her to pull out of her nursing class in the middle of the spring semester.

She delivered her son, John, in April 2006 and took until September to recover. That fall, Graziano-Mackay returned to class, but she still wasn't feeling quite right.

By the following May, she continued to feel tired and full of anxiety. Initially, doctors told her this was a result of being a mom of three and a full-time student, but Graziano-Mackay felt there was more to it. An electrocardiogram of her heart, taken in May 2007, showed blood flowing from one side of her heart to the other. Something that, as a nursing student, Graziano-Mackay knew wasn't right.

Further tests revealed that she was born with an atrial septic defect (ASD), meaning that there was a hole in the wall of her heart that separates the left and right atriums. Graziano-Mackay was told she would need open heart

surgery.

Not comfortable with that, she searched for another doctor with experience handling adult ASD patients. Typically this heart defect is diagnosed as a child. Therefore many of the ASD specialists are pediatric doctors.

Her search for a doctor led Graziano-Mackay to Ohio, where she became a patient at the Cleveland Heart Clinic. In September 2007, Graziano-Mackay and her husband, Kevin Mackay, flew out to the hospital where Dr. Richard Krasuski would attempt to close the 20-mm hole in the wall of her heart.

Graziano-Mackay went through a catheter-based procedure where doctors entered her body through the femoral arteries near her hip and installed a 22-mm closure device in the wall of her heart. She left the hospital 15 hours after the surgery and returned to Connecticut five days later.

Now the only signs of her heart defect is the aforementioned bracelet. Graziano-Mackay says she feels better than ever. In fact, she was back doing her clinical coursework just one week after returning to Connecticut.

With her, Graziano-Mackay brought a new understanding of her patients' concerns and the emotions that come with hearing that you need surgery to survive.

Soon after returning to her clinical position, Graziano-Mackay met a man in his 50s about to undergo open-heart surgery. "He said to me, 'I don't think you understand how scared I am,'" Graziano-Mackay said. "I remember looking at him and saying, 'I understand. I had those

same worries."

"When someone tells you there's a problem with your heart, you worry," she added. "You need that [organ]. And I understand that worry."

In fact, she felt so connected to her cardiac patients that last week Graziano-Mackay accepted a position in St. Francis' Hospital's Cardiac Care Unit. After four years of putting her heart and soul into learning the craft of nursing, Graziano will finally be able to put her knowledge and life experience to work, serving the population she feels most connected to.

In April, Graziano-Mackay had the opportunity to address her fellow graduates at their pinning ceremony. In that speech she quoted Bernard Edmonds: "To dream anything that you want to dream. That's the beauty of the human mind. To do anything that you want to do. That is the strength of the human will. To trust yourself to test your limits. That is the courage to succeed."

Despite graduating with a 3.88 grade point average and overcoming a critical health condition, Darcie Graziano-Mackay said she doesn't feel special, only blessed.

Blessed to have a mom willing to watch her children as she and her husband flew to Cleveland.

Blessed to have friends that would watch her children during the day, enabling her to take classes.

Blessed to have a family that has always supported her.

Blessed to be alive.



Darcie Graziano-Mackay is shown here in her cap and gown. The Andover mother of three graduated from Goodwin College's nursing program last week.

East Hampton Resident Writes Book About Divorce

by Michael McCoy

"Let's hope you never need the book" are not the words you expect someone promoting their first foray into publishing to utter.

Nevertheless, that is the sentiment of East Hampton resident Shane Mallory. His words might make more sense once one discovers that Mallory, under the pen name S. Perry Mallory, recently wrote a book entitled *The Divorce Manual for Men*.

Mallory, 48, was born and raised in Rochester, NY. After high school, he stuck around and received his bachelor's degree in finance from the Rochester Institute of Technology. In 2000, Mallory moved to East Hampton when he took a job as an account executive with Aetna. He now works as an administrator for the Leasing and Property Transfer unit of the state Department of Public Works.

As for writing this book, Mallory was inspired to take it on as a result of his own divorce, which happened in 2005. Mallory was further prompted to take on the project in late 2006. Open-heart surgery left Mallory out of commission for two months, which enabled him to get a start on writing the book; he started writing it in December of that year. He finished up about the same time last year.

Publish America published the book in April. The bite-sized chapters cover a range of issues such as "Expectations," "Telling the Children," "Your Finances," "The Contract," "Your Health," and "Post Divorce." The end of the book also contains space for goals, notes and questions.

Mallory explained his rationale behind writing the book by saying, "Typically, we're not equipped with the skill set to deal with [divorce]... Basically, we're not taught to communicate well."

While men "like to get things done," divorce is "not a one-time event." To the dismay of many males, Mallory said, divorce is not something to be knocked out in a day; instead, "it can take months before that and many years after" to deal with the fallout.

The book speaks to this issue: "Do not expect that you will file for divorce, go to court and walk out single."

While Mallory said he "found a few friends I could talk to," he supposed that men have a

harder time talking through divorce with other men than women do with other women. Mallory seemed to think that men have no problem discussing business, but talking through personal struggles comes much harder.

"Men are geared on fixing stuff and getting it taken care of," Mallory said. However, Mallory suggested divorce should be only a last resort. "If you think your marriage can be fixed, then you shouldn't be contemplating divorce," he said.

Mallory warned men (and women for that matter) that while in court participants are pressured to agree to a number of terms without much time to deliberate. Mallory said that under these conditions, many men will agree to a number of conditions, primarily financial ones, that they know they cannot follow through with.

"You have a very short amount of time to finalize the agreement," Mallory said. "You have to swear under oath that you haven't been coerced." Mallory warns men not to be so hasty to take that oath, and said, "If you say 'yes' to \$50 extra a month in alimony, but can't afford it, you're in trouble."

Mallory, who has a teenage daughter and a preteen son, also pointed out, "When you get divorced in Connecticut, both parents need to take a parenting class. ... It tells you what to expect. I thought it was actually a good class."

Mallory repeatedly drove home that his book in no way belittles women. Still, Mallory said sympathies tend to run stronger toward the woman in a divorce, and argued, "It's the end of the marriage for the man too." In the book, Mallory writes, "Court personnel may be rude to you for no other reason than you are a man. It takes a great deal of self-control to ignore that..."

The Divorce Manual For Men is just 63 pages long, and Mallory says it can be easily finished in two hours. "I don't want to look through a 900-page manual," Mallory admitted, figuring that many men would feel the same way.

Mallory also assumed that men prefer their reading outlined in a step-by-step format, and he could not find anything on divorce with that particular approach. "I didn't see one that was written by an average guy," he said, and instead, everything was written by lawyers, psycholo-

gists, or academics of some sort.

Mallory has received a generous response so far and reported, "I actually gave [the book] to a guy who had been married four or five times, and he asked where the hell I was 20 years ago."

The author seemed especially pleased with the "Expectations" chapter, which reads, "If you have too many expectations or the wrong ones the divorce process will be a disaster for you and more importantly your children."

The chapter continues, "When men, or anyone for that matter, know what to expect they tend to handle things calmer, more professional and business like and make better decisions."

Another potential surprise, according to Mallory, is divorce is "not a very private process." He explained that any number of other couples, along with their legal counsel will be present during the proceedings, awaiting their own turn.

"It's kind of an eye-opener when you see how it actually works," Mallory said.

Mallory has no events or book-signings scheduled. "It's not that kind of book," Mallory said, adding that this particular work falls into a unique area that would be awkward to promote traditionally. According to Mallory, when people have requested the book, Mallory has said, "I'm sorry to hear that; I hope the book helps."

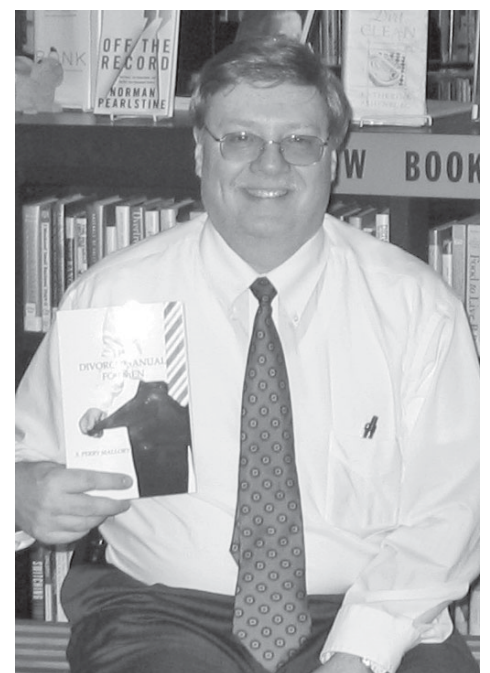
Mallory said even East Hampton Public Library Director Sue Berescik told him, "Somebody had to write it."

"There's just not a lot out there to help men," Mallory said.

Mallory has set up a web site, www.thedivorcemanualformen.com, which contains more information about the book. He said the site is receiving a good number of hits. There is a place for visitors to offer comments, and one commenter wrote that the book is "A useful guide for dealing with a very turbulent time in your life from an obviously caring and knowledgeable individual."

Mallory has also been in contact with a number of attorneys who may provide the book to their clients. "I'm still struggling with what is the best way to market this," he admitted.

"It's not a story about my divorce," Mallory made clear. Instead, highlighting the procedural



Resident Shane Mallory, the author of the new book *The Divorce Manual for Men*, recently stopped by the East Hampton Public Library.

style, Mallory mused the book is like "a manual for fixing your snowblower, but you're not going to do it in an afternoon."

The bleak nature of the content has been mentioned earlier. However, the book concludes on a hopeful note: "While you may not believe me now, through the grace of God, you will handle this fine and everything will work our okay."

Mallory said the book is not exactly the sort that people leave out on their coffee table or carry around with them in plain view, given the snap judgments it may solicit. For that reason, he suspects online sales are the best route. The book is available at various sites, including Barnesandnoble.com, Amazon.com, and TowerBooks.com. However, the best way of finding the book may be to simply search for it at PublishAmerica.com.

The Divorce Manual For Men costs \$9.95.

Portland Resident's Longtime Love Culminates with Garden

by Michael McCoy

About 35 years ago, Bill Larson fell in love with a handful of Japanese gardens along the west coast. Now he has his own, and is offering it to all to enjoy for free.

Lifelong Portland resident Larson, 76, and his wife Evelyn married in 1959 and later had two daughters. During the summer of 1974, the Larsons headed out west to see sights like the Cheyenne Roundabout and the Grand Canyon. However, they ended up running across one Japanese garden after another from Alberta, Canada down to southern California.

After that, Larson spent a lot of time researching the gardens. "I kept saying I was going to build one," remembered Larson, who added that people he knew would chastise him for talking and not acting.

Finally, in 2005, Larson took the plunge. When asked what made him finally get started on the garden, he responded, "My wife said, 'So, are you going to do it or not?'"

With the help of his friend, John Race, Larson started on the garden in August and worked until November. They did the same in 2006 and 2007. Though he held a grand opening for the garden in 2006, he only now considers it finished (and even now he can identify a couple of spots here and there that he wants to work on). Larson estimated that they have put about \$75,000 into this labor of love. The garden is located at 171 Bartlett St., part of Larson's business, Wheeler Farm Gardens.

With the exception of some Japanese Shoji screen used for dividing the area, Larson promises that everything else in the garden came from scratch.

According to Larson, what are now called Japanese gardens date back to the 600s and actually started in India. Larson said they then caught on in China, where they were elaborated on and dressed up more. But, Larson said, "the Japanese got them back to pure nature."

"Japanese revere nature," Larson said. "There's a beauty in nature that you just can't get anywhere else."

According to Larson, a Japanese woman who now resides in Brooklyn, NY, happened by his garden and called it the best one she has seen on the East Coast.

Upon entering Larson's garden, visitors are greeted by two Foo dogs, one male and one female. These small statues welcome you into the garden. As you pass through the threshold into the garden, you cross the devil-casting stone, which Larson said, is "supposed to be raised up, but I don't want people to trip." The

idea is that the devil, not visitors, will trip over the stone, causing him to flee from the garden.

Ninety-five percent of the plants in the garden come from Asia, Larson said. In addition to Japan, the vegetation hails from China, south-east Russia and Korea.

One of these plants is the dawn redwood, which Larson estimated could grow to 150 feet. This tree, native to China, was thought to be extinct for thousands of years, Larson said, but was rediscovered in the early 1990s.

Other plants include Chinese and Japanese wisteria, fantailed willow, Korean dogwood, Japanese maple, and a Japanese Black Pine, which Larson actually planted 30 years ago with the help of neighborhood kids.

The arrangement of a Japanese garden differs from others. For instance, the paths are purposefully winding, allowing each corner of the garden to reveal itself gradually. The Japanese "like crooked paths," Larson said. "They don't want to see everything at once."

Larson incorporated several different garden variations into his sizable labyrinth. A typical Japanese family may have a garden, but it would probably just be the size of one of the sections of Larson's garden. The varieties include teahouse, hill and pond, stroll and Zen. The latter incorporates either raked sand or gravel, which is meant to represent water.

Another section features moon-viewing stones, where the Japanese would sit and do just what their name would suggest. The Japanese "love rocks," Larson said, explaining that, in addition to Japan being covered in them, rocks also represent stability. By the same token, the proliferation of various pines represents longevity.

Larson even created a miniature representation of Mt. Fuji, the largest peak in all of Japan.

The centerpiece to the garden is an idyllic pond filled with water lilies, frogs, and a number of fish, including koi, a vividly-colored variety native to Japan. However, Larson estimated having lost 150 fish to hungry herons already.

Larson's daughters, Kristen and Beth, were just little girls when the family went on that trip to the west coast in 1974, but, Larson said, "It totally opened their eyes to a different world out there." Kristen now works for Sony, and has been personal assistant to Penny Marshall and Lynn Redgrave. Beth teaches at the Hollywood (CA) Magnet School.

Larson estimated that he and Evelyn put in 120 hours a week at Wheeler Farm Gardens,



Bill Larson describes his Japanese garden, located at his nursery, Wheeler Farm Gardens, located on Bartlett Street.

and 8,000 a year. He outlined a normal day as waking at 6 a.m., working until 10 p.m., and heading to bed around midnight.

"Weather is everything," figured Larson concerning the business. "The three previous years have been either too wet or too hot."

He said that while business wanes on dreary days, should the sun burst out, without fail, a crowd emerges about 10 minutes later.

Wheeler Farm Gardens is the nation's largest supplier of the Alpine geranium. Between the nursery's in-store and mail-order business, about 50,000 of the plants are sold each year.

In the mid-1990s, the Larsons also started Pine Ledge Gardens, located on Route 66 in Portland. However, they sold that business in 2002.

This is Wheeler Farm Gardens' 40th year of operation – but the Wheeler Farm name actually dates back much further than that. All four of Larson's grandparents were Swedish immigrants. One of them, Charles G. Larson, began working at the farm in 1881 and inherited it in 1916. Back then, Wheeler Farm was a 78-acre dairy and tobacco farm.

When Charles G. Larson died, his son, Charles W. (Bill's father), inherited the farm, and Bill inherited it in 1964, after his father

died. According to Larson, his father was at one point considered to be the finest tobacco farmer in all of the Connecticut River Valley.

Larson sold the farm to Joe Kelly in 1973, who built Portland Golf Course there. Five years earlier, the Larsons started Wheeler Farm Gardens, which sits on about seven or so acres. The Japanese garden makes up just fewer than three-quarters of an acre, though it feels a lot bigger.

As it was last year, the garden was featured in last weekend's River Valley/Connecticut's Garden Tours. The event featured 15 area locations, including Elizabeth Park in West Hartford, the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Wickham Park in Manchester, Gillette Castle in East Haddam and Hubbard Park in Meriden. (On a side note, Larson's wife Evelyn is a 12th-generation Hubbard).

"Japanese love dark chocolate," Larson said, so, fittingly, he gave out dark chocolate and tea last weekend to garden visitors.

Wheeler Farm Gardens can be reached by phone at 342-2374, or on the web at wheelerfarmgardens.com.

Admission to the Japanese garden carries no charge; it is open during Wheeler Farm Gardens' regular business hours, which are 9 a.m.-6 p.m. seven days a week.

Laughter and Tears at Bacon Academy Graduation

by Kristina Histen

"Maybe I can bag this bee," valedictorian Justin Morse said at the Bacon Academy Class of 2008 graduation Monday night.

Morse shared a story with his fellow classmates about some carpenter bees that had hovered over him and his friends at lunch on a sunny day in May. "The result would be a bee inside a bag, and I would then have the ability to say, 'I just bagged a bee,'" he said. "I repeatedly failed, and as I lowered the bag on the last attempt, the bee moved aside with ease. ... This event represents the great challenges and expectations I faced. Class of 2008, I'm sorry, but I cannot bag all of your bees."

Over 250 Bacon Academy High School students graduated Monday night, where not even the weather could bring them down. Because of rain, the graduates along with their family and friends were packed inside the very humid and crowded gymnasium.

Yet no one seemed to care that the temperature felt like it was over 100 degrees and many were dripping with sweat, because everyone was so proud of the young adults that finished up one chapter of their lives and are now prepared to write the next.

As the mass amount of blue caps and gowns sat facing the beaming smiles of their loved ones, they listened to advice, words of wisdom and praise from Morse, salutatorian Michael

Guarino, Colchester Senior Center Director Cathy Russi, Board of Education Chair Bill Hettrick, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle and a montage of recordings from the Bacon Academy faculty and staff.

"Many of you have been together since 1995," Hettrick said. "Take a sense of belonging with you when pursuing your dreams. You all truly have the ability to change our world individually and collectively. Each of you can and will make a difference."

The evening was also particularly special to Loiselle, as the graduates were the last class that she had served as principal for, when they were in fourth grade. She recalled how much they had changed over the last eight years, but were continuously eager to learn more.

"You have distinguished yourselves as athletes, artists and activists with strength and character," she said. "You have the knowledge, the skills and the power, and the world needs your leadership."

Gilbert Lamb Essay winner Mary Jo Valenzuela also spoke at the ceremony, bringing tearful emotions not only to her family, but also to most in the crowd. The subject was "the appreciation of our own," in which Valenzuela wrote about her grandmother. Her grandmother sat in the front row at graduation, unknowing beforehand that the essay was about her, and cried the entire time.

"Now that I'm a senior, graduating with a good head on my shoulders, loyal friends, long-lasting memories and a prosperous future ahead of me, I know that I owe it all to her," she said. "I know that sometimes my teenage attitude makes her think I don't appreciate all she has done for me, but the problem is that I could never possibly express my gratitude. ... I'm determined to apply all she's taught me and become a strong, forceful, hardworking young woman. ... She has no idea how intelligent a woman she is, high school diploma or not. My grandmother is my role model, and she's given me a high standard to live up to."

After the ceremony, as the tears streamed down her face, Valenzuela held on tight to her grandmother while being congratulated by her family, and only managed to give a 'thumbs up' when asked about the night.

"So, fellow Bobcats, remember your accomplishments these four years, but also remember your failures and shortcomings," Guarino said in his speech during the ceremony, as he related advice to a quote by Teddy Roosevelt. "Winning graciously is important, but losing graciously is equally important. Try for what you want. If you succeed, excellent! Take pride in 'the triumph of high achievement.' If not, so be it, but remember that you tried and 'failed while daring greatly.' And if all else fails and

you've fallen to a last resort, just remember, don't panic!"

There were more tears after the ceremony by other graduates as the realization came to them that their high school days were now over. They felt pride as they hugged their parents and a special connection to their fellow classmates as they high-fived each other on their success.

"This has been a fantastic night," Principal Jeffry Mathieu said after the ceremony. "It was celebrated with dignity and class, which says a lot about this class."

"This is just wild," graduate Andrew Duhamel said excitedly. He will be deployed in just a few days for the National Guard. "I'm ready to start my life," he said. Katelynn Barr echoed his enthusiasm with a huge grin on her face saying how "surreal" the night was and how excited she was to attend school in North Carolina.

Of course, others were nervous about their future endeavors, like Mike Vinickas, who will be playing French horn in the Army Reserve Band at Central Connecticut State University. However, he admitted to also being "wicked excited" about his next steps in life.

"Life will offer you a rich selection of bees, and it is up to you to bag them," Morse closed with during his speech. "Class of 2008, I encourage you to bag all the bees you love."

East Hampton High School Class of 2008 Sent on its Way

by Michael McCoy

Despite a week rife with irritable weather, the 2008 East Hampton commencement exercises were held outside in front of the high school, as, no doubt, all present had hoped.

In fact, last Thursday evening, June 19, ended up being about as picturesque as anyone could hope, and at 6:30 p.m. students and faculty filed through the crowd and up to the front. Class President Hollin Abraham then led the pledge of allegiance as everyone turned to face the local Veterans of Foreign Wars post's giant helicopter and American Flag.

After her brief remarks, essayist winner John Cheng spoke. His thoughts seemed less concerned with harkening back to his fondest memories of high school and more with looking forward to how the class could help address the world's ills.

"Young adults, such as ourselves," Cheng said, "have an obligation to embrace a sacred civic and moral responsibility that we have to our communities. And, the concept of community applies not only to local settings, but also to our nation and global economy at large."

Cheng praised the character of his classmates, and suggested their talent, confidence, warmth and decency be put to use for the good of the world. "Dr. Martin Luther King once observed, 'The time is always right to do what is right.'" Cheng said.

Cheng said the class has witnessed various evils over the span of their lives, including "homelessness in America, genocide in Darfur, Sudan, sectarian violence in Iraq, starvation in Somalia or cultural repression in Tibet." He said complacency is not an option. "Now that we can call ourselves adults," he said, "we must recognize that we have the power to make meaningful change in the lives of fellow, dispossessed human beings and to build communities where none stand."

Cheng continued, "We have no conscionable or dignified alternative but to adopt their troubles as though they were our own, and to transcend whatever barriers, physical and psychological, which may lie between our relative comfort and their relative need. That is the essence of compassion. That is the definition of humanity."

Cheng did, however, come around to a hopeful note. "Young people have historically been among those who have been able to translate that spirit of kindness into movements of mass social transformation," he said.

The floor next went to salutatorian Janice Nosal. She led off by mentioning famed essayist Henry David Thoreau, and said, "Thoreau was one of the most fortunate men in history, for he was able to isolate himself on Walden Pond and contemplate life, nature, civil disobedience, and whatever else entered his thoughts. What a lucky man. He had a chance to enjoy each day as it was handed to him."

Nosal contrasted this lifestyle with the myriad activities that take up a high school student's life in 2008, and got a chuckle from the crowd when she opined, "...it is a miracle that many of us are even conscious as we sit here this evening."

She then asked her class to remember the week spent at Nature's Classroom in sixth grade

and said, "During that short time, we were just like Thoreau in our own Walden Pond... From the ORT Report to nature hikes, we were able to appreciate each day as it happened..."

Following her "carpe diem" philosophy throughout her address, she ended by saying, "As Richard Bach eloquently stated, 'The best way to pay for a lovely moment is to enjoy it.'"

Her address was followed by the senior choir, who performed a tightened rendition of Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Water."

Valedictorian Alicia Gadomski gave her address, opening with, "How ironic is it that the girl with the reputation of being one of the quietest in the class has to speak at graduation? During preschool, one of my classmates came up to my mother, tugged her shirt, and asked 'Does she talk?' Even on Facebook, I am ranked as the 220th most talkative person in the school."

Gadomski's self-deprecating opening segued into her view that reputations are not always fair or accurate, and suggested that teenagers at large are currently the victims of such a stigma. "In the media, we're portrayed as unintelligent and people who carry a stronger relationship with our cell phones than with our parents," she said. Alluding to a recent television commercial, she added, "If you have seen 'IDK, my BFF Jill,' you'll know exactly what I'm talking about."

Gadomski said that, according to statistics on teenagers "this 2008 graduation could be very different. Some of us should have totaled our cars, as teens are four times more likely to total their cars compared to older drivers. Twenty-three percent of us should have received speeding tickets - hence the police outside the VFW every morning - 20 percent of us should be sick due to smoking daily, and 10 percent of us should have been high school dropouts. However, I am proud to say that this class of 2008 has proven all of these statistics and reputations wrong."

Instead, Gadomski seemed joyful to share her class' athletic excellence, and fundraising for Darfur, the food bank, Hurricane Katrina, cancer, and the Red Cross. "Also, you know there must be something special about this town if foreign exchange students all the way from Poland, Spain and Africa want to come here," Gadomski said. "Can they even find us on a map?"

Gadomski urged her classmates to prove society's perception of teenagers wrong. "Show that the Class of 2008 is not out of control, rude or careless," Gadomski said, "but is one of potential and determination, already portrayed here at East Hampton High School."

Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden also spoke and, after singing the praises of the class, relayed a story from the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

After a certain running event was effectively finished, Golden said, Tanzania's John Stephen Akhwari made his way into the stadium. "His leg was bloody and bandaged," Golden said. "Winching through the pain at every step, he pushed on. The crowd watched silently and then gradually began a slow steady clapping and then the cheering, which grew to a roar as he made his painful way around the track. Finally, after what seemed to be an interminable amount of



Lenny Kloos, left, was one of 137 students who graduated from East Hampton High School last Thursday, June 19. Valedictorian Alicia Gadomski is shown at right, delivering her final remarks to her class.



time, he hobbled across the finish line with the crowd on their feet, cheering as if he were the winner."

Golden continued to say that after Akhwari was asked why he would endure such agony when winning the race was an impossibility, he looked puzzled and said, "I don't think you understand. My country did not send me to Mexico City to start the race. They sent me to finish the race."

Universalizing the story, Golden advised, "If you face life's journey with perseverance, courage and integrity, you will win the gold medal of life." She added that passion, hard work, courage, compassion and love are virtues worth striving for throughout life.

Embracing an optimistic outlook, Doyen told the graduating seniors, "You have already made a difference in the lives of those around you. You are the ones who can solve the world's problems. You have the ability to do amazing things."

Golden concluded with a quote from Winston Churchill: "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Board of Education Chairman Michael Vasquez also spoke, and opened his remarks by saying, "I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but tonight I'm going to discuss a subject you graduates probably thought you had heard the last of here in the East Hampton Schools, and that subject is homework."

Vasquez listed some common responses parents get when asking their kids if they have homework, including, "Why do we have to do this?," "This is so stupid," "I'll do it later," "When will I ever need to know this?" and what Vasquez identified as his personal favorite, the line "I'm pretty sure it's optional." He delivered a list of excuses teachers also get, before adding, "I'm going to let you in on a little

secret. The reality of homework is not really the product, but the process. Discipline, time management, accepting responsibility, being accountable, meeting deadlines, and producing desired results not only represent keys to contemplating homework assignments, but, more importantly, represent the keys to success in life."

He concluded his speech by leaving the class with one last piece of homework. "Your assignment," Vasquez said, "is to use the academic and moral fabric that these schools and this community have provided you, and represent all of us here this evening by becoming a productive member of this ever-changing global society. Please do not take this responsibility lightly."

EHHS Principal Linda Berry delivered a light-hearted speech, set at the class' 10-year reunion on June 19, 2018, held at the fictitious newly-constructed Bellringer High, a three-story school which has air conditioning, a swimming pool and food court, complete with a Dunkin Donuts and Taco Bell.

Of course, attendance of this reunion was contingent on their being no outstanding library fines. "Mr. Luckenbach never forgets," Berry joked, and then went on to describe what many of the students and faculty would be doing 10 years from now.

Finally, Golden, Vasquez and Berry distributed what the 137 students had worked 13 years for. Once the diplomas were handed out, the classes headed into the school to, appropriately enough, Rusted Root's "Send Me on My Way." However, as Belltown tradition dictates, students had to ring the ceremonial bell (located right in front of the high school) two by two, before they could enter the school and lose their gowns and mortarboards.

Amendments to Colchester Tax Relief Ordinance Unanimously Passed

by Kristina Histen

Every seat was taken at a special town meeting last Thursday, June 19, as more than 50 residents unanimously passed amendments that will widen eligibility for permanently and totally disabled individuals to benefit from the town's 1993 Elderly Tax Relief Ordinance.

Since Jan. 24, the Elderly Tax Relief Task Force (ETRTF), consisting of Chair Rosemary Coyle, Vice Chair Ron Goldstein, Jerry Blum, Neil Gervais, Brenden Healy, Bill Wagner, Eileen Fazekas and town Assessor John Chaponis, has met about twice a month to consider available options to provide tax relief to the elderly citizens.

The revised ordinance is now named "Colchester's Tax Relief Program for Homeowners who are Elderly or Permanently and Totally Disabled," reflecting the fact that the program will also be available to the disabled. The ordinance now has broadened eligibility, to include permanently and totally disabled individuals as eligible to apply for tax relief. The original 1993 ordinance only included eligibility for individuals 65 years of age and older and their spouses.

The amendments also call for raising the qualifying income limits were raised to \$5,000 above the state's 2008 elderly tax relief program qualifying limits, therefore the town's limits for this year will be \$34,800 for single individuals and \$41,500 for married couples, and since the state adjusts the qualifying income limits on an annual basis, Colchester's qualifying limits will also be adjusted on an

annual basis.

Other changes approved include lengthening the filing period, with a new deadline of Aug. 1 (the original ordinance had a filing period of Feb. 1 through May 15) and lowering the interest rate on deferred taxes from four percent to three percent (however, the Board of Selectmen may adjust this rate annually to take in account prevailing market conditions). Also, starting in 2012 and every five years thereafter, the program will be reviewed by a local option property tax relief task force and, if necessary, changes will be proposed, Coyle said at the meeting.

The amendments are effective immediately. "I think it is a wonderful thing that will help seniors," resident Dorothy Mrowka said after the meeting. "I won't ever qualify, but sometimes people need help and this will definitely give it to them. It will also let them keep their dignity to be able to stay in their own homes."

The ETRTF decided to consider the improvements to the 1993 Elderly Tax Relief Ordinance first before moving on to other options because it was a deferral program. The complete text of both the old ordinance and the approved ordinance is available on the town's web site, www.colchesterct.gov.

"I am very happy with the decision," First Selectman Linda Hodge said. "It is the first step of several [steps to help the elderly with tax relief] but we are headed down the right path."

Developers File Appeal Against Belltown Place Decision

by Michael McCoy

Fifteen days after the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) rejected a 127-unit development proposed for South Main Street, the applicant filed an appeal.

On June 4, the PZC unanimously voted down Glastonbury-based Pelletier Development's proposal "a townhouse community" called Belltown Place, located on a 24.4-acre parcel. It was billed as a Housing Opportunity Development (HOD). This means that in exchange for shaving a percentage off the fair market value, the developer would be allowed to build more units per acre. This is part of a state initiative to provide affordable housing to residents.

The proposal had been the subject of hearings and deliberation since the end of February. At the end of May, the Inland Wetland and Watercourses Agency unanimously approved the project, but that was followed by PZC's rejection of it the following week.

The day after PZC's action, Pelletier attorney Mark Branse said, "We clearly have no choice but to appeal."

It appears as if they wasted no time. The town received a summons on June 19, which names the PZC as the defendant.

According to the lawsuit, Chatham Health District director Thad King's "refusal to allow the drilling of sufficient exploratory wells deprived the plaintiffs [Pelletier Development] of the opportunity to present a modified application within the period prescribed by Conn. Gen. Stats. Section 8-30g that would address the Commission's concerns regarding lack of ad-

equated water supply and allow such information to be included in the record on appeal."

Section 8-30g of the state's general statutes is the piece that addresses HODs.

The appeal also accuses the PZC of failing to "state any valid or proper reason for its decision" and claimed the decision was "not supported by the weight of evidence." It further alleged that the PZC did not give due weight to affordable housing concerns and failed to consider "reasonable changes or conditions to the proposed plan..."

The litigation also alleges that "the Commission's decision has a substantial adverse impact upon the availability of affordable housing in the Town of East Hampton."

Branse declined to comment and, as of press time, Jean D'Aquila and Janet Brooks, attorneys for the town, were not available for comment.

PZC chairman Mark Philhower said the appeal "was almost expected." However, he stood behind the commission's decision and said the developers "refused to show that they could provide adequate water development." He added, "I believe the commission acted the only way it could vote with the evidence presented to it."

While the lawsuit will be filed at Superior Court in Middletown, all HOD-related cases are heard in New Britain. It will go to a pre-trial conference, where a settlement will be sought. Should this not happen, the matter will go to trial.

Colchester's Newest Toy Store Opens this Saturday

by Kristina Histen

The owners of Hide and Seek Toys are hoping the store will become every child's fantasyland and a parent's dreams come true.

Nestled at 199 Old Hartford Rd. (where the old Eblen's Clothing store used to be), the store is more than just convenient. It will not only offer the best specialty toys around at a reasonable price, but children can enjoy themselves for hours on end with open play, birthday parties and a variety of different classes like yoga, art and acting.

At just \$5 a day for unlimited open play, children of all ages can let their imaginations run wild with under-the-sea murals set behind a huge pirate ship along with sand boxes and a moon jump. There will also be a gated toddler section so parents can be worry free that their young ones won't be knocked over by the hyper active. Plus, with comfy couches ideal for breast-feeding or simply hanging out, a discount on siblings and a snack bar, it's just right for the whole family.

However, on Wednesday, it would seem highly unlikely that the place could possibly be ready by Saturday. The shelves that were put together in the store area were mostly empty with boxes of toys scattered throughout the floor. Most of the equipment for open play wasn't even put together yet and the walls were still being painted. But amidst it all were the determined husband and wife co-owners Lori and Vinny Indelicati, and ready or not, they're opening on Saturday, June 28.

Lori, with a heavy New York accent and a bubbly personality, believes that no matter what, everything happens for a reason and it all will work out. For four years, Vinny and Lori have been trying to find a location in Colchester because they saw a need for their type of store in the area. With the help of Jack Faski of Skyview Realty, they searched and searched but nothing seemed to work out until this past year. It wasn't until April when they were able to sign the lease and began work in mid-May.

Of course, Lori said, laughing, she is "very worried" about the economy. Yet she admits to being a "daredevil," especially when it comes to following dreams and seeing a need for something. She also feels there will be synergy between the other stores on the lot that she hasn't seen anywhere else. One store offers party supplies and the other is a Kodak picture store, and

Lori believes they can all benefit from each other's success. There is also great parking for the stores, which is set off to the side from the road, so parents don't have to worry about cars whizzing past.

"You can't live life in fear," she said. "If you believe strongly in something, go for it. The worst thing that can happen is you fail, but failure doesn't mean the end of the road. I'm not afraid to try things even if it does mean failure. If we fail, we fail. I will go on, I will move on, everything will be fine, but I don't think that's going to happen because I definitely think it's something that is needed here."

Plus, the Indelicatis have already had their streak of bad luck. The original paint color turned out to be like a mustard yellow, causing the place to look like a '70s basement, so the whole place had to be re-painted. A lot of toys she had purchased four months ago are still on back order and they are short-staffed. Not to mention, they were set back three weeks when the truck company they went through to deliver the safety flooring they ordered "kind of went out of business," Lori said. When the truck company finally brought the flooring to the store, they plopped it right at the front door - all 9,000 pounds of it - and drove away. But because this isn't their only toy store, Lori said she has learned a lot about being in business, and something will always go wrong.

The Indelicatis also own Whatnot Cottage Kids on 78 Main St. in East Hampton, which is slightly different because it is just a toy store with only some classes available. It was originally located in East Haddam, where the Indells still live, but two years ago they moved it over to a bigger store in East Hampton. Lori said that since the gas prices have gone up, they have become busier because people no longer want to drive all the way out to Wal-Mart or Toys-R-Us for a birthday present.

"When you support a local store you're supporting your local economy," Lori said. "What you spend here, stays here. They say on average that 80 percent of what you spend in a local store goes back to your local community and your schools. Unfortunately when you go to the big guys it's not even going to this country much less the local economy."

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Indelicatis reevaluated their lives. Vinny had worked in the World Trade Center for 17



The finishing touches are being put on Hide and Seek Toys, as the store's owners are getting ready for their grand opening this Saturday, June 28.

years, and was in the building for both the 1993 and 2001 attacks. The two had lost a lot of friends on Sept. 11 and gave it about a year before they decided to move out of New York.

"Don't get me wrong, I love New York, it's who I am," Lori said, "but we both worked in the corporate world and really wanted to do something fun, so we came here. That's why we do this, because it's fun and we wanted to do something we didn't have to take home with us."

Keeping it classic, Vinny came up with the name Hide and Seek Toys for their second store. Lori said the store's tagline was more difficult to create, but after a play on words they came up with "Come find fun," not only because that's what is expected when one visits, but also because "Fun" is the name of the bear that is the mascot for the store. "It all came together kind of accidentally," she said.

Even though the Indells have to scramble to get the store in place by Saturday, Lori just can't

wait. "I wanted to be here for so long," she said. "I think the area needs it, and hopefully we'll get the support from the town."

So be sure to be around this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., no matter what age, for the "light" grand opening of Hide and Seek Toys. Though the hours of operation haven't been set in stone yet, they will likely be Tuesday-Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday is kept free for Vinny and Lori to spend time with their six-year-old daughter.

In addition to toys, Hide & Seek Toys boasts indoor play areas for infants up to age 8, where children play for just \$5 each day (and parents are admitted free), a café with snacks and refreshments and an expansive party room.

Hide & Seek Toys is now accepting students for classes in parent and child yoga and children's acting lessons. Call Lori at 537-TOYS (8697) to inquire about dates, times and other classes being offered in the future.

Former Assistant Principal Offers Advice for RHAM Graduates

by Sarah McCoy

“Congratulations on your raise,” former RHAM High School Assistant Principal Jason Peacock said to the 227 graduating seniors at commencement exercises last Thursday, June 19. “As a high school graduate you will earn, on average, \$7,000 more a year than someone without a high school diploma.”

Peacock, who left RHAM High School at the end of last summer to take a principal job at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School in East Haddam, was invited back to be the honorary speaker at last week’s graduation ceremony. Peacock served as assistant principal at RHAM High School for six years.

He continued to give four pointers of advice to the graduating seniors. He told the members of the class to find their passion, whatever it is. “You’re better at being you than anyone else is,” Peacock said Thursday evening.

“Leave the world a better place than you found it,” he continued. Whether it’s by picking up litter, saying ‘hi’ to those who walk by, or giving blood, Peacock urged the graduating seniors to do the right thing.

His third pointer was to take pride in everything you do. Peacock’s proudest moment came not as a principal or assistant principal, but as a worker for a dye company making \$4.75 an hour. Despite being covered in goo and alone in a dark room, Peacock managed to fix a leaky gasket on a piece of machinery. He didn’t do it for the money, he did it because he took pride in the job he was hired to do.

“And, don’t be afraid of failure,” Peacock said as his final piece of advice for the RHAM High School Class of 2008. “Thomas Edison used to say that he never failed, he just found over 1,000 ways not to invent the light bulb.”

Words of wisdom for the future and reminiscing of the past converged last Thursday as 227 RHAM seniors said goodbye to high school and hello to their next step in life.

Class President Mallory Mangan likened her experience of RHAM to a movie. There were times playing under the Friday Night Lights.

There were the occasional Ferris Bueller’s Days Off. “We all,” she said, “had defining high school moments.

“It’s been a Most Excellent Adventure.”

Class Salutatorian Hannah Mondrah addressed her classmates, saying, ironically, “Grades aren’t everything.” It’s the experiences, she said, that she and her classmates will take from high school.

Valedictorian Ann Dang followed Mondrach, commending her fellow graduates. “You are not just potential,” she said. “You are success”

Graduating together, Dang said, “solidifies our bond, not just as classmates, but as friends.”

Prior to the dispensing of diplomas, Leslie announced the recipients of local scholarships. Forty-seven different students received scholarships for displaying characteristics such as academic achievement, citizenship, respect, and a desire to continue their education.

After each of the 227 graduating seniors had walked across the stage to accept their diploma, students let loose a fury of silly strings and tossed their caps into the air. Their time at RHAM High School is complete.

Class of 2008 Graduates

@ * Jennifer Marie Alfano, Ryan William Allison, Joseph James Anderson, Scott Douglas Anderson, Trevor Charles Averill, Tallal Bin Azmat, Sean Christopher Michael Baker, Bryan Robert Balcer, Ian Edgerly Bates, Brendan Michael Behrendt, Britney Elizabeth Bender, Jonathan David Billard, Kevin Timothy Black, Justin Warren Bodey, James Marc Boyle, Amanda Nicole Bragdon, Stephanie Loretta Brainard, Vanessa Georgina Bramwell, @ Devan Ellyse Brancard, Daniel James Branco, @ * Matthew Daniel Breglio, Andris Janis Briga, Conor Patrick Brown, Olivia Huntington Brown, * Gregory David Bucci;

@ Matthew Bradford Buck, Alexander Franz Buhagiar, Kelsey Rea Burns, Tiffany Busch, @ * Amy Lynn Canino, Lauren Ashley Caprario, Heather Marie Casale, Nicholas James Cassells, Evan Michael Chamberlain, David Lee Chapman, Peter Andrew Chase, Blaine Michael Chesnutt, Maura Lynn Cole, Jordan Michael Collins, Erin Elizabeth

Connolly, Hilary Jean Cooke, @ * Jaimie Elizabeth Cordier, Emily Teresa Costello, Arielle Meena Cotoia, Justin Robert Cowles, @ Wesley John Cowles, @ * Bridget Rosemarie Cronin, Joseph Dylan Cunningham, Kathryn Elizabeth D’Amico, * Ryan Michael Daddi, @ # * Ann Xiaoyu Dang, Matthew Joseph Daudish, Rory Jonathan Davenport, Christina Marie Deeter, Molly Frances DeGemmis, Tamra Lee DiBiasi, Mark Joseph DiTommaso, Melissa Kate Doherty, * Erin Elizabeth Duffy, Stephen Gerald DuPont, @ Michelle Denise Dussol, Kassandra Ann East, Kyrsten Lynn Eck, Erika Sita Eitland, @ Kellie Nicole Eldridge, Amber Christine Elliot, Kimberly Marie Erikson;

@ * Michelle Rose Fanciullo, Carli Marie Fandacone, Scott David Ferony, * Kaitlin Marie Finnance, @ Bryan Robert Finnegan, @ * Kristen Marie Finocchiaro, * Eric James Fitting, @ * Margaret Cecelia-Tucker Fitzgerald, Shawn Peter Fitzpatrick, Kara Diane Fodaski, Corinna Ann Fornabi, @ Matthew Carlson Forsberg, @ * Britany Leigh Fowler, Victoria Demari Freitas, Ryan William Friend, Kayla Marie Fritz, Timothy Aaron Giddix, @ * Susan Marie Gilbert, * Colleen Ann Girardin, Brittany Ann Glynn, Jonathan William Gonsalves, Johnathan David Grano, Sandra Rae Griffin, Britney Gudeahn, Jack Edmond Guerin, @ Carlo Anthony Guerriero, * Tyler James Hall, Rachael Elizabeth Hara, Ashley Pamela Hart, Cassandra Lauren Hartwell, Jessica Lee Hayden, Heather Claire Hellstrom, * Ryan Donald Henley, Melissa Ann Heriot, Keith Brian Hinchey, James Paul Holmes, Tyler James Hopson;

Drew Jason Hund, Maria Lauren Hunter, * Robert Lee Huntington III, * Rhiannon Rose Jadush, @ * Daniel Mark Jardin, * Rebecca Leigh Johnston, Michael Theodore Kalisz, Ryan James Kane, Erin Lyn Kelly, Karissa Marie Kermod, Scott Ford Kimball, Alexander Robertson Kliminsky, Peter Horst Knochenhauer, Samantha Kaye Konopka, Michael Alexander Krywonis, Alicia Jean Kureczka, Kayla Marie Lage, * Blaise Michael Lampugnale, Faith Leigh Langhans, Matthew James Laprad, Robert Douglas Leach, Jr., Andrea Lynn Lee, Leah Anne Liebeskind, Angela Marie Lomnick, @ Jessica Ann Long, William Michael Longo, Jillian Jadwiga Loos, Daria Lash Lotreck, @ * Dana Catherine Lovallo, Ashley Ann Ludwig, Kayla Lauren Lunt, Hailey Marie Machado, Justin Michael MacLean, Christopher James Madison, Meaghan Catherine Maher, James Phillip Maloney, * Mallory

Bree Mangan, Derrick Miles Martin, @ Zachary Michael Frank Martin, Michael Mark Mayes, Colleen Turner McClintock, Zachary Michael Caple McCutcheon, * Jennifer Aimee McKay;

Megan Karen McManus, Ryan Arthur McNary, Nicholas Robert McQueeney, @ * Kristyn Aniela Michaud, Christopher Jason Miemiec, Ashley Marie Minicucci, ## * Hannah Rebecca Mondrach, Michael Joseph Murray, Miles Reid Natorski, Sarah Elizabeth Nilsen, @ * Jonathan Joseph Novak, Jaime Michelle O’Connor, @ Shelley Patrice O’Keefe, Axel Karl Ost, David Anthony Padelli, Michael Frederick Paonessa, Rebecca Alana Parade, Shawna Marie Parente, Spencer Emilio Paris-Beattie, Lisa Michelle Parks, * Shelby Marie Passacantando, Michael Gregory Pattavina, Michael James Pekarski, Caitlyn Ann Pelletier, Benjamin Thomas Poncini, Anthony Edward Poulin, Martha Louise Price, Monica Lorraine Price, Sean Patrick Quint, Ayla Vivienne Raes, Molly Elizabeth Rathbun, Elizabeth Ann Regish, Eric Michael Ress, Kimberly Christen Rick, Katie Ellen Robinson, Timothy Robert Roesch, Jamie Lynn Roly, Sierra Joy Roman, Matthew Salvatore Roncaioli, Thomas Edward Ryan, Darren Rynne, David Matthew Sarisley, @ * Christopher Joseph Savitski, Nicholas Matthew Schadle, Kyle Timothy Schappert;

Eric Joseph Schaus, Elyse Marie Schiavi, Gordon Patrick Sime, Brian Donald Simons, William Lee Siter, Jessica Mary Snell, * Mark David Sousa, * Aaron Lee Speagle, Sean Michael Stack, Michele Lynn Steiner, Rachel Farrell Steiner, * Emily Kathryn Strunk, Benjamin Ross Sutherland, Beth Anne Sweeney, Nikole Elaine-Sandra Sylvester, Shannon Marie Sylvester, Catherine Anne Szykowitz, Valerie Elizabeth Timreck, Kevin Robert Townley, Alexandra Nicole Tracy, * Matthew Evan Trippel, Shelby Lynn Trott, Jessica Lee Troy, Sarah Lynn Turner, John Patrick Tworkowski, Jordan Aaron Tyler, Christine Michelle Wallace, Sean Michael Walters, Kyle Joseph Walz, Christopher Fitton Wargo, Yuri Eugene Weselyj, Nathan Edward Whitehouse, Cheryl Lynn Wooster, Brianna Lynn Yardis, Jessica Lee Zocco

Valedictorian
Salutatorian
* Member of National Honor Society in good standing
@ Green Cord/100 or more hours of community service

East Hampton Hires New Town Manager

by Michael McCoy

After a nearly yearlong stint as acting town manager, it looks as if Bob Drewry will get to return to his position as director of public works.

That’s because the Town Council announced Tuesday it has selected a new town manager.

Jeffrey J. O’Keefe, currently division manager for the Administrative Services Department for the City of Santa Clarita, CA, will begin his new position in East Hampton Sept. 1.

O’Keefe’s hiring seems to mark the end of an arduous saga that began a year ago, when the Town Council fired longtime town manager Alan Bergren. The council then hired his replacement, Jim Thomas, last October. He was to start Jan. 1 of this year, with an annual salary of \$118,000.

Two months – and one election – after Thomas’ hiring, the Town Council rescinded his contract, a mere two weeks before his scheduled first day. In January, the town agreed to a “release settlement” that paid Thomas \$60,000, and he agreed not to pursue any legal action against the town.

The Town Council hired Wallingford-based Randi Frank Consulting in February, to aid in the search for a town manager. Then, in April, the council set up a seven-person search panel – composed of five residents and two retired town managers – to narrow down the field.

Five candidates were selected and were set to come to town on June 12. However, one took another job before this date, and this brought

the number down to four. So, the four candidates met with the search panel June 12 and 13.

On Saturday, June 14, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., each Town Council member met with each candidate for one-on-one interviews. That night, they were given a tour of the town by Drewry and taken to dinner at Angelico’s. The tour was also supposed to include a cruise on Lake Pocotopaug, courtesy of Dennis Griswold, but it was called off due to bad weather.

The candidates were reconvened from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. the next day. This time, the council as a whole interviewed the candidates. Later that day, they extended an offer to O’Keefe, who accepted the position.

According to Town Council member Tom Cordeiro, while the finer points of the contract are still being finalized, O’Keefe’s salary would be \$120,000.

O’Keefe has roots in Connecticut (his wife Donna is from Old Saybrook) and served a three-year term, from 2001-04, on the Connecticut Statewide Transportation Strategy Board. From 2000-04, he was CEO for the Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority

In Santa Clarita, CA, O’Keefe, according to his resume, heads up a division with an \$18 million operating budget and is responsible for overseeing “all operational, administrative, planning, and budgeting aspects.”

Santa Clarita, located about 35 miles north-

west of downtown Los Angeles, has a population of 243,000. The city has 371 employees, and a \$160 million budget. (According to the 2000 census, East Hampton has a population of 13,000. Its 2008-09 budget is \$36.94 million.)

O’Keefe earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Kent State University and a Master’s degree in public administration from California State University.

Cordeiro said Tuesday that the panel as well as the council unanimously picked O’Keefe. However, he said, council members did not look at the panel’s selection until after their interviews were completed, so there would not be any bias.

Cordeiro said O’Keefe “brought to us a great energy. He had actually visited the town two weeks before his scheduled interview.” And, Cordeiro added, “He knew street names.”

He later said Frank is in the middle of conducting a background check.

Cordeiro said after the meeting he was especially excited about his attitude toward infrastructure, and to that end mentioned, “He has some political influence that he feels may be helpful with grants.” He said O’Keefe currently makes “considerably more” money in California, but was more interested in getting back to Connecticut.

Council chairman Melissa Engel said, “I wanted him from the beginning” and called it a

“pleasant surprise” to find that the search panel had picked the same candidate.

Drewry said, “On paper he looks great,” although he cautioned, “You never know until he starts working for you.” Still, he said, “It doesn’t seem that he has any skeletons in his closet.”

Drewry also seemed quite impressed with O’Keefe’s pre-interview stakeout of the town and figured, “He wanted the job real bad.”

“It was the first time I saw anyone do a background check on the town,” council member Bill Devine said.

Fellow councilman Sue Weintraub called O’Keefe the “engine to drive our economic development” and said, “He has the background to do that.”

She also said, “He has the energy we need” and “He knows how to think outside the box.”

Like others, Weintraub voiced her pleasure over his visit to town. “He did his homework... and that’s impressive.”

While Drewry admitted he’s “ready to go back” to his position at Public Works, he said, “I’m going to help [O’Keefe] in any way I can to make this transition as smooth as possible.”

Cordeiro said the council hoped O’Keefe could start earlier than September but that O’Keefe wanted to see some projects through that he had begun in Santa Clarita.

“We respect that,” Cordeiro said. “If he worked for us, we’d want him to finish too.”

Andover Voters Again Turn Down Proposed Budget

by Sarah McCoy

They're getting closer in Andover, but they're not there yet.

Voters once again shot down the proposed \$10.27 million 2008-09 budget at a referendum on Tuesday.

By a vote of 212 to 206, voters sent another message to town officials that they just can't afford the increase. "It's yet another increase," resident Mary Duval said Tuesday after casting her vote. "I wanted to see a zero mill rate increase."

On Wednesday night, a day after the budget vote failed, the Board of Finance (BOF) made its recommendations for the next budget referendum. At their meeting the BOF received word from Board of Education Chair Jay Linddy that the local school would be returning \$200,650 to the town, as a result of underspending in the current fiscal year.

Instead of putting all of this in the town's reserve, as has been customary in Andover, the BOF opted to apply approximately \$83,000 to reduce this year's budget. This would bring the final increase to 1 mill.

State statute prohibits towns from applying a surplus in one year to another year's budget, so the town will borrow the \$83,000 from the general fund and replenish it with the \$200,650 from the local Board of Education.

The BOF made no reductions to the content of the proposed 2008-09 fiscal year budget.

"I really don't believe we have anything to cut," BOF member William Perez said on Wednesday night.

BOF Acting Chair Cathy Desrosiers agreed. "If people are worried about their personal finances and their own cost of living, this is the budget they should vote for," she said. "If it's a political reason [they're not voting for the budget] then it'll never pass."

Desrosiers has said earlier in the budget process, and again on Wednesday, that she doesn't believe it's the money that residents are taking issue with in this year's budget. "It's political," she said. "And that's a tough thing for this board to deal with."

The motion to take \$83,000 from the general fund and apply it to this year's budget passed unanimously, but it wasn't without discussion.

BOF member Bob Carrara recommended the finance board cut the \$70,000 in the budget earmarked for capital projects. Perez said he would like to use half, or \$100,000, of the BOE surplus to reduce next year's budget. BOF members Marie Burbank and Ginny Kuhn, however, worried that this would be too much. "I think we have to be prepared for the worst and if the worst doesn't come, fantastic," Kuhn said.

The local Board of Education is estimating a shortage of \$75,000 for next year's budget, due to an increase in enrollment for magnet schools and the rising cost of fuel. The general government also is expecting a shortage due to the increase in the cost of fuel. The budget was compiled estimating oil costing \$3 a gallon. Currently it's over \$4.

Kuhn said she would like to see the BOF use less of the surplus to defray the cost of this year's budget, and put more of it into the town's reserve fund in the case of an emergency, as preparation for what looks to be a difficult year ahead.

But, Desrosiers responded, "That's not what the people voting are telling us they want," Desrosiers responded.

Perez and Desrosiers spearheaded the desire to get the BOF to a one mill increase. "I think if we get rid of the .3 we might be at the magic number," Perez said.

With only six votes to make up from last Tuesday's referendum, the Board of Finance is hoping this appropriation seals the deal.

The town will hold its fourth town meeting next Tuesday, July 1, at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Andover Elementary School. Voters will either approve the budget to go forth to referendum, which would likely be held on July 15. Or, voters could vote down the Board of Finance's recommendations, in which case the BOF would head back to the drawing board.

Two Men Arrested in Connection with Spring Burglaries in Portland

by Michael McCoy

Portland police arrested two men June 16 in connection to a string of burglaries that date back to March.

The town experienced a rash of burglaries in March and April around Old Marlborough Road, Cox Road, and Penfield Hill Road. According to Lieutenant Ron Milardo, the perpetrators would force entry into the homes by either kicking in the door or breaking windows. They would then proceed to stuff their loot into pillowcases that they ripped off from a bed.

On June 16, police nabbed Rick Rotondi, 20, and Brad Hruska, 19, both of 12 Ap Gates Rd., East Haddam, in conjunction with the aforementioned incidents. Rotondi was charged with two counts of third-degree burglary, as well as a count of first and third degree larceny, police said, while Hruska was charged with conspiracy to commit burglary, as well as third-degree burglary and second-degree larceny.

Though the primary target was jewelry, Milardo said the bandits made off with cash and electronic equipment as well. During their nearly month-long spree in Portland, Milardo said they easily stole thousands of dollars in money and goods.

However, Milardo added, the perpetrators also hit up residences in East Haddam, East Hampton and Glastonbury, among others.

Officer Gary Jarzabek led the investigation and worked with neighboring police departments to crack the case. During the four-week investigation, Jarzabek and fellow officer Daniel Knapp visited a number of pawn shops in places such as Hartford, Meriden and Waterbury to recover the stolen items and track down the alleged burglars.

Rotondi and Hruska are currently being held on bond, police said.

Commenting on the case, Milardo said it was a "lengthy investigation" and added, "It was a lot of legwork."

Blumenthal Warns Customers About Colchester Oil Company

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) Commissioner Jerry Farrell Jr. Monday announced they are jointly investigating Cady Oil of Colchester.

According to a press release issued by Blumenthal's office, certain pre-pay customers reported that Cady Oil had underfilled tanks or failed to make oil deliveries altogether.

Blumenthal and Farrell urged any Cady Oil consumers with long-term or pre-pay contracts to immediately report any incidents of underfilling or missed deliveries. They said consumers who are owed oil or services, and paid in advance by credit card, should dispute the charges with the credit card company.

"Given the news that we have been hearing in recent days, our fuel investigators visited Cady Oil today and had discussions with the owners, who confirmed that they were going out of business and subsequently relinquished their heating oil dealer's license,"

Farrell said Monday. "We are tagging their trucks now and they are prohibited from selling or delivering any oil. In addition, we are obtaining their list of pre-buy fuel contract customers, so we may act quickly to ensure customers' funds are returned."

Blumenthal said, "We will fight for money back and other relief for consumers from this apparently failed home heating oil dealer. Our investigation concerning this apparent home heating failure is a warning about long-term or pre-pay oil contracts. Cady Oil is only the latest home heating fuel company facing financial failure or collapse. My office, working closely with DCP, will investigate this company ... to protect consumers. I urge any consumer with questions or complaints to contact us immediately."

Cady Oil customers who have pre-paid for fuel or who have ongoing fuel service contracts are encouraged to call DCP at 860-713-6160 or Blumenthal's office at 860-808-5420.

Cady Oil was unable to be reached for comment for this story.

Colchester Police News

6/16-Samuel Kranc, 48, of 59 Carli Blvd., was charged with DUI, State Police said.

6/16-Robert Borgeson, 20, of 423 Linwood Cemetery Rd., was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

6/18-Sean Anderson, 21, of 45 Mill St., was charged with possession of cocaine, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

6/18-Leona Macdonald, 43, of 60 Lebanon Ave., was charged with DWI and improper turn, State Police said.

6/19-Danny Spaulding, 25, of 83 Lebanon Ave., was charged with possession of marijuana, State Police said.

6/19-Kyle Jolly, 19, of 149 Pautipaug Hill Rd., Baltic, was charged with three counts of violation of probation, State Police said.

6/22-Mark Eddy, 25, of 1087 Main St. Apt. D, Manchester, was charged with DUI, failure to stay in lane, operating an unregistered vehicle and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, State Police said.

6/22-Thomas Morosky, 54, of 640 Old Hartford Rd., was charged with DUI, failure to drive right and traveling fast, State Police said.

6/23-Two 15-year-olds and two 16-year-olds were all charged with third-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

6/22-Trevor Quider, 21, of 272 Mountain View Rd., Somers, was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs and failure to maintain lane, State Police said.

Portland Police News

6/14 — Jason Clark, 34, of 7B Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with DUI and failure to drive reasonable distance apart, Portland Police said.

6/16 — Steven Rockwell, 48, of 120 Washington St., Milford, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

6/21 — Sarah LeBlanc, 19, of 181 Paley farms Rd., was charged with four counts of second-degree failure to appear, police said.

East Hampton Police News

6/3 — Timothy Sherrick Sr., of 33 Terp Rd., was issued a ticket for allowing a dog to roam, East Hampton Police said.

6/7 — Slawomir R. Welka, 32, of 812 Lake Vista Dr., and Eric Grechko, 48, of 30 Palisade Ter., Glastonbury, were involved in a motor vehicle accident at the East Hampton Public Library, police said, and added that Welka was arrested for operating without insurance, misuse of registration and operating an unregistered motor vehicle.

6/8 — Shaun D. Sweet, 23, of 40 Colchester Ave., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign, police said.

6/13 — Andrew Parley, 22, of 54 Rillbrook Rd., Griswold, and Matthew P. Wargo, 20, of 19 Lake Ridge Rd., Marlborough, were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Rt. 196 and Rt. 16, police said, and added that Parley was issued a ticket for failure to drive right.

6/15 — A sixteen-year-old female juvenile was arrested for disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

Hebron Lake Reopened After Weeklong Shutdown

by Sarah McCoy

Those looking to cool off late last week and early this week had to find somewhere other than Gay City State Park to do it.

The lake at the park closed last Wednesday, June 25, due to a high bacteria count. The Department of Environmental Protection received word that Tuesday's retest yielded numbers in the normal range and the lake was to reopen Wednesday afternoon, DEP Spokesman Dennis Schain said.

"Gay City is among the inland beaches most likely to face closures in the summer," Schain said. He said this is, most likely, due

to the high concentration of waterfowl and not any man-made pollution.

The lake at Gay City State Park is routinely tested each week. When the DEP received last week's test results, they closed the beach to swimmers. The re-test, taken on Tuesday, showed normal levels of bacteria prompting the DEP to reopen the popular swimming destination Wednesday afternoon.

Those looking for more information about beach closures are asked to visit the DEP web site www.ct.gov/dep or call the beach hotline at 1-866-CT PARKS.

Obituaries

East Haddam

Mildred Kalat Jahelka

Mildred Kalat Jahelka, 90, a lifelong resident of East Haddam, passed away Friday, June 20, 2008. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. Born in New York on June 28, 1917, Mildred grew up in East Haddam, the daughter of the late Helen and Wallace Kalat. She is especially remembered as the executive secretary to the principal of Nathan Hale Ray High School, where she was employed for many years. She ran a successful business, the Arrowhead Gift Shop and County Store, in Haddam, CT. After her retirement, she served in many volunteer positions, including secretary to the East Haddam Historical Society, member of the Board of Directors of the Bashan Lake Association, Docent at Amasa Day House in Moodus, and East Haddam Senior Citizen's bus driver.

Mildred was a woman who enjoyed much in her life. She cherished the time spent with family. She dearly loved her home of nearly 50 years on Bashan Lake (her "Golden Pond"). She was most comfortable outdoors swimming in the lake or working in her yard. An avid gardener, Mildred loved Queen Anne's Lace flowers, the bright red geraniums that adorned her home, her magnificent vegetable gardens and the lovely cardinals that visited her often.

Mildred was predeceased by her husband, Anton Jon Jahelka and her son, Thomas Dean Jahelka. She is survived by her daughter, Linda J. Aldrich of East Haddam; her niece, Deborah Prater of Moodus; her nephew, Martin S. Prater of Bailey, CO, and her four granddaughters and their families, Jesse Strassman and her husband Mark of San Rafael, CA and their children Benjamin, Mia and Sophie; Victoria Fewell and her husband Scott of Essex Junction, VT and their children Olivia, Georgia and Eva; Jeanne Ritchie and her husband Mark of Union, MO and their children Mikaela and Emily; Jeannette Womble and her husband John of Greenville, SC and their children Luke and Lydia; and her former daughter-in-law, Susan Jahelka of Olathe, KS.

The family greatly appreciates the loving care and kindness of the staff at Chestelm where Mildred spent her last years.

The family received friends and relatives at the Spencer Funeral Home, East Hampton, Thursday, June 26. The funeral process left the Spencer Funeral Home on Thursday at 10:30 a.m., and was followed by a celebration of Mildred's life at 11 a.m. in the First Church of Christ Congregational in East Haddam with the Reverend Kathleen Peters officiating. Burial followed in the family plot in the Main Street Cemetery in East Haddam.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Bashan Lake Association. Contact William Denya at 203-237-9000 or the 100 Club of Connecticut at the 100club.org. To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com

Colchester

Katherine V. Muir

Katherine V. Muir, "Kay," 88, of Colchester, widow of the late Gerald Muir, passed away Sunday morning, June 22, at the Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Born April 26, 1920, in Lexington, VA, she was a daughter of the Charles Lee and Nora Lee (Switzer) Altizer.

Together, Kay and Gerry had lived in Maryland and New Jersey for a number of years before moving to Colchester in the 1960s. Over the years, Mrs. Muir had worked as a sales associate at local stores and was also a trained cosmetologist. Kay was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester and volunteered with the Ladies Guild there — especially enjoying to help make pierogi. She was also very active with the Colchester Senior Center and was a longtime member of Colchester Grange No. 78. Kay also helped make sleeping bags for the less fortunate with "My Brother's Keeper" in Colchester.

She is survived by her three sisters, Beatrice Webb of Natural Bridge, VA, Bernice Hickman of Lexington, VA and Alma Harris of San Francisco, CA and numerous extended nieces, nephews, extended family members and a host of friends.

Friends can call Friday morning, June 27, starting at 9:30 a.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester; followed by the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at 11 a.m. at St. Andrew Church with Fr. Michael Giannitelli officiating. Interment will follow in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Peter M. Stupnitzki

Peter M. Stupnitzki, 54, of East Hampton, husband of the late Joanne E. (Youngs) Stupnitzki, died Saturday, June 21, at his home. Born Sept. 22, 1953, in Sansdans L'Yonne, France, he was the son of Victoria (Robin) Stupnitzki and the late Michael Stupnitzki.

Peter had lived in Hartford before moving to East Hampton more than 17 years ago. He was retired from SNET after more than 20 years of service and had been employed at NAPA Auto Parts in Colchester as a parts manager. Peter had been a member of Telephone Pioneers of America.

Besides his mother, Victoria Stupnitzki of Hampton, he is survived by his son, Christopher Stupnitzki of Newington, a stepdaughter, Sandra Youngs of Florida, two sisters, Chantal Stupnitzki of Newington and Nadia Hall of Hampton, and two nephews, Devin Ford of Uncasville and Justin Ford of Hartford.

A memorial service will be held Friday, June 27, at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. John Ash officiating. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery East Hampton. Friends may call at the funeral home on Friday from 9 a.m. until the time of the service.

To leave online condolences or for directions, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Grace M. Perrone

Grace M. "Gracie" Perrone, 58, of East Hampton, died Sunday, June 22. She was born in Hartford, daughter of the late Vincent Perrone Sr. and Carmela (Ruggiero) Perrone and had lived in East Hampton for the last 16 years. Grace worked as a service consultant at Travelers Insurance Company for over 40 years. She enjoyed Lake Pocotopaug, kayaking on the lake, taking walks, grilling out, spending time with her friends and family and her cats.

She is survived by her son, John M. Candela of East Hampton; her brother, Vincent D. Perrone Jr. of East Hampton; six nieces and a nephew, Rosemarie Russell, Mary Catherine Gopal, Christine Rheaume, Susan Piasecki, Margaret and Jean Annino and David Perrone; a sister-in-law, Eileen Griffin and her husband Michael and a brother-in-law, Joseph Annino; an aunt, Nonie DiBenedetto; and an uncle, Joseph Ruggiero and his wife Ann; many grandnieces and grand nephews, and many longtime special friends. She was predeceased by a brother, Carmen Perrone and a sister, Theresa Annino.

The funeral will be Friday, June 27, at 9:15 a.m., from The Dillon-Baxter Funeral Home, 1276 Berlin Tpke., Wethersfield, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial, 10 a.m. in St. Augustine Church, 10 Campfield Ave., Hartford. Burial will follow in Cedar Hill Cemetery. Visiting hours were Thursday, June 26, at the funeral home. Contributions in her memory may be made to: Marlborough Health Care Center, 85 Stage Harbor Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447. To share a memory with the family, visit www.dillonbaxter.com.

East Hampton

Helen Peck

Helen (Bates) Peck, 99, of Middle Haddam, died Thursday, June 19, at her home. Her husband, Raymond Peck, predeceased her in 1969. Helen was born in Hartford on January 9, 1909, the daughter of the late Herbert and Maude (Lyons) Bates, and grew up in East Hartford. She married after graduating from high school and traveled with her husband, living in various places during his career. They lived in Chicago for an extended period of time before moving to Middle Haddam where Helen resided for over 50 years.

Helen was an avid supporter of the arts, notably the Wadsworth Atheneum, and was involved with her husband in the formation of the New England Air Museum. She consistently supported community events. She was an historic resource with the Middle Haddam Historic Society and was instrumental in Middle Haddam gaining status as a National Historic Area. Helen was a member of the Middle Haddam Garden Club and volunteered for many years at the Middle Haddam Public Library. She was a strong presence, full of spunk, stylish and charismatic. Helen learned to drive after her husband died in 1969 and was seen about town in "Misty Blue," her '74 Pinto. "Misty Blue" enabled her to frequent antique auctions and become an avid collector, decorating her beloved Mulberry Farm home with her latest finds.

She is survived by her great nephew, Jeffrey Wolcott, his wife, Donna, and daughter, Kimberly all of West Hartford; and her dear friend, Carol Wheeler of Middle Haddam. The family wishes to thank Joyce, Amma, Eunice, Patricia, Hadara and Diane for their loving care. A Funeral Service was held Saturday, June 21, at the Taylor & Modeen Funeral Home, 136 South Main St., West Hartford. Burial followed at Fairview Cemetery, West Hartford. Friends and relatives will be received at the funeral home last Saturday morning, prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the New England Air Museum, Bradley International Airport, 36 Perimeter Rd., Windsor Locks, CT 06096.

Portland

William A. Darrow Sr.

William A. "Will" Darrow Sr., 92, formerly of Airline Avenue, Portland, passed away Sunday, June 22, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the husband of the late Mabel Blore Darrow. Born in Roxbury, MA, Sept. 17, 1915, a son of the late Benjamin and Lillian Anderson Darrow, he had been a Portland resident for over 50 years.

He had been employed as a lace maker for 30 years, first for the Norwalk Lace Co. and later the Wilcox Lace Co., of Middletown. He retired from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation in 1977 after 18 years of service there. He had been a member of the Masonic Lodge of Portland.

He is survived by his daughter Nancy Sbona and her husband Manny of Portland; his son William A. Darrow, Jr.; his grandchildren Jason, Justin, Katie, Billy, Jeffrey, and Cherie; his seven great-grandchildren; his brother Harry W. Darrow of Ashford, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his daughter Florence M. Darrow.

His family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Tuesday, June 24. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, June 25, at 11 a.m. in the Portland Memorial Funeral home with the Rev. John F. Ashe, Pastor of the Church of Saint Mary officiating. Interment will follow in Pine Grove Cemetery in Middletown. Pallbearers will be Jason Darrow, Justin Darrow, Billy Darrow, Gregory Bolton, Jeffrey Sbona and Michael Sbona. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that gift in Will's memory be sent to the charity of one's choice.

Hebron

Patricia Ann Duffy

Patricia Ann (Topping) Duffy of Hebron, wife of Brian P. Duffy, died on Sunday, June 22, at St. Joseph Living Center surrounded by her family. She was the daughter of the late Paul B. Topping, Sr. and Ann (Grubb) Topping. Mrs. Duffy has been a resident of Hebron for many years.

Besides her husband Brian, she is survived by her sons, Jonathan Paul Duffy, Nathaniel Patrick Duffy and Ethan Edward Duffy; her sister, Eleanor T. Hicks, brother-in-law, James E. Duffy; sister-in-law, Patricia Duffy; niece, Kelly McCarthy and nephew Jameson Duffy as well as several cousins. She was predeceased by her brother, Paul B. Topping Jr.

Her family will receive friends Friday, June 27, between 6-8 p.m., at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St. (Rte.195), Willimantic. Her Funeral Mass will be celebrated Saturday, June 28, at 10 a.m. at St. Joseph Church, 99 Jackson St., Willimantic. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Joseph Living Center, 14 Club Road, Windham, CT 06280.

Patricia was an especially dear, loving mother, wife and friend and will be extremely missed. For online memorial guestbook and directions, please visit www.potterfuneralhome.com.

Portland

David E. Felt

David E. Felt, 59, of Portland, formerly of Killingworth, husband of the late Sharon (Curry) Felt, died Tuesday, June 24, at home. Born July 15, 1948, in Casper, WY, son of the late Wesley and Gunborg (Quist) Felt, he had lived in Killingworth for almost forty years before moving to Portland a short time ago.

David graduated from the University of Wyoming in 1970 and received his masters from the University of Connecticut in 1975 and was a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma honor society. He was an engineer at U.T.C. for many years.

He is survived by a son Jeremy Felt of Avon, a daughter Jessica Felt of Chester, a brother Dr. Jerry Felt of Omaha, NE. He was predeceased by a sister Karin Brewer and a brother Jim Felt.

A graveside service will be Saturday, June 28, at 10:30 a.m., in Holy Cross Cemetery, Glastonbury. Friends may call at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, Friday, June 27, from 6-8 p.m. Memorial donations may be made to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, 300 Research Parkway, Suite 310, Meriden, CT. 06450.

Colchester

Christopher S. Panioto

Christopher S. Panioto, 59, of East Hill Road, Canton, beloved husband of Cindy (McDaniel) Panioto, died Tuesday (June 24, 2008) at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center. He was born Nov. 9, 1948 in Hartford, son of Sebastian A. and Mary (Farragher) Panioto of Wethersfield and had lived in Colchester prior to moving to Canton 17 years ago.

He was a combat veteran of the Vietnam Era having served in the U. S. Marines and was awarded the Purple Heart Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with Three Stars, Rifle Marksman Badge, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Combat Action Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal. He attended Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University where he received Pilot Certification. Mr. Panioto was a dispatcher for the Canton Police Department for many years and a retired Daytona Beach, FL, police officer. He was an avid hunter and fisherman and was a former member of the First Company Governor's Horse Guards, Avon.

Besides his wife of 15 years and his parents, he is survived by his daughter, Christina Panioto of Rochester, NY; his son, Matthew Panioto of Canton; two brothers, Mark Panioto of Bristol and Jeffrey Panioto of Fox Island, WA; a loving extended family and the mother of his daughter Christina, Charlene Markiano. Friends may call at the Vincent Funeral Home, 120 Albany Tpke., Canton, Friday, June 27, from 3-8 p.m. Funeral service will be Saturday, June 28, at 11 a.m. at the Funeral Home with Chaplain William Cox officiating. Private burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to St. Francis Foundation - Cancer Center, 95 Woodland St., Hartford, CT 06105-9720. For on-line condolences or directions visit www.vincentfuneralhome.com.