

RIVEREAST

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This sign was posted at the corner of Routes 66 and 85 in Hebron last week, following the freeing of former resident Marc Gonsalves. A 1990 graduate of RHAM High School, Gonsalves was held hostage for over five years in Columbia, following his capture by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia.

Former Hebron Resident Freed from Hostage Situation

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron resident George Gonsalves says he goes to bed happy and wakes up happy these days. He's got good reason to. His son, Marc, a RHAM High School graduate, is finally on U.S. soil after being held hostage for over five years in Columbia.

In February 2003, Marc Gonsalves and four colleagues were flying over Columbia on a drug surveillance mission for Northrop Grumman. The plane went down and almost immediately the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) captured Marc Gonsalves and his colleagues Thomas Howes and Keith Stansell. The two others perished in the plane crash.

The three Americans joined a growing list of captives for the FARC, including French politician Ingrid Betancourt, who was kidnapped in 2002.

But last Wednesday, July 2, the ordeal for 15 hostages, including Betancourt and the three Americans, came to an end, thanks to an elaborate scheme of trickery.

The rescue mission, dubbed Operation Check, was developed and executed by Columbian troops with assistance from a team of U.S. Special Forces stationed in Bogota. Published reports indicate that the rescue involved an infiltration of the FARC by Columbian soldiers and a series of fake radio messages.

The military spies posing as FARC guerrillas were able to trick the rebels to hand

over 15 hostages under the guise of moving them to another camp. However, about halfway into the flight, one of the crewmen reportedly turned to the hostages and said, "We're the national army. You're free."

Two FARC commanders joined the hostages on board the MI-17 helicopter but were overtaken by members of the national army. They remain in custody.

Columbian Defense Minister Juan Manuel Santos said the operation "will go into history for its audacity and effectiveness," published reports have said.

Marc Gonsalves and the two other American hostages were taken from Columbia to Texas last Thursday. They landed at Lackland Air Force Base and are currently undergoing a reintegration process at U.S. Army base Fort Sam Houston, George Gonsalves said.

George Gonsalves, along with many other members of Marc's family, flew down to Texas for a long-awaited reunion. "It was unbelievable," George said of seeing his son again. "There were times when we doubted when we would see Marc again but we always knew that this day would come."

While reports indicate that Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice were briefed on the rescue mission, none of the families of the

hostages were told of the plan.

"I was mowing my lawn when my neighbor told me they had Marc," George recalled. "We ran into the house, turned CNN on, and sure enough, there he was.

"I never did finish my lawn," he added.

George Gonsalves said all three of the former hostages are in good health and excellent spirits.

Marc Gonsalves, who grew up in Bristol and then moved to Hebron in the late 80s, graduated from RHAM High School in 1990. He served in the U.S. Air Force for 8 years and soon after began work as a contractor for Northrop Grumman, a global defense and technology company.

Prior to his capture, Marc Gonsalves lived in Florida with his wife, daughter Destiny, and two stepsons, Cody and Joey. George Gonsalves reported that his son will return to Florida when he completes the reintegration process at Fort Sam Houston in Texas.

He also hinted at the possibility of a trip to Connecticut for Marc. With his father in Hebron and mother, Jo Rosano, still in Bristol, George Gonsalves said his son is eager to get back to his home state. "When he saw a picture of the sign welcoming him home, it really touched him," George said of the "Welcome Home Marc Gonsalves" sign posted at the intersection

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of routes 66 and 85. "He was happy to see that people from Hebron would do something like that."

While Marc Gonsalves' ordeal has come to an end, he realizes that many others can't say the same. In a press conference held Tuesday, Gonsalves denounced the FARC, calling his captors, "terrorists with a capital 'T.'"

George Gonsalves said his son is passionate about helping the remaining hostages in Co-

lumbia and about continuing the drug surveillance he was doing. "Their interests lie in drug trafficking, kidnapping. They refuse to recognize human rights," Marc Gonsalves said at Tuesday's press conference. He went on to thank his rescuers and said, "I don't have to dream about being free anymore."

"This happy ending is really a happy beginning for Marc and our entire family," George Gonsalves said.

Colchester Police News

6/29-Samuel Turker, 18, of 775 Old Hartford Rd., was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

7/1-Peter Ezold, 24, of 206 High St., Norwich, turned himself into State Police on the charges of operating or towing unregistered vehicle, reckless driving and operating with a suspended license, State Police said.

7/4-Matthew Mercado, 18, of 75 Mill Hill Rd., was charged with DWI, State Police said.

7/5-Michael Forrest, 51, of 5408 Carmen Ave., Sarasota, FL, was charged with DWI and weapons in motor vehicle, State Police said.

7/6-Lauren Murphy, 18, of 186 Deepwood Dr., Amston, was charged with failure to appear and violation of probation, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

7/1-Two juveniles and a youthful offender were all charged with second-degree criminal trespass. One youthful offender was charged with criminal trespass, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

7/3-Luke Shields, 24, of 31 Oneco St., Norwich was charged with failure to carry certificate of registration/insurance ID, operation of motor vehicle when registration or license is refused/suspended/revoked and speeding on highway: up to 85 mph, State Police said.

7/5-Arsenio Perez, 51, of 39 Robinson St., Waterbury, was charged with DWI and operation under suspension, State Police said.

Car Accident Sends Colchester Woman to Hospital

by Kristina Histen

A local woman remains hospitalized in critical condition Wednesday after a motor vehicle accident last Thursday, hospital officials said.

Heather Foster of 83 Lebanon Ave. was the passenger in a Toyota Corolla being driven by Bruce A. Stauffer Jr., 25, of 19 Campground Rd., Columbia, State Police said. They were traveling northbound on Miles Standish Road around 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 3, when the car veered off the right side

of the road and struck a tree, police said.

Foster was transported via Life Star to Yale New Haven Hospital for possible internal injuries and a laceration to the forehead where she remains in critical condition as of Wednesday. Stauffer was transported by ambulance to William W. Backus Hospital in Norwich for a seatbelt abrasion, police said.

There were no other vehicles involved or witnesses to the incident. State police are still investigating the cause of the accident.

East Hampton Police News

6/20 — Joshua J. Chism, 27, of 39 Balaban Rd., Colchester, was arrested for operating without insurance, East Hampton Police said.

6/27 — Jason R. Pangretic, 28, who police have no known address for, was arrested pursuant to three warrants on the following charges: disorderly conduct, second-degree harassment, violation of a restraining order, two counts of criminal violation of a protective order and first-degree failure to appear, police said.

6/28 — Bryan Hickey, 22, of 5 Aarons Way, was arrested for operating under the influence

of alcohol and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

6/29 — A 17-year-old female juvenile was issued a ticket for following too closely as a result of an accident, police said.

7/1 — Eric D. Cook, 22, of 28 Bevin Blvd., was issued a ticket for having an improper muffler, police said.

7/1 — Evan S. Ogren, 21, of 11 Tartia Rd., was arrested pursuant to a court ordered warrant for second-degree failure to appear, operating under suspension, speeding, improper lane and failure to carry license, police said.

Portland Police News

7/3 — Christopher Schroeder, 31, of 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with violation of restraining order, Portland Police said.

Local Teen Takes Top Prize in Racing Contest

by Michael McCoy

About 280 kids spent a week recently racing in Meriden, but it was an East Hampton teenager who took home the top prize.

Anthony Flannery, who turned 14 last Thursday, took home the top prize in the half midgets at the Eastern Grand National Championships, which culminated on Saturday, June 28. Though the top prize was in half-midget racing, the race was "basically the Daytona 500 of quarter midget racing," said Anthony's father, Tony.

Anthony started in a car with a 120cc engine that topped out at around 35 miles per hour. His championship car has a 250cc Honda ZR motorcycle engine, which reaches speeds of about 60 miles per hour.

While that may not sound terribly fast, keep in mind that the track is only 0.05 miles long, so the car is virtually turning left the whole race.

Drivers may race up to three cars during the weeklong event, which explains why about 600 cars were present but only about 280 drivers. Anthony raced the half midget car, as well as a World Formula quarter midget car.

The event started Friday, June 20, with sign-in and car inspection. On Sunday and Monday, drivers are allowed to practice and get to know the track. Time trial eliminations begin Tuesday. With just one track, and 600 cars, gunning for their best time, one by one, it is a slow process, lasting from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day. Every driver is given five laps of warm-up and three qualifying laps. Anthony qualified 14th in his quarter midget car and second in the half midgets.

To give an idea as to the fierceness of the competition, Anthony's trial was 5.7102 seconds, while the number one qualifying time came in at 5.7010. "These kids are racing for tenths and thousands of a second," Tony said. The worst time trial was 6.4 seconds.

The kids are split into juniors (ages 5-9) and seniors (ages 9-17), so Anthony was beating out drivers four years older than him.

According to Tony, several drivers were actually the children of other racers. So, NASCAR drivers Jeff Burton and Dave Blaney were onhand for much of the week, but had to leave early for their own races.

In addition to all the competitors and their families, Tony said the track had to make room for 130 motor homes, 210 car trailers and 20 vendors all week.

As for the quarter midget car, Anthony had not logged any practice time on it prior to the big week, but came in fourth at time trials, and third in the first race. However, he was eliminated before the championship race.

Anthony and his dad do most of the maintenance themselves in back of their Abbey Road home. Once inside the garage, you would find the far wall virtually covered from floor to ceiling with what the Flannerys like to call "the

barn trophies."

The larger and more prestigious trophies are kept inside the house, including the 30-plus pound trophy he took home last weekend. In addition, Anthony got to take home a checkered flag signed by all the drivers

The genesis of the Flannery boys racing career, which came in 2002, is fairly surprising. It was actually his mother's idea. Tony, who owns Belltown Motors and Belltown Auto Sales with his brother Owen, was logging countless hours at the business. "I didn't spend enough time with [my sons] as I needed to," he admitted. To address this, Anthony's mother Hope suggested the three guys get into racing. Prior to 2002, the extent of the Flannery's connection with racing amounted to Anthony's NASCAR fandom. (Incidentally, he's a Dale Earnhardt Jr. follower.)

Anthony has raced all over the country, and his family has put 35,000 miles on their motor home in the last four years alone. This included an event with about a thousand other kids three years ago in Indianapolis. Other races include Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Florida. The season runs from May to September.

Anthony's younger brother Collin, 12, races as well, and came in sixth during the G-Main race. [Races span from Z Main (lowest caliber) to A Main (highest caliber).] He would have had to finish in the top five to continue.

Though Hope travels with her boys to all the events and helps out, she watches from outside the track. "When she doesn't like what she sees, she turns the other way," Tony laughed.

All told, Anthony has raced in seven Grand National events.

"I like it a lot," Anthony said. "It's a lot of fun. It's better than going to soccer." (Anthony had been involved in baseball, soccer and football.)

Furthermore, his dad finds it to be a great character building experience. "Most of the families come from a good background of morals and understandings," Tony said.

Anthony also seems to enjoy relying on his own excellence and said, "I like being able to make my own decisions."

However, racing does not come without its smashups. Last year, during a quarter midget race in Meriden, Anthony flipped his car and crashed cage first into the wall. Still, he was back in his car the following day.

However, the Flannerys spend most of their time at the Little T track in Thompson and Silver City in Meriden. The latter, Tony said, has "been our home track for the last seven years."

The Little T is actually how Anthony happened upon his championship car. Every year, the Little T track hosts the Lou Sherman Memorial Day Race. Sherman was a pioneer in producing parts for quarter midgets; he lost his



Anthony Flannery took home the top prize in the half midgets at the Eastern Grand National Championships last month. Photo courtesy Kara Tarallo.

battle with cancer a dozen years ago.

Last year, the Sherman family found themselves without someone to race their car for the first time, so they asked Anthony to do the honors. He won that race, and actually came within one thousandth of a second of beating the track's record time, set by Sherman's son. Tony then bought the car from the family, and the rest is history, albeit recent.

The car is in the process of being sold for around \$8,000

"The best competition is here in the northeast," Tony said, commenting on what makes the Meriden track such a draw. (He later said that it draws a bigger crowd than any other quarter midget track.) Middletown native Joey Logano even showed up in the beginning of the week to give the kids a pep talk. "They call it the track of champions," Tony said.

Meriden is where Anthony raced for the first time as a seven-year-old. It was not only his first race but also his maiden first-place finish. Anthony performed the feat in a less-than-stellar machine, prompting many to chastise Tony, "Why don't you buy him a real car?"

Quarter midget racing is not limited to guys. The Flannerys said that a large number of female drivers were on hand at the Eastern Grand Nationals, and they came to win. "They're very competitive," Tony said.

On top of coaching his two sons through the season, Tony served as the chairman of the Eastern Grand Nationals for the past 16 months. Tony figured he has put in about an hour a day. This year, the organization gave away \$52,000 worth of trophies.

The Eastern Grand Nationals was Anthony's

"retirement race," Tony said. He said Anthony was going to move on from midgets last year, but decided to stick around for another year when Tony was chosen to chair the event.

Not only does Anthony feel it's time to move on, but, at 5'10", he has literally outgrown the midgets. "It's not safe when you get too big for the cars," Tony said.

After closing up the track all day last Sunday, June 29, the Flannerys proudly returned home Sunday evening.

Anthony plans to take a month or so off and travel out west (once again in the motorhome) with his family. However, when he gets back, he will spend the rest of the summer easing back into racing.

The likely plan is that Anthony will split his time between racing micro mini sprints on a dirt track in Waterford and driving a Legend car on asphalt in Whip City, MA. However, one adjustment that should work in Anthony's favor is the type of track used in micro-mini racing. Though the speeds the cars race at top out at about 20 miles an hour faster than the half-midgets, the tracks contain much bigger straightaways, prompting many who advance from the midgets to call it slower.

"We have friends from all over the country," Tony said, including a younger driver Anthony has mentored. "When I started, that's what all the older kids did, and I that's why I did the same thing," Anthony said.

In the fall, Anthony, who just finished his eighth grade year at East Hampton Middle School, will attend Vinal Technical High School in Middletown, where he will study automotive technology and repair.

New RHAM Middle School Principal Anxious to Begin

by Sarah McCoy

Michael Seroussi is looking forward to the end of summer.

While students are spending their days on vacation, relaxing or hanging out, the new RHAM Middle School principal is counting the days until school is back in session. "It's not a school without the students," he said.

Seroussi began his tenure as principal on July 1 after beginning his career in education almost 20 years ago.

After growing up in upstate New York, Michael Seroussi headed to UMass-Amherst to study animal science. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree and intended to pursue a career working with horses.

In the fall of 1986, he traveled south and enrolled in the Equine Studies program at the University of Florida. Seroussi spent a year taking classes and teaching horseback riding lessons to earn some money when it dawned on him that he was enjoying teaching more than he was enjoying his research classes.

He switched programs and earned a Master's degree in education in the spring of 1989. Wanting to be closer to home, Seroussi packed his bags and accepted a position teaching science at Norwich Free Academy (NFA). For the next 13 years he worked at NFA, the last as an Assistant Principal Intern.

"I've always wanted to help kids," Seroussi said. "As you climb the ranks of the profession, so to speak, you can have a different impact on kids."

While he loved, and still loves, teaching, Seroussi decided to try something different. "I jumped in and tried it out," he said of being a school administrator. "I figured, no matter what, I could always go back to teaching."

In the fall of 2002 Seroussi took a job as assistant principal, split between the Tolland middle and high school. He remained in this position until 2005, when he became the principal of Tolland Middle School.

It was this experience that stood out to RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski. "He is a seasoned administrator who understands middle school students and likes middle school students," Siminski said. "We will be looking for him to use his expertise to improve student achievement at RHAM."

For the past two years Seroussi has worked as the assistant superintendent for the Waterford Public School System. While he found it to be a rewarding position, Seroussi said he was looking to return to a position that would afford him more time with students.

He was one of 17 applicants for the vacancy at RHAM Middle School.



Michael Seroussi is the new principal at RHAM Middle School.

After former principal Linda Crossman tended her retirement, the regional school district compiled a search committee with the charge of recommending three candidates to Siminski. The search committee was comprised of parents, school staff and members of the district's administration.

Siminski conducted more in-depth interviews and site visits with the final candidates. Last month, Seroussi went before the RHAM Board of Education and was unanimously approved as the new principal for the school.

Now getting comfortable in his new position, Seroussi has filled his day meeting the staff and catching up on the operation of the facility. "Fortunately," he said, "I'm coming to a district that is in a good place and has the right attitude towards education."

Seroussi welcomes any community members or parents to stop by and introduce themselves. "My style is very much collaborative," he explained. "Teachers, parents, we all need to work together to see kids succeed."

In the spirit of collaboration, Seroussi said he has no plans to change anything at RHAM just yet. Instead, he wants to talk to both the staff and administration to identify areas for improvement and strategies to get there.

Seroussi will continue to live in Norwich, his home for the past 19 years. He and his wife, Vicki, have nine children. "We're like the Brady Bunch, with a few more," Seroussi joked.



Jack Jackter Intermediate School was vandalized on two separate occasions the week of June 23-27.

JJIS in Colchester Vandalized Twice in One Week

by Kristina Histen

Vandalism rarely happens at any of the local school buildings, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said. But in one week, it occurred twice at Jack Jackter Intermediate School.

"It is highly unusual," Loiselle said. "The community and students have a great deal of respect for our facilities. For the past three years that I have served as superintendent, there have been little to no reports of vandalism."

However, on Monday morning, June 23, the school custodian saw that shingles had been removed from the 8'x10' shed on the property. The shingles were laid out on the ground to spell out a derogatory racial statement near the playground, both Loiselle and State Police said in different statements. Four shrubs had also been pulled from the flowerbed, police said.

Later that same week, on Friday morning, June 27, the custodian also found that several areas on the exterior walls of the school had been spray painted with various images of designs, sexual references and random alphabet

letters that didn't make any sense, Loiselle said.

Both acts of vandalism were immediately cleaned up because school officials did not want the students or the community to see it. Police believe that the incidents happened late at night.

According to the school custodian, the first act of vandalism caused around \$750 worth of damage, mostly because the shingles needed to be replaced, Loiselle said, and the second cost around \$200. In situations like these, the school tries to utilize their own labor as much as possible to save on cost, but it takes away from other projects that need to get done, Loiselle said.

"We have no idea as to why this happened," Loiselle said. "It is rare for vandalism, inside or outside the school, so this is obviously disturbing. None of us have any insight as to who and why this occurred at the close of the school year."

Police continue to investigate the incidents and encourage anyone with information to call State Police at 537-7500.

Town Seeking Well Access in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron town officials have filed a petition with the state for a public hearing on a proposed permit that would grant underground access to two well sites in the town.

Last month, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) approved a permit to allow the Connecticut Water Company to draw water out of two Hebron locations to service the Amston Lake community with a more consistent water source. In its letter to the town of Hebron, the DEP also waived the requirement for a public hearing on the issue unless the town officials submitted a petition with a minimum of 25 signatures.

That petition, with more than double the required signatures, has already been filed with the state.

The two proposed locations for wells are at 95 Deepwood Dr. and 612 Church Street. The DEP also granted a permit for a well on Island Beach Road in Lebanon that would also service the area.

A major concern for town officials is the proposed location for one of the wells. The location, 612 Church St., has a long history of contamination, not to mention back taxes. Town Manager Jared Clark said the site has been vacant for over a dozen years but, over the years, has been used for a variety of endeavors including a distillery and a research plant for industrial processing materials.

Clark stopped short of calling the site contaminated. "I know that it was previously contaminated," he said. "I've seen two engineering reports that state some clean-up has occurred but the site needs continued monitoring."

The other issue at hand regarding the property is the \$100,000 owed to Hebron in back taxes. Six weeks ago, the town began foreclosure proceedings. These proceedings are expected to take the better part of a year.

REJA Incorporated, which currently owns 612 Church St., had made an agreement with former Town Manager Robert Lee to clean the property in exchange for a reduced tax rate. Clark reported that REJA defaulted on the agreement in the late 1990s, and recently came before the Board of Selectmen looking to reinstate the contract.

The Board of Selectmen, according to Clark, wasn't interested in doing this. "Their feelings were that REJA should have honored the terms and conditions of the last agreement," Clark said.

He added that back tax collection preempts all other rights.

The decision to petition for a public hearing, according to Clark, "has to do with providing the public an opportunity to understand what's going on, ask questions, and get some answers."

No date for the public hearing has been set, though Clark said he expects it to be within a month.

DEP spokesman Dwayne Gardner did not return requests for comment by the *RiverEast*.

The Connecticut Water Company, which filed the permit applications with the DEP for the groundwater access, became the exclusive provider for drinking water in Hebron last winter when the company bought out Birmingham Utilities.

No C in AHM, For Now Anyway

by Sarah McCoy

The addition of Columbia to the AHM Youth Services family has been put on hold, at least for this year.

"It's unfortunate, but both sides walked away with no hard feelings," AHM Director Joel Rosenberg said.

Earlier this year, Columbia officials had approached AHM about possibility joining the youth service bureau. They had hoped to come in as full partners, at a cost of \$80,000 a year.

That hope disintegrated after the town faced a tough budget year. "Unfortunately it came to the point where the fiscally responsible thing to do was reduce the line item," Columbia First Selectman Don Cianci said in April.

However, the dialogue between the two entities continued, centered around Columbia joining on a partial level. Fourteen thousand dollars had been included in the town's 2008-09 fiscal year budget, with another \$14,000 expected through a state grant. With \$28,000, both Columbia and AHM felt that a part-time partnership could be achieved.

But all that changed in June, when the state announced a freeze on new funding initiatives, meaning Columbia would not be receiving the \$14,000 grant.

"When the state grant didn't come through, it signaled to us that this just wasn't the right time," Rosenberg said. "It wasn't going to be in AHM's best interest to find the services Columbia is looking for with \$14,000. It's just not

a big enough commitment."

With fuel and energy costs rising, Rosenberg said he is at peace with the AHM Board of Director's decision not to pursue any level of partnering with Columbia this year. "There are just too many unknowns in the budget."

With no youth service bureau of its own, Columbia is hoping to join AHM next year. "Our young people are counting on us," Cianci said.

In the meantime, Rosenberg said, AHM will continue to offer technical support to Columbia and resources to assist in their decision for next year.

Dick Szedga, a member of the Columbia Board of Selectmen and a former employee of the state Department of Children and Families, has been spearheading the effort to begin offering youth service options for Columbia residents for the past year. He said the town considered partnering with Lebanon, who is also without a youth service bureau, or starting their own facility. In the end, however, Columbia officials agreed that AHM would provide the town with the highest quality of services at the lowest cost.

Columbia residents passed a \$15.8 million budget at their May 29 referendum. This represented a .9 mill increase.

"This is by no means an ending," Rosenberg noted. "It's a continuation for discussions."

School's Out for Portland Board of Ed Chair

by Michael McCoy

"He's been a board member it seems like forever," Chris Phelps said.

For this reason, it may be hard to imagine the Board of Education (BOE) without Chris Hetrick, but the town will have to nonetheless.

During Tuesday evening's BOE meeting, Hetrick, the chairman of the school board, officially resigned. He had contributed more than 13 years of service to the school board.

"I've been thinking about this for the better part of the year," Hetrick said. "It's time to get different people with different energy."

Though most would probably call Hetrick's experience on the board a huge asset to the town, he looked at it somewhat differently. "While a historical perspective can be important, it can also be a crutch," he said.

"I'm seeing some of the other members considering some new ideas," he added, "and it's time to get off and running with those."

Hetrick also said, "My youngest graduated, so I kind of held out for that." Grace Hetrick graduated from Portland High School last month.

Hetrick made it quite clear his decision had nothing to do with bad blood of any sort. In fact, he said, "I would say it's exactly the opposite."

In a letter to the BOE, he wrote, "My resignation is not due to any matter of the school board or administration. This is a supportive group I will miss."

Hetrick started his tenure on the BOE in early 1995. "I was filling a vacancy, much as I am creating one now," Hetrick said he felt filling vacancies was a great way for someone interested in a board or commission to get acclimated with its functions.

Hetrick recalled that, prior to joining the school board, "I started going to a couple of board meetings, and I just got very interested." When a vacancy opened, Hetrick applied for it, but did not receive the nomination. A month

later, another spot opened up, and it was given to Hetrick. He has spent the last eight years as the board's chairman.

"There's a lot I learned," Hetrick said. "That's why I enjoyed it an awful lot." He mentioned leadership and negotiating as just two of the skills he has honed over the past 13 years. He also said his experience with contracts has even helped him out in his professional life.

"I learned an awful lot about how a town runs," Hetrick said. One item he mentioned was, "When it comes to funding, all the money comes from the same pot." As an example, Hetrick mentioned that the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grants the BOE received last year. "Some of that money was what helped there be a zero percent tax increase."

Hetrick singled out Donna Finkelstein as a mentor. Finkelstein was chairman of the BOE when Hetrick began and the two worked together on the building committee. "She really showed me everything," Hetrick said. Hetrick also praised Finkelstein's husband, Mark, who serves on the Board of Selectmen. "He doesn't always give the Board of Education everything they want, but he's very fair and logical."

Hetrick also said he learned quite a bit from director of buildings and grounds Paul Bengston and former Superintendent of Schools Joe Castignola.

Castignola left his position in 2004, and Dean Tophier filled in as interim superintendent until Sally Doyen was hired in 2005. Hetrick said the trio had "three very different superintendent styles, and the schools benefited from the strengths of all of them."

Hetrick also said that he has seen the BOE involve the town more and more.

Hetrick seemed proud to be a part of the building project that created the high and middle school complex. "We were able to make a state of the art facility and alleviate a lot of prob-

lems in all of the other schools," Hetrick said, citing space problems at Gildersleeve School as one of these.

When asked if the relationship between the BOE and the Board of Selectmen was harmonious, Hetrick said, "Yes, [the relationship] is at its peak. I've seen when both sides are bickering with each other, and nobody benefits from that." Hetrick said that when everyone cooperates the town sees "bigger budget allocations and lower tax increases."

In his letter, Hetrick wrote, "The remaining board is a great ensemble, the superintendent is first rate, the administrators and staff are an exceptional team all driven to the goal of a quality school experience with respect to the taxpayer. The teachers and staff include some of the finest professionals I have met, and I am grateful for the support they have given the board over the years."

As far as the timing goes, Hetrick said from now until about October is the slowest time of the BOE's schedule, and would be best suited for transitions.

"Some people didn't see this coming," Hetrick said, "but I've been thinking about this for a while."

Hetrick also said, "The board right now is in a good spot," and added, "I have had so much vested in the board that I wouldn't leave if I didn't think things were OK."

Hetrick said there have been "very few resignations in recent years, compared to what I've seen in the past."

Hetrick, who turns 50 on Monday, has lived in Portland his whole life and is a quality control manager for Airex Rubber, a family-owned business in town started by his grandfather, James O. Hetrick, Sr., in 1965. Hetrick has worked there since he was 16. He and his wife Colleen have four kids, ranging in age from 18 to 27.

After Hetrick officially stepped down Tuesday night, the board unanimously voted Christopher Phelps as the new chairman. Phelps has served on the board since 2003 and has previously been secretary, a position to which MaryAnne Rode was just elected.

"I have a ton of respect for Chris Hetrick," Phelps said. In fact, Phelps recalled, "He asked me to run for the board five years ago."

Phelps continued, "He's never lost sight of the number one priority... which is to stand up for education in the community. He's been unwavering in that basic principal."

"I think a lot of the success of the district has been due in no small part to his leadership," Phelps said, and added, "I've got big shoes to fill. ... It's daunting and exciting at the same time."

Phelps also said, "He's just an all-around great guy. ... Chris is gonna be missed."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she is "very proud of Chris [Hetrick] and grateful of all his accomplishments." She said Hetrick is "one of the longest-serving Board of Education members in recent history."

"I admire all his work," Bransfield added. She also credited him on his work on the building project. "That is a tremendous project that he has overseen," Bransfield said.

Technically, though Hetrick is no longer chairman, he will remain a board member through the end of the month. Hetrick said there are some things he wants to finish up before leaving, "but I can do it at a very low profile."

Hetrick expected to still have a presence at BOE meetings and half-joked, "I would hope I get an occasional call looking for my opinion."

Phelps said he expected the Democratic Town Committee to nominate someone to fill the vacancy within the next month. One the nomination comes in, the BOE will vote on that candidate.

Nutmeggers Sent to Help Fight California Blazes

by Michael McCoy

"I often say that Connecticut has the best volunteers," Governor M. Jodi Rell said last Thursday, July 3. And Rell wasn't speaking about municipal service within a council chambers.

Rell was at the state Department of Environmental Protection's Marlborough branch to send off a crew of 20 Connecticut firefighters bound for California to fight the wildfires.

In a press release dated the same day, Rell said, "Connecticut has received a call for help once again, and I wanted to tell these firefighters how proud I am of them."

At the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) last week, Rell joked, "Some people just don't know when to quit," alluding to the fact that some of these firefighters have been sent out west before for similar missions.

Rell added that, when Hurricane Katrina occurred in 2005, "It was in Connecticut that people stepped up to the plate before any other volunteers."

She proudly continued, "Our volunteers seem to be the ones to say, 'I'll go.'" Furthermore, she did not mince words concerning the severity of the situation, as she declared, "You certainly have your work cut out for you." The governor also recognized that the crew would be giving up their Fourth of July, while most would be kicking back and eating hot dogs and burgers with their family.

Finally, Rell sent them off saying, "We wish you Godspeed," and "We'll see you in a couple of weeks."

Ralph Scarpino, Forest Fire Supervisor for

the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Agency (NFFPA), anticipated that this would probably be the first of three crews who would travel to California to fight the fires.

Scarpino said the crew was going to ride from the DEP in Marlborough to New Hampshire, where it would meet up with two other teams and fly out at 6 a.m. on July 4. The firefighters were to arrive in California that same day, and work for two weeks before returning home.

"When our guys get back, we'll see if we have enough for another crew," Scarpino said.

Scarpino said some of the crewmembers are actually professional firefighters with the DEP, while others are municipal firefighters. He said each firefighter must be federally qualified and attend an eight-hour refresher course once a year to make it onto the Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew.

Scarpino said different team members have different specialties. For instance, five are EMTs, while four have special chainsaw qualifications.

According to Scarpino, when a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-declared disaster happens, the NFFPA looks at who is available to ship out and put together a crew if they can. Similar teams were sent immediately after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina. This is because of an agreement NFFPA has had with the United States Forest Service for the past 30 years. During that time, the NFFPA has never lost a firefighter said Scarpino. "They always come back," he said, and added that while injuries have occurred, they have been minimal.



Twenty Connecticut firefighters shipped off from Marlborough last Thursday to spend two weeks in California, helping fight the wildfires. Rich Scalora of Berlin is shown here, comforting his children as he prepares to ship off. Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who was present for the firefighters' departure last week, also spent some time consoling one especially emotional daughter.

Scarpino said firefighters who are state employees continue to receive their same regular wage, while those who are not temporarily become federal employees and receive around

\$13.50 per hour.

The Connecticut Interstate Fire Crew will be fighting fires in the Basin Complex, located in the Big Sur area.

Colchester Residents Being Asked to Conserve Water

by Kristina Histen

Nearly a month after the town alone used about 150,000 gallons of water to put out the monstrous fire at M&J Auto Recycling, residents are still encouraged to participate in a voluntary water-use restriction.

But the fire isn't the only reason the water-use restriction is in effect.

Since June of last year, the town has been working on a \$2.6 million water treatment plant project, Public Works Director Mark Decker said. Throughout the project, one high-yield well has been taken off line because it must pass water through the aeration tower before going to the distribution system, he said. With the aeration tower off-line, the well is also off-line. The second, lower-yield well is at a different well field. Therefore, the Town Water Department is operating on a single high-yield well and a second lower-yield well and until the primary wells become fully-functional, the department has issued a Voluntary Conservation Notice.

"The reason we have gone to a voluntary water-use restriction was somewhat heightened by the fire that occurred because it showed us basically what a critical condition we are in," Decker said. "We only have one well currently

available. So what we have basically done is said, 'look folks, could you just be conscious when you use the water.' If we get into another situation like M&J, that will put a real strain on the system."

This is the first time during the project that the town has had to issue a voluntary water-use restriction, Decker said.

The water treatment plant project will include the installation of two new filter vessels, retrofitting the three existing vessels, to all have a high-efficiency filtration media specifically designed for high iron content raw water. The project also includes upgrades to the aeration tower that will provide natural pH adjustments for a reduction in chemical use and new high efficiency premium pumps and motors with variable frequency drives to improve efficiency and minimize energy costs, he said. In addition, there will be bulk chemical storage that will reduce purchase costs and minimize operator contact, he said. The system will all be controlled through computers with state-of-the-art monitoring of water quality and pressures, Decker said.

"There is plenty of water right now in the ground and we have the treatment to treat it,"

Decker said. "But while construction is going on, we want to maintain the water levels in the storage tanks to be as high as possible. Going to a voluntary measure is more of a hurdle in the race to a much greater situation in the long run."

The voluntary conservation notice does not preclude people from using water outdoors or indoors, the town's web site, www.colchesterct.gov, said. However, it does request people to be aware of how they use water and to conserve whenever possible and practical. Because outdoor water use represents the greatest difference in water consumption throughout the year, it also provides the greatest opportunity to conserve, it said. Watering lawns and gardens is most effective and efficient when done early in the morning and later in the evening when temperatures are cooler, it said. It also does not have to be done every day therefore, the Department requests people to limit their lawn and garden watering to the hours of 7-9 a.m. or 7-9 p.m. only. Pool filling or topping off should be done only on weekday nights, it said.

Regarding the spray park, the hours of operation have been reduced only slightly to 8

a.m.-8 p.m. instead of 7 a.m.-10 p.m., Decker said. The Water Department and Park Department have closely monitored the quantity of water used and feel comfortable that the recapture/recirculation system at the spray park minimizes the amount of new water consumed, he said. Virtually all of the water, except the amount that blows off the pad or evaporates, is recaptured, filtered, disinfected, and re-circulated into the system, he said.

Immediately following the June 13 fire, a mandatory water-use restriction was in effect for all but necessary needs. On June 16, this was switched to a voluntary water-use restriction. The voluntary conservation order will continue until the second high-yield well is brought back into service, a process that is expected to happen at the end of July, Decker said. The new electrical system is currently being installed by Connecticut Light & Power and the instrumentation and controls are in place and virtually complete, he said. A start-up and test period is required before the second well can be brought on line.

"It's like the parts to a puzzle," Decker said, "They all need to come together in order to make it work."

East Hampton Council Members Argue Over Town Manager Contract

by Michael McCoy

The Town Council finalized the contract for newly named town manager Jeffery O'Keefe Tuesday evening – but not before more arguing among council members.

After the firing of former town manager Alan Bergren in June 2007, the hiring of Jim Thomas in October, and the rescinding of his contract two months later, town manager issues have not proceeded amicably of late within the town council.

But after a unanimous vote to hire O'Keefe on June 15, and overwhelmingly positive sentiments being expressed all around, it seemed the town manager search would end on a harmonious note.

Tuesday night, however, that notion was turned on its head.

Prior to the evening's regular meeting, the council held a special meeting to hash out O'Keefe's contract. Prior to adjourning the meeting, the council emerged from executive session to vote. At that time councilman Scott Minnick questioned "whether or not the contract is valid and enforceable."

While Minnick said several times at the special meeting that he was enthusiastic about the hiring of O'Keefe, he voiced concern about a section of the contract that says O'Keefe will be hired "for an initial period of three (3) years..." While this is congruent with state statutes, Minnick said the town charter dictates that the town manager must be hired for an indefinite term, and explained that in specific matters such as this, the town charter trumps the state statute.

Furthermore, Minnick said that when the Town Council voted to rescind Thomas' contract (only Minnick and Sue Weintraub voted against the motion), they deemed it void, unenforceable, and/or invalid based on the fact that the language "TOWN agrees to employ Mr. Thomas as its TOWN MANAGER for an indefinite term" was not in line with the state statute.

Minnick said after Tuesday's meeting that Thomas' firing "was bogus," but added, "I'm not going to do what they did: pull a 'Melissa and Bill.'"

Minnick felt his concerns were dismissed by

other Town Council members at the special meeting and said, "They're children! I am embarrassed to be associated with those five."

Minnick expressed disbelief over the events of the evening, and said, "I'm beside myself."

Minnick, who said Bergren's contract was worded the same way Thomas' was, worried that O'Keefe's contract could potentially be deemed invalid for not adhering to the town charter, causing Minnick to later call the situation a "Catch 22."

Minnick also accused the five non-Chatham Party members of making the contract for three years in order to save face and not appear inconsistent.

"I would hate to go forward knowing there is a discrepancy," Minnick said.

Minnick raised another issue he took with the process. He said he received an e-mail from council chairman Melissa Engel saying O'Keefe was flying into Connecticut and would be in town on Saturday. Minnick said his understanding was that during Tuesday's special meeting, the whole council would review and make possible changes to the contract that town attorney Michael Rose drew up.

However, on Sunday, Rose, O'Keefe, Engel, and fellow councilmen Tom Cordeiro and Christopher Goff met and fine-tuned the contract. When Minnick began to raise concerns over the contract Tuesday, the majority of the council seemed to simply proceed with a vote.

Minnick said he was not invited to the Sunday gathering (since only three councilmen were there, it did not meet the quorum for a meeting), and expected that what was done there wasn't really going to occur until Tuesday's special meeting.

Weintraub seemed to agree and exclaimed, "I have a real problem with the fact that I didn't know we even hired another law firm!" She later added, "I don't feel I'm doing the best job I can to review this. ... What happened with the Town Council taking part in the whole process?"

Council member John Tuttle alluded to the fact that O'Keefe and his wife were present at the meeting, and said, "This really is an em-

barrassment."

The council voted to adopt the contract by a vote of 6-0-1 with Minnick abstaining, saying, "I don't have enough information."

During public comments, resident Mary Ann Dostaler noted the council's "obstinacy" in contradicting the town charter. She also called it "stunning" that the council members "sit there with these incredibly smug looks on your faces."

After Tuesday's meeting, Cordeiro said the public discussion "must have been very uncomfortable for Mr. O'Keefe." He also accused Minnick and Weintraub of being purposefully contradictory. "When we say 'up,' they say 'down,'" he said. He figured, "To say, 'Welcome to town, but...' just doesn't work."

After the meeting, Engel said, "Scott chose to grandstand" and "I almost feel the need to apologize to the O'Keefe's on behalf of the council." Tuttle after the meeting said he in fact did just that.

Tuttle seemed to think this process was executed better than the process to hire Thomas. He said members of the council went to Bridgeport, where O'Keefe worked prior to getting a job in Santa Clarita, CA. "Nobody went to Maine," Tuttle said. (Thomas had been the town manager for Old Orchard Beach, ME, before East Hampton hired him last year.)

Cordeiro also said, "'Indefinite' is an ambiguous term. We felt that a gentleman coming from California deserved more than an 'indefinite.'"

Cordeiro and Tuttle also said they interpreted the charter differently. While Minnick felt that the phrase "indefinite term" must be included to validate the contract, Tuttle and Cordeiro said they thought that the charter's calling for an indefinite term freed the council to choose whatever term they wished.

Cordeiro said that if Rose saw a reason for concern in the wording of the contract, he would have said something. However, when Minnick asked point blank for a legal opinion on the matter during the meeting, the council proceeded with a vote before Rose could answer.

Cordeiro also called Minnick's charges that

O'Keefe's contract was far more extravagant than Thomas' were "crazy."

Tuttle, in fact, seemed to think the opposite was true, noting that Thomas left an \$85,000 salary to take a \$118,000 one in East Hampton, while O'Keefe's gave up a \$156,000 salary to make \$120,000 in East Hampton. "Who gets that kind of a raise today?" Tuttle said about the Thomas contract.

Cordeiro slammed the Chatham Party slogan, "Our only special interest is our town," which is displayed on the party's web site. "Their only special interest is themselves and getting themselves elected in a year and a half," Cordeiro said.

On June 15, Cordeiro said, "seven members of that council approved [O'Keefe's hiring] and went back to their lives." According to him, the particulars of the contract negotiation protocol were not explicitly discussed, and he said he felt it was generally understood that only the town's attorney and perhaps a member or two of the council would need to be present for such details.

According to Cordeiro, Goff informally offered to help with the contract sometime later, given his experience with such affairs. Cordeiro said there was nothing formal about his involvement either. He said Engel called him one day before just to say they would be meeting to discuss the contract, and he offered to help, given his managerial experience at Stanley Works.

He later commented that if Minnick was under the impression that the event would just be a time to greet O'Keefe and that it would be Saturday instead of Sunday, it must have been a misunderstanding of some sort.

He also said that since the council had already agreed on a salary, "There wasn't really that much to involve him in." He later added, "We all know we got the right guy."

Cordeiro did display a bit of empathy for Minnick's position. "I know what it's like to be on the outside," noting he served on a council previously where he was one of two Republicans working with five Democrats.

O'Keefe will officially assume the town manager role on Sept. 1.

Obituaries

Andover

Helen Lucille Mosher

Helen Lucille Mosher, 88, of 4 Rose Ln., Andover, passed away Sunday, July 6, at Haven Health Care Center of Windham, after a brief illness. She was the widow of Francis Mosher. Helen was predeceased by a loving son, Ralph N. Johnson, of Hurlock, MD, who passed away on April 25, 2008.

She will be sadly missed by her two children, Nancy DeRoche of Benton, ME and Steven Mosher of Andover, and their families as well as family members in Hurlock, MD, Wakefield, RI, St. Johnsbury, VT and Marlborough, CT.

A graveside Memorial Service will be held Sunday, July 27, at noon at Townsend Cemetery in Andover.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Haven Health Care Center for the excellent care given to their mother.

Hebron

Francis Leroy Liebler

Francis Leroy Liebler, "Frank," 77, of Hebron and formerly of Glastonbury, passed away unexpectedly Sunday, July 6, at home. Born Jan. 4, 1931, in Glastonbury and raised there, he was a son of the late William Burnham and Caroline (Lange) Liebler.

After graduating from Glastonbury High School in 1949, he served a brief tour of duty with the US Army during the Korean War and went on to work on the family farm and farmstand in both Glastonbury and Hebron. In his later years, Frank enjoyed teaching wreath-making classes at the Russell Mercier Senior Center and was an active communicant of the Church of the Holy Family, both in Hebron. He was an avid fan of the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots; but found his greatest joy in visiting with both family and friends.

He is survived by two siblings, Richard "Bud" Liebler and his wife Ann of Melbourne, FL, and Carolyn M. (Liebler) Bogue of Hebron; special friends, the Sessa and Sears families, both of Hebron; and numerous nieces, nephews and friends. In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, William M. Liebler, late of Glastonbury.

Friends called Wednesday, July 9, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Thursday, July 10, at the funeral home before processing to the Church of Holy Family in Hebron for the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy, with Fr. Michael Smith officiating. Committal with full military honors followed in the Gilead Cemetery, Hebron. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church Street, Hebron, CT 06248.

Andover

Richard A. Rosen

Richard A. Rosen, 61, of Andover died suddenly of natural causes at his home on Saturday, June 28. Richard was the son of Dr. Seymour Rosen and the late Mildred (Freimon) Rosen of Somers, NY. Richard was a graduate of Lafayette College with a degree in chemistry. He attended the University of Connecticut receiving a degree in pharmacology. He was employed by Manchester Memorial Hospital for 28 years as a chemical pharmacist and more recently at Middlesex Hospital in the same capacity.

Richard is survived by his wife, Maureen and their children, Seth and Abby of Andover. He is also survived by his sister, Barbara and her husband, Rabbi Mark Perkal; his brother, Dr. Robert Rosen and his wife, Elaine; as well as many nieces and nephews. Richard will be greatly missed by his family as well as the many friends whom he had the opportunity of meeting throughout the 61 years of his life.

His family would like to extend an invitation to all these who would like to take part in a memorial service to celebrate Richard's life at 3 p.m. on Saturday, July 12, at the Coventry-Pietras Funeral Home, 2665 Boston Tpke. (Route 44) in Coventry. Relatives and friends are welcome to join the family from 2 p.m. prior to the services at the funeral home on Saturday afternoon. In lieu of flowers please make a donation to the charity of your choice. For online condolences or directions please visit www.pietrasfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Elinor Dawn West Gonci

Elinor Dawn West Gonci completed a full life of 81 years on Tuesday, June 24. She was born April 27, 1927, and was raised in East Hampton. Elinor was predeceased by her husband of 56 years, George H. Gonci. She leaves behind a son Richard, his wife Joanna Fink and grandson Noah of Cambridge, MA and a son David, his wife Noreen Cullen and grandson Paul Petro of Glastonbury. She also leaves a brother and sister-in-law, Almon and Dorothy West, of East Hampton and special cousins, as well as many members of the Gonci, West and Flemke families and several dearly loved nieces, nephews, grand nieces and nephews on both sides.

Elinor lived the major part of her life in Marlborough, and she and George moved to Glastonbury in 1997 after having spent many years enjoying seasonal residences in Estero, FL, and Eastport, ME. She always felt fortunate to have been able to travel a great deal with her beloved husband following her retirement as Administrative Services Officer for the Connecticut Commission for Higher Education.

Elinor's large extended family and wide circle of friends will remember her for her generous spirit, dedication, fortitude, energy, enterprise, and her enduring positive attitude and caring connection to those she knew. She was widely admired for the four decades of support that she provided to her husband, as well as for her own strength over the years in living fully and independently, and regularly volunteering while coping with carcinoid cancer.

With her energy and mastery of information, she was dependably relied upon as an organizer in her administrative career and in countless family events and volunteer endeavors, including her role in organizing the Connecticut Carcinoid Initiative to heighten awareness of this unusual disease. Elinor was also an active Congregational Protestant, and she willingly surrendered herself back to her spiritual source to close a beautiful life.

There will be a private interment. In lieu of a wake, friends and relatives are invited to call on the family 3-5 p.m. on Saturday, July 19, at the Parma Restaurant, 21 Rankin Rd., Glastonbury. There will be a memorial service at South Glastonbury Congregational Church, 30 High St., Glastonbury, at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, July 20. A reception will follow at the Gallery Restaurant, 141 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. Memorial contributions may be made in Elinor's memory to a charity of the donor's choice. The Spencer Funeral Home in East Hampton is in charge of arrangements.

Marlborough

Eleanor H. Papineau

Eleanor H. Papineau, 67, of Marlborough, beloved wife of Patrick, passed away Tuesday, July 8, at the St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford. Born Dec. 16, 1940 in Ft. Myers, FL, she was a daughter of the late Edgar and Evelyn (Brack) Hendry. She was a graduate of Naples, FL High School and went on to study at Katherine Gibbs Secretarial School in New York.

On Dec. 28, 1964, she and Patrick were married in Naples and she then moved to Connecticut. Eleanor would later earn her Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from UConn, graduating *summa cum laude* in 1989. Mrs. Papineau was an Accountant with Coopers and Lybrand in Hartford before her retirement in 1994. A Grand Master of bridge, she was a long-time member of the Hartford Bridge Club. Eleanor was also a member of both the Baldwin and North Cove Yacht Clubs. In her spare time, she was an avid birder, with 487 on her life list. Following her retirement, she and Pat enjoyed traveling across the country extensively in their RV.

In addition to her loving husband of 43 years, she is survived by two sons and daughters-in-law, Louis and Elizabeth of Wallingford and Henri and Bonnie of Falmouth, MA; a granddaughter, Carlie Elizabeth; two sisters, Leila Johnson of Boston, MA, and Bonnie Lee Smith of Plantation, FL; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Franklin Commons, Rte. 32, Franklin 06254-1800.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Bruce Milton MacKay

Bruce Milton MacKay, 68, of Andover, died Wednesday, July 2, at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford. After graduating from Boston University with a Bachelors Degree in Aeronautical Engineering, he came to Connecticut to work for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. Bruce continued his education at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and completed his MBA at the University of Hartford. In 1999, he retired after a 36-year career in quality control at Pratt & Whitney.

For many years, Bruce was an active member of the American Society for Quality Control and served as chairman of its Hartford chapter. He also belonged to the American Society for Non-Destructive Test, and taught classes in non-destructive test at Hartford State Technical College.

As a young man, Bruce enjoyed downhill skiing and ice hockey. As a street rod enthusiast, he appreciated and restored cars of the 1950s. Bruce built a 1927 T Roadster reproduction. He was an organic gardener for many years, and owned a certified oak and maple tree farm. With his friend, Gordon Howard, he cut and split firewood as part of a forest management plan to develop a sugar bush. Bruce made maple syrup in the sugar house he designed and built himself on the 40 acres he called Maple Brook Farm. He was a member of the Connecticut Maple Syrup Producers Association.

Bruce hand-built a summer cottage and out-buildings in Vermont from lumber harvested from evergreen trees on his property there. He especially enjoyed the beauty of wide pine boards and made many pieces of furniture, including tables, dressers, clocks and six board blanket chests. He renovated the kitchens in his Andover and Vermont homes with extensive hand-made raised panel cabinets. He considered himself "a carpenter who made furniture, not a cabinet maker."

He started each day early with a plan for the day, and continued this pattern after he retired. During retirement he discovered the joy of vacationing in St. John U.S. Virgin Islands, and returned every winter. The warm water, snorkeling and casual atmosphere restored his soul.

Much to his surprise, the arrival of grandchildren brought him more pleasure than he had anticipated. He was a better grandfather than any of his family would have predicted.

Bruce had a good life.

Bruce is survived by Carol, his devoted wife of 45 years; his son Brian and wife Kristin of Ayer, MA; his daughter Michelle and husband Yann of Manhattan, NY; twin sons Scott of Manchester and Kevin and his wife Darcie of Andover; a brother Gary and wife Helen of Myrtle Beach, SC; and seven grandchildren.

Friends may call Friday, July 11, from 5-8 p.m. at the Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center St., Manchester. Funeral services will be held Saturday, July 12, at 11 a.m. at the First Congregational Church of Andover, 359 Route 6, Andover, CT.

Bruce's family is grateful to his caring friends, John, Gordon and Dennis, who consistently provided companionship and support during his illness and who took him out to breakfast every Thursday. Visiting Nurses and Health Services of Connecticut, especially Susan Phelps RN and Bonnie Contois provided superior home care for Bruce during the many months of his illness. Special thanks go out to Doctor Gregory Riely of Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital, and to the dedicated staff and doctors at Connecticut Hospice.

Memorial donations may be made to Lung Cancer Research Foundation, 800 Third Ave. - 4th floor, New York, NY 10022.

Portland

Patrick Francis Rodgers Sr.

Patrick Francis Rodgers Sr., 84, of High Street, Portland, died Sunday, July 6, at the Hospital of St. Raphael in New Haven. He was the husband of the late Rosa F. Giuffrida Rodgers. He was born in East Hartford, April 4, 1924, to the late Mary (Galvin) and James J. Rodgers.

He attended East Hartford schools and the University of Connecticut where he had played varsity basketball and later played semi-pro basketball in Connecticut. He was elected to the East Hartford City Council at the age of 23 and maintained an interest in civic affairs in East Hartford and, later Portland, where he lived for 59 years. Before his retirement, he was employed in the accounting department of Aetna Insurance Co. in Hartford. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus and was a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary in Portland.

He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, Rosemary and Alain Munkittrick, and his son and daughter-in-law, Patrick Jr. and JoAnn, all of Portland; his four grandchildren Prudence Munkittrick of Annandale, VA, Malcolm Munkittrick of Washington DC, Melissa Rodgers and Meaghan Rodgers, both of Portland. He is also survived by his sister Margaret House of East Hartford, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his sister May Rodgers and his brother James J. Rodgers Jr.

His family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Thursday from 4-7 p.m. Funeral services were to be held Friday at 10:15 a.m. from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home and at 11 a.m. in the Church of Saint Mary for a Mass of Christian Burial. Interment will be private in Swedish Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, gifts in his memory may be sent to the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480. For directions and online expressions of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.