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Thousands flocked to the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds last Saturday, for the Lions' annual picnic and fireworks show. The display lasted about half an hour, lighting up the sky and generating lots of "oohs" and "ahhs" from the crowd. *Photo by David Wheaton.*

Thousands Dazzled by Hebron Fireworks

by Kristina Histen

There was fun for the whole family on Saturday at the Lions Fairgrounds in Hebron, as the town continued to celebrate its 300th birthday.

Throughout the day, about 1,350 cars (140 more than previous years) filled the parking lots at the fairgrounds, as attendees of all ages had the opportunity to watch a Vintage Baseball doubleheader at 2 p.m., participate in activities like rock climbing, enjoy free hayrides, ride a mechanical bull, play on inflatable attractions, take a train ride throughout the fairgrounds and enjoy everyone's favorite fair food – fried dough.

The day was a bit hot and muggy, but as the afternoon rolled on it became the perfect summer evening with clear skies, a slight breeze and live music by the band In Deep. Songs like "Walking in Memphis," "I'm a Believer" and "Bad Case of Loving You" got people up and dancing with the encouragement of the band members to "shake their booties."

Kids played football and baseball with each other in front of the band while others tried to find the best spot on the grassy fields to spread out their blankets and prop

open their lawn chairs for the evening attraction. Fireworks seemed to be the only thing on everyone's minds.

"We come here every year to watch the fireworks," Hebron resident Diane Kasper said, as she and the three of her five children that were with her tried to find a seat. Michael, 11, Kristina, 9, and David, 7, repeated her statement with big smiles at the thought of them.

"And to see friends, listen to the band and get fried dough," Kasper continued. "All the fun things."

Linda Boothroyd, a Bolton resident and also a big supporter of the fireworks, was there along with her husband, her sister, her sister's husband, her son and his new wife.

"It should be a great show, especially this year with the 300th anniversary," Boothroyd said. "We just really like the atmosphere. It's very family-oriented. We like to support the local events."

Linda Browning and her son Michael, 7, also come every year to see the fireworks. "Since it's the 300th birthday, we're expecting a big display," she said. "It's also nice that the kids get to see all their

friends from school, especially now that it's the summer."

As it grew darker, glow sticks could be seen scattered throughout the fair grounds as the late arrivals scanned the area trying to find a seat. Couples snuggled close, while parents tried to get their children to settle down from all the excitement. Teenagers were especially giddy because of their extended curfews and chance to hang out with friends unsupervised.

Hebron resident Liz Hoffman and Marlborough resident Whitney Hyde, both high school sophomores in the fall, said in unison that they were there because of "the fireworks" as well as the chance to see everyone from school. But they did have some complaints.

"We hate the prices," Hyde said, "Everything is so expensive."

Around 9:30 p.m. all the lights on the fairgrounds shut off. Cheers were heard echoing throughout. When the show didn't begin right away, some people began singing "Happy 300th Birthday, Hebron," while others chanted "Fireworks, Fireworks, Fireworks!" Before the show, how-

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ever, a brief moment of silence was held in honor of former Hebron EMS Captain David Podell, who passed away last Friday, June 27. This was followed by the national anthem, sung by Hebron resident Susan Rivard.

Then the sky lit up with various colors and loud booms reverberated as the crowd "oohed" and "ahhed."

Because it was the celebration of Hebron's 300 years, 72 percent more fireworks were purchased, Hebron Lions Club member John Johnson said. In addition, they were bigger than previous years with two firework shells measuring 12 inches in length whereas last year's biggest was only five inches, he said.

"We made it special for the 300th year," Johnson said. "It was definitely the biggest display there. When those went off, it was very

elegant and lit up the whole sky."

To continue the relevance of the celebration, during the finale 300 "salutes" went off (the big bang noise) in honor of Hebron's birthday and could be heard all the way from the Columbia and Amston lakes, Johnson said.

As people rushed off into the darkness to get to their cars in order to beat the other hundreds of people rushing off to get to their cars, all that could be heard were positive reviews on how elaborate and entertaining this year's fireworks were. It seems like Hebron's 301st birthday might have some high expectations to live up to.

All in all, it was a great day for everyone at the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds, with some quality fun and a good, wholesome family time.

Portland Resident Remembers the 'Day the Clowns Cried'

by Michael McCoy

Across the nation, this weekend will feature a bevy of fireworks, as people celebrate Independence Day. But here in Connecticut, a far more tragic incident will also be remembered.

Sunday, July 6, marks the 64th anniversary of the devastating Hartford Circus Fire, a blaze that claimed more than 160 lives. Wayne "Duffy" Duff is one of the survivors of that day. Now 74, Duff was only 10 when he attended the circus with his mother Dorothea.

The fire started at the southwest sidewall of the tent during the Great Wallendas' performance, about 20 minutes into the whole show. Though bandleader Merle Evans is traditionally believed to have spotted the fire, it was animal trainer May Kovar that Duff remembers.

"I thought she yelled 'fight!'" remembered Duff, who said it took him a bit before realizing she was actually yelling "fire!"

The incident happened during a Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. The performance was attended by about 8,000 people that fateful afternoon.

Most of the people who perished were sitting near the wall where it started. That was where the Duffs tickets were for. "At the last minute, my mother went and changed the seats," Duff said, adding that they moved down to a better spot, from section 'C' down to 'E.' "If we hadn't changed seats, I wouldn't be here today."

"We happened to be right by a rail," Duff recalled. When Duff realized just what was happening, he flipped over the rail and he and his mother headed for a nearby side entrance used for animals. For this reason, Duff figures they beat the crowd out of the big top.

Most of what followed is a blur for Duff today.

"I remember screaming and everybody yelling," he said. "If you fell, you probably couldn't get up."

While he said that most people find it hard to believe today, Duff remembers running out to a nearby cornfield. "We just kept on moving," Duff said, who said he didn't pay much attention to anything but fleeing.

Duff also figured, "If you fell, you probably couldn't get up," alluding to the many that were trampled. Fortunately, Duff not only made it out, but also never got separated from his



Wayne "Duffy" Duff

mother. "I stayed right with her." Dorothea was a nurse, and she passed away in 1996.

Reportedly, the tent was coated with 1,800 pounds of paraffin and 6,000 gallons of gasoline in order to waterproof it. Within eight minutes of the fire's start, the tent was leveled.

In some areas of the tent, Duff said, people were trampled in piles three bodies thick, though some at the bottom were later found alive, while those above were killed by flaming paraffin. Time Magazine called it "the worst circus disaster in U.S. history."

Today, Duff lives in Portland with his wife, Marie, where he has spent his entire life. They have two daughters (one of whom lives in East Hampton) and four grandchildren.

Duff, who said he's "been a truck driver all my life," retired 12 years ago from Suzio Construction in Meriden. He now works for Logano Waste Management in Portland. In his spare time, Duff follows racing phenom Joey Logano. "Racing's my life," he said.

In 2002, a memorial was built at the site of the circus fire, to honor those who died. Duff has not yet visited the memorial.

East Hampton Town Gearing Up for 30th Old Home Days Celebration

by Michael McCoy

It may seem unbelievable the calendar's hit July already, but it has – and this means it's time for Old Home Days.

This marks the 30th year of the three-day 'Glorious Celebration.' The event will kickoff on Thursday, July 10, and is being dedicated to the late Governor William O'Neill and Mo Lanzi. O'Neill passed away last November, while Lanzi, one of the founding Old Home Days members, died 15 years ago.

The festival will, as always, be held on the Center School grounds and "is all about celebrating and sharing the spirit and force of our spectacular community," according to the Old Home Days web site (www.easthamptonoldhomedays.org). This year's theme is Hometown Holidays.

In addition to being president of Old Home Days, Sheila Oakes is also chairman of the Glorious Gallop, the annual 5K road race that will celebrate its 10th year. The top finishing three males and females in each age bracket will receive awards, and the first 150 runners to register will receive a free T-shirt. Early entry is \$10, and \$15 on race day. Children under 13 run for \$8. The race will kick off at 7:15 p.m. at Seven Hills Crossing and will finish at Center School. Last year's winner, 17-year-old Forrest Misenti of Haddam, beat the second-place runner by nearly a minute. (Misenti ran the 5K in 15 minutes and nine seconds.)

This year's race will feature a blast of technology. Each racer will be given a chip to place in their shoe that will record their exact time. "Technology is marvelous," Oakes said.

As in the past, Old Home Days will give out 50 bicycles and helmets during the three-day period, thanks to the donations of around 20 businesses.

If you're anything like the staff at the *Rivereast* office, no festival could be deemed complete without food. Old Home Days has

that in spades, including the American Legion's steak sandwiches and sausage and meatball grinders, the Anchor Lodge's stuffed baked potatoes, shrimp from the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug, buffalo wings, fried mushrooms, fried clams, and fried peanut butter and jelly sandwiches from McGrath Foods, Ray's French Fries, hamburgers from the Rotary, and specialties from Thai Taste.

If it's sweets you crave, you can pick from the Republicans' fried dough, the Democrats' Italian Ice, ice cream and frozen lemonade from New England Soft Serve, strawberry shortcake from the Congregational Church, and fried Oreos and apple turnovers from members of the Boy Scouts and CHAMP. The Old Home Days Association, which includes around 30 active members, will also have its soda and water booth. New this year will be a plastic cup available for two dollars; it may be refilled free of charge throughout the festivities.

The festival grounds will also host many non-food booths, manned by various organizations and businesses.

As its web site proclaims, Old Home Days features Middlesex County's largest parade, which Russell Oakes will once again chair. This year's parade is shaping up to be the grandest yet, as founding member Red McKinney recently announced it would run about two and half hours.

The late Gov. O'Neill and Lanzi have been named the honorary parade marshals of this year's parade. The parade will feature a tribute to O'Neill in the form of a performance of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" by the 3rd Connecticut Regiment Fife & Drum Corps. During his time in office, O'Neill declared "Yankee Doodle Dandy" Connecticut's state song. (Oakes was part of the 3rd Connecticut Regiment Fife & Drum Corps during part of the 1980s and 1990s and will play fife herself.)

The parade will once again feature the South Philadelphia String Band, which made a splash in their Old Home Days debut last year. In addition, this will mark the first year that the Boston City Band marches the parade.

As of now, the parade will include over 60 different organizations. Anyone planning to have a float, who has not yet registered should contact Oakes at 267-8533.

As always, Old Home Days will feature all sorts of free musical entertainment. The celebration's opening act is Ben Rudnick & Friends, who will play at 6 p.m. The web site describes their sound as "ranging from folk to bluegrass, calypso and rock." The evening will close out with two-and-a-half hours of The Dramatix, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The lone Friday act will be the "six-piece funk'n', rock'n', and rhythm group" Savage Brothers, who will begin their set at 8:15 p.m.

Immediately following the parade Saturday, the South Philadelphia String Band will perform again, playing a half-hour set beginning at 1:30 p.m. Then, from 2:15-3 p.m., The World's Smallest Quartet will play. Calypso/reggae act Island Girl will be jammin' from 3:30-5 p.m. Tip the Van will play from 5:30-7 p.m. The MySpace page for this Marlborough band dubs the group a "rockin' female fronted power-ska, pop, reggae, rock, anything-goes band." Finally, Johnny 5 will close out the weekend from 8-11 p.m.

The Center School will also be home to a mass of rides and amusements during the three-day extravaganza. During Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon, kids may purchase wristbands for \$20 that grants them carte blanche access to the attractions. Five dollar off coupons are also floating around town.

Once again, the Old Home Days will raffle off a number of prizes. However, this year

boasts a special 30th anniversary raffle. The annual raffle includes a Nintendo Wii (third prize), a Weber gas grill (second prize) and a 40-inch Sony LCD flatscreen television (first prize).

The 30th anniversary grand prize is four loge seat tickets to see the Red Sox take on the Yankees at the soon to be demolished Yankee Stadium on Aug. 27. The prize also includes door to door limousine service (given you reside within 20 minutes of East Hampton). Tickets may be purchased at Belltown Dental, Devine Jewelers, the East Hampton Public Library, Food Bag, Spa Radiance, the Village Merchant, and Wine.com. The raffle will take place Saturday, July 12, at 8:05 p.m., and will commence with the grand prize.

According to Oakes, donations from many individuals, businesses and community and church groups make Old Home Days a success. She specifically singled out Liberty Bank and Shaw's, who gave \$4,000 and \$5,000 respectively.

Aside from donations, the rest of the costs are covered by proceeds from the previous year's festival, Oakes said. Only the necessary police overtime is paid for with taxpayers' money.

Be on the lookout for the roaming prize patrol. During the course of the festival, the Old Home Days Association will give away 1,500 T-shirts, which boast the striking new logo designed by Teri Prestash.

The 30th annual Old Home Days Glorious Celebration will run Thursday, July 10, from 6-10 p.m.; Friday, July 11, from 6-11 p.m.; and Saturday, July 12, from 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Anyone looking to volunteer to help out may still call Sheila Oakes at 267-8533.

For more information, visit www.easthamptonoldhomedays.org.

New Special Ed Director Ready to Start in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Brenna Kosicki has found her dream job in Hebron. The mom of two and lifelong proponent of education for everyone has been hired as the school system's new Director of Special Education.

Kosicki was one of 14 applicants for the job, after former Director of Special Education Nancy Johnston left to take the same position for the Lyme/Old Lyme school system. Kosicki started her new position in Hebron on Tuesday.

For the past three years, Kosicki has worked as the Supervisor of Special Education and Related Services for the Capital Region Education Council (CREC), working with magnet schools in the area. Wanting to be back in a school building and directly part of a school community, Kosicki applied for the Hebron opening.

When she attended the June 12 Board of Education meeting, Kosicki got the exact reinforcement she needed that the career shift was a good fit. "I attended the meeting as a way to introduce myself and meet the members of the Board of Ed[ucation]," she explained. "While I was at the meeting, the board recognized a bus driver for a job well done. That sense of community and everyone working together in the best interest of the children, that's why I'm here."

Kosicki received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the State University of New York in Oneonta, NY, and then went on to earn her Master's degree in school counseling from Russell Sage College in Troy, NY. She moved to Connecticut 12 years ago, taking a position as a psychotherapist in an alternative education setting in Meriden.

After two years there, Kosicki took a position as a school counselor at Vernon Middle School before returning to Meriden. This time she returned as the department facilitator for Meriden Middle School.

It was here that Kosicki honed her skills and love for working with special needs students. She worked directly with student's Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and identified areas for modification that would enable all students to succeed. This was also a leadership position where Kosicki developed professional development initiatives and oversaw all components to a student's education.

From there Kosicki moved to CREC. Although she's now moved onto Hebron, Kosicki feels that her experience at CREC will help in her new position.

"I have developed good relationships with the state Department of Education and have spent the last part of my career learning and applying the state and federal guidelines that apply to special education," she said.

Kosicki has moved around a bit in her career, dabbling in a number of positions. But Hebron, she says, is the place she envisions staying for "a long, long time."

Her past experience has given her a well-rounded view of school districts and now she's looking forward to applying what she's learned and experienced to Hebron and Gilead Hill elementary schools.

As for what exactly Kosicki is looking to do in Hebron, she doesn't know just yet. "I plan to get my feet wet and see how the district operates before I rush to change anything," she said.

However, she said she plans on taking a progressive approach when it comes to new methods and technology. "I believe it's better to be proactive rather than reactive," Kosicki said.

She said she's also looking into additional grants the district may qualify for to reduce the cost of the overall budget.

As Director of Special Education, Kosicki will be responsible for overseeing the services provided to the almost 150 special education students in the Hebron school system. She will also be the point person for informing parents



Portland resident Brenna Kosicki is the new Director of Special Education for Hebron schools. Kosicki started in her new position on Tuesday.

and staff of programming needs and ensuring the district is aligned with the state and federal guidelines that apply to special education.

Kosicki and her husband Brian live in Portland with their two children, 3-year-old Brandon and 8-month-old Juliette. In 2007, Brenna ran unsuccessfully for the Board of Education in Portland; she plans to run again next year.

"Being part of education is not what I do. It's what I am," she said. "Whether it's here or with my own children, I believe it's the best investment we can make."

She describes herself as easy-going but hardworking. "I have high standards for my staff," Kosicki said. "And, I'm motivated by the cause; acting in the best interest of kids."

Andover to Try Again to Get Budget Passed

by Sarah McCoy

Will the third time be the charm for the Andover budget?

Voters Tuesday approved sending a proposed \$10.27 million 2008-09 budget to referendum. The referendum will be held Tuesday, July 15, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the community room of the Town Office building, 17 School Rd.

This will be the third try to pass an Andover town budget. On June 24, residents, by a vote of 212-206, shot down a proposed spending plan that also came in at \$10.27 million. Since then the Board of Finance has learned that the local Board of Education will return \$200,650 from the 2007-08 budget thanks, in large part, to three grants Andover will receive. At its meeting last Wednesday, June 25, the BOF voted unanimously to apply \$83,700 to the revenue side of the 2008-09 budget. The BOF made no other adjustments to the rate of spending in the town.

Still, while the dollar amount of the proposed budget hasn't changed, its impact on taxpayers is lower than the budget that was defeated June 24. The proposed spending plan now features a one mill increase, bringing the proposed mill rate to 27.3; the budget defeated June 24 featured a proposed 27.6 mill rate.

State statute prevents a town from applying a surplus from one year's budget to the next, so the BOF will instead borrow from the town's general fund and replenish it with the surplus funds.

On Tuesday BOF Acting Chair Cathy Desrosiers urged voters to support the current budget. "We have a great community," she said. "It's time to come together, unite, and pass this budget."

Only one motion was heard at Tuesday's meeting to reduce the budget further. Resident Debbie Scanlon made a motion to apply the total \$200,650 surplus to next year's budget. "We've already been taxed on that money," she said. "Use it to offset the costs for the 2008-09 budget."

Desrosiers said the BOF considered this but felt it was fiscally irresponsible to do so con-

sidering that the deficit areas that may present themselves during the course of the year. The local Board of Education is estimating \$75,000 in unbudgeted costs due to an increase in the price of fuel and enrollment at magnet schools. The town is also estimating \$20,000 in unbudgeted costs due to the rise in oil and fuel.

"Let's address the shortfall if it comes," Andover resident Ken Mosher responded, in support of Scanlon's motion.

First Selectman Bob Burbank said that using the entire surplus would put the town on uneasy financial grounds. "Standard auditing procedures say at least 8 percent and no more than 12 percent of the budget should be placed in reserves," he said. "That's at least \$800,000 in Andover."

Burbank also said that while the town's reserve status won't be known until the auditor completes his findings, he estimates there to be \$400,000 in the town's general fund.

"You can't rob Peter to pay Paul," Desrosiers added. "Passing this motion would lead to a serious cash flow problem."

Andover resident Rob England received a round of applause after he called the proposed budget "a win-win for everybody." England said that he supported the last budget but could understand how some just couldn't afford it. "This seems like a very good opportunity to compromise," he said.

The motion to apply the entire surplus to the budget failed by a 37-16 vote. The next vote, to put forth the \$10.27 million budget with a 27.3 mill rate to referendum, passed overwhelmingly, 54-15. Absentee ballots for the referendum will be available from the Town Clerk early next week.

To the average Andover homeowner with a house assessed at \$150,000, this budget represents an increase tax rate of \$12.50 a month, or \$150 a year.

Desrosiers, who looked confident during Tuesday night's vote, said afterwards, "I think we're low enough."

Hebron's Bond Rating Improved

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron's bond rating has improved, just in time to finance the townwide park project.

Standard and Poor's (S and P) upgraded the town last week from an A-1 level to a premium grade of AA.

Bond ratings are an indicator of the degree of risk associated with a municipality and its ability to repay the loan. Towns with higher bond rating levels typically receive more favorable interest rates and aren't required to purchase bond insurance.

Hebron Town Manager Jared Clark reported that this upgrade will translate to a \$50,000 savings to the town for the \$4.5 million park project. "Based on S and P's analysis of the town they found that there was very little risk that the town of Hebron won't be able to repay a loan," he said.

For over 15 years Hebron had been rated at an A-1 level, a medium grade.

Clark said the upgrade was mainly due to four contributing factors.

First, the town has a 99 percent tax collection rate. The major reason for this is that, for the most part, people can afford to pay their taxes. Over 64 percent of the town earns more than \$50,000 a year.

Additionally, the town maintains approximately 7.5 percent of its operating budget in an undesignated fund balance. This account puts Hebron in a firm financial state in the case of an emergency. "If the community had an emergency," Clark explained, "we have the financial reserves to deal with it without creating a major spike in the tax rate."

A third criterion that S and P considered when analyzing the town is its financial management practices. From controlling increases in spending to the tracking of the town's expenditures, revenues, assets, and liabilities, Hebron has solid financial procedures.

The fourth area in which Hebron has demonstrated its strong financial position is

through the Capital Improvements Program. Since 1988 the town has had a consistent level of capital investments in new vehicles, buildings and roadways. This demonstrates the town's priorities and its ability to provide services.

One area which Hebron continues to develop is its strategic planning. For over a year, Clark has spearheaded the effort to meet with department heads for a better understanding of the town's needs and wants in the coming years. "The fundamental assumption we are working with is that if you can't afford to do everything, do what's most important," Clark explained.

He continued by noting that the town will have to choose what is most important and valuable to Hebron.

Clark said good financial practice is to maintain a debt level of no more than 10 percent of the current year's budget. Hebron will be at 11 percent for three years, beginning with the 2009-10 fiscal year, due to the recent bond acquisition for the park project. In 2013 the town will pay off the final note for the sewer project and, at that time, will be able to take on more debt, if residents decide to.

Possible needs for the town in 2013 include renovations or constructions of new elementary schools, a new Public Works facility, an expanded Town Offices building or development of the Peters House. "Politics, in a business sense, is supply and demand," Clark said. "When a group of constituents gets behind something, they've been able, for the most part, to pass it. Now our resources are more valuable than ever and residents will have to decide what they want."

So, sporting a history of good decisions and wise financial practices, Standard and Poor's rewarded Hebron, making the burden of debt a little easier.

Beloved Hebron Resident Remembered as Always Helping Others

by Sarah McCoy

As an eighth-grade student in a New York City private school, Judy Podell remembers meeting the new teacher starting at the school and her son that would enter her class.

"I sat in the front of the class, a raise-my-hand teacher's pet, and he sat in the back throwing spitballs," Judy recalled.

Judy, just 13 years old at the time, would go on to marry this classmate, David Podell.

While David never lost the sense of humor he displayed in that eighth-grade classroom, he went on to become better known as Hebron's Emergency Medical Services Captain, and an eager volunteer for virtually any project.

David Podell passed away last Friday, June 27, at the age of 66.

Born in Milwaukee, David moved to New York when he was 12 years old.

After marrying Judy in 1967, the two raised their two sons, Adam and Danny, in Illinois and then New Jersey. David worked as an industrial designer, building everything from trade show displays to the cigarette dispensers featured in most convenient stores.

"He could not only build anything, but he could make it work," Judy said. "He was a problem solver."

When asked what one thing she would want to take with her on a deserted island, Judy could think of only one thing. "I'd want David. He'd build me shelter, find me food, and make me laugh," she said. "I'd live very well."

In 1997 the couple came to Hebron, as part of what Judy called "David and Judy's Excellent Adventure." While initially thinking about moving to Glastonbury, the two fell in love with their antique Hebron home. David set up a workshop in the barn in their backyard and settled into his new community. He continued to build everything from product packaging to a pond for his wife. However, he was still looking for more.

Not one to ignore a need, David approached his wife about volunteering for the fire department soon after the couple came to Hebron. "I told him there was no way he was going to run a burning building," Judy recalled. "But he wanted to be a medic. He felt that he could help."

His lack of a medical background didn't stop

David from pursuing opportunities as a medic. He volunteered in Hebron and then went to school and eventually took a job as a medic for Hunter's Ambulance based in Meriden. "He wanted to do something useful, especially after 9-11," Judy said of her late husband.

David was one of several Hebron volunteer emergency personnel who traveled down to New York City to work on a bucket brigade in the wake of the attacks on Sept. 11. That experience, Judy said, had a profound impact on David.

In turn, David had a profound impact on others.

He served hundreds of individuals as a volunteer EMT in town. But it isn't his medical prowess that he'll be most known for. "He brought a level of maturity and people skills to the job," Judy said. "We'd be walking in Ted's and some little boy would walk up to him, pull on his leg, and say, 'You came to my house when I was sick.' They loved him."

Fire Chief Paul Burton remembered David as the consummate volunteer, a role model to others. "David was the type of person that would get off from a 16-hour shift as a paramedic and come to the firehouse, go on calls, or stock the ambulance," Burton said. "He considered it his personal obligation to keep Hebron safe."

When Burton's two children each needed medical assistance while their father was out of town, the family took comfort in knowing that David would be there. "He was always relaxed, which put everyone at ease," Burton said.

David continued to work and volunteer until his passing on Friday, June 27. In 2000, Podell was diagnosed with Myelodysplasia, an inability of the body's bone marrow to produce enough red blood cells. At first he underwent blood transfusions every couple months; by the end, it was every week. Those transfusions put too much iron in his system, eventually shutting down his organs.

Podell was admitted to the hospital on June 9, convinced he would return to work shortly thereafter.

Despite his deteriorating health, David managed to find a way to etch the names into 300 blocks of granite for the town's commemorative stonewall. He also continued to serve as Hebron's EMS Captain, a position he had held



Hebron EMS Captain and eager volunteer David Podell died last week. David is shown here skydiving in Ellington in 2006.

for the past five years.

For the last three years, David had worked to add a second ambulance to the town's fleet. With Hebron's growing population and the prevalence for medical assistance, David considered a second ambulance vital to the town. The ambulance was funded in the 2008-09 budget and, when it arrives in town, will be adorned with David Podell's name. Additionally the fire department will be constructing a memorial garden outside of Company One, in the center of town, to remember David and other late volunteers.

When he wasn't protecting the wellbeing of others, David could be found at home with his wife. "Every room has something he made in it," Judy said as she looked around her living room. "I would say, 'I'm looking for this' or 'I'm looking for something that does that,' and he would build it for me."

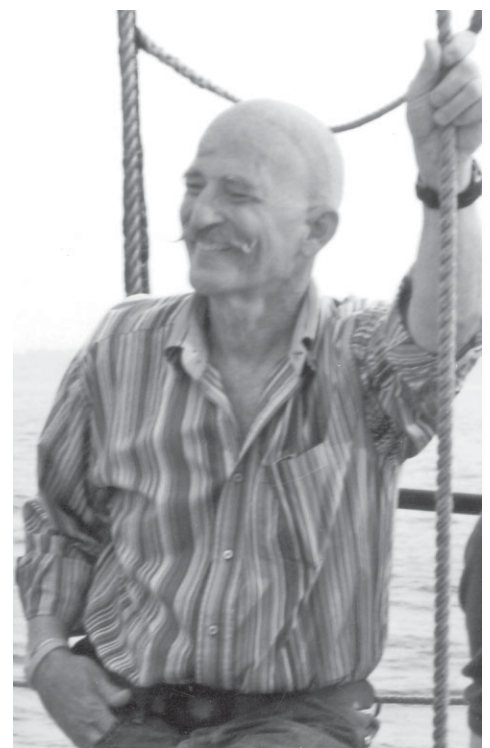
The problem-solver extraordinaire had a knack for making things efficient.

"I used to say that David would be perfect if he only knew how to dance," Judy said. Taking it as a personal challenge, David signed up for dancing lessons as a 50th birthday present to his wife. "He said to me, 'Now, I'm perfect,'" Judy recalled.

When the couple married in 1967 they took a Circle Line cruise around Manhattan, as Judy had to work the next day and David had school. For their 40th anniversary last year they recreated their honeymoon, renting out the Argia schooner in Mystic for them and 40 friends.

He also loved to bike ride, often over 100 miles a day. For 14 years Podell traveled to Iowa for a 500-mile bike trip. Thousands of riders each year gather at the Missouri River and bike to the Mississippi River. For three years David didn't just go, he brought a 70-member posse to ride together.

"That was him, always wanting to include everyone," Judy said.



David is shown here in Mystic last year, celebrating his 40th wedding anniversary.

By 2002, riding was too hard on his body, forcing Podell to retire from the sport. But he continued to fish, repair his antique Mini Cooper, and pitch in wherever there was a need.

In 66 years David lived a full life. He never thought of himself as old nor did he act it. An adventurous and giving spirit, David has left his mark on Hebron in so many ways and with so many people.

The Podells have tentatively scheduled a celebration of David's life for September. In lieu of flowers the family asks for donations to the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department or the Myelodysplasia Foundation. David's full obituary appears this week on page 14.

Hebron Police News

6/24-Stephen Sparks, 49, of 25 Elmer St., East Hartford, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

6/28-Paul Adamowicz, 25, of 9 Oak Rd., Cromwell, was charged with alternation of firearm identification mark number, breach of peace, carrying firearm while under the influence of liquor/drugs, carrying of pistol or revolver without permit, criminal possession of pistol or revolver, operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol, operation of motor vehicle when registration or license is refused/suspended/revoked, second-degree reckless endangerment, threatening and weapons in vehicle, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

6/23-Jamie Bogan, 38, of 11 Chestnut Dr., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

6/24-Thomas Mather, 48, who no address was provided for, was charged with injury or risk of injury/impair the morals of a child and fourth-degree sexual assault, State Police said.

6/25-Scott Duffany, 26, of 48 Manners Ave., Windham, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

6/26-Eugene Mastroianni, 58, of 16 Green Ln., North Windham, was charged with operating under suspension and failure to obey signal of an officer, State Police said.

Charges Filed in March Accident in Marlborough

by Kristina Histen

The investigation of a serious one-car crash that occurred on Route 2 in March has resulted in the arrest of the driver on multiple charges, state police said.

Darrell Baker, now 44, of 1791 Norwich New London Rd., Uncasville, turned himself into state police last Thursday, June 26, on charges of second-degree assault with a motor vehicle while intoxicated, DWI, failure to drive right, operating after suspension, operating an unregistered vehicle, operating without insurance and misuse of plates, police said.

The passenger of the vehicle, Amalfis Payano, now 32, of 64 Oakwood Knoll, Norwich, was seriously injured as a result of the accident, police said.

On Tuesday, March 11 around 10 a.m., Baker, and Payano were traveling eastbound

on Route 2 in Marlborough, about a half-mile east of the exit 13 ramp, in the left lane, police said. When the vehicle left the travel lane, it struck approximately 100 feet of guard wire on the left shoulder median with its left front end, police said.

The vehicle broke through the guard wire and struck a tree in the center median with its right passenger side door and quarter panel, police said. It then spun around and came to a final rest down a steep embankment in the center median of the highway.

Baker was taken to Hartford Hospital with injuries, police said. Payano suffered from more serious injuries, and was transported by Life Star to St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Due to the long extrication of Payano from the car, Rt. 2 East had been shut down to traffic for about three hours, police said.

Andover Police News

6/27-Rachel Webb, 41, of 24 Gilead Rd., was charged with DWI, risk of injury and second-degree reckless endangerment, State Police said.

6/27-Jeffrey Fox, 35, of 104 Wellswood Rd., Apt. 2, Hebron, was charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace, State Police said.

6/27-Billy McNamara, 33, of Bolton, was charged with violation of protective order, disorderly conduct and threatening, State Police said.



Significant damage was done to the Colchester Farmer's Club bar area after a fire broke out early Saturday morning.

Club Damaged In Fire, But Things Could Have Been Worse

by Kristina Histen

A fire charred a local club early last Saturday morning, but the building might have sustained even more damage had a volunteer firefighter not been passing by the building at the right time.

Volunteer firefighter Arnold Ewing was on his way to get his morning coffee around 6 a.m. Saturday, June 28, when he saw smoke coming out of the Colchester Farmer's Club at 108 Halls Hill Rd. He immediately called the fire in while on his way to get a fire truck at the Colchester Hayward Fire Department to come back and help put it out, Fire Marshal Reed Gustafson said.

It only took about 20 minutes to contain the fire, but firefighters and officials were kept on scene for about four hours Saturday to overhaul the whole building construction by checking for hidden fire in wall and floor space, Fire Chief Walter Cox said. They also had to meter the building, as the carbon monoxide levels

were very high after the fire, he said.

The fire consumed most of the bar area, burning the ceiling and walls, but smoke caused destruction to the second and third floors, both Gustafson and Cox said in different statements.

No one was in the building at the time of the fire and no injuries were reported.

According to the town building official, the incident caused between \$75,000 to \$100,000 worth of damage, and the bar area will have to be reconstructed, Gustafson said. If Ewing had not been driving by at that time, there would have been an even more significant amount of damage done, he said.

Since the club is privately owned, patrons are allowed to smoke in the building. Investigation by the fire marshal revealed that the fire was caused by an electrical problem with the smoke eater (air purifier/cleaner) in the bar area, Gustafson said.

East Hampton Police News

6/19 — Frederick E. Nichols, 38, of 13 Summit St., was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, misuse of registration plates and operating without insurance, East Hampton Police said.

6/20 — Debra M. Pratt, 55, of 153 Main St., was arrested for failure to obey a stop sign, operating without insurance and failure to notify of change of address, police said.

6/20 — Daniel P. Evans, 21, of 10 Charles Ave., Waterford, was arrested for failure to wear a seatbelt and operating while under suspension, police said.

6/21 — Thomas W. Harrison, 50, of 1822 Chamberlain Hwy., Berlin, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol, risk of injury to a minor, operating under suspension, and failure to obey a control signal, police said.

6/21 — Kathy S. Moody, 37, of 188 White Birch Rd., was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Summit Street, 200 feet west of Bishop

Hill Road, police said, adding that Moody was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right.

6/22 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was issued a ticket for a cell phone violation, police said.

6/23 — Kendra Moderow, 19, of 41 A Hubbard Hill Rd., Danielson, was arrested for operating under suspension and failure to drive right, police said.

6/24 — A 16-year-old male juvenile was issued a ticket for violation of 16/17 year-old passenger restrictions, police said.

6/24 — Sean H. Martland, 23, of 73 Main St., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to have lights lit, police said.

6/25 — Robert E. Murphy, 47, of 4 Hickory Rd, Marlborough, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and operating under suspension, police said.

Portland Police News

6/22 — Steven Dickerson, 28, of 18 Chatham Ct., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police said.

6/23 — Michael Bordonaro, 41, of 15 Silver St., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

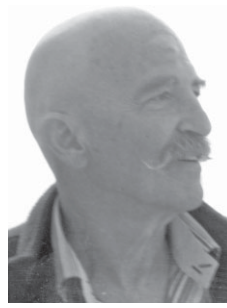
6/23 — A 15-year-old female was referred to juvenile court on charges of making a false statement and second-degree falsely reporting an incident, police said.

6/25 — Joseph Cannata, 23, of 18 Victoria Rd., was charged with reckless driving, engaging officer in pursuit, failure to obey stop sign, operating motorcycle without motorcycle endorsement and speed, police said.

Obituaries

Hebron

David Podell



On Friday, June 27, David Podell lost his eight-year battle with myelodysplasia, a bone marrow disease that he refused to let keep him from living his life to its fullest. Despite the progression of the disease and its inevitable conclusion David continued to work full-time as

a paramedic for Hunter's Ambulance and devote his non-working hours to keeping Hebron's residents safe and alive as the town's EMS Captain.

David was a "sui generis," a truly unique mensch with many talents, a great sense of humor, far-left political views, and a love of gadgets — from his antique mini-cooper to any and all mechanical toys. He was passionate about long-distance bicycle riding and counted his annual treks to RAGBRAI in Iowa with his son, Adam, as one of the greatest pleasures of his life.

He was compassionate with his patients, generous and loyal to his friends, a loving husband, father, brother and son and was respected and admired by all who had the good fortune to know him.

Born in Milwaukee WI, David met the love of his life, his wife Judy, when he came as a handsome, trouble-making 12-year old to the Walden School in NYC. Judy was 13, an older woman, as he liked to remind her. They married in 1967 and settled with their two boys Danny and Adam, first in Aurora, IL, where David worked as a Product Designer for American Can Company after earning a Bachelor of Industrial Design degree from Pratt Institute in NYC.

The family moved back east to their first home in Montclair, NJ when David accepted a position designing educational toys for Childcraft. David started his own business, Penultima, after Judy saved \$2,000 — enough to pay their mortgage and live for six months. The business flourished and David spent the next 35 years designing and building prototypes, trade show exhibits and products for point-of-purchase display companies and major corporations such as Congoleum, Revlon, Biotherm, WaterPik, Cannon Towels, Wal-Mart, Elizabeth Arden, Clairrol, Qwest, Esprit and Brown & Williamson.

As one client claimed, David had "Golden Hands" and could make and repair almost anything, which he did...usually at Judy's request: furniture, fountains, lighting fixtures, kitchens, fish ponds and recycling streams, custom window shades, a chicken coop (or more accurately, a four-star chicken hotel), he created clever and beautiful solutions to thousands of daily events and problems that turned every home the couple owned into a thing of beauty.

David became an EMT shortly after the couple moved to Hebron in 1997. He became a paramedic after 9/11, where the experience of working on the site of the World Trade Center convinced him to change careers in order to do something "useful." And useful he was, as can be attested to by the hundreds of people he helped both as a volunteer in Hebron and in his paid career. His impact in Hebron, a town he loved, can be seen in the celebration stone wall that he conceived. The curbstones that bear the names of 300 people is his legacy, as he spent hundreds of hours painstakingly adding the names to the stones.

In addition to his wife, Judy, he will be missed and mourned by his immediate family: his sons, Daniel Podell of Seattle, WA, and Adam Podell of Riverdale, NJ; his mother, Sophie Rosner of Montclair, NJ; his step-brother David Rosner and wife, Kathy, of New York City, his step-sister, Adrienne Rosner of Montclair, NJ, as well as many other family members and a host of dear friends near and far, especially Brett Thompson of Hartford, CT, Fay Mackey of Macungie, PA, and Irving Hopkins of Mystic, CT.

The family will sit Shiva, the traditional Jewish mourning period, and welcomes visits from friends daily after 4 p.m. through Sunday, July 6, at the Podell home in Hebron. A celebration of David's life is planned for the near future.

In lieu of flowers, people can make a contribution in his memory either to the Hebron Fire Department's Emergency Medical Service (Hebron Volunteer Fire Dept. P.O.Box 911, Hebron, CT 06248) or the Myelodysplasia Foundation (www.aamds.org).

Colchester

Gordon Barry Coates

Gordon Barry Coates, 69, of New London Road, Colchester, beloved husband of Christine, passed away Monday, June 30, at the Hartford Hospital.

Born June 2, 1939, in Willimantic, he was a son of the late Donald and Margaret (Barry) Coates Sr.

He was a graduate of RHAM High School in Hebron and went on to enlist in the U.S. Marines Corps in 1958, serving proudly for six years, with service during the Vietnam War.

In March of 1964, he wed the former Christine Clauson in Sturbridge, MA.

Mr. Coates worked as a Supervisor in Manufacturing for Pratt & Whitney for 30 years, retiring in 1992. He went on to work for J&K Construction Co. in Colchester for six years and was currently employed as Senior Field Supervisor for Moran Environmental Recovery in Berlin.

He fellowshipped with the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Willimantic and enjoyed pulling hayrides for the church members. Gordon was also a longtime member of the American Legion in Hebron, as well as the Colchester Farmers Club and St. Joseph's Polish Society in Colchester.

In his spare time, he loved wildlife and the outdoors, especially the ocean at Cape Cod, but found his greatest joy in being with his family.

In addition to his loving wife of 44 years, he is survived by a daughter and son-in-law, Julie Lynn and Lt. Michael Terp, USN of Norwich; beloved family friend, Sarabeth Vanvelzor, her husband Bruce and their daughter, Hana Marie Vanvelzor, all of Norwich; three siblings, Virginia May Phelps, Donald Gilbert Coates Jr. and Carleen Elizabeth Coates, all of Amston; and numerous extended family members and friends. He was predeceased by a sister, Patricia Ann Biron.

We look forward to seeing him again on the Resurrection Morning.

Friends may call 6-8 p.m. Wednesday at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. Funeral services, followed by committal with full military honors in the New Hebron Cemetery, will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Maranatha SDA Regional School, 126 Quarry St., Willimantic 06226.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Marie (Connie) O. Thomson

Marie (Connie) O. Thomson, 82, died Thursday, June 26, at Oceanview Nursing Home, New Smyrna Beach, FL, after a long illness. She was the widow of M. Joseph Bransfield and Robert M. Thomson. Connie was born to the late Arthur J. and Elsie Lafley O'Heare in Enosburg Falls, VT on March 22, 1926. She grew up in Portland and lived in East Hampton until 1988, when she moved to Myrtle Beach, SC. In 2000, she moved to Florida. She was retired from SNET in Connecticut after 32 years.

She leaves a brother Michael "Terry" O'Heare and his companion, Anna Mae Burkey of New Smyrna Beach, FL, a nephew Michael T. O'Heare Jr. of Lebanon PA, and a niece Holly A. O'Heare of Glastonbury.

Funeral services were Wednesday, July 2, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with the Rev. Charles LeBlanc, pastor of St. Patrick Church, East Hampton, officiating. Burial followed in St. Patrick Cemetery, next to her first husband, M. Joseph Bransfield. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Wednesday morning before the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made in her memory to Hospice of Volusia/Flagler 3800 Woodbriar Trail, Port Orange, FL 32129.