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The Connecticut Cellar Savers' Toy Train Layout is back again this year. Shown here is Michael Tierney standing behind his 9-foot-by-5-foot S-scale train set, which is the second largest display at the museum. It portrays a rolling snow-covered scene, and features detail like a Christmas tree farm and the abominable snowman.

Holiday Train Layout Returns to Portland

by Michael McCoy

The phrases "holiday season" and "free" don't often co-mingle. But for the sixth year running, kids of all ages have a no-cost option for some Christmastime cheer.

The Connecticut Cellar Savers' Toy Train Display opened in Portland Nov. 27 and runs through Jan. 10. The cozy and nostalgic Connecticut Cellar Savers Museum, located at 634 Main St., now hosts five displays, ranging from Sandy Alonzo's tiny but minutely-detailed Maine dockside to Michael Tierney's 18 by 8-foot spread.

The Connecticut Cellar Savers (CCS) is a local chapter of the Society for the Preservation and Appreciation of Antique Motor Fire Apparatus of America. Though the museum is relatively new, CCS was founded in 1977. After Jan. 10, the museum, which displays antique firefighting equipment, will reopen in April.

"I can't believe we put this thing together six times already," said Tierney, who first displayed his trains in 2004. The inaugural display was actually synchronized with the museum's debut that Thanksgiving. "It just seemed like everything sort of clicked," he said.

"The first year, we were scrounging to get stuff in here," Tierney remembered. Just five years later, the better question is how to include everything.

Part of the joy of Tierney's display is seeing the new additions each year. This year's model added an animated tire swing, crossing lights, LED street lamps, a welder with a light-up iron, and a boy flying a kite.

The scene is peppered with other gems, each one making the scene seem more real. You might see a vintage Ringling Bros. billboard, an oil derrick, or even a fish ranch train car, complete with swimming fish. Also, take notice how realistically two men sawing lumber move.

The main display includes a downtown scene on one side, with a rural pastiche on the other. The train also heads through a tunnel to complete the circle again.

Tierney's smaller display is no mere afterthought. A nice complement to the larger model's summer setting, the 9-foot-by-5-foot display is a winter scene, realistically painted white, trees dusted with snow, and an iced-over pond with ice skaters. This set also boasts a silver 1949 A.C. Gilbert model train, replicating one from the New Haven Railroad.

Many of the engines even emit mock-steam, and it's realistic enough that Tierney has to shut it off periodically.

"It just kind of happens," said Tierney, explaining that the organizers of the layout largely decide where to place each piece as they go. The nostalgic scenes also leave room for some humor. For instance, John Rzasa's N-scale display features a trailer-park scene, complete with domestic dispute.

Kids who want to have a little extra fun obsessing over the detail can do the scavenger hunt. The quest has over 20 challenges, including spotting a skunk, a fireman rescuing a cat, and a person painting.

See Holiday Train on Page 2

East Hampton Child Memorialized in Rose Parade

by Michael McCoy

East Hampton resident Katie Coolican will be honored in the 2010 Tournament of Roses Parade 26 years after her sudden death.

On Sept. 19, 1983, Katie, 6, was enjoying recess at Memorial School when she suddenly fell to the ground. She died at Hartford Hospital five days later, the collapse being diagnosed caused by an arteriovenal malfunction, or broken capillaries in her brain.

Katie's mother, Maggie, has worked as a nurse since 1962. She recalled, "We felt it was important for her spirit to live on." So, she and her husband, Don, decided to donate her organs.

"It was such a senseless death," said Maggie of her "funny little tomboy." She added, "We had to make some sense out of it."

As Maggie, Don and their five kids grieved, Maggie said there was not much professional support available. So, she did something about it. Maggie formed a two-year bereavement follow-up program at Hartford Hospital's organ procurement department. That department has since become known as "Life Choice."

After taking time off to raise her family, Maggie returned to nursing at Hartford Hospital. In 1992, she became the founding chair of the National Donor Family Council. Since

2005, she was worked for Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation (MTF), and has become a national figure among the donation advocacy community. This includes publishing the book *For Those Who Give and Grieve* in 1989, which is distributed to donor families.

"I've been able to do a lot of advocacy work on her behalf," said Maggie, who has helped around 1,600 families, some times in states as far away as Texas and California.

"In society today, grief is not something we like to talk about, but we could talk about it here," she said.

In September, the Coolicans were notified that Katie would be included in a float helmed by Donate Life, memorializing 76 organ and tissue donors. They were even invited to see the float in the parade New Year's Day, but declined. Instead, they hosted a luncheon at their home that featured the floragraph, a portrait made with various organic material. The float, started last January, portrays a metaphoric phoenix.

"I wanted it to be a celebration of not just Katie's life, but all the volunteers," she said of Friday's luncheon, so she invited many of the volunteers who make her vision possible. Most of the volunteers are themselves family mem-

ber of donors.

Don expressed his pride over his wife's work increasing awareness of donation's importance. He said she often fields calls from people on the west coast who need to talk and don't realize how late it is in Connecticut.

He praised Maggie, saying, "She's spent her life taking care of people who are in grief." But he mentioned that she doesn't dwell on the loss of Katie, focusing on her clients' problems instead. "That's not part of the script as far as she's concerned," said Don, although he added she won't hide if it should come up.

This reverence is notable, since Don did not feel this way initially.

He revealed that his initial attitude was "We had a terrible thing happen; we made the best of it; that's the end of it." He couldn't figure out why Maggie didn't want to move on and distance herself from the situation.

But Don said he was simply wrong, and that Maggie's work in the last 26 years has made Katie's death not in vain. "She's really made a huge difference."

Mary Swanson worked with the Coolicans during Katie's donation process, and they have stayed in touch ever since. Swanson said the

See Memorial on Page 2



Katie Coolican, 6, died suddenly in 1983. On New Year's Day, a float in her honor will be included as part of the Tournament of Roses parade.

Memorial cont. from Front Page

process was quite different in 1983 and said that Maggie's work "greatly improved the process."

Pat Coughlin, an East Hampton resident, has known Maggie for a long time, but started volunteering in 2007 after her granddaughter Kelly died. Kelly's parents decided to donate her liver and kidney. "Whatever needs to be done, we do," said Coughlin, who is assigned to help families who are being phased out of the program after two years.

The Coolicans' lakeside home was filled last Friday, Dec. 11, mostly with Maggie's volunteers and colleagues, but there were also some family and close friends, including some whose children had been friends with Katie. One such parent, Gem Marshall, noted how Katie was the girl of her son's group of friends, but said she was game for anything. She remembered Katie showing up at her home wearing a dress with a toy gun and holster.

Marshall called Katie "a real delight."

Another parent, Bunny Simko, said that, while Katie was the youngest of six Coolican children, "she took care of the family." She also labeled her the most outspoken of the Coolican kids.

Marshall and Simko, along with Lynda Krasnitski and Maureen King, said Katie's death rattled the foundation of their community. But they all have a fond reminder of Katie: the angel Christmas tree ornament made from a scallop shell that Maggie gave them the Christmas after Katie's death. All four said they

still put it on each year.

Acknowledging Maggie's donor work since, Marshall said, "Out of that came all of this good work you see."

Don also recounted several circumstances surrounding Katie's death. For instance, his daughter, Kelly, who was 15, was an exchange student in Germany. She came home when Katie died. When Kelly arrived, Don received a call from Nikki O'Neill, wife of then-Governor William O'Neill. She offered a limousine to take the Coolicans to the airport, as she'd predicted they would be in no shape to drive there.

Don noted that Kelly stayed here for just a week, as she and her parents decided she should finish her commitment in Germany. But Don said the situation was quite tough on her.

Maggie's work has taken her around the country, and she's even delivered an address on donation in Amsterdam. But her work's not finished yet.

As for the float, Maggie said, "I think it's a wonderful tribute"

The 121st Tournament of Roses Parade, held in Pasadena, CA, begins at 11 a.m. Eastern Standard Time on Jan. 1, 2010. The parade will be broadcast on ABC, NBC and several cable channels.

More information on the float is available at www.donatelifefloat.org. More information about organ and tissue donation is located at www.donorfamily.org.



Maggie Coolican (pictured front and center, dressed in white) is shown here with her band of volunteers during a luncheon last Friday, Dec. 11, at the Coolican home. Maggie's husband, Don, is shown at top left.

Holiday Train cont. from Front Page

When he's not growing his collection, Tierney, 26, manages retirement plans for Bank of America. He also leads the town's Boy Scouts of America Troop #2 and is a member of three model trains organizations: the Mohegan Pequot Club, the Train Collectors Association, and the Shoreline O.N. 30. [The O.N. stands for O-scale (the model size) Narrow (a type of track).]

During the rest of the year, the bulk of Tierney's collection remains in storage. (However, he said he's currently entertaining an invitation to display in Amato's, a hobby shop on Main Street in Middletown.) In September, he begins piecing his set together at home, hauling it to the museum around Halloween. He admitted the finishing touches are put on just before the Nov. 27 opening. Tierney guessed that preparing all the sets took roughly 70 or 80 man-hours. In addition to Rzasz and Alonzo, Tierney also gets a lot of help from Michael Mazzocco and Pete Sulinski.

While it may be a lot of work, Tierney has no regrets. "When the door opens and the kids are running in and their eyes light up," he said. "That's what makes it worthwhile."

And the magic doesn't die with childhood. People of all ages stop by, though it is mostly families with children. Even then, though, Tierney pointed out the phenomenon: "They're all amazed by the same thing."

As an illustration of the draw of train sets, Tierney alluded to the opening shot of *A Christmas Story*, which shows a throng of kids ogling a train set in through the store window. Despite the electronic age, Tierney figured, "It just seems like there's something magic about trains."

Tierney between 1,200 and 1,500 usually visit the museum during the display's six-week run, and 130 came out last weekend. Observing that attendance spikes the weekend after



Shown here is one of the layout's toy trains zipping along.

Christmas, and the fact that Christmas falls on a Friday, Tierney predicted, "Saturday and Sunday are gonna be packed."

The CCS Toy Train Display is open every Saturday and Sunday through Jan. 10, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. This year, the display will also be open Tuesday, Dec. 29, from 1-6 p.m. There is no charge to see the display (although CCS will accept donations).

More information about CCS is available at www.ctcellarsavers.org. The museum, located at 634 Main Street may be reached at 860-342-1187.

Hebron Elementary Nominated for Blue Ribbon Award

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron Elementary School (HES) has been nominated for the Blue Ribbon Award, given by the federal Department of Education.

Last Thursday, Dec. 10, Principal Kevin Hanlon received a phone call notifying him that the state Department of Education had nominated HES for the honor, which means the school can apply for the federal Blue Ribbon Award. "I was so surprised," Hanlon said at last week's Board of Education meeting. "But, it's a real testament to the hard work of our entire staff."

HES is joined by schools in Madison, Glastonbury and Avon as the only other elementary schools nominated for the award.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's website, the Blue Ribbon Schools program is designed to recognize schools "that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels."

Hanlon said earlier this week that HES was nominated under the "academically superior" category.

In order to be nominated for the award schools must meet certain criteria largely from the state's standardized test – either the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) for grades 3-8, or the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for high schools.

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz reported that no Hebron school has ever been nominated for the award.

RHAM High School did receive the award from 1994-96.

Hanlon will have the next month to complete the Blue Ribbon application, which includes sections such as curriculum development and instruction. That application as well as the school's performance on the 2010 CMTs will determine whether or not HES is recognized as a Blue Ribbon school.

In the past the Blue Ribbon award was given to a specific number of schools within a state. Earlier this week, Hanlon reported this is no longer the case as schools are trying to meet certain criteria not compete against one another.

In 2009 HES students improved in nearly every subject on the CMT. This includes sixth grade reading and math scores that were both in the top 10 in the state.

Hanlon said earlier this week that he was proud of the recognition. "This is something our teachers, parents, the Board of Education, administration and the entire town should be proud of," he said.

BOE Chair Jane Dube said at last Thursday's meeting that she now knows what actors who are up for an Academy Award mean when they say, "it's a thrill just to be nominated."

School officials will find out in August if they are one of the schools named as a Blue Ribbon school. If they are, members of the school staff will be invited down to Washington, DC, to accept the award.

Handley to Retire from State Senate

by Katy Nally

Mary Ann Handley, the Democratic state senator who has represented Marlborough for the past seven years, announced her retirement last Friday, Dec. 11. She will complete her term and leave the Senate in January 2011.

"After nearly 50 years in public service ... I feel it's time to spend more time with my family," she said in a press release. "I'm 73 years old, and the legislature ceased being a part-time body a long time ago."

Handley is senator for the Fourth District and represents Marlborough, Bolton, Manchester and Glastonbury.

While Handley has been state senator for 13 years, she has only served Marlborough since 2002, when the Fourth District was redrawn. (Her district used to be composed of Hebron, Bolton, Manchester and Glastonbury.) Handley looked back fondly Monday at her seven years' association the town, and said she has helped Marlborough receive state funds throughout her tenure.

First Selectman Bill Black said Tuesday Handley was instrumental in securing funds for the town's sewer project. He said Marlborough was not even on the list to receive grant money from the Clean Water Fund, but Handley "opened the door." Black said she set up meetings with the Department of Environmental Protection and, in total, helped Marlborough receive \$4 million from the Clean Water Fund. But this was just the first of many grants from Handley, Black said.

"She was a super, super representative," he said. "If I had one request - don't leave."

Dennis Hawrylko, who was Marlborough's interim first selectman in 2006, just before Black, also remembered Handley from her efforts with Marlborough's sewer project. He said Monday she was able to secure grant money for the town even during a time when the state was tightening its budgets. He commended her for "going against the tides."

"What impressed me with Mary Ann Handley was if you asked for something, you got it," he said. "I'm disappointed because we're losing an outstanding public server - and I don't use those words lightly."

When Hawrylko took office, the town government was in upheaval because the former first selectman had stepped down and the town treasurer and director of Public Works had both left. He said he was "under the gun" to govern Marlborough, but Handley was one continuous "bright spot." Hawrylko said Handley would simply ask, "What can I do for you?"

Hawrylko remembered Handley as having a "common touch" and being very receptive to the people of Marlborough. He pointed out that although he is a Republican, he "wholeheartedly endorsed" Handley because of her genuine "concern for the people."

"In my estimation, she was just an outstanding representative," Hawrylko said.

Handley has worked with five first selectmen of Marlborough since 2003. Howard Dean, who was first selectman from 1991 to 2003, still remembers Handley as a friend and a dedicated Senator.

"I thought she was a very good Senator for our district," Dean said Wednesday. "She was always there when I needed her."

Dean said Handley was supportive of Marlborough when the town was dealing with the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA). Dean said the CRRA was trying to charge extra for trash disposal and Handley advocated on the town's side.

After he left office in Marlborough, Dean said he continued to work with Handley, when he was employed at a lobbying firm.

"She's been a friend and she is still a friend and I'm sorry to see her leaving," Dean said. "But after a while its gets long," he said of the senator's tenure.

Handley also said Monday she helped secure funds for the town green project and the expansion of Richmond Memorial Library.

She said for most municipal projects she was an "interested onlooker," but the library development in Marlborough particularly piqued her interest. "I love libraries and I love that building," she said.

When asked which projects she would have liked to see come to fruition before retirement, Handley mentioned the library expansion.

The library received a \$250,000 Small Town

Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant in September, but expansion plans have since been put on hold.

Nancy Wood, director of Richmond Memorial Library, said Handley "will be missed." "She's just always been a great supporter of libraries," Wood said. "She really is thoughtful and helps her constituents."

Though Wood never dealt with Handley directly, she said the Senator helped the town procure several grants for the library in the past.

"[State Representative] Pam Sawyer and Mary Ann just do such a good job for their district," Wood said.

Sawyer, a Republican who represents Andover, Bolton, Hebron and Marlborough, said people like Handley who give their lives to public service should be "commended."

"Though we are on very different political sides on most issues, she has served her constituents very well and has worked very hard on their behalf," Sawyer said Tuesday.

Handley described her seven senate terms as a "roller coaster" with many "peaks and troughs." Handley said she hopes by the time she officially retires, the economy will be at least some what recovered, so she can leave on a high note.

The senator said she announced her retirement so soon in advance to give others enough time to come forward. Handley said she had a few ideas as to who might want to replace her, but did not give out any names.

Shawn Fisher, chairman of the Marlborough Democratic Town Committee, said anyone who resides in Handley's district could potentially replace her, but he said he would be surprised if anyone from town would run.

Fisher most recently helped Handley campaign in Marlborough for re-election last year. He said, as a senator, Handley "really listened to the needs of people in town."

"She's been a wonderful representative and we're very grateful for her," Fisher said.

This is Handley's 13th year as senator. In her press release, she recounted some of her greatest accomplishments, including when she advocated for the bussing of black Hartford students to Manchester schools in 1968, working



Mary Ann Handley

to replace the state's coal- and oil-burning power plants with environmentally-friendly solutions and heading Manchester's Earth Day events.

She said her greatest "legislative disappointment" was in 2009 when Governor M. Jodi Rell vetoed the bill to abolish the death penalty.

Some of her most recent bills introduced to the state House revolve around extending health care. On June 18, Rell signed Handley's bill that prohibits insurance companies from using a patient's prescription drug history as a tool to deny coverage.

Similarly, Handley helped pass health care reforms including the HUSKY Health Care Plan to provide health insurance to thousands of children and their parents.

In addition to serving as a senator, Handley was Manchester's Deputy Mayor from 1991 to 1996. She also taught history at Manchester Community College for 30 years until she retired in 1997.

She said Monday she does not yet have any plans for retirement, except to spend more time with her family. "Things will happen," she said about retirement. "They always do."

Preparation Underway for 'Beauty and the Beast' in Colchester

by Katy Nally

More than 80 performers began their transformation last Saturday into plates, cups and candlesticks, as they prepared for the latest Colchester Community Theater (CCT) production.

Beauty and the Beast cast members came together Saturday at St. Andrew's Parish Hall for their first script read-through and a costume fitting. Rehearsals begin Jan. 4 and opening night will be 7 p.m., Feb. 12 at Bacon Academy. The show is based on the 1991 Disney animated musical.

"We're very excited with how the reading went," Diane Ozmun, CCT president, said. "You get a glimpse and start to see the story forming."

In November, more than 150 people auditioned for CCT's *Beauty and the Beast*, and some were inevitably cut. "It's always difficult, because you'd like to pick everybody," Ozmun said.

This year, a mix of new talent and experienced performers auditioned. "It's wonderful because we have so many of the same people come back, but it's also exciting to see that people are coming to Colchester to audition," Ozmun said.

The CCT president said it's not all about the newbies, because some CCT veterans surprise judges with a stronger singing voice or a new character development, Ozmun said. "We're always floored by new talent," she said. "They can come in and knock your socks off."

Two CCT newcomers were chosen for lead parts. Rosanne Sweeney Gowdy from Wethersfield will play Belle and Jim Metzler from Manchester will play the beast.

Ozmun praised all who auditioned, saying the process can be "very nerve-wracking."

This year many family members auditioned together. Several parent-child pairs made the cut, including Kurt Filosa and his three daughters, Emma, Anna and Elise. Kurt Filosa will play Cogsworth (the clock), Emma Filosa will be Chip (the cup) and Anna and Elise Filosa

will be in the ensemble.

"It encourages the involvement of families because kids get to have that experience with their parents," Ozmun said.

The original script for *Beauty and the Beast* does not include many parts for children (except for Chip), but CCT added a few in. Elementary school children to high school students all participated in the Saturday reading. Many will join the 60-member ensemble, which is a typical size for CCT productions, Ozmun said.

In several large-scale musical scenes, ensemble members will perform as forks, spoons, plates and villagers. "We couldn't do the show without that number and quality of ensemble," Ozmun said. "They're the glue that holds us together."

Beauty and the Beast is the CCT's first Disney script, and it was chosen because it's appropriate for all ages and can support a large ensemble, Ozmun said.

Last year's production of *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat* also called for a similar cast size.

Like *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Beauty and the Beast* was selected because it coincided with CCT's mission statement, Ozmun said. CCT, a nonprofit organization, strives to encourage community participation in performing arts.

Because it is a community theater, Ozmun said the nonprofit tries to give back to Colchester in addition to its productions. Last year, CCT organized a coat drive to accompany *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*. For *Beauty and the Beast*, Ozmun said CCT board members have discussed two community-related initiatives: donating to troops abroad and creating a rose delivery program for senior citizens.

Since CCT is a nonprofit it depends on volunteers for its crew and special effects creators. In total, about 105 people contribute to the *Beauty and the Beast* production. "There's so many people buzzing around on the sides,"



Above, Joanne Becker of the *Beauty and the Beast* costume crew takes Cosette Gresh's measurements. The cast held its first script read-through Saturday. Opening night for the Colchester Community Theater production will be Feb. 12 at Bacon Academy.

Ozmun said.

Ozmun would not divulge this year's special effects, partly to maintain some opening-day shock and awe. "Technical effects," she said, "create that magic, and surprise the audience."

In *Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Ozmun said the crew created stairs that lit up with each step as Joseph descended. In *The Wizard of Oz*, the witch's broom burst into flames on cue and images appeared in her crystal ball in another scene.

As Wallis Johnson, director of *Beauty and the Beast*, put it, "My goal is to make magic

happen." Ozmun said CCT aims for effect that the audience "never expects to see."

But theatergoers will have to wait until February to experience the magic.

Opening night for *Beauty and the Beast* is Friday, Feb. 12, with additional performances on Saturday, Feb. 13 and Sunday, Feb. 14. Tickets are available at Wild Geese, Plotkins Jewellers, Tracy's Tunes and online through the Parks and Recreation Department website, accessible through www.colchesterct.gov. Tickets are \$8 for seniors and children under 12, and are \$10 for adults.

Cruz Presents \$12.22 Million Proposed Budget in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz officially kicked off the budget season with a presentation to the Board of Education last Thursday, Dec. 10, outlining her recommendations for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Cruz put forth an overall budget of \$12.22 million. This represents an increase of \$513,371, or 4.33 percent, in spending over the current year's budget.

Nearly \$440,000 of the proposed \$513,371 increase is due to salary and benefit contracts for school district employees. The remaining \$74,954 is for maintenance items and the district's sole new initiative for the year – expanding full-day kindergarten.

Under Cruz's proposal, the district would spend just over \$60,000 in salary and benefits to hire an additional kindergarten teacher.

The budget also includes a proposal to move a .5 pre-kindergarten position to kindergarten because of a drop in enrollment at the younger grade.

These two changes would translate to six kindergarten teachers in Hebron – five of which would be teaching in full-day classrooms. Cruz said the decision to leave one section of half-day classes was partly a financial decision but also a "response to the desires of the community."

A survey was given to parents two years ago to gauge interest in a full-day kindergarten program. Cruz said the results showed that about two-thirds of parents wanted to see full-day kindergarten in Hebron. Those results seem to be holding steady as, Cruz reported, about two-thirds of parents have registered their child for the lottery to determine which students will be placed in the two full-day kindergarten classes.

Thanks to declining enrollment, Cruz hopes to expand the full-day option to five classes. "We've heard our parents asking for this," she said at last week's board meeting.

Board member Mark Allaben said at the meeting that, for him, expanding the full-day

kindergarten program is "an equal access issue."

When the BOE initially approved the program it was with the intention of adding an additional two classes each year. However, due to the financial constraints of last year, the BOE felt it prudent to maintain the program but not expand it.

Cruz said last Thursday that another tough budget year seems to be around the corner. "We're going to need to work really hard together to make some difficult decisions," she said to board members Wednesday night.

Now that Cruz has put forth her recommendations, the budget is in the hands of the Board of Education. By charter, the school board must recommend a budget to go to the Board of Selectmen by Feb. 1.

The BOE will meet weekly starting Thursday, Jan. 7, to go over specific sections of the budget. Earlier this week, board Chair Jane Dube urged residents to attend these meetings. "It's hard for us to make decisions if we don't

know what voters are thinking," she said.

Dube described the budget presented by Cruz as "essentially a level-services" budget except for the full-day kindergarten program. "I think the superintendent tried to use our limited resources in the best way possible," she said. "There is no wiggle room. It's barely adequate."

She went on to say that she's pleased to see Cruz make full-day kindergarten a priority in Hebron. Dube admitted that she wasn't always convinced that school districts needed to move to a full-day option but, after looking at research on the matter, she has since changed her mind. Dube also believes that it's just a matter of time before full-day kindergarten is mandated by the state Department of Education.

The Jan. 7 meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the library at Hebron Elementary School. At this meeting the board will be reviewing the maintenance, curriculum and technology budgets for the school district.

Residents Bid Farewell to Hebron State Trooper

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron residents said goodbye to one of their longest-serving resident state troopers at a party held in her honor last Tuesday.

The Democratic Town Committee (DTC) sponsored the get-together where dozens of locals shared stories and dispensed well wishes to former Hebron trooper Kelly Kraynak.

Kraynak moved to Hebron in 1996, and eight years later was named Resident State Trooper. She held that post until the end of October. Come the new year, she will serve in the same role in Stafford Springs. "I'm going to miss this town," she said Tuesday. "It's amazing what's in this community."

In his introduction of Kraynak, DTC Chair Bill Rudis called her the "caretaker of our roads" and a trooper who "engaged our community in a way that no other has." From her role in assisting parents in properly installing car seats to calling bingo at the Russell Mercier Senior Center, Kraynak was more than someone who prevented and investigated crimes in Hebron.

On Tuesday, Board of Selectmen members Mark Stuart and Brian O'Connell presented Kraynak with a proclamation from the Connecticut General Assembly thanking her for her service. In addition, members of the community shared a brief synopsis of what Kraynak has done for the town. The list included starting a bicycle patrol squad, resurrecting the D.A.R.E. program at Hebron Elementary School, developing data and justification for the hiring of a second trooper in Hebron and delivering presentations to high school students on youth drinking.

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz

remembered a time a few years ago when she was admittedly distracted by the day ahead of her. Cruz was just about to pull out of Ted's Plaza when her phone rang. It was Kraynak telling her to put her seatbelt on.

Cruz said Kraynak always made herself available to the school district. "It has always been evident that the safety of our children was a priority to her," Cruz said of Kraynak on Tuesday night.

Hebron school bus driver Christine Nyack recalled several times that Kraynak helped to make sure town roads were safe and accessible. However, it was Kraynak's willingness to go "above and beyond" that made the former Hebron resident state trooper stand out.

Nyack said she was responsible one year for driving the sixth grade students down to Dodd Stadium in Norwich to watch the Connecticut Defenders play. Kraynak came up to Nyack to thank her and handed her a ticket so she could watch the game too.

Hebron DTC member Karen Strid said Tuesday that she met Kraynak during her time as a selectman. Over the years, though, their relationship became that of friends.

It was Strid who spearheaded the efforts to recognize Kraynak on Tuesday night but she wasn't alone. "There are so many individuals who feel a bond with her," Strid said of Kraynak. "She has gone way above her job description for this town and people appreciate that."

Kraynak said Wednesday that she was "humbled" by the turnout at Tuesday's celebration. "There's a lot going on this time of year," she said. "I appreciate people coming out to show their support for the work that I was able



Hebron selectmen Mark Stuart, left, and Brian O'Connell present former Hebron Resident State Trooper Kelly Kraynak with a proclamation from the Connecticut General Assembly for her six and a half years of service to the town. Kraynak was honored for her service at a celebration on Tuesday night. She left Hebron at the end of October for a position in Stafford Springs.

to do in Hebron."

She added she's hoping to bring many of the community programs she began in Hebron to her new placement in Stafford Springs. Kraynak said she's relocating for "new challenges."

"I think it's good for me and Hebron," she said of the change. "I will have an opportunity

to get to know a new community, and Hebron will get some new blood with new ideas."

That "new blood" comes in the form of James Nolting. Earlier this fall, Nolting was assigned to join Mark Gendron as Hebron's two resident state troopers.

East Hampton Town Council Adopts Two-Year Goals

by Michael McCoy

At their meeting last week, the Town Council members compiled a list of six priorities they hope to work on over the next two years.

Reaching consensus during their Dec. 8 meeting, council members included, in no particular order, lake improvements, roads and bridges, facilities, water, economic development and charter revision on their list.

The exercise was recommended by Town Manager Jeff O'Keefe who said, "It does provide direction for me and my staff." He likened keeping all initiatives moving forward simultaneously to "spinning those circus plates."

Chairman Melissa Engel said all seven council members came to the meeting with virtually identical lists, albeit ordered differently.

Engel said her personal number one was probably addressing Lake Pocotopaug, which she thought would be quite doable with the Lake/Conservation Commission's new lake

improvement plan.

Speaking to economic development, she said the council agreed that it should be environmentally sound, and the geographic focus would be the Design Development (DD) Zone and the village center. (The DD Zone is located near the new CVS on Route 66, and is slated for light industry.)

Engel said pursuing a water system was lower on her list, since she figured the money for it was simply not there, and that the newly secured water source has bought them some time.

She did say that charter revision was sort of honorable mention on the master list, only because it is already being pursued. Engel said a charter revision commission would be formed and filled at their next meeting, Jan. 12. She said the council would compose their formal charge, but that the biggest task would be to

explore staggering council term limits and/or lengthening terms to four years.

Vice Chairman John Tuttle said he thinks the master list is "very positive." He said his personal top priority fell under facilities, specifically fixing the Memorial School roof. He said other council members agreed with him.

In contrast to Engel, Tuttle identified his next priority as taking steps to engineer the well-heads and pumping stations for the property at St. Clements in Portland and the Greer property at routes 66 and 151. Both properties were recently secured as part of the first step in an eventual municipal water system. He said he was anxious to "get closer to being shovel-ready."

While acknowledging that gargantuan facilities project and water system undertaking will not be completed in two years, he figured they

could take a bite out of the road and lake plans given they "put some capitol behind them."

Speaking about the lake plan, he said, "We've been clamoring for this for a decade. What we can't do is just shelve it."

No dollar amounts have been attached to these priorities, but, Engel promised, "It's going to be palatable to taxpayers," as opposed to costing them millions and millions of dollars in a short amount of time.

The council priorities are on tap for the first "Let's Talk East Hampton," a new series of informal dialogues between residents, town officials and the Town Council. The initiative was coined by O'Keefe, and the first one is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, at the middle school media center.

"I want to hear what are the priorities of the community as well," O'Keefe said.

RHAM BOE Approves Lacrosse Expansion, Mobile Newsroom Plan

by Sarah McCoy

Two recent Board of Education approvals should yield new opportunities for RHAM High School students.

The RHAM Board of Education (BOE) on Monday unanimously supported motions to create a boys' varsity and girls' club lacrosse teams, as well as the acquisition of a truck to be used as a mobile studio for the school's Video Production Club.

Both programs will have no effect on the school district's budget.

Three years ago, the RHAM BOE approved the creation of a boys' lacrosse program. Since 2008, the team has competed at the junior varsity level, finishing 12-2 last spring. For the past few months members of the team as well as parents have urged the BOE to approve a motion to make the team a varsity sport.

On Monday night they got their wish. "It's wonderful," said Beth Fitzgerald of Hebron, mother to one of the players on the team. "I'm so pleased that these students will have an opportunity to play at a high level."

Like they have in the past, parents will still be responsible for providing equipment and players will continue to pay for officials and travel expenses.

Lacrosse is a booming sport in Hebron. In 2004, there wasn't any opportunities for chil-

dren to compete in the area. Fitzgerald's son, Kevin, was in sixth grade at the time. He commuted to Tolland to play.

Then, in seventh grade, he and his mom headed up efforts to begin Hebron's own youth lacrosse program. Initially, Beth Fitzgerald said, she had to recruit players to try the new sport. "I would wait in the parking lot after games for other sports, asking kids to come out to try lacrosse," she said earlier this week.

Just five short years later, the RHAM Youth Lacrosse organization is in full swing with opportunities for students in grades 3-8 to play.

When Kevin was in eighth grade, he and his mom began blazing the trail again. This time at RHAM. They got BOE approval to start a club lacrosse program for the boys as long as the program was self-funded.

With two years of experience, many of the players were looking for a step up in competition. "A lot of us [on the team] want to play in college," RHAM junior Taylor Leahy said earlier this week. "In order for us to have a chance at that we need to play at a varsity level."

They will get that opportunity come April when the Sachems open up competition.

The RHAM girls will also have an opportunity to play lacrosse. The BOE approved the

creation of a club level team with the understanding that the matter will be reviewed within three years.

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said there has been "quite a bit" of interest in having a girls' lacrosse team. As is the case with the boys' team, players and their families will be responsible for the costs associated with playing.

On Monday the RHAM BOE also approved a motion that to let the regional school district take ownership of a 1985 truck previously used by the Andover Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD). The truck will be used as mobile newsroom for the school's Video Production Club.

RHAM Technology Education teacher and Video Production Club advisor Paul Bancroft also serves on the Andover Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD). He noticed that the department had a vehicle that they weren't using anymore and asked if the truck could be turned over to the school.

Officials with the fire department agreed, and Bancroft is in the process of applying for a \$14,000 state grant to outfit the vehicle with the proper equipment for students to be able to transmit live from school events as well as film outdoor activities. Events would then be broad-

cast on the local public access cable channel.

Bancroft said earlier this week that if RHAM does not secure the state grant the project is "scalable," meaning the Video Production Club could create some kind of newsroom for significantly less. Bancroft added that he is looking for donations from anyone interested in supporting the club. He can be reached at rhamtv@yahoo.com.

The Town of Andover has agreed to continue paying insurance on the vehicle for the next 18 months and will continue to store the vehicle in their facilities. Siminski said the truck could go into use as soon as the beginning of the next school year.

Board member Mike Turner, who was also elected chairman of the board at Monday night, said he was pleased to see the board unanimously approve both programs. "It gives our students more opportunities and that's a good thing," he said this week.

Turner also stressed that both programs have no effect on the district's budget.

The BOE will begin its budget process for the 2010-11 school year after the holiday season. The next board meeting will be held Monday, Jan. 25, at 6:30 p.m., in the choral room at RHAM High School.

Colchester Dog Park Plans Forging Ahead

by Katy Nally

Construction for the new Colchester Dog Park is almost ready to go to bid, said the Dog Park Committee's treasurer, Amanda Nelson.

She said the committee's president, Keith Kelley, has almost finished finalizing plans with the town, and once that's done, companies will begin the bidding process, which can last up to six months. Nelson said the grand opening date is still set for late spring 2010.

Nelson said the process is slow-going, because the committee is made up of volunteers. But the dog park took a big leap forward on Nov. 21 when the land was cleared and a new sign was put up. Now, residents will recognize the two-acre plot on Old Amston Road as the "Future Home of Colchester Dog Park."

The construction plans call for fencing around the two acres and grading of the land and driveway. The enclosure will be divided almost in half, with the greater section devoted to large dogs and the lesser section for small dogs. Plans also show a bullpen where dogs can be unleashed by their owners. Nelson said the town would eventually provide trash bins and the committee will set up doggie-bag dispensers.

Nelson said the fence will eat up most of the construction budget, costing anywhere from \$20,000 to \$30,000. She said committee members might also perform the grading themselves to save money.

To date, the committee has raised over \$30,700, Nelson said. More than half the total came from Colchester resident Mary Gagnon's donation of \$20,000, which she made in honor of her son Scott who was a dog lover, who died in February at age 41.

Gagnon said Thursday Scott was always fond of dogs since he bonded with his loveable mutt, Max. When her son was a teenager, a stray dog named Wendy had 13 puppies under the family's shed in Colchester.

She figured Wendy must have had "many suitors," because each puppy looked like a com-

pletely different breed. Gagnon said there was what appeared to be a greyhound, a St. Bernard, a beagle, a Benji look-alike and Max, who looked like a German shepherd with a curly husky's tail.

Each puppy was given away to new owners, except Max, who was shyer than others, and he was kept as the family pet. "But that's the dog you want," Gagnon said. "If they're the most retiring, they make great house pets."

The \$20,000 donation provided great momentum for the dog park and it will memorialize Gagnon's son Scott, and their family pet, Max.

Other funds for the dog park came from a September walk-a-thon that raised \$5,000 and brick drive that raised \$3,000, Nelson said. In addition to the driveway, the dog park will also include a brick walkway. Dog walkers, owners and appreciators can still purchase and personalize the bricks online at www.bricksrus.com/order/colchesterdogpark.

The remainder of funds came from various events and other donations.

Nelson said the committee has enough money to complete phase one, which includes the fence and grading, but it is still accepting donations for phase two and annual maintenance. Nelson said after the phase-one construction, the committee hopes to set up benches, gazebos and even an agility course for high-energy pups. She said the town would eventually provide trash bins.

"We're always looking to sell bricks and get more donations," she said.

Nelson and her committee members said they realized the need for an area where dogs could be off their leashes in Colchester. She said it is important for dogs to socialize with other dogs and for owners to meet fellow dog lovers.

The committee treasurer said people who come to Colchester to use the park would likely utilize local businesses and restaurants when they stop in.



Pictured above is the new sign for the Colchester Dog Park, which was cleared on Nov. 21. Construction for the park is almost set to go to bid.

"By having the dog park, we knew it could really benefit the town," Nelson said.

Transforming the two-acre site will also benefit Colchester, as the dog park will be built on an old landfill. Nelson explained the land is a brown field called a capped landfill that has been inactive for many years.

"It's good for the environment to reuse the land," Nelson said.

Plans to construct on the landfill were approved by the town engineer Sal Tassone, Nelson reassured.

With the new sign posted, the site markers arranged and the construction almost set to go

to bid, Nelson said she and the rest of the dog park committee are eagerly waiting for opening day.

That is, Nelson and her three-year-old border collie Cooper are both anxious for the park to open. Nelson, a condo resident, said she is especially excited for the park so that Cooper can have enough room to exercise. Nelson said Kelley and his two black Labs, Shannon and Ryan, will likely join her and Cooper once the park opens.

"We are all dog lovers," Nelson said of her committee members. "We all are looking forward to running around with our dogs."

Man Charged with Stealing from Colchester Business

On Sunday, Dec. 13, a Meriden resident was observed stealing PVC piping from Granite Group, a plumbing supply store on South Main Street, Colchester Resident State Trooper Sgt. John Thompson said.

At about 3:15 p.m. a bystander challenged Frank Gavrish, 51, of 574 Arch St., who was taking the pipes, Thompson said. Gavrish then returned the pipes and proceeded to take wooden pallets instead, Thompson said.

Gavrish left the scene and Troop K and Colchester Police were dispatched to the reported larceny. Thompson said police were

told to look for Gavrish's blue GMC 2500. The accused was later pulled over and arrested by Trooper Kelo of Troop K.

Gavrish was charged with second-degree criminal trespassing, possession of drug paraphernalia, interfering with an officer, sixth-degree larceny, criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny and possession of a controlled substance, State Police said.

Thompson said Wednesday he believes the wooden pallets were returned to Granite Group.



Halo Hair Studio recently opened in Colchester. The salon offers treatments like keratin collagen and bio-ionic straightening system.

New Colchester Hair Salon Offers High-End Looks

by Katy Nally

Halo Hair Studio might be the secret to divine 'dos, the fountain of hair-youth and the source of everlasting style.

"You don't just come in and get a haircut," said owner Susan McMahon. "You get a look."

The new salon, which opened in November, features three chairs for haircutting and will eventually include a manicurist station. McMahon said she is also toying with the idea of a room for facials.

McMahon said her studio specializes in more high-end treatments, like revamping hair with keratin and collagen and using a bio-ionic straightening system. She said the keratin and collagen makes hair stronger and shinier while the bio-ionic straightening system can tackle even the curliest hair to transform it into pin-straight strands.

Halo Hair Studio also offers dimensional color, which is more than just highlights and lowlights, it's "lots of colors running through the hair," McMahon said. The new salon also sells flattening irons, blow dryers and a natural hair care products.

With all the chic treatments and upscale items, McMahon said many people come to her salon "looking for a change." In her 25 years of hairstyling, McMahon has transformed many clients.

She said some ask to look younger and others more sophisticated; some want to celebrate a new career and the younger ones, graduation. "I can do it all," she said casually. McMahon said she's created styles ranging from classic to funky, and colors from natural to maroon. She said a simple cut can change drastically by simply adding bangs or layers.

She described one woman she styled who had frizzy, grown-out, bleached hair. McMahon's

skilled hands flipped through her own hair as she described how she created the woman's new do. McMahon said the outcome was a "piecey," layered and modern cut, which she blew out and later used a flat iron to finish the job.

McMahon said the extra steps throughout the hair-cutting process are worthwhile because they keep the shape intact. A quality haircut, she said, will retain its style even when air-dried, which appeals to customers who want low-maintenance.

McMahon said her personal favorite style is the bob, adding, "I love all the different varieties that are out there today to adjust to each person." She said many customers have requested a bob lately because it's become a hot hairstyle.

On Tuesday, one of McMahon's clients, Lisa Diamond, took a seat in the purple room, ready to update her look. Diamond, of Glastonbury, said she has been coming to McMahon for four years.

Before setting up shop in Colchester, McMahon worked at a salon in Glastonbury and prior to that she owned a day spa in Newington for nine years. At her spa, she said she provided "the whole nine yards" in a store that employed eight hairdressers.

McMahon said the spa was booked six months out and some clients have since followed her to Colchester. "They're loyal to me because they really like their hair," she said.

So far, the new owner said business has been "coming along," but she is still looking for another hairdresser to join the team.

Halo Hair Studio is located at 167 Lebanon Ave., suite A. For more information, call the salon at 860-537-0430.

Colchester Police News

12/7: Shgnif Bolica, 54, of 93 Aunt Olive Rd., Watertown, was charged with DUI and failure to maintain proper lane, State Police said.

12/9: Scottie Olson, 24, of 76 Mt. Sumner Dr., Bolton, was arrested via arrest warrant for an incident involving the illegal transfer of firearms that occurred in January 2009 in Bolton, State Police said. He was charged with 12 counts of illegal sale of firearms and falsely reporting an incident, State Police said.

12/9: Raymond Nadeau, 30, of 67 Valinsky Rd., Lebanon was charged with two counts of failure to appear, State Police said.

12/9: James Turkington, 56, of 200 East Haddam Colchester Tpk., Moodus, turned himself in for failure to appear, State Police said.

12/10: A 13-year-old was charged with possession of alcohol by a minor at William Johnston Middle School, State Police said.

12/11: Carl Schultz, 45, of 111 Leslie Ln., Coventry, turned himself in for failure to appear, State Police said.

12/11: Robert Bombard, 45, whose last known address police said was 166 Hilliard St., Manchester, was charged with criminal mischief, third-degree burglary and third-degree larceny, State Police said.

12/11: Warren Smith, 59, of 207 Deepwood Dr., Amston, was charged with DUI, State Police said.

12/11: Denise Rush, 56, of 437 Cabin Rd., was charged with DUI and making an improper turn, State Police said.

12/12: Mark Litwinko, 26, of 14 Diane Ln., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

12/12: Nicole Klusek, 18, of 67 Park Ave., was charged with operating a vehicle when license is suspended, failure to have lights lit and failure to have head lamps, State Police said.

12/11: Stephanie Savoie, 31, of 128 West Main St., Vernon, was charged with criminal violation of a protective order, State Police said.

Bacon Academy in Colchester Moving to Block Schedule

by Katy Nally

Bacon Academy will switch to an "A-B" block schedule, beginning in the 2010-11 school year. There will be fewer classes each day, but they will be almost double the duration.

There was a seven-school-day trial run of the block schedule in November that was very well-received, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loisel said. "We were really delighted," with the test run, she said Monday.

Instead of a seven-period day, students at Bacon Academy will attend four 88-minute classes and a half-hour lunch. There will be a blue schedule, of periods one through four, and a gold schedule, of periods five through eight; students will follow each schedule every other day.

After the block schedule test run, teachers were polled and their experiences were shared at the Dec. 8 Board of Education (BOE) meeting. In a presentation from Assistant Principal Mark Ambruso, a math teacher was quoted as saying, "I absolutely loved it both as a teacher and a parent. The feedback I got from my own children and my students was also very positive." A science teacher said, "I really loved it. I love the pace - it is not as hectic. Also it will allow us to do more hands-on activities during class."

Loiselle said Monday, at the same BOE meeting, civics students were asked for their thoughts on the block schedule. According to Loiselle, the students said they felt more relaxed, their day was less stressed, they could accomplish more in class and they could budget their time better. She said the seniors asked to start the schedule immediately so they could experience it before graduation.

Principal Jeffry Mathieu noticed similar attitudes toward the new schedule, saying the building was calmer and there were fewer distractions for students.

Before the trial run, some teachers were wary of an almost-double class period, Mathieu said, but afterward, they were surprised at how quickly the 88 minutes went by. He said a big "selling point" for teachers was the opportunity to spend more time on class work.

According to BOE Chairman Ron Goldstein, 84 percent of Bacon's faculty approved the block schedule.

This is a drastic change from the two times over the past 15 years the same type of schedule was voted down by Bacon faculty. Neither Loiselle nor Mathieu were entirely sure why the scheduling was voted down, because both votes occurred before the two administrators assumed their current positions. But Loiselle did say some teachers might have been against the block schedule because they did not want to hold a class every other day.

But it seems attitudes have changed because there was such a positive response from the faculty after the November trial run.

This time around, the school was advised to switch to a block schedule by its accreditation provider, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). According to Ambruso's presentation, NEASC said the new format would provide "depth over breadth" and it would "revise the academic expectations to express high levels of rigor." Goldstein said the new schedule was a match because "that's what we're all about - raising the bar."

Throughout its deliberation, the BOE reviewed several types of schedules including variations of the four-by-four block: the rotating version of the A-B block and another that condensed year-long classes into one semester courses.

In the end, the BOE and the faculty approved the A-B block because it "improved interaction between teachers and students" and "increased classroom climate," according to Ambruso's presentation.

"This one seemed to be effective for what we were trying to achieve, which was more rigor," Goldstein said. "We really need that time to go deeper into instruction," Loiselle added.

Since its June decision, the BOE has charged the school administration with briefing parents and students about the upcoming change. "It's so they have a comprehensive understanding," Loiselle said.

Colchester Police Chases End With Arrest

by Katy Nally

A Colchester man was arrested last week after, State Police said, he led troopers on a chase through multiple towns.

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, Peter Maurice, 47, was arrested after engaging troopers in two separate police chases, police said. According to police, the chase began in Colchester, and Maurice was finally apprehended after he abandoned his 2005 Toyota Avalon in Ledyard and continued on foot.

According to State Police Troop K, troopers went to what police said was Maurice's last known address, 12 Robin Rd., last Tuesday to arrest him for charges issued out of State Police Troop E.

Maurice was not home, and troopers were told he had taken a family member's car without permission. Troopers later found Maurice driving his Toyota on Route 11, police said. A traffic pursuit began at about noon, police said, with troopers following Maurice through Colchester and Salem along Route 11. An officer at Troop K, who did not wish to be named, said this week the pursuit was discontinued because Maurice was traveling "excessively fast" and officers did not want to endanger anyone.

Troop E in Montville was notified of Maurice's vehicle and his direction of travel, police said. At about 12:45 p.m., a member of the State Police Traffic Services Unit spotted Maurice's Toyota in Montville and attempted to stop it, police said.

Police said they followed Maurice for sev-

eral miles along I-395, then to Route 2A, to Mohegan Sun's property to Route 12 through Preston and Ledyard. Troop E police, the Traffic Service Unit and several officers from the Montville and Ledyard police departments helped search for Maurice after he abandoned his car off of Mulberry Drive in Ledyard and evaded officers on foot.

Mohegan Sun security personnel also helped to locate Maurice's car when he was on the casino's property, police said.

Nothing was damaged in the police chases, Troop E said.

Maurice was held in lieu of \$100,000 by Troop E. He was charged with first-degree reckless endangerment, DWI, reckless driving, engaging in pursuit and interfering with police.

Troop K charged Maurice with using a motor vehicle without the owner's permission, reckless driving and engaging in a pursuit.

Maurice was also served with three active warrants from previous charges, State Police said. One was issued from Troop E for failure to appear in court, one was from Troop D in Danielson for the same charge and one was from Montville Police for engaging in pursuit, reckless driving, using a vehicle without the owner's permission and various other vehicle offenses from a Nov. 6 incident, Troop E said.

Maurice was held in lieu of \$235,000 police bonds and was due in New London Superior Court Dec. 9.

Marlborough Police News

12/9: Jeremy Medina, 36, 51 Roberts Rd., was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

Salem Police News

12/11: William Hagberg-Porter, 27, of 7 Stetson Rd., Griswold, was charged with driving an underinsured vehicle, DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

11/29 — Marilyn Baillargeon, 80, of 174 Mott Hill Rd., and Dana Klemky, 50, of 93 South Main St., Marlborough, were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Rt. 66 and Old West High Street, East Hampton Police said. Klemky was issued a ticket for operating without a license, police added.

12/1 — Thelma Bouley, 75, of 29 Sunset St., Manchester, and Robert Piacentini, 55, of 180 Saner Rd., Marlborough, were involved in a two-vehicle accident on Lake Drive, 200 feet south of Pocotopaug Drive, police said. Bouley and Piacentini were both cited for failure to carry insurance, police added.

12/2 — Randolph Scherp, 41, of 47 Hog Hill Rd., and Patricia Holmes, 38, of 4 Starr Pl., were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Rt. 16 and Sinco Place, police said. Scherp was issued a ticket for failure to grant the right of way, police added.

12/3 — Edward House, 51, of 200 West High St., was issued a ticket for speeding and failure to carry an insurance card, police said.

12/4 — Julia A. Vezina, 44, of 24 Childs Rd., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, police said.

12/5 — Michael K. Downey, 51, of 63 Viola Dr., was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, police said.

12/7 — Carol J. Lord, 44, of 28 Oneco St, Norwich, was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and failure to illuminate the headlights, police said.

12/7 — Peter P. Moore, 29, of 85 North Main St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for impairing the morals of children and second-degree harassment, police said.

12/8 — Michael C. Poe, 35, of 7 West Blvd., was arrested pursuant to a warrant on charges of third-degree burglary, fifth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit larceny, police said.

12/8 — Troy Ellis, 29, of 111 Loomis Rd., Colchester, and Kerri Lee, 38, of 145 Comstock Tr., were involved in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Rt. 16 and Flatbrook Road, police said. Ellis was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, unsafe tires and operating without insurance, police added.

12/8 — A 15-year-old male juvenile was referred to juvenile court on charges of disorderly conduct, possession of marijuana and interfering with a police officer, police said.

12/8 — Patrick A. Lachappelle, 22, of 130 East High St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for violation of probation, police said.

12/9 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was issued a ticket for failure to drive right, operating a motor vehicle by a 17-year-old between the hours of 11 p.m.-5 a.m., and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

12/9 — Brendan J. Turner, 19, of 104 Falls Rd., Moodus, was issued a ticket for possession of alcohol by a minor, police said.

12/10 — Michael Bartolotta, 32, of 83 Midwood Farm Rd., was arrested for second-degree harassment, police said.

Portland Police News

12/1 — Marie Nolan, 50, of 9 Edwards Rd., was charged with operating of an unregistered motor vehicle and insufficient insurance, Portland Police said.

12/8 — Salvatore Branciforte, 28, of 177 Weston St., Hartford, was charged with third-degree larceny, police said.

12/9 — Michael Latronica, 58, of 74 High St., Middletown, was charged with misuse of plates, driving under suspension, insufficient insurance and operation of an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

12/10 — Steven Marino, 19, of 47 Copper Beech Ln., was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

12/11 — Brian Ayer, 39, of 44 Bokum Rd., Chester, was charged with second-degree harassment, police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Perhaps people are focused on more important things, or perhaps they've finally realized how silly the whole thing is, but for whatever reason, there seems to be decidedly less of that whole "war on Christmas" stuff this year. This is a good thing.

For the past few years, there has been a group of people – usually led, or at least egged on, by Bill O'Reilly or some other loudmouth – criticizing stores or advertisers that have the audacity to wish people "happy holidays" around this time of year instead of "merry Christmas." It's political correctness gone too far, they say. It's removing Christ from Christmas, they say. Sometimes, boycotts are even encouraged.

The whole thing is silly.

Christmas isn't the only holiday that's celebrated in December; there are also Chanukah, Kwanzaa and other observances. Particularly if you work at a store and see dozens of people over the course of the day, saying "happy holidays" just seems practical. Unless you know the person you're talking to, you may not know what they're celebrating. There is no one religion or culture in this country. Saying "happy holidays" to someone just seems like a nice way to play it safe. It's all-inclusive.

Also, how is the stomp on all over Christmas? Last I checked, Christmas is one of those December holidays too. I'm a Christian, and I've never once been offended by someone wishing me "happy holidays" instead of "merry Christmas." I don't view it as people refusing to acknowledge Christmas, or removing the "true meaning" of the holiday. I mean, most of the time (outside of church, at least), when people say "Merry Christmas" to you, they're not seeking to convey a religious message, anyway. They're being nice, and they're wishing you well.

And really, isn't that sentiment keeping the "reason for the season" alive anyway? Around this same time last year, I wrote a fairly lengthy column about the much-derided commercialization of Christmas and the sentiment that people have forgotten what, as Charlie Brown would say, Christmas is all about. As I wrote then, the "non-religious" aspects of the holiday – such as giving gifts to people, donating to charity or just being nice to somebody and saying a friendly "hello" – are perfectly in keeping with Christ's teachings, and if he walked the earth today, he probably wouldn't be too displeased with the way the holiday is celebrated.

Like I said, there seems to be less criti-

cism of the whole "happy holidays" thing this year. But I know it still exists. So maybe the people who do get offended by it should keep that in mind: instead of taking offense (and it really is a silly thing to be miffed by; again, the expression doesn't exclude Christmas), think of the sentiment *behind* the statement. It's a pleasant greeting, said with a smile, wishing you a, well, happy holiday season. Accept it in the spirit in which it was intended. Don't look for a reason to be offended. Don't you have shopping to do anyway?

* * *

It's the end of the decade, so that means that, in addition to the various "best [fill in the blank] of the year" pronouncements we get each December, we've also been seeing various "best [fill in the blank] of the decade" declarations. And recently, *Billboard* magazine named Daniel Powter, who performed the 2006 hit "Bad Day," the top "one-hit wonder" of the decade.

A one-hit wonder, for those of you who don't know, is pretty much just what it sounds like: an artist who has one big chart-topping hit but never manages to notch another one. And "Bad Day" was indeed one huge hit. For a time in 2006, it was difficult to go a full day without hearing the song someplace. It really seemed to take off once *American Idol* began using it as the song that played every time a contestant was voted out of the competition. Heavy radio airplay followed; because of the type of song it was – popular but also kinda frothy and easy to listen to – "Bad Day" could be played just as easily on a Top 40 station as it could on, say, Lite 100.5.

For what it's worth, I always thought it was a good song. It's catchy, and can be oddly uplifting after you've had a bad day of your own. The song kind of gives a nice reminder that, yes, your day might have stunk, but you know what? It happens to other people too, so just take it in stride and try to move on.

* * *

A gentle note to readers: next week is our last issue of 2009. (Hard to believe, isn't it?) And since next week, Friday falls on Dec. 25, we are going to press early. This means there is an early deadline of noon on *Tuesday*, Dec. 22. All letters and news copy must be submitted by then; no exceptions will be made. Also, there will be no *Rivereast* for Jan. 1, as we will be closed the week of Dec. 28. Our next issue after next week will be the Jan. 8, 2010, installment.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Grace L. Hall

Grace L. Hall, 96, of East Hampton, widow of the late George Byron Hall, died Monday, Dec. 14, at Cobalt Lodge. Born April 4, 1913, in East Hampton, she was the daughter of the late Harold J. and Effie M. (Hall) Strong.

Grace was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and had graduated from Middletown High School. She was a very active member of the East Hampton Congregational Church since 1948 when she and her husband joined. She was the past Noble Grand of the Nesis Rebekah Lodge of East Hampton and the past District President No. 3 of the Rebekah Lodge of the State of Connecticut. Grace was retired from the Farmers and Mechanics Bank where she had worked as a clerk for many years.

She is survived by her two sons and their spouses, George and Joyce Hall of Southington, Arthur and Angel Hall of Kingman, AZ; her sister, Ruth Flannigan of Guilford; three grandchildren and their spouses, Jody and Michael Catalano, Michelle Latimer, Douglas and Laura Hall; and five great-grandchildren, Ginna, Michael and Kyle Catalano, Justin and Ryan Hall; and several nieces and nephews.

Besides her parents she was predeceased by her husband of 62 years, George, and several brothers and sisters.

Funeral services will be held today, Friday, Dec. 18, at 10:30 a.m. in the East Hampton Congregational Church. Burial will follow in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Thursday, Dec. 17.

The family would like to thank the staff of Cobalt Lodge for the care and kindness shown their mother during her extended stay.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to East Hampton Congregational Church, P.O. Box 237, East Hampton, CT 06424, or Cobalt Lodge, P.O. Box 29, Cobalt, CT 06414.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Ruth F. Korge

Ruth F. Korge, 81, of Bolton and formerly of Marlborough, died Wednesday, Dec. 9, at her home in Bolton. Ruth was born in Brooklyn, NY, the first born of Amy and Herbert Franson, on Aug. 11, 1928.

She moved with her family to Sweden in 1934, living there until 1948 when her family relocated to the United States. They lived in Bloomfield, NJ, and then Marlborough. Ruth married Ilmand Korge on Nov. 21, 1970. They resided in Glastonbury, Marlborough and Bolton. She worked at the American Eagle Federal Credit Union until her retirement.

Ruth leaves two stepsons, Johan and Hans Korge, and their children and grandchildren as well as her cousins in Sweden; sister Astrid and her husband Richard Harrison of Marlborough; her brother Raymond Franson and his wife Evelyn of Rangeley, ME, and her brother, Rev. Carl Franson and his wife Diann of Lime Rock, CT. Ruth loved her nephews Ken, Paxton and Eric and nieces Jean, Jill, Deanna, Paige, Liv and also many cherished grandnephews and grandnieces. Many thanks go to her exceptionally caring friends, Bean and Mario.

The family will always remember Ruth for her thoughtfulness and good times.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Dec. 19, at 11 a.m. in Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton. Burial will follow in the family plot in Marlboro Cemetery in Marlborough, CT.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1 East High St., P.O. Box 31, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements.

Salem

Patricia Francazio

Patricia Katherine (Kollar) Francazio, 41, formerly of Salem, CT, died Nov. 12 at her residence in Lamoine, ME. She was born Sept. 13, 1968, in Albany, NY, the daughter of Mary Kay Turner.

Patricia's greatest joy was spending time with her children and gardening with them. They also enjoyed their many visits to Acadia National Park and summer on Cape Cod. She was a graduate of Albany College of Pharmacy and was a registered pharmacist working for CVS in Colchester, CT and most recently Community Pharmacy in Bucksport, ME.

She is survived by her mother, Mary Kay Turner of Colchester, her husband of 15 years, Dean K. of Lamoine; son, Dante; daughters, Fallon, Faith and Faedra, all of Lamoine; and sister, Mary Eileen of Connecticut.

She was predeceased by an infant son, Baby Dean.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Saturday, Nov. 21, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 231 Main St., Ellsworth, ME, with Father Scott Mower, celebrant. Burial was private at the Salem Green Cemetery, Salem, CT.

Andover

Russell L. Davidson

Russell L. Davidson, 88, of Columbia, formerly of Andover, loving husband for 67 years of Muriel J. (MacDonald) Davidson, died Saturday, Dec. 12, at Windham Hospital after an extended illness. Russ was born in Manchester July 15, 1921, the son of the late Charles Davidson and the late Victoria Davidson Brewer.

He was raised in Manchester, served in the Navy during World War II and moved to Andover in 1951. After retiring, he moved to Florida and returned to Connecticut in 2006. Russ was a heating and plumbing contractor for many years in the Manchester area before becoming the chief building inspector in 1977 for the Town of Manchester and the Buckland Mall, retiring in 1989. He was a member of the Bolton Lions Club, the Hebron Sportsman Club, and was an avid outdoorsman and golfer.

With his wife he is survived by two sons and his daughter, Russell A. Davidson and his wife Edith of Columbia, James Davidson and his wife Nancy of North Windham, and Janet Parent and her husband Daniel of Columbia; four grandchildren, Scott Davidson and his wife Laura, Jason Davidson, Nicole Michele and her husband Douglas, and Michelle Parent; two great-grandchildren, Cole and Chace Davidson; two brothers, Lloyd Davidson and his wife Rita, and William Davidson and his wife Heddy, both of Manchester; many nieces, nephews, extended family and close friends.

Russ was predeceased by a brother, Charles Davidson.

Funeral services will be held today, Friday, Dec. 18, at the Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester. Burial with military honors will follow in the Townsend Cemetery in Andover. Visiting hours were Thursday, Dec. 17, at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Assoc., 1 Union Street, Suite 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691 or the Bolton Lions Club, 108 Notch Road, Bolton, CT 06043.

To sign the online guest book or for directions to the funeral home, visit www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.



Hebron

Katherine (Szegda) Pigan

Katherine (Szegda) Pigan, 89, wife of the late Michael Pigan, passed away Friday morning, Dec. 11, at her home in Hebron, surrounded by her family. Born in the Ukraine, she was the daughter of the late Timko and Anna (Pinchurek) Szegda.

Katherine retired from Colt Firearms in Hartford and was a member of St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church of Hartford for many years, and more recently of St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Colchester. Katherine was active in both churches. Katherine loved her gardening and cooking. Family and friends would always leave with something from the garden and from the kitchen. Katherine's (or Baba's) cookies, pierogies, and Sunday dinners were always events that everyone cherished. Katherine enjoyed both teaching her cooking skills to the kids and using those skills to work with the Woman's Guilds of St. Michaels and St. Mary's. Katherine looked for the best in everyone.

She leaves two daughters and two sons, Mary Pigan of Hebron, Anna and her husband, Walter Gwisc of Newington, Stefan Pigan and his wife Kathryn of Cooper City, FL, and Donald (Bohdan) Pigan and Brenda Belisle of Colchester; she also leaves grandchildren Daniel and Michael Pigan of Cooper City, FL, Kathy Laskowski and her husband Michael of Lebanon, Shannon Massey and her husband Scott of Amston and Gregory Gwisc and his wife Molly of Salem; great-grandchildren that will miss Katherine include Grace, Kaylin, and Abigail Laskowski, Alexia Rai, Austin, Cole and Chase Massey and Whitney Gwisc; she leaves her close nieces Catherine Durato and Slawka Cronin, and many nieces and nephews in the Ukraine.

The family wishes to thank the staff at the Harry Gray Cancer Center in Hartford with special thanks to "Sheila."

A Requiem Liturgy was held Tuesday, Dec. 15, directly in St. Michael's Ukrainian Catholic Church, 135 Wethersfield Ave., Hartford, followed by burial in St. Michaels Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery in Glastonbury. Calling hours at the Talarski Maple Hill Chapels, 380 Maple Ave., Hartford, were Monday, during which time a Panachyda Service was held.

Memorial donations may be made to Children of Chornobyl Relief and Development Fund, P.O. Box 340278, Hartford, CT, 06134.

Hebron

Patricia Turkington

Patricia (Boucher) Turkington, 85, of Hebron, widow of Alan E. Turkington, died Saturday, Dec. 12, at her home. Pat was born in Cleveland, OH, on Feb. 13, 1924, the daughter of the late Albert N. and Estelle (Cullen) Boucher.

She was raised in Manchester and resided in Moodus before moving to Hebron in 2009. She enjoyed gardening, cooking, and spending time with her family at Bashan Lake in Moodus.

Pat is survived by four sons, Stephen Turkington of Manchester, David Turkington and his companion Carol Heller of Windsor Locks, Michael Turkington and his wife Cathy of Manchester, and James Turkington of Moodus; four grandchildren, Christopher, Matthew, Jessica and Alicia; three great-grandchildren, Victoria, Cole and Michael; her brother, William Boucher and his wife Joan of Las Vegas, NV; several nieces, nephews and her beloved dog, Daisy.

Besides her husband Pat was predeceased by a son, John Turkington.

A private graveside service will be held in the East Cemetery in Manchester. There are no calling hours.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Humane Society of CT, 701 Russell Road, Newington, CT 06111.

The Holmes Funeral Home in Manchester has care of arrangements. To sign the online guestbook, visit www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Portland

Scott Franklin Selleck

Scott Franklin Selleck, 39, loving husband to Joan (Wadsworth) Selleck, and father to Gus and Nick, passed away Dec. 10, unexpectedly at home.

Scott grew up in Portland, where he graduated high school and went on to earn degrees in engineering from Lehigh and Northwestern and an MBA from RPI. He worked at Pratt and Whitney for greater than a decade in engineering and sales. Scott will be remembered as a loyal, hard working man who loved his family, the outdoors and creating, repairing and restoring anything he could. His love of cycling brought him many friends and many adventures.

Scott is survived by his wife, Joan, and two sons, Gus and Nick of Marlborough/Glastonbury; his parents, Frank and Mary Faith (Peppard) Selleck of Portland; a brother, Walter, and sister, Jean Selleck, both of New Hampshire; in-laws Fran and Luke Button, Sarah Wadsworth and Steve Stackpole, Susan and Ricci Baird, and Christine Wadsworth; his best friend Keith Kroeber and his wife Seng.

Calling hours were Monday, Dec. 14, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main Street, Portland, CT. A memorial service will be held Tuesday, Dec. 15, at the Congregational Church of Marlborough, 35 South Main St., Marlborough.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made Gus and Nicholas Selleck Educational Fund c/o Portland Memorial Funeral Home 231 Main St., Portland, CT 06480 to form a trust for Scott's children.

For directions or to leave an online expression of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.