



Portland High School teacher James Stotler recently returned from a nearly year-long tour in Iraq. He's shown standing alongside the other men in his Basra unit. Pictured, from left, are Captain Matt Ferguson, Stotler, Staff Sergeant Chris Russell and Major Kevin Emerick. Other than Stotler, they are all United States Army personnel.

Portland Teacher Returns from Tour in Iraq

by Michael McCoy

While plenty of area residents have been deployed to Iraq over the past six years, none have been Portland teachers.

James Stotler, who recently returned from a nearly year-long tour in Iraq, is the exception.

Stotler, 36, teaches classes in U.S. history, current events and psychology at Portland High School. But, Stotler, noted, "I'm pretty much a U.S. history kind of guy," and is specifically an aficionado of the Civil War, Spanish-American War and World War II.

Stotler, who lives in Middletown, enlisted in the Navy Reserves in December 2003, nine months after the invasion in Iraq began.

"My basic training was shorter than the regular one, but we did all the same things," Stotler said. Stotler added that, since he was among other 30-something professionals like himself, the Navy did not feel the need to discipline them the way

they do kids recently out of high school. He said his colleagues consisted chiefly of police officers, firefighters and corrections officers.

Stotler was a fit 31-year-old when he enlisted, so "physically it wasn't an issue." However, the hard part of basic training, other than not seeing his now-wife Michelle (also a social studies teacher at Portland High School), was the termination of the sort of autonomy adults have. Now he had to be where the Navy told him to be, when they told him to be there.

Stotler, who felt a calling to serve his country however he could, said he assumed the U.S.' involvement in Iraq would be similar to the relatively brief Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s. Stotler, who had enlisted in an administrative capacity, thought there was no way he would actually be deployed overseas.

"Maybe I was being somewhat naïve at the time," he said.

By 2006, though, Stotler had a different view, and began suspecting that, sooner or later, he would be deployed. Sure enough, in September 2007, Stotler received the call that he would be going to Iraq. He had just a month to prepare before reporting. "I had 30 days to get everything in my life in order," he remembered. (It was during this month period that Stotler and Michelle got married.)

When he told his students of his departure, Stotler said, "It really caught a lot of them offguard." And, he added, "from the start, they were very supportive."

Leaving behind his family and the students he taught in class were not the only hard parts. He also had to say goodbye to the boys on the varsity soccer team, which he had coached for about 10 years. (Stotler has taught at Portland High School for 12 years.) In Stotler's absence, associate principal Scott Giegerich coached the team for

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Front Page

a year. Stotler will return as coach next season.

Upon leaving, Stotler was processed in Norfolk, VA, and then spent three weeks in Fort Jackson, South Carolina for training. He arrived in Kuwait in November 2007, and then in Iraq.

Once in Iraq, Stotler served as an Individual Augmentee, and actually fulfilled an Army job. Stotler worked at the Multinational Division South-East headquarters in Basra, where he was a liaison between U.S. and U.K. forces.

During this time, the battle of Sadr City occurred, something Stotler seemed proud to have contributed to. Stotler called the battle a “turning point,” and said, “The Iraqi forces kind of took the lead in battling the insurgency.”

However, Stotler freely admits that he was never anywhere near the front line of any conflict. “I can happily say I didn’t really have any close calls,” he said.

While Stotler is back, “my command is still there,” he said of the headquarters in Basra. Furthermore, he keeps in touch with some of his fellow soldiers. One of these is a guy from Colorado that Stotler chats over the Internet with every day.

Stotler returned home on Oct. 17 of last year, and was granted six months of authorized absence for his duty as a reservist. He noted that this was standard. He must report to Newport again next month.

“I’m at a decision-point soon,” said Stotler, who noted Navy Reserves commitments run six to eight years. Before long, he must decide whether he wants to renew his commitment for another two-plus years or not.

Stotler said he would like to see more servicemen recognized for their valor, men and women who had “a hell of a lot harder job, who don’t come home to the reception I’ve gotten.”

Stotler said that, for many of his students, he was the first person they knew who went to Iraq. “Suddenly this far off war suddenly became real for a lot of kids,” he said.

“The Town of Portland and the school district were completely 100 percent supportive,” Stotler said, adding that the Veterans Affairs Committee in town often sent him care packages.

On Oct. 24, the same day Stotler made his first appearance at a school function (a soccer pep rally), the Veterans Committee honored him

with a ceremony.

Stotler returned to teaching Jan. 5, but things had changed in a year and a half. He remarked, “I came back to a school where only one class knew me.”

When asked if his thoughts on the Iraq war changed at all during his service, Stotler replied, “I don’t know how I felt about it in 2002,” but added, “I’m of the belief now that it is a situation that you have to finish.” He said that he saw a lot of progress in the year he was there that makes him optimistic the war will not last too much longer. For example, he noted the indirect fire that was chronic when he first arrived in Basra was only happening about once a month when he left.

Immediately upon returning home, Stotler joined the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Then, at Christmastime, Stotler helped with a mass packaging effort of the Connecticut Cookie Platoon, a Deep River-based organization that describes its mission as “sending a small taste of home to the protectors of the homeland.” After being the benefactor of their good will, Stotler said he decided to “do a little bit of giving back.”

Stotler has not really shared much of his experiences with his classes yet, figuring that he eventually wants to integrate it into his lessons in a meaningful way, rather than simply pontificate randomly at length. “My current events class will probably get the first rough draft,” he predicted. The class is wrapping up a unit on President Barack Obama’s new administration, and they will next talk about the dire straits of the economy. After that, he expects to address the war.

While away, Darlene Allen filled in as the long-term substitute; she’s since left the district. “It’s a tough situation to walk into,” he said of Allen’s situation in the fall of 2007. “She did a good job.”

Of course, first and foremost, Stotler is a teacher, and when asked if he felt trepidation over returning to the job on Jan. 5, he admitted, “It’s something that really concerned me.”

Stotler sort of threw himself back into it right in the middle of things, a week before midterms. However, he marveled, “Quite frankly, it was just like riding a bike. I felt like my old self again.”

*From the Editor’s Desk***Observations & Ruminations**

by Mike Thompson

The biggest news in the sports world this week (sorry, Brett Favre) was the A-Rod bombshell. And I was both surprised and disappointed by it. I really did think he was clean. In hindsight, of course, I probably should have been a little more skeptical, but I just didn’t see overwhelming evidence pointing to the juice. His numbers were terrific, but his numbers were always terrific; there was a reason the Texas Rangers signed him to that big contract to begin with, remember. From 1998-2000, A-Rod’s last three years with Seattle, he hit at least 40 home runs each year, batted over .300 two of the three years, and had at least 111 RBI. The numbers went up a bit while he was Texas, but not all that much, and plus he was only 25 when he started his first season with the Rangers: his prime years were just starting, and it only made sense his batting stats would improve some.

Also, while some steroid users tend to see their play become rather one-dimensional when under the influence of the juice (take Mark McGwire for instance, or better yet, take Barry Bonds. Bonds is said to have started using in the very late ’90s, after he saw the McGwire-Sosa home run excitement of 1998, and if you look at his numbers, you’ll see his running game really dried up — after averaging 30+ stolen bases a year throughout his career, Bonds swiped 11 in 2000, 13 in 2001, and never saw double-digit SB numbers again. Also, from 1990-98, Bonds won eight Gold Glove awards. After ’98, nothing), A-Rod remained an all-around great player. He remained a decent, if not terrifying, stolen base threat. He won back-to-back Gold Gloves in 2002 and 2003, and committed just eight errors at shortstop the entire 2003 season. (His defense wasn’t as great at third base, where he played with the Yankees, but New York wasn’t about to tell the overrated Derek Jeter to move.)

A-Rod’s body didn’t change that much either. (Seriously, compare Barry Bonds’ head from earlier in the decade to his head from when he was with the Pirates or when he first signed with the Giants in the early ’90s. Those are two different melons.)

So, when it all came out last weekend, I was pretty surprised. Maybe I believed he was clean because I *wanted* to believe it. With his age — he’s still only 33 — he had a legitimate shot of taking the career home run record away from Bonds, and the record would no longer be sullied by steroids. But now, of course, that’s no longer the case. He’s said he only used steroids from 2001-03, but even if he stopped right after that, that’s still three years’ worth of home runs that are tainted. And who’s to say how long that stuff remains in your system anyway?

I suppose A-Rod does get points for coming clean earlier this week and admitting he did use steroids. It’s a better course of action than continually maintaining your innocence despite ever-increasing piles of evidence to the contrary (like Bonds and Clemens), or pleading the fifth with a bizarre “I refuse to talk about the past” line (like McGwire). It would have been nicer if he admitted it a couple of years ago, when the steroid scandal was first breaking. It would have been nicer still if he had never felt the need to juice up in the first place.

I know a couple of people for whom this was the last straw; A-Rod was one of the all-time greats, a legitimate contender to the home run throne, and now that it’s revealed he too is a cheater, they’re walking away from baseball, finding another sport of which to be a fan. I don’t feel the same way. What this does drive home is that you probably can’t make sweeping assumptions about *anybody* who played in the so-called “steroid era” (which stretches probably from the mid-90s

to the mid-2000s). I’m not saying you should automatically suspect everyone who played during that time from doping; you just probably shouldn’t be as jaw-droppingly astounded if news does surface that someone used. After the A-Rod news, I’ll probably never be shocked again.

But I’m not walking away from baseball. I still love everything about it: the beauty of a well-turned 6-4-3 double play; the tension of seeing a batter try to work his way out of an 0-2 hole when the tying run is in scoring position; the thrill of seeing a runner stretch a double into a triple; the tension of the fact that baseball — unlike football or basketball — has no time limit, making it impossible to just “run out the clock” (indeed, that 27th out can sometimes be the toughest one to get); I could go on and on and on. It truly is a grand old game, and I’m not going to let steroids take it away from me.

* * *

In other news, word came this week that some liquor store owners are again campaigning for Connecticut to allow liquor sales on Sundays. There’s been the usual back-and-forth that there is whenever the issue comes up, but I say: Let them be open.

Forbidding liquor sales on Sunday is one of the last remaining “blue laws,” and it’s something that’s ridiculously outdated and needs to go. Those in favor of lifting the ban note that package store owners in towns near the Massachusetts, New York or Rhode Island borders lose out on business every single Sunday, when folks who want a six-pack or a bottle of wine just hop in their cars and drive across the state line.

Like I said, the issue of allowing liquor sales on Sundays has come up before. But this year those in favor of repealing the ban have added a little something to their argument: allowing sales would help the state’s budget. Each time an alcoholic beverage is sold, the state collects not just sales tax but alcohol tax too. In other words, that’s revenue that the state is willingly passing up every Sunday, when it forces liquor stores to be shuttered and those black curtains placed over the shelves of beer at supermarkets. With the budget deficit the way it is, can Connecticut really afford to turn its nose up at extra revenue?

But those who want to keep liquor sales forbidden on Sunday — and there’s still a lot of them — argue that the majority of package store owners prefer being closed on Sunday, and that if sales were allowed on Sunday, the stores would have to be open to be competitive, and that, for some stores, the cost of overhead of opening that extra day — such as electricity costs, heating costs, paying staff — could very well outweigh any sales they make.

The thing is, that’s a question every small business owner faces: what is the cost-benefit ratio of opening an extra day, or closing an extra day, or adding hours, or reducing hours, etc. No retail store is *required* to be open seven days a week. It’s a decision left up to the individual store owner. But, by keeping this “blue law” on the books, you’re telling package store owners when they *can’t* be open. It’s time for the government to let those store owners actually make that decision for themselves.

Also, let’s not forget that while stores may not be able to sell alcohol on Sunday, restaurants can. Alcoholism is a terrible disease, but it exists. If somebody has a strong craving for a beer on a Sunday, what’s better: for them to go to a store, buy beer and drink it at home, or go to a bar, drink, and then have to drive home? I admit this scenario might not happen too often, but even one drunk driving accident is one too many,

* * *

See you next week.

Marlborough Selectmen Get First Look at Budget

by Adam Benson

The Board of Selectmen Tuesday got its first look at a proposed \$4.6 million 2009-10 operational budget that includes \$987,000 in capital improvement requests.

If the plan moves through the Board of Finance and meets with voter approval, it would clear the way for several major projects to get underway or continue, including a feasibility study concerning the expansion of the senior center, site preparation for a new ball field along Park Road and the start of engineering and design work for a new multipurpose field at the elementary school.

Officials are also asking for the addition of several new vehicles to the fleet, including a \$12,500 Town Hall staff car, a \$107,000 backhoe loader, a \$165,000 roll-off dumpster truck and a \$9,600 three-wheel lawn mower for field and facility maintenance.

The \$4.6 million town operational budget would be a 6.5 percent increase over last year’s plan and includes significant upticks in several areas including dental insurance premiums, heating oil and electrical costs, a 45 percent increase in contract work for street lights and \$6,000 more in town contributions

to facilities operations costs at the Marlborough Food Bank.

As municipalities across the region are struggling to bring costs in line with major state budget deficits, Marlborough’s town budget represents a fiscally sound and responsible approach, selectmen said.

But they also have some wiggle room, with expected revenues of \$488,720 in the upcoming year. If that number proves correct, it would bump the general fund up to just more than \$21.1 million. Much of the extra money is attributed to the collection of back taxes and projected property tax revenues.

Other proposed increases to the budget include modest raises for elected town employees and the selectmen.

There is also nearly a 6 percent increase proposed for Social Security and Medicare tax payouts and \$8,260 more in the town’s deferred compensation plan.

The Board of Selectmen’s next scheduled meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 7 p.m. in Town Hall, where budget talks are expected to continue.

Support Expressed for School Sports, Personnel in Colchester

by Adam Benson

Confronted by some of the deepest budget cuts in the district's history, the Colchester Board of Education on Tuesday again heard an outpouring of support for sports programs and key personnel that could be axed next year from parents, students and community members.

"I really want to make sure that as a board, have you cleaned house? Have you gotten rid of and organized your departments before you go cutting from the kids?" asked resident Eva Marie Young, one of about 90 members of the public who attended the board's Tuesday night meeting. "My only thing is just to make sure the question has been asked of the town instead of doing it on the backs of the kids."

Two weeks ago, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loisel presented Board of Education members with a proposed 2009-10 budget that included massive hits to athletic programs at William J. Johnson Middle School and Bacon Academy, along with what would be Colchester's first round of layoffs in 17 years.

Since then, school board members and district officials have heard passionate pleas by community members who fear the elimination of key positions and athletic opportunities for students would have an adverse impact on Colchester's schools for years.

The issue has become such a dominant talking point that Board of Education Chairman William Hettrick said the body has pushed back its timeline for adopting a financial plan for next year.

Originally, the board was scheduled to vote on the budget at Tuesday's meeting, but, following an outcry from parents after Loisel's initial budget presentation, board members opted to wait at least until the end of the month. Next Wednesday, Feb. 18, the boards of education, finance and selectmen will hold an unprecedented town hall meeting devoted specifically to details about next year's spending plans on both the town and school sides.

"It's the first time we've ever done this," Hettrick said. "It's going to be a very important meeting and we're asking everybody to attend. We need hundreds of people there, not 20 or 30."

Loisel has said repeatedly putting the proposed cuts in place has been among the most painful and difficult decisions she's ever had to make as leader of the district.

"We've never had to face cuts of this magnitude at my budget level," she said Tuesday night. "Most of our operational line items have reductions. We've tried very hard not to impact the students."

If approved in its current form, Loisel's \$35.4 million budget in fiscal year 2009-10 would pink slip 11 employees and cut 13 teams from seven sports across the district. Combined, those moves would save the district nearly \$650,000.

Other proposed cuts include reducing by half the funding for the Jack Jacter Intermediate School reading program, removing one bus from the district's transportation contract, putting off driveway repair work at Bacon Academy and not buying any new library books.

Administrators have also made concessions with unions in a bid to save even more internally, and officials said Tuesday those negotiations could be revived. Included in the proposed budget is a pay cut of \$1,000 for each district administrator after an agreement between the union and budget planners.

But of course, the threat of losing extracurricular activities and support staff in classrooms have weighed most heavily on those who have spoken out or written letters to the district.

"The psychologist is trained in a specialized field and I as a classroom teacher need the psychologist to support my neediest children," Anne Lemke, a nine-year teacher at Colchester Elementary School (CES), wrote in a letter to

the board. "It would not be fair to the children of Colchester or the teachers not to have a psychologist available full time to handle sensitive issues that we have been seeing more of at CES."

District administrators are seeking to trim \$43,753 from the budget by scaling that psychologist position down to a part-time job.

Augusta Gilberti, a CES special education teacher, shared similar concerns.

"I believe that without this position there will be more outside placements for these children because teachers can not meet their needs in the classroom without the support of the psychologist. Outside placements are very costly," she wrote the board. "I implore you to reinstate the position at CES. As an educator, taxpayer and parent I know it is a necessity. CES cannot be successful without it."

Some of the most dramatic appeals Tuesday came from student-athletes who participate in golf and indoor track. They said taking them away meant mortgaging the future of kids trying to get into colleges on scholarships.

"I don't feel that it's right to cut a sport that does so much for so many people. It's such a good support system and it's made me work even harder," Bacon Academy senior and track team member Natalie Gaudette said. "Even though I'm not going to be in the program next year, I have so many teammates that are doing so well and to see them lose a season, it hurts because it would be detrimental to their athletic careers."

Hettrick said the flood of support for school sports and key staff positions will help to influence the board's budget decisions, but he again warned that cuts will have to be made while expressing concern at what they'll mean for long-term viability of the district.

"I've never seen anything like this as far as what we're being asked to cut," he said. "We've

been taking baby steps for years and it looks like we're going to go from baby steps over the past 15 years to three giant steps backward because of the economy."

With the state facing a nearly billion-dollar budget shortfall, and uncertainty on the federal level about how much money will be available for public school aid, local lawmakers are bracing for difficult talks in Hartford.

But State Rep. Linda Orange of Colchester and State Senator Eileen Daily – whose 33rd District seat covers Colchester – pledged to preserve as much state aid as possible for the town's operational costs.

"The combination of a serious drop in revenues and a historical record of delays in adopting a budget when there is significant drop in revenue is not a good or hopeful scenario for cities and towns," the lawmakers wrote in a letter to Loisel. "The ensuing budget will present a number of challenges. . . . You may be assured that we will do all we can to fight for funds for Colchester."

Despite the dire prospects, Loisel pledged this week to bring forward the most financially sound budget she can.

"As long as I'm superintendent here, you'll have a commitment that we'll look at no-cost/low-cost options to get things done," Loisel told the public Tuesday. "It's been painful for all of us, but we need you engaged throughout the whole process and we're going to need all the help we can get."

The community forum will be held Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 6:30 p.m., at the Bacon Academy cafeteria, 611 Norwich Ave. The forum will provide residents an opportunity to talk about the town budget and other priorities related to the final development of next year's spending plan. Child care services will be provided by adult volunteers so families can attend.

Proponents of Peters Plan Pack Hebron Public Hearing

by Sarah McCoy

One by one Hebron residents and reported descendants of Cesar and Lewis Peters urged the Board of Selectmen (BOS) at a public hearing last week to designate the home at 150 East St. as a historic property.

Over 40 people packed the community room at Town Hall last Thursday, Feb. 5, and virtually all in favor of designating the property as historic.

BOS Chair Jeff Watt began the public hearing by stating that the purpose of the meeting was not to decide on the fate of the house but, rather, whether it should be designated as a historic property.

Such a designation would mean that any future owners of the residence, commonly referred to as the Peters House, would be subject to the desires of Historic Properties Commission (HPC) when applying for a building permit. "It has nothing to do with the color of paint used on the house," HPC member Donna McCalla said. "It's an added protection for any future owners looking to add or demolish parts of the building's exterior."

The house at 150 East St. is believed by some to be the one-time dwelling of Cesar and Lewis Peters, two slaves who in the 18th century were captured and then rescued by Hebron residents. However, an architectural study has shown a discrepancy between the time of the Peters' capture/rescue and the time of the actual construction of the house.

At last week's public hearing, Hebron resident and HPC member Lara Bordick described her experience as she accompanied architectural historian John Obed Curtis through the house. "It was like being with a kid in a candy store," she said. "To see beyond a house that needs work, to see that this house was that important and that valuable, it was a moving experience."

Also at the hearing, Alethia Daughtry, joined by dozens of her family members, stood to speak about her new book. Daughtry's book focuses on her owned genealogy. In her research she discovered that she is an eighth-generation descendent of Cesar and Lewis Peters.

Daughtry said she learned about the house online. She heard the story of the arrest of the two free African-Americans and their rescue by the hands of Hebron residents. The more

she read, the more Daughtry had to know.

Last year she traveled down from Springfield in a caravan of a dozen cars to visit the Peters House. "Learning about your history is very different from sitting in class," she said at last week's public hearing. "This house is part of our family."

Daughtry's desire to see the house designated was echoed by many other Hebron residents. Dan Larson, who is a member of the Board of Finance but said he was speaking solely as a private resident, called the house a "national treasure."

Another Hebron resident, Ken Randall, urged the selectmen to "take advantage of what [they] have."

And resident Mary Ann Foote, who was born and raised in the Gilead section of town, said, "there are many old homes in town. But, I don't think any of them compare to the beauty and style of the Peters House."

The BOS did not take action on the matter at its meeting immediately following the public hearing. However, according to Watt, it will be on the board's agenda for its Feb. 19 meeting.

In the fall of 2007, this same issue was brought before the BOS. At that time, with a potential buyer for the house lined up, board members opted not to apply the designation. (Mark Stuart is the only person from that BOS that is still serving on the board.) The understanding at the time was that the buyer would reapply for the designation when he completed the necessary renovations on the home. However, the deal for the house later fell apart, when the prospective buyer, Hebron resident Jeffrey Farber, withdrew his plans in response to the heavy opposition from Hebron residents.

If the selectmen do opt to designate the house, the property can still be sold. At a prior meeting the BOS have voiced a desire to have a Peters House advisory question be a part of the May referendum.

The town acquired the home in 2004 when it purchased the surrounding 122 acres. Much of that space is currently being renovated into an athletic field complex. The park is scheduled to open this summer.

Andover Board Adopts \$3.99 Million Budget

by Sarah McCoy

With little hesitation, the Board of Education (BOE) Wednesday adopted a budget for the upcoming 2009-10 fiscal year.

Wednesday was the first public meeting the BOE has held on Superintendent of School's Andrew Maneggia's proposed \$3.99 million budget. The spending plan, which the board voted unanimously to adopt, represents a 1.9 percent increase, or \$75,304, over the current year's budget.

"One point nine is about the lowest [increase rate] I've seen out there," BOE Chair Jay Lindy said.

The biggest line item change in the recommended budget comes from the transportation account. Next fall, Andover Elementary School will begin its full-day kindergarten program and, as a result, the district won't be running school buses halfway through the day. This switch saves over \$30,000 in transportation costs.

In fact, the move to full-day kindergarten actually produces a net savings for the school district. With a low enrollment in the current second grade, Maneggia is planning to relocate one third grade teaching position to kindergarten.

This position, plus the 1.5 positions already in kindergarten, mean that Maneggia needs only to hire a .5 position to staff the new full-day program. "I told the board, 'If we're going to do it, now's the time,'" Maneggia said.

The switch to full-day kindergarten from half-day yields a net savings of \$7,000, Maneggia said.

Another line item that saw a significant decrease was the school district's technology plan. Last year, the BOE budgeted \$37,000 for technology purchases and maintenance. But for the 2009-10 budget, that number was cut to \$20,000. Maneggia said the decrease was due to the fact that the school has purchased all the necessary smart boards so now they only need to pay for their maintenance.

The legal fees line item was also trimmed from \$12,000 to \$6,000. The BOE felt that with no scheduled negotiations for next year they could count on spending less in this account.

Many of the smaller line items, such as of-

fice supplies and professional development, were reduced in the budget. Maneggia said these cuts were made in an effort to control costs. He also said the district is hoping to see somewhere in the neighborhood of \$40,000 through the federal government stimulus package.

Of this \$40,000, most of it will be used for special education and facility improvements, however, Maneggia hopes to supplement the accounts that were reduced this year with some of that grant money. "The last I heard was that money is coming to every municipality," he said. "We'll incorporate that funding wherever we see needed."

Maneggia said the school district wouldn't be rushing to spend every last dollar it has unless it was necessary. Since the 2005-06 budget year, the school board has returned at least \$100,000 to the town each year. So, this means the net school budget increase has averaged \$27,000 per year during period. "That's minuscule," BOE member Scott Sauyet said.

Maneggia said the same approach would be taken this year.

The major increase in the budget this year comes from a student who will need to be placed outside of the district. While the Andover BOE will be reimbursed for some of the cost associated with the outplacement, the town's share results in a \$49,940 increase to the special education line item.

Earlier this month, Maneggia and Lindy presented the budget to the Board of Finance. Both reported that it was well received. "A few years ago a 3.4 percent increase would have been very accepted," Maneggia said. "I think it's inappropriate to ask for that kind of money right now for our district. We have a budget that should meet the needs of our students and respects the position of our taxpayers."

Last night the BOE held an open forum for taxpayers to voice their opinions on the recommended budget. That meeting was held too late to be included in this week's *Riverast*.

The Board of Finance will review the budget and put forth a final number for the annual Town Meeting in April. The town-wide referendum on the budget will be held on May 4.

Andover Community Mourns Loss of Local Teen

by Sarah McCoy

Andover resident Glenn Siter this week described his son as someone who stood up for what was right, loved to laugh and put others' needs before his own.

William Siter, 18, died suddenly last Friday, Feb. 6. He moved to town from Mississippi in 2005, graduated RHAM High School last year and, according to his father, was just finding his path in life.

While at RHAM, Will developed a passion for welding and had recently talked to his dad about his desire to become a certified welder to work on power plants. At the time of his passing he was working at a farm in Bolton.

"Will was one of the most genuinely nice kids I've had the pleasure of working with," RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie said. "His gracious personality and southern hospitality drew kids to him. He made friends easily."

Will's death came unexpectedly and as a shock to those that knew him.

He was born in Biloxi, MS, to Glenn and Anna Marie Siter and is survived by his step-mother, Dorene Siter, of Andover, and eight siblings.

Earlier this week, Glenn said he learned his son's character when Will was a fourth grade student in Mississippi and a group of six sixth-grade students started bullying one of Will's classmates. "Will stepped in and said 'That's enough,'" Glenn recalled. "So the bullies turned their attention to my son. One of the bullies took a swing at Will, but by the end of it there were six sixth-graders on the ground. Will would always take up for those who needed protection before he worried about himself."

Glenn hopes that his son's legacy will be his passion for helping others. "If someone called to say their car broke down or they needed a ride, Will was gone," his father said. "It was always about helping out."

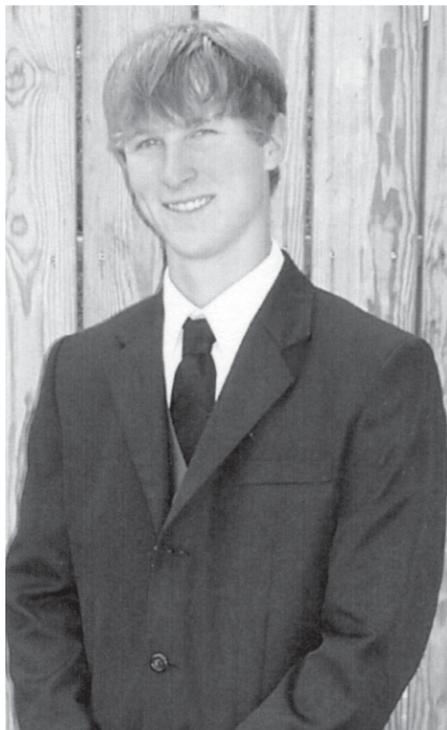
Fittingly, the last time Glenn saw his son was last Wednesday, Feb. 4, when Will stopped by with one of his friends to help plow.

Will will continue to give after his death, thanks to an organ donor program. On the day he got his driver's license, Glenn recalled, the woman at the counter at the Department of Motor Vehicles asked him if he'd like to be an organ donor. Glenn remembers his son saying, "Hell yeah," at the option.

His fierce loyalty coupled with an infectious sense of humor made Will a magnet for friends. On a couple of occasions he told his dad that he and "a couple friends" were going to play paintball in the woods behind their home – only for Glenn to look out and see 20 cars and 40 kids out playing.

His friends nicknamed him "Mississippi," thanks to the persistent southern drawl that lingered despite his move to Connecticut.

Even when school was out, Will could often be found hanging out with his friends in the parking lot of the high school. "They goofed off a lot, made jokes and liked to have fun,"



William Siter

Glenn said. "Those, I think, were some of the best days of his life."

In December 2007 Will lost his best friend, Zachary Choquete, 18, of Andover, who passed away as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident. Will was also in the vehicle but suffered only minor injuries. Glenn said the loss had a great impact on his son, who treasured his time with his friends.

Outside of being with his friends, Will was involved in a number of different activities. He and his dad were members of the Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad Club. Each year, Glenn said, Will would look forward to their show in Sturbridge, MA, where the club would put on a huge train display and talk to those interested in the hobby.

Will also loved the outdoors. Whether it was building a bonfire, working on his car, or hunting, he preferred to be outside.

Services were held Wednesday at First Congregational Church of Hebron. Leslie said hundreds turned out for the services. People lined the walls with plenty more waiting outside to pay their last respects, he said. Will's burial will be held Sunday, Feb. 15, in Gulfport, MS.

Counselors at RHAM High and Middle schools have been available to students all week. AHM Youth and Family Services is currently providing counseling services to those outside of the school system. For more information call 228-9488.

In lieu of flowers the Siter family asks for donations to be made to Life Choice Donor Services located at 8 Griffin Road North, Windsor, CT 06095.

A full obituary appears this week in page 28.

Grant to Allow Extra Police Presence on Route 6

by Sarah McCoy

The Town of Andover has secured a state grant that will provide hundreds of hours of extra police enforcement in town. The grant, which is funded by the state Department of Transportation (DOT), will focus primarily on officers patrolling on Route 6.

For the past eight years, Andover Resident State Trooper Kevin Reed has received DOT grants for a variety of reasons. This year, however, Reed took it upon himself to write his own grant. The grant, called the Hazardous Movement Grant, was received earlier this year and awarded \$30,000 to the town for law enforcements.

This money will be used to provide for 526 hours of additional law enforcement in town. Reed said that these hours will be fulfilled using officers from the State Police Troop K barracks in Colchester at times when he is not on call.

Ten years ago, when Reed first accepted the Resident State Trooper position in town, he could expect anywhere between two and four fatal accidents on the Andover portion of Route 6 each year. Thanks to the installation of turning lanes and the widening of the roadway, these numbers have sharply decreased. Reed said it's been two years since the last fatality. However, he still sees room for improvement.

"I wrote this grant because of the unique issues on Route 6," Reed explained. "People get impatient and do things they wouldn't normally do. They're thinking about picking the kids up at basketball, what's for dinner, and all the things they have to do after work instead of the

matter at hand."

According to a three-year DOT study, following too closely and failing to grant the right of way cause over 56 percent of accidents along Route 6 in Andover.

Reed said it isn't just Route 6 that will benefit from the additional law enforcement in town. The grant allows for patrol throughout the town. Reed said officers will be better able to respond to complaints of speeding through residential areas as well prevent crimes from ever occurring in the first place.

"Who knows, someone could be driving to town looking to rob someone and they see a cop pull into the Xtra Mart for coffee. That would-be criminal might just drive on through," Reed said. "Having another cop in town when there normally wouldn't be one is a good thing."

In order to receive the grant, the town had to provide a 10 percent match, or \$3,000. While money is certainly tight in Andover, First Selectman Bob Burbank said the decision was an easy one. "It's a grant that pays for itself because the town receives money back for tickets written," he said.

Andover receives \$10 per ticket for certain violations. Last year that added up to \$6,000.

Burbank said had the town not received the grant they would go without the additional law enforcement. "It's not that we don't need it," he said. "It's that we can't afford it."

Reed agreed. "We're a small community. We can't afford year-round enforcement," he said. "It's fantastic that the federal government and DOT can help us out."

East Hampton Council Merges Boards and Commissions

by Michael McCoy

In an effort to streamline operations, the Town Council voted Tuesday to merge some boards and commissions.

The decision came two weeks after Scott Ekman, who runs his business out of Meridian, ID, presented an assessment of the town's boards, commissions and task forces. Ekman's recommendations included the disbanding of the Ethics Commission, merging the Economic Development Commission (EDC), Redevelopment Agency, Brownsfields Steering Committee (BSC) and Design Review Board (DRB) into one group and – perhaps most controversially – combining the Conservation Commission and Lake Pocotopaug Commission (LPC) into an Environmental Advisory Committee.

The Town Council had a special meeting on the recommendations last Thursday, and council members spent more than three hours deliberating them, council chair Melissa Engel said.

At this past Tuesday's meeting, around 10 members of the public commented on the recommendations. Pete Brown said, "I'm all for the consolidation. When you start developing commissions on top of land use boards I get very concerned." He also called such a practice a "duplication of efforts."

LPC chair John Ciriello said, "I really don't agree with the consolidation of the Conservation Department and the Lake Commission. The issues, I think, are completely different." Ciriello also noted that the LPC was working on a watershed management plan, which was about halfway completed.

"I completely disagree with Mr. Ciriello's opinion," resident Christopher Burt retorted. "I think it makes all the sense in the world." As for that watershed management plan, Burt said, "I think it should have been done a year-and-a-half ago."

To this, resident Mary Ann Dostaler said, "Why are we assuming the Lake Commission, which is two years old, is able to produce something the Conservation Commission has failed to for years?"

LPC member Tom Wells said the management plan was three-quarters complete at least, and that a portion of the delay was due to the Enser contract "sat on the [former Acting Town Manager Bob Drewry's] desk" for months. (Enser is the company that takes samples from the lake.)

Wells also noted the recent creation of the Lake Implementation Task Force. "Assumably, it was [created] because the [LPC] needed more help." Noting the council's taking three environmental bodies down to one, he said, "I guess that's what they call a flip-flop."

Resident Kyle Dostaler said a cost-benefit analysis should be performed before deleting or merging any bodies and on the topic of the lake and conservation commissions asserted, "I think it would be a very serious mistake."

At the end of the public remarks portion, Engel read a letter into the record from Lake Commissioner Paul Peszynski, who endorsed

the merging of the two boards. He wrote, "I have often thought there was a duplication of efforts."

Resident Jim Morris called Ekman's recommendations an "opportunity for a more efficient operation." He said he was "certainly sympathetic" with Ciriello's concerns, but figured all the progress the LPC has made so far will not be merely discarded. "Nobody said you're going to throw out the baby with the bathwater," he said.

As for the DRB, Burt said it was "very discouraging" to many of the clients his real estate business aims to attract. However, PZC alternate Dick Gosselin called the DRB a "good tool for planning" that requires "no extra cost."

PZC chair Ray Zatorski, who said he was speaking as an individual, read a written quote he had prepared, which said "a potential application on Route 66, near the lake, in the Town of East Hampton, has to be reviewed by EDC, Design Review (probably two times), Lake Commission and/or Lake Task Force, Conservation Commission, IWWA and P & Z." He continued, "Five or six separate review entities runs counter to the legislators' expressed desire for timely review of applications. The town of East Hampton needs to capture and transmit the expertise and credentialed experience on the DRB while keeping a timely review process."

Zatorski closed by saying, "I don't know what the answer is – but the present system's problems must be addressed before the next big application."

Council member Tom Cordeiro read a letter written to the Town Council by DRB chair Scott Hill, whose comments included the prospect of design review falling under the purview of town staff. "The only way this would work is if the town hired a full-time town architect," Hill said. "Given that hiring a town architect is not in the budget, I highly encourage you to consider utilizing the DRB and its talent pool, which comes at very little expense to the town. To assume that existing town staff can assume the duties of the DRB is incorrect."

Hill also wrote that the DRB "appreciates the hard decisions that are required by the town, and we stand ready to support whatever course of action the Town Council decides to adopt. We only ask that you strongly consider not eliminating the board..."

The discussion last Thursday night resulted in a recommended action from O'Keefe, which did not include every suggestion made by Ekman. After the public weighed in on the issue Tuesday night, the council voted on the six recommended actions one by one.

The council voted 6-0 to not disband the Ethics Commission, but instead make its meetings on an as-needed basis, as opposed to regularly. The council also voted 6-0 to combine the Brownsfields Steering Committee and the Redevelopment Agency into the Brownsfields Redevelopment Agency. Prior to the vote, Engel said the chairs of both groups had acquiesced

to this action.

The third action was for O'Keefe to work directly with members of the DRB, EDC, PZC, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the planning administrator and others to "institutionalize an internal town hall design review committee" that that would review all application prior to the PZC. The current DRB guidelines would become the standard, and the DRB would be "sunset" once the internal committee was "fully functioning."

However, council member Sue Weintraub said the expertise on the current DRB was invaluable and that "you can't replace that kind of professional talent. Here we're trying to save money, and we're actually losing money."

Engel seemed to see it differently, remarking, "I was in favor of the DRB [when it was created] but what we need is the guidelines they created."

The council voted 5-1 (with Weintraub opposing) to take the aforementioned action.

The council also voted 5-1 (also with Weintraub opposing) to merge the LPC and Conservation Commission into the Conservation & Lake Commission. Council member John Tuttle said the move "makes sense." With three environmental boards in town, he said, "we're trying to create action, and the result is creating more bureaucracy," and added, "We have two groups [the LPC and the Conservation Commission] doing the same thing."

Weintraub said she spoke with the town manager of Simsbury, who told her that town combined its inland/wetland and conservation commissions. She said that move made sense, but "to me, the Lake Commission needs to stay separate." She said she felt Lake Pocotopaug was too big of an issue to be grouped in with other matters.

Commissioner Christopher Goff said, "Well, I don't live in Simsbury; I've been here my whole life," and added, "I am in favor of the joining of these two commissions."

Cordeiro said he "deliberated a great deal on this one" but said he felt the two commissions "can work in a collaborative effort."

Engel, who said she comes "from a long tradition of conservationists," said the Conservation Commission has "been a difficult board to hold membership," though she didn't assign any blame for that circumstance.

With the merging the merging of the two commissions, Engel said Wednesday she planned to entertain a motion during the Town Council's next meeting to sunset the Lake Implementation Task Force (which was created last fall) before it even meets.

The fifth matter was whether to sunset the Streetscape Steering Committee in the spring once the sidewalk project is completed. (O'Keefe said the project is 90 percent complete.) But O'Keefe said the committee "did do a good job with" the sidewalk project.

The council voted 4-2 to sunset the commission; Weintraub and Cordeiro voted against the

move, saying that while it wasn't a bad idea, they wanted to wait until the sidewalk project was 100 percent complete.

The council also voted 6-0 to adopt all of the "operational recommendations" Ekman presented two weeks ago. Those include such items as upgrading the town's technology and the composition of an "orientation packet," to clarify the charge of each town body. (Ekman's full report is available at www.easthamptonct.org.)

O'Keefe's agenda report for the functional assessment concluded by saying, "...no existing commission volunteer would be let go or displaced from any of their current functions, unless they choose to do so themselves."

Instead, Engel later explained, membership would be condensed through attrition. As commissioners resigned or their terms expired, some vacancies will simply not be filled.

* * *

Also Tuesday, the Town Council discussed the still-closed Main Street Bridge.

The council voted to replace the bridge last June, bonding the project for \$1 million. The section of Main Street between Niles and Skinner streets has been closed since late July. The bridge was due to open in October, but that was eventually pushed back to November and then December. In December, O'Keefe said the bridge was supposed to be "passable" by mid-January, and chalked the matter up to "contractor/subcontractor delays." Standard Demolition was contracted to install the bridge on the site; CONTECH Bridge Solutions was sub-contracted to do the actual bridge construction.

The project has not only posed an inconvenience to those wishing to traverse Main Street. A side effect has been drivers effectively adopting the narrow Niles Street as a detour. Niles Street residents have complained that the road cannot sustain this level of traffic.

Tuesday night, O'Keefe noted that the town will collect \$300 per day in liquidated damages for every day past Dec. 5 that the project is uncompleted.

In a Feb. 5 memorandum, O'Keefe said there is about three feet of "frozen surface materials" on the bridge, and that a "good thaw" is necessary to prepare it for safe passage.

In a Feb. 10 report, CLA Engineers, who work for the town, said, "Due to construction delays, the soonest that the roadway could be paved would be March or April when the local paving plants reopen."

Despite the frustration that O'Keefe the Town Council, and many residents undoubtedly feel, a couple moments of levity were sprinkled on the situation. O'Keefe, who assumed his role of town manager more than a month after the portion of road was closed, half-kidded, "I'm glad I wasn't here to lead the effort on this one."

Then, though failing to conjure up her best Art Garfunkel falsetto, Sue Weintraub donned the situation a "troubled bridge over quiet waters."

Family, Colleagues and Students Recall Beloved East Hampton Teacher

by Michael McCoy

Though Sandra Grzybowski lived her whole life in Chester, her untimely passing last week may be just as deeply felt in East Hampton.

Grzybowski, 60, died Friday, Feb. 6, of complications from multiple myeloma.

With the exception of a two-year stint working in computers, Grzybowski taught fourth grade at Center School from 1973 up until she went on medical leave last November.

Debbie Day was one of her closest friends, and, though now retired, taught with her at Center School for 25 years. Day's son, Jeff, a past student of Grzybowski's, played bagpipes at the funeral Wednesday. One piece was *Ave Maria*, one of her favorite songs.

Day recalled that Grzybowski's stint working in computers with The Hartford didn't last long because "she missed teaching too much."

Day, who retired in 2003, winters at her Boynton Beach, FL home. She vacationed there prior to this, and Grzybowski, beginning in the mid-1990s, would often join her.

"She absolutely fell in love with" the area, Day said. Grzybowski was so enamored that she bought a home there last spring, although sadly, she never got to stay there. With February vacation next week, Day said Grzybowski would probably have been traveling down there this weekend.

"Oh, we were best friends," Day said. "We did lots of things together," including playing dominoes and such card games as thrice and pinochle.

Day said she and Grzybowski "sort of had the same philosophy about teaching. So we got along very well."

"She and her sister [Priscilla] were very supportive of me," recalled Day of her own battle with breast cancer. "As time goes by, I'll miss her terribly."

"Everybody liked her," Day said, adding that this included students, their parents, the administration and all of her coworkers.

It seems Grzybowski was a born teacher. "She had a soft spot for children," Day said, but added that, had she chosen to do so, Grzybowski could have been a "tough business lady" capable of running her own corporation.

Day last saw her friend in early January, and has been in Florida since. "I feel very, very helpless," she lamented, of her not being around to help during Grzybowski's battle with cancer. She added, "It was hard for me [Wednesday] morning, knowing the service was going on."

Center School Principal Donna Turchi, who has been at the school for 11 years, called Grzybowski "very, very caring" and said, "She was just a wonderful teacher...She just loved the kids."

Grzybowski not only went out of her way to help students, Turchi said, "she was always willing to help her colleagues and help new teachers."

Fifth grade teacher John Baine has taught at Center School since 1999. He said that, though Grzybowski has been out of school since November, the rapid progression of her illness was a surprise to him and his colleagues.

"The atmosphere's been somber," Baine said of the school this week, and noted that the students seem to be struggling with it even more than the adults. He said the current fifth-graders that had Grzybowski for the entirety of last year seem to be having a harder go of it than anyone.

Fourth-grade teacher Mary Silverman said Center School psychologist Linda Early spent the better part of the day in Grzybowski's classroom, trying to help her current students through this. She also said a number of social workers and school psychologists from around the district were on hand to speak with any students who wished to talk through the issue.

A very large number of faculty and staff from the school district attended the funeral service Wednesday at St. Joseph Church in Chester. The vast majority of personnel from Center School attended, which Turchi said was made possible by others in the district covering the classrooms. (Turchi actually said school officials had briefly entertained the idea of closing on Wednesday, to allow students and faculty a chance to go the funeral.)

Grzybowski's professional responsibilities were not limited to her fourth-grade classroom. She was also leader of the fourth-grade team, which included six other teachers, and served on the science curriculum committee. Also a leader among her peers, Grzybowski was on the contract negotiating committee and was the school district's shop steward for the union.

"She did a great deal beside just teach her classroom," Baine said, who recalled that when someone had a problem or question, it was far from unusual to hear, "Go see Sandy."

"She was the go-to girl," he added.

Baine also called Grzybowski a "great listener" and said, "She would really get to the heart of an issue."

Their love of science also created a bond between Baine and Grzybowski. Baine leads the Invention Convention each year at center school. "She was always a big help with that," Baine said.

Furthermore, he recalled, "She would always find articles that she thought I might be interested in."

Center School teacher Mary Silverman taught alongside Grzybowski in the fourth grade for the past seven years. She said Grzybowski's death brings with it "a tremendous sense of loss personally and in the educational community."

"She's a real leader," Silverman said of Grzybowski's work in the classroom and with the union.

Silverman continued, "Even though teaching has changed...she didn't back away from

that. She continued to learn new ways to teach." And, Silverman added, "She was very kind to everyone."

Silverman said the service Wednesday was attended by not only faculty, but students as well. "It was wonderful to see," she said of the large turnout at the funeral. "It was really a memorial to her."

Hollin Abraham, a current freshman at the University of Connecticut who had Grzybowski in fourth grade, called Grzybowski "definitely the best teacher I ever had."

"She was the one who made me take my schoolwork seriously," Abraham said. Abraham explained that As came easy to her in school. However, Grzybowski was not satisfied with her coasting, despite her excellent marks. She remembered Grzybowski saying, "Hollin could still improve" during parent-teacher conferences.

However, it was not only this firmness that Abraham recalls with fondness. "She was always smiling," Abraham said, "even if she was being strict in class."

Abraham's mother, Cynthia, said that her daughter, who is currently a chemical engineering major, received a 4.0 in her first college semester. Cynthia Abraham chalked this up to Grzybowski. She called Grzybowski "a great, great teacher" and "a very special lady." She also noted Grzybowski's presence at every graduation ceremony.

Grzybowski's brother Edward and sister Priscilla also live in Chester. Neither could speak at length this week about Grzybowski's passing, but Priscilla (who also lived with her sister) did manage, "She was my best friend. We did everything together. I'm going to miss her so much."

West Kingston, RI, resident Kenneth Grzybowski, the second oldest in the family, was, along with other family members, with his sister when she passed away at Middlesex Hospital last Friday.

He recalled finding out about her cancer in early November. However, speaking for the family, he remarked, "We were under the impression that she could take chemotherapy," to keep the cancer at bay, though doctors explained to them at the time that the cancer was terminal.

By the end, Kenneth said, his sister was capable of little more than speaking a little bit, but she "basically passed away very gently." By the time of her death, family and friends were present at the hospital around the clock; Kenneth said around 10 or 12 people were usually on hand. Of the hospital staff, he said, "They're about as gentle as you could be."

"Sandy was a dedicated sister, aunt and friend," Kenneth said.

He continued, "her two greatest passions were teaching and gardening," adding that, concerning the latter, she was especially fond of



Sandra Grzybowski

tomatoes and summer squash. He said he and his sister would frequently spend time gardening together both at her Chester home and his in Rhode Island.

"Sandy and I would talk about our dreams," Kenneth said, explaining that the two planned to travel extensively once Sandy retired. They were specifically primed to see Alaska and Canada.

"She would help any student or adult," remarked Kenneth, who noted that Sandy took care of both their aunt Helen and mother, who both resided at an Old Saybrook convalescent home. Unfortunately, their mother, Katherine, just passed away last month.

"I can't ever remember her wanting to be anything other than a teacher," Kenneth said. He remembers her talking about teaching since she was in her early teens, something he credits his father for. According to Kenneth, his dad often repeated, "You gotta get an education." Her devotion to her profession showed up in the wealth of people at her funeral. Kenneth called this outpouring "overwhelming," and seemed touched by the many teachers, students and administrators that turned out. This latter category included Superintendent of School Judith Golden and Assistant Superintendent Kevin Reich.

Kenneth said that she planned to return to teaching once she felt better, and noted that during a recent visit with her in the hospital, Grzybowski said, "Oh, I should try to get a [lesson] plan into school."

From family, to students to co-workers, it seems Grzybowski will be greatly missed indeed.

Lack of Communication to Blame for Eagle Scout Fence Issue in Marlborough

by Adam Benson

In late 2005, resident Michael Schadtle proudly completed his Eagle Scout project, installing a fence and cleaning up the area around the cemetery on Route 66.

This pride turned to confusion and hurt feelings when, in late 2008, Michael learned the white vinyl fence had been torn down, replaced with a chain link model.

Michael began his journey to the highest ranks of the Boy Scouts of America in May 1999, when he joined Marlborough's Troop 39 as a Cub Scout. Seven years later, he capped that service by attaining the rank of Eagle Scout – an achievement so prestigious that only two percent of the more than 86 million boys who have participated in scouting since 1911 have received it.

To get to that point, candidates must earn at least 21 merit badges and plan, organize, oversee and manage a major service project.

So on Nov. 19, 2005, Schadtle began work on a revitalization project along the Route 66 cemetery.

"The town will benefit from a better looking cemetery, where they won't have rotting fences and piles of dirt, and the assistant sexton will benefit from having better constructed gates and fences so that he can put more soil in the bins," Michael wrote in an August 2004 project description. "The vault house will be better protected from collisions from rocks and machinery so it will last longer."

By mid-December 2005 – and on the strength of more than \$1,700 in in-kind donations and a total of 162 hours spent planning and working on the enclosure – Schadtle's project was complete.

In June 2006, Schadtle was recognized by the Board of Selectmen with a signed proclamation commending his commitment to the project and the betterment of the town.

Despite this, though, in late 2008 the town removed the fence and replaced it with a chain

link model around the vault; the new fence, town officials said, was more durable and appropriate for commercial use.

Schadtle's mother Barbara – who works as a teacher directly across the street from the cemetery at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School – said she learned from a family member the fence was coming down because town officials said it was in need of repair and not supportive of commercial use.

But First Selectman Bill Black said the town had no idea the fence was installed as part of an Eagle Scout project until he read a Dec. 12 letter by Barbara Schadtle published in the *Rivereast* condemning the town's move.

"I hope there's no more surprise improvements made at someone else's expense," she wrote then. "First, I was shocked, then angry and disappointed in the lack of regard for all the work that is lost. Who makes these decisions? Is there no value and respect left at the Town Hall?"

Michael – who is attending college in Maine and couldn't be reached for comment – said in a statement relayed by his mother he was hurt by the town's decision to uproot his project.

"I am hurt and disappointed by the total disregard and lack of respect displayed by the current town of Marlborough administration towards organizations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, myself and the individuals who support them," he wrote in a statement to the *Rivereast*. "I hope that in the future town leaders will take into consideration the significance of these projects and how these projects have a positive effect on the community."

Black blamed the dust-up on a lack of communication between the parties involved, and said the incident brought to light "missteps" that occurred between Schadtle, former town leaders and Troop 39 that led to the fence's demise.

Black spent much of the past two weeks meeting privately with town staffers, Scout leaders and Schadtle's family in an effort to forge



Michael Schadtle is shown here in front of his Eagle Scout project, a vinyl-sided fence at the cemetery on Route 66, shortly after the fence's completion in late 2005.

better lines of communication moving forward and smooth over the hard feelings.

"There are some disconnects, and looking forward I think there's a way we can close these gaps so we can communicate. As the town evolves, projects may have to be adjusted and modified," Black said. "The bottom line is these projects are designed to build leadership and develop our children and as we go forward, communicating to make that happen is the final step in the process."

Barbara Schadtle said after speaking with

Black that she's optimistic the town can avoid in the future the kind of embarrassment and strain the incident sparked.

"I feel better, because at least everything has been brought into the open, but I still do want people to know what these projects are about and if in the future a child wants to do an Eagle project, they need to know what's coming down the road," she said. "Everyone is trying to fix it, so hopefully in the future there won't be any more of these sad commentaries."

East Hampton Police News

1/17 — Daniel Cook, 40, of 16 East High St., was issued a ticket for allowing a dog to roam, East Hampton Police said.

1/28 — Robert Saltus, 26, of 18 Middletown Ave., was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Rt. 16, eight-tenths of a mile east of Harlan Place, police said, adding that Saltus was issued a ticket for traveling too fast for conditions.

1/30 — Daniel B. Wisialowski, 41, of 27 Beverly Rd., West Hartford, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and making an improper left turn, police said.

2/4 — Heath Galvin, 19, of 61 North Main St., was issued a ticket for driving on the ice of a public waterway and simple trespass, police said.

Portland Police News

2/3 — Roy Neumann, 48, of 5 Spruce Terr., was charged with violation of probation, third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, Portland Police said.

2/5 — William Perkins, 31, of 730 Brooks Rd., Middletown, was charged with second-degree harassment, police said.

Obituaries

Andover

William Lee Siter

William Lee Siter, 18, of Andover, died unexpectedly Friday, Feb. 6, at Windham Hospital. Born Sept. 22, 1990 in Biloxi, MS, he was a son of Glenn Siter of Andover and Anna Marie (Shaw) Siter of Mississippi. William was a 2008 graduate of RHAM High School in Hebron and went on to work for Comcast. He enjoyed hunting, working on cars and being outdoors.

In addition to his loving parents, he is survived by his stepmother, Dorene Siter of Andover; eight siblings, Kellie, Lauren, Katelyn and Marsha Siter, Justin and Colby Shaw and Jaime and Elizabeth Wilder and numerous extended family members and friends. He was predeceased by a sister, Sandy Siter.

Friends and family called Wednesday, Feb. 11, at the First Congregational Church of Hebron, 1 Main St., Hebron. A funeral service followed that evening. Burial will be in Gulfport, MS.

William was able to give the gift of life through organ donation in his death. Therefore, in lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to Life Choice Donor Services, 8 Griffin Road North, Windsor 06095.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Viola (Rogers) St. Peter

Viola (Rogers) St. Peter, "Ginger," 77, of Colchester, widow of the late Gerald F. St. Peter, passed away Monday, Feb. 9, at Windham Hospital. Born Aug. 10, 1931 in Norwich, she was a daughter of the late Herbert and Alice (Rogers) Rogers.

Mrs. St. Peter had worked for the former American Thread Co. in Willimantic for many years before their closure. She went on to work for S&S Worldwide in Colchester until her retirement in 2001. She will be lovingly remembered for her devotion to her family, especially to her grandchildren.

She is survived by two daughters, Meredith and her husband, Jon Cable of St. Cloud, FL, and Cheryl and husband, Mike Montgomery of Lebanon; three sons, Gerald and wife, Cathy, and John, all of Colchester and Herbert of Columbia; five grandchildren, Morgan, Heath, Justin, Ian and Connor; one great-grandson, Anthony; her sister, Wildred Marvin of Colchester; her best friend, Edith Webster of Colchester; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband, she was predeceased by a sister, Jane Brown and her brother, Carlton Rogers.

Friends may call today, Friday, Feb. 13, from 9:30-11 a.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service will follow at 11 a.m. Interment will follow in the Rogers family plot in the East Lyme Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Franklin Commons, Franklin 06254.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Andover

Faith S. Weber

Faith S. Weber, 84, of South Windsor, wife of the late William H. Weber, died Thursday, Feb. 5, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. Born in Rockville on March 24, 1924, daughter of the late George and Frieda (Hopfner) Scheiner, she had lived in Rockville and Andover before moving to South Windsor several years ago. Faith enjoyed playing cards at the Community Center, South Windsor and at the Recreation Center where she had lived. She was a former member of St. John Episcopal Church, Vernon.

She leaves a son, Dana Weber and his wife, Tiziana of South Windsor; a sister, Shirley Deere in Colorado and her two very dear granddaughters, Maria Ann and Alexa Faith. She also leaves her loving nieces and nephews, Sandra Leinz of Colorado, Kathy Lloyd of Arizona, David Grimason of Vermont, and Mark Grimason of Massachusetts.

She was predeceased by a son, Gary and a sister, Eunice Grimason.

Faith will also be dearly missed by her childhood girlfriends Lillian and Ruth along with her special friends at Watson Farms and the South Windsor Community Center. Her monthly luncheons with her cousins, Ginny and Jean were always a special treat for her.

The family extends a special thank you to the staff at the Crestfield Rehabilitation Center for their care and compassion and to our wonderful family and friends who made so many efforts to help keep Faith's spirits up during these last few months.

The funeral service were held Sunday, Feb. 8, at the Samsel & Carmon Funeral Home, 419 Buckland Rd., South Windsor. Burial private at Grove Hill Cemetery, Rockville. Her family received friends Sunday, Feb. 8, one hour prior to the service, at the funeral home. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) 11781 Lee Jackson Hwy., Suite 160, Fairfax, VA 22033.

For online condolences and guest book, visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Filippo Tripoli

Filippo Tripoli, 88, husband of the late Lucia (Spinali) Tripoli, of Michael Drive, Portland, died Friday, Feb. 6, at Middlesex Health Care Center. He was born Jan. 1, 1921, in Augusta, Sicily, son of the late Domenic and Natala (Fassaro) Tripoli.

He was a member of St. Sebastian Church, a 50-year member of the Italian Society of Middletown and a life member of the International Bricklayers Union. Prior to his retirement he was employed as a Stone Mason. He was a veteran of the Italian Navy during World War II.

He is survived by two sons, Domenic Tripoli of Middlefield and Robert Tripoli of East Hampton; two daughters, Natalie Macri of Old Saybrook and Anna Louise Flannery of East Hampton; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by a daughter, Suzanna Tripoli; three brothers, Leboneo, Sebastiano and Giuseppe, and a sister, Domenica Britterri.

Funeral services were held Thursday morning, Feb. 12, from the D'Angelo Funeral Home, 22 South Main St., Middletown, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St Sebastian Church. Burial in the family plot in St Sebastian cemetery, Middlefield. Relatives and friends called at the funeral home Wednesday, Feb. 11.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Alzheimer's Association.

Colchester

Dorothy M. Charbonnier

Dorothy M. Charbonnier, 73, of West Road, Colchester, passed away Sunday, Feb. 8, at the W.W. Backus Hospital after a long illness. She was born in Middletown on July 11, 1935, daughter of the late Thomas and Anna Larson Rau.

She is survived by her husband Arthur of 50 years. Dorothy was the loving mother of six children and their spouses, Deborah and William Kreder, Christine and Jeff Durkee, Lawrence and Dawn Charbonnier all of Colchester, Buddy and Debra Charbonnier of East Haddam, Susan Cooper of Virginia and Lori and Alfred Wlodarczyk of Salem; a sister Alice Spenard of Middletown and a large extended family consisting of 14 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by a brother, Thomas Rau Jr., and two sisters, Lillian Goodwin and Ruth Rau Alsp.

Dorothy was very fond of her dog Fonzi and prior to her long illness was an avid bingo player, a past member of the American Legion Auxillary Post 54 of Colchester where she served as treasurer for many years and was very active in their annual poppy drive. In her younger years she worked at the former Gregory's Soda Shop and Levine and Levine Coat factory in Colchester.

Visitation were held Wednesday evening, Feb. 11, at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by a service. Burial private. At the family's request, please omit flowers.

East Hampton

David Souza

David Benevides Souza passed away Sunday, Feb. 8, at Cobalt Lodge, Cobalt. He was born in Fall River, MA, on Dec. 4, 1926, the son of Francisco (Frank) and Maria Souza.

David was very proud of his Portuguese heritage. He was a veteran of World War II serving as part of a battalion of 18-year-old infantrymen on a troop ship bound for the invasion of Japan. Luckily the war ended mid-ocean and he spent the rest of his army service in Japan where he grew to love the Japanese people.

He returned to Fall River, MA before moving in 1956 to East Hampton to work for 17 years at Pratt & Whitney. He then opened his own business, "House of David Decorators" in East Hampton, where he did beautiful drapery and upholstery work for many hospitals as well as for many friends and neighbors. David was very active all his life. Two of his favorite sports were racquetball and dancing, both of which he did several times a week for over 50 years.

Along with his beloved companion of 25 years, Ellie Woodward, he is survived by his sister, Georgiana Supra of Rochester, NY; his brother, John "Clarkie" Souza of Dover, PA; his children, Janice Steinberg of Ocala, FL, David and his wife Anne of East Vassalboro, ME, Michael and his wife Cathy of Old Saybrook and Lisa Walker of Silver Springs, FL; his four grandchildren, Marissa, Michael, Jared and Ryan; his great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. today, Friday, Feb. 13, at St. Patrick Church, Route 66, East Hampton, with a luncheon in the church hall immediately following the Mass.

We would like to give a special thank you to all the wonderful staff at Cobalt Lodge for their compassion and kindness in caring for David. Donations in his memory may be made to Cobalt Lodge, Rt. 151, Cobalt, CT 06414.

Colchester

Scott Gagnon

Scott James Gagnon, 41, of Colchester, beloved son of Mary (Fedus) Gagnon and the late Robert Gagnon, passed away after a long illness Tuesday, Feb. 10.

Scott "Dish" was known for his quick wit, athleticism and incredible skill at sudoku and crossword puzzles. Most of all, he will be remembered for his love and loyalty to his brothers, Bill and Bob Jr. The trio of Bob, Bill and Scott was enjoyed for all of their youth by their contemporaries while growing up in Colchester. Scott's brothers and parents treasured him until the day of his passing.

Scott was a devoted member of the extended Fedus family, with numerous uncles, aunts and cousins whom he treasured in his heart through difficult times. Although all of his wonderful family were helpful to him, he was especially grateful to his aunt, Ginnie Hill and grandmother, Wilma Fedus for their continued support through his illness, and to his Uncle Bill who introduced him to the world of the electrician which he loved.

Scott was a 1986 graduate of Bacon Academy and went on to study at SCSU. He had worked as a meter reader for Connecticut Natural Gas and as an electrician apprentice for AZ Electric of Ledyard as well as Allied Electric of Andover.

In addition to his mother, brothers and grandmother, he is survived by his brother, Rick Polk of California; his stepbrother, Kevin; four nieces and nephews, Jacob, Emily, Kayleigh and John Luke; and his grandmother, Mary Tomasetti of Bristol.

Family and friends may call starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A chapel service will follow at 12:30 p.m. Burial will be private.

Memorial contributions may be made to the New London Community Meal Center, 12 Montauk Ave., New London, CT 06320 or to the Covenant Soup Kitchen, 220 Valley St., Willimantic, CT 06226.

As his final gift to the world, Scott was able to give the gift of life through organ donation.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

