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Liam Hangen, 6, and his mother Kelly McDermott, both of Tolland, tap a maple tree on Main St. in Hebron last Sunday during the town's 19th annual Maple Festival.

Visitors Pour In for Maple Festival

by Adam Benson

While the Hebron Maple Festival traditionally attracts large crowds looking for a way to fend off winter cabin fever, it also draws in aspiring maple sugar makers like Tolland's six-year-old Liam Hangen.

"He wants to know how to do this in our backyard. This is the reason why we came here," Hangen's mother Kelly McDermott said as she watched her young sap harvester practice tapping into the stump of a maple during a syrup-making demonstration on Sunday.

Record crowds, beautiful weather and, of course, gallons and gallons of sweet maple syrup, made town residents and sugar house owners eager to call this year's festival the most impressive in its 19-year history.

"It's the busiest we've ever been. Just absolutely superb," an excited Tom Ludwig said in between answering questions from visitors at Pierce's Sugar House in Amston. "It's been a great weekend. It's been really busy. It looks like everybody had cabin fever."

Ludwig is a neighbor and frequent helper at the sugar house.

So far this season, Ludwig said the Pierce Sugar House has churned out about 40 gallons of syrup – about half of what producers there expect to see in a traditionally good year.

A few miles away, at the Woody Acres Sugar House, operator Russ Schaller said results have been similarly lean. He's been able to produce 24 gallons of syrup this season. Last year, he was able to harvest 58 gallons.

With about two weeks left in the season, Schaller said he was hopeful for increased pro-

duction but admitted it wasn't the focus of the Maple Fest weekend.

"It's not been a good year, but it's been a productive year," Schaller said. "It all depends on the weather. If we get ideal temperatures, we'll still get some good flows."

By Sunday afternoon, Schaller was out of the home-made products he offers to Maple Fest customers every year.

"Yesterday, we had so many people here, they were parked in the street," he said.

Though all things maple syrup remain the festival's staple, many events have grown around the event and have become popular additions to the celebration. Among the most anticipated is a quilt exhibition and sale sponsored by the Hebron Historical Society, housed in the Old Town Hall.

Historical Society President Donna McCalla said the Maple Festival has provided town officials with a great tool to promote year-round tourism in Hebron. With more than 200 historic properties around town, McCalla said her organization is always searching for ways to integrate them into their programming.

This year for the first time, Historical Society members offered tours of their old town pound and turned the facility into a petting zoo.

"This is a great place for tourism, and during the Maple Festival people do even more," McCalla said. "Now it's become one of those statewide events."

Historical Society members said they met people from all across New England and New

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Open Choice Approved During Volatile Meeting

by Michael McCoy

Tuesday night the Portland High School media center doubled as a pressure cooker, as residents and Board of Education members butted heads over Portland's potential participation in the Open Choice program.

Ultimately, during their regular meeting the Board of Education (BOE) voted 4-3 to move forward with the controversial Open Choice program.

BOE Chairman Christopher Phelps said the state first approached Portland about this in the 1990s and intermittently since his tenure on the BOE began in 2003. However, for all intents and purposes, serious discussion on the program began when the members of the state Department of Education (DOE) and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) attended a BOE meeting on February 3.

DOE representatives included Commissioner Mark McQuillan and Deputy Commissioner George Coleman.

In essence, Open Choice buses urban (in this case Hartford) students to suburban schools with the philosophy being that demographic desegregation will result in academic excellence

for all. The DOE has defined all the towns serviced by CREC as "the greater Hartford region," and all 40 of those are being asked to participate in the currently voluntary program.

This current push for suburban Open Choice participation stems from the 1996 Sheff versus O'Neill verdict.

On February 24, the BOE, joined by CREC and DOE, held a public hearing on the matter at the high school auditorium.

During that meeting, Coleman said the court deemed, in 1996, that Hartford students were by and large, "not given the opportunity of the promise of a full education." So the DOE convinced the court to allow them to correct this voluntarily, noting the alternative would be a "prescribed" and "binding" mandate.

By 2007, 27-28 percent of Hartford students was supposed to be schooled in a non-isolated setting. Instead, only 11 percent were achieved. So, in 2008, the DOE was ordered to bump that percentage to 19, which they came through on. In 2009, they need to increase this to 28 percent. To this end, they are asking for the involvement of the 40 "greater Hartford" towns.

Including Portland, 28 towns across the state currently participate.

During the hearing, Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen suggested a scenario where the BOE could accept 42 Open Choice students without having to add a single teacher. During this week's meeting, the BOE voted to make only 12 slots available to the state for the coming school year.

While some spoke in favor of the program that night, the vast majority offered oppositions. Arguments against were basically split into two categories: disciplinary concerns and financial concerns.

The idea of cost is fairly vague.

For every student Portland accepts from Hartford, the town receives \$2,500. (This has been the fixed amount since 1995.) So, of course, one big question is whether or not the education of the average student exceeds that. This has proven hard to answer. In the most simplistic terms, if the BOE budget is divided by the number of current students, the figure comes to about \$11,000 per year per student.

However, much of this is a result of fixed

costs, such as utilities or transportation contracts. If one child left the district tomorrow, the BOE would not necessarily save anywhere near \$11,000. On the other end of the spectrum, one number that is concrete is the \$671 it costs to provide supplies, equipment, books, library, computers and other media use to the each student. However, that lower number is obviously quite incomplete.

Considering the large venue and the controversy that had preceded the hearing, a relatively small amount of people (around 60 not including town or state officials) attended the February hearing. Those that spoke voiced very strong opinions, largely against Open Choice participation. During this past Tuesday night's meeting, the better part of the number (about 50) crammed into the library. Those who spoke, again, did so against participation.

The public comments, which were solely devoted to Open Choice, were initiated by Sandy Favale, one of only two members of the public who supported moving forward with the program Tuesday night.

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Favale said she had children in Valley View, Gildersleeve, and Brownstone Schools. "At first, I had some resistance," she commented, but continued, "I have become very open to accepting this program. However, she suggested that the BOE introduce it slowly, with only about 20 students this coming fall.

Favale said, "Portland is often very resistant to change," but figured that Open Choice "will benefit everybody involved."

Donna Labella, who spoke later on, was the other proponent. Noting that opponents seemed to assume that all Open Choice students would pose one problem or another, she figured, people were under the impression it would be the "Open Choice Special Education Program." Instead, she said, "It's a streamline of people from many socio-economic backgrounds.

On the other hand, she recognized the financial argument against it as valid, but proposed, "We can't assume that every student coming in is a \$20,000 cost."

Shirley Olson said that the Town of Simsbury testified before the state, saying that at the rate they are being reimbursed, "they can't afford it."

Donna Rini mentioned the economic crunch, and, noting that all the general government unions had forfeited their raised for fiscal year 2009-10, added, "we haven't seen that giveback yet from our teachers." The financial aspect of Open Choice prompted her to direct the BOE to "tighten our belts, because, man, the tidal wave is on us."

On Wednesday First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said that, at this time, only the police union has formally forfeited their raise for the year. However, she said the other three unions, public works, clerical supports, and library, have hinted that they may follow suit.

"I'd like to think we could help everyone out and educate everyone else's kids," said Mark Bradway, but he figured that was not possible. Furthermore, he said, "the \$2,500 is not going to cover educating these kids." He continued, "I don't understand why we're putting so much time and effort into this." Furthermore he speculated, "We're going to take up the room for our future growth."

Doyen said Tuesday night the state legislature currently has a proposal in front of them to increase the amount for receiving districts from \$2,500 to \$6,000. It is has not been passed as of now.

Ellen Caisse said she was in the East Hartford school system 30 years ago when they bused Hartford students in. According to her, the result was knife fights and fires being started.

If the BOE proceeded, Caisse, predicted, "You can be sure, at some point, you will have to install [metal detectors.]" She also figured of the Open Choice students, "There's a reason the town wants them to leave."

Julie Whited commented, "I'm not against bringing in minorities." However, she said she works with people who have children in the Cromwell district. "None of them have anything positive to say," she said.

Later in the meeting, Harry Dumeer was invited to share with the BOE. Dumeer spent 30 years in the Cromwell school system, serving as principal at the intermediate and middle school level. He was instrumental in bringing Open Choice to Cromwell in 1997.

"I did it slowly," said Dumeer, who introduced three or four students into fifth and sixth

grade during the first year. He went on to say that he felt starting students in the program as early as possible was better, but Cromwell started at the intermediate level because he was the driving force behind its involvement, and that's the level at which he was principal.

Dumeer said by the time he left in 2005, the district had 14 or 15 students in the program, ranging from first to 12th grade.

"Youngsters and parents are really honored to come to another district," said Dumeer. He later added, "They look at this as an honor and a privilege."

Addressing behavior concerns, he said his experience in Cromwell was that "These youngsters were no different than the ones that came from the town itself."

Dumeer said the parents of these students tend to be quite supportive, and he could not say enough positive things about the intimate involvement on the part of CREC.

"I honestly feel I made a difference in the lives of youngsters today," Dumeer remarked.

On a more pragmatic level, he said "My budget never increased" as a result of Open Choice. In fact, he said, "We were able to bring activities to the school that we probably otherwise would not have been able to bring in," if not for the Open Choice money.

"There really weren't any costs that went beyond the budget," he said.

One BOE member mentioned the negative remarks that Whited had alluded to concerning Cromwell parents. "That was never ever shared with me by any parents," responded Dumeer, though he conceded that he has been gone these past four years.

On the contrary, Dumeer called the Open Choice students, "the best students in some of the grades."

Noting that some Open Choice students board the bus as early as 6 a.m. to get to school, Dumeer started a breakfast program, funded with Open Choice money. Furthermore, he started homework centers for before and after school. He said these three programs were available to all students, and that the afternoon homework center was primarily populated by students who lived in Cromwell despite being funded by Open Choice monies.

As per the BOE's request, Doyen visited and/or spoke with a number of area schools currently participating in Open Choice. These included Glastonbury, Cromwell, the region 10 district of Harwinton and Burlington, Granby, East Granby, Bolton, and Woodbridge. She said feedback was positive from all of these.

Doyen was asked why Portland does not simply wait until, if and when, they have to participate. She responded, "It's much better locally to develop a workable program...than being told what to do from day one. She said a likely scenario if they waited for a state mandate would be the state saying, "Portland, here's how many students you're going to take, and here's the grades they'll be in."

BOE member Ben Srb wondered how the new residential units in the proposed Portland Town Place Development might affect class size in the future if that development is passed. The Planning and Zoning Commission will discuss the site plans submitted for the development no earlier than May. If plans are approved, construction wouldn't be expected until 2010, at the earliest.

Doyen suggested that this could be an instance of, "assuming things would be occur-

ring in town that would never occur." Clearly alluding to the enrollment projections that proved to be grossly overestimated concerning the middle-high school complex project. That resulted in a short-lived fiasco that was partly based on speculations concerning new development that never came to pass.

By the time BOE member Andrea Alfano made the motion to accept the Open Choice Program, the number of open slots being proposed was 12: three students in kindergarten, first and second grades at Valley View Elementary School and three more students in fourth grade at Gildersleeve Elementary School. Third grade was excluded because next year's class is larger than the surrounding grade levels.

Phelps figured that number provided a "margin of error to keep class sizes at a manageable level."

Once the motion was made, BOE member Christopher Bongo remarked, "On an issue like this, I feel the board should be unanimous in its decision." He went on to say he felt it prudent to spend the next year looking into the matter and make a decision in a year.

"I have found very contradicting information," he said. He went on to say he felt the program would work, but the public needed more time to embrace it. "Give us a year to really get our ducks in a row," he continued, making it clear he would be voting 'no.'

Bongo later suggested conducting educational programs in town on ethnic diversity. "A year from now we could be a lot more knowledgeable than we are today."

"I couldn't agree with Chris more," said Srb, who sought to make sure they'd "dotted all our i's and crossed all our t's."

Srb went on to say he felt the town was in a precarious position without an approved budget. "The bottom line is, as of now, we do not know where we stand. We have never seen anything like this is our lives," he said referring to the ongoing recession.

"We need to prepare for the worst," he figured. However, he also said, "I think this is a wonderful program," but called moving forward at this juncture "premature" and "irresponsible."

"I certainly hear people's trepidation around the current economy," said BOE member MaryAnne Rode. However, she continued, "I don't see how it's any different than any other grant we're given."

Switching gears, she added, "There have been lots of comments tonight over our money/their money, our kids/their kids. Whose money is it? Isn't it suppose to go to educating children?"

She said this should be for all children, "not the ones I happen to think 'deserve' it."

"I tell you," continued Rode, "I've heard some scary things, not just what I've heard in this room."

Going back to finances, she said, "There's never gonna be a right time to spend money... We're not gonna know any better next year."

"In my mind, those who have, do," she said. "Adding 12 children to our population of students, to me, at this point, doesn't seem like undue burden."

Rode also remarked on what she viewed as an inconsistency from the public. During the uproar that ensued last fall, when the BOE entertained the idea of going out to bid for their bus contract, parents aggressively pleaded with the BOE to stay with Nichols Bus, telling them

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York as well as some from as far away as St. Louis and California.

With 60-degree temperatures on Sunday afternoon, McCalla said the turnout along Main Street and at Hebron's sugar houses was the strongest in years.

"It's been fabulous. This is the best turnout we've had in four or five years," she said, wearing a 19th century bonnet. On Saturday, McCalla spent the day dressed up as a cow to promote the Historical Society's sale of maple milk. By Sunday, the beverage was gone.

While Hebron welcomes the influx of visitors over the two-day festival, maple producers also use the time to build contacts and pitch their products directly. The syrup has become so popular that operators are beginning to export their supplies abroad.

Ludwig said a California man recently contacted Pierce's Sugar House and wanted an entire box of syrup shipped to him. The treat has also been sold as far away as Australia, and even has sweetened tours of duty for troops in Afghanistan.

Ray Pierce, who owns the sugar house, said he hosted about 3,000 people over the course of two days – twice as many as he saw last year, when numbers were held down due to inclement weather.

it should not be about saving money. With Open Choice, Rode said, "That's all I'm hearing: 'It's about money.'"

Alfano seemed to agree: "We are gonna be having the same conversation next year." Furthermore, she suggested that with immediate action, "we have the ability to start it out very small."

BOE member Brenna Kosicki said, "I have the utmost respect for the program," but continued, "I share Chris and Ben's thoughts on the economy. I will be voting against it tonight."

"We can dicker all day long about money," said BOE member Rosemary Woiowitz, but added, "It's the right thing to do."

"There isn't a good time to do it," she conceded, admitting, "I'm scared too." The budget is a real issue, she said, "but it's 12 students."

Phelps spoke last. Referring to Bongo's declaration that a decision such as this should be unanimous, he said, "We are unanimous in that we believe this is a good program," differing only over whether it is financially viable right now."

"Will this bust our budget? That has been at the heart of this discussion," he said. Though he acknowledged the validity of fiscal concerns, he said he felt the program could still be supported.

Then Phelps said he wanted to address "the elephant in the room."

"It's the question of race," he said, figuring there are those in the community who do not want to see "students who are black or Latino come to our school." He said letters in the *RiverEast* have alluded to this, and he called one in particular "bigoted."

"I've had people say things to me that are absolutely vile," continued Phelps. "It angers me," he said, adding that those remarks weren't appropriate to be said in public. He continued to say sentiments such as this are not what the school or community is about. "And for the love of God, that's not what our children are about."

He later said, "I don't want Portland to be the town that says, 'I don't want these children in our community.'" He continued, "Open Choice is about ending racial isolation in our schools." He made it clear that he felt this did not exclusively apply to Hartford. "I think it's equally beneficial for kids who live in Portland."

Phelps, who has children in seventh and eighth grade, said his kids rarely have the opportunity to rub elbows with those from diverse backgrounds. This prompted someone in the audience to interject, albeit under their breath, "Send 'em to Hartford."

The board eventually voted 4-3 to approve the Open Choice program for the 2009-10 school year.

As parents exited before the close of the meeting, several chanted things like "Boo!" and "Vote down the budget."

At that point, Ellen Caisse, who commented earlier, said, "No one mentioned anything about race until he said it... It's all about money."

When asked if he was worried that this decision would affect the budget vote, Phelps responded, "I don't think so; I hope not." He likened such a measure to "cutting off your nose to spite your face."

"We're better than that," he said, adding later, "It's a good town."

The DOE is expected to assign Open Choice students to their corresponding districts sometime next month.

"This is just unbelievable. I was astounded by the turnout," he said. "I've just gone along for the ride, because we have a great location. It's truly fun and games."

In addition to serving as an ambassador for the community and his industry, Pierce said he tries to slip a bit of education into his demonstrations with visitors.

"Americans in general have no idea where their food comes from, and this is just a little taste of one aspect of that," he said.

While maple syrup production is a strong New England tradition, McCalla said Hebron's natural surroundings gives the festival even more of a rustic feel that helps build its popularity year after year.

"It's small-town Americana," she said. "I think Hebron is a wonderful place to visit, and what we have to do is capitalize on what we have, because we're never going to have a big box store."

Lisa Mowerson of Wallingford arrived at Pierce's late Sunday afternoon with her five-year-old son Matthew in tow. While they said they enjoyed themselves, Mowerson admitted to having one regret.

"I wish we came earlier, because we missed a lot," she said.

Towns/St. Clements Unite to Go Green in Portland

by Michael McCoy

The elegant St. Clements Castle straddles the Portland/East Hampton line, so it seems suitable that they unite both towns for a greater good.

On Saturday, the castle will host The Portland and East Hampton Clean Energy Expo. It will be sponsored by the Saint Clements Foundation.

The event is completely free, both for attendees and vendors.

"We're located between two towns and participate in both of them," said Father Edward Doherty, founding trustee for the St. Clements Foundation, who figures this event would not only contribute to the quality of life in both towns, but also create new jobs as clean energy industries expand with increased visibility.

"We're supporting the idea that we need to become independent," said Doherty.

He went on to say that he was struck with the idea "as soon as I got the first bill," shortly after moving into his Middle Haddam home in December of 2007. He had his home outfitted with clean energy amenities and he now depends primarily on geothermal and solar means.

If that sounds ambitious, Doherty said he hopes to make Saint Clements Castle energy independent by the end of 2010.

While Doherty certainly expressed concern for the well-being of the planet, as well as future generations, what is striking is that his drive seems to be primarily pragmatic, instead of altruistic. It's the cost of traditional energy sources that seems to power his efforts. "Energy is almost as bad as healthcare," he said, speaking of the realm of obscene expenses. He added that those are just about the only two things that could put somebody out of business.

When asked if the changes he made in his own home have already paid for themselves, he did not miss a second: "Oh, a thousand times, are you kidding?"

Furthermore, he pointed out that renewable sources not only provide heat, but power for air conditioning in the summer. Doherty said this allows for a home with a comfortable and consistent temperature in each room. "It's like living in Florida," he beamed.

Doherty also made mention of his most recent visit to his native Ireland, which he called, "full-speed ahead on the windmills," commenting that they are quite present there.

John Tuttle, Chair of the East Hampton Clean Energy Task Force, admitted that many people

would not be keen on having windmills all over in plain view, but sales manager Susan Dzialo, coordinator for the event, retorted, "I'd rather see a windmill than power plant." (General Manager Chris Jargilo is also part of this effort.)

"The main objective is to find new ways to tap into energy sources," said Doherty, and of these, solar geothermal and wind energy will be chiefly addressed on Saturday.

To make this event a success, Doherty enlisted the help of the chairmen of the East Hampton and Portland Clean Energy Task Forces (CETF), John Tuttle and Andy Bauer respectively.

"He's been a wealth of knowledge," said Doherty of the former.

Like Doherty, Tuttle also seemed to take a pragmatic approach. "Those are the kinds of questions [attendees] can get answered. 'What's it gonna cost me? What's the payback?'"

Doherty also said the issue should span public policy as well. "You gotta give incentives to people," he said, figuring that someone who opts to outfit their home or business with clean sources should be exempt from those property taxes for at least five years.

Taking it a step further, Tuttle said Doherty voiced the notion of a "Green Zone," which would only allow a home to be built in that particular area if it met energy-efficiency criteria. "It's a bold step," Tuttle admitted, "but it's something to talk about."

"It's not going to work in America as a whole unless every little community does their part," figured Doherty

That's where Saturday's Clean Energy Expo comes in.

Doherty began coordinating the event in December. In addition to CETF Chairs from both towns, the event boasts a slate of expert speakers representing local organizations and companies who, in one way or other, aim to promote clean sources. These vendors will also fill the interior of the castle, and attendees may listen to their remarks, circulate among the other vendors or do a little of both.

These include architect George Fellner, who will discuss strategies for designing green homes, as well as engineer Dell Smith, who is promoting the cutting edge breakthroughs in geo-thermal design.

John Swift, of the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund, will take a broader approach, ex-

ploring a range of programs that enhance energy efficiency and conservation. Diana Bercury will also be on-hand, representing Sunlight Solar and People's Action for Clean Energy (PACE.) She'll talk specifically about methods for homeowners to harness solar energy.

Beth Piggush, of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF), will also attend. The CCEF has been instrumental in working with municipalities to spearhead this effort from the ground up. She will be available to talk more about such local options.

Other guests will present and have booths available, including Brad Wheatley, a proponent of solar power, Home Depot, and a trio of hybrids to inspect, including a Toyota Prius and Scion.Plus. Free refreshments will be served including soda, chips, cookies and hot dogs.

Doherty had a hard time cloaking his admiration for Tuttle, and, when asked to pick one of the speakers he is most primed for, he said, "I'm excited for John," who he called eloquent and extremely informed.

In addition to providing information and other opportunities, the East Hampton CETF table will give people (not limited to East Hampton residents) the chance to sign up to convert a portion of their electricity to being reaped from renewable sources. This decision entails a negligible (even for these times) bill increase.

Bauer created Portland's CETF four years ago. During that time, they gathered 250 signups, good for two free solar panels. East Hampton does not yet have this because the threshold for receiving solar panels was changed from 100 to 200 not long before they hit the mark.

When speaking of Andy Bauer, Tuttle assumed an air of humility. "Andy's been at it for years; we just started last fall," he commented

Bauer called Saturday's event "a great opportunity for homeowners and businesses who want to find out about energy efficiency measures."

One piece of information he planned to share was the opportunity for an energy audit. Bauer said that for \$75, an expert crew will visit your home and "make sure your home is energy tight." He called the procedure "money well spent."

Bauer's rhetoric tends to be idealistic, highlighting the long-term benefits, as opposed to cost-savings. However, when asked about the

financial side that Tuttle and Doherty emphasized, he counted that as a highly valuable component of such a cause. Practically speaking, he commented, "It's essentially a no-brainer. If you do this... you save money."

Recalling when Doherty contacted him about the event, he exclaimed, "I was psyched! I was thrilled!"

He continued, "I think Father Doherty deserves a lot of credit for taking the initiative and saying, 'Let's do this.'"

"You've got some very outstanding speakers," said Bauer, specifically calling the CCEF "one of the most forward thinking clean energy organizations in Connecticut."

"They've been beating his drum for along time," he added.

The CETF has currently enrolled about 100 households, and needs to hit 200 to receive a free solar panel.

"We have a good speakers and good vendors," said event coordinator Susan Dzialo, who added all they needed now was a good turnout.

Noting their neighbors, Doherty said, "We're hoping Middletown and Cromwell will follow," voicing his hope that they eventually hold a similar event.

"I'm a total believer," pledged Doherty. "Energy's the thing that's going to kill the situation we're in," tying in the proliferation renewable sources with the current recession. He figured further, "That's not being 'Democrat' or 'Republican.'"

Proceeds from Saint Clements' many events benefit the homeless, cancer research, hospice, and DARE. Also in conjunction with the latter, the castle hosts Portland's DARE graduation each year. The DARE course which addresses substance abuse prevention, is taught by the Portland Police Department. In addition to hosting, weddings and other private events, Saint Clements holds a number of large events throughout the year, including, most recently, its annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner earlier this week.

"This is our way of making a little dent in the community," said Doherty. He later optimistically pontificated, "Maybe we'll get East Hampton to be the model."

The Portland and East Hampton Clean Energy Expo will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 21, at Saint Clements Castle, located at 1931 Portland-Cobalt Road (Route 66) in Portland.

Changes for Probate Coming in Marlborough

by Adam Benson

Earlier this week the Marlborough Board of Selectmen signed off on a proposal that would give residents broader access to probate court services located in Glastonbury while local court hours would shrink.

The move came in response to a plan unveiled in February by Gov. M. Jodi Rell to streamline judicial operations within state government. Currently, the state operates 117 probate court facilities. Rell wants to see that number winnowed down to 36, which would eliminate 81 judges and cut non-judicial staff expenses by 20 percent.

The effort is expected to save the state \$9 million a year, and communities have until 2011 to come up with a plan to consolidate services.

"We saw the governor's bill on probate administrative reform, we knew we had to jump in and get going," Marlborough First Selectman Bill Black said. "We're trying to be proactive."

Marlborough has offered local probate court services to residents since 1846, local judge is Frank Corbo. Black said the challenge to town leaders was keeping his hours in place while coming into line with Rell's mandate.

Currently the Marlborough Probate Court, located at Town Hall, is open from 10:30 a.m. - noon on Mondays, 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday and 9 a.m. - noon on Thursday with other hours by appointment.

According to Black those hours likely will be altered once the consolidation is complete, though new times still have not been worked out.

Black said he began talks in January with Corbo, Glastonbury Probate Court Judge Jay Alter and Glastonbury town leaders to allow Marlborough residents access to the municipality's court services.

Connecticut's probate courts have been in

existence for more than 300 years and deal with a variety of issues related to parental rights, guardianship, adoption, emancipation, matters involving people with mental retardation, trusts, marriage waivers, name changes, passport services, conservatorships and matters related to people who are drug or alcohol dependent.

"The concern that we had is when you go to probate court consolidation, the small-town oversight of the system and administration both for families, the elderly and disabled and all of that is no longer handled locally," Black said. "We don't want people intimidated by the court system."

Black said merging with Glastonbury's court made sense because 70 percent of Marlborough's population works in Hartford, and the court is located just 14 minutes from Marlborough's town center.

"We want to be in a position to control our own destiny. If it's going to happen, we want to be able to make it the best possible equation for our residents," Black said.

Black said he expects Glastonbury's Town Council to sign off on the agreement soon, and the move has the support of local lawmakers. The General Assembly has to formally approve any consolidated court services, but the proposal can be rolled into a wider spending bill during the session.

Black said adjusted hours could be in place as soon as July 1 when the new fiscal year begins, and the town should see savings soon thereafter.

"Long term, it will have a positive impact in Marlborough. At some point, we'll no longer be leasing space and facilities," Black said. "That's going to have a positive impact on the viability of the court system from a financial viewpoint."

Theft Reported in Colchester at Bacon

by Adam Benson

A necessary, and expensive, piece of equipment has been reported stolen from the cooking department at Bacon Academy High School, school officials say.

Known as the Big Dipper, the 150-pound, \$3,000 stainless steel grease trap was awaiting installation to bring Bacon's student-run lunch program into line with state health guidelines.

The unit catches grease before it can enter the sewer line and is a requirement for the program to be able to operate.

School Board President William Hettrick said the Big Dipper was purchased through a grant and was covered by insurance, so another one is on the way. But with major financial constraints facing district officials, any added expenses to premiums will be felt.

"We're aware of it, and it's covered under insurance and we'll end up getting another one, but it's under police investigation right now," Hettrick said.

School officials reported the unit missing during the first week of March. It was the new-

est addition to Academy Cafe, a student-run school lunch program that includes 13 students who create a lunch each week for sale to the staff and public.

The class sees about 125 customers a week including school staff, local business owners, and town officials, said program coordinator Donna Kaik.

Though school officials don't know just when the replaced unit might arrive, they've gotten permission from the town to continue with the program until another Big Dipper is installed. Still, Hettrick said, not having the piece of equipment in place will have an impact on the program's overall success.

"It does impede on the program because (having that unit) is a new requirement from the state. That's why we had to buy it, but because we'll be getting another one, I'm sure we'll be OK with that," he said.

State police couldn't be reached for comment and their investigation is ongoing, according to a Troop K barracks statement.

Portland Police News

3/12 — Brian Ferrigno, 35, of 16 West Dr., was charged with having weapons in a motor vehicle, Portland Police said.

Portland Spirit Recognized

by Michael McCoy

Few could argue that the first Spirit of Portland Award fell into undeserving hands.

On Sunday, March 15, Ruth and Nunzi Maio were shocked to find themselves the guests of honor at the award ceremony, which was held at the Portland Senior Center.

The idea for the award hit Senior Center Director Mary Flood during last September's Brownstone Festival. Observing all the less visible work that goes into the making of the town what it is, Flood thought it time to recognize those who "don't very often get a pat on the back." What's more, she mentioned, "Not only do they not get credit, they don't expect to get credit."

So, she started floating the idea around, and kept getting the same response, "You have to give it to Ruth Maio." In fact, she said one committee member's involvement hinged on it.

The award committee ending up consisting of Edna Markham, Ruth and Ed Kalinowski, Marilyn Meckenstrum, and Flood.

In addition to the committee members, the ceremony was also made possible by many of the food bank volunteers, St. Mary's confirmation class, all three of the town's garden clubs, and Cavalieri's Bakery. During the ceremony, the confirmation class, overseen by Paula Agogliati, buzzed around serving hors d'oeuvres.

Ruth and Nunzi, originally from Wyoming and Massachusetts respectively, married in Ruth's home state in 1956, and moved east shortly thereafter. They have resided in Portland since 1959.

The Maio's biggest claim to fame seems to be the Portland Food Bank, which started in the mid-1970's. The Maio's have been on board from the beginning.

The food bank provides food, clothing, personal hygiene items, and even furniture for those in need.

Additionally, Ruth has been heavily involved with St. Mary's Church, which she and Nunzi have attended since moving to Portland. Ruth has served there as parish nurse and Eucharistic minister, and helped out with their administration of the Angel Food ministry. The latter is a program that provides for food for "people that are falling between the cracks," figuring it applies to those that do not quite qualify for

assistance from the food bank, but need help nonetheless.

Ruth also visits Greystone Retirement Home weekly to help with the prayer service and Communion.

She also spent three decades, beginning in 1970 at the Portland Visiting Nurses Association.

Noting her hailing from the west, Ruth recalled, "When I first moved to Portland, I didn't like it out here. I really thought the people were not friendly." She said this was compounded by the fact that, save her husband, she had no family nearby. However, that changed when she began working for the VNA a decade later. "It was just an awakening for me," she said of all the strong friendships she made with coworkers and patients.

Fifty years after her first apprehension, Maio now declares, "I would never move from Portland."

As for the food bank, she commented, "It's very fulfilling," and promised, "Whatever we can do, we do it."

What's more, not only does she work side by side with her husband, but her daughters and granddaughters help when they get a chance. "It's kind of a family affair," she figured, though this does not even include the 10 or so other food bank volunteers. "We all enjoy doing it," she said.

It seems Ruth thrives on helping others, and said of the food bank, "It just fills me with so much love for everyone. It's just something very special."

Since the Maio's are integral to the food bank, it seems worth mentioning that, in light of the recession, it now serves double the people it did just a year ago, bringing the monthly total to around 200 individuals served by the food bank. Yet, Ruth sighed, "We've been very fortunate." Thanks to donations from schools, churches, and individuals, the shelves have remained stocked.

The food bank is located in the basement of the Senior Center, 7 Waverly Avenue. Visitors are asked to bring either a driver's license, item of certified mail, or another official document to prove their Portland residence.

Last Sunday afternoon more than 100 people

showed up to honor the Maios, but they were the only ones in the dark as to just who was getting the award. "I'm amazed that nobody spilled the beans," chuckled Flood, in light of how many people were in on the secret.

When the award was formally presented, the Maios proved characteristically reluctant to grab the spotlight. Remarks were more or less limited to Ruth, seemingly overcome with emotion saying, "We couldn't do this alone."

"They do so much," said Flood on Sunday. "I bet you there's no one in this room that hasn't been touched by what she's done." During her comments Sunday, Flood, also seeming to fight back tears, said, "Ruth is the public face of a lot of what gets done, but Nunzi is always right there behind her... a truly unsung hero."

She also lauded them for their "many acts of community spirit, grace, charity, and simple human kindness."

During the reception, the Maio's were seated with their family, which included daughters Maureen Duffy, Kim Franklin, and granddaughters Kelly Franklin and Erin Duffy.

In addition, some town officials attended, including Youth Services Director Mary Pont and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

Furthermore, the room was littered with various friends and well wishers. Among these were Jack and Anne Murray. "We've been friends for years..." said Jack, adding they've have attended each other's children's weddings.

Though they recently moved to Middletown, the Murrays lived in Portland for 25 years, and their friendship with the Maios began in 1978, when Anne and Ruth met while working for the Portland Visiting Nurses Association (PVNA.)

Anne said, "They've done a lot for Portland," calling them the "best people you could meet." Noting their lack of pretense, she later commented, "They're the salt of the earth."

Many parishioners of True Vine Church spoke to the Maio's character. One in attendance, Una Chambers, called Ruth, "very nice," commented, "She's always accepting... she looks out for everybody."

Pete and Jean Zaborowski have worked alongside the Maios at the food bank for years. But it was it was Jean who first befriended her

at the PVNA.

"They've done a lot for the town," said Pete. Jean commented, "She's so honest, and she's just as sweet as she can be."

Later this week, Bransfield noted not only their impact on the town, but specified "They help my office quite a bit." She explained that it is common for her to receive calls concerning families in need. Bransfield said that often, help is just a phone call to the Maios away.

Noting humility, Bransfield said, "They don't want attention; they do it very quietly." Yet, when asked about the large number of attendees Sunday, she said, "I was not surprised. I knew there would be an outpouring of love and admiration

"I can't thank them enough," said Bransfield, who called the Maios "a wonderful couple."

On Tuesday, Ruth Maio recalled the afternoon. "Well, I was shocked; I had absolutely no idea," she said. In fact, to secure their attendance, Flood told Maio the reception was for Sister Ida Dolan of St. Mary's Church. Furthermore, Flood asked her to write a brief speech. (On Sunday, Flood laughed as she said she hoped Ruth did not slave over it.) Ruth said she was still putting the finishing touches on it that morning.

Then as Ruth and Nunzi entered the room, and all eyes hit them, Flood whispered to her, "It's not for Sister Ida; it's for you." (However, the sentiments of the speech will not be in vain, as she commented, "I still have it, so I'll share it with her.")

Maio said she was thrilled to see "so many dear friends" and marveled, "I'm amazed at how well they kept it a secret from me."

Ruth and Nunzi spent about two hours at the senior center, cavorting with those they had touched. "It was just so nice," gushed Ruth. "It felt so warm."

Flood concluded her speech Sunday by professing, "We may not always tell you, but we thank you and hope some of your spirit rubs off on us."

Hopefully, that is exactly what will happen, and, to that end, Flood said nomination forms for next year's award are available at the Senior Center, and will hopefully be on the town's website before long.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Sarah McCoy

This is it.

After nearly four years of reporting and attempting to be as neutral as possible, I got the call.

Maybe this is how Olympic alternates or minor league ballplayers feel. I wouldn't know. I've never been either.

What I do know is that Mike Thompson, the editor of the Rivereast News Bulletin, is on vacation this week and I'm filling it.

Sure the position comes with some added responsibility but it also comes with...drum roll please...a column. Here's my chance to stand on my soapbox and convince you all how right I am. Sure I have a blog to do the same thing, but the Rivereast reaches way more than the dozen, or so, readers that stop by my site.

But what to write about...

What about current events? I could write about the AIG executives and their asinine bonuses. But then again, I wouldn't have to work too hard to convince taxpayers that it's not a good idea to spend federal dollars to pad the wallets of the same individuals who drove the insurance giant into the ground.

I could write about sports. After all there aren't many topics I know better. But not everyone likes sports and with March Madness upon us, everyone and their mother will be weighing in on this topic.

Maybe I'll write about my love of knitting or quilting. Wait a minute, maybe those things age me by about 50 years. I won't tell you that I love Family Feud and Wheel of Fortune either.

The freedom of what to write about is intoxicating but proving to be too much for my ADD-mind that can't seem to hone in on a single item of interest. Then, while driving home last Wednesday, it hit me. What's one thing that I know about that transcends both age and gender?

The movies.

2008 was a great year and unfortunately the Academy Awards missed the best parts. Now is the time, before the summer blockbusters and Oscar rush come later on in the year, to soak in all the premiere movies that regrettably went unnoticed by the average viewer. So grab a pen and paper, pick up your favorite treat (Junior Mints are my personal favorite) and get ready to fill up your Netflix queue.

Twilight was huge this year. Viewers flocked to see the teen love vampire movie with the sultry Robert Pattinson. While they were doing so movie-goers missed the best vampire movie, nay...the best movie, of the year. *Let the Right One In* is the sweet story of the constantly bullied pre-teen Oscar and his devotion to Eli, his neighbor, who has admittedly been 12 for a "very, very long time."

The story is a poignant portrayal of friendship and unconditional love with a sprinkling

of blood sucking gore and a kick-ass ending.

As luck would have it, this column coincides nicely with the movie's DVD release earlier this week.

Second on the viewing list is *The Visitor*. Richard Jenkins, one of those actors that everyone recognizes and no one knows his name, plays Walter Vale, a professor at Connecticut College living an unfulfilled life. His humdrum routine turns anything but when he heads to New York City for a conference to, unexpectedly, find a pair of illegal immigrants living in his apartment.

Walter befriends the couple, helping them overcome their obstacles while he relearns how to take chances, chase happiness, and love again.

Anne Hathaway rightly received a Best Actress nomination for her part in *Rachel Getting Married* but the film deserved so much more than that. Hathaway plays Kym who is granted a weekend reprieve from rehab to attend her sister, Rachel's, wedding. If you thought your wedding was stressful, try adding a self-involved addict desperately trying to deal with her demons.

The movie can be adequately summed up in two juxtaposing scenes. At the rehearsal dinner Kym gives the kind of embarrassing, trainwreck-esque maid of honor speech that, hopefully, only exist in movies. Then, just a day later, Kym looks on as her future-brother-in-law serenades his new wife during their wedding ceremony.

It's just your typical family - full of love, mistakes, and awkward moments trying to coexist in one house.

If you act quickly you may be able to see my last flick pick on the big screen. Bow Tie Cinemas on Brainard Rd. in Hartford is currently showing *Wendy and Lucy*, starring Michelle Williams as Wendy.

Lucy is, *Wendy and Lucy* director, Kelly Reichardt's dog.

It's the kind of story that I imagine is happening more than I want to think about given our nation's current economic climate. But the movie isn't about the ending as much as it is about the choices we make to get their and the challenges that seemingly happen at the worst possible moments.

These movies are some of the best in recent memory yet went largely unnoticed come award time. It's a shame really.

Out of the five nominees for Best Picture only one (*Milk*) was actually good. While I didn't expect the four aforementioned movies to get nominated, the Academy could have done right by the movies by nominating box office monsters *Wall-E* and *The Dark Knight*. Instead they chose safe, boring, and long movies lacking real emotion and creative filmmaking.

Now's your chance to kickback and enjoy the best of the movies. Happy viewing and I look forward to hearing what you think.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Al Ford Olson

Al Ford Olson, 64, of Middle Haddam, passed away Monday, March 16, at Middlesex Hospital with his family at his side. Al was born May 7, 1944 in Ludington, MI, to the late Amy (Wanika) and Alford Olson. He lived in Detroit before he moved to Connecticut as part of his service with the United States Coast Guard.

He is survived by his beloved wife Kathy; cherished daughter Christy and her husband Mark Loring. Al leaves a niece, Katie (Mullen) Murphy; nephews Joe and Kevin Mullen; sister and brother-in-law, Valerie and Daniel Mullen and eight grand-nieces and nephews.

Al worked in Hartford for Industrial Risk Insurers until his retirement in 1999. Since his retirement, he had worked at the Portland West Golf Course enjoying his co-workers as much as he did the game of golf. Al enjoyed sports. He was a golfer, a regular participant in a Wednesday morning league at Portland West. He cheered for the Red Sox but always secretly hoped the Detroit Tigers would win a pennant. He was an avid fan of both the men and women UConn Huskies, traveling to Storrs for the home games.

Al left this world knowing that what was most important to him, his immediate and extended family are healthy, happy and well-loved.

Funeral services will be held tomorrow, Friday, March 21, at 11 a.m. in Christ Episcopal Church in Middle Haddam. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in Union Hill Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Thursday evening, March 20.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Food Bank, 22 East High St., East Hampton, CT 06424 or Middlesex Hospital Hospice Program, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457. To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Ronald C. Duguay

Ronald C. Duguay, 50, longtime resident of Connecticut, peacefully passed away on Friday, March 13, after a long, courageous battle with cancer. Born in Bangor, ME on July 27, 1958, Ron is survived by his parents, Clifford and Lois Duguay of Cherryfield, ME.

Ron graduated from Valley Regional High School in 1977. After a few years in machine shops, Ron followed his heart's desire to become a professional truck driver. He drove tractor trailer trucks for the last 25 years. He has been employed by New England Dairies, Guida's and Dunkin' Donuts. Ron often said, "I may not have a whole list of fancy accomplishments, but I have seen this country from one coast to the other." Ron also enjoyed fishing and golfing in his leisure time.

A loving father, Ron is survived by his son, Christopher John and his daughter Heather Elizabeth, both of East Hampton. With cherished memories, Ron leaves his former wife, Elizabeth Robida-Eiman of East Hampton; his brother, Rodney C. Duguay of Bethel; his in-laws, John and Jane Robida of East Hampton, as well as several nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends including his lifelong friend, Dennis Goodrich of Oakdale.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, March 21, at 10 a.m. in St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton. A reception will follow the Mass in the church center. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements.

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

Portland

Charles S. Shefcyk

Charles S. Charles S. Shefcyk, 70, of Portland, died Sunday, March 15, at his home with his beloved wife, Jacalyn (Landry) Shefcyk by his side.

He was born in Middletown on July 26, 1938, the son of the late Stephen and Norma (Bailey) Shefcyk. Charlie led an amazing life. After graduating from Woodrow Wilson High School, he joined the U.S. Navy in 1956 and served aboard the U.S.S. Canisteo. A member of the CT Carpenters Union #24 since 1962, he was a very talented master carpenter, working on many large jobs throughout New England for E.F. Hauserman Company.

In 1972, he established C.S.B. Inc., C. Shefcyk & Sons, a local kerosene and fuel oil company and spent the past 22 years working side by side with his wife, Jackie. He recently retired, turning over the reigns to his dedicated "son", Todd Roccapiore. Charlie spent numerous hours restoring over the years a 1951 Chevy oil truck, 1950 Chevy Sedan Delivery and had almost completed his 1928 Ford Model A car.

Music was an important element in Charlie's life. The Lord gave Charlie a beautiful voice and talented hands. "To sing is God's greatest gift...it gives the heart wings and the soul lips." A gifted musician, he could play any instrument you placed in his hands. He played piano, fiddle and sang with the Country Kings for 25 years, a country band which was inducted into the CT Country Music Hall of Fame in 2001. The last 10 years, he played guitar, mandolin, fiddle and sang with "Middie and the Country Gentlemen", who entertained many senior clubs throughout Connecticut. He shared his talent with his many friends every Wednesday night at "Hank's Garage" in Middlefield jamming together. His passion was bluegrass music and he and Jackie were part of a very unique bluegrass family, camping at many festivals throughout New England. Charles was always "the last one playing", "let's do one more song."

Charles was a son to Norma and Steve, a brother to his "baby sisters", as he would refer to, Patricia Bystrek, of Middlefield, and Sharon Kelly and her husband Shaun, of East Hampton. He is also survived by his aunt and uncle Anthony and Rose Shefcyk, of Portland. Charles was a loving father to William Shefcyk, of Kensington, Steven Shefcyk (deceased in 1987), Traci-Lynn Shefcyk, of Mill Valley, CA, Allison Kercher and her husband, Tim, of the Republic of Georgia, and Stacey Gibson and her husband, Eric, of Portland. He is also survived by his two grandchildren, Noah and Samuel Gibson, who referred to his as "Pop". He was cousin to many, especially to Warren Kelsey, of Middletown, and Barbara Seagrave and family, of Higganum. He was Godfather to Cherylann Bystrek Hunt, Lisa Corley Laudano, and Keith Warzecha; brother-in-law to James Landry and his wife Gail, Henri Barillaro, and leaves many special nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents and son, Steven, he was predeceased by his sister-in-law, Joy Barillaro (2006); mother-in-law, Janet Carlson Landry (2007); brother-in-law, Edward Bystrek (2007); and father-in-law Rudolph Landry (2008).

Todd Roccapiore and his wife Beth will miss Charlie, but will continue on working with Jackie and sharing many special memories. They will always be "the kids", as Charlie lovingly referred to them. He was a very special friend and neighbor to many. Though he is now gone his memory will live on in all our lives.

Funeral services will be held today, Friday, March 20, at 9:15 a.m. at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, followed by a 10 a.m. Funeral Liturgy at St. Mary's Church, Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial will be in Pine Grove Cemetery, in the family plot. Friends called on Biega Funeral Home Thursday from 4-7 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Mary's Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480 or Central CT Association for Retarded Citizens, 950 Slater Rd., New Britain, CT 06053 or Middlesex Hospital Weiss Hospice Unit, c/o Dept. of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Colchester

Rudolph I. Breisach

Rudolf I. Breisach, 83, of Colchester, beloved husband of Frances (Siebert) Breisach, passed away peacefully Saturday, March 14.

Born April 14, 1925 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, he was a son of the late Johann and Luise (Vorsprecher) Breisach.

Rudi and Frances met and were married in Germany and came to settle in their beloved adopted country in the late 1950's.

Early on, Mr. Breisach worked for Volkswagen of America and went on to work for United Technologies as a Research Technician for 27 years before his retirement.

In his spare time, he was an amateur radio operator, enjoyed photography and was an avid soccer player, referee and fan over the years.

In addition to his loving wife of 55 years, he is survived by five children, Isabella Breisach and husband, Richard Neuroth, of Panama, Ingrid and husband, Ed Dailey, of East Hartland, Helga "Eva" Breisach, of West Australia, Gloria and husband, George Swanson, of Lowell, VT, and Peter Breisach of Colchester; five grandchildren; Justin Breisach-Infanger, Alexandria and Savannah Dailey and Jacob and Wesley Swanson; his sister, Jeannette Shyn of Texas; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a brother, Anton.

Calling hours were Wednesday, March 18, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester, followed by a Chapel Service at noon. Burial was private and at the convenience of the family.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association CT Chapter, 279 New Britain Rd., Ste. 5, Kensington 06037.

For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Rita T. Funk

Rita T. Funk, 84, of Beckwith Rd., Montville, formerly of Colchester, passed away after a sudden illness, surrounded by her loving family, on March 13, at William W. Backus Hospital.

Rita was born Oct. 21, 1924, in Providence, R.I., the daughter of the late Joseph B. and Teresa A. (Falvey) Jolls.

A graduate of St. Xavier's Academy in Providence, she was employed for many years as an executive secretary at the Underwater Sound Lab in New London. She also was employed for 16 years at Shurts Insurance Agency of New London, and retired from after some years as clerk at the East Lyme Probate Office.

After retiring from work, she did volunteer work for Hospice Southeastern Connecticut and was an active member of the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer in New London, teaching Sunday school and serving as a volunteer for many years.

Rita enjoyed reading, crocheting, family gatherings, watching UConn basketball and she loved the company of her beloved golden retriever "Sandy".

She is survived by her husband of 58 years, Edward J. Funk and their children, Christian E. Funk and his wife, Donna of Oakdale and Linda A. Charron and her husband, Naud of Colchester; six beloved grandchildren, Michael Charron and his wife, Cecelia, Daniel Charron and his wife, Heather and Kevin Charron, Kristyn Dudek and her husband, Ben and Katie and Margaret Funk; six great-granddaughters; a sister, Eleanor Cannon; and her sister-in-law, June Funk Shashok. There are also many special nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by four brothers, Arthur, Joseph, Everett and Raymond Jolls and two sisters, Genevieve Sauer and Marie Fulton.

Calling hours were on Monday at the Thomas L. Neilan & Sons Funeral Home, 12 Ocean Ave., New London. The funeral service was held on Tuesday at Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer, Cedar Grove Ave., New London. Burial followed in Cedar Grove Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to The Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer; or to a charity of the donor's choice.

Online condolences may be expressed to the family at www.neilanfuneralhome.com

