

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam, Portland, Colchester and Salem

Volume 34, Number 5

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

April 24, 2009



And They're Off!... The East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club in Marlborough held its annual Easter Egg Hunt for children on April 5. The hunt was a hit, and featured prizes for several kids. For more on the event, see related story on page 30.

AHM Gearing Up for Annual Telethon

by Sarah McCoy

AHM Youth and Family Services Director Joel Rosenberg is trying to be realistic without being an alarmist.

With funding sources being trimmed, Rosenberg is hoping for a large response to the annual AHM Telethon. "If we fall short there are going to have to be changes in how we deliver services," he said.

The telethon starts next week, and will be held in each of the three towns AHM serves – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

This year has been a financial nightmare for the youth service bureau. Between changes in the stock market, rescinding of grant money and a reorganization of how the United Way provides funding, AHM found itself over \$30,000 behind in its budget.

A reduction in spending of all non-essential items, as well as a \$21,000 appropriation from Hebron earlier this winter, has helped AHM pay its bills. However, Rosenberg said, the nonprofit is hoping for a strong response from the telethon. "Over 50 percent of our funding comes from areas other than municipal funding," Rosenberg said. "Local donors play a critical role in supporting our agency."

AHM's current operating budget is \$847,212. Between the three towns, municipal funding covers approximately 30 percent of this.

Additionally, the AHM staff stationed in the area schools will be funded entirely by the school districts. Even with that, AHM is left to raise over \$400,000 from additional sources.

They've set a goal of \$65,000 for the telethon.

The AHM Board of Directors has identified five programs that the Telethon funds will go to supporting – the Lanterns mentoring program, the Juvenile Review Board, the Teen Center, the Family Resource Center and counseling services. Rosenberg explained that some programs receive more grant funding than others and the aforementioned programs are areas that AHM has to make up in their budget through private donations.

"In order to pay all the bills for these programs we have to know where the money is coming from," he said.

Rosenberg did say that the Board of Directors has identified programs to be reduced if fundraising goals fall short. However, he did not want to share the names of the programs at the present time. "We're prepared to make cuts if we need to but I don't want to be all doom and gloom," he said. "Up to this point, we haven't cut a single program to the schools or services to the community. In fact, we're see-

See Telethon on Page 2

Colchester First Selectman On Her Way Out?

by Adam Benson

While Democrats don't caucus until July, at least two town residents – including one high-ranking official – don't think Colchester First Selectman Linda Hodge will be endorsed for re-election.

"I gamble every day [as a businessman] and to me, it's a sure bet that the Democrats aren't going to support her," Board of Finance Chairman Bruce Hayn, a Democrat, told the *RiverEast* this week.

Hayn said he met with the Democratic Town Committee (DTC) April 13 "and they gave Linda a vote of no confidence."

And James McNair – a former Board of Education member, as well as a Hodge supporter – said he got similar feelings from the DTC when he interviewed with them.

"The DTC not supporting Linda was one of the worst-kept secrets in town," McNair said.

Hodge confirmed she met with the DTC's nominating committee April 13 in what she called a "very professional" interview as the body continues its work to field a candidate for the First Selectman's seat this summer.

Hodge, who ran on a platform of transparency and connecting residents with information through Colchester's website (www.colchesterct.gov), monthly coffee meetings and weekly newsletters, said she wants another term.

"I love my job and I think I can continue to do good work for the people of Colchester,"

Hodge said. She was elected in November 2007.

Neither DTC Chairman John Malsbenden nor DTC nominating committee head Dot Mrowka could be reached for comment for this story.

However, Hayn said members of the committee expressed concern over Hodge's lack of political experience and complaints by some in town that she mishandled the budget process and didn't communicate with colleagues on the Board of Finance and other town bodies.

"Throughout her whole term, we have been in more turmoil with her over things than we have been with any other First Selectman since 1984," Hayn said. "I know that I'm not happy with her and the Democrats in general aren't happy with her and they're weighing their options to see who they're going to support."

Hayn – whose term on the Board of Finance runs through 2011 – said he has no interest in the job. Hayn said that, when he was interviewed by the DTC on April 13, he was asked by committee members to give his assessment of what qualities a First Selectman should possess.

Hodge said she is respectful of the process in place to nominate somebody for the position, and feels her regular communications with residents and appearances at town and school events has given her the visibility and presence a First Selectman needs to carry out the job.

"We have brought a lot of people into the government," Hodge said about her young ad-

ministration. "The more information I can give residents and the more they can be involved in the process, it makes for better decisions when people know what's going on."

McNair said he shares Hodge's beliefs about transparency and likes her leadership style. He said he e-mailed Malsbenden April 3 to request an interview before the committee.

However, McNair said he reconsidered after seeing the make-up of the nominating committee and learning Hodge had to be re-interviewed.

"It was a shame that they would go ahead and have to put Linda through an interviewing process for a job as an incumbent, and it looked like to me the deck was stacked against me in particular and Linda too," McNair said.

Hayn pointed to decisions made under Hodge's watch that soured some Democratic leaders and finance members – including waiting until January to implement a budget freeze, four months after the Board of Finance asked her to do so.

"She wants to be the person who knows everything, and she's not," Hayn said. "The lack of cooperation is a problem."

McNair said he admired Hodge's fiscal prudence, government transparency and "independent thinking."

"I want to continue her work because there are a lot of people that positively responded to her type of clarity," he said. "The voters of Colchester put Linda Hodge into the position, and now it appears to me that the DTC is trying



Linda Hodge

to circumvent the will of the voter."

But Hayn said Hodge has developed a reputation among some as being a unilateral leader.

"One of the things that I told the people doing the interview is we need a person who is a

See Selectman on Page 2

Telethon continued from Front Page
ing an increase in need for services especially the Teen Center and mental health services.”

The AHM staff will have mandatory furloughs days next year and have cut back in other non-essential areas such as having the building professionally clean. Instead, AHM has relied on RHAM High School volunteers and other community volunteers to help keep the building clean.

Rosenberg said that he hasn't eliminated the possibility of having furlough days in the last quarter of this fiscal year but he isn't expecting that to be the case. AHM is also planning more fundraisers for the coming year.

Selectman continued from Front Page
team player, and currently Linda is not,” Hayn said. “For whatever reason, she feels the need to do things herself and doesn't ask for assistance.”

Hodge wouldn't comment on whether she feels she has the support of the DTC and its nominating committee, saying, “As far as whether the party is going to support me, that's the decision for the party to make.”

Hodge also said her governing style is aimed at embracing as many people – and perspectives – as possible.

“Government is about people, and I'm here to serve them,” she said.

“Throughout our own financial struggles I've been proud of the staff and volunteers for not forgetting our number one priority- the children, families and residents of these towns,” Rosenberg said.

The telethon will take place April 27, 28, 29, May 4, 5, and 6 in Hebron, on April 30, May 4, 6, and 7 in Marlborough, and on May 5, 6, and 7 in Andover. Calls will be made between 5-9 p.m. all nights of the telethon.

AHM is still looking for volunteer callers. Those who are interested can call Rosenberg at 228-9488.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I didn't realize until Sunday night that this past Monday, April 20, was the tenth anniversary of the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO. I'm sure there are several of you out there who remember where they were when they first learned about the tragedy.

I was a sophomore in college, and returning to my dorm from an afternoon class. The dorm I lived in that year had a suite-type setup; from the hallway, you entered a common room, shared between your room and the two other rooms occupying the suite. The individual bedrooms were then located off the common room. As I walked through the room to get to my bedroom, I noticed one of my suitemates had his door open and was watching TV, and they were broadcasting the story. After glancing at it for a couple seconds, I asked, “What is it, another school shooting?” I was admittedly a little callous about the whole thing; shootings at high schools and middle schools seemed to be growing a little more common. There had already been a couple of them in the months leading up to Columbine. I was getting a little numb by the whole thing, perhaps even a little disgusted by it all.

It wasn't until later that day that I learned the scope of Columbine. The previous shootings generally resulted in a couple of fatalities. Columbine was far, far worse. Thirteen people dead, many shot up close and multiple times, killed by two deranged students who were basically terrorizing the entire school. I still remember reading the stories, of the two shooters in the library, of the two of them in the cafeteria. As survivors shared their tales over the subsequent days and weeks, I just shook my head in disbelief. I wasn't too far removed from high school myself at that point, so that made everything particularly affecting, and I found myself thinking about what it must've been like to be one of the students there, particularly in the library, the location of the most bloodshed. What it must've been like, reading a book or doing some homework one minute, and then in the next moment hiding under a desk or behind a bookcase, fearing for your life. If you were one of the ones who witnessed it all but survived, how do you get past

it? *Do you get past it?*

In the aftermath of Columbine, metal detectors at high schools across the country became more commonplace. Police presence was heightened. You'd routinely hear of evacuations, due to bomb threats that had been called in. Before long, I found myself being thankful I went to high school when I did. Who would have guessed that one day we'd be looking back at the mid-1990s as a period of innocence and tranquility? And yet, those pre-Columbine (not to mention, of course, pre-9/11) years sometimes seem like just that.

* * *

Speaking of students and guns: I was a little disturbed earlier this week when I read about students at Central Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut pushing for the right to carry guns on campus. The thinking being, if you're old enough to be able to legally carry a handgun (and state law says that, if you're 21, you're old enough), then you should be allowed to have one on campus. UConn and CCSU ban students from having them, and I'm siding with the universities on this one. Yes, the students may be old enough to carry a gun, but that doesn't mean they *should*. Tensions can run high at college, with students worrying about their grades, soap opera-level relationship problems, even roommates just flat out growing to hate each other. Throw some alcohol into the mix (and as we all know alcohol is not exactly hard for a college student to come by), and you've got some problems. Throw a gun on top of all this, and you've got some potentially *lethal* problems.

Do I understand if a college student is worried about a Virginia Tech-type massacre? Sure. But I think the potential for harm here far outweighs the potential for good. Even with Virginia Tech, shootings on college campuses aren't all that common. Certainly not common enough to warrant having to carry a gun with you at all times for protection. And *definitely* not common enough to warrant allowing a drunk, stressed-out college kid access to one.

* * *

See you next week.

Marlborough Budget Public Hearing Set for April 27

On Monday, April 27, the Board of Finance will hold its Annual Public Hearing on the town's 2009-10 proposed budget in accordance with the Town Charter. The hearing begins at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr. Residents are highly encouraged to attend the hearing.

The Board of Finance recommendation is a budget of \$20.97 million in spending, 1.38 percent more over the current year, and results in a 3.58 percent tax increase if approved by voters. The mill rate would increase by an additional .93 mills up to 26.79 mills. Contributing to the tax increase is: town debt – up \$280,571 or 11.66 percent; Town Operations – up \$73,885 or 1.68 percent; RHAM – up \$175,655 or 2.52 percent; local Board of Education – down \$153,016 or 2.15 percent; capital non-recurring expenditures – down \$91,250 or 79.73 percent; and contingency – \$40,000, unchanged over current level. The finance board's recommendation for public hearing is \$452,494 less, or a 3.05 percent tax decrease, over the \$21.43 million (a 6.63 percent tax increase) requested from the boards of selectmen and boards of education.

The Board of Selectmen sought borrowing approval for the following items: replacement of two Public Works trucks for \$195,000 and \$1,650,000 for Year 2 of the Road Reconstruction Plan. Instead, the Board of Finance is seeking input from residents on only borrowing to continue road reconstruction for the upcoming year in the amount of \$1,645,000. If approved, the town's current debt load of \$29.6 million, including principal & interest, would increase by \$1,645,000 and associated interest charges.

The Board of Finance did not recommend all of the selectmen's \$151,800 capital and non-recurring expenditures. Instead, only \$23,300 is supported for the following items: \$1,400 for sewer utility billing software as

an additional appropriation; \$8,400 towards the purchase of a senior van; \$3,800 for an extension accessory to the Public Works Cross Conveyor purchased this year; and \$9,600 for a mower. These capital items would be paid by transferring Capital Non-Recurring uncommitted funds. A Department of Transportation grant for \$40,000 is being sought to cover the remaining cost of the senior van.

Factors contributing to the tax increase include increasing debt payments, salary contract obligations, near-zero grand list growth and reduced investment earnings. There was also a decrease of \$267,000 surplus funds available to offset taxes required to cover expenses.

Efforts to mitigate the tax increase included reviewing historic tax collection data. The estimated tax collection rate was increased to 98.9 percent from 98.8 percent to increase revenues. The Board of Finance requested from town and teacher labor unions a salary freeze for the upcoming year. The requests were declined by the bargaining units.

Budget information can be viewed on the town's website (www.marlboroughct.net), local Board of Education (www.marlborough.k12.ct.us) and RHAM's website (www.reg8.k12.ct.us).

Following a budget presentation, the public is encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback about the Board of Finance recommended budget. This is the public's opportunity to advise the board before it finalizes budget numbers for the Annual Town Meeting. The Board of Finance will hold a special meeting immediately following the public hearing to set final budget numbers to bring to town meeting.

The annual town meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 11, at 7 p.m. in the school's cafeteria where residents will vote on the budget.

Colchester Town Seeking to Fill Police Commission Vacancies

by Adam Benson

The embattled Colchester Police Commission could be at full strength by next month, First Selectman Linda Hodge said last week.

Police Commission member Arthur Standish – who served as interim chairman during an Ethics Commission probe into alleged wrongdoing by William Otfinoski – stepped down from the board April 2.

That followed a late March vote by the Board of Selectmen to oust Jim Stavola from the Police Commission after he publicly released a statement purportedly on behalf of his colleagues expressing disappointment that Otfinoski was cleared of any misbehavior.

Stavola's letter was sent without prior review from Hodge's office, in violation of the town charter.

Though the flare-up brought simmering tensions between the Police Commission and Board of Selectmen to the surface, Hodge said many people have expressed interest in having a seat on the commission.

“We are finding no problems,” she said.

“People are pouring out of the woodwork.”

The Police Commission is slated to interview potential candidates at its April 27 meeting, and selectmen could vote to fill the vacancies at a May meeting.

The Police Commission – which oversees the general management and supervision of the town's officers – is comprised of five members who serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Hodge said despite the rocky relationship between the two entities, she's confident the commission will be able to get back on track once new members are in tow.

“Colchester volunteers,” she said. “Every time we have put out a call for a very specific purpose, we've got people.”

For more information or an application, residents are asked to contact the First Selectman's office at 537-7220 or townhall@colchesterct.gov or stop by the office in Town Hall during regular business hours.



Members of the East Hampton VFW and Marlborough American Legion honored late resident Richard Chadwick at a ceremony earlier this week. At the ceremony, American Legion member John Barnes, left, and VFW member Dennis Erickson, right, presented an enclosed flag to Chadwick's wife, Janice (center).

Former Resident Honored by VFW, Legion

by Michael McCoy

During a brief, quiet ceremony Tuesday afternoon, members of the East Hampton Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 5095 and Marlborough American Legion Post 197 honored an area veteran who passed away last month.

Richard Chadwick was born in Providence, RI in 1939 and grew up in Marlborough. From 1956-58, he served in the United States Marine Corps, and spent a part of that time stationed in Beirut, Lebanon. In 1960, he married his wife, Janice, and the couple moved to East Hampton for good.

Chadwick passed away from lung cancer on March 24. During a wake three days later, the Marines presented Janice with an American Flag in her husband's honor. And at Tuesday's ceremony, the VFW and Legion gave that flag to her again, presented in a wood and glass case,

something not uncommon for the organizations to perform.

Chadwick, who also spent more than 30 years in the All Laborers Local 230 of Hartford, was a lifetime VFW member and served with the American Legion for 15 years.

American Legion member John Barnes knew Chadwick since around 1980. "He loved to go fishing," Barnes recalled. In fact, Chadwick, Barnes and Mark Alger (the third member of the trio) used to take an annual fishing trip to Gloucester, MA. Incidentally, that trip is actually this weekend.

Janice said her late husband had an affinity for trout, as well as deep-sea fishing.

Barnes said Chadwick "was a good friend to have around," while VFW member Dennis Erickson added, "He was a good boy."

In addition to his wife, Chadwick left behind his daughter, Teresa.

Gravesites Desecrated at Marlborough Cemetery

by Adam Benson

Marlboro Cemetery vandals be warned: you're being watched.

That's the message sexton Vi Schwarzmans is communicating to residents this week, following a string of grave desecrations that have left several people in town shaken and upset.

"People seem to think they can take off with things from gravesites, and they have to stop," Schwarzmans said. "It isn't just that they're taking it, they're hurting someone because that's the last place they remember their loved ones being, and having it desecrated is just too much for them."

Schwarzmans said that, since Easter, several wooden pots and planters have been taken from graves and presumably relocated to the yards of property owners in town.

Schwarzmans said she's confident adolescent pranksters aren't to blame, since the goods weigh too much to be transported by bicycle and none of them have turned up at dump sites.

Though police conduct regular patrols of the site, Schwarzmans said vandals regularly slip past them and make off with possessions and flowers.

In an effort to crack down on the behavior even more, Schwarzmans has recruited the help of homeowners whose property abuts the cemetery. They'll act as an extra pair of eyes and report suspicious behavior and any identifying information to authorities, Schwarzmans said.

Schwarzmans said vandalism at the cemetery has been a recurring problem over the years and is particularly prevalent over Easter and the onset of spring, when people set fresh flowers at the grave sites of loved ones.

In the past two weeks, Schwarzmans said she's fielded calls from three people who were visibly shaken at the vandalism that occurred at the plot of a loved one.

"The sacrilegious part of that is what gets me, but it happens year after year after year," she said. "Having a woman that's 80 years old and cries all the way home is just so sick."

Schwarzmans – whose parents are buried at the cemetery – said she understands the trauma and anger that comes from residents who are victims of the vandalism.

She also said she's been in contact with cemetery caretakers in Willimantic and East Hampton who have experienced similar incidents.

"I think it's a universal problem," Schwarzmans said. "But this time, it seems to be hurting people more."

Though she's not ready to post them around town, Schwarzmans sent a flyer and statement to the *Rivereast* this week, expressing her frustration at the problem and asking for help in trying to stamp it out.

"I just feel so strongly about the cemetery and the people of Marlborough that I just can't let this go," she said. Grave site decorations "mean so much to the individual that is left behind, and it is devastating."

The Connecticut Gravestone Network – a nonprofit organization that educates the public on historic graves in the state and also works with area authorities on desecration, theft and vandalism complaints – offers several suggestions to people who have fallen victim to the crime.

Stolen items that end up for sale on online auction websites like eBay.com can sometimes be traced back to the owner if a person files a complaint with the company. The organization also suggests contacting area auction houses and antique circuits if items taken from a grave are valuable.

State Police did not return calls for comment before press time Thursday.

Hebron Selectmen Vote for Town to Join Andover Probate District

by Sarah McCoy

In response to state government's request for court consolidation, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) last week voted for the town to join the Andover probate district.

The move is pending approval by the other member towns as well as the General Assembly, although those close to the situation say that these are merely formalities.

At a BOS meeting earlier this month, Tom Gaffey, Assistant to the Probate Court Administrator, informed the selectmen of the state's desire to see a restructuring of the state's current 117 courts.

According to Gaffey, the state's probate courts have been operating in a deficit since 2005. With the existing fund balance scheduled to run out later this year, the General Assembly has asked towns to consider voluntary consolidation as part of a cost-savings initiative.

This wouldn't be the first such move in the *Rivereast* area. Last month, Marlborough voted to merge with the Glastonbury Probate district. Glastonbury's Town Council later approved the move.

State Representative Pam Sawyer was also at that April 2 BOS meeting, and added that if voluntary consolidation didn't happen, state officials were prepared to make mandatory consolidations. One possibility would be that probate lines could be drawn along senatorial districts, meaning Hebron residents might have had to travel as far as Norwich for probate services.

If Hebron's move is approved, the town would join Columbia, Bolton and Andover in the probate district. The offices for the probate court will continue to operate out of Bolton. The consolidation would not be effective until the start of the next legislative term, which hap-

pens in January 2011.

Judge Ellen Camposeo currently presides over the Andover probate court. She might already be a familiar face to residents, as she is currently filling in on an interim basis for Hebron probate matters following the retirement of Judge Kevin Connors. Earlier this week Camposeo, who served the town on an interim basis in 1995 as well, reported that she's already had Hebron cases before her. She began as interim judge for the town on April 1.

The primary responsibilities for probate judges involve descendants' estates, children's matters (including guardianship, temporary custody and adoption) and appointing conservators for infirmed or incapable individuals.

Gaffey told the selectmen that the state is looking to see each judge serve approximately 53,000 constituents. With Hebron joining the Andover district that would raise the population to 24,000 for the probate court.

Additionally, as a district member, Hebron would be able to put forth their own candidate for the position. Camposeo has served as probate judge for the past 19 years.

Last Thursday, April 23, the BOS unanimously supported the merger, with some discussion of the associated costs. Currently, the town budgets \$1,600 for probate services. It was discussed that Hebron's share of Camposeo's \$8,000 budget would be around \$3,000.

"We shouldn't double our budget to save the state," Mal Leichter, Board of Finance member and liaison to the BOS, said at the meeting. "What you're voting on here is the policy decision not the cost."

BOS Chair Jeff Watt agreed, saying that the negotiated costs would be handled separately.

Finance Board Makes Mistake, Calls for Special Budget Meeting

by Sarah McCoy

Just minutes after unanimously recommending a budget for public hearing, the Board of Finance (BOF) this week scheduled a special meeting for next Monday to address an \$80,000 oversight.

Board members approved a \$10.31 million budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year, but realized after the meeting that no money had been included for town road repair. In the current year's budget, \$80,000 is allocated for this line item and, after realizing their error, BOF members Wednesday indicated a general interest to see it funded at the same level for next year.

"It was an oversight on our part," BOF Vice Chair Cathy Desrosiers said after Wednesday night's meeting. "It's better that we realized it now than later."

Just over \$85,000 is included for town road repair through state reimbursement. However, according to First Selectmen Bob Burbank, what the town actually receives is still up for debate. "If [state officials] go with the governor's proposal we'll receive 30 percent less than this current year. Other proposals have us getting 15-20 percent less," he said. "Regardless, if we want to take care of our roads there has to be some money in the town's budget."

The selectmen's recommended town budget did include \$80,000 for road repair, and it was only through an oversight that the number was left off from the Board of Finance's budget. "What I would hate is for people to see this as the Board of Finance trying to sneak this through," Desrosiers said. "That wasn't our intention at all. This has always been something that's been included in the town's budget."

Fixing the road repairs oversight could result in a small tax hike for next year, though.

As it currently stands, the \$10.31 million budget represents a .44 percent increase in spending and no increase to the town's mill rate. Adding \$80,000 to the budget would push the increase in spending to 1.21 percent, which would make the mill rate 27.6, or a .3 mill increase over the current year.

Prior to the adjournment of Wednesday

night's meeting, public comments were made commending the board members for their work in keeping the mill rate flat. Desrosiers and the remaining BOF members hope that the public will understand the necessary changes and continue to support the budget.

"I still think we did a really good job balancing spending with what residents can pay," Desrosiers said after the meeting.

The budget includes a 1.92 percent increase to the Andover Board of Education budget a 2.02 percent increase in Andover's share of the RHAM Board of Education budget. Town government spending is down over \$41,000 from the current year even with the \$80,000 for road repair reinstated.

Contributing factors to this reduction include a \$39,000 reduction to capital expenditures (after the road repair line item is added back in), a \$6,858 reduction to the Town Office Building line item and the foregoing of raises by all town employees.

Andover will also be using the \$83,000 in excess taxes collected during the current fiscal year and the \$102,000 surplus from the two boards of education to further reduce the amount needed to be raised by taxation. Last year the Board of Selectmen set a mill rate of 27.6 before the budget was approved at referendum. Voters later approved the budget at a rate of 27.3 mills, yielding a surplus in taxes collected.

Rather than cutting individual taxpayers small checks the Board of Finance has opted to apply these funds to the 2009-10 budget.

Next Monday's special meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the community room at the Town Office Building, 17 School Rd.

The Board of Finance will meet again Wednesday, April 29, for a public hearing on the 2009-10 fiscal year budget. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the Town Office Building.

A Town Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, where voters can vote to move a budget to referendum. If a budget is recommended, the referendum would be held on May 13.

Friends and Family of Late Teen Lash Out at East Hampton Bar

by Michael McCoy

East Hampton watering hole Dalton's Pub is under fire in the tragic wake of a local teenager's death last month.

Robert Kochuk, 19, died early on March 26 while driving on North Main Street. According to police, he lost control of his pickup truck and veered off the road. After hitting garbage cans and a tree, the truck caught on fire. At that time, police said the accident was at least due in part to speeding.

In the days following his death, a petition was circulated throughout town. The petition was dated April 2 and was addressed to the State of Connecticut Liquor Commission, with carbon copies sent to Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel, Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe, Police Chief Matthew Reimondo, Governor M. Jodi Rell, State Senator Eileen Daily and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) of Connecticut.

In the petition's cover letter, Kochuk is referred to as "our child, our grandchild, our nephew, our cousin, our boyfriend, our neighbor, our friend." (The petition was signed by around 200 people, the first two being Kochuk's mother, Janel, and stepfather, Samuel.)

The letter alleges that Kochuk's death came after Dalton's Pub served him beer. (Reimondo said police are continuing to investigate the accident and are "pursuing all leads." However, he would not confirm if Dalton's was specifically being investigated, and said simply, "We are looking at the possibility of an establishment being involved.")

The letter says, "While we [the petition signers] understand he [Kochuk] had no business being at a bar, we also believe our local bar owners have a responsibility to check the identification of those they serve."

The letter continues, "We are also standing up to tell you that liquor is often served to minors at Dalton's Pub. We know – some of us are among them. There is no identification asked for and we are served freely."

The letter closes by asking the Liquor Commission to stop Dalton's from serving to minors.

The petition was accompanied by a separate letter, written by Engel. In it, she wrote,

"Not only has Dalton's Pub served a minor involved in a deadly crash, they have been accused of that practice in the past. We have witnesses who would testify to that claim."

She continues, "I urge you to do whatever is in your power to correct the ills associated with this establishment. I can assure you the East Hampton Town Council will do whatever it can, but I fear our power is rather limited."

O'Keefe said the continuing investigation into Kochuk's death is "a really serious concern to the town."

Reimondo said police are trying to piece together Kochuk's final 24 hours. He said they have not yet determined just why Kochuk lost control of his vehicle and could not estimate when such a decision could be made. Similarly, he also couldn't predict the timing of toxicology reports. He acknowledged the sensitive nature of this tragic situation and predicted, "This one's gonna take some time."

On Thursday, the state Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) reported that agents from the Liquor Control division accompanied the East Hampton Police to a preliminary visit of Dalton's Pub. DCP spokesperson Claudette Carveth said that during the visit, police discovered that the pub's permit was "not valid." Though the state issued the permit in February, the business had not had it validated by the town.

Carveth reported that Dalton's "voluntarily closed down" when this was discovered. However, the bar did complete the validation process with the Town Clerk's Office this past Monday, April 20. On Thursday, Dalton's permittee/manager Catherine Lynch said the bar was closed Saturday and Sunday but was now open again. She did not comment further.

As for the questions of Dalton's serving alcohol to Kochuk, Carveth said DCP has been notified of the investigation, but are not actively involved; instead, she said, it was being conducted by East Hampton Police. She further explained that should police deem that the bar was involved, they would issue a report to the liquor division, who would then discuss the matter. If such a report was received, Carveth said, any type of disciplinary decision regarding Dalton's could take months.

Two Arrested After Fight in Portland

by Michael McCoy

A fight on Brownstone Avenue involving a knife ended with the arrest of two Middletown teens last Friday, Portland Police said.

According to Officer Daniel Knapp, police received a call around 8 p.m. Friday, April 17, concerning a fight on Brownstone Avenue near the quarries. Knapp and fellow officer Peter Paranzino responded.

According to Knapp, nine or 10 Portland youths were congregated near the quarries when a trio of young Middletown males approached. Knapp pieced together what happened after talking to the alleged victims.

Allegedly, one of the Middletown youths, Nicholas Foreman, 18, attacked a 13-year-old Portland resident. Knapp later said Foreman's reasons were retaliation for something the 13-year-old supposedly said about his cousin. (According to Knapp, Foreman later said he thought the youth was older than 13.) Knapp said Foreman "picked [the 13-year-old] up and slammed him." During the fight, a 16- or 17-year old friend of the youth came to his aid, Knapp said. A 17-year-old member of the Middletown trio put a three-inch pocket knife to the 16- or 17-year-old's neck and demanded he give him his cell phone.

Shortly thereafter, Knapp said, the "three

suspects fled on foot." Police were tipped off that the trio was at Burger King, but they checked there to no avail. Eventually Middletown Police notified Knapp and Paranzino that they spotted to suspects crossing the Arrigoni Bridge toward Middletown. (Middletown Police officers Frank Scirpo and Sergeant Steven Augeri aided Portland, Knapp said.) "It was nice to have Middletown checking the bridge," Knapp said.

Knapp picked up the 17-year-old offender and the third member of the trio about half-way across the bridge, just over the Middletown line. Knapp said that while he was driving across the bridge, he spotted Foreman. (Knapp said the other two suspects, who were already in the cruiser, identified Foreman on the bridge.)

Knapp said all three suspects were picked up by 8:30 p.m. Foreman was charged with third-degree assault and second-degree breach of peace. The 17-year-old youthful offender was rung up on first-degree robbery, sixth-degree larceny, second-degree threatening and second-degree breach of peace. The third Middletown male, who was 22 years old, was "detained, but not arrested," Knapp said, as he was not involved in the fight.

Stimulus Money Received for Marlborough Commuter Lot

by Adam Benson

Marlborough's Park and Ride commuter lot off Route 2 is set to undergo a half-million dollar upgrade through federal stimulus money awarded to the town, First Selectman Bill Black said this week.

Once complete, the repairs will mark the first major improvements done at the site in more than 20 years and is expected to make pedestrian and vehicle traffic much safer, Black said.

The commuter lot has "really presented a number of safety issues and access was difficult because you didn't have sidewalks, you've got people crossing two different streets within 200 feet of an intersection. You've got every conceivable problem in front of you right there," Black said. "It's a nightmare up there right now what people have to do to dodge traffic."

Though there have been no major accidents or injuries to date, Black said the bus stop presents a safety hazard that the town wants to eliminate. According to the state Department of Transportation (DOT), Marlborough's lot has a maximum capacity of 210 people.

The improvement plan – backed by the state Department of Transportation – calls for the creation of a bus pullover lane for passengers to exit onto a sidewalk, designated crossing areas, sidewalk access to each of the three commuter lots and road restriping.

About a year ago, the town's Sidewalks and Trails Commission envisioned the project and last spring asked Connecticut Transit – which operates the buses – to sign off on the pullover lane.

Since then, town officials have been in talks with the state DOT on ways to improve parts of the lot that fall under its jurisdiction.

Black said the town picked up design and

engineering costs so the project would be "shovel-ready" and qualify for federal bailout money once the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act was signed into law.

President Barack Obama approved the measure Feb. 17, and so far more than \$640 million has flowed into the state, with nearly \$2 million set aside for use by the state DOT to improve bus stops.

Black said Marlborough officials initially requested \$350,000 for the project back in December, but state officials asked the town to resubmit its application using the DOT's pricing list (the list of materials, contractors and vendors the DOT uses for its projects), increasing the cost to \$496,296.

Black said it still remains unclear when work on the project will begin, and whether the town or the state will take the lead on the actual construction work.

"The mechanics on how the project is to be structured have yet to be determined," he said. The town is going to "wait for DOT to take the lead on it."

Still, Black said, even if Marlborough is tasked with carrying out the work, the venture is completely covered through federal dollars.

"Obviously if they ask us to coordinate it, it's something that would be blended into our workload," Black said.

Black said he was "pleasantly surprised" Marlborough received the entire allocation for the project, and said its completion will enhance safety and travel in one of the most well-traveled parts of town.

"It'll provide the improvements and encourage the use of commuter lots and obviously that's good for the environment," he said.

East Hampton Police News

4/9 — Jeanne Berlin, 18, of 14 Sunset Dr., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign and driving an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

4/9 — Jason A. Gee, 36, of 30 Wangonk Trail, was involved in a car versus building at the Route 66 Food Bag. Gee was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating without insurance and traveling too fast for conditions.

4/10 — Tracy Darna, 33, of 177 Wopowog Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to drive right, police said.

4/10 — James Harris, 22, of 284 Hog Hill Rd., was arrested for risk of injury to a minor and possession of paraphernalia, police said.

4/10 — Matthew A. Levesque, 23, of 71 South Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for sixth-degree larceny, police said.

4/12 — Thomas Way, 21, of 152 Prospect St., Middletown, was issued a ticket for following too close, police said.

4/12 — Kegan Schunk, 19, of 23 Mountain View Rd., and Seth Hall, 18, of 126 Bear

Swamp Rd., were issued tickets for creating a public disturbance, police said.

4/13 — Jason M. Alward, 37, of 6 Meeks Point Rd., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

4/13 — Scott E. Evans, 24, of 12 Mohegan Trail, was arrested for using a motor vehicle without permission, possession of less than one oz. of heroin and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

4/13 — Jeremy Eldridge, 24, of 73 Main St., was issued a ticket for creating a public disturbance, police said.

4/14 — Jason R. Prince, 29, of 33 North Main St., was arrested for risk of injury, disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

4/14 — Robert T. Rudnick, 53, of 10 Forest St., was arrested on a court-ordered warrant for operating under the influence of alcohol, failure to drive right, improper turn/stop – no signal, operating/towing an unregistered motor vehicle and second-degree failure to appear, police said.

Colchester Police News

4/17-Brian Duhamel, 19, of 59 Dara Drive, was charged with possession of a prescription out of its container and possession of a weapon in a motor vehicle, State Police said.

4/18-Ryan Henk, 18, of 297 Old Hebron Rd., was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

4/20-Heather Lariviere, 28, of Taftville, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and second-degree forgery, State Police said.

4/20-Christian Leon, 20, of Willimantic, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and third-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

4/10-Steven Moran, 49, of Lebanon, was charged with driving while intoxicated and failure to drive upon the right, State Police said.

Andover Police News

4/20-Sabrina Nadeau, 48, of Bolton, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

4/20-Ivan Caballero, 32, of Willimantic, was charged with misuse of license plates, speeding and operating a motor vehicle without a license, State Police said.

Portland Police News

4/17 — Nicholas Foreman, 18, of 26 Kieft Rd., Middletown, was charged with third-degree assault and second-degree breach of peace, Portland Police said.

Colchester Selectmen, Finance Board Adopt \$48.35 Million Budget

by Adam Benson

After months of wrenching budget talks and unprecedented cuts to both school and town operations, officials late Tuesday adopted a \$48.35 million 2009-10 spending plan.

The move came after two nights of public hearings in which residents sounded off on an array of issues from the debt load the town is carrying to the viability of putting four bond questions on the ballot on the heels of a 0.64 percent mill increase that's included in the proposed budget.

The higher mill rate – a 2.78 percent increase over the current figure – was needed because of minimal Grand List growth, a dwindling general reserve fund balance and reductions in investment earnings and conveyance tax revenues directly related to the nation's current economic climate, officials said.

According to figures presented at this week's public hearings, the new mill rate will result in annual tax increases of between \$89.60 to \$201.60 for homeowners depending on the assessed value of their homes.

"Taxpayers do not create any of the problems we have in this country, but you want us to be the solution every damn year," Colchester resident Archie Everett said.

The overall spending plan marks increases of 1.55 percent and 1.39 percent respectively for the school district and town, among the most modest annual upticks in more than 20 years, officials from both sectors said.

The overall \$48.35 million operating budget represents a 1.51 percent spending increase.

"This is the first time any of us can remember bringing forward a budget asking for nothing new," Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said. "We have made a tremendous effort to bring you a budget that we feel is fiscally responsive to the times but educationally responsible to our students."

The school district's proposed \$34.82 mil-

lion portion of the overall budget includes the first round of layoffs in 19 years, purchasing freezes for any new technology, library books and equipment during the upcoming school year and voluntary contractual concessions from all six labor unions and nonunion personnel that total more than \$250,000 in savings.

"We are down to the bare minimum, but we've worked so hard to make sure our programs are meeting and exceeding national standards and we'll continue to do that," Loiselle said. "We're constantly looking for how we can share resources or get things done in a different way."

One payoff educators made was to make class sizes slightly larger so programming and existing curriculum offerings could stay intact.

"We made a conscious decision that rather than eliminate programs that are successful to kids, we could increase class size a bit," Loiselle said at Tuesday's public hearing. "We were not going to blame anything on the fact that we didn't have the monies."

On the town side, municipal leaders are asking voters to sign off on a \$13.34 million spending plan that includes dramatic cutbacks in several areas including Parks and Recreation, road maintenance and repair and professional development.

"After two years of zero mill increases, there's not a whole lot we can cut that doesn't affect services in some way, shape or manner," First Selectman Linda Hodge said Tuesday.

Knowing cuts would have to be made, Hodge said town leaders early on the in budget process identified several priorities to work around including maintaining public health and safety, keeping the undesignated fund balance at roughly seven percent and preserving services as much as possible.

Still, with a Grand List growth of just 1.5 percent and significant increases in health and workers' compensation insurance and vehicle

maintenance across all departments due to an aging fleet, Hodge said service-related cuts couldn't be avoided.

Hodge told selectmen last week despite anticipated reductions, Colchester's core services have remained largely intact when compared to what other communities have been forced to do to make ends meet.

"They're closing senior centers, they're closing libraries, they're closing all kinds of things," Hodge said during an April 16 Board of Selectmen meeting.

Among the cuts proposed by Hodge, about \$10,000 would be removed from legal fees – something selectwoman Rosemary Coyle asked be revisited.

"I think if everything's going to have to suffer some, that account needs to come down a little," she said. "I'm not sure some of these are good decisions."

Selectman Stan Soby said even with less money to work with, the municipality needs to focus on road repairs in the upcoming fiscal year.

"If we don't start doing some road repairs, pretty soon we're all going to be driving on dirt roads," he said.

Board of Finance Chairman Bruce Hayn said his colleagues have pressed for budget cuts so they can replenish the town's general fund balance, which currently is just below 7 percent.

That's a concern for officials down the line because bonding agencies look at that fund as a key criteria when generating rates, Hayn said.

"One of the things the Board of Finance has been very concerned about through this process is our general fund balance," Hayn said. "Our goal is to get as close to seven percent as we can."

Chief Financial Officer N. Maggie Cosgrove said Colchester received an A1 rating during its last bond issuance, and the municipality's debt service will ebb and flow over the next few years as payments for earlier initiatives are

made.

"This is one of the things that's been factored into our planning," she said.

In addition to the budget, voters will have a chance to weigh in on four bond questions totaling \$2.3 million, with payments beginning in the 2010-11 budget cycle if approved.

Town side projects include \$760,000 for the purchase of a new fire truck to replace a 1982 tanker, \$280,000 for the purchase of a new ambulance and \$560,000 in road reconstruction work for non-regular maintenance.

The road repairs would allow for the reconstruction of Chestnut Hill Road, Linwood Cemetery Road, Clark Lane and the lower intersection of Gill and Wall streets. They would also provide structural enhancements along Sashel Lane, Jurach Road and the first 1,200 feet of Christy Lane as well as pay for the construction of a drainage outfall and slope work for Marvin Road.

The school district is forwarding one bonding question that would enable officials to bond for \$760,000 to replace the track at Bacon Academy.

Since the summer of 2005, officials have poured more than \$17,000 into patching and repairs of the track and a 2008 study by a landscape architect found the facility to be unsafe for competitive use in its current state.

According to figures provided by the school district, an estimated 1,000 community members use the track every year, including track and field and cross country athletes, physical education students, 25 Special Olympics Track and Field athletes every spring and participants in community fundraisers.

The full track study is available at the district's website, www.colchesterct.org, and complete information on the current budget proposal can be found at www.colchester.gov.

Town Meeting is slated for May 5 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall, with a proposed referendum on May 12.

Colchester Tricentennial Trees in Need of Trimming

by Adam Benson

Several trees planted at the town green in celebration of Colchester's tricentennial have grown into power lines and need to be trimmed or removed completely, town and Connecticut Light and Power (CL&P) officials said Tuesday.

First Selectman Linda Hodge said that, because the trees hold significant sentimental value to the residents who purchased them back in 1997, the municipality will work closely with the utility and its contractor to clip them back before exploring the possibility of uprooting them.

"There's no consensus anywhere about what should be done. We can't take a couple of years to be dealing with this," she said. "It is a safety hazard at this point."

In recognition of the town's 300th birthday, nearly 30 hybrid elms were planted along the perimeter of the common in memory of deceased residents, current residents or on behalf of organizations who purchased one of them.

Now, about nine of them growing on Hayward Avenue side of the green are in direct contact with the 23,000 volt lines that service businesses and homes along the street.

Hodge said town officials became aware of the hazard several months ago, after workers from the utility noticed the problem during a routine trimming run.

The problem was so bad that the top of one of the trees caught fire and required immediate

preventative trimming by CL&P to ward off further risks.

Town leaders and CL&P say the trees don't pose an imminent safety risk, but could if the problem isn't addressed soon.

"That's why we're working to get it done, so we have no injuries," Hodge said.

On March 21, the town set up a meeting between residents and agency representatives who purchased on the trees, CL&P arborists and municipal leaders in an effort to come up with a compromise that would save the elms but eliminate the safety threat.

"Normally, they'd be considered a hazard tree and we'd ask CL&P to work with us to remove the tree completely," Kevin Kelly, the town's tree warden, said. "These are special trees so we're taking the extra steps."

But it's not foolproof. If the trees continue to grow into the lines even after being trimmed, officials will have no choice but to remove them completely.

There's also the possibility of damaging the tree's health by removing so many of its limbs, Northeast Utilities System arborist Steve Child said.

"We are flirting with the danger of that tree not surviving because we have taken significant canopy away from it, and that's arboriculturally not really correct," he said.

Brian Smith, a resident who purchased one of the trees, said he appreciated the steps town

officials were taking to try and preserve them.

"Our feeling, and I think the feeling of the individuals who had sponsored the trees, is we'd rather give them a chance and see if we can work with them," he said. "We're buying four years and if the problem is the same or worse, then we can revisit whether we'll have to take them down."

The variety of tree was chosen because they were a historic match with elms that populated the green earlier in the town's history. Most of them died of Dutch elm disease – a fungal disease spread by the elm bark beetle – or in the Great New England Hurricane of 1938.

"This particular type of tree was chosen because it was disease resistant" and was a good replacement for the ones originally lost, Smith said. "I don't think it was thought they were going to be a major concern for the wires."

Mitch Gross, a CL&P spokesman, said trees are the number one reason for power interruptions and outages across the state, though the company tries to collaborate with customers when problems arise.

"Our customers make it very clear to us how they feel about their trees, and we work very closely with them to reach an agreeable point that we have a safe and reliable system and they have their trees," he said.

Hodge said the utility will pick up all costs related to the trimming, and crews hope to have the work done some time in early May.



Several trees on the Town Green have grown into power lines and need to be trimmed.

"The idea is to get it done as quickly as possible, before the activities on the green start in the summer months, because we try to make the green as safe as possible," Kelly said.

Portland Selectmen Consider Outlawing Bulk Fuel Storage

by Michael McCoy

It seems safe to say Portland's recent push to prohibit bulk fuel storage is linked to a certain application that was withdrawn just over a month ago.

During a special meeting Tuesday, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) set a May 6 public hearing to address a proposed "Ordinance Prohibiting Bulk Fuel Storage."

As it reads now, the proposed ordinance denotes the BOS' acknowledgment of "the dangers inherent in bulk fuel storage and the potential for a catastrophic occurrence or other accident associated with bulk fuel storage..." It also mentions that the town's fire department is completely voluntary.

The preamble to the proposed ordinance concludes, "the Town of Portland has a number of locations where bulk fuel storage currently exists and market conditions and changes in energy demands may stimulate the creation of additional bulk fuel storage facilities...the prohibition of additional bulk fuel storage is reasonably calculated to address these issues and that it is in the best interest of the public health safety, and welfare of the Town's citizens to prohibit additional bulk fuel storage within the Town of Portland."

The ordinance breaks down the definitions of "bulk." In this instance it would apply to 1,000 or more gallons of liquid, 1,000 or more cubic feet of gas, or 1,000 cubic yards of more of a solid. As for "fuel," the broad definition includes "any material used to produce heat or power by burning, including, but not limited to kerosene, liquefied petroleum gas, propane, natural gas, wood, coal, and any other like substance."

There are a few exceptions to this. Existing bulk fuel storage would be allowed to remain, and repairs and replacements would also be permitted. However such tanks would not be able to be "increased or expanded." Furthermore, motor vehicle filling stations would be exempt, as would lumber yards. The reason behind the latter case was the assumption that such wood is used for building and construction, as opposed to burning. Delivery vehicles would also be exempt.

The selectmen began discussing this matter with Bradley during their April 1 meeting, and he introduced a draft of the ordinance to them during their April 15 meeting.

Some selectmen pointed out that there may be a variety of businesses that could want to install a fuel tank in excess of 1,000 gallons. For instance, Mark Finkelstein, speaking on the proposed Portland Town Place project at the former Elmcrest property, said, "I would think a development of that size might very well have need for a tank larger than a thousand." However, Bradley said the size noted in the ordinance would be totally up to the selectmen.

Last fall, Gospel Lane Properties, LLC submitted two applications for a bulk propane storage facility that would include six 30,000-gallon propane tanks. One of these applications (three of the tanks) was withdrawn just before a November public hearing. The other was withdrawn the following month. The application spawned hours of verbal derision at that hearing, as well as a myriad of letters to the editor in the *Rivereast* criticizing the proposal.

In February, Gospel Lane Properties submitted a similar application, this one containing just three tanks. On April 1, this application was also withdrawn, and Gospel Lane's attorney, John Boccalatte, said the reason was to let the town figure out where it stood (suggesting the potential of an ordinance just like the one in question), before proceeding. He did, however, remark at that time, "Propane is definitely still on our mind."

After Tuesday's meeting, when asked why fuels like wood and coal were included in the ordinance, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said, "We're not picking on one fuel. We want to be as inclusive as possible."

The next step in the process is to hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance. The hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, at 8 p.m. The location has not been finalized, though, given the projected attendance, Bransfield said she hopes to secure the auditorium at Brownstone Intermediate School, 314 Main St.

After receiving public input, it is up to the BOS to pass the ordinance.

Obituaries

Marlborough

Irving Anderson

Irving Oscar Anderson, 77, of Marlborough, beloved husband of 52 years to Martha (Fiereck) Anderson, died Tuesday, April 21, at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford. Born July 6, 1931, in Marlborough, he was the son of the late Karl Berger Anderson and Theresia V. (Nelson) Anderson.

Irving was a lifelong resident of Marlborough and had been employed at Bevin Brothers Manufacturing in East Hampton for many years. Irving had proudly served his country in the Air Force during the Korean War. He was a member of the American Folk Music Association and a member of the Manchester American Legion Post 102.

Irving fully enjoyed life and he always had a good outlook. He enjoyed spending time with his family and his many, many friends. He enjoyed going on cruises and vacationing. His love of music was a central part of his life. He loved riding around town on his Whizzer Bike. Everyone knew Irving and he will be greatly missed by all.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his two sons, Irving Anderson Jr. and his wife Joyce of East Hampton, Ernest Anderson of East Hampton; a daughter, Heidi Just and her husband Joe of Kensington; a brother, Herbert Wilcox of Washington; two sisters, Jane Bellavia of Maryland and Anna Fuller of East Hampton; six grandchildren, Irving III, Heather, Shawn, Allen, Kristopher and Joseph; three step-grandchildren, Sharon, Heather and Brenda; two great-grandchildren, Jared and Tyler and seven step-great-grandchildren, Jay Lee, Angel, La La, Tammy, Paul, Jake and Becca.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, April 25, at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will follow with military honors in Marlborough Cemetery. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home on Saturday from 9 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 328 Westchester Rd., Westchester, CT 06415.

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

East Hampton

Shirley Krasnitski

Shirley Elaine (MacDonald) Krasnitski, 84, of East Hampton, widow of John Krasnitski, passed away peacefully Friday, April 17, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Oct. 12, 1924 in Stonington, ME, she was the daughter of the late Charles R. and Edith L. (Sprague) MacDonald. Shirley had been a resident of East Hampton since 1947.

She is survived by her three sons, John and Linda Krasnitski of East Hampton, Donn and Sandra Krasnitski of East Hampton and Steven Krasnitski of Florida; a daughter, Julie and Thomas Vogel of Colorado; a brother, Wilber MacDonald of Maine; a sister, Dottie Dodge of Maine; six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by a brother, Jack MacDonald.

Shirley played clarinet for the Stonington Maine School band at the 1939 World's Fair in New York City. After graduating from Becker College in 1942, she came to Connecticut and helped with the war effort. She met her husband here and started her family. She loved to sing. Alto was her favorite voicing.

She loved William Hurt movies, cheesecake, maple walnut ice cream and trips to Maine with her granddaughters. Shirley enjoyed poetry, gardening and traveling. Her family was her life and her love. They will miss her dearly.

Funeral services will be private. Burial will be in the family plot in St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, 1 Union St. #301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691-4183, or East Hampton Food Bank, Town Hall Annex, 20 East High St, East Hampton, CT 06424, or Middlesex Hospice at Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

The Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

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

Colchester

Robert Lodi Sr.

Robert A. Lodi Sr., 86, husband of the late Gemma Rose Franzetti Lodi of Colchester, died Monday, April 20, in Norwich. He was born Sept. 11, 1922, in Merridale, NY, son of Pompeo and Mary Reggiani Lodi.

Robert was a machinist and was employed for many years for the former General Grinding Company in the Bronx. Later on, he was employed for Pratt & Whitney Corporation. He was a veteran of WWII, serving the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of PFC with Company K 10th Infantry, where he received the Bronze Star and in the Ardennes. He also received the EAME campaign medal, WWII Victory medal and the American Campaign medal.

Robert was a member of the Colchester Senior Center where he belonged to the Green Team and Inter Generation. For many years he was a leader of the Boy Scouts Troop 354 of the Bronx, NY. He also was an avid gardener.

Surviving are two sons, Robert A. Lodi Jr. of North Babylon, NY, Ronald A. Lodi of Yonkers, NY; two daughters, Linda Farina of East Hampton, Elisa L. Piragnoli of the Bronx, NY; 10 grandchildren, 16 foster children, numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and several great-grand nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial was held Thursday, April 23, at St. Andrew's Catholic Church on Norwich Avenue, Colchester, followed by full military honors. Interment will be private. Visitation was held Wednesday, April 22, at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester.

Colchester

Sandra L. Dutra

Sandra L. Dutra, 71, wife of Arthur Dutra of Colchester, passed away Monday, April 20, at the Middlesex Hospital. Sandra was born on April 10, 1938, daughter of Leroy and Louise Brown Fidler. She was an active member of the Colchester Senior Citizens.

Besides her family she was a caregiver to others around the community.

Surviving is her loving husband Arthur and son Kevin Dutra. She was predeceased by a brother, Roy and two sisters, Joan and Dianne.

Funeral services will be held today, Friday, April 24, 10 a.m. at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by an 11 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial at St. Andrew's Church on Norwich Avenue, Colchester. Interment will be private. Calling hours were Thursday, April 23, at the funeral home.

Colchester

Kenneth Sullivan Jr.

Kenneth Kerwin Sullivan Jr., "Woody," 47, of Colchester, passed away Saturday, April 18, at the Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by his loved ones. Born June 17, 1961 in Norwich, he was the son of Kenneth K. Sullivan, Sr. of Colchester and Betty (Carden) Connors of Norwich.

Ken was a 1979 graduate of Norwich Free Academy. He was currently a builder for Care-free Small Buildings in Colchester, where he had worked for the last nine years. Ken was an avid drummer and was a member of the Fletcher Raiders of Norwich, the New London Surfers, Excalibur, the Connecticut Classics of New Haven as well as the Marching Color Guard of American Legion Post No. 4 in Norwich. He was a devoted fan of UConn men's basketball and enjoyed playing pool. Ken was a devoted son, brother and uncle. He was loved by everyone and will be sadly missed by his family and all who knew him.

In addition to his parents, he leaves behind his girlfriend, Arlene McKelvey of Colchester, with whom he spent eight loving years; his stepmother, Eileen Sullivan of Colchester; his grandmother, Rita "Nana" McNamara of Middletown, whom he thought the world of; five sisters, Erin Sullivan, Colleen Diaz and her husband, Daniel, Kathy Roberts and her husband, Chris, Jackie Connors and Nancy Jacobson; a brother, William Connors; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his grandparents, John and Evelyn Sullivan and George and Mary Carden.

Friends called Wednesday, April 22, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Thursday, April 23, at the funeral home before a chapel service. Interment followed in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Hebron

Joan B. Oliver

Joan B. Oliver, 59, of Hebron and formerly of Colchester, beloved wife of Charles, a wonderful, compassionate, artistic woman lost her long battle with cancer Saturday, April 18, at home. Born March 29, 1950 in Norwich, she was a daughter of the late John and Stella (Anuszewicz) Skut.



In her high school years, Joni was always found in the art classroom, planning backdrop scenes for proms and decorating Bacon Academy's halls. Her passionate, artistic nature never left her. She worked for many years at Colchester's Rexall/National Drug, ordering and setting up the displays for the giftware department. After owning and operating a produce market known as "Reggie's Veggies" near her Colchester home and the Skut farm, she married Charles D. Oliver Sr. and moved to Hebron and began a home-based fresh vegetable and cut flower market.

Her desire to "treasure hunt" at tag sales and dedication to eBay.com buyers earned her a 100 percent seller rating, newfound friends and a reputation of being a seller with honesty and integrity. Her devotion and commitment to family, friends and four-legged companions was unwavering. She will be dearly missed by all who entered her life.

In addition to her loving husband, she is survived by her two sisters, Marie and her husband, Bob Tarnowski of Salem and Patricia Grenier of East Hartford; four stepchildren, Sue Oliver of Bolton, Cathy Lynn Campen and her husband, Glen of Andover, Cindy Lukaszewicz of Lebanon and Charles Oliver, Jr. and his wife, Yvonne of Hebron; seven grandsons, Stanley Jr., Shawn, Michael, Cody, Tyler, Benjamin and Garrett; her best friend and cousin, Susan Brown of Colchester; her beloved dog, Oliver; and numerous nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends.

Per Joni's wishes, there will be no services. Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Franklin Commons, Franklin, CT 06254 or to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington, CT 06111.

For online condolences, visit www.aurora-mccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Robert Allen Yockachonis

Robert Allen Yockachonis, 61, of Colchester and formerly of Cedar Run, NJ and Hebron, passed away Sunday, April 19, at the VA Hospital in West Haven. Born June 23, 1947 in Hartford, he was a son of the late Joseph and Rose (Motz) Yockachonis.

He grew up in Hebron and attended RHAM High School before joining the Army in 1965. Bobby proudly and bravely served his country during the Vietnam War until his honorable discharge in 1971. He then moved to New Jersey, working as a plumber and had four children with his first wife, Patricia Molineax. Two years after her passing, he returned to Connecticut. He soon rekindled a relationship with his childhood sweetheart, Lesley Bell. They were married in August of 2005 and settled together in Colchester. Although Robert and Lesley lived a short life together, it was a wonderful one.

In addition to his loving wife, Lesley, he leaves his five children, David of Colchester, Sherron of Arkansas and Debra, William and Robert, all of New Jersey; his stepchildren, Raymond Bell of Hebron, Derek Bell of Andover and Lesley Feliciano of Manchester; grandchildren, Madeline, Jessica, Dana, Jack, Addison, Landon, Colby and Ethan; a sister, Judith Walker of New Jersey; a brother, Richard of Manchester; and numerous extended family member and friends.

In addition to his parents and first wife, he was predeceased by three siblings, David, Gary and Irene.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, attn. Development Office, 1023 15th St. NW, Ste. 200, Washington, DC 20005.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

For online condolences, visit www.aurora-mccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Gayle Anne Bushnell

Gayle Anne (Roncaioli) Bushnell, 48, of East Hampton, formerly of Middletown and Windsor, passed away Friday, April 17, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Hartford, Oct. 10, 1960, daughter of the late Theodore and Gloria Roncaioli, she grew up in Windsor and graduated from Windsor High School in 1978. Gayle lived in Middletown for 18 years and was formerly employed as director of the Adult Day Club For Seniors in Middletown. She was loved by so many.

She leaves behind an unconditionally loving husband of 23 years, Robert Bushnell; three beautiful children; Nicole and her husband Luis Ortiz, Lcpl. Anthony Bushnell USMC, and Nathan Bushnell, and wonderful grandchildren; Atyanna and Olivia Ortiz, her sisters; Karen and Mark Yacone of Manchester, Jo Anne and Joseph Harrison-Becker of West Hartford, a niece and goddaughter, Heather MacDonald.

She was predeceased by her brother, Theodore Roncaioli, Jr.

She will be missed by so many friends who loved her so much. Wherever you may be Gayle Bushnell you will always be in our hearts and souls.

Her family will receive friends today, Friday, April 24, from 5-7 p.m., in the Chapel of the Carmon Windsor Funeral Home, 807 Bloomfield Ave., Windsor followed by a prayer service at 7 p.m. Her family would like to invite family and friends to be with them on Saturday, April 25, from 1-4 p.m. at their home, 8 Whippoorwill Hollow Rd., East Hampton.

Memorial donations may be made to the Hartford Hospital Fund Development Office, Attn: Cardiac Unit, 80 Seymour St., P.O. Box 5037, Hartford, CT 06102-5037.

For online condolences, visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Mary Tyler Bell

Mary Tyler Bell, 102, of Portland, passed away peacefully at the Portland Care and Rehabilitation Center on April 15. She was the wife of the late Henry C. Bell. Mrs. Bell was born in Lubec, ME, Dec. 13, 1906, the daughter of the late James and Eunice Tyler.

She was a graduate of the Bangor Secretarial College in Bangor, Maine. Upon graduation, she worked at the Bucksport Seminary and helped to support her younger brothers and sisters. After her marriage, she worked in Eastport, ME for the Passamaquoddy Project. For the many following years, she worked her husband in his various businesses in Maine and Connecticut. In 1964, she opened a gift shop, Bell's Holiday House in Portland. Her shop was unique in that people loved to purchase unusual gifts and visit with Mrs. Bell. She was a good listener and a friend to all. She was active in many town functions including: Trinity Episcopal Church, The Lions Club, The Republican Party, The Elks Club and the Hemlock Grange. She also helped start the hot lunch program in the Portland schools.

Mrs. Bell is predeceased by her three brothers, Charles, James, and Joseph; her six sisters, Helena Olson, Kathleen Lamore, Christine Bryant, Esther Behm, Gretchen Tyler and Jeanetra Tyler; and three sons James, Richard and Charles.

She is survived by two sons, Henry Jr. and David; daughter-in-law, Margaret; her two daughters, Prudence Hadden and Linda Longo; and son-in-law, Dr. Edward Longo; and her sister-in-law, Edith Tyler. Also 15 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, six great-great-grandchildren, 11 nieces and nephews and their spouses.

Her family will receive relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Sunday, April 26. Funeral services were held Monday, April 27, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., Portland.

Memorial donation in Mrs. Bell's name may be sent to Trinity Episcopal Church.

Colchester

Luella Sue Huntley

Luella Sue (Schreier) Huntley, 87, of Colchester, wife of the late Harold P. Huntley, passed away on Saturday, April 18, at Middlesex Hospital with her daughter, Gayle, by her side. Born in Middletown, on July 5, 1921, Luella was the youngest daughter of the late Charles and Pearl (Botelle) Schreier.

Luella was raised in Cromwell, attending Cromwell schools and graduating from Middletown High School in 1938. Mother of four children, Luella was a stay at home mom. Eventually she started working at SNET and retired from there. She was the President of the Cromwell PTA, President of the Cromwell Senior Club, lifelong member of the Cromwell Historical Society and belonged to the Rough Writers of East Haddam. She was best known as a fierce fighter for the Cromwell River Front. She loved her square dancing and summers spent in Litchfield. She was very proud of her father who was the blacksmith of Cromwell.

Luella is survived by three daughters, Gayle Millard and her husband, Doug, of Colchester, Janice Macri and her husband, Rodney, of WA, and Hollis Huntley; a son, Harold P. Huntley and his wife, Gail, of WA; several grandchildren; great grandchildren; and her adopted daughter, Betsy Trevason of Middletown. Other survivors include her brother, Thomas Schreier and his wife, Doris of Wetherfield, and her sister-in-law Mary Schreier, wife of the late Arthur Schreier.

Besides her husband and parents, she was predeceased by several brothers and sisters and her special friend, the late Fred Reiman.

Funeral services were held Thursday, April 23, at the Hilltop Covenant Church, 82 Hicksville Rd., Cromwell, with the Pastor Timothy Stolberg officiating and interment will follow in West Cemetery in Cromwell. Friends called Wednesday evening, April 22, at the Cromwell Funeral Home, 506 Main St., Cromwell, and in lieu of flowers, may make donations in Luella's memory to "Lou Gehrig's Disease," The ALS Association, 4 Oxford Road, Unit D4, Milford, CT 06460.

Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at www.doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Marlborough

Rita Rankl Sears

Rita Rankl Sears, 62, born Sept. 24, 1946 in Hartford, passed away on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2009 in Ocala, FL after a courageous battle with cancer. She was the beloved daughter of Edward and Rita Rankl of Marlborough. She was a lifelong resident of Marlborough until a recent move to Florida

Rita was the owner and operator of a landscaping business while in Florida. She was an avid fan of NASCAR racing. She also enjoyed Harley Davidson motorcycles. Her hobbies were baking goodies for family and friends, as well as crocheting blankets for everyone. She loved to donate her time to helping others.

In addition to her beloved friend Sam Kochuk of Connecticut, she is survived by her mother Rita Rankl of Maine, her sister Barbara Prescott and husband Harold of Maine, a brother Thomas Rankl and wife Mary of Connecticut, and a sister Janice Stanley of Vermont. Her son Rod Griffin and his children Matthew, Sean and Cody Griffin of Connecticut, her son Mark Griffin and his daughter Katherine of Connecticut and her son Keith Griffin of Connecticut, also many adoring nieces, nephews and friends. She was predeceased by her father Edward Rankl.

A service of remembrance will be held Saturday, May 9, at noon, at the Marlborough Moose Lodge. Family and friends are invited to attend this celebration of her life. A reception will follow the service. A private burial will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to The American Cancer Society.