

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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

Volume 34, Number 2

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

April 3, 2009



Rocking Around the Clock... The Marlborough Congregational Church Junior High Youth Group will hold a "rockathon" Saturday, April 18, to benefit Marlborough resident Jordan Hyde, who was seriously burned in a 2008 backyard explosion. Sitting is Brian Beauregard; standing, from left, are Tiffany Caye, Jacob Turner, Andrew Ketchum, Jared Rand, Kendra Walz and Alicia Sedgewick. For more information on the "rockathon," see story on Page 25.

Library Supporters Criticize Cuts

by Michael McCoy

When budget season rolls around in Portland each year, the Board of Selectmen workshop dealing with the public library is rarely a standing-room-only event.

This year's workshop, held Tuesday night, was an exception.

In her 2009-10 budget proposal, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield has proposed \$155,650 worth of library cuts – including layoffs of four library employees – and this led to about 60 people packing the library's Mary Flood Room, which hosted Tuesday's workshop. (Throughout the evening, several people would note how often the library hosted meetings just like this one.)

During the workshop, Board of Selectmen (BOS) member Mark Finkelstein named his three top priorities for the town as education, public safety, and infrastructure maintenance.

Portland Library Director Janet Nocek responded by asking, "Do you not consider the library an educational support?" This was the first of the evening's many assertions that the library is deeply involved in the education of the town's students.

While operating the library certainly costs the town money, Nocek said that last year, the library actually brought it \$15,000 in revenue, and she suggested that shortened hours would result in less revenue. (Bransfield said she anticipated \$7,500 in library fines during the current year and \$9,500 the following year.)

The library board has stated that the proposed four layoffs would result in the elimination of 103 staff hours. As a result, Nocek said the library hours would have to be cut from 52 per

week to 40. And library staff wouldn't be able to provide the same level of service that they provide during the current 52-hour week, Nocek said.

While Nocek pleaded that the selectmen restore the cut staff, she did say there were a few places where the library budget could be cut that would impact services less severely. She also suggested cutting the conferences, training and dues line item from \$3,250 to \$2,050. She also said periodicals and programs could be cut – and expressed hope that private entities may step up and pick up the slack.

If there have to be staff cuts, Nocek said, "we do have volunteers who are wonderful. [But] in the long run, we'll all be better off with trained staff."

Library Board member Lorraine Neville also spoke, and appealed to the Board of Selectmen on two counts, the first being library security. According to Neville, from time to time, people who do not belong in the library wander in, including intoxicated individuals. With less staff at the front desk present to head such people off, Neville worried that it was only a matter of time before an unwelcome patron said something inappropriate to someone, be it a child or otherwise. "Do you really want to deal with this?" she asked the selectmen.

Admitting that this next point might come off as pretentious, Neville said another aspect to the library boiled down to "civilization." Neville continued that a civilized society must make any and all sorts of information available to its people. She added that it's impor-

See Library on Page 2

Three Take Over for Hebron Town Manager

by Sarah McCoy

Three longtime town employees have been selected to temporarily fill the void left by the sudden departure of Hebron Town Manager Jared Clark.

The formal title of interim town manager has been given to Public Works Director Andy Tierney. However, the responsibilities of the position will be equally split between Tierney, Executive Assistant to the Town Manager Donna Lanza, and Town Planner Mike O'Leary. It was necessary to name an individual the interim town manager in order to satisfy town charter requirements.

In late January, Clark announced his planned retirement for the end of 2009. In a letter dated March 12, however, Clark advanced his resignation to mid-April. But his actual last day in office was Friday, March 27; Clark will use his remaining vacation and personal time which carries him until that April date.

In a resignation letter submitted to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) Clark attributed his decision to step down early to changes in the role of the town manager in Hebron as well as the "irreparable" working relationship with one

selectman.

According to BOS vice chair Mark Stuart, the change in roles came from the selectmen wanting to have a clearer understanding of Clark's job, so they could better conduct a search for the next town manager. "We had months of time to get in close to the town manager and know what he's doing in order to make an informed decision for our next hire," Stuart said earlier this week. "Apparently, Jared found that objectionable."

In the letter, Clark stated that the board's desire not to have him represent the town in outside meetings without another staff member present transformed the town manager role "toward that of an administrative assistant to the Board [of Selectmen.]"

Clark said his greatest disappointment came when his actions to apply for Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) funding for the Peters House were interpreted by some selectmen as political and unprofessional. Late last year, Clark applied for \$400,000 in STEAP funding to convert the controversial Peters House, located at 150 East St., to municipal

offices. Due to an application deadline, he submitted the paperwork before the BOS could vote on it. The BOS later approved of him filing the grant application by a count of 3-2, with Stuart and fellow Democrat Brian O'Connell dissenting. At the time, Stuart criticized the grant application, calling it a politically-motivated move.

"Some of the selectmen disagreed with how the STEAP grant went down. Not everyone is going to agree all the time, especially on an issue that has become as emotional as the Peters House," Stuart said this week. "There's that saying, 'If it's too hot in the kitchen, get out.' If that's Jared's reason for leaving, okay."

BOS chair Jeff Watt said he takes full responsibility for the STEAP grant incident because he knew what was going on but didn't believe the entire board could be called together on short notice. Instead, Watt allowed Clark to move ahead with the grant application, as he wanted to submit it before the deadline. "What he was trying to do was handle a situation with a short deadline," Watt said. "I think he took it more personally than maybe he should have."

The three individuals taking over the job bring nearly 50 cumulative years of experience in Hebron. "We know the town and know how it works," Tierney said earlier this week. "By handling this in house we can provide greater continuity of services."

Lanza agreed. "It will be business as usual here," she said.

In addition to his responsibilities at the town garage, Tierney will take on the day-to-day responsibilities of the town manager, as well as overseeing the parks and recreation, fire and police departments.

O'Leary will oversee the library, senior center, potential grant opportunities, the Village Green District and the Peters House.

Lanza will work with the town's financial department, the town clerk, personnel issues and assist with the hiring of a new, permanent Town Manager.

Each of the three individuals will be compensated at a rate of \$2,293 a month for their additional responsibilities. The team will be effective until June 25, as per charter regula-

See Manager on Page 2

Library continued from Front Page

tant to “feed the soul, feed the heart before feeding the body.”

Neville said she’s “not a person who says, ‘Hot dog! My taxes have been raised.’” But, she said, she’d be happy to pay extra for such services as the library.

Friends of the Library president Stephanie Tatro seemed desperate for the selectmen to find money elsewhere to make up for the proposed library cuts. One strategy she suggested was charging a \$25 fee to the many groups that meet in the library.

While Tatro said “it’s not our place to pay for salaries; that’s not what the Friends are about,” she said the organization “will do the best that we can... to support the library within the allowances of the charter.”

Library Board chair Susan Alyson Young also spoke, and said that “from the lowest economic to the highest economic, we are all library users.”

However, Young seemed concerned that, given the cuts, the amended library hours would not meet the needs of the entire community. The Library Board has suggested that, if the staff cuts are made, the library would close every weeknight at 6 p.m. instead of 8 p.m., and would only be open for a half day on Saturdays. Young figured that, while senior citizens may look to the library during the day, working people and students rely on it at night.

“This is not just a library, it’s a community service hall,” Young said, and added that if you take away library access, “you take away our ability to communicate with the rest of the world.” (Young said the library used to be open until 9 p.m. and the students “were here” right up until closing.)

Directly addressing the selectmen, Young said, “You guys have suggested decimating the library’s budget... You’ve got to find someplace else. You’ve got to.”

Young then told everyone in the audience who was wearing red (a sign of solidarity to the library) to rise. Though about 20 people were wearing red, the vast majority of people in the room stood up.

(During the section of the budget workshop that dealt with police – which occurred immediately after the library portion – Young told the selectmen that with the truncated library hours “all the teenagers are going to be out there raising hell.” So, she beckoned the selectmen to “keep the police budget in tact as much as you can.”)

Friends of the Library member Terri Larson is also a former first selectwoman in town, and said that, after she won her bid for the office in 1981, she “worked hard to get the [current] library approved.” At the time, people seemed to think the town spent too much money on the facility, and Larson said she lost her 1983 reelection bid “because we built too nice a library for the town of Portland.” However, she said, over the course of the last 10 years she could not count how many people told her they commended the town for having the foresight to build such a wonderful resource.

Bransfield then opened the microphone up to the rest of the public. Ron Bryant and his young daughter Mackenzie (who looked to be in early elementary school) went first. Mackenzie commented, “No one wants it to have less hours. I think the public library should have a little more time for people to stay and stuff.”

Resident Stephanie Miller’s comments were brief but poignant. Explaining that she was a widow, she remarked, “When you get that way, you make it, but just barely.”

“I read books; that’s my only enjoyment,” she concluded.

Next Lorel Czajka approached the podium with her two young sons in tow. She said the older one, Kaelan, “developed his love of reading from the library and the staff.”

Kaelan followed her, saying, “If we all work together, we could make the library really good.” He then voiced his appreciation for the staff, adding, “They help me out a lot with reading and all that.”

Tonianne Bankoski said her family is “re-

ally working paycheck to paycheck,” adding, “We really don’t have money for a lot of extras.” However, she said the library has provided a lot for her family free of charge.

“All of my kids feel very comfortable here. It really is a second home to them,” she concluded.

Lauren Coleman, a library employee, reminded people that the schools are only open for nine months. “We’re all they have in the summer,” she said. She said the library’s summer reading programs involve about 500 kids, and they are expecting 200-300 teenagers to be involved this summer.

After the meeting, Nocek said the library has had 61,679 visitors from July 2008 through February 2009. This comes to 1,762 per week. She also said circulation is up 7 percent this year, with a 26 percent increase in teen use. She chalked the latter up to more programs and books being available that appeal to them. These included movie nights and an evening devoted to all things *Twilight*. And while those movie nights may only relate tangentially to reading, Nocek said that, for this summer, the teenagers have specifically requested a book discussion group. “That blew me away,” she gasped.

Nocek has been the library director since 2002. In that time, she said there have been staff vacancies left unfilled, but never any layoffs.

On Wednesday, Bransfield seemed pleased with the workshop and appreciative for all who spoke. She did not, however, seem all that surprised by the turnout, saying, “I had been getting a lot of positive comments about the library.”

Bransfield said she could not guess what the BOS will eventually do about the library’s budget; however, some recent union moves might free up money for the library.

All employee unions, except the Public Works union, have agreed to forego raises for the coming year. The police were the first to make this move, and that resulted in \$26,000 in savings that is already reflected in Bransfield’s budget. Since that document was submitted, the other unions, including the library, have agreed to similar terms (although no formal documents have been signed yet), which would save the town another \$80,000. Though the Public Works union has not yet followed suit, its representatives have told Bransfield that they are open to discussing ways to help the town. Should that union also forfeit the coming year’s raise, the town would save another \$50,000.

Tuesday night, the selectmen formally thanked the police for their forfeiting of raises. Bransfield called them “the leaders of this whole endeavor.”

* * *

Though there is much trepidation over the 2009-10 budget, Bransfield has also addressed an even more immediate concern. In late February, she enacted a spending freeze. This means that all expenditures, for the time being, must be cleared either with her or Finance Director Tom Robinson.

Bransfield said the freeze applies to “anything discretionary” and does not apply to salaries or health insurance. Furthermore, she guaranteed that any spending that involved public safety would be approved.

Bransfield called this an effort to stretch out “an already lean budget this year.” She said the revenues are simply not there, a result of no one buying or selling homes, no conveyance tax, not realizing interest on its investments. At the outset of the financial year, aside from state money, the town anticipated \$702,000 in revenue for the year. Now, it expects \$250,000, Bransfield said.

“We’re just not getting the revenue,” she said, and said this was a problem “no matter how closely you’re sticking to your line items.”

As for the 2009-10 budget, the selectmen will deliberate on it next week and make a decision next Wednesday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m., at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave. The referendum is scheduled for May 11 in the Mary Flood Room.

Manager continued from Front Page

tions. At that time, the Board of Selectmen can opt to continue the set-up at 30-day increments until a permanent replacement is found.

Watt said he is “very comfortable” with the team approach to handling the town manager position. “We asked town employees for suggestions on how to handle Jared’s departure,” he explained. “Three names kept coming up. It’s clear that Andy, Donna, and Mike are respected staff members who can handle the extra responsibilities.”

Stuart agreed. “I have known Donna, Andy and Mike my whole tenure on the Board of Se-

lectmen and back to my time on the Board of Finance,” he said. “They are very competent employees who work well together. The town is in good hands.”

Stuart went on to say that the change at the town manager level will affect the Board of Selectmen in any major ways. The biggest change, he said, would be the more immediate search for a new town manager.

All five selectmen will serve on the search committee for the new hire, along with representatives from the Board of Finance and Board of Education.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

The recent news about the Marlborough Board of Selectmen accepting the RHAM teacher raises, while the Hebron and Andover selectmen’s boards did not, left me with a little feeling of *deja vu*.

I’m sure I’m not the only one.

In case you missed the cover of last week’s paper, Marlborough’s move meant the RHAM teachers’ union received the raises (and new insurance premiums) it was awarded as a result of arbitration. According to the terms of the award, two-thirds of each of the three RHAM towns’ boards of selectmen needed to vote against the arbitration or else it would pass. Hebron and Andover voted unanimously against the new contracts, but Marlborough voted unanimously in favor of them. So the raises were in.

The whole thing reminded me of the “old days,” in the earlier part of the decade, when Marlborough going against the grain was a pretty regular occurrence of RHAM-related votes. The new RHAM middle and high schools are beautiful buildings, and while a lot of Hebron and Andover residents will probably agree, that doesn’t change the fact that the two towns voted against the construction project in 2000. Why are the schools there? Because Marlborough voters were in favor of the project. How individual towns vote doesn’t really matter where RHAM referendums are concerned; it’s the total number of votes. For example, if a RHAM project passes by a 1,600-600 vote in Marlborough, but fails 800-1,100 in Hebron and 200-400 in Andover, the project still wins overall, because the combined 1,500 ‘no’ votes from Hebron and Andover are outweighed by the 1,600 ‘yes’ votes coming out of Marlborough.

Following the schools vote came the budget referendums. Anyone who lived in the RHAM towns in the early to middle part of this decade – or anyone who read the *Rivereast* during that time — likely recalls the multiple school budget votes RHAM dealt with, in multiple years. It took three referendums to pass the RHAM budget in 2001, seven in 2002, and a whopping 13 in 2003 (so many budget votes were needed that year that it wasn’t in fact until early 2004 that a spending plan for the 2003-04 fiscal year was passed).

Throughout most of those referendums,

Marlborough voters supported the budget. Sometimes it was enough to overcome the collective ‘no’ votes coming out of Hebron and Andover; as the multiple budget votes listed above might indicate, it more often was not. But regardless, it still left a definite sense of division among the towns.

I didn’t cover Marlborough during those budget vote years, but I did cover Andover and Hebron, and I still remember the bitterness and resentment some residents in those towns had — specifically those residents who had voted against the schools, voted against the budgets, only to see their votes wiped out by overwhelming ‘yes’ numbers out of Marlborough. I recall one resident complaining to me about the situation, and derisively referring to “those Marlborough soccer moms.”

Since 2004, the RHAM budget situation has generally calmed down, and any bad feelings among residents of the three towns seem to have subsided too. But seeing the recent selectmen’s vote has me worried those days might be over. Indeed, anger already seems to be rising. Andover First Selectman Bob Burbank told the *Rivereast* last week he was “very, very, very disappointed” with the Marlborough selectmen’s decision on the teacher raises, said he thought they “had a real lack of consideration of towns that are less affluent than them.” And a Hebron resident had a letter in last week’s issue encouraging Marlborough voters to kick all the selectmen out of office in November. We’ll see if more letters follow.

And we’ll see how the budget votes go this spring. With the economy the way it is, I wouldn’t be surprised in the least if multiple referendums are needed to pass a budget – not just for RHAM but in all the area towns that decide their spending plans with a machine vote (by the way, referendums are the way to go, in the my opinion; voting on budgets at town meeting is just such an outdated practice). If that’s the case, and the *Rivereast* is filled with stories and letters about budget referendums throughout the spring and even summer...well, it really will be *deja vu* all over again.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Dogs Coming to Colchester?

by Adam Benson

A long-standing talking point between Colchester and East Hampton took a step closer to reality last week.

During a March 26 special meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Colchester First Selectman Linda Hodge was given clearance to engage East Hampton officials in talks about opening up several runs at the Colchester Dog Pound for use by the neighboring municipality.

While a fee structure and use schedule has yet to be worked out, Hodge said she thinks the would-be partnership makes sense for both communities.

"It's combining forces to be cost-effective," she said. "One of the things I've been doing all year is looking for places where we can combine forces with other communities and do some cost-sharing things so it makes sense for all of us."

Colchester's pound has 15 runs in all, and on average about five of them remain open throughout the year, according to information presented to the board by Colchester Animal Control Officer Don Favry.

Hodge first presented the idea to the Board of Selectmen in mid-March, but the selectmen said then they wanted more information before authorizing a change to the pound's usage level. Colchester already partners with Marlborough for animal care at the facility, charging \$195 in rent and requiring a 25 percent contribution to all capital improvements made at the pound.

"What are the revenues versus the costs of doing this? I'd like to see an explanation of that," selectwoman Rosemary Coyle said. "I'm not ready to decide that this is a revenue."

But after being told by Colchester Animal Control Officer Don Favry that the pound could host more dogs without a reduction in services to local residents with the added revenue, selectmen felt good enough to allow Hodge to move forward with the proposal.

Among Favry's proposals for the partnership were: sharing capital improvement costs based on population, keeping the facility open longer and finding a veterinarian to handle East Hampton's animals.

With an expected half-million dollar revenue shortfall this year and a tight financial plan for next, Hodge said combining services puts Colchester in a better position to pick up cov-

eted federal and state grants that could help pay for improvements to the pound and other core resources around town.

"There are large-scale price benefits," Hodge said. "If we have to improve the facility, anything works better to apply for grants if you're doing it regionally."

Hodge said she has spent some time speaking with Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield on the issue as well. Portland shares its dog pound with Cromwell and Middletown.

East Hampton Police Chief Matthew Reimondo said local law enforcement has a "great interest" in moving forward with the plan, should the East Hampton Town Council sign off on it.

"I think the duplicity of services that towns have is antiquated and detrimental to spending tax dollars," he said. "It's going to be a cost-saving measure for everyone involved."

But East Hampton Town Council chair Melissa Engel didn't seem thrilled by the idea.

"I need to hear all the information, but I'm not loving it right out of the gate," she said. "I don't think it allows for a quick enough response time."

Engel said most of East Hampton's stray dogs are found walking along streets or on public property, and having to wait up to 20 minutes for an animal control officer to respond has her worried.

"With animals, you need to have somebody in town that can get to the situation and get it taken care of," she said.

She also said it might cost East Hampton more over time to partner with Colchester rather than maintain its own local facility.

"I don't know that the cost will be better. I fear it might be more expensive to regionalize in the long run," she said.

East Hampton officials are planning to visit Colchester's site ahead of an April 14 Town Council meeting where the partnership could appear on the agenda.

Meanwhile, Hodge said she'll continue to work closely with East Hampton leaders and is anxious to get the deal in place.

"We're really looking forward to working with East Hampton," she said. "We've taken our time to make sure all our ducks are in a row."

Colchester Selectmen Vote to Increase Fees

by Adam Benson

The Board of Selectmen earlier this week voted to double several town department fees in an effort to find more revenue and bring the cost of doing business more in line with neighboring communities.

A public hearing is set for the matter Thursday, April 16, with the new rates taking hold after that, First Selectman Linda Hodge said.

"We've been working on this for about five months, looking at our fee structures and making sure they're in line with other towns and that they make sense for us," Hodge said.

The move impacts fees charged by the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals and the health department – among others – for administrative charges, applications and public hearings.

Under the new rate structure, it will cost \$200 for a Zoning Board of Appeals public hearing, compared with \$125 before. Bank inspections will jump from \$25 to \$100, well permits would move to \$60 from \$30 and residents and businesses can expect to pay more for soil tests,

septic tank permits and engineering reviews.

Hodge said many of the fees haven't been adjusted since 2004, with some remaining stagnant since 1991.

Even with the changes, Hodge said most of the adjusted rates are either on par or lower than those of similar-sized communities in the state.

"We're looking at every way we can bring in revenue, but is fair," she said. "They're not just aimed at businesses, but also at the people who are using the services. They're not across the town taxes."

Chief Financial Officer N. Maggie Cosgrove said raising the fees in April – a peak time for new construction – could help ease a projected \$500,000 budget deficit this year.

Hodge expects the new set of fees to add \$55,000 to Colchester's fiscal year 2009-10 revenues.

A complete breakdown of the fee structure can be found attached to minutes from the Colchester Board of Selectmen's March 26 meeting at www.colchesterct.gov.

EH BOF Looks to Get Bottom Line Lower Before Public Hearing

by Michael McCoy

The Board of Finance (BOF) held budget deliberations this week, leading up to a public hearing on the proposed 2009-10 budget next Monday, April 6.

During a meeting Monday, March 27, BOF members had a preliminary discussion as to what they want to present to the public during the hearing. At that time, they took what chairman Ted Hintz called a "consensus vote," which passed 6-1, to ask the town manager to find \$10,000 in his proposed budget to throw social services' way. Furthermore, in the same vote, BOF members decided to take \$100,000 from the Board of Education budget.

But, it should be noted, because this was simply a "consensus vote;" it is not an actual cut at this point, but rather a way to let the public know what they are thinking at the moment.

Hintz said, "It didn't seem everyone was on the same page," so the BOF discussed the budget at a special meeting Thursday, after press time.

Hintz said George Pfaffenbach was the lone dissenting vote, and, though Hintz said there was unanimous consensus on the \$10,000 for social services, Pfaffenbach felt that Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe's budget should go to the public hearing before the BOF makes any cuts, such as the \$100,000 to the budget.

Though this \$100,000 is not an actual cut yet, Hintz did say, "There will be some reductions" when the BOF does vote on their budget.

As it stands now, O'Keefe's proposed budget is \$37.53 million, a 1.59 percent increase

over current year spending. This represents a 0.47 increase in the mill rate, which would be a 1.97 percent tax hike.

The BOE budget comes in right now at \$25.36 million. When asked about the possibility of the BOF presenting a BOE budget including \$100,000 further in cuts, BOE chairman Michael Vasquez said, "I felt that the town manager's budget... was a responsible one. I thought that's what should go to referendum." However, he said that if voters objected to the BOE budget, then he could understand further cuts being made.

Should the BOE budget end up actually being cut by another \$100,000, Vasquez said the school board "would be looking at programs, staff, sports," figuring that at that point nothing would be off limits. It would be a "painful" process, he said.

Next Monday's public hearing will take place at 7 p.m., in the auditorium at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St. at 7 p.m. Two days later, on Wednesday, April 8, at 7 p.m., the BOF will adopt its proposed budget in the community room at East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St.

On a side note, Hintz reported Thursday that Standard & Poor's had doubled the town's bond rating, from A+ to AA. "It's just an awesome thing for the town!" Hintz said, who said this would help save the town money in interest. He also explained that, as far as town's past activity goes, the rating bump means, "We've been financially prudent."

Propane Applicant Withdraws Plans, Again

by Michael McCoy

Portland's rollercoaster ride of a relationship with propane took another turn this week, as the controversial application for a Gospel Lane storage facility was withdrawn for a second time.

On Tuesday, Inland Wetlands Agent Lincoln White received a letter from John Boccalatte (attorney for applicant Gospel Lane Properties, LLC) informing him that his client was withdrawing its application. Planning and Land use Administrator Deanna Rhodes received a similar letter Wednesday.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she was surprised by the withdrawal; she said the applicant first informed her about it last Thursday, March 26.

Last fall, Gospel Lane Properties proposed six 30,000-gallon above ground tanks, three at 34 Gospel Ln. and three at William Street Extension, which is an adjoining property. In November, the applicant withdrew the William Street Extension part of the plan, leaving only three tanks. The applicant then withdrew the application altogether on Dec. 1.

Gospel Lane Properties returned in February with a slightly different application, which included three 30,000-gallon tanks on a 3.77-acre parcel. The site would have also included a 10,000-gallon underground water tank.

Earlier this year, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) denied a proposed text amendment that would provide restrictions on where bulk propane storage would be allowed. However, PZC members said at the time that they wished to revisit the regulation.

Boccalatte said the main reason for this withdrawal was to allow the PZC to figure out where it stood on the matter of the text amendment before proceeding with an application that could become moot later on. Furthermore, he said his client did not want to see the town spend money on a consultant concerning the application if so many factors remained uncertain. This latter reason was given when Gospel Lane Properties withdrew the first application.

Boccalatte said his client reserved the right to return with a similar application, and supposed that they may be interested in being in-

involved with the reshaping of the corresponding regulation.

"We're just trying to be good citizens," Boccalatte said, adding that the public has largely and unfairly pegged he and his client as "bad guys, greedy developers, or rich people."

However, despite the withdrawal, he remarked, "Propane is definitely still on our mind."

Some developers might try to steamroll such a project before a PZC had a chance to change its regulation. The fact that Gospel Lane did not, Boccalatte said, is "as much evidence as I can offer as to how honest my client is trying to be."

Rhodes said PZC plans to explore the prospect of including "additional criteria" in the regulation, which may end up involving things like required distances from other structures, as well as possibly redefining "bulk." However, to accomplish this, the PZC hopes to hire a fire safety consultant. Whether or not this measure is taken is up to the Board of Selectmen.

Bransfield said the selectmen would be discussing the matter with recently-hired town attorney Jack Bradley.

"I have some serious reservations as to whether this should be in the town at all," Bransfield said. She cited two reasons for her concern as an inadequate supply of water and the fact that the town's fire department is all volunteer.

"I have very serious concerns about this," she reiterated.

When asked if Portland could legally outlaw bulk propane storage throughout the whole town, Bransfield said, "That's the question I'm going to ask [Bradley]."

It seems Gospel Lane Properties is waiting to see what the PZC decides before submitting another application. However, Rhodes could give no estimate as to when the PZC might begin discussing the matter.

Due to the withdrawal, the propane application will no longer be heard by the Inland Wetlands Commission on April 7 or by the PZC on April 16, as had been the case.

Andover Finance Board Wrapping Up Budget Talks

by Sarah McCoy

The local Board of Finance (BOF) is wrapping up their budget discussions for the upcoming 2009-10 fiscal year, and expects to put forth a recommended budget at its meeting next week.

Still, at this point both First Selectman Bob Burbank and BOF vice chair Cathy Desrosiers were hesitant to announce a final budget number. They were both confident that final numbers would be nailed down by next week.

"We're going through the process and putting the pieces together," Desrosiers said at Wednesday night's BOF budget workshop.

Burbank said that last month the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had recommended a general government budget that showed a reduction in spending from the current year; however, that did not include the budgets for RHAM or the local Board of Education (BOE). "With town government making up only 19 percent of our entire budget, I doubt that a reduction in spending could offset any increases by the boards of education but we are working to get as close to an overall zero percent as possible."

In February the BOE recommended a \$3.99 million budget, a 1.92 percent increase in spending.

The RHAM BOE is currently deliberating its budget, though regional school board members have agreed to use a 1.9 percent increase in spending as a starting point for discussions. School board members will hold a public hearing Monday, April 13, and make their final recommendation soon after that.

On Wednesday, the Andover BOF made some decisions on the budget. They accepted a .5 percent increase to the library's operating budget as well as a \$34,000 reduction to the capital expenditures line item. Because the

numbers are still in flux Desrosiers reported that final figures wouldn't be available until the BOF meeting next Wednesday.

Last month, the BOS had requested all town employees forego any salary raises for the coming year. Burbank said that the vast majority have accepted this request though, he noted, the town's Public Works union has not been "receptive" to the request.

BOF members expressed concerns over the revenue sources coming into the town. The town estimated \$18,000 in revenues from the building department and \$75,000 for the town clerk's office. Given the economic climate these numbers are expected to be reduced meaning monies would have to come from an additional source, possibly property tax.

The majority of board members did support the idea of using any monies returned to the town from RHAM or the local BOE to be used to offset the 2009-10 budget. Burbank reported the town is expecting around \$34,000 from the RHAM 2007-08 budget audit.

Before Wednesday night's meeting, Desrosiers said that while she hopes to see a zero percent budget, she estimates that the number will be closer to a 2 percent budget increase.

"It's a tough year and we're aware of that, but I've lived in town for 24 years and they've all been tough years," she said. "We have to do the best we can."

The final BOF budget workshop will be on Wednesday, April 8, at 7 p.m. in the community room at Town Hall. A public hearing for the budget has been set for Wednesday, April 29, at 7 p.m. also at Town Hall. A town meeting will follow Wednesday, May 6, where residents can vote to send a budget to referendum.

Hebron Selectmen Budget Increase Barely There

by Sarah McCoy

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) last week sent to the finance board a proposed town government budget that features a nearly-nonexistent spending increase.

Last Thursday, March 26, the selectmen unanimously supported an \$8,885,720 town operating budget for the 2009-10 fiscal year. This represents an increase in spending of \$10,802, or 12 percent.

These numbers do not include the budget figures for the local and RHAM school board budgets.

The Board of Finance (BOF) will now review all three budgets and set a bottom-line number before a May 5 referendum. The RHAM Board of Education is currently in the middle of their budget workshops. The school board will hold a public hearing Monday, April 13, and set a final number soon after that.

The local Board of Education (BOE) approved a 2.98 percent increase in spending in February. Earlier this month, BOF chair Mike Hazel asked the BOE to begin discussions with the teachers' union to see if school staff would be willing to make salary concessions for the coming year. Hazel also asked the BOE to show what a zero percent budget would look like.

The BOE held a special meeting to discuss its budget Thursday night, after press time.

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said that to get to a zero percent budget there would need to be cuts of over \$200,000 to the BOE-approved budget. She said these cuts would have to come from staff and programming.

On the town government side, the near-level funding isn't without sacrifice. Non-union town employees have agreed to take furlough days in order to reduce the salary line item. Employees will still receive a raise though their reduction in hours has allowed the BOS to keep the final numbers down.

A letter has been sent to the town unions asking them to make concessions in terms of salary or by taking furlough days. While layoffs are possible, BOS chair Jeffrey Watt said he hopes to avoid that. "Town employees are really coming together to keep everyone employed," he said.

The selectmen's recommended budget calls for no increase to the salary line item for town employees. This does not include school staff.

BOS member Mark Stuart said the priorities of the board have been to achieve a zero percent budget and to avoid layoffs as much as possible. "It's tough but we're doing what we can to create a reasonable, responsible budget," Stuart said this week.

The budget also includes both resident state trooper positions. Governor M. Jodi Rell's proposed budget calls for towns to pay 85 percent of the costs associated with the resident state troopers. Currently, the town pays for only 70 percent.

The selectmen agreed to budget as if the town will pay 75 percent, a \$201,493 hike from the current year's budget.

The budget features anticipated savings of nearly \$4,000 each month due to the change at the town manager position. Last Friday was Jared Clark's last day in town. The town manager position will now be filled on an interim basis by Public Works Director Andy Tierney, Town Planner Mike O'Leary and Executive Assistant Donna Lanza. A permanent replacement for the position isn't expected to be hired until the fall.

Another large cut to the budget includes a \$70,000 reduction to the open-space acquisition fund. In the past the town has funded this account with \$200,000 each year. That number was dropped to \$130,000 in the selectmen's recommended budget.

Only three areas in the town budget are slated for increases next year. Spending for workers' compensation and liability insurance is projected to rise, though final bids haven't come in. The town's park division will also see an increase because of a new supervisor to be hired for the nearly finished athletic complex on East Street. Debt services is also expected to increase by \$173,418 to a total of \$1.9 million. Of this, over \$400,000 is debt attributed to the park development.

The Board of Finance's next meeting will be Tuesday, April 7. At that time, the board will hear a presentation from the local BOE.



Brenda Belisle is pictured with her four grandchildren, Austin, Cole, Lexie and Chase. Belisle, a Hebron native and current employee of Gilead Hill School, is currently fighting cancer. Her friends will host a benefit dinner tomorrow in her honor at the Colchester Fish and Game Club.

Pasta Dinner in Hebron to Benefit Resident

by Sarah McCoy

When Brenda Belisle went in for back surgery last summer she came out with a diagnosis that gave her pause.

Cancer. Belisle, who now lives in Colchester but grew up in Hebron and works at Gilead Hill School as a paraprofessional, was diagnosed with either multiple-myeloma or multiple-plasmacytoma (she has indicators of both). Both are cancers of the bones. Belisle's back surgery was necessary because one of her disks was eaten away by the cancer. While doctors were doing the surgery they noticed another lesion that, too, was cancerous.

Since then she's gone through three rounds of chemotherapy and is hoping this last one will get her blood levels to the place they need to be for a stem cell transplant. If not, she'll go through another round of chemo treatment.

Belisle said she's tired and her legs often hurt, but is quick to add, "things could be a whole lot worse."

Liz Gonsalves, also of Hebron, said it's this upbeat and joyous attitude that first attracted her to Belisle. They both worked at Gilead Hill and soon developed a strong friendship.

Gonsalves is just one of a group of women that have forged a bond. Together this group gets together to play dominoes, camp, and enjoy "girl talk" as Belisle would put it.

Now the group - Gonsalves, Deb Horton, Laura Sforza, Mary Cofiell, Tammy Lemke and Belisle's daughter, Shannon Massey - is uniting for a much bigger reason. They women are hosting a benefit dinner to raise money to help Belisle and her family.

The dinner will be held tomorrow, April 4, at 6 p.m. at the Colchester Fish and Game Club on Old Amston Road in Colchester. The meal will include pasta, salad and dessert. Tickets are \$20 or \$10 for children 12 and under. For tickets or more information, call Cofiell at 860-942-3572, Gonsalves at 228-8459, Sforza at

295-0541 or Horton at 228-4436. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Also, donations can be made to the Benefit of Brenda Belisle at The Savings Institute at 115 Main St. in Hebron.

Resistant at first, Belisle said she finally accepted help when her treatments forced her out of work last February. "I've been so overwhelmed by the amount of support I've received," she said. "It's been an incredible display of love."

Gonsalves said that the decision to hold the dinner came easy. "[Brenda] is always the first person to help someone else that had fallen on hard times," she said. "We now that it's only a matter of time when Brenda will be paying in forward."

Belisle said she's looking forward to paying the kindness and support she's received forward. "If everyone did that the world would be a better place," she said.

Belisle also looking forward to returning to school. After attending Hebron Elementary School and RHAM as a student, Belisle has now been a part of all of the town's public schools. For the last nine years she's worked as a paraprofessional in the special education department.

"I just keeping smiling and try to stay positive," Belisle said. "I'm hoping for a long remission and, hopefully, returning to school real soon."

Belisle said that she's been blown away at the level of support she's received from so many in the community. From her husband Don who continues to be her "rock" to the Gilead Hill School nurse who's offered to come to her home to inject the stem cell treatments she'll need daily, Belisle feels blessed.

"Even though I live in Colchester, Hebron has always been my family," she said. "I am so grateful for that."

Menzo to Go?

by Mike Thompson

It looks like Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo may be headed south.

The Wallingford Board of Education has decided to name Menzo its new schools superintendent. Menzo told the *Rivereast* Thursday the Wallingford school board is expected to formally vote on the appointment next week.

If Menzo is approved, he would start in Wallingford July 1. Menzo said he would stay in Marlborough through the end of June, and said he is committed to help out "at no cost to the town" during any transition process the board might have in appointing a new superintendent.

Menzo said he wasn't planning to publicly announce the news until after his official ap-

pointment, as he was "trying to be respectful" of both the Marlborough Board of Education and the Wallingford school board.

Still, while he has yet to make a public announcement, Menzo said the Marlborough Board of Education "was aware of this throughout the whole process."

Since he had not yet been officially approved, Menzo did not wish to comment at length Thursday about the situation. However, he said, his application process for the Wallingford job has "absolutely not" affected how he's dealt with Marlborough's school budget situation this year.

Menzo has been the Marlborough superintendent of schools since February 2005.

Board of Education chair Maria Grove was unavailable for comment at press time.

\$54.74 Million Facilities Upgrade Plan Presented in East Hampton

by Michael McCoy

The much-discussed \$54.74 million facilities upgrade plan was presented by Friar Associates during a Town Council meeting last week, and most of the council members gave the project a thumbs-up.

Last fall, the Town Council voted to hire Friar Associates to compose a plan that would include major renovations to the high school and Memorial School, moving Center School to a new wing of Memorial school, and moving Town Hall to a renovated Center School. This plan-drafting ran the town \$45,000, and came three years after the town hired the same firm to conduct an initial facilities feasibility study, which identified the aforementioned buildings as priorities.

The 18-page study that was presented last week lists a slew of deficiencies with the existing facilities. (The full study is available at www.easthamptonct.org.)

Currently, Town Hall is split between three buildings, including the annex, which is located in leased space. According to Friar's report, Town Hall is overcrowded, and has insufficient parking, restrooms, and handicapped accessibility and storage. It also does not have a sprinkler system.

In the police department (which is located at Town Hall), the study reported inadequate prisoner transport, lobby space, evidence and weapon storage, holding cells, and security system. Also, there is currently no female locker room, the study noted.

The study also called Center School overcrowded, and said insufficiencies there include computers, music and art room size, kitchen facilities, classroom ventilation, as well as space for psychologists, social workers and support staff.

The new Memorial School wing that would become Center School would be 46,760 square feet, work that would cost \$19.94 million

Town Hall (now 7,000 square feet) would then relocate to the old 43,400 square foot Center School. However, the building would be renovated, and parking would be expanded from 44 to 138 spots. This comes in to the tune of \$14.78 million.

The plan presented last week also reported concerns at the high school, including concerns with the technology infrastructure, the gym, flooring that contains asbestos, lighting, the lack of a sprinkler system and the issue that has been mentioned most in the past: a need for science labs. Total work on the building comes to \$16.08 million

The smallest piece of the project involves alterations to the existing Memorial School, primarily a new roof. This would total \$3.94 million.

All told, the project totals \$54.74 million. Of that, \$22.75 million is reimbursable by the state, leaving the town to pick up the remaining \$31.99 million.

However, there remains a chance that final number could be even lower. In November, Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe applied to the state for federal stimulus money concerning the project. Engel said that should the state throw that money East Hampton's way, they might expect as much as an additional \$12 million, which would bring the town's share down to just below \$20 million.

This week, council chairwoman Melissa Engel said, "It's a great plan...It meets all of our needs."

Engel seemed eager to get moving on this,

but conceded, "I'm very sensitive to the economic times. We can't go forward right now." Engel said Finance Director Jeff Jylkka managed to find a way to pay this off over 20 years without ever raising taxes by more than a mill each year, but added, "Still, right now, one mill is too much."

Engel called the \$45,000 spent on the plan so far "money well spent."

On March 24, the council voted forth the plan 5-1, with Scott Minnick dissenting. This week, Minnick recalled his and fellow council member Sue Weintraub's opposition to the \$45,000 being spent on the study in the first place, in November. "Nothing has changed," he blurted. He boiled his opposition down to "wrong priorities," "wrong process" and "wrong timing."

Minnick said only the Memorial School roof and the high school upgrades were paramount right now. As for the process, he said, "This is a major project...and the town had no input," figuring everything was done "at the committee level." Furthermore, he held that Friar "got a no-bid contract." Engel and O'Keefe have held that hiring Friar was merely an extension of their existing contract.

As for wrong timing, he figured given the recession, a \$54 million project should be moving forward at all.

As for stimulus money, Minnick noted that it will only go to "shovel-ready projects." He wondered how a proposal that has not been formally approved by the public could fit that moniker. He also said that any federal stimulus money had to be spent by 2009. So, as far as that money goes, he said, "Don't count on it... We are not shovel ready. ... I would be flabbergasted if we got a cent of stimulus money."

However, Engel said the state is well aware that the project has not yet gone to referendum, and are content that it is simply moving forward.

Addressing the allegation of faulty priorities, Engel responded "As far as I know, that's only Scott's opinion."

Board of Finance chair Ted Hintz, who is also on the Facilities Implementation Task Force, the body that oversaw Friar's development of the plan, commented, "I think the town needs to move forward," and gave his full confidence in the plan.

"I'm in favor of the whole thing, to be honest with you," Board of Education (BOE) chair Michael Vasquenza said. On March 23, one day before the plan went before the council, the BOE voted on the plan. The high school component was approved 8-0, while the rest was approved 5-3 (with Alan Hurst, Don Collican and Deborah Pessoni opposing).

While he noted the need for high school improvements, Vasquenza also singled out the Town Hall/Center School component, saying, "I think the Town Hall in the center of town is a good idea."

Vasquenza also said he has lived in town for 22 years and, "I haven't seen a shovel in the ground for any municipal upgrade."

When asked for an estimate of when the project might move forward, Engel hoped an informal public question and answer period could be held in the summer, followed by a referendum sometime in the fall. She said, the project should be completed about three and a half years after the referendum, and hoped physical work might actually begin by the end of the year.

The Hair Sanctuary Gets a New, Larger Home in Marlborough

by Adam Benson

Since 2006, Marlborough residents have gotten to know Polly Carilli's glamorous reputation as owner and operator of The Hair Sanctuary Salon and Spa.

But starting this week, Carilli and her staff of seven are hoping to make their presence in town even greater, opening a 2,200-square-foot facility right off Route 2 and in the heart of the town's commercial district.

"It's always been a dream of mine," Carilli said in between clients Wednesday – the first day of business at her new 7 S. Main St. location. "It's just been a work in progress, and I've very patiently waited for the perfect space in Marlborough. It's an excellent community and I love the people here."

For the past three years, Carilli has shared space with Creative Coiffures owner Ginny Fazzino along Saner Road, but she said with a growing client base and a desire to offer more services to area residents, it was time to take up residence in the larger space.

"I just had the need to expand," Carilli said. An industry professional for 24 years, Carilli has trained in New York and Los Angeles with Wella International and Clairol Professional. Along with her day-to-day duties at The Hair Sanctuary, Carilli remains a sales education specialist for the two companies.

A Connecticut native, Carilli said traveling between the coasts was beginning to take a toll on her and her three children, so she decided to bring her talent and passion for the job back home.

Carilli hopes to one day turn her business into a breeding ground for emerging talent in the field, and every Monday offers in-house

continuing education classes for Wella and Clairol.

Her ultimate goal is to open a school, but for now, Carilli said she's committed to bringing high-end hair and beauty care to local residents.

"That's really been my driving force to open," Carilli said. A unisex operation, haircuts begin at \$40 for women and \$15 for men. Included on Carilli's staff is master barber Lou Fernandez and massage therapist Kimberly Bona.

Long hair charges apply, though Carilli offers multi-service discounts and monthly incentives along with daily senior citizen discounts. Carilli also does personal complimentary cuts for Locks of Love donors.

In addition to offering HotStone and Swedish massages, The Hair Sanctuary does manicures, restorative, corrective and signature facials, waxes and foils.

Carilli is also working to bring in tanning booths and rejuvenative light therapy equipment to offer her customers even more to choose from.

The Hair Sanctuary also hosts birthday parties and spa parties for people of all ages. A website is in the works and should be up soon, Carilli said.

Carilli said her community activism and environmentally-friendly inventory will also help set her shop apart.

Carilli – along with manager and esthetician Tina Marino – are crafting monthly promotions to benefit local charities and non-profit organizations.

Throughout April, customers can get a 10-percent discount off hair services for bringing in two non-perishable items for the Marlborough Food Bank.



The Hair Sanctuary, a high-end salon and spa in Marlborough, opened its new location this week at 7 South Main St. Pictured from left are owner Polly Carilli, manager and esthetician Tina Marino, hairstylist Lisa Garcia, hairstylist Kristina Bona and hairstylist Karen Hightower. Not pictured is master barber Lou Fernandez, hairdresser Suzi Stula and massage therapist Kimberly Bona.

Carilli's staff also uses vegan nail products along with organic and green materials and carries a full line of inventory from Redken, Sebastian International, TIGI and Wella.

Employees will also specially order any product asked for by a client – in line with Carilli's mission to provide the best one-on-one attention she can.

"We're here to pamper the soul," Carilli said.

"My customers have stayed with me, and opening is out of loyalty to them. I want to provide a space that is welcoming."

The Hair Sanctuary is open Tuesdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information, call 860-368-1627.

Marlborough Finance Board Makes \$350,000 Cut to School Budget

by Adam Benson

It's back to the drawing board for the Marlborough Board of Education, and officials fear the final picture won't be pretty.

Last week, school board members learned they needed to slash an additional \$350,000 from what they say is an already pared-down 2009-10 budget following a mandate by the Board of Finance the night before.

If left in place, a cut that large would result in layoffs of non-tenured teachers and a possible dent in classroom programming and curriculum planning, Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo and district officials said this week.

"Educationally speaking, what the Board of Finance is requiring is going to set this system back years," Board of Education member John Angelo said at a school board meeting last Thursday, March 26. "The economy will come back in a couple of years. What we're looking at right here will not."

But Board of Finance chair Catherine Gaudinski – herself a former Board of Education member – told the school board last week her colleagues are asking all contributors to the town budget to make dramatic reductions to their bottom lines given the economic conditions.

"No one's questioning the value we get here for the education of our students, and all of us on the Board of Finance realize it's very important, but our revenues are also following the same pattern as the state," Gaudinski told the Board of Education last week.

Already, Marlborough residents are facing a

likely 6.7 percent tax hike, but Gaudinski said that figure could drop to 4.4 percent with alterations to the Board of Education's recently approved \$7.2 million budget.

That financial plan marked just a 1.45 percent increase over the 2008-09 budget, and was within the 2 percent growth range that members of the Board of Finance told the Board of Education they wanted to see. And in October, Menzo froze spending in the district.

Gaudinski said her body had to reevaluate that stance after getting updated figures on Marlborough's debt load and taking into account an almost zero-percent Grand List growth.

The town is expected to take on a 38 percent increase in its debt capacity next fiscal year, on top of a 14 percent increase this year, Gaudinski said.

"If this was a normal year, it [the Board of Education's budget] falls well within the parameters of funding our education, but we all have to be partners in this, and your budget is the largest segment of the town budget," Gaudinski said. "It's really going to be no frills, and we're going to have to do more with less and pitch in."

During last Thursday's school board meeting, Board of Education members said they were upset that the Board of Finance voted to ask for the deep cuts at nearly 11:30 p.m. the night before, and without first consulting them or Menzo.

"I haven't found this process to be very forth-

right, and that's disappointing to me," Board of Education member John O'Toole said. "I'm really shocked at the point we're at now."

Board of Education chair Maria Grove was equally critical of the process and substance of the request.

"We have now signified to our community that education has taken a back seat to anything else, and I'm very concerned about that," she said. "We're getting to a point where if we just keep delivering zero or one percent budgets, we run the risk of backsliding. Now, we've taken a further step back."

Since last week's meetings, members of both boards have re-opened talks, and Menzo said he's hopeful the Board of Finance will accept a compromise and cut about \$151,000 from the Board of Education's budget. If that happens, he said earlier this week, officials could avoid classroom layoffs and changes to core offerings that directly impact students.

(Indeed, the Board of Education last week told Menzo to contact 10 non-tenured teachers and tell them they could be let go at the end of the school year should officials be forced to meet the Board of Finance's \$350,000 mark.)

"As the Board of Finance continues to ask for such significant reductions, it does ultimately put the potential for providing the same level of services to students in jeopardy," Menzo said this week. "We've tried to keep the reductions as far from the curriculum and core services as possible, and that will be our continu-

ing goal."

However, on Tuesday, Menzo presented the Board of Finance with a list of proposed savings that include making \$81,800 worth of purchases through existing surplus and federal stimulus dollars, decreasing the student school year by three days and cutting funding to summer literacy, a substitute teacher account and administrative meetings and conferences.

The Board of Education and Board of Finance will hold a special meeting Monday, April 6, where another vote could be taken on Menzo's new plan, Gaudinski said.

Menzo said he's hopeful both sides can come to an agreement.

"We are well aware that the Board of Finance is in a position that is not enviable to any of us. They are purposely targeting the school. We know they are trying to balance their responsibilities to the town and each constituency that they serve, but we feel the school is one of the true assets in the community," Menzo said. "We do not believe it's an 'us versus them' situation. It's a 'we' situation, but we're hoping they'd be willing to revisit our reduction."

Gaudinski didn't give any sign this week how that vote might turn out, but she said there's a willingness by her colleagues to work with the school district.

"Our town is dealing with a tough situation right now," she said. "I'm concerned about all the divisiveness that seems to be appearing. We all have responsibilities as elected officials."

Colchester Police News

3/17-Cobey Boyce, 19, of East Hartford, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana, State Police said.

3/19-Carl Czech, 28, of 431 Cabin Rd., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

3/19-Karen Riedle, 33, of Millbury, MA, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/19-Kevin Kalama, 41, of Amston, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

3/19-Matthew DeSautels, 23, of 36 Old Hebron Rd., was charged with driving under the influence, failure to illuminate headlights and having an invalid registration sticker, State Police said.

3/19-Adam Renz, 34, of 625 Hartford Rd., was charged with driving while intoxicated and driving with no headlights, State Police said.

3/20-Scott Fabrycki, 47, of Ellington, was charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive upon the right, State Police said.

3/20-Russell Cherico, 38, of South Windsor, was charged with driving under the influence, State Police said.

3/20-John Spaulding, 46, of East Haddam, was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

3/22-Rebecca Hunt, 24, of 251 Lebanon Ave., was charged with second-degree failure

to appear, State Police said.

3/22-Daniel Walz, 22, of Amston, was charged with driving under the influence, operating under a suspended license, failure to carry registration and failure to obey a traffic signal, State Police said.

3/23-James Green, 43, of 28 N. Park St., was charged with 10 counts of sixth-degree larceny, three counts of third-degree larceny, illegal use of a credit card, making a false statement and illegally procuring a credit card, State Police said.

3/24-Steven Rochette, 21, of Hebron, was charged with criminal mischief, State Police said.

3/26-Ivonne Garcia, 32, of Newington, was charged with driving while intoxicated and following too closely, State Police said.

3/26-Robert Kempesta, 48, of Lebanon, was charged with criminal violation of a protective order, State Police said.

3/30-Yolanda Wilson, 40, of New London, was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/30-Zachary Jascowski, 21, of 12 Settlers Lane, was charged with driving under the influence and speeding, State Police said.

3/31-Michael Desfosses, 39, of 175 Boretz Rd., was charged with issuing a bad check, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

3/20-Gregory Strong, 39, of Manchester, was charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive in the proper lane, State Police said.

Portland Police News

3/29 — Terrence Willmore, 49, of 1 Ferry Ln., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, Portland Police said.

East Hampton Police News

3/17 — Elisa Duennebier, 54, of 10 Cedar Ridge Rd., was involved in a one-car accident on Wopowog Road at Tartia Road, East Hampton Police said. Duennebier was arrested for traveling too fast and driving under the influence.

3/20 — Jason Stojak, 25, of 234 White Birch Rd., was arrested for operating without insurance and operating an unregistered vehicle, police said.

3/22 — Carol Perkins, 59, of 9 West High St., was arrested for first-degree criminal trespass and sixth-degree larceny, police said.

3/25 — Willie J. Prioleau Jr., 25, of 76 North 1st Street, Meriden, was arrested pursuant to a warrant on charges of violation of a protective order and harassing phone calls, police said.

Obituaries

Hebron

Corinne Elizabeth Geraci

Corinne Elizabeth Geraci, 78, of Hebron, passed away peacefully Friday morning, March 27, at the Harrington Court GHC in Colchester. Born Sept. 23, 1930, in Stafford Springs, she was a daughter of the late William and Laura (Provencher) O'Brien.



She married Joseph Anthony Geraci, Sr. in 1959. Mr. Geraci predeceased her in 1987.

Corinne retired several years ago after having worked as the Customer Service Representative for the former Willimantic Savings Institute in Hebron. Corinne enjoyed showing champion Great Danes in the 1960s and 70s with her daughter, Cheryl. Most importantly, she will be remembered by her family as being a loving and devoted wife, mother, grandmother and sister. "The Four O'Brien Girls"

Survivors include two children, Cheryl Lent of Hebron, with whom she most recently made her home, and Joseph Anthony Geraci, Jr. and his wife, Peggy of Lebanon; two sisters, Jacqueline Lindau and her husband, Richard of Lecanto, FL and Mary-Ellen Scrivano and her husband, Joseph of Colchester; a grandson, Jason Cook of Sonora, CA; many loved nieces and nephews and extended family and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by a sister, Patricia Lindau and her husband, Brör Lindau.

Funeral services will be private. Donations in her memory may be made to the VITAS Hospice, 255 Pitkin St., East Hartford, CT 06108.

The family wishes to extend sincere appreciation to the staff at Harrington Court GHC in Colchester for the loving care they gave to Corinne in her final days.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Brenda Lou Shain

Brenda Lou (Johnson) Shain, 69, a longtime resident of Marlborough, passed away peacefully Monday morning, March 30, at Marlborough Health Care. She is now reunited with her beloved husband Jack. Born Feb. 8, 1940, she was the daughter of the late Wymen and Julia (Anthony) Johnson Jr. She had lived in Marlborough since 1966.

She is survived by her son, Richard V. Shain of East Hartford; two daughters, Teri L. and her husband Phillip Chaput of Portland, and Dianne L. and her husband Herman Voisine Jr. of Marlborough; two sisters, Judy Clarke and her husband David, Barbara Pete and her husband Elwood; four grandchildren, Michelle, Christine, Michael and Joseph; two great grandchildren, Virginia and Kyra; and several nieces and nephews; and a special friend Roger "Joe" Laine.

She was predeceased by her brother Leland Johnson.

She enjoyed making a variety of crafts especially quilting, folk art painting and her crocheting. Brenda had wonderful memories of growing up on the shores of Maine.

A private graveside service was held Thursday, April 2, in Marlboro Cemetery. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton has care of the arrangements.

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

Portland

Philip Gantnier

Philip Gantnier of Berkeley Springs, WV, formerly of Portland, died Tuesday, March 31. Phil retired from Chevron Oil and Peterson Oil, Portland.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn Schilling Gantnier; one daughter, Cindy Gantnier; three step-daughters; five sisters, Mary Dickenson, Leah Potvin, Elsie Karen, Modest Deskus and Faye Mitchell.

Arrangements by Helsley-Johnson Funeral Home, Berkeley Springs, WV.

Portland

Catherine Margaret Tryon

Catherine Margaret Tryon, 95, formerly of Joelle Drive, Portland, died Monday, March 30, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Portland June 29, 1913, the daughter of the late James C. and Mary Ellen (Foley) Tryon, she was a lifelong resident.

She was a teacher having taught in the Middletown and Portland School systems until her retirement several years ago. She was a member of the Portland AARP and the Portland Garden Club. She was a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary and a member of the Ladies' Guild.

She is survived by her niece, Beverly M. Tryon of Boston, MA, and her nephew, James C. Tryon of Hamden.

She was predeceased by her brother, James A. Tryon.

Her family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Thursday, April 2. Funeral services will be held Friday, April 3, at 10:15 a.m., from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home and at 11 a.m. in the Church of Saint Mary for a Mass of Christian Burial. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in her memory may be sent to the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480 or to the Weiss Hospice Unit of Middlesex Hospital, c/o Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Portland

Irving Emerson

Irving Emerson, 81, of Susan Circle, Portland, died Sunday, March 29, in his home. He was the husband of the late Elaine Anthony Emerson. Born in Boston, MA, Dec. 1, 1927, the son of the late Carl and Ruth Seavey Emerson, he had lived in Hartford before moving to Portland many years ago.

He was a machinist and had been employed by several area companies including Chandler and Evans, Terry Steam Turbine, and Hartford Special. He also had worked for the *Middletown Press* and the Tri-Town Market for 10 years. He had served his country in the U.S. Merchant Marines. Irving was a Mason for 54 years, a member of the Friendship Lodge of Manchester. He was an avid fly-fisherman and a member of Trout Unlimited and a charter member of the Farmington River Association. He also was an avid Red Sox Fan.

Irving is survived by his daughter, Karen Kurimay of Portland; his sons, Carl Emerson and his wife Jamie of Cleveland, OH, and Phillip Emerson and his wife Maureen of Chicopee, MA; his grandsons, Mark S. Kurimay of Cromwell and Blake C. Emerson of East Windsor; and his great-grandchildren, Cynthia Elaine Emerson, Javier Emerson, and Blake Anthony Emerson.

His family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Wednesday, April 1. Family burial with Military Honors will be private in Cedar Hill Cemetery.

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

East Hampton

Robert Richard Kochuk

Robert Richard Kochuk, 19, of East Hampton, beloved son of Samuel and Janel (Blow) Kochuk, died suddenly Thursday, March 26, in East Hampton. Born in Middletown on June 6, 1989 he was a lifelong resident of East Hampton, a 2007 graduate of Vinal Tech, and a 2008 graduate of Baron Institute. He was employed by Windsor Sanitation as a diesel mechanic.

Besides his parents he is survived by two brothers, Ryan and Brandon Kochuk both of East Hampton; and a sister Rachelle Kochuk of East Hampton; grandparents Russell and Cheryl Blow, Samuel and Florence Kochuk, Janice Stanley and Nancy Chesley; great-grandparents Evelyn and Paul Blow and Rita Rankl; aunts and uncle Dawn Brown, Holly and Robert Grant and Susie Chesley; also many cousins and friends.

Robert was a fun, lovable, and goofy guy, who loved his quads and trucks. His friends were very important to him. He will be greatly missed by all who loved him for he was "our sunshine."

A memorial service was held Tuesday, March 31, in the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial followed in Lakeview Cemetery. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home Monday evening, 5-7 p.m.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Epoch Arts, 27 Skinner St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

Hebron

Milton S. Button Jr

Milton S. Button Jr. of Hebron, born Oct. 11, 1925, in Middletown to the late Milton S. Sr. and Ellen Louise (Johnson) Button, died Saturday, March 28, at Marlborough Health Care.

Milton was married Oct. 11, 1947, to Eleanor Alice Blish at the Congregational Church of Marlborough. He attended West Hartford schools and was a 1947 graduate of Hall High School. He formerly lived in West Hartford, Marlborough, East Hartford, Manchester, Colchester and East Hampton. He was a 52-year member of the Congregational Church of Marlborough, having served on numerous committees, boards and councils. His church memberships included South Park Methodist, Hartford, First Baptist, West Hartford, and South Congregational in East Hartford. He was a delegate to U.C.C. 5th General Synod.

He was a constable in Marlborough in 1949. He served in the Connecticut State Guard Co. A 1st BN-1943, also HQ, CO. 1st BN as Sergeant Gr. IV Motor Pool in 1946. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard 1943-1946. He had been employed at Hartford A and I, Aetna Fire Ins., and the Travelers, having retired as a computer systems analyst after 30 years.

He was a past member of Charter Oak Council BSA from 1942-1960, member of Troop 49 West Hartford, Scout Master of Troop 39 Marlborough, Scout Master of Troop 232 East Hartford, George Slye PTA Pres. 1960, George G. Penny H.S. PTA Pres. 1965-1966, 54 year member and Past Master in 1956 of Anchor Lodge No. 112 AF&AM East Hampton and Associate Grand Marshall Dist. 7A 1974-75, past member of Mount Aetna Temple and Travelers Square Club, member of NCT, NUMC and Travelers Woods Campground, member of the COA of Hebron and member of Hebron Seniors, a longtime member of the Republican Party and the Belleville Chapter No. 46 O.E.S. of East Hampton.

He is survived by three daughters, Sarah Poulin and her husband Raymond of Poland ME, Evelyn Bernier and Marilyn Henry of Hebron; nine grandchildren and their spouses, Richard and Ann Sellinger, Michael and Matthew Sellinger all of Maine, Thomas and Lisa Sellinger of New Hampshire, Robert Sellinger of Idaho, Scott Bernier of Hebron, Jennifer Bernier of East Haddam, Brian Henry of Pennsylvania and David and Cynthia Henry of Hebron; eight great-grandchildren, Hannah, Caleb, Dylan, Kaitlyn, Alyssa, Maya, Austin and Liam; a brother- and sister-in-law, John and Jeanette Button of Florida; a sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Dorothy and Almon West of East Hampton, and a brother-in-law E. Allen Blish of FL.

He was predeceased by a sister and brother-in-law, Levinnia Jane (Button) and Emmett Hayes; a granddaughter, Catherine L. Sellinger; sister-in-law, Ruth Gidley, and sister-in-law Joyce (Andelin) Blish.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, April 1, in the Congregational Church of Marlborough, burial will follow in Rose Hill Memorial Park in Rocky Hill. Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, March 31.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Marlborough Congregational Church Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447 or Marlborough Health Care Recreation Fund, 85 Stageharbor Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447.

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

East Hampton

Julia Alice Smith

Julia Alice Smith, 90, formerly of East Hampton, died March 25 at an Orono (ME) health care facility. She was born Jan. 1, 1919, in South Parsonsfield, ME, the oldest daughter of Raymond "Ven" and Edith (Haines) Smith.

During the depression she was a part of a family orchestra and entertaining group, "The Singing Smiths," who provided country music for dances and entertained throughout southern Maine, and at the University of Maine and Eastern States Exposition. The income helped supplement her mother's teaching income and the family farm income. She attended one-room schools in Parsonsfield, plus two years in Limerick schools. She graduated valedictorian from Parsonsfield Seminary in 1937, the University of Maine with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1941, Willimantic State College with a Master of Education, plus extra graduate studies in Connecticut. At the University of Maine, she was a member of Phi Mu Sorority, Omicron Nu-National Home Economics Honor Society, MCA, the University of Maine 4-H Club as the first woman president, and the University Chorus.

She taught home economics in Buckfield, ME, first grade for 16 years in East Hampton, directed preschool at St. Stephens Church, East Haddam, and was on the board of directors and substitute teacher at the Orono Pre-School at Orono United Methodist Church. She taught Sunday school for more than 25 years and was a 4-H leader in Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut, including several great years in a black American community.

She married her classmate, Charles B. Smith Jr., on April 10, 1942, in Abilene, TX, where he was stationed with the reactivated 90th Division at Camp Barkeley. In Abilene, TX, Alice taught Red Cross courses in canteen and nutrition, and was a supervisor in the Red Cross production programs. In Hermon she was a charter member of the PTO, Associate Cub Scout Den Mother and supervised the school lunch program in the then new elementary school. Retiring to Orono in 1978, she and her husband did part-time farming on Main Street for more than 10 years.

She served several terms on Orono Library Board of Trustees, was a member of Friends of the Library and a director emeritus of the Orono Library Foundation. She and her husband were longtime co-chairs of Orono Historical Society and shared a seat on the board of directors of the Page Farm and Home Museum, one of their major interests. She and Charlie were also active in promoting the Orono Land Trust and Edith Patch House. Alice also served a few years as a volunteer and director at large at Treats Falls House. She and her family enjoyed camping in New England and the Provinces, plus the annual visits to Pushaw Lake, where all six children have property.

Alice and her husband enjoyed their home on outer Forest Avenue, where they hosted many groups such as Daughters of the American Revolution, Phi Mu and Alpha Gamma Rho Alumni and college chapter, Greater Pushaw Lake Association, Women of the World Branches and a number of international grad students. Alice's last years of retirement were made comfortable at Dirigo Pines Inn by staff and the incredible love and support of her children, community and extended family.

She is survived by her husband of 67 years, Charles B. Smith Jr. of Orono; six children, Dianne Blackmer of Jefferson, IA, Peter Smith and his wife, Kathy, of East Hampton, Leigh Smith and Gretchen Luxenberg of Seattle, Dana Smith and his wife, Jan Kristo of Orono, Louise Smith and Carmen DiBuono of Orrington and Brian Smith and his wife, Susan, of Bangor; one brother, Arnold H. Smith and his wife, Luella, of Parsonsfield; sister-in-law, Nancy Smith of Parsonsfield; eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, many nieces, nephews and cousins.

A service of remembrance was held Sunday, March 29, at Brookings-Smith, LaBeau Chapel, 72 Main St., Orono, with the Rev. Alden Johnson officiating. Friends called Sunday before the service. The family invited relatives and friends to share conversation and refreshments after the service at Stillwater Federated Church, Bennoch Road, Stillwater (ME).

If you would like to remember Alice in a special way, gifts in her memory may be sent to Orono Public Library Foundation, P.O. Box 308, Orono, ME 04473 or Page Farm and Home Museum, care of University of Maine Foundation, 2 Alumni Place, Orono, ME 04469-5792.

Condolences to the family may be expressed at www.BrookingsSmith.com.