

RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Food Bank Donation... The Colchester BNI has collected items for the town food bank for several months. Pictured is Greg Radding, the BNI Event Coordinator, dropping off the first batch of donated Food Items to First Selectman Linda Hodge. See story on page 32.

Andover Voters Pass Budget

by Sarah McCoy

At the conclusion of the annual Town Meeting earlier this month Andover Board of Finance Vice Chair Cathy Desrosiers and First Selectman Bob Burbank said they felt confident that voters would pass the proposed 2009-10 budget on the first try.

Those are strong words in a town that typically takes at least two or three go-arounds before a number is palatable to voters. Nevertheless, Desrosiers and Burbank proved to be right, as voters Monday approved the \$10.41 million budget by a count of 191-70.

"It was a joint effort by the Board of Selectmen and town employees who didn't take raises," Burbank said. "By holding the mill rate to the existing tax rate we met the needs of the taxpayers."

Selectman Jay Lindy agreed.

"If we didn't have the zero increase to the mill rate this budget wouldn't have passed," Lindy said.

Last year the Board of Selectmen set the mill rate at 27.6 prior to a budget being adopted. This enabled town officials to produce and mail out tax bills in time for collection.

The budget was later voted in at a 27.3 mill rate; however, residents were still charged at the 27.6 rate. The .3 mill rate difference equated to \$83,000 and will be applied to the 2009-10 budget.

Andover resident Jolene Rocks said after voting Tuesday that the allocation of the \$83,000 wasn't good enough for her. "Last year an emergency meeting was held to set the mill rate before we even had a budget," she said. "We were supposed to get a reimbursement of \$200 this year as a result of being overtaxed. Where's that money now? All I see is a budget that's still getting higher."

Burbank responded by saying that it would cost the town in excess of \$10,000 to mail, print and stuff the envelopes for checks to be mailed to individual taxpayers. "The Board of Selectmen felt that it made better sense to take that money plus interest and apply it directly to next year's budget," he said.

He also noted that the difference in mill rates (27.6 vs. 27.3) translated into a 30-cent overtaxation for every \$1,000 of assessed property. That means an average home in Andover, with an assessed value of \$130,000, could expect a refund of \$39. "Some properties, like many motor vehicles in town, would have a refund of less than \$5 meaning that, by charter, we're not obligated to send out a check," Burbank explained. "By applying it to next year's budget all the money is being used to the benefit of taxpayers."

Resident Dennis Foran said it wasn't the bottom line that he had a problem with but rather the content. "As far as a final number, I think it was as good as they could get it but I don't like everything that's behind the numbers," he said. The pay disparity between the assessor and other town employees and the funding for a part-time position at the landfill that's currently vacant were two examples Foran gave of things he'd like to see changed in the budget.

Andover resident Dorothy Yeomans said she voted for the budget because of trust. "We elect leaders for this town," she said on Tuesday. "I trust them to make decisions on where we need to be."

Peter Maneggia Jr. said that he felt the budget was "fine" but was displeased by the voter turnout. "There's an indifference in this town

See Budget on Page 2

Restoration Planned for Colchester's First Firehouse

by Adam Benson

One of Colchester's oldest buildings may soon receive a makeover.

Officials announced this week the municipality received a \$50,000 matching grant from the state Commission on Culture and Tourism's Historic Restoration Fund in April that will be used to renovate and restore the original Fire Station, located in the center of town.

Erected in 1855, the building served as the town's first library, and then in the 1920s it became home to the Fire Department. The fire department stayed there until 1988. And since then, the structure – located in the heart of Colchester's historic district – has fallen into disrepair.

"We're thrilled. The fire house is in the center of our historic area and we're really happy we're going to be able to clean it up and restore it to one of its earlier plans," First Selectman Linda Hodge said. "It's real key to the overall atmosphere and culture of our town."

In addition to weatherproofing it by adding

a new roof, plans call for the removal of the facility's outer two wings to bring it back in line with its original footprint.

Ellen Sharon, chairwoman of Colchester's Historic District Commission, said rejuvenating the building will go a long way toward improving the town's historic center.

"To put it mildly, we're ecstatic that the town will be able to move forward on this," she said. "The building obviously is of great historical significance to the town and it's also located pretty dead center in the middle of our district. It is in a horrendous state of disrepair so we are very excited about restoring it."

In fact, the project has been on the town's radar for nearly a decade.

Matching funds have been set aside since 2001 and a few years ago the project was included on a state bonding agenda that died in the governor's office.

Because it's taken so long to secure state aid, Sharon said the Historic District Commission has been able to play a major role in discus-

sions about the building's future.

"We had input very early on," Sharon said. "This process has been ongoing for years and years and years."

Officials said once the exterior restoration is complete, they'll begin searching for additional grants to help renovate the interior.

The hope is to one day convert the structure into a mixed-use facility that includes a museum for the department's older equipment, including a restored 1935 Federal Pumper.

Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department Chief Walter Cox said the money came through just in time; officials were considering razing the structure due to safety concerns.

"It was getting to the point where something needed to be done or it had to come down," he said. "The building itself could no longer continue to be in the state it's in. Something had to be done."

He said he was happy to hear the building

See Firehouse on Page 2



Colchester's first firehouse, as seen in an archive photo provided by the town historical society. Go to page 10 to see what the building looks like today.



The plans for the restoration of the firehouse call for the removal of the facility's outer two wings, to bring it back in line with its original footprint.

Firehouse continued from Front Page

would enjoy a second life given the role it's played in the town's history.

"It sits in the center of town and was a mainstay of the Fire Department," Cox said.

Sharon said preservationists will closely monitor the facade improvements to make sure they fit the character of the historic district and are in step with the building's original look.

"Where our commission will come into play is in determining all of the facade of the building will be appropriate," Sharon said.

Once the funds are released, work on the project will be begin almost immediately, and Hodge said officials hope to see them completed

by this winter.

"We won't even begin to move forward until we're 100 percent guaranteed the funds are there," she said. "Until we receive the Attorney General's signature on the contract, there still is the possibility we might lose the money."

Hodge credited former town intern Stacy Fernandez with helping to write the grant, and said despite bureaucratic formalities, town leaders are anxious to see the building overhauled.

"I'm relieved that we got the grant because now we can remove an eyesore from the center of town and maintain one of our historic structures," Hodge said. "It's really sad it has disintegrated."

Budget continued from Front Page

that I'm disappointed to see," he said.

Tuesday's referendum drew 261 voters, for a turnout rate of just 11.6 percent.

The ballot also contained two advisory questions for voters to answer. When asked for an opinion on the town government budget, 147 voters said the budget was too high while only 52 said it was too low. On the education side, 143 voters said the budget was too high and 63 said it was too low.

These questions have no impact on the adoption of the budget but are used by town officials to gauge public support for town spending.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I don't always agree with Richard Blumenthal.

Sometimes our attorney general can be a little overzealous for my tastes. While sometimes his complaints are spot-on, other times they seem more like attempts to get his face on the 6 o'clock news.

But I support him 100 percent in the stance he took last week, when he asked federal authorities to investigate the recent rise in gas prices. This was in response to a letter he received from the Gasoline & Automotive Service Dealers of America, asking him to look into the matter. According to that organization, national inventories of gas are at an 18-year high, while demand is at a seven-year low. And yet, by looking at the way the gas prices have risen, you'd think that *demand* was high and *supply* was low.

I know what some of you are already thinking, that at this time a year ago we'd have been overjoyed at the sight of gas for \$2.50 a gallon. As I've written here before, after seeing gas hit \$4.25 a gallon last summer, I didn't really think gasoline would be this low again. And that is helping to keep things in perspective, somewhat. But that doesn't explain the rising prices.

Every day on my way into work, I pass a Mobil station. There's a red light by the station, so I usually have a chance to sit there and look at the numbers while I wait for the light to turn green. In late March, that gas was hovering around \$1.90 a gallon. Since that time, it's gone up, and up, and on Thursday, when driving in, it was up to \$2.41. That Mobil station is hardly alone. Gas prices across the state have been spiking, dramatically. According to the latest AAA fuel gauge report, as of Thursday morning, gas in the Hartford area is now averaging \$2.46 a gallon, up 31 cents from just one month ago.

It needs to stop.

I know this is the time of year when gas prices do rise a little, as summer approaches and people typically get ready for their summer vacations. But this is not a typical year. While it's true the economy has been showing slight signs of improvement, it's still not where it needs to be, nor has it really trickled down to the individual consumer yet. Companies are still closing, cutbacks are still taking place, and as a result retail spending is still off and people still aren't driving. This won't be a typical summer for vacations because many Americans simply won't have the money to *take* vacations. Do I hope that eventually the economy *will* rebound, and that people *will* be able to afford vacations again? Of course I do, but we're not there yet, and, by increasing their prices 31 cents in one month, the gas station owners are acting like we are.

That's why I hope the federal authorities take Blumenthal up on his request and look into things. Hopefully the spikes at the pump will subside a little bit. And if the economy happens to instantly improve, and the Clark Griswolds of the world start immediately piling their broods into the Family Truckster for a cross-country drive, don't worry, gas station owners will be more than capable of raising gas prices overnight. They know how to do that all too well.

* * *

Every Thursday I plop myself down on my couch and tune into the two-hour comedy block on NBC, from 8-10 p.m., which features *My Name is Earl*, *Parks & Recreation* (which started kinda ho-hum but has gotten gradually better each week), *The Office* and *30 Rock*. Last Thursday night brought the season finales for all four shows, so my Thursday night comedy tradition is kaput until the fall. Maybe they'll show repeats but I'm not sure. (Side note: I miss the old days when they just showed reruns in the summer, instead of all this reality slop.) And actually, even in the fall, the block won't be the same, as NBC announced this week they're cancel-

ing *My Name is Earl*, after four years on the air.

The news disappointed me a little. While I don't enjoy the show quite as much as when it first debuted, it did have a nice bounceback season this year, after a misguided third season that saw the title character be sent to jail and then wind up in a coma (both of which kept him away from the show's great supporting cast of characters too much of the time). And while the show might not be as hilarious as *The Office* or *30 Rock* (in my opinion, the two funniest shows on TV), it's still a pleasant half-hour, surprisingly sweet at times, with a few bona fide laugh-out-loud moments each week. I think there's still life in the show, and evidently its producers do too. After NBC canceled it, word circulated that the show was being shopped to ABC and Fox. As of this writing, I don't know if either network is going to bite, but I hope they do.

Another reason I'm hoping for a renewal is the show ended on a cliffhanger, with Crabman demanding to know from Joy who the father of her son (whom he previously thought was his) is. It was a rather gutsy move for the show to end with a "to be continued..." screen, especially since *Earl's* future with NBC has been far from certain for a few months now (whereas renewals for *The Office* and *30 Rock* were announced a while ago). If Fox or ABC picks it up for next season, then we'll get to see how it all plays out. If not, then *My Name is Earl* will go down in history as another show that ends its run on a cliffhanger (much like *ALF* or *Las Vegas* – both of which were, interestingly, NBC shows).

* * *

This week also saw the season finale of *24*. Like *My Name is Earl*, the show had a bounceback season, after a rather ridiculous sixth season (which actually aired two years ago; thanks to the writer's strike last year, *24* took all of 2007-08 off, as there weren't enough installments in the can for a whole 24-episode season). In fact, *24* has been top-notch all season, keeping me on the edge of my seat like it has so many times before. (I've been a regular *24* watcher since its second season, in 2002-03.)

This season will go down as the one in which Jack Bauer repents for all that he's done during prior seasons, including shooting people in the knee, shocking them with wires from a lamp, and various other ways he'd try to get people to talk. ("Tell me where the weapon is!! *Damn it!!!!*!") It was all in the name of justice, and Jack is not, nor has he ever been, an evil man. But many people thought a season like this was necessary for *24*; that Jack Bauer had gone too far and needed redemption. In fact, a few years ago, after the Guantanamo Bay photos surfaced and rumors of torture or near-torture by those in the Bush administration started to swirl, some people started saying *24* was to blame, that some in the military saw Jack routinely torture terrorists in order to extract information he needed, and they'd get ideas of what to do with suspects.

I found the whole thing ridiculous, mainly because *24* is.... how can I put this delicately.... a *fictional television show*. These aren't little kids we're talking about; these are grown men and women. If you're of the mind that torture is abhorrent behavior, then *24* isn't going to change your outlook. Likewise, if you think torturing someone is OK, then you can watch a marathon of *Little House on the Prairie* and you'll still go out and cut somebody's finger off to get them to spill the beans. And if you really *are* so wishy-washy and impressionable that you'll let a fictional character in a TV drama decide for you whether you should torture someone.....well, then you've got some fairly significant problems of your own, and it's not fair to blame them on Kiefer Sutherland now, is it?

* * *

See you next week.

Retirement Helps Marlborough BOE Trim Budget

by Adam Benson

Marlborough voters will return to the polls June 1 to take another shot at adopting a spending plan for next year. Only this time around, the proposed budget has the backing of two key factions – the boards of finance and education.

Monday night, the Board of Education (BOE) unanimously approved a revised \$6.96 million budget for fiscal year 2009-10, in an effort to meet the Board of Finance's mandate from last week.

"It appears we're right on the mark now with the budget the Board of Finance approved," BOE member John O'Toole said. "I think that this is workable."

Last week, the BOF told the BOE to trim \$28,000 from its budget, so on Monday school board members signed off on a plan that would reduce teachers' classroom budgets from \$300 to \$200 and reduce spending on instructional supplies by an additional \$2,000. But the biggest savings came following the retirement of a district employee.

Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo – who wouldn't identify the person until the employee's departure was officially approved by the board – said the employee submitted a letter hours before Monday night's meeting, informing Menzo of the retirement.

That move was expected to result in more than \$20,700 going back to the district. Last week, the BOF convened to craft a new budget, after voters shot down a proposed \$20.96 million at the May 11 town meeting. The 188-171 vote was largely due to concerns many people had about deep cuts to education and a 3.56 percent tax increase.

BOF members said last week they were confident residents would accept a new budget if more money was given back to the school district and with the BOE's endorsement.

Board of Education members discussed other options to hit their number, including taking money away from AHM Youth Services, the district's summer reading program or passing on custodial costs to the town and organizations.

But several school board members balked at

that idea.

"I always thought this building and keeping it open and being supportive of sports programs in town as an educational service," Karen McKinney said

Her colleague, James Angelo, said he was opposed to stripping away any additional money toward AHM or the troubled summer reading program.

"AHM should not be touched," he said, and added, "The only reason I would consider taking something away from the summer literacy is if you could guarantee the reduction of one teacher is not going to disrupt the process."

While the board stayed away from programming reductions this year, members implied they could be revisited later – especially the idea of setting up a user fee for the summer reading program.

Elmer Theines-Mary Hall Elementary School Principal Loraine Giannini acknowledged the offering struggles with its attendance rates, and even backed the idea of setting up a payment structure for parents who want their children to participate.

"I feel a fee would probably promote attendance," she said. "It would be most advantageous for the children to come at the time we're offering it."

BOE Chairwoman Maria Grove also supporting looking into the idea.

"That might be an interesting way to move some money around and be creative," she said.

But the focus for now is moving a budget through town meeting, and First Selectman Bill Black said Tuesday he was appreciative both entities could come to a compromise and publicly back it.

"I think we get caught up in our strength to do the very best for the board we represent, and the process was very intense this year. With that that level of intensity, I think it's very difficult sometimes to sit back and clear your head and think it through," he said. "A budget was arrived at that meets both parties' needs but respects the needs of our residents."

New Traffic Lights Coming to Exit 13 in Marlborough

by Adam Benson

One of Marlborough's best-traveled intersections will soon become a lot safer.

First Selectman Bill Black said this week the state Department of Transportation (DOT) will install a pair of traffic lights at each exit ramp from the intersection of Exit 13 off Route 2.

The project was included in a package bid awarded recently by the State Traffic Commission that included many traffic signal upgrades across the state. Black said the DOT will release bids June 3, and the traffic lights should be in place within a year.

He said he was unsure how much the venture would cost since it was rolled into a larger spending plan, but the state is covering all costs.

The town first asked for the installation of traffic lights at the intersection back in 2007. The following year, DOT re-lined the roadway to include a left-hand turning lane in all four directions and put down crosswalks.

"What we have observed is that we have so many people heading eastbound on Route 66 going to Hebron that traffic was actually backing up onto the highway," Black said.

According to traffic count data maintained on DOT's website, the intersection of routes 2 and 66 sees about 14,600 vehicles a day.

"There's a tremendous amount of traffic there and it's climbing," Black said. "There are a lot of people who use Route 2 that live in the western side of Hebron." As a result, the number of wrecks and continual congestion problems in

the area have steadily risen.

Though last year's alterations have helped traffic flow, Black said more needed to be done to make the intersection safer and more efficient.

"One of the reasons for re-lining it immediately was to alleviate people trying to pass on the shoulder lane," Black said. "The re-designation of lanes westbound did a lot to help, but you still had the volume that results in the backup on Route 2."

Black said DOT officials conducted traffic studies and reviewed State Police incident reports before qualifying the project. He's confident the new signals will make the thoroughfare safer for motorists and pedestrians.

"I'm very pleased that the state is going to be providing it," he said. "It will definitely improve the safety conditions and the problems that have been experienced."

In April, town officials said they received nearly \$500,000 in federal stimulus funds earmarked for improvements to the Park and Ride commuter lot off Route 2.

Black said that project and the Exit 13 intersection were the two biggest areas of concern for town leaders.

"Those were the red-flag areas. The other concern that we have is a continued vigilance on enforcing posted speed limits," Black said. "The reality is people seem to be going faster and faster every day, and that creates a danger."

Lunch Prices Going Up at Colchester Schools

by Adam Benson

Starting in the fall, students at the Colchester schools will pay more for their meals.

Last week, the Board of Education unanimously voted to increase prices for breakfast and lunch by 25 cents at all four of the town's schools to keep pace with rising purchasing costs and increased health insurance premiums for cafeteria employees.

The new price of breakfast at Colchester Elementary School (CES), Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS) and William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS) will be \$1.15 and \$1.50 at Bacon Academy. Lunch prices will be \$2 at CES, JJIS and WJMS and between \$2.50 and \$3 at Bacon Academy.

The move marks the first time since the 2005-06 school year that meal prices have been increased.

Facilities Director Gregory Plunkett said the new price structure isn't designed to boost the program's profit margin, but to stay ahead of steadily increasing costs.

"We're just trying to keep up," he said. An exact revenue figure is "pretty fluid, because a lot of it depends on how many kids buy lunch."

Board of Education Chairman William Hettrick said school board members signed off on the proposal after learning even with the increase, the prices of meals in Colchester's schools remain below those of surrounding towns.

For example, Berlin schools charge \$2.70 for middle school lunches and \$2.90 for high school. In Southington, it costs \$2.50 for a middle school lunch and \$2.75 at the high school level.

"We're very cautious about [raising prices], because we're very focused on the parents and what they can afford," Hettrick said. "But we felt it was an important thing to do so we could afford the program."

Colchester's meal program is self-sustaining, meaning its budget is not subsidized by the town, Board of Education or taxpayers.

In order for that to continue, Hettrick said it became clear an increase to meal prices would be needed.

"If we don't raise the prices, then we'd have to supplement it through the Board of Education budget, and that is not the intent," he said.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said she requested an "extensive analysis" of the cafeteria program before endorsing any changes to meal prices.

"When we looked at the comparative prices with other districts and saw we were charging the lowest amount, we felt more justified in suggesting the increase," she said. "We looked hard at that but because there's no money in the budget, we had to make sure the program could continue to be self-sustaining."

Denise Salmoiraghi, the district's food service director, said the cost of food has increased nine percent from last year and is expected to jump by another 3 percent this year.

Specific commodities are well above that rate. The unit price of rice has gone from \$17.83 in 2007-08 to \$30.74 this year – a 92 percent uptick. Wheat roll prices have leapt by 29.5 percent while milk has gone up by 22 percent.

Salmoiraghi was resigned to the lunch price increase, although she clearly wasn't enthusiastic about it.

"I dislike doing it but even with an increase we are still charging less than a lot of other school systems," she said. "We are self-supporting in every way, which means that our labor costs, any benefits, repairs or new equipment purchases all come out of the cafeteria budget."

Salmoiraghi said the program continues to run in the black, and the increased prices should help to ensure that continues to happen.

"I do know of some school systems that are having a lot of trouble meeting monthly bills," she said. "We're doing OK but we want to make sure we're keeping our heads above the water."

Hettrick said his board likely would have voted down any price fluctuations had the district already been charging similar amounts as its neighbors.

"If we were at the top of the scale with our meal prices, the board would have been very concerned, but we're well within the norm," Hettrick said.

Portland BOE Looks at Ways to Handle Budget

by Michael McCoy

While Portland's budget may have passed last week, the local Board of Education's work on its 2009-10 spending plan was far from over.

During the budget process, \$539,872 was cut from the \$17.70 million 2009-10 school budget the Board of Education (BOE) adopted in January. The school board met Tuesday to discuss how to tackle those cuts.

However, the outlook is not as bleak as some may have feared.

Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen said at the start of the meeting, "We've all agreed one of our major goals is to avoid layoffs." She also offered a list of proposed cuts and other budget adjustments that managed to do just that.

Before school board members even got a chance to talk cuts, Doyen presented some fortuitous news: When she was putting together the 2009-10 budget, Doyen said was instructed to anticipate a 15 percent increase in health insurance costs for the 2009-10 year. However, it turns out those costs are rising a mere 3 percent, which will save them \$253,650.

A small savings Doyen suggested is ceasing the printing of a district calendar, and exclusively offering it online. This measure would save the town \$3,230. Doyen also proposed reducing summer custodial work, as well as summer secretarial services at the elementary school, saving a combined \$10,626. Doyen seemed especially dismayed by the secretarial trimming, calling it a service that's "very, very helpful to the community."

Federal stimulus money helped the BOE save

various positions, such as special education and reading specialists. BOE Chairman Chris Phelps said that without the insurance savings and stimulus money, they would have been forced to cut programs and staff.

Doyen also suggested eliminating \$2,376 either through a reduction in central office supplies or through a "superintendent giveback" (i.e., a reduction in her salary). BOE member Christopher Bongo said this cut should be through the supplies, and noted that none of the BOE unions ended up making concessions. "No other union was willing to give back; I don't think the superintendent should," Bongo said.

Finally, Doyen proposed leaving two vacancies each partially unfilled. By only filling the custodial and media specialist positions each half time, the district would save \$67,577.

Doyen did not exactly seem excited about any of the cuts she proposed, but, she said, "I think they will have the least overall impact to the student classrooms."

The BOE will vote on the cuts during their next meeting, Tuesday, June 2. However, even if the school board approves this draft of cuts, there is one more problem the board may have to deal with. Because of larger than anticipated participation, magnet school tuition is rising from \$46,000 to \$68,000. Assuming those students remain at those magnet schools, the BOE would have to come up with another \$22,000 to make up the difference.

AHM Beefs Up Program Slate for Summer

by Sarah McCoy

With calls coming in from parents earlier than ever, AHM Youth and Family Services has expanded their programming for the upcoming summer.

“With the economy the way it is families are opting not to travel like they may have in the past,” AHM Director Joel Rosenberg said last week. “We’re responding to the community need by expanding some of our most popular programs.”

Rosenberg explained that because of AHM’s budget restrictions, any new programs must be self-sufficient.

One of the biggest changes for the summer includes a slight modification for AHM’s oldest program – Summer Youth Theater. In the past the annual production has been open to students who have just completed grades 5-12. This year, however, the program will be split in two.

Children who have just completed grades 4-6 will be encouraged to participate in the junior version of the program which will operate more as a theatrical workshop, play director Mary Rose Meade explained. Those students who have completed grades 7-12 will still have the opportunity to participate in the standard Summer Youth Theater production.

This year’s show will be Disney’s *Mulan*.

The change in programming has been in discussion for years as the number of student participants has surged. “When I first started in 1992, there were 32 kids,” Meade said. “This year we were looking at 110-120 participants. That’s too much. It ceases to become a learning experience and just becomes crowd control.”

AHM will run two sessions of the junior Summer Youth Theater. Each session will run for two weeks from 6-8:45 p.m. Monday through Friday. The first session begins on June 22 and ends on July 2. The second session will run from July 6-16. The cost is \$115 per session though scholarships are available on an as-needed basis.

The focus of the younger sessions will be on theater education, Meade explained. Students will learn performance and communication skills with a culminating production the final night of class. Students are invited to participate in both sessions as the groups will be slightly different.

The junior Summer Youth Theater will be run by RHAM alumni and former Summer Youth Theater participants Sara Warner and Leah Gilbert. Warner recently graduated with a theater degree while Gilbert currently works as a fifth grade teacher.

The new format, Meade feels, will benefit students in the long run. “By the time they get to be [at the senior level] the kids will have an understanding of the basics,” she said. “That means we can take on more down the road.”

Auditions for the senior production will be held Wednesday, May 27, from 2:30-5 p.m. at the auditorium at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St., Hebron. Cost to participate will be \$150. Performance dates this year will be July 23-25.

Jazz for Juniors will also expand this summer. The program is run by professional musician and Hebron resident Dominic Marino. Marino estimates that he’s run the program for about 7 years for students in grades 7-10. The program focuses on students learning improvisational techniques, becoming comfortable as part of an ensemble, and learning how to create music.

This summer Marino will run a second program to include younger students. Sessions will each be an hour and a half long and will run every day for one week. The first session, for students in grade 7-10, will run from July 27-31. The session for students in grades 5-7 will be held the following week, Aug. 3-7.

Seventh grade students are eligible for either session and will be placed by their level of proficiency with the instrument.

This summer AHM is also continuing its partnership with the Hebron Parks and Recreation Department to offer Teen Camp. This is the camp’s third year and will run for seven one-week sessions with each week featuring two field trips. Field trips include tubing down the Farmington River, Ocean Beach Park, Six Flags, and Lake Compounce. When they’re not on field trips teens will be able to use the AHM Teen Center, the skate park and other town facilities.

“The program was developed for kids that are too old for the traditional summer camp but not quite ready to stay home alone,” Parks and Recreation Program Coordinator Josselyn Salafia explained. “It’s a great way for teens to have fun with their friends all summer.”

Salafia estimates that there were about 15 teens each week at last’s years camp. She expects the same if not higher numbers this year.

The camp is open to teens from Andover, Marlborough and Hebron.

Registration is now open for all AHM summer programs. Those interested in signing up may contact AHM at 228-9488. Those interested in registering for the Teen Camp can do so through the Parks and Recreation Department at 228-5971.

Portland BOS, Gospel Lane Owners Discuss Ordinance

by Michael McCoy

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) met Wednesday night to discuss the proposed bulk fuel storage ordinance. Though no action was taken, the BOS did make some tweaks to the proposal and set a date for another public hearing.

Last month, the selectmen sent a draft ordinance to public hearing that would prohibit bulk fuel storage. Fifty or more people showed up to the May 6 hearing, both supporting and criticizing the ordinance.

The original ordinance, defined “bulk” as 1,000 or more gallons of liquid, 1,000 or more cubic feet of gas, or 1,000 or more cubic yards of a solid. It defines “fuel” as “any material used to produce heat by burning, and included kerosene, liquid petroleum gas, propane, natural gas, wood, and coal. Exemptions included existing businesses, as well as motor vehicle filling stations.

During the May 6 hearing, some critics of the ordinance expressed trepidation that the ordinance would crimp existing business and discourage new ones.

At Wednesday night’s BOS meeting, the selectmen amended the draft, most notably to change the “bulk” threshold from more than 1,000 gallons to more than 2,000 gallons. The new draft also places no ceiling on the amount of storage, as long as that property is not engaged in distribution or resale, and deletes all other fuels from the ordinance, changing it from a bulk fuel ordinance to bulk propane ordinance.

The new draft of the ordinance also says that a distribution facility that exceeds 2,000 gallons not be abutting a residential property, and must be hooked into a public water source. If these two prerequisites are met, distribution and resale would be allowed, no matter the size of the tanks. The prior draft prohibited bulk storage despite these two items being met.

As First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield looked for consensus among the selectmen, BOS member Sharon Peters said, “I think the changes we’ve talked about are appropriate and

address most of the concerns.”

Bransfield felt the changes were substantial enough to warrant another public hearing, and the selectmen voted 7-0 to set the next one for 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 3, at Brownstone Intermediate School, 314 Main St.

During the public remarks at the end of the meeting, Ken Woronoff criticized the town for not hiring an expert to aid with the ordinance. (Woronoff and his brother Bruce own Gospel Lane Properties, which last fall filed an application to construct a bulk storage facility on Gospel Lane. The application was later rescinded. The town was primed to hire an expert, but never followed through after the application was withdrawn.)

“The third-party consultant was going to be hired to review a specific application,” Bransfield responded, and said an ordinance change is a different story.

“We’re ensuring public health and safety at large in the town,” she continued, adding that the 2,000-gallon threshold was put in the ordinance as a result of conferring to Fire Marshal Ray Sadjak.

Woronoff and his brother have been somewhat demonized publicly since their first application for a bulk propane storage facility was submitted last fall. Both had much to say following Wednesday night’s meeting.

“How do you validate the information that is given to you?” Woronoff said, figuring that anyone could make their opinions known, but hard numbers used in an ordinance of this sort should be acquired from experts.

He said Gospel Lane Properties has always met or exceeded the requirements of the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 58, the section that addresses liquefied petroleum gas.

Woronoff alluded to the selectmen batting around the notion of mandating a minimum radius around such a facility, in proximity to residences. Though their applications easily met the NFPA standard, residents worried about what would occur in the case of a Boiling Liq-

uid Expanding Vapor Explosion (BLEVE). When asked what would happen to the surrounding homes if a BLEVE did occur, Woronoff responded, “The tanks were going to be buried in the ground,” adding, “There is no possibility of a BLEVE.”

With many of the other fuels that were stricken from the new draft ordinance, Woronoff said this further crystallized the effort as a “thinly-veiled disguise to go after propane.”

Woronoff also brought up the Cromwell Planning and Zoning Commission’s recent approval of a bulk propane storage facility in that town. He said construction is set for this summer, and the facility is to have 60,000 worth of above ground tanks initially and ultimately 90,000 gallons. He said this facility is as close or closer to Brownstone Intermediate School in Portland as Gospel Lane’s proposed site was from the Portland High School/Middle School complex.

He also mentioned and supplied a partial list of sites in the state that contain bulk storage as defined by Portland. This list included Dream Development in East Hampton (a site with 26,000 gallons worth of bulk fuel storage), St. Clements Castle in Portland (totaling 6,000 gallons) and other area sites, including Demers, a petroleum company in Glastonbury, totaling 90,000 gallons; a site in Plainville with 270,000 gallons and sites in Rocky Hill and Trumbull totaling 700,000 gallons each.

When asked if he and his brother expected the uproar that followed their application in town, Woronoff responded, “No, and nobody did,” including the brothers’ lawyer, technical consultants and Planning and Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes. He said his NFPA compliance engineer Richard Lavengood even told him it was an ideal location.

Woronoff said the town’s fire chief and fire marshal both saw no problem with the plan initially, but said the sentiments of the former cooled once public reaction took hold.

Woronoff said three factors have contributed to the hostile reception: the explosion in Toronto last August, “the power of the Internet” and the “lack of accountability of our opponent.” (“Nobody has [opponents of the proposal] validate their facts,” he said.)

However, both brothers said they understood the interest of residents in the immediate area, and Bruce Woronoff commented that if it were him, “I’d be concerned about anything that’s going in there.”

But, Ken Woronoff said, “Once this is in the ground, you’re not even going to know this is there.”

He also pointed out that he and his wife are 50 percent owners of the strip mall where Dairy Queen is located, which abuts the property where the formerly proposed facility would sit. “The last thing I would do,” he said, “is do something that would jeopardize another of my own properties.” He also noted that his wife is a teacher at the high school.

Also, Woronoff said, he and his brother are longtime residents and here to stay. “We’re not developers from Chicago” trying to push through some “cheap and dirty deal,” he said.

“It’s very easy to scare people,” Bruce Woronoff said, who also added, “We’ve had a lot of support from the business people we’ve talked to in town.”

Bruce Woronoff added, “All of our friends in town feel we have been done a disservice,” though he said he did not expect them to take a public stand on the matter.

When asked what their next step would be, should the town eventually approve a bulk fuel storage prohibition ordinance, Woronoff said, “We would have our lawyer review the way they’ve gone about this.”

The Woronoffs’ attorney has said Gospel Lane Properties intends to wait to see how the situation regarding the proposed ordinance plays out before they decide whether to refile.

Hebron Science Fair Project Takes Home International Gold

by Sarah McCoy

For many parents, the question “why?” from a child might bring about a cringe or, at the least, exacerbate impatience. For Ellen and Paul Oei, “why”’s were encouraged.

“We’ve always wanted [our children] to be curious and interested in how the world works,” Ellen said last week.

The inquisitive nature has remained in the Oeis’ eldest two children, who have achieved great success at national and international science fair competitions.

Theresa Oei, now a sophomore at East Catholic High School, took first place in the Applied Sciences category at the Connecticut Science Fair in 2006. She later traveled down to Washington, D.C. to compete in the Discovery Channel Young Scientist program. Last year, she qualified for the International Science and Engineering Fair in Atlanta to present her project on using seashells to detoxify contaminated ground water.

And now younger sister Bridget is following in Theresa’s footsteps, as she too entered the Connecticut Science Fair this year.

Bridget got her inspiration for her project from her very first trip to New York City last fall. “I stood in Grand Central Station amazed at how many people were passing through,” she explained. “That’s when I thought about how we could collect the energy of the people who walk through the train station every day.”

For her project, Bridget developed a prototype of a piezoelectric tile. The tile is designed with crystals on the inside to collect the energy of any vibrations that it feels. That energy can then be transmitted for uses such as powering lights.

Her presentation captured first place in the Physical Sciences category at the Connecticut Science Fair last fall. She also took first place in the Goodrich Engineering category, the Women in Engineering category and the E-smarts category.

Thanks to her victory in the E-smarts category, Bridget traveled down to Houston, TX, last month for the International Sustainable World for Engineering, Environment, and Energy Project (ISWEEP) Olympiad. While she was there she competed against middle-school aged students from all over the world in the energy category. Bridget took home the top gold medal and grand prize for her project.

She said she’d like to take her presentation further, eventually seeing if she can get the tiles installed somewhere. However, Ellen isn’t quite ready to volunteer the destruction of her kitchen floor for the project just yet.

At the very least, Bridget will get to present her project one more time at the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford when it opens later this summer.

Bridget said a similar design has already been implemented in Japan. While her prototype cost just under \$20 to make, Bridget found that mass producing them could bring the cost down to just under 11 cents per tile, making it a cost-effective approach to creating renewable energy.

Even though next year’s science fair is still a ways away, Bridget has already begun thinking about a project. While she doesn’t have any specific ideas just yet, she wants to stick with renewable energy. “I think it’s really important and relevant today,” she said.



Hebron resident Bridget Oei, 13, recently took home both state and international awards for her science project on using piezoelectric crystals to capture and transmit energy.

Bridget, who is home-schooled, said she envisions herself in a science-related career someday. Not only does she enjoy the research and discovery aspect, but the well-spoken teenager is honing her skills as a presenter. “We tell our kids, ‘What good is an idea if you can’t communicate it?’” Ellen said.

Over these past few months, Bridget has had plenty of opportunities to explain her project to a number of different crowds. “I’ve devel-

oped more confidence and better communication skills,” she said of the science fair process. “It’s something that I can’t wait to do again.”

Bridget said she’s unfazed by her or her sister’s success at science fairs. “As long as I do something scientific and worthwhile to the planet it doesn’t really matter what I get,” she said.

Portland’s Former First Selectman Remembered Fondly

by Michael McCoy

Family and former colleagues looked back this week on the life of Wes Pierini, the town’s First Selectman from 1989-93, who passed away earlier this month.

“He was a dedicated person and a dedicated Democrat,” Bernadatte Dillon, Portland’s Town Clerk since 1977, said.

Pierini, 78, died May 8 of complications from pneumonia and dementia at Middlesex Hospital. He was born in Pawtucket, RI, on June 25, 1930, to Louis and Ruth Pierini. In 1954, he married Jean Colacci, and the two moved to Portland two years later. They went on to have six kids, all of whom still live in Connecticut.

Pierini worked at Pratt & Whitney from 1954 until he became First Selectman, but his career in local politics is perhaps how most in town know him best.

Pierini was a longtime member of the Democratic Town Committee and served as its chairman for a period in the 1980s. From 1975-83, he was a Board of Finance member and, in 1983, won a bid for a seat on the Board of Selectman’s seat. In 1988, he succeeded John Anderson (grandfather of the current selectman of the same name) as First Selectman. When his term was up in 1993, he declined to run again and formally retired.

Pierini also served on Portland’s 2000 Charter Revision Committee.

“Wes and I always worked hand-in-hand,” Dillon said. She said Pierini went out of his way to support her during her first campaign.

Dillon said the Pierinis were “a good Portland family.”

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield also credited Pierini for being instrumental during her first campaign. (She ran for First Selectman unsuccessfully in 2001, and won two years later.) Bransfield explained his instruction: “Go door to door, tell them why you want to run. ... Make sure they know you.”

“He was a hard worker for the Town of Portland,” she said, and added, “He was always there when you needed help.”

Bransfield also said that Pierini was “very



Wes Pierini

careful with money,” chalking up his fiscal prudence as First Selectman to his “roots” on the BOF

Bransfield also lauded his modesty and said, “He was a very loving husband, father and grandfather.” Speaking of Pierini’s virtues, Bransfield said, “If we could all be like that, we’d have a wonderful life.”

Pierini did not limit his public service to politics. For years, he coached the Portland Dukes football team, Portland Little League and was a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Jean Pierini said she and her husband also enjoyed traveling and they helped out with Meals on Wheels. He drove; she served the food. “We just liked being together, I guess,” Jean said.

“He was a people person,” Jean Pierini said. “He always had a smile on his face.”

“He wanted to do the best he could for the Town of Portland,” she added.

Police News

4/27 — Frederick Galvin, 45, of 57 Midwood Farm Rd., was issued a ticket for improper parking, East Hampton Police said.

5/2 — Dylan Wilkins, 18, of 144 West Rd., Colchester, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and operating without a license, police said.

5/2 — Katherine M. Carlson, 21, of 75 Main St., Rockfall, was arrested for third-degree assault, police said.

5/4 — Robert A. Dickenson, 48, of 4 Wangonk Tr., was arrested for fifth-degree larceny, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

5/5 — Daniel Cook, 51, of 16 East High St., was issued a ticket for allowing a dog to roam, police said. He was also arrested 5/12 pursuant to a court-ordered warrant for failure to respond

to an infraction, police added.

5/6 — Stanley J. Patalik, 56, of 790 Waterman Rd., Lebanon, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, police said.

5/8 — Patrick E. Scott, 21, of 27 Fernwood Dr., was arrested pursuant for two counts of second-degree failure to appear and one count of first-degree failure to appear, police said. Scott was also arrested for escaping custody and interfering/resisting an officer, police added.

5/9 — Robert D. Leach, 50, of 28 North Pond Rd., Amston, was issued a ticket for failure to renew registration, police said.

5/13 — Michael P. Distefano, 46, of 48 Barton Hill Rd., was arrested for disorderly conduct and second-degree harassment, police said.

Portland Police News

5/9 — Thomas Foley, 18, of 163 Airline Ave., was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, Portland Police said.

5/16 — Justin Jones, 24, of 315 Main St., was charged with criminal violation of restraining order, police said.

5/17 — Joseph Albert, 27, of 49 Grove St., was charged with reckless driving and failure to drive in proper lane, police said.

Hebron Police News

5/6-Jonathan Morin, 27, of 41 E. High St., East Hampton, was charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace, State Police said.

5/9-David Karpinski, 45, of Warwick, RI, was charged with driving while intoxicated, operating a motor vehicle without a license, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and driving without an insurance card, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

5/10-Adam Bice, 25, of Manchester, was charged with driving under the influence an failure to drive in the proper lane, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

5/7-Patrick Gruss, 31, of 13 Courtney Ter., was charged with disorderly conduct and interfering with an emergency call, State Police said.

5/8-David LaFlamme, 44, of 73 Wildwood Drive, was charged with operating a motor vehicle under a suspended license, State Police said.

5/10-Jamison Cole, 34, of 616 Norwich Ave., was charged with violation of a protective order, third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

5/11-Bruce Higginbotham, 62, of Lake Wales, FL, was charged with driving under the influence and failure to maintain the proper lane, State Police said.

5/12-Joshua Kirby, 24, of 4 Cobble Way, Apt. 5, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

Salem Police News

5/8-Brian Bloom, 48, of 235 Haywardville Rd., Colchester, was charged with driving while intoxicated, traveling too fast for conditions and operating a motor vehicle under a suspended license, State Police said.

5/9-Dave Russ, 28, of Norwich, was charged with intimidation and second-degree harassment, State Police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Frank O. Lamprey

Frank O. Lamprey, Jr., 67, of Colchester, beloved husband of Laura (Cardoza) Lamprey, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, May 13. Born July 18, 1941, in Hartford, he was a son of the late Francis and Rose (Battaline) Lamprey Sr.

A proud Army veteran, he served during the Lebanon Conflict. On Nov. 25, 1961, he and Laura were married in Hartford. Mr. Lamprey was an avid horseman and cowboy all of his life and had worked as a dealer of horses and equine equipment for many years. He will be remembered for his zest for life and ability to light up a room. Most importantly, he will forever be the hero to his children and be loved and adored by his family.

In addition to his loving wife of 47 years, he is survived by three children and their spouses, Frank and Christine Lamprey of Colchester, Michael and Heather Lamprey of Sumter, SC and Marcy and Eric Furphy of Colchester; six beloved grandchildren, Brittany, Nicole, Ashley, Frankie, Michael and Katelyn; a brother, John Lamprey of Cheyenne, WY; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends called Tuesday, May 19, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Wednesday, May 20, at the funeral home before the celebration of the funeral liturgy at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, with Fr. Michael Giannitelli officiating. Committal with full military honors followed in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Heart Association, P.O. Box 3049, Syracuse, NY 13320.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Louise Corban Murray

Louise Corban Murray passed away peacefully at home Thursday, May 14. She was born Jan. 10, 1924, in Springfield, MA, to Madelyn and Myron Corban of Windsor.

Louise was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. She grew up in Windsor, and also lived in Rocky Hill, East Hartford, Wallingford (for 38 years) and most recently Portland. Louise graduated from Hillyer Junior College with a degree in English, and was employed by the Insilco Company for more than 25 years. She was a member of the Eastern Star for more than 50 years and was a Past Matron. She and her husband Don Murray were longtime members of First Congregational Church in Wallingford where she served as treasurer.

Louise was married to Donald C. Murray on November 30, 1943. Their marriage has served as an example of love and partnership for over 65 years. Louise loved to cook for and take care of her family, and her apple pie and Scottish shortbread were renowned.

She leaves behind her loving husband Don; her children Cathy, Allison and Jim; grandchildren Barbara, Christopher, Jessie, Michael, Brendan, and Andrew; and great-grandchildren Joshua, Nathan and Mayhew.

Calling hours were Tuesday, May 19, at the Portland Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Funeral services were Wednesday, May 20, at the First Congregational Church of Portland. The Rev. Jane Hawken officiated. Internment took place privately Thursday at Center Cemetery in Rocky Hill.

Memorial donations may be made to the Portland Congregational Church, 554 Main St. Portland, CT 06480.

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

Colchester

Simone Lorraine Frascarelli

Simone Lorraine (Legras) Frascarelli, a strong-willed, hard working, self-made woman, decided to be at peace Tuesday, May 12, with her loving husband and sons by her side. Born in Hartford May 2, 1957, she was the daughter of the late Rene and Martha Ann (Hess) Legras and had been a resident of Colchester for the past 26 years.

Due to her stubborn and feisty spirit, Simone continued to work and enjoy life in spite of being diagnosed with stage 4 colorectal cancer in 2002. She dismissed her illness as “a scheduling nightmare.” She was employed by The Hartford for 31 years. Because of her high motivation and excellent problem-solving skills, she was appointed business consultant, assistant director of the automation unit for specialty actuarial. Along with her staff, she was responsible for providing data to actuaries and underwriters that was vital in making business decisions. She received many awards for the quality and timeliness of her work, as well as the praise and respect of her co-workers. Undoubtedly, she will be sorely missed.

Simone loved good restaurants (especially Ruth’s Chris), puppies, kittens, and autumn. An avid reader, she enjoyed the works of Jane Austen, Dickens and Dostoyevsky. Her most enjoyable readings were with her young sons at their bedtime when they were treated to Dr. Seuss, the Berenstain Bears, and *The Lord of the Rings*. Her musical tastes ranged from the Moody Blues and Led Zeppelin to Beethoven and Rachmaninov. She developed a knowledge and deep appreciation for fine wines. She had a small but impressive wine collection and it was not unusual for a visitor to leave with a good vintage and advice on with which food to enjoy it. She took pride in caring for those closest to her, whether it be with a hearty meal or countless other means. Her generous ways earned her the nickname “Ivana.”

With her sisters, she visited Florida, Pennsylvania, and Salem, MA during their “Sisters’ Weekends.” Thursday evenings and Sundays were often spent with their father, with whom they had a special bond. Few summers passed without a stay at Briar Dell in Lake George, NY. She would bring some of her favorite wines and cheese to be savored with family and friends by the lake. Her tradition – Wine Time – will live on! She chaperoned her son Michael on a class trip to France in 2000 that included visits to Chartres, Carcassonne and Paris. She fondly remembered being kissed on the cheek by a French patisserie owner and was especially proud that the locals never believed she was just a tourist. With her husband, Art, they took two cruises: one to Bermuda, another to visit five Caribbean islands where they enjoyed the cuisine, beaches and each other. Through marriage, she became a Yankee fan and tolerated Art’s loud enthusiasm at the games they attended at Yankee Stadium.

Simone is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 31 years, Arthur; her three loving sons, Anthony Frascarelli and his fiancée Victoria Cowley of Fairfax, VA, Michael Frascarelli of Albany, NY, and David Frascarelli of Colchester; her newborn grandson Nicolas by Anthony and Victoria; her brother Rene Legras, Jr. and Jill Garfunkel of Wall, NJ; her three sisters Sheila Parent and husband Albert of Enfield, Debra Bienko and husband Joseph of Glastonbury, and Theresa Legras of Colchester; her sister- and brothers-in-law Teresa Johnson and husband Ted, John Frascarelli and wife Julie Somer-Frascarelli, and Joseph Frascarelli and wife Beth; her parents-in-law John and Rose Frascarelli of Rocky Hill; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her brother, Marcel Legras.

Her family extends its deepest thanks to Dr. Robert D. Siegel and the staff at the Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, especially Laurie Veale; to VITAS Home Hospice, especially Helen Kingstorf for laying the groundwork to help Simone find peace; and to the many friends who brought meals, comfort, and support. Even after the fiercest storms, the birds will come out to sing.

A Memorial Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, May 19, at Our Lady of Sorrows Church, 79 New Park Ave., Hartford. Friends and relatives called Monday, May 18, at Fissette-Batzner Funeral Home, 20 Bonair Ave., Newington.

Memorial donations may be made to the Connecticut Food Bank, P.O. Box 8686, New Haven, CT 06531; or to the Salvation Army, 855 Asylum Ave, Hartford, CT 06105.

To share a memory with the family, visit www.duksa.net.

Portland

Helen Wiercioch

Helen (Wisnieski) Wiercioch, 99, of Grand Street, Middletown, wife of the late John Wiercioch, died Monday, May 11, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born January 15, 1910 in Portland, the daughter of the late Stanislaw and Czeslawa (Suchocka) Wisnieski. Prior to her retirement, she was employed at The Traveler’s Insurance Company for 48 years.

Helen is survived by her sister-in-law, Genevieve Rajtar Wisniewski; her nieces, Rita Galuska Satagaj and her husband John Satagaj; Jean Wisnieski Damiata and Eileen Wisnieski all of Middletown; Barbara Wisnieski Winalski and her husband Gary of Stonington and Carol Wisnieski of California; nephews Edward “Ned” Wisnieski and Gerald Wisnieski and his wife Carmen, all of Middletown. She also leaves many great nieces and nephews.

Helen was predeceased by her brothers Edward Wisnieski and his wife, Margaret, Raymond Wisnieski, John Wisnieski; her sisters, Mary (Peg) Wisnieski; and Anastacia Galuska; her sister-in-law, Mary Wiercioch; nephew-in-law Louis Damiata; and her niece Mary Jane Galuska Charamut and her husband Edward Charamut.

A funeral liturgy was held Thursday, May 14, at St. Mary of Czestochowa Church in Middletown. Burial will be in Calvary Cemetery. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, on Thursday, May 14, before the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Mary of Czestochowa Church, 79 South Main St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Hebron

John W. Spada

John W. Spada of Hebron, beloved husband of Cher (Cook) Spada, passed away on Tuesday, May 19, surrounded by his loving family.

John led us all by his example of courage, faith, and an exceptionally positive attitude. Born on June 7, 1954, he graduated from Wethersfield High School in 1972 and attended CCSU. He worked for 35 years at Hartford Postal Service, where he met his wife Cher. As a devoted husband, he loved his wife and treasured her in his heart, while never leaving her side through both the happy as well as difficult times. He was a member of American Postal Workers Union 147. As a father his world revolved around his children, and he was their number one fan.

John was a longtime New York Yankees fan and enjoyed attending sporting events. He was a member of St. Andrew’s Parish and the Knights of Columbus Council 6107. John was an exceptional cook and enjoyed the many hours he spent in the kitchen. He enjoyed the simple pleasures in life such as working in the yard, golfing, camping, and being a special “Uncle Buddy” to Ray and Kristin. His patience and understanding touched and inspired those who knew him.

In addition to his wife, John is survived by his loving son, Daniel and his wife Tracey of Hebron; a cherished daughter, Heather of Hebron; parents, John and Barbara of Wethersfield; mother-in-law, Jean Cook of Windsor; sister-in-law, Nadine Charette and her husband Jon and their children of Newington; and a brother, Daniel.

He was preceded in death by his father-in-law, Robert Cook and maternal grandmother, Estelle McKeon.

In lieu of flowers, make donations in memory of John W. Spada to the RHAM scholarship fund c/o Savings Institute Bank and Trust, 115 Main St., Hebron, CT 06248.

A memorial Mass will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 23, at St. Andrew’s Church, 128 Norwich Avenue in Colchester.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Carmon Funeral Home, 807 Bloomfield Ave. in Windsor.